

K8 HARDY AND ULRIKE MÜLLER

ULRIKE: So here we are, having whiskey and tea at our kitchen table, and getting ready to have a conversation about our artwork.

K8: In our new home. We just moved in together. We met at the Whitney Independent Study Program. What was that... 2002? You came in from Vienna, fresh off the boat. And, I have to say I'm most proud of setting the standard, as you said, in bastardizing your name in English [*laughs*].

ULRIKE: You were running a few days late when the Whitney Program started. I had seen your mysterious name on the list, but I hadn't met you until one day when you walked in wearing jeans and a checkered shirt and a belt that spelled "BUTCH" in big letters right across your ass.

K8: And everyone was like, Why do you spell your name with an 8? Why? Why, why oh why?

ULRIKE: Well, that's a good question. Why do you spell your name K8?

K8: I started doing it when I was like fourteen or fifteen and I was making zines, and that was sort of the most amped-up era of riot grrrl... probably toward the end. Somehow there was a crossover for me with the DIY skateboarding culture, and people used to write "sk8 or die," and they spelled it S-K-8. So I started writing K8, and K8 or Die, and just eventually signed all my zines and writing that way, and with all my friends knowing me as K8, it just stuck.

ULRIKE: It made quite an impression on me, I have to say.

K8: That was the same year that Ginger Brooks Takahashi and I decided to start *LTTR*, and Emily Roysdon came aboard, and we were setting up the headquarters in the studios there.

ULRIKE: I remember you working on *LTTR*, and it seemed interesting, although I probably didn't really get the project until I came to your first presentation, which was in a gallery in Williamsburg. It was a great crowd. Matt Wolf climbed on a chair to give a speech, and he said, "I

don't know why I'm invited to talk here. I guess because I'm a fag, and I'm also a feminist." And I was like, "Yes, wow, this is where I want to be. That's the scene where I feel comfortable and where I feel that my work is in the right context, and these are the people who I want to be in exchange with and talk about work and politics with."

K8: And now you're part of the collective.

ULRIKE: Yes. I went from being a contributor to number two and number three to being an editor and member of *LTTR*.

K8: Were you in numbers two and three?

ULRIKE: You had my collaboration with Marie Therese Escribano in the third issue—the text she wrote and I translated—and that we then performed at the *LTTR* explosion. In the second issue you had two of my audio recordings.

K8: Yeah. "G train to Queens..."

ULRIKE: "...late last night. I just love it when a bunch of women board the G train to Queens."

K8: I'll always have it memorized.

ULRIKE: How did the last line go? "For some strange and stupid reason they get all get off at several stops before they get there..."

ULRIKE & K8: "Too bad for them..." [*They laugh.*]

ULRIKE: "Too bad for us!"

K8: So I think that I became really turned on to your work and intrigued because you were motivated by a concept and an idea, and the form came later. We were both video artists, but at our show in the end, you had an audio piece. I was just really impressed that you wanted to do a project and it could manifest itself in any form and in the best form possible, while I felt so tied to video, you know? And I was really trying to break out of that, desperately.

ULRIKE: You were working on photographs that year.

K8: Yeah, I did a series of photographs with objects I made.

ULRIKE: Yeah, so we kind of got different things out of a similar impulse. For me the audio work is very much related to my video making. In my videos I was really interested in the soundtrack, in using narrative, and language. I was inter-

ested in the way in which language can produce images. So, I still consider that audio piece—the *New York Times* piece—as filmic, a soundtrack without the movie. It is very evocative; it's installed in the window, it's supposed to play off the images that we have in our heads; already. It also uses the scenes that are happening outside of the window or in the gallery space. That's the image for that soundtrack.

I remember your photographs in that same show. I really loved them. What intrigued me early on about your work was your very open and direct way of looking at sexuality. You know I've been working with sexuality but maybe on a more subliminal level. Mobilizing it and working with the body and with all kinds of sensations. But you were way more out there and direct, and there's a lot of crotch, there is pussy in your photographs, and I thought that was really strong.

