

Actionismo

an Interview with

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Valetti

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# Actionismo Magazine – An Interview with Magdalena Valetti

by Roy Ellison

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The following text is the transcript of an unpublished interview of performance artist Magdalena Valetti.

AM: "We're here in Salzburg, Austria with Magdalena Valetti, the current icon of performance art and one of the creators of neo-actionistic art. Her work has been much publicised in the last years and it must be said that she has used every possibility to create a scandal. Her previous work was "Democracy and Free Will", a piece that encapsulated the entirety of the current developments of modern technology, post-humanism and the resolution of conflicts both internal

and external. In this controversial piece, she held an online vote on which body part she should lose and ended up with the removal of her navel. The performance, including the surgery and the recovery were recorded and broadcast via her facebook page and youtube. The navel was then auctioned off on the internet. The concept and its results have been hailed as a proof that well-planned democratic procedure can actually produce deep and complex artistic experiences. The resulting scandal led to a tremendous rise of influence and opened the path for her current, much more difficult piece.

So, first of all, Magdalena, how do you feel?"

MV: "I'm fine thank you. I hope you enjoyed the flight."

AM: "You know how it is. It's getting worse and worse."

MV: "I'm sorry you had to come here all the way, I wanted to meet you in New York, but in my current state, travel needs a lot of preparation. The airlines are usually rather unhappy with this kind of passenger."

AM: "If you ask me, they seem to be unhappy with any kind of passenger."

MV: "That's right."

AM: "Anyway, I'm very glad that you managed to free up some time for this interview. Now, Magdalena, tell us about your current project."

MV: "Well, since Actionismo has always supported my ideas, it was clear that you would get the first possible interview. About the project: As you can see, it's still a work in progress. I guess it's best if I start with the beginning."

AM: "Go ahead."

MV: "The initial inspiration for this project came up three years ago during my recovery after the navel removal. A friend of mine visited me at home. You probably know her, Siobhan Donaldson."

AM: "Of course. She did 'State of the Art'."

MV: "Exactly. The concept was quite new at the time and she had some trouble with the design. The idea of searching online art sites for especially scathing comments and then creating a showcase of hated and despised works was quite difficult to implement, both from the technical and the legal side. As a result, she visited me at the studio to escape the troubles and showed me her initial results."

AM: "This showed up on the 'State of the Art' video too."

MV: "Yeah. I wasn't too happy about it in the end. Siobhan recut the whole scene to make it look like some kind of orgy. I don't know. Anyway, she showed me a few of the 'worst cases' and one of them was a sculpture of a ridiculously muscular woman. The artist had really over-exaggerated every single piece of anatomy. It was a quite bizarre, but what was the weirdest thing was that the artist had just forgotten the navel. This was when inspiration struck. If you look at Renaissance sculpture, there is this profoundly humanistic perspective of the idealised human being that is represented in stone. So although the 'David' by

Michelangelo might be idealised, there is a human model behind it. You know I started with classical sculpture when I started at the academy and I found the idea intriguing. After the success of 'Democracy and Free Will', I had enough funds to just live comfortably for a while, but you know how it is: When inspiration strikes, that's what you do."

AM: "Honestly, I'm just a journalist. That's hardly art. But I trust you on that one."

MV: "Of course. Anyway, I mulled this over for a few weeks and then, I set up a concept. In my line of work, the body is the raw material. I had quite a bit of planning and preparation to do, but after two months, I was ready to go."

AM: "So, how did you start?"

MV: "You see, the main trick is that art allows you to do pretty much anything. As long as you always repeat that this is an art project, the law will let you get away with everything. In this case, it's pretty much the same thing. But more on that later. The first step was to get a coach. So, a friend of mine is a bit of a gay icon around here and he's pretty buff. When I first approached him, he was all 'No, you shouldn't, think about what happened last time, I mean, what do you think, you take away your navel, that's like giving up your mother, I mean, you can't do that.' You can imagine, I guess."

AM: "Sure. Absolutely."

MV: "It took a while for me to get him to understand. Which is weird, because he's all for it, he just doesn't like the art angle. If you ask me, he just likes to look

at hard man-butts."

AM: "Don't we all..."

