



KING'S LEAP

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Jasmine Gregory

Heirlooms

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My mother taught me how to count banknotes when I was six: you hold a bunch of notes in your non-dominant hand, slot them between your pinky and ring finger, then bend them with your thumb. With the bundle secured you press it down, the thumb against the index finger under the notes and gently slide the first banknote. Use the other hand to pinch the extended note. This guarantees only a single note is being slid. Then pull that note behind your thumb, the one that is doing the sliding. The thumb that does the sliding holds the counted notes from the original bundle. Repeat this until you finish the bundle.

She would count money every night sat on her bed, with long receipts from a day's work at the restaurant draped around her. I picked up the hand trick quickly so I double-checked the bundles with her, making sure no notes were stuck. She counted money like this everywhere we went. Her elegant and pale fingers would pull out a bundle from her purse, bend the notes and flip. She was fast. Cashiers and bank clerks watched her, a delicate Chinese woman flipping money like it was magic. Their eyeballs zigzagged back and forth losing track of what slid first. After she handed them the money they would recount it again every time. Their way, messier: placing each note on the table as if it were sacred, mumbling their order – one, two, three, four – one on top of the other, spreading money all over their counter.

Recently my mother stopped counting money like this in public. I've never asked her why, but I know she senses the discomfort of people watching her or any of us that counts money this way. It's so crude, so vulgar, as if money's virtue is being desecrated by being held like if it were something ordinary, like if it were nothing. She uses a long wallet now. The wallet is a screen, a guard, a barrier that is usually Prada but lately has been Céline. And she counts banknotes behind it. Her fingertips browse like an archivist through a rolodex. She wants to be a classy lady, so she can't afford walking around exposing herself like she used to. But wealth has made her more vulnerable because nothing she owns now is shitty anymore. And if it's not shitty, it must be preserved. And if it must be preserved, it must live long after she is gone. And if it must live long after she is gone, her emancipation, her pride, her successes, her fears, her disillusionments and her shame are becoming my problem.

– Bruno Zhu

Jasmine Gregory (b. 1987, Washington DC) is an artist living in Zurich, CH. Recent solo exhibitions include Karma International (Zürich, CH), Istituto Svizzero (Milan, IT), and Paul Soto / LA MAISON DE RENDEZ-VOUS (Brussels, BE). Selected group exhibitions include Le Centre d'Art Contemporain (Gêneve, CH), Fri Art Kunsthalle Fribourg (Fribourg, CH), Haus Konstruktiv (Zürich, CH), Cordova (Barcelona, ES), and Le Commun (Geneva, CH). Forthcoming solo exhibitions include Sophie Tappeiner (Vienna, Austria) and Martina Simeti (Milan, IT).