

edited by William Ellis and Jordan Tannahill

the

F

book



# **The Videofag Book**

edited by William Ellis and Jordan Tannahill

**BookThug • Toronto**

FIRST EDITION

Copyright © 2017 by the contributors

The production of this book was made possible through the generous assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council. BookThug also acknowledges the support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund and the Government of Ontario through the Ontario Book Publishing Tax Credit and the Ontario Book Fund.



Canada Council  
for the Arts

Conseil des Arts  
du Canada



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO  
an Ontario government agency  
un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Funded by the  
Government  
of Ontario

Funded par le  
gouvernement  
de l'Ontario

Canada

BookThug acknowledges the land on which it operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION

The Videofag book / edited by William Ellis and Jordan Tannahill.

Issued in print and electronic formats.

Softcover: ISBN 978-1-77166-362-5

HTML: ISBN 978-1-77166-363-2

PDF: ISBN 978-1-77166-364-9

Kindle: ISBN 978-1-77166-365-6

1. Arts, Canadian—Ontario—Toronto—21st century.
  2. Artists—Ontario—Toronto. 3. Kensington Market (Toronto, Ont.).
- I. Tannahill, Jordan, editor II. Ellis, William, 1982-, editor

NX513.T67V53 2017 700.9713'541 C2017-906756-7 C2017-906757-5

PRINTED IN CANADA

## A Love Letter to Videofag

with excerpts from the 2007 performance *Everything Else Has Failed!*  
*Don't You Think It's Time for Love?* by American artist Sharon Hayes  
(shaze.info)

*“My dear love, my sweet lover. I'm shaking a bit, I'm not sure exactly how to begin...”*

I don't know how else to say it: I love you. You are the wind beneath my wings. You make me feel like I'm the only girl in the world. You're a superstar, yes that's what you are (you know it).

I love Jordan and Will and the interns. I love the porous border between private and public, domestic space and event space, bridged by the bar counter and the kitchen (sanctuary for pre-performance dinners). I loved hearing about your downstairs neighbours, how they gave you a bag of lemons when they left (and then ended up coming back). I loved the old woman who threw herself into violent 1960s-style body-art paroxysms on the floor—clearly an experienced yet under-recognized senior Canadian performance artist herself—because she couldn't handle you.

I love that you and I have organically developed our own research centre (the Institute for Sissy Studies?) into the intersections of queer childhood, narcissism, DIY glamour, self-fashioning, Internet video, and performance. I love that Vid-

eofag is a kind of embassy for queer kids (of all ages) raised by the Internet. I love that I can approach you with any idea and you are open to it. I love how obsession feeds discussion feeds research feeds artistic production and on and on.

I love that you embody everything that “queer” means to me—in your fluidity, your generosity, and your committed yet casual disdain for biology and for tired and oversimplifying identity categories. I love your intergenerational commingling, your fostering of a dynamic social space that is not afraid of difference or disharmony, a space that is better than safe. I love that I can trace a yellow brick road from General Idea to Fifth Column to Will Munro to Hotnuts to your doorway in Kensington, and that you understand and respect those legacies but that they don’t enslave you. Better, that you get that everyone who walks in has their own distinct lineages and networks, how they got from there to here and what excites them. I love that you innately grasp the continuum between cinema, media art, performance, and socializing, and you passionately believe in the potential of a group of people in a room to make something magical-meaningful happen together.

*“I found the paradox: that if you love until it hurts, there can be no more hurt, only love. Mother Teresa said that, I had never heard it before. But she is talking about loving bunches and bunches of people ‘til it hurts, she is talking about loving the people of the world till it hurts. I don’t know how to do that. I don’t know how to love you, I only know how to love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you. There is no more to say. Be safe, my love.”*

—Jon Davies



Peter Kingstone's *Meditations in an Emergency*, curated by Ellen Walker



The Dietrich Group's *I Am Marilyn*, choreographed by D. A. Hoskins



Bridget Moser performing as part of *Groaners*, curated by Miles Stemp and Felix Kalmenson



Judy Virago and Igby Lizard



Jon Davies's *Sissyboy YouTube Night*



*Troubling Masculinities*





Vivek Shraya's *What I LOVE About Being Queer*



Humboldt Magnussen performing in the tree across the street



*Long Live the Working Class* by Hannah Enkel and Philip Shelton



The Dietrich Group's *Hard Candy*, choreographed by D. A. Hoskins



Audience in a giant tent for Erin Fleck's *Unintentionally Depressing Children's Stories*



Keith Cole performing



*My Father, Francis* exhibition by Casey Mecija



Henri Fabergé's punk rock opera *Feint of Hart*, about to start



Eshan Rafi's performance *Touching/Diana*



*The Lee Press On Nail Play* by Aurora Stewart de Peña