K8: People have a hard time looking at them. I constantly consider the female form in my work and how I'm using it. I'm taking images and stuff like that, so I feel hyper-aware. I want to represent these things like sexuality and lesbian sexuality, and body and the female body, but I'm constantly considering the context of the body in terms of things like race and size. One thing about that series is that you don't really ever see a face. Not that it is a constant in my work, but I think that is a challenge, to make images that aren't sexist, that aren't like, "Hey, we flipped this woman on her side and her feet are in the air." Every time I see a woman photographed like that, I'm like, you just fucking pushed her over, you know?

ULRIKE: That's really interesting to me, because I have very similar concerns. You know, in my video work and in the performances, I always think about how to mobilize subjectivity and how to mobilize experience, without identifying it with one person that you can discern.

K8: Right, right...

ULRIKE: So the distance can't be introduced in this way where you can say, "I'm the viewer and this is the person speaking." She's talking about her experience, so I don't really have to be bothered with it. I want to tie in the person who listens or who watches the piece, and figure out ways of saying "I" without talking only about myself. You know, making this position in language available for other people.

K8: One thing I really like about your projects is that you pull in the viewer so strongly. In the *New York Times* piece you have to put on headphones, so you can't escape like you can after a glance at a photo or a painting. And then what I was really impressed with is that you shifted

the gaze outside of the gallery so we're staring at the street and looking at the public. I would have never approached a gallery space and said, "Hey, look out the window. Look out at the world." And that's what your piece is making people do. I never thought about it this way before, but I like that you're really directing people. I was going to say, maybe it's a bit sadistic of you, but... [laughs].

ULRIKE: It is. I think that there is an amount of violence involved in putting on headphones, listening to somebody else's voice, and having that turn into an interior monologue that really takes over your physical existence at that moment. Yeah, it is. I'm aware of that.

K8: I have a question for you: Are you thinking that you know what kind of person is going to come into this space?

ULRIKE: No, not at all. I mean, I don't know what you're... Do you want to elaborate on the question so that I understand it better?

K8: Well, I mean, you just showed the *New York Times* piece at Orchard, which is a really intellectual collective gallery, and it was at the Whitney Program, and you can easily make an assumption about who's going to walk into those spaces and a little bit of an assumption about their education. It's not the average public.

ULRIKE: It occurred to me that in these places the art audience is not racially very diverse, and the same is true for education and class. I don't know. That's something that I do probably need to think about more. I do have certain assumptions that border the universal, like that certain experiences in everyday life are structured by our psyches and structured by a general political mood. You know, that we're not outside of what's going on, on the level of politics, even though to a large degree we often feel that we can't influence it. But, yeah, I think that I operate from a place where I say there are certain aspects of reality that we all share.

K8: So you think anyone who would come in and witness the piece would get it?

ULRIKE: No. I mean, I know it's queer work...

K8: Right, it's leftist. This is something that's come up for me in the past year, and I'm not saying it's elitist or something like that, but I sort of came to realize that I'm not really interested in the general public, and maybe I need to acquiesce to the fact that there is an elitist element in



K8 Hardy and Wynne Greenwood, *New Report*, 2005
video still

that or maybe not. I really do have a specific audience in mind, although I like to think that my tapes aren't heavily theoretical or that most people can grasp them if they watch them. My mother can watch *New Report* and get certain elements of it. Maybe she won't get all the nuances of it, but, you know, she'll... she likes it [laughs].

ULRIKE: And your mother is a Republican.

K8: Yeah, I would say that.

ULRIKE: That's close to the answer that I have to this question, but it's not a definitive answer. I'm not using language that comes out of theory. It's very everyday language.

But I also think that it is a mistake to underestimate your audience. And I would rather allocate a potential for understanding in other people I don't know. It does happen that people who come from a very different context pick up on the work. There's no way of predicting it. And there's certainly no way of controlling it. That's not what art making is about to me. The best I can do is give the piece a certain spin. But what happens to it when it's out there is not under my control.

