

I WANNA BE YOUR DOLL



I WANNA BE YOUR DOLL is a project sprung from a reflection about the woman as an object which gave birth to an experimental film where the cathartic performance starts an intimate tale.

I developed this research work on the doll and its representations according to the three ages of life. The doll is a toy for children, a sexual object for the adult and a ritual object for the elderlies.

The title of the movie comes from the punk song I wanna be your dog from The Stooges, and refers to sexual submission.

During this performance, I carry out a funerary ritual where I embody an opposite character, half woman, half animal, inspired from the Icelandic pastoral culture. Thus, my researches led me to construct my work on the doll starting by the end, that is, by 'killing' the stereotyped image of the woman as an object.

The production of woman's images constitutes a photographic work dealing with the ambivalence of the aesthetic representations of woman's body .

Therefore, I rely on the doll's history and its derived imagery when I ask a group of people to adopt me or during the collaborations with an individual : I take them to think with with about the link with the Other to question woman's identity and social status. The game consists in the reinterpretation of cliches so that an imaginary woman can merge as a paradigm of the doll.

Bénédicte Loichemol

I will be the doll dressed up by Véronique Damart during the year 2015 .

I met Véronique at salon des créateurs Fonzy-shop in Nantes in November 2013 to propose her to knit me a woolen suit.

When I saw the baskets she made out from doilies she had collected according to her encounters, I felt like participating to this stitches and crochet story, so

we eventually decided to manufacture a suit out of doilies.

This doll echoes the work *Marshmallow sex* which is still going on with the Kerkennah's embroiderers (Tunisia) whose mastering of the crochet hook makes the island's fame.

Lace is originally reserved for women's clothing, and more particularly for lingerie. This new suit reveals the sensual aspect of woman's body, skin being partially uncovered.

Embroidery is a decorative art, one could say that it de-corpse-ate ; the whole corpse being the very scene of action.

Love crystallization is an intense emotional phenomenon that I ritualise by merging myself into the salt fields in Camargue.

This rebirth announces the second chapter of the project *I wanna be your doll* which questions the Eros of woman's body.

Véronique is called Damart just like famous french brand of undershirt, she moreover chose to name her brand *Maillo* in reminder to the diaper with which we wrapped the children.

The desire to value a traditional knowledge through a contemporary practice led me to perform at the salt marshes of Aigues-Mortes (France) and later at Zarzis, during the festival of performance art *Dream City* (Tunisia).

***I wanna be your doll, installation and performance
Véronique Damart (costume) et Jacques Fournel
(photography) Montpellier-Nantes-Tunis. 2015.***



Jacques Fournel is a photographer who supervises the edition home of contemporary art, La Villa Saint-Clair in Sète (France).

We have undertaken a photographic work aiming at producing an object inspired by paper dolls to be dressed up dating of the fifties.

Since then, I keep following my researches about the woman as an object through hundreds of images arisen from our collaboration.

The paper doll is a mere excuse which enables me to experiment images of the toy doll by facing the child's toy to the adult toy, object of desire itself represented by my own female body.

*I wanna be your doll, mannequin and paper doll
Photography with Jacques Fournel. France. 2011-2015.*



My doll was born on July of 2013, between two glaciers in the heart of Iceland.

I go back over three years of researches, of encounters, of projects which led me “ to find my own inner doll ” as once a shepherd wished me.

Here, the doll is an object for cult, an idol dedicated to a magical ritual. Dressed up with a full body suit which blinds up my senses, I cross the wild nature of Iceland which substitutes to my emotions.

The repetition of these marches is an obsessive quest, a wandering between dream and reality, in search of an identity that would not be threatened by the outside anymore.

This experience starts during the seasonal move to summer pastures, when sheep leaves the farm. I mix with the flock, I am among beasts and breeders, and I rely on my instinct to act on the world.

The movie will be shown during Art Actions events with the performance *Mugga*. “ Snow fall without wind ” is the name of this Icelandic doll thusly baptized by Johanna, sheep breeder in the north of Iceland.

I wanna be your doll, experimental film (50 min)
Vincent Pouplard (cameraman). Guillaume Brunet (sound
ingenior). Corinne Forterre (costume). Islande- France. 2013-
2015.



