

**BROKEN
EGO**

Exhibition of Victoria Colmegna at Park View,
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www.parkviewparkview.com

Designed by: V.Gondra

Through Broken Ego:

five steps towards organization

Broken Ego, Victoria Colmegna’s first solo show in Los Angeles, although you might not at first believe it, tackles delicate issues at the heart of the political organization of existence. Her starting point is a critique of the structure, today in decay, that allowed the reproduction of power relations and the extraction and administration of wealth in modern society: that structure is the high school clique. In 2008, at Appetite Gallery in Buenos Aires, VC worked with the twelve signs of the Zodiac: represented by twelve men; young actors. She lodged them on a farm on the outskirts of Buenos Aires by the Luján River. She fed them, made them talk to each other, challenge each other, clash with and love each other. The signs of the zodiac constitute the organizational principle of politics: a *primary/primal* political congregation of men with the capacity to distribute power on a cosmological scale. They form a brotherhood of gods, each limited to a specific domain of action, interacting and sharing power with the others. In a word, she made them into leaders. But one of them stings, poisons and sets the story in motion.

Sweet Valley and sisterhood

the title of your best work

(A work in commission)

Broken ego contains three points of access. The first group is a work that incorporates drawings that VC commissioned from James L. Mathewuse, the legendary illustrator of the *Sweet Valley* book series, to celebrate her graduation from art school in 2015. The schoolgirls in this series, and in the book series that inspired them, do not share power beyond the field of their interests, nor do they need it. In their conversations about boyfriends and dogs, schoolgirls are unproductive, cheerleaders of a model of productivity that ignores them. Work, in the strict sense of the word, is done by domestic help. The schoolgirls devote themselves to the study and the innovation in the domain of personal relationships: they are social scien-

tists of leisure. Small betrayals and calculated gossip, the inner workings of the social, filled with a thousand and one ephemeral intrigues in the style of Mme de Staël, spice up their false innocence: the sexual and logical opposition of the masculine fraternity of extractive violence. The ego has not yet entered the world, and maybe never will. (Once the school girl has graduated, her only option is confinement through marriage. Isn’t it?)

Sweet Valley embodies the paradigm of the commissioned work as a path toward the solo *show / individual exhibition*.

Hardy Boys--

Cocaine is for guys--

Group masturbation

(Not included in the solo show; a series of works made at highschool kept by her parents.)

Hardy Boys (a series of square science stool seats covered with faux fur and hardy boys book covers) and her 2008 show at Appetite cover the theme of *brotherhood*, which governs and distributes what’s left (through organizations like the Zodiac or the Berlin Conference). The brothers, after joking around at school, extract the sap from trees and sweat of workers from around the world. The brothers, after making jokes at school, extract the sap from the trees and the sweat of the workers of the whole world, always with their friends and with their codes of conduct, formed at the age in which grains on the skin and semen emanates, sharing themselves and leaving long lasting white stains of loyalty. In 2013, VC installed a piece in an apartment in the Kavanagh building (a rationalist monument that crowns the Retiro neighborhood in Buenos Aires). The piece consists of men’s rugby-style jerseys, designed by VC herself. The sweaters were hung on the walls, each sweater’s cuffs attached to another’s, forming a group hug of power. This is the embrace of total power: the brotherhood, which moves through the middle of the street to impose its own rules of existence. Because the brotherhood is obsessed with rules, codes,

the law. The code is to not break the code. The law (contrary to Aleister Crowley’s suggestion) demands not to break the law. In this way, the brotherhood limits and postpones the access to chaos to simultaneously extract privileges: the male organization is a recursive search for the organizational form whose iteration is the history of injustice. Victoria Colmegna re-reads classic English scholarly *bildungsromans* (Waugh, Connolly, etc.) and finds the key to this structure by completely identifying the individual with the organization to which he belongs to. Hardy Boys and the show at Appetite explore the possibility of the original work not included in the exhibition as an alternative to reach the solo show.

Judas

(A guest work)

Brotherhood breaks down at the Last Supper—that’s why it’s the last one. Power no longer has to be shared and reality is left at the mercy of a new, insidious magic. Judas’ power is the Scorpionic leap from a new economy centered around mobile capabilities and not in the organized regulation of force. Betrayal reveals the self-destructive production of the ego, which is set forth when Judas breaks the individual-group identification through which the material domain of frats as an emanation of the order of the universe had been established. In his betrayal, Judas breaks the astral circle and reveals his peers as other possible traitors, agents of change under the new sign of an individuated and disorganized libidinal reality. Judas embodies the model of the work exhibited on institutional loan as a means of access to the solo show.

Selfhood: frenemies, creative elite, masturbation (compulsive, individual) and the new deplorable

(A ghostwritten piece called The 7 year itch).