Going back to that idea of the window and connecting to everyday life, I actually think that your photographs, too, are very similar, because they're taken in private, intimate spaces, and a photograph on the gallery wall

often functions very much like a window. You show something that comes out of a private space, and you put it out there for a public.

K8: Looking back now, I feel that I'm recognizing that I'm interested in creating images in spaces that are unlocatable, that are more imagined, into which the viewer can more likely propel himself or herself. Like in *Beautiful Radiating Energy*, Klara Liden and I made these sets out of trash to resemble cityscapes or land-spaces or nature, and I feel really

compelled right now toward more imagined spaces, because in our world everything is so ripe with political implications. In my film *Disquiet*, it's all suburban, and I show shopping mall after shopping mall and parking lots, and I think that I knew how political all those shots were, but only after making that film did it really sink into me.

ULRIKE: I'm sure that contemporary alienation is something we're both dealing with in our work, and that we also both operate from the feminist understanding that the personal is political, and that what we experience as very personal and even lonely moments is socially shared. I think we both feel that there is a potential in this understanding, that it's not fate, that you end up finding yourself in this kind of place because it's part of a political landscape, it's part of how economy structures our life.

K8: Yeah.

ULRIKE: Like *Mock Rock*, this video I did, which you did the cinematography for...

K8: A film.

ULRIKE: It is a film, right. [They laugh.]

K8: Shot on Super-8.

ULRIKE: Shot on Super-8 in a very non-site-like place out in Queens where there is an outcropping of bedrock in between the industrial buildings. In the film, the body of a woman interacts with this rock, kind of appearing and disappearing on and around the rock. And, yeah, that links to what you're doing in *Disquiet*.

K8: I really love that film, which I hesitate to say since I shot it, but I do love that film. You had a songwriter, Essie Jain, redo the song. What is the title? "I Am a Rock, I Am an Island?" It's so poetic and romantic, and the Super-8 film lends that feeling as well. This stark, enormous rock is coming out of the most preposterous place—factory and zone and parking lot—with the noncontinuous interaction of the female form. I could watch that on loop, you know? I remember when I was first making videos, and Tammy Rae Carland came to lecture at Smith, and she was talking about her work and her videos, and it was this hopeful moment—she was starting [her independent record label] Mr. Lady—where she hoped to sell video art to the public, and feminist video artists, like myself and Elisabeth Subrin, gave her tapes to be sold for only ten dollars, through this record/video label. Something she said just struck me and has always stuck with me: that she just wanted to put on a tape and have it play in the background the way you would play a CD or something. That totally struck me, and I didn't think of it as an insult to the video artist, like you're not paying attention to the video, but rather that there's so much work in depth and sound and that it's worth so many looks. Yeah, in your home, these videos should be looped. That's how I feel about *Mock Rock*. I could really watch it over and over.

ULRIKE: I think the best thing that can happen to art is that people really want to live with it and share a space with it and bring it home. The distribution aspect of it is



Ulrike Müller, *Mock Rock*, 2004
Super 8 transferred to Video, 3 minutes

one of the things that really turned me on to video making. It's so easy to pass on a tape.

Mock Rock to me is also the piece with which I broke away from an unquestioning belief in a conceptual aesthetic—an aesthetic that is handed down over a couple of generations now and that has become something like a standard, and certainly a standard that influenced me early on trying to be a political artist. I thought I was supposed to address rationality, and talk about fact and information, and frame it in a way that it would make an impact, and *Mock Rock* is really the opposite of that. It's really about feelings and sensation and trying to find an image for that, and trying to put that out there and share it, and that has influenced a lot of the work that I've done since. I believe that there is a political potential in aesthetic practice.

K8: Which is kind of a radical departure for you, right?

ULRIKE: I don't feel alone with that at all, you know; I see it in your work, I see it in a lot of the work that we are featuring in *LTTR*, and I see that it has to do with a situation in which we are all feeling despair, and we all don't have much political agency, so it comes out of thinking about where the potential for social change is located. In the

end it's a very humble proposition. The point of departure is shared emotions. And thanks to *LTTR*, I know that it's not my own private, fictitious illusion, but it's something that really works, and also works on a larger scale of *LTTR* events and parties and performances, where we create that energy and enthusiasm and experience a group of people getting together and living it up.