MV: "Of course. But anyway. In the end, he accepted. He even offered to do the coaching for next to nothing, seeing how I am a starving artist. I was grateful, of course, but one of these days, I'll have to tell him that I've been married to Marcel Z\* for a few years now. By the way, could you cut this detail out? I guess it's not such a good idea after all."

AM: "No problem. But I'll have to ask some questions about your personal life later. It's not like Actionismo is USA Today, but getting a home story is worthwhile anyway."

MV: "Okay. If you insist."

AM: "I do. But back to your preparations."

MV: "Sure. So I start working on it. It was pretty hard at first, you know?"

AM: "I go to the gym once a week and that's already too much for me."

MV: "That's what I thought too. For me, living a disciplined life isn't hard. I've been doing this for years now. When you're in my line of work you're either completely full of drugs or you're straight edge. There is no middle ground. I

started my anorexia when I was 13 years old and I sort of managed to get it under control, but it's always been hard. It's all about control and the perception of self. Anybody who tells you that all this is just models and photoshop, is probably going to recover. The real shit happens when you drift off."

AM: "Back to the beginning, please."

MV: "Sorry. I just wanted to explain how I got there. You know, 'Democracy and Free Will' was the worst for me. I basically gave up the control I had developed. I had some completely anonymous people decide over my body. I must confess in retrospect that this was really, really hard. Harder than you imagine. So this thing is more about re-establishing control. I choose to accept a random ideal. Anyway: The worst thing was eating. When you're doing this, you're eating all the time. The good thing is, the stuff is gross. It tastes like shit. I honestly don't know how my coach does it. For me, there's a clear perspective. For him, it's just routine."

AM: "But it did work, didn't it?"

MV: "Oh yes, it did. You wouldn't believe it. After a month, I had buffed up like never before. I looked like one of those swimsuit models, minus the tits. You know my old portraits: one meter, 82 centimetres, that's um... six feet one, 85 pounds. I gained like fifteen pounds of muscle in a month. It was pretty crazy. I had to buy new pants and everything. If I had known how far this would go, I would have bought more stuff right away."

AM: "Sure."

MV: "By that time, I was practically living in the gym. Marcel was nice enough to set one up here, so I could train with a nice view. Of course, I had to be careful with my navel, so my stomach took forever to firm up, but finally, it started to come together. We did daily photo shoots, measured everything, chronicled the amount of food consumed. We have statistics on everything."

AM: "What do you plan to do with them?"

MV: "They're all going to be part of the installation. There's going to be a making-of website, with all the data and processes. Just like in a factory. We're aiming for a very modern, very smooth design."

AM: "Nice."

MV: "Yes, definitely. I can show you a preview later on, if you want to."

AM: "Absolutely. But let's go on. Honestly, I doubt that any amount of training would get you where you are now."

MV: "Of course. This is what I was talking about before. In this country, it has to be art, then you're allowed to do anything. Even though I was progressing nicely towards my goal, I was pretty sure that I had to be quick and to be honest, I wanted it to really sweep me along. For me, it was always clear that I would not move into the sports aspect of body building. This isn't what this is about. The whole concept was just becoming the realistic model of an unrealistic sculpture. To see how far I could take. It was clear for me that this was grotesque at its heart, but that's an important aspect of performance art. It's about art and artificiality. A bit like ORLAN, if you know what I mean."

AM: "Sure. I trust your work is inspired by hers."

MV: "Absolutely. However, I refuse her focus on high art. Life isn't about high art. Anyway, in order to get to the level I wanted to reach, I hired a doctor who accepted to provide me with the necessary chemicals to make me grow."

AM: "Steroids?"

MV: "Yes. But not only steroids. Growth hormones and all kinds of other products the doctor considered necessary."

AM: "And what about side effects?"

MV: "Side effects... Of course. You can't make an omelette without breaking an egg. I always had a deep voice, I sang alto in the school choir, sometimes even deeper with the boys. You probably noticed: It's even deeper now. This was one of the first things that happened and it turned out to be quite useful. I went to the supermarket to get new food, mostly eggs and lean meat. At the time, I had gained some 20 more pounds, which brought me to 120 pounds total, 35 of which were muscles. I looked quite impressive with my clothes off, I'd say. Anyway, I was at the cashier and there was this jerk right behind me, always trying to push by. After a few seconds, I just turned around and growled at him. I said something along the lines of: 'Can't you just wait in line, asshole?', but it came out like a real threat. The guy stared at me like I was a monster. I was wearing a hoody at the time, plus some jogging pants. He couldn't have seen my body shape. It was just the voice. Fascinating, really..."

