

Collapsar: Jordan/Martin Hell
Alex Bennett

“Where the light is brightest, is where the fecal secretly rules.”¹

Viscous, violent—“filth” doesn’t just stick, it constructs. In the second volume of Jordan/Martin Hell’s novel, *CONSTANT VIOLINS I & II* (2022), Hell describes its pages of science fiction, parafiction, autofiction, and experimental memoir aptly as a “sort of smut porn *Lord of the Rings*-esque monstrosity.”² Hell notes the process of writing this “Bible for artists”³ as being “chained to the plot [. . .] as so much of my subconscious life was tied to its outcomes & its logic.”⁴ This psychosomatic endurance illustrates the embodied tonalities of Hell’s process. Worlds rip into worlds in hedonistic groundswell narratively simulating the act of world-making itself; selves are body-portals dissevered and skinned in cannibalistic entropy; phenomena of parasocial encounter become fiercely elastic, celebrity a sophist *deathorama* expelling blasphemy and obscenity.⁵ This porno-vortex is a protean spelunking of so-called perversion, manipulating fictionalized time to contend with collective forms of circulation and perception that classify queer subjects. In this decadence of contexture there persists an incommensurable physicality of presence, whose brutality and pleasure spatializes a particular truth claim: sanctum in a “lawless place.”⁶

Countercultural semantics institutes punkish animation to the qualifiers of deviance. In this assimilative violence, numerous embodiments, specifically across Black-queer-transness, suffer outside such a calculation. Hell’s writing is a reparative and speculative inquiry into how histories are produced, and for whom such histories and their counternarratives become a vehicle. Who is obscured in the process of their telling or imagining? Who is at stake in such fantasy? In this reckoning, Hell delves into subconscious somatics, libidinal economies, and ancestral Black feminist epistemologies to reacquire the mind and the body as a generative methodology. The resulting style brims with the impassioned alchemy of embodied poetics, writing with and beyond one’s reality.

“I want to be a better pervert today than I was yesterday & to do that I have to let the world flip on its axis while I try once more to tell the only story that exists & the one least admired; the truth.”⁷

Constellating lodestars, Hell hoards relations in psycho-associational clusterfucks, on apocalyptic proportions. *Deviance* pivots on *deviations* as an intentional maneuvering through irregularities. Scandal is narrative-ruin lust; rumoured happenings catalyze a spasmodic hivemind; realities reel on exhaustion. Everything sheds in nihilist knowledge that the social and psychological are always plastic. Plasticity with philosophy involves destruction and deconstruction to handle presence and its withdrawal, signifying achievement and deflagration: emergence and explosion. Plasticity betokens “the excess of the future over the future”⁸ by contracting the receiving and destruction of form in the same temporal movement. It’s a potent reminder that nothing is truly safe, and everything is impressionable: welcome to Hell.

Writing through this “psycho-corporal essence of perversion,”⁹ Hell creates sculptures and paintings that are a speciation of objects incarnating narrative splinters.¹⁰

Poriferous motifs and stenciled profiles, foremost on laser-cut plexiglass, mimic slide projector sheets where icons and fictions can be overlaid and brainstormed at will.¹¹ Parapsychological objects are essays of compacted physicality that reserve a facility to unlatch, unspool, and recount. Velvet ribbons are woven into abstract compositions, tightly knotted like personalized pigtails; horse-hair plaits dangle while clusters of hair beads spell names and codes.¹² These brace the cutting exuberance of Hell’s writing in a warm resilience: *kiss, kiss*. Machetes are suspended from snap hooks on chains, the object mollified to utilitarian oblivion, embellished with rainbow-threaded hair beads. Sickles hang invitingly like mythic saccharine weaponry. As the busted bike and car tires of *INTERCOURSE* (2022) imply, it is a fucking-as-praxis that alloys selves.¹³ Chain-mail portraits, too, formally hinge on such dense referentiality, creating a matrix of interlinked porosity with soft-focus airbrushing. A chain-mail purse dangles from chains strung between doorways, beribboned as a tantalizing prize. Armament or accessory, the purse is a state: “it’s the apocalypse and it might be sort of the future and it might be sort of the past and we might be in a river and we’re just trying to make as many different Swiss army knives as possible.”¹⁴ In this effervescent, chthonic maelstrom at turns sweet and savage is an urgency to exercise what it is to live and be in multiplicity, by any means necessary.

- 1 Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2005), 29. See: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/adorno/1951/mm/> (translated by Dennis Redmond).
- 2 Jordan/Martin Hell, *CONSTANT VIOLINS I & II* (London: Arcadia Missa, 2022), 80.
- 3 Jordan/Martin Hell in conversation with the author, November 16, 2022.
- 4 Jordan/Martin Hell, *CONSTANT VIOLINS I & II*, 80.
- 5 Discrete vignettes erupt into cacophony of apocalypses starring around three hundred characters including Azealia Banks, Soren Kierkegaard, Johnny Cash, Arthur Schopenhauer, an alien-birthing-cum-dragon-god Vito Acconci (see: *VITO*, 2022), and mini-villain Hilma af Klint, who unleashes a spiritualist coup in her version of hell.
- 6 Jordan/Martin Hell, *CONSTANT VIOLINS I & II*, 80.
- 7 Jordan/Martin Hell, *CONSTANT VIOLINS I & II*, 81.
- 8 Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectic* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 5.
- 9 Jordan/Martin Hell, *CONSTANT VIOLINS I & II*, 81.
- 10 Each exhibition of Hell’s is accompanied by a text, and every text is accompanied by at least one object. This networked, associative thinking corresponds to other disciplines, such as Hell’s music. See Hell’s new album, *Psychosocialite*: <https://martinhell.bandcamp.com/album/psychosocialite>.
- 11 The materiality simulates Hell’s working as a youth consultant for a museum “to teach white teachers how to teach black kids,” where “the transparency was so fucking opaque and heavy.” Such portraits include Angela Davis, Jeffrey Dahmer, and Dusty Springfield. Jordan/Martin Hell in conversation with the author, November 16, 2022.
- 12 Such as Angela Davis and Malcom X.
- 13 Travis Jeppesen, “Queer Abstraction (Or How to Be a Pervert with No Body). Some Notes Toward a Probability,” *Mousse Magazine*, no. 66 (2019): 182–91. See: <https://www.moussemagazine.it/magazine/queer-abstraction-travis-jeppesen-2019/>.
- 14 Jordan/Martin Hell in conversation with the author, November 16, 2022.

105 Jordan/Martin Hell, *INTERCOURSE*, 2022. © Jordan/Martin Hell. Courtesy: the artist and Layr, Vienna. Photo: kunst-documentation

106 107 Jordan/Martin Hell, *CONSTANT VIOLINS* installation view at Arcadia Missa, London, 2022. © Jordan/Martin Hell. Courtesy: the artist and Arcadia Missa, London. Photo: Josef Konczak

108 Jordan/Martin Hell, *THE WAR IS OVER* installation view at Galerie Noah Klink, Berlin, 2022. © Jordan/Martin Hell. Courtesy: the artist and Galerie Noah Klink, Berlin. Photo: Hans Georg Gaul

109 Jordan/Martin Hell, *AZEALIA*, 2022. © Jordan/Martin Hell. Courtesy: the artist and Arcadia Missa, London. Photo: Josef Konczak





