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Critical Relationality: Queer, Indigenous, and Multispecies Belonging Beyond Settler Sex & Nature

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CONSUME

JAY FIELDS



CONSUME STATEMENT

Unhealthy attachments are encouraged in monogamous relationships through a complex of economic, social, and popular media forces. The artificial sanctity of romantic interpersonal relationships often makes them seemingly invulnerable to outside critique, or at least outside of the realm of analysis. With art I hope to breach the untouchable relationship in an emotional way that is informed but not limited by more traditional academic analysis.

Consumption is the central theme of the sketch turned digital art piece. The lips and hungry mouth borrow from imagery that pops up frequently in advertising that takes advantage of the association between painted lips, generally a woman's, and sex. Mouths in this context are sexy but benign, and almost always presented for the male gaze and pleasure. With this illustration I aim to twist the common narrative of a woman's passive decorated lips into a more violent and consuming image – turning the passive mouth against the viewer and giving them a sense of being the passive object by empathizing with the people being manipulated inside the mouth. Another twist is having the mouth acting out the consumption that it is normally passive to. Beyond these media driven twists, consumption is also common in the way that monogamous romantic relationships are treated socially. Partners may be picked as much for what they can provide as for who they are, which leads straight into the economic push for consumption. "Sex sells" – the result being that women's bodies continue to be objectified for monetary gain, perpetuating the narrative that associates wealth and the accumulation of certain products with an entitlement to women's bodies and sex.

All of my illustrations use symbolism to bring social, economic, media driven relationship ideals into question. The play between appealing visuals and disturbing content is one that I feel reflects the appeal of these unhealthy relationship themes. Possessiveness, codependency, and consumption are all logically and practically unhealthy but the emotions driven by them, the intensity of a relationship fueled with unhealthy attachment and devotion, is recklessly and painfully appealing. My hope is that this cruel but beautiful love can remain in the realm of the illustrated and the narrated, rather than playing out in the lives of people who may be broken by the system and their own desires.