AM: "Cool. That sounds like a real advantage."

MV: "Absolutely. Marcel was all for it too. I have to admit, after a day of training, all I wanted was to sleep, but sometimes, I still had enough energy to fuck."

AM: "Any changes there?"

MV: "Well, I was doing a lot of cardio at the time, so I was able to keep it up for a long time and... There was the matter of my clitoris."

AM: "Go ahead."

MV: "It got really big. I always had a really small one. Didn't look much like anything. Nowadays, it's quite huge. Like this long."

AM: "That's big. Wow."

MV: "Must be an inch and a half."

AM: "What does it do?"

MV: "The same it always did. I really like it when Marcel sucks me. Licking is

fine, sucking is better... You know, I really like to talk about this. I'm not sure whether it should be in the magazine, but it was oddly liberating to do all this."

AM: "We can leave that part out, if you prefer."

MV: "No. Leave it in. It's part of the performance after all. After half a year, it was getting out of hand. I was eating like a horse. All the time. I bought a new wardrobe every month. Sometimes, when I had motivational problems, Dominik's face was enough to keep me working. Dominik is my coach, you know, the gay gentleman. Since the beginning, I had gained 82 pounds of raw muscle. I had almost doubled my weight. Imagine what it felt like. I weighed some 167 pounds by then. I was a total beast."

AM: "Wow."

MV: "Yep: I had it all. I wouldn't have done it before, but by this time, whenever I saw a mirror, I just had to take a look at myself and flex. Pretty cool feeling. You should try it too..."

AM: "No, thank you. I'm quite comfortable as I am now."

MV: "Really? Your loss. Just tell me whenever you want. I know what to do."

AM: "As I said, it's okay. Let's get back to your experience, shall we?"

MV: "Sure. You wouldn't believe it: My life changed totally. For the first time, I could really use my height. Before that, I was just a tall, gangly girl in black clothes. After half a year, I was a solid powerhouse. I used to wear very covering clothes until then. I always dressed down: turtlenecks, cargo pants, things like that. By then, I wore tight shirts and short skirts. I couldn't wear anything else, since I was so busy growing out of them."

AM: "Must have been an impressive change."

MV: "Absolutely. Let's not forget that this town is pretty small. If you're an artist, you know all the people that are artistically inclined and everybody knows you from the papers. You can see what would happen. People would talk to me in the street, guys would look at my muscles, ask me to compare theirs with mine. I was bigger than quite a few of them. Women would sneer at me. I was quite the sensation."

AM: "So you had your audience."

MV: "In a way, yes. However, I didn't want this to be some kind of a freak show. It's not about the obscenity of the over-exaggerated human form. It's about artificiality. It became clear to me that I had to work on the context. Hanging a real van Gogh into a museum shop next to the reprints would be pointless."

AM: "So this is when you had your custom wardrobe made."

MV: "Yes. Marcel was kind enough to pay for it. I chose to try the classics. Pantsuits, blazers, conservative skirts. It really worked, though. People were much calmer. I had realised that my initial over-reaction had been unwarranted."

A woman with a muscular body is much less outrageous than a woman with no clothes on. Of course, I couldn't help myself from showing off occasionally. In the summer, the lakes around here are truly beautiful, so I took a chance at it and went for a swim. This was the first time I realised that this wasn't just for show. First of all, I was amazed by the buoyancy of my new style. After all, I was displacing a lot of water by then. Second, I was fascinated by the speed with which I could swim and the duration I could keep it up. Last, the people on the beach were quite impressed when I emerged from the lake."

AM: "Must have been quite a sight."

MV: "Definitely. I got out of the water, I was wearing a deep red bathing suit which left nothing to imagination. The water was just flowing over the hills and through the ridges of my muscles and I felt awesome. I was quite the superhero in that moment."

AM: "Wow."

MV: "Exactly."

AM: "This must have given your confidence quite a boost."