In the center of the room six winter jackets hang from a steel coat rack. A humming sound hovers around. At arm’s length, upon closer inspection, voices can be singled out. Each

jacket contains speakers which are connected to mp3 players. The separate audio channels play atmospheric sounds from different locations: a cafe, a swimming pool, a shopping mall, an airport, etc. The various places are distributed according to the topography of the human body as seen from the perspective of an ectoparasite (a flea, tick or scabie): so the crotch of the jacket may be envisioned as a night club, an inside pocket a bedroom, etc. The sounds are interrupted by moments of dialogue, an exchange of touristic intelligence between the subjects frequenting these places of transit and repose: *where can I get a good sandwich, how do I find a decent apartment, who can I trust here, etc.* These individuals, the creative elite, network and exchange like spies without any government to report to. Are they nothing but would-be entrepreneurs who can only think where to jump next? Is it better in your country?

When the brotherhood breaks, there is only chance, opportunity, disorder. Subjective autonomy is gained at the expense of structure and stability. The brotherhood divided the world in her circular recursive code, but in doing so made something coherent, complet, apprehensible of it. Now the world is a collection of autonomous fragments and the individual wanders around without any plausible intention. *Selfhood* is the term VC chooses while describing the young artist as the basal layer of this state. The features of this stereotypical creative, semi-destitute individual are also the traits of the schizoid as once categorized by modern psychiatrists the likes of Pyotr Borisovich Gannushkin: a figure depicted as cynical, inauthentic, depersonalized, alternately feeling empty and full of omnipotent fantasies and hidden grandiosity. Withdrawn, aloof, impervious to others’ emotions, afraid of intimacy, marginal or eclectically sociable in groups, vulnerable to esoteric movements owing to a strong need to belong, tends to be lazy and indolent. Asexual, free of romantic interests. Secret voyeuristic and pornographic interests, vulnerable to erotomania, tendency towards compulsive masturbation and perversions, absent-minded, engrossed in fantasy, vague

and stilted speech, alternations between eloquence and inarticulateness, autistic thinking, fluctuations between sharp contact with external reality and hyper reflectiveness of the self, self-centered use of language.

This global workforce is portrayed as a pair of fleas: disempowered cultural producers with no regular income, unfulfilled projects and a markedly weak ability to get organized and access some form of power: they’re the new deplorables who only want to jump from one jacket to the next. But hidden in their absurd, erratic and frequently superfluous interactions are the keys to something else. Something special.

The 7 year itch enacts the model of the ghost-written, collaborative work as a decisive effort towards the solo show.

So there are many paths to the solo show through Broken Ego; but no actual solo show. The show is over-curated, populous, somewhat apocryphal, under-acknowledged. It’s *transpersonal*; as in things done by many. By mixing, committing, hosting, inviting, ordering, commanding, asking and begging different things to different people in her path to the solo show, VC found the cipher for selfhood’s unresolved dilemma: transpersonal agency. Just look at the show: at the peak of networking, exchanging and including others, everything is kindred. Everything has something, difficult to define, in connection. The problem of transpersonal agency is that we do things with other people all the time, new things, things we couldn’t even mention without causing surprise, tenderness or exaltation, but we don’t have the tools to think about them properly. We have only the clichés of the old organizations and the smell of their corruption. But to write something for another person to use, to simulate being another person and thus be able to support her and build energy, it’s like raising the neighbor’s kid and not even knowing what kind of relationship you’re building. Ghostwriters are the aunts of the world: transpersonal heroes who channel and formalize the other people’s feelings. Could a show be devised by thinking like that, by projecting oneself that much onto others? Could organi-

zations emerge by thinking like that? The question of transpersonal agency (or super-personal entities) isn’t the newest item in the agenda of radical intelligence. “We must bear in mind,” wrote Anatoly Lunacharsky almost a hundred years ago, “that the struggle is for an ideal: that of victory over individualism and of communal life based on a natural merging of personalities into super-personal entities.” These new entities Lunacharsky was thinking of were not the old fraternities conceived to share power, nor the exhausting networking-binge of young ambitious future despots, but real kinds of association like marriage, friendship, a party, or just the preference for such or such author: structures the subject can have confidence in. Frenemmy is here substituted by bonding. The Lunacharskian *super-personal* is stronger because it builds-up through exchange, love, literature...

