

# SOGTFO

**(Sculpture Or Get The Fuck Out)**

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## SCULPTURE...

by Sarah Lehrer Graiwer

...or the nice lady in my head who whispers, *lean in*. Sometimes she makes winking air-quotes, sometimes a cock of the head, and sometimes a very weary eye roll. We laugh. LOL. I say, *get the fuck out*. It's 2015. You don't need to whisper a message like *get the fuck out*.

...or LOL, when it's "used as a mask for the inexplicable and even terrifying."

...or where did the nice lady come from? She's so existential and yet so pragmatic. She will be back. She is me and part of me is her. There are others; it's crowded in this mother. I is always already we which is already a cluster.

...or this body that produces other bodies, newly poured and forged biomasses. The female has particular access to an extreme experience of internal multitudes and carrying alien weight. She inherits a skill for stripping, dropping trou, and taking it all off. She is a natural sculptress.

...or the desire to cast these sentences that are not mine in soap and mud: "My entire state of being's changed because I've become my sexuality: female, straight, wanting to love men, be fucked. Is there a way of living with this like a gay person, proud?"

...or I'm not sure which one of me says *lean in* and who says *get the fuck out*. We think they mean the same thing. Behind the bright screen of digital flatness and social networks, you can't see who's who; everyone's gray in the dark and names don't mean a thing. Usually it won't matter whether or not you are a female; you will probably be attacked in Internet forums regardless. Posting in online space is not the same thing as speaking IRL. Still, one of me sounds mindfully androgynous, youthful, sedate, and flirtatiously post-human, while that other me sounds angry, restless, biting, on edge, and difficult—spurred by a repressed anger that erupts in a rumble of thunder.

...or here's a good example of getting the fuck out: When the man said to the artist, "You are a good painter and a nice girl," Lozano shot back: "Wrong on both counts. I'm a *very* good painter and not a nice girl." Later, lathered up and teary in the shower, she screamed, "Win first don't last, win last don't care."

...or you don't have to understand my style to get that it's unapologetic.

...or this bitch that thinks she's Miss Force Majeure. And, thing is, she's right. Bitch is like an avalanche. She says, stop, drop, and roll, and everyone stops, drops, and rolls. I'm not sorry, she says. It's not OK, she says. You're wrong, she says. Get out of my way, she says. Heavy and hardened, she is happiest when writing out of anger.

...or every time I lose my voice I try to think of one man ever who lost his and I can't. Instead I find myself pointing to Avital Ronell on "the feminization that occurs, even to Friedrich Nietzsche, when a thinker must scream to get her thoughts across."

...or not claiming to know who or what womanhood is. So much productive confusion around gender is making people terribly uncomfortable. Valerie Solanas diagrammed the collapse in SCUM, helpfully clarifying that man is really an "incomplete female," a woman-in-lack and women are complete men, who are really women.

... or a sculptor emerging into her prime who explains how gender is an imposed dilemma that consumes too much mental energy. She worries about how to fit inside such established, antiquated, ill-fitting systems. Adopt a "gendered position" as an artistic identity to gain some stable ground on which to stand and act? Or refuse the limitations and exclusionary structure of such gender identification in order to access a greater understanding of the myriad identity-positions that exist and are available? The ascendant generation tends to align with a post-gender position, while the more matriarchal feminists stress a politics of solidarity and see such unrootedness as the abnegation of collective power.

...or all the times a woman is forced to take a position and just wants to escape and climb to another plane—direct mental energy into other conversations. She'd rather pursue that life-long project of unlearning in order to truly self-generate behaviors and material relations.

...or being sick of crude binaries, false oppositions, extrinsic responsibilities, and coerced competition. She wants a break from options phrased as this "or" that.

...or not letting go of the doubts and insecurities I like. I will continue to couch my arguments too much and beat around the bush.

...or daily physical engagement with materials and production. Giving weight to something—an idea—is the primary, major act. The airspace of balloons cast into concrete, wax drippings into bronze, and foam knots into aluminum: heaviness, such a sweet drag, literally slows things down. The power of giving weight is closely tied to size and scale—twin tools for calibrating distance and proximity.

...or how much space do I require?

...or that paranoid moral compass I inherited from feminism that always asks who and where the power is in any given situation. Who's got the most to gain? Who's profiting and how much? Who's being instrumentalized? Where and when is it a matter of "power *over*" and how can that classic dynamic of cruelty be turned into a "power *to*" scenario of liberation? Who's setting the terms of engagement, who's making the rules?

...or, when curating a polemic, can anyone play the part? Is it open season on collective struggle? Can there be a wrong spokesperson for the right cause?

...or there's insouciant defiance and vulnerability all over these sculptures; I may be projecting.

...or, as Hilton Als described the way he loved a bygone lover, showing "no mercy but every tenderness."

...or I start feeling self-conscious up here on the page, on display like so much sculpture. Posing my body for you like a big question mark, the problem of whether to be or not to be for sale contains a set of hyperbolic anxieties for women.

...or one-percenters who love huge, towering, expensive-looking-but-submissive lawn ornaments by capitalist cowboys.

...or Sturtevant's righteous refusal of patriarchy's deeply imprinted, undead fantasy of genius and exceptionalism: "I am not interested in being a 'Great Artist' / That's real medieval thinking." In other words, should *more* (praise, sales, press, career success, etc.) really be what we want? Should hustling and competing for a bigger slice of a shitty pie even be the dream? No, thanks. Pie today is either tainted and tasteless or old and moldy. Sugar has become the new number one killer because it's so goddamn addictive.

...or bypass phallogocentrism altogether! I'm so over it. SCUM says, "What will liberate women, therefore, from male control is the total elimination of the money-work system, not the attainment of economic equality with men within it."

...or mere parity is such a lame aspiration. I want to transcend the grow-or-die demands of capitalism and invent my own liquid stamina. Everyone knows the world we live in is in countdown mode.

...or wasn't it Agnes Martin, becoming ever queerer in the desert, who said, I'm not a woman, I'm a doorknob, leading a quiet existence?

...or if men bled out of their penises every month, we'd be living in an entirely different universe.

...or female bravado—a crucially indeterminate, opaque, coy, and searching quality of form.

...or an all-female sculpture show is pretty cool, but an all-female Senate would be so much cooler.

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