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Hissy Fits and a Cream Pie to the Face.

Comedy and Contemporary Feminism in Art

An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the post-graduate degree of

Master of Fine Arts

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Abstract.

NOTE: Please watch the videos first because nothing is funny after being explained in this many words.

This thesis examines the dynamic of humour in contemporary feminisms, investigating social conventions and the absurdity of human existence. It articulates through a suite of performative videos with a low-fi aesthetic how humour can be employed to reconfigure our understanding of subjectivity and sexuality, and argues for the necessity of rethinking feminist art language to ensure its contemporary viability as a political project.

This body of work explores the language of comedy as a device for political and social communication, as a potential agent in undermining cultural hierarchies and as a disarming strategy to deal with serious issues through pleasure, happiness and recreation. In particular, it examines the physical humour of slapstick and marginalised women's comedy to redefine notions of canonical beauty, sexuality and social etiquette in terms of the self-consciousness and fallibility of the human self.

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