K8: Messy gay art.

ULRIKE: That's what you like to call it. I subscribe to messy gay art. I'm really interested in your performance *Beautiful Radiating Energy* because it's about exactly this point. I've seen it a few times, and I think the one performance that stuck with me the most was in Chicago at the Pilot TV conference.

K8: Well, I did that right before you did *Love / Torture* for the first time.

ULRIKE: The other way around. I think I went first.

K8: OK, that's what I meant, I'm sorry. You did it right before I did that, which really set the tone, and I remember kind of being in the background waiting to go on, and it was just intense. Was that your first performance?

ULRIKE: It wasn't my first performance, but it was the first time I used one of my texts live in that way. I used media language from the Abu Ghraib abuse coverage and collaged that together in a text. It was the first time that I did not record my audio piece at home in my bedroom in a very private and almost trancelike situation over days. I just went out there and put myself on the stage and I did it live, so yeah, it was really a first time. It was a really powerful experiment—trial and error, you know.

K8: The text you use is so intense, but even more so were the moments of silence. You say such provocative,

violent things, and you leave an equal amount of silence to what you say. It's like sinking further and further in. And we can feel Abu Ghraib in what you're saying. We know what's happening in the world with this torture, and you're bringing it into the context of a love relationship, and in that way it's as if any one of us could be that torturer, and you are that torturer. It's beyond the simplistics of sadomasochism, because it has broader political implications.

ULRIKE: Yeah. I walk up on the stage; I stand with my back to the audience. I don't see the audience, but of course I can feel the presence of people. You get a very intense sense of whether people are paying attention, and what's going on behind your back. I start out by saying, "I push you into an empty room, I take off your blindfold, and you see that the walls are splattered with blood." And then there is silence. So that really kicks in. Your reading of what I was trying to do is really accurate. Coming from Austria and coming from a background where the Holocaust was always part of my awareness, but somehow weirdly turned around, I read not only the diary of Anne Frank but also novels about Jewish experience, childhood in the ghetto, and so on, when I was a teenager. Much later I realized how weird that identification with the victim is for someone whose culture is way closer to the culture of the perpetrator. Being part of the majority culture I could find myself in the place of the perpetrator.



Ulrike Müller, *Love / Torture*, October 2004
Pilot TV Conference, Chicago, IL.

K8: And without a doubt there's something cutting with your accent that adds to that, you know? There's just such a charged relationship to that strict, German accent. Do you think about that when you make your performance?

ULRIKE: People have brought it up to me, and I embrace it. It's not something that is under my control, it's just the way I speak and my way of talking, and it's in all the other pieces as well. What I try to be conscious of is voice and tone and how a text is delivered...



K8 Hardy performing *Beautiful Radiating Energy*, October 2004
Pilot TV, Chicago, IL.

K8: Which reminds me of our voice workshop we took together, which helped me develop *Beautiful Radiating Energy*. That was a really big departure for me, and I was so happy to make that piece, because I have this really performative instinct, and when I first started making videos it was just me in front of the camera. I have this real desire to perform and to be present with the audience, and it's so gratifying. Right after 9/11, I did this performance at a cabaret, where I sang "God Bless America," and I was in this floral, housewife dress, and I gave birth to a thousand little green toy soldiers and had a bra on with balloons filled with milk, and I was squirting milk everywhere and feeding my little soldiers. This was in New York, five days after 9/11 I think, and I really upset some people. I went on doing little spontaneous cabaret acts, and I felt something there, but *Beautiful Radiating Energy* was the first time where I was like, OK, I want to use my body and my voice, and I want to make a piece. I'm so tied into video that I had to use it as well; I couldn't take it out of my work. It took me performing it a few times to really connect directly with the video, which is really what came into synch at Pilot, because I was completely aware of how I interacted with the projection. I first did it on the windowsill at Reena Spaulings, and I had finished the video about three days before, so with time and more stage space I think the performance improved itself.