MV: "It did. I trained harder than before. At this time, I began to publish my progress on the net. Pretty soon, my transformation was featured in magazines and I gave some interviews to the local press. The publicity allowed me to recover some funds and apply for a few grants. Let's not forget, building such a body is extremely expensive. I was careful to appear all covered up on TV to prevent people from just seeing this as a diversion. It had to be in context."

However, I hadn't realised that my initial inspiration would come back to haunt me."

AM: "What happened?"

MV: "'State of the Art' was a huge success and the people whose art was publicised got quite outraged. When they discovered my project, the effect was quite the shitstorm. The echoes were diverse to say the least: On the one hand, there were some fetishists who just enjoyed the prospect of seeing their fantasy realised. Those were supportive in a creepy way. On the other hand were those who thought that my project was actually making fun of them and decided to fight it."

AM: "Fight it?"

MV: "The website got hacked twice. People accused me of being a fake and exploiting their concepts. I even got some image macros designed after me. It was quite unnerving to continue on my path. The whole community, both art and fetish, was very active. They got quite personal after a while. Combined with the stress of training, the strain from the medication and the craziness in public, I was getting close to a collapse."

AM: "So what did you do?"

MV: "First of all, Marcel was a great help, he just stayed calm and reassured me that this kind of reaction was to be expected. I think he liked the way my body was developing. Second, I took a few weeks off and went to Italy. In Austria, when you can't bear the bigotry and small-mindedness anymore, you go to the

beach in Italy. Works wonders, that's why everybody's doing it."

AM: "That's where you met Francesco Sganarelli."

MV: "Yep. Francesco is a really nice guy. I had thought of working with him before, but none of us had time for it when he was around, so I just took the chance. I met him in Venice after two weeks of sweet nothing on the beach. He's one of the few Venetians still living in Venice, if you may say so. His studio is built right into his parents' shop, so he still works as a grocer while producing his statues. He's a funny guy, very much into practical jokes. Explains his last name, I guess."

AM: "I've seen his exhibition at Tate Modern. Yes. A joker, definitely."

MV: "I thought the whole ticketing process was awesome. The security checks, the pointless waiting, the paraphernalia of politics. It was incredible."

AM: "I must admit I liked it better than 'Checkpoint'."

MV: "Do you think so? I adored it. It was horrible. I remember this old woman, who must have thought that this would be some kind of traditional thing. She was horrified when they just took her husband with them. When they did the gunshot sound-effect, I was afraid she'd have a stroke. Her reaction completed the whole thing. The art crowd was terrified. Stupid buggers, what did they believe this would do?"

AM: "Honestly, sometimes I'm not sure whether they actually understand what they're about themselves."

MV: "If you ask me, admirers and critics are important, but some of them are just pointless... By the way, I guess we should cut that out afterwards."

AM: "No problem. Don't want to pull them out of their comfort, do we?"

MV: "Anyway. He was impressed by my concept and I guess he also liked the body. We spent a few weeks together, just fooling around. He had this new device he'd prepared for his next project. It's a 3D-printer that prints out soft surface plastic. I hope I don't spoil anything, but the concept is that you undress, lie down in a kind of sun bed and the machine scans your body, then molds a copy of it. It's still in the early stages, but it's basically a machine that makes love dolls of people. It's pretty impressive since you get a realistic copy. The skin is soft, it has a totally realistic surface. The thing even copies the little hairs and everything. Francesco has been working on this thing for God knows how long."

AM: "I wouldn't want to know what he built that for."

MV: "Neither would I. The whole thing gives you an uncanny valley vibe. After all, his studio was full of semi-successful prints. Imagine a small, rather crowded room full of pseudo-realistic half-people. Some of them with runny faces, others with collapsed bodies."

AM: "Yuck."

MV: "Totally. On the other hand, it is impressive. He does earn a bit of money by printing copies of body parts for movie sets and for people with artificial limbs."

AM: "So, did you try it?"

MV: "Of course. It was a pretty weird experience. I climbed in, laid down on the scanning platform and the machine started humming. Then, some rays shot out of it and they started to go around me over and over again. It was quite hard to stay calm all the way through. In the meantime, he had all these computers running at full speed and taking in all the data that the beams were collecting. It had a science fiction vibe all over. When it was done, I was aching all over. Honestly, this was so tiring, because you have to lie really still."

AM: "Just like in a computer tomography."

