

## Dear Nane,

I watched a documentary on Donatella Versace last week. Near the beginning she says to the camera, “A dress, for a woman, it’s a weapon,” and part of me wanted to do a fist bump when I heard that, but then I also thought, is that all we have to fight with? It’s a depressing notion, but there is perhaps something to be said here about the resourcefulness of the oppressed. They do what they can with what they’ve got. Virginia Woolf wrote that it was no surprise that women, who were for so long confined to the home and banded from entering the professions, excelled at fashion and interior design, because they were the only things open to them to pursue.

Versace’s comment also made me think of you saying that cutlery, which is a reoccurring motif in your work, can be turned inwards to nourish us, or outwards as a weapon. It’s all too easy to imagine the kind of desperate situation that would necessitate that subversion. Who among us hasn’t placed a key between two fingers and made a fist on an empty street at night – prepared to battle if that figure behind us didn’t eventually recede into the shadows?

That brings me to *Les Guérillères*. I read the passages that you sent to me, and predictably I loved them. I just reread the part you used in the early press release for your exhibition, and it really nails what is so special about the world that exists in this book. Of course there is a certain amount of *schadenfreude* to be gained from watching these Amazonian women blasting men into oblivion (I’ve been obsessed with watching YouTube videos of woman fighting back against wannabe thieves recently), but much more than this what struck me was how free they felt to completely lose themselves. When they’re not sitting quietly holding hands and watching the clouds go by they’re either crying or screaming; it’s one extreme or the other. What freedom! To drink tea laced with narcotics and then go to sleep *en masse* outside would be unbelievably irresponsible in our world. I don’t think I have to tell you why.

Imagine this: *Les Guérillères* is actually set in an alternative universe where witches were never burned at the stake. Instead of losing their relation to nature and herbal remedies, women have used them to prosper. It’s amazing that academics have started to reassess this neglected time period and see it as a transitional phase into capitalism and as a way to silence and oppress women, which it was. I also love that idea of the witch has made its way to popular feminism and trans activism. I even heard someone call herself a ‘kitchen witch’ on a podcast the other day. Would it be too far to think of the female artist as a studio witch? I like the idea of you in the studio melting latex in a big pot, making sculptures based on trial and error, piecing them together slowly based on personal rather than institutional knowledge. Studio witches are as unafraid of ugliness as they are of beauty.

Anyway, this is a very long way of saying I like the images of your recent work very much. I don’t know if I explained this properly when we were on Skype, but your practice has become something that transcends buzzwords now (architecture; design; the body, etc. etc.) and become something that is more than the sum of its parts. Looking at your work sends instead me on a path filled with forked turns (which you can probably tell from this email).

All my best,

Chloe