ULRIKE: What is really great about *Beautiful Radiating Energy* for me is that you do mobilize all this energy and the need for action, and what you say over and over again is, "Are you ready?" It's like a call to arms, but then it dead-ends, because the question is it's never, like, are you ready for what? And that's the question you're left with, and I think that's the question we're really facing.

K8: Right.

ULRIKE: To me it's a very successful performance, because you project that energy of feeling alive and at the same time struggling with circumstances that are in your way. They just don't allow us to go ahead and have it our way.

K8: It's kind of a wild piece for me, because I didn't think ahead. I didn't write. I went with my voice, and I did these hippie workshops with my body. I was really propelled by the riot grrrl movement, women's liberation, and the gay liberation movement. I was just kind of piecing it all together, and it was super emotional and I didn't want to think too far ahead. I wanted it to be more about that moment, and I wanted to absolutely test myself physically and emotionally. It was stamina, or something like it, that motivated me. But after making the video, it really became clear how limited I was, and that I was trying to push myself within these moments scripted by the image of the video projection I placed myself in. I didn't do



K8 Hardy performing *Beautiful Radiating Energy*, October 2004
Pilot TV, Chicago, IL.

exactly what I set out to do, physically, which was to wear myself out completely, but maybe another time, although now I wear myself out so much in that performance that I don't even know if I want that anymore.

ULRIKE: Yeah, I recently performed *Love / Torture*, and I had sore muscles afterward for two or three days.

K8: And you just stand there.

ULRIKE: I'm really controlling my body and my nerves, and trying not to move, and standing with my legs slightly apart. I don't know—I think I just pushed all my nervousness into my muscles and cramped them up. Maybe I can get better about that.

K8: Where did you do that?

ULRIKE: At this afternoon that was organized by Gregg Bordowitz and Dean Daderko called "This Strangest of Theaters," at Roebing Hall in Williamsburg. Gregg in one of his lectures pointed out how we both use our shadows—you use the shadow that you cast by standing in the video projection, and I use the shadow as this kind of presence/absence.

K8: I knew that I was using my body as a screen. At first I didn't think so much about the shadow, but I really have

been compelled by and interested in that space and absence of what's happening within that shadow that I'm creating, that disassociation. I didn't originally consider the space I was in, but I was compelled to be part of the screen and to interact with the image. I've gotten to the point where I block things on purpose with my body and stuff like that.

ULRIKE: We're never going to be able to script it all out. We're never going to be able to understand it all and to be conceptual in that sense. That is a total

illusion. But we still make work and show it, and we have to involve others in that process.

K8: Yes, we have to be active in our culture, you know? And I think that's what we feel really compelled by at *LTTR*, and that's the imperative, to be active and motivated, and to be a part of it and not be passive.

ULRIKE: Make work that's geared toward creating meaning within our community. And culture. This is the perfect moment to talk about *New Report*, your video and performance collaboration with Wynne Greenwood.

K8: Yeah.

ULRIKE: This project is really interesting to me, because you tie in feminism and journalism and question the stuff that gets coverage on the news by covering different kinds of things. Maybe you can talk about the conception of news that is a driving force behind *New Report*.

K8: I think that there's a little utopian driving force behind it, a "what if?" What if there was a feminist news station, with reporters modeled after militant lesbian feminists? What would we be reporting on? We have a kind of Patty Hearst/SLA look. But as Wynne and I developed that project, it became really clear that we could not have actual facts and real events in our reports.

ULRIKE: You're talking about facts.

K8: You mean you think we are talking about facts?

ULRIKE: Yeah.

K8: We did initially consider whether we should report on an interesting event that's happening. But everything is fictional or sort of shifted to not be actual facts, because we're not really journalists. Not that that's really important, but that was part of our process. So there's this kind of utopian element, but then there's this shift in emphasis in the kind of nonnews. And the personal. Which is a really traditional feminist element.