The doll that will be born in a farm at Blönduós is a magical doll which will go with the shepherds and their flocks during the seasonal move to summer pastures. This performance was inspired by the sheep and horse breeders I met during my stay at Blönduós textile art center (Iceland). This doll is an idol, a supernatural creature according to the image and beliefs of inhabitants, between gods of the sagas and elves of the Icelandic folklore.

The outfit of the fetish doll is being manufactured by Corinne Forterre : *I was born on April 1953 in Alger. Around five years old. I was offered a sewing box and knitting needles for Christmas. When I turned 9. my mother strongly incited me to knit a “ full ” sweater while we were “ in transit ” after Algeria had become an independent country. Within a month. I made a long sleeves sweater with V-neck that fitted me. It was red with sleeves knitted in stocking stitch. with a 1/1 edge coast at*

the bottom. Stitches were twisted because I had to manage knitting by myself after Christmas and I switched the left hand thread . which caused back and front strands to be inverted compared to the french way. My brother wore that sweater a whole season and made me understand the interest of manufacturing a whole piece. I “ flooded ” my father. my grand fathers and grand grand fathers with scarves. I had found a way to make easy presents. This way of making presents stem-

ming from my work. or to have clothes that no one else possessed (endlessly manufactured by me) added to my curiosity in mastering new stitches and new techniques highly motivated me.



I wanna be your doll, prototype
Knitted doll costume by par Corinne Forterre (laine islandaise Lett-lopi, technique de tricot islandaise). France. 2013.

I will be the doll of Héléne Magnússon, an Icelandic knitter I met during a performance project which will take place in Reykjavik in winter 2013.

During my stay at the art residency in Iceland by September 2011 I met Helga Thóroddsen, a knitter and horse breeder. The doll called Theodóra knitted by Héléne was inspired by a book for children written by her grand mother, the famous Icelandic poet Theodóra Thóroddsen.

Helene Magnússon is Franco-Icelandic, she lives in Reykjavik. She involves in many knitting projects in Iceland, France and Belgium, particularly with the Hibou textile mill in Bonnine.



*I wanna be your doll, 'Theodóra'
Costume designed by Héléne Magnússon. Iceland. 2011.*

A Belgian friend whose father is Tunisian offer to tidy up his grand mother's flat after she had died a year before. I settle there for a while and I discover her clothing workshop on the ground floor of the family house.

Impressed by the objects and personal belongings of the lady, I take her 70's bright coloured patterned dresses and decides to become her doll, her dummy.