MV: "Just like that, but less loud. After this, the machine was ready to print and I got up to watch my copy be created. It was pretty impressive. Francesco had prepared a sort of wire-skeleton to build the copy on and the machine just pasted some plastic substance on it. It worked in layers, calmly and evenly. The copy worked very well. When it was done, there was a sculpture of me as if I were sleeping."

AM: "Must have been creepy."

MV: "Not too much. No. Actually, what really shocked me, was the size of my muscles. I hadn't visualised my body as clearly as this before. When the copy was dry, I could touch it and it was a weird experience. Of course, I looked into the mirror before, but this was more complex. The body had an inner warmth from the copying process and for the first time, I understood what I was like. I was half muscle and this was the clearest way to see it."

AM: "What a strange situation. It's quite arousing, actually."

MV: "Absolutely."

AM: "So what happened next?"

MV: "I couldn't help touching it. While it was still cooling down, I was caressing my copy, squeezing it, feeling the girth of my own arms. It was extremely weird, but I was getting aroused like hell. By the time I had checked out my entire body, I was so hot that my clit was poking through my panties. When I looked around, I saw that Francesco had been filming me and masturbating at the same

time. By that time, I couldn't help myself anymore either, so I just rubbed my big, swollen clit until I came. Francesco was just as weirded out by this as me, but we really enjoyed our 'threesome' if you see what I mean."

AM: "Naughty."

MV: "Absolutely. After this session, I decided to go all out. I'd turn myself into the hugely muscular beast of a woman the perverts on the internet had imagined. For real."

AM: "So ..."

MV: "I returned home, thanking Francesco and hoping that he would be welcoming me as soon as I'd have grown. I decided that these dicks on the internet wouldn't get me down. I was stronger than them in every way and I would pull this through."

AM: "Which was when the police became aware of what you were doing."

MV: "Not yet. You're getting ahead of myself. I had a very nice autumn. I trained like crazy and juiced like a junkie. By the time it got colder, I weighed in at 207 pounds. I had those ridiculously over-sized arms by then. It was quite amazing. If I just shook them a little, the muscle would quiver. If I flexed them, they'd just stop and turn rock hard."

AM: "So you liked it."

MV: "Absolutely. I was having the time of my life. Wherever I went, people went crazy. As before, I dressed conservatively, but I stayed on the radar. I was invited to all the parties and went all out. When I wasn't eating, training or sleeping, I was out in public, shocking the average people. As for myself, I was surprised how much my body had changed. Of course, there was the muscle and the weight. It was really impressive. I was able to lift pretty much anything. A friend of mine needed help to furnish her apartment, so I just carried her washing machine up to the third floor. It was crazy, I didn't even have to stop to catch my breath. She was nice enough to make me feel nice after that."

AM: "Okay."

MV: "Yeah, it was totally unexpected, but she just led me to her sofa in her mostly empty living room and had me lie down. Before I could say anything, she had me undressed and started caressing my abs. They were impressive, like fists, but she was really excited. She was surprised by the missing navel, but then most people are."

AM: "So you were comfortable?"

MV: "Sure. I was quite hot anyway. By the time this was happening, I was so full of growth hormone and testosterone I was as excitable as a boy going through puberty."

AM: "That sounds awful."

MV: "It was. I had awful acne once again. Just like when I grew up, but it was much worse. Also, my voice dropped further. The worst thing though was my face. My jaw just started building up, just as my nose. The doctor explained that this was normal given the dosage and that I was happy not to have started earlier with this. It was a bit strange, especially since my friends from the art scene started talking behind my back. I stormed out from quite a few invitations during this period. Still, just being overly emotional and crying is better than what happened next."

AM: "The police."

MV: "Exactly. I had borrowed Marcel's car to drive to Munich and I was going fast. I was being reckless, I know, but that was just my way of being then."

AM: "So you got stopped."

MV: "Of course. The cop held me up and asked for my papers. When he saw my picture on my license, he couldn't believe it was me. Honestly, I couldn't blame him. I was nothing like the person on the photograph."

AM: "So ..."

MV: "I got into trouble. The cop asked me who I was, I insisted, he didn't believe me, I explained, he asked further about the drugs, I realised I was in trouble and he just provoked me, or at least it felt that way and I punched him."