ULRIKE: I just say you're talking about facts because anxiety is a fact, you know? It's a fact in our life.

K8: Yeah, OK. There are a lot of emotional facts... That's probably what drives it, that sort of emotional fact and reaction to our lives and our state of being within this patriarchy, and within this culture, and within war culture. Location is also always prominent. When it shifted to being performed live and we found ourselves reporting in Chelsea, we thought, how in the world can we report in Chelsea?

ULRIKE: Because Chelsea stands for...

K8: It just stood for the art market, and the project to us is just so out of that market. When we were reporting from other locations, we used a bathtub or a field, and so in Chelsea, we did go for the emotional drive behind the report, in that basically women's art is worth so much less, and its market value is so low, you know?

ULRIKE: Yeah. There is a discrepancy.

K8: In this performance, an anonymous caller reported that a woman was throwing paintings out on the street. So our report asked why would these paintings be thrown out? Who was she? And there is related content in the text on the paintings themselves, when we find them later on.

ULRIKE: Now that you've been working on *New Report* both in the medium of video and also in live performances, what do you want to push in that project?

K8: Well, it's changing. As we've done it live, the venues and the places that are receptive to us are art venues, so

it's hard to take it out of the location. At Reena Spaulings we set up a real studio, and we reported on objectification of biological female parts. Were you there for that?

ULRIKE: No, I heard about it and really felt like I missed something.

K8: I think we broke ground there, for both of us as performers as well. I don't know much about performing or acting, but we went beyond a point and a level where it became very real. We were talking about objectification, and we used these very basic tenets of feminism, like that women are objectified. And we did this report on it. I strapped cameras onto my pussy, to really be on my genitals, and Wynne strapped a camera with a dildo harness onto my thigh, and then I strapped a camera onto her stomach to sort of mimic a pregnant belly, because she's usually pregnant and our motto is "Pregnant with information." The camera was pointed at her breast, which was exposed. We actually did this to each other in front of the audience, and we sat there, and people really expected it to be funny because our tape was so funny. We dealt with this laughter, but then on the monitors in front of us are our private parts. It wasn't sexy, but we do a lot of play on language, and we were just talking about how can the camera be violent and how can framing be violent. Framing cuts the image, and we asked, "Is that a violent act?" After a while we had produced the thing that we were talking about and really became very conscious of and uncomfortable with what we were doing to ourselves. It was sort of a repetitive performance, because in the performance we're doing it to be taped, and ultimately it'll be edited to be one or two minutes long, but I really like the live taping and the performance aspect but it became so intense in the end—and I don't think either of us were expecting it—because we described how it happens and whatnot as so violent that we made ourselves really uncomfortable. It's not that we're not free with our bodies or comfortable with nudity and stuff like that, because we are, but it was because of the action and that we did it to ourselves.

ULRIKE: You put yourself into a position of vulnerability.

K8: When Wynne and I had our show, we also thought, Oh my God, if we sold something we could pay our rent, and we could live as artists off our work, but we didn't sell anything, and you know that's so arbitrary anyway. I don't think that's the first motivation for either you or me, but I don't think it's unreasonable to want to make a fucking living as an artist.



K8 Hardy and Ulrike Müller at the Cooper Union, 2006, New York, NY.

ULRIKE: I agree. We have this event coming up in two days at Cooper Union where we announced that we will be talking about the political potential of aesthetic practice, and we decided that you're going to show *Fashionfashion* photographs, and I'm going to show a series of drawings that I've been working on.

K8: I remember when I came to your studio to see those drawings, and again it's this moment I was talking about before where I'm struck with, Oh, Ulrike is just shifting and there's the audio and now here are drawings. I'm just constantly impressed by that. You have these line drawings that seem to perfectly mirror each other—but not perfectly, because I think you did them by hand.

ULRIKE: They were all symmetrical, though.

K8: OK, symmetrical. You could maybe look at one or two and not really consider them heavily, but once you start looking at them they're so sexual and so fluid, but you have these really rigid line drawings...

