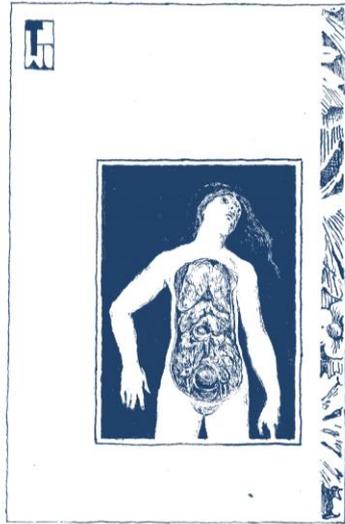


G A S W O R K S

PRESS RELEASE 20.10.2016
Jamie Crewe, *Female Executioner*

26 January – 26 March 2017
Preview 25 January 2017, 6:30 – 8:30pm



Jamie Crewe, cover design of *Monsieur Venus*, drawn with a knife, 2016.

Gasworks presents [Female Executioner](#), the first solo exhibition in London by Glasgow-based artist Jamie Crewe.

Comprising newly commissioned video, sculpture, print, and text-based works, the exhibition focuses on French writer Rachilde's *Monsieur Venus: A Materialist Novel*. Exploring what is at stake in historical reclamation, *Female Executioner* investigates what happens when a queer, transfeminine artist tries to touch, reflect on, or rehabilitate a historical work of fiction which seems to offer them ancestry.

First published in Belgium in 1884, *Monsieur Venus* describes a relationship between Raoule de Vénérande, a masculine aristocratic woman, and Jacques Silvert, a working class boy who becomes her mistress. Together, aided by Jacques's sister Marie and Raoule's friend the Baron de Raittolbe, the couple invert their genders, acting out a love fuelled by perverse innovation and tinged with sexual jealousy, conservatism and class power. In the end, however, the novel's overarching Victorian morality falls upon its characters, and everyone is punished for their transgressions.

For Jamie, the novel's frequent and nuanced cruelty complicates any wholly positive identification with the lead characters, who may at first seem like prototypes of modern-day transgender figuration. However, aspects of the novel still speak lucidly to contemporary trans experience, touching on issues that remain urgent, such as fraught relations with visibility and authenticity, pervasive experiences of trauma, and the threat of punishment and harm. Grappling with this painful ambivalence, *Female Executioner* stages, reworks and misreads the positive and negative, radical and moralising aspects of *Monsieur Venus* in relation to the artist's own personal history and experience of transness. In Jamie's own words, "seething under its own references" the exhibition "tries to touch the past, and is struck by the past in response."

The video *Adulteress*, for example, stages the moment that Jacques slips away from Raoule to walk the streets in a black velvet dress and attempt to seduce a 'real man'. Focusing on Jacques's excited journey instead of Raoule's jealous rage, chronology, setting and performance are unhinged from Rachilde's original description of the episode, which scrolls along the bottom of the screen. This text juxtaposes with and contradicts the footage it accompanies, building to a tentative and optimistic visual ending which synchronises with the promise of duel to the death scrolling below. Through these and other strategies of wilful misinterpretation — as well as impartial editing, working together with close friends, and displacing the novel's events to modern-day Glasgow — the radical potential and fundamental judgements of *Monsieur Venus* are made to trouble a new context.

Supported by the Freelands Foundation. With thanks to Transmission gallery, Glasgow.

For artist / curator interviews and for high resolution images visit:

<http://www.gasworks.org.uk/about-us/press/> or email sheena@gasworks.org.uk +44 (0)207 091 1636

Listings Information:

Jamie Crewe, Female Executioner

Exhibition: 26 January – 26 March 2017

Preview: 25 January, 6:30–8:30pm

Open Weds – Sun 12-6pm

Free admission

www.gasworks.org.uk

155 Vauxhall St, London SE11 5RH

Facebook/ Twitter/ Instagram: @GasworksLondon #femaleexecutioner #jamiecrewe

Editor's Notes:

About Jamie Crewe

Jamie Crewe lives and works in Glasgow. In February 2016 they opened their first solo show, *But what was most awful was a girl who was singing*, at Transmission, Glasgow; recent group exhibitions include *Enough Romance, Let's Fuck*, Gabriele Senn Galerie, Vienna, (2016); *Like a Floral Knife*, Embassy Gallery, Edinburgh (2016); and *A Camel is a Horse*, Transmission, Glasgow (2016). In 2015 Jamie graduated from the Master of Fine Art course at Glasgow School of Art, for which they received a special commendation from Glasgow Sculpture Studios.

About the Freelands Artist Programme

Jamie Crewe is the first artist to benefit from the Freelands Artist Programme, a 3-year programme at Gasworks for emerging artists based in the UK but outside London, made possible thanks to a generous grant from the [Freelands Foundation](#). The programme combines a three-month residency at Gasworks with an exhibition and a series of public events.

About Gasworks

For over twenty years Gasworks has played a unique role in the contemporary visual arts sector by working at the intersection between UK and international practices and debates. It does this by providing studios for London-based artists; commissioning emerging UK-based and international artists to present their first major exhibitions in London; and developing a highly-respected international residencies programme, mainly working with artists based outside Europe and North America. All programmes are accompanied by events and participatory workshops that engage local and international audiences with artists and their work.

Gasworks is also the hub of Triangle Network, an international network of small-scale arts organisations and projects that support and disseminate the work of emerging artists through artist-led workshops, residencies, exhibitions and outreach events. Gasworks and Triangle Network are registered as a charity in the UK under 'Triangle Arts Trust' and all their activities are free to the public.



155 VAUXHALL STREET LONDON SE11 5RH
T. +44(0)20 7587 5202 F. +44(0)20 7582 0159 INFO@GASWORKS.ORG.UK WWW.GASWORKS.ORG.UK

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