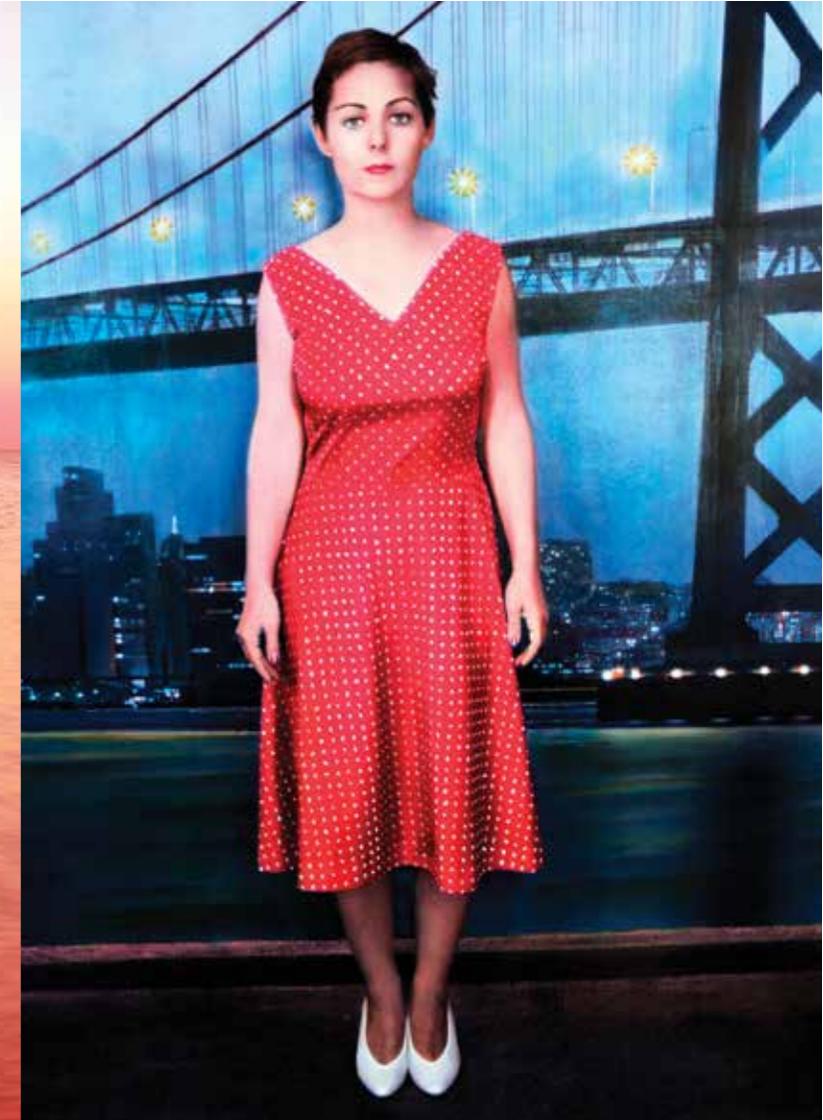
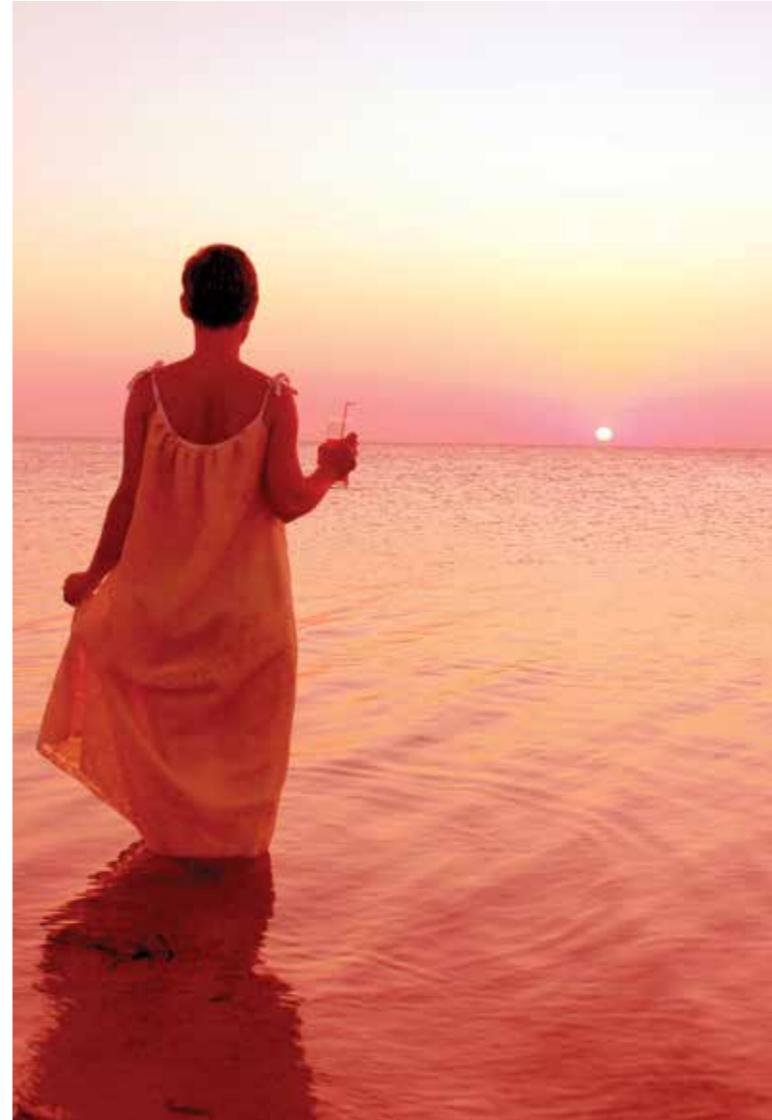
Paula Khempis was a very coquettish woman, an extravagant personality well known in Anderlecht, Brussel's district where many North Africans settled. Back from Tunisia, I decide

to alter Paula's dresses by a dress-maker from Sidi Bou Said whose workshop is situated in the ancient palace of Bey. I make up Paul's travel to Tunisia and I play these souvenirs later on when I wear her dresses during my stay at the Grand Hotel, a 70's decaying palace on the island of Kerkennah.

