

Nancy Nguyen
Cybersensuality

a response by
Jaz Papadopoulos

As I looked into one of the two opposing “mirrors” – bumpy sheets of reflective material reminiscent of fun house mirrors, warping and creating anew of the object/subject in front of it – I did not recognize myself. One moment, I had a single body that split at the waist, birthing two sets of chests, arms and heads; the next, an amorphous blob in my clothing was reflected back to me. My form became indistinguishable from, exchangeable for, any other.

I did not recognize my self, yet each frame in Nancy Nguyen’s show, *Cybersensuality*, presented *an* image of my self (or, *the* self...any distinctions that may have separated the two have already been absorbed by the mirrors). Whether I was gazing into my contorted reflection, or one of the several heavily pixelated prints of people and body parts, it was still the mirror room in the fun house: brimming with vague, blurry, light-skinned forms with barely-perceptible limbs, none of which were different enough from my own to be insistent as such.

“It’s very impressive,” states my friend as they walk past me, drawn in to one of the show’s myriad aspects.

Nguyen compels questions of “who am I?” and “what is me?” and “what are the methods through which am I seen?” This also seems to blur the lines between “me” and another – is the viewer seeing another subject-as-object, or just their own reflection? Who is the witness that can confidently and truthfully respond? The simultaneous anonymity and relate-ability of cyber space is brought to the forefront most powerfully with Nguyen’s books, one of which seems to depict, page by page, the process of someone “creeping” another online. As a familiar hand icon moves about the pages, scrolling and searching for pictures in what might be an internet chat room or perhaps the hacking of a Myspace or Facebook page, I can see myself as the “creep,” yet the images of feminine faces simultaneously place me in the familiar position of female/object; of course, while all of this is happening, no one is creeping anyone and I’m flipping the pages in a book, not scrolling and clicking my way through online layers in pursuit of...who knows what. At least the book has an ending and I can walk away.

I am a clown and a shapeshifter constantly on the lookout for the in-between. While standing in the gallery, I realized that cyberspace is the most literal liminal space I have encountered. Online, with our bodies in one place, but our self/ves in any number other others, can we say we *are* anywhere? At what point does my self converge with *the* self? The boundaries are porous. We can be anything, but we are still left with the questions who can – who will – I choose to be? Who am I?

Jaz Papadopoulos is a recent member of the Cartae Open School at ace art inc. Lately, they are learning how to use technology. They mostly live in Winnipeg, Canada. Their musings are findable on IG @hotdogjazmin and <https://www.tumblr.com/blog/hotdogjazmin>.