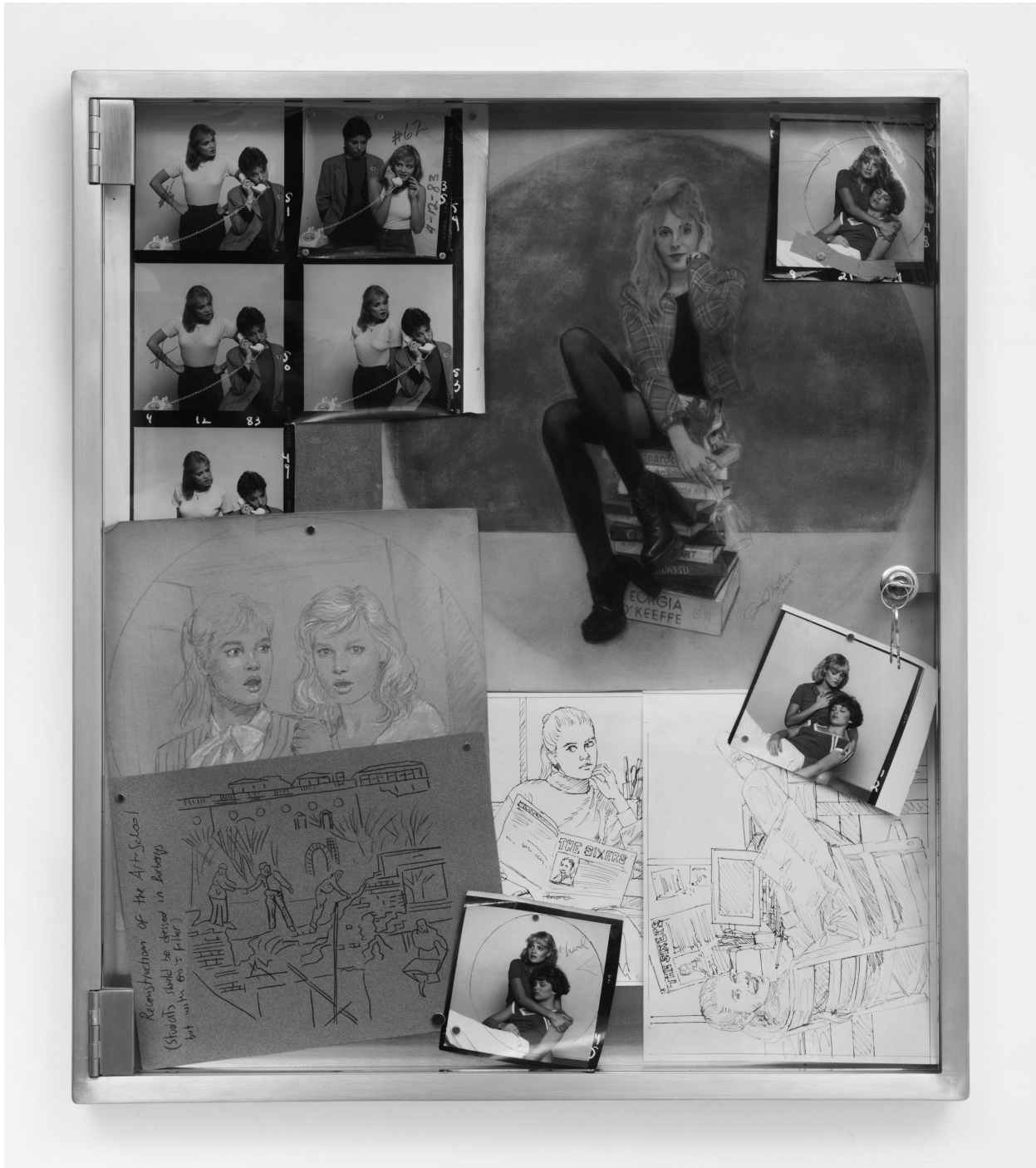
And some of these ideas, in times of the Russian Revolution, were shared by the feminist wing of the Bolshevik party, with champions as Alexandra Kollontai and Inessa Armand. They both founded the *Zhenotdel*, the Department for Women Issues of the Revolutionary State in 1919. It was a completely new institution, it was as if it had emanated from pure imagination in the size of a whole ministry. And it wasn’t only devoted to improving the conditions of women’s lives and promoting their rights. The *Zhenotdel* was also a huge thought experiment about how all aspects of a woman’s life past the Revolution would be: marriage, motherhood, sisterhood, friendship. What could these words mean in the future? This was the starting point. So should VC look forward, leap-frog the solo show and establish a new *zhenotdel*? And what would it be like? A party? A school? A spa?

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translated by Anayvelyse Allen-Mossman



The 7 hour itch
Sound sculpture comprised of hanger and 10 jackets.



Campus Cool

- #2 **Secrets** What J wants J gets! Even if someone gets hurt.
- #20 **Crash Landing!** Will Julian loose her best friend?
- #4 **Power Play** The twins have taken sides, against each other!
- #103 **Clara solves it all!** Does Clara have all the answers?
- #WW2 **Reconstructing Art School** Its punk to do what can't be done



Broken Ego

- #27 **Team Work** Can the twins prove they are not babies anymore?
- #52 **White Lies** will Bonnie despise Reece when she finds out the truth?
- #22 **Out of place** Is there room in Sweet Valley for an outsider?
- #8 **First Place** Will Sarah risk everything for a horse?
- Super Chiller**, The Carnival Ghost