At the time, tourism reached its height, but now we are no more than three people residing in this vast hotel....I hit it off with Robert and Dominique, a couple in its fifties, to whom I offer to snap pictures of me on the beach....

Before leaving Tunisia, I go to Tunis where I print a souvenir picture at the photo studio in France Street. For this occasion, I choose a tapestry with the Brooklyn bridge as a background, and finally, I get the picture to be re-coloured according to a handmade technique long abandoned in Europe. This process is hand crafted with oil paint for portraits relating to family events but as it was originally reserved to star photos, it somehow renders the final cliché more anachronistic. I finally post my souvenir picture in Brussels.

*I wanna be your doll, Paula Khempis 'doll
Photography by Robert Crémoux (left) Photography by Studio
Monder (right). Brussels-Tunis. 2012.*



I have actually been collaborating for a year with the photographer Jacques Fournel on a research work about the woman as object of desire.

We are exclusively operating out of studio where I stage myself in doll costumes.

I felt like experimenting more closely the status of the toy by investing environment, particularly rabbits of which sexual connotation sends back to clichés about women.

This series of photos, snapped by my sister, generated a performance in a poetic context, an empty lot where thousands of tree trunks are stored, amongst which I walked about naked, in the search of a primitive animality as an answer to the reductive image of women.

These researches participate in the preparation of the Icelandic doll that I will embody in June 2013.



*I wanna be your doll, research on wild woman figure
Photography by Caroline Loichemol. France. 2012.*

On the occasion of the festival Les Litteratures Pirates in Brussels, I offer Stéphane Blanquet to take the pose in public for body a painting performance in the context of his installation *La chambre des cauchemars*. I figure the mermaid-woman fantasy which will be illustrated later in a silk screen printing used as cover page by the Brussels magazine *Voxer*.

Stéphane Blanquet is a major player in the comics' scene, as well as an editor (United Dead Artists). He is a polymorphic artist who works on many projects: from theater to cartoons, from installation to performance.... He published *Sur l'épiderme*, in 2003, with Alain Baulet Publisher, book of photography with pictures of women's bodies paintings.

The writing of our dreams plays a central part in our collaboration and will lead us to a new performance in Tokyo by 2010 where I take the pose as a doll with the bear *Jon the dog* (Japanese pop band).

*Teddy bear and doll. Span Art Gallery. Tokyo. 2010.
Mermaid skeleton. Recyclart. Brussels. 2005.
Performances with Stéphane Blanquet.*



This project was born in La Compilotèque, an artist-run center in Brussels which offers to swap musical compilations during art events. I organized a performative guest meal where I invited the public to a masked diner as a tribute to *Bal du rat mort d' Ostende*, founded by Jame Sensor in 1899.

I imagined the menu and a musical compilation on the theme of the tales and animals as depicted in the song *Teddy Bear's picnic* by Henry Hall, 1920.

Inspired by the scene where Goldilocks sleeps in the little teddy's bed and is suddenly frightened by the three bears who discovered she ate their food; I thought about playing a fairytale doll with real-size bears.

In the end, I will transform into a porcelain doll, surrealistic play on words from "porc-e-laine" as "pork an sheep" referring to James Ensor anagram "hareng-saur" which means herring.

Porc-e-laine doll, performance
La compilotheque. Brussels. 2009.



During this performance, I coat like a muffin, I build up an imaginary body dedicated to pleasure.
Each dress or coat in english (the french word for coated is “enrobée” which means literally “dressed in”), represents a layer of batter adding on the top of the other until it finally produces a human muffin ready to be eaten.

The analogy between coats, coating and female body introduces to a performative work about women and desire which will be developed thereafter in my work on the doll.

*Enrobée, performance
Nantes. 2003.*