ULRIKE: Very abstract, and they're very formal, and they're physical also.

K8: Yeah. I don't know much how to talk about drawings or paintings. I was going to call them abstract, but then

I was thinking, Is it so abstract to make an exact circle, or to make an exact shape? I'm not sure.

ULRIKE: I'm not sure either. In art school I used to share my studio with an abstract painter, and he would be very upset whenever I could discern something in his paintings and say, you know, "This shape looks like Mickey Mouse to me." A really mean thing to say, I understand now. But then I was just talking off the top of my head. If I said I recognized a shape, he would turn the painting 180 degrees and work over it obsessively, just really being

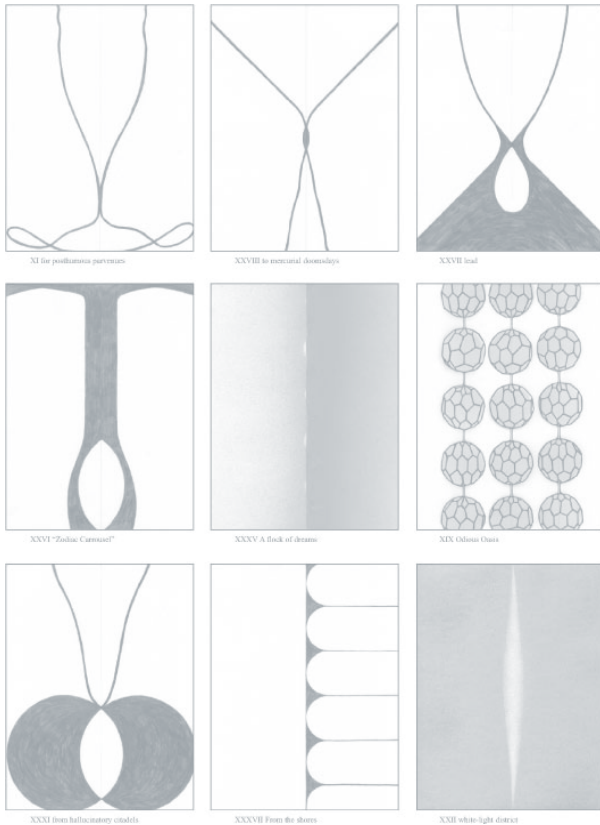
concerned with not having people read any representation into the paintings. And my drawings are certainly different because they're suggestive.

K8: There is representation. I was hesitating to call them abstract because of what you're talking about, but they are also very representational. I can tell there's a sexuality to it, and a form, and a female or male sexual form, but what you're doing is kind of abstracting that act and that signifier—which is really successful, and it's done in so many multiple ways that it blows my mind. When you look at these drawings you have this abstract image where there's a mixing, and you bring up body signifiers and biological signifiers, but you don't take it anywhere. I mean, you do take it somewhere, but you don't make a clear decision. They're very queer, you know? I feel really nervous talking about drawings sometimes.

ULRIKE: So do I. It's something that's new to my practice, and I haven't done drawings in years, and they're definitely different from my previous work.

I remember when you came to my studio and we had a conversation that was really interesting to me about central core imagery, which is another 1970s feminist trope.

K8: And which I used a little bit in my performance. I think what you can get out of that is the sentiment of



Ulrike Müller, *Curiosity* (Drawings), 2005
pencil and spraypaint on paper, 8.5 x 11 inches

exactly now, of fluid gender and sexuality. Something that's so crucial and pivotal to our feminist and queer movement is that there aren't these rigid definitions based on biology that patriarchy is putting on us and wants us to believe in. Those drawings are kind of manifesting those ideas and they're exciting. But it takes a while for that to sink in...

ULRIKE: That's why I do so many of them, because it's really something that happens in repetition, which is also something that relates to sex. Sex is repetition of certain things that feel good. If you overdo it, it doesn't feel good anymore. But it's like riding the line, I think.

K8: And you literally do ride the line, down the middle. [They laugh.]

K8: What are you working on now?

