Post Script is a new initiative of Artspeak designed to encourage the development of innovative critical writing about the visual arts by Vancouver writers, to provide critical feedback to emerging and mid-career artists and to further enhance cross-fertilization of ideas between the visual art and writing community.

Information about this exhibition is available on-line at www.artspeak.ca

Althea Thauberger
Songstress
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In their approach to self-marketing, amateur songstresses often try to mimic professional marketing. Pain is slow, I watch it pass. Each tends to assert her eligibilities as loving (imaginary) and commodity (real) choice: sex appeal and musical talent. And it burns my heart when you say it’s broken.

In music-videos of well-known women singers, the quality of the song and the quality of the body singing it are given together as the quality of the person. I walked down a hill that took me to my home. Few actually measure up to big-budget beauty standards without the help of expensive photographers. My fist clenched, I can’t let go.

Far more hit songs exist about losing than finding someone, though musical talent is supposed to make you attractive. You can’t hold on to what’s not yours. If we judge by lyrics, in fact, the music world is a vast singles-club. I felt your golden touch.

Because it’s so difficult to self-market, budding songstresses get help from coldly generous hacks. "Natasha Gaynes’ voice, her playing, her songs all come together as a manifestation of who she is and what she feels* could be the hook-line of a desperate personals ad if changed to first-person. The scent of your hair is a translucent fingerprint.

Thauberger makes her songstresses even more alone than that. But as morals die, sun is your disguise. She abandons them to confront the camera through ruthless unbroken takes. Stumbling over rocks, fidgeting during instrumental breaks, none of the polished prose of editing inter-venes to protect. Laid in the stretcher of time. The raw, clear recordings reveal flaws in the songs careful production would hide. The earth in me is changing.

It’s not obvious, either, why the songs are so uneven in Songstress. I hear a crash and screaming all around. Young people can write good songs. I feel sunshine coming today. If the songs were a notch better, questions of why these women chose to participate would be mute; we’d assume for self-promotion. A tired laughing old man, a small dark café.

Some of the songs would succeed on the radio, with the right props. The wonders I have come to know. If the songs were better questions of why these women chose to participate would be mute; we’d assume for self-promotion. A tired laughing old man, a small dark café.

The hippies in Songstress are far the best self-marketresses and (notice) they are also the happiest. I’m moving through bright tunnels of light. Not many people can write good songs, and most could still love someone who writes lousy songs as long as they get to know the person first. Left for the circus in my mind.

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