ULRIKE: I'm not done with the drawings. They're confusing to me, and they're not resolved, and I have more paper. I have like a hundred sheets of that paper.

K8: I like that that's a requirement. You want to fill up those sheets of paper. You have this sort of environmentalist motivation, that you must finish the paper.

ULRIKE: I love that paper, and there is more for me to figure out, and while I'm doing the drawings I'm thinking about stuff and processing stuff, so I'll continue the drawings. I like to think about sexuality outside of a binary norm, and there's a lot of me in there that I want to push further. The other thing that I will do in the near future is very different; it's my first documentary video project. My friend, the performer and singer Marie Therese Escribano, asked me to do a portrait of her for her eightieth birthday, which was last week. We shot a lot of video, and I have the documentation of the feminist solo performances that she's been doing since the 1970s. So as soon as we're set up better in our new apartment...

K8: Slash, studio.

ULRIKE: ...and work space, exactly, I'm going to get some light-out fabric for my studio window, and I'm going to work on that.

K8: I need some of that, too. I have a few bits and pieces here and there. I'm waiting to see if I'm going to go to school and whatnot, but I really want to perform. But I'm kind of confused about it, and I have been doing these nightclub routines where I do my freak-out rap routines... well, "rap" is a kind of generous word to call it. But I love doing that so much no matter how well received it is... So I have that, and it's a nice continuance; it's just feeling it out, and it's not so well planned. I've also been writing a character, and I've been trying to develop this character, and I'm not sure how it'll manifest itself. But now I'm kind of excited about the opportunities, because that's really what *New Report* taught me. I could be performing it, but that doesn't mean I can't make a single-channel tape or make an installation. I can make a character and an idea and this whole world. It's also inspired by Stanya Kahn and Harry Dodge and their writing and video.

ULRIKE: How does the character relate to you?

K8: Well, I plan on performing it, so I bring that back, but I don't know yet what I want to say... I'm sorry, I can't really answer that question. But I want to shift to something I've been thinking about during the past few days, which I only realized lately, since having these school interviews. I realized that I had this shift in my practice: Before I was more interested in a passive and

repressed person, like in *Disquiet*, and now after the war started I'm focused really on agitation. I'm interested in creating friction, total action, and I'm totally excited by that. I'm excited by this realization. It's a political state, but I don't think it was really a conscious decision I made. I see this shift where I'm now interested in action and motivation and friction, and I think that's where I'm moving right now. It gets me excited.

ULRIKE: It's really great... I think I'll always be an ambiguous person, and I'll work from that position of ambiguity.

K8: Oh my God, you are not ambiguous. I mean your content is so political and intense, with Abu Ghraib and these...

ULRIKE: But it's all these things that I can't really understand, and I still have to talk about them. I have to bring them up, but I can't really resolve them. I'm going to talk about them as long as I can't resolve them, and I suspect that I'll never be able to resolve them. At the point that I'm able to resolve them, I'll shift my practice to something else.

K8: I think that it's something that you're motivated to resolve it or to look into it—that is an action in and of itself, you know? I don't think it's ambiguous at all. I'm not trying to say that you're wrong...

ULRIKE: One thing that I understood is that to be ambiguous means to be passionate, it means to be torn between two poles.

K8: OK, yeah.

ULRIKE: Both of them are exciting and interesting, and you feel an attraction both ways, and that's a tension. I'm interested in tension.

K8: OK, yeah, yeah.

ULRIKE: I think what's going to be good for me about the work on the documentary piece that I'm doing is that it's a case of transgenerational feminist friendship. I'm really interested in working with somebody else's practice, and looking at the solutions or at the forms that somebody else found or struggles that we are all encountering and facing.

K8: Well, I like ending on that note, about ambiguity. I just immediately presumed that's such a passive place, but you're right, you're sort of torn.

ULRIKE: You're torn, and you have to work something out, and you feel the need for action, but there are two things pulling you, and it's really disturbing. What keeps us going is the questions and not the answers.

K8: I would say so. ■