AM: "You beat up a cop."

MV: "Well, yes."

AM: "So what did you do then?"

MV: "Honestly, I don't remember. The next thing I can recall is waking up the next day in bed with two guys in Munich. By the looks of it, we had had great sex, although they were both a little bruised. I decided to leave it at that, put my clothes and just get away before they woke up. I was hungry, I was late for training and I was honestly too dazed to think clearly. I took my car and rode back to Salzburg, so as not to miss my training session."

AM: "No problem then?"

MV: "Not quite. First it all came back to me, then I heard about the police looking for a person for beating up one of their officer. The description was weird since I didn't think it was me, even though it was quite accurate. I still wasn't too sure about my body. Later on, the police came over to ask about the incident, after all, I had shown them my license."

AM: "Quite a predicament."

MV: "Yep. When they rang, I had just finished showering, so I put on as much clothing as I could to make me look fat and put a big scarf around my neck to conceal my traps."

AM: "Your what?"

MV: "Ah, yes. My trapezius muscles. Those."

AM: "I see."

MV: "I tried to add a bit of volume to my face with make-up and returned to the door. They were quite impatient by the time I was ready and they asked me where I was the day before. I told them I had no idea, I was at a party and I had a blackout. I must have been to Munich, though. The policemen listened to me, but somehow must have decided that the fat woman in front of them couldn't have been the one that beat up one of them. I did my best to appear out of shape and tired. After that, they wanted to take a look at the car, so I let them. All the time, I was nervous as hell. They took a photograph of the car and left. I was relieved at first, but then I called my lawyer."

AM: "What did he say?"

MV: "She. Anyway, she told me to stay quiet about it while she prepared a statement about me being irresponsible of my actions due to the drug use for my art project."

AM: "That's a weird defence."

MV: "Yes, but apparently, it can work. The whole thing played out over the next

month. The police questioned me several times, I was analysed by a psychiatrist and I had my blood work done more times than I can remember. The case ended up in the papers and the country got into uproar. It was the old 'should artists be allowed to do shocking things' debate which we need regularly."

AM: "Of course, this time it was much more intense."

MV: "Yes, involving the police with such intensity was hard."

AM: "It was quite the shitstorm."

MV: "Definitely. I was invited to several talk-shows, especially once the petition for the freedom of art that had been started took up speed. I was turning into a kind of national celebrity. I remember an interview in France about how Austrians can only be either musicians or bodybuilders if they want to make it internationally."

AM: "Sounds right."

MV: "Honestly, I couldn't care less. The project was reaching its completion by then. I had bulked up to 260 pounds and it wasn't pretty anymore: I had those hugely swollen arms, my shoulders had become enormous and my chest was so big that I couldn't even get clothes at the big women store anymore. My legs were so bloated with muscles that I swaggered when I walked. My face had actually changed. It was quite weird to look into the mirror and not recognise yourself anymore."

AM: "That's quite horrible."

MV: "Yes. I was close to my goal, but this was too strange."

AM: "Did you do anything about it?"

MV: "I couldn't. If I stopped training, it wouldn't just go back and getting surgery to fix it was also impossible. It would have fucked up my training schedule. So I had to bear with it. Also, Marcel was into the new me. He's quite the weirdo."

AM: "So, what was the situation by then?"

MV: "Basically, I had everything ready. I had a gallery to host the performance, I had Francesco's machine, I had the media coverage. Everything was going fine. I occasionally had some health troubles by then, of course, but you have to suffer for art."

AM: "What kind of health troubles?"

MV: "The usual: You can't just almost triple your weight in less than three years without busting your knees, tearing your skin and fucking up your liver. To put it simple, I was pretty fucked up. I had an endocrinologist who just tried to salvage the remains of my hormonal system, a physiotherapist to get my joints back in line and a beautician to make me look good for the show."

AM: "Wow. This sounds awful."

MV: "It was, but if you want something, you have to give your all. Otherwise, there's no point. Besides, the show was a total success."

AM: "Everybody was shocked."

MV: "Definitely. The show was simple to set up. The gallery held most of the peripheral work: A few screens showing the development of my various body parts, several displays of extreme muscle art from the Internet and a collection of newspaper articles including the scandals that had happened. There was a separate darkened room that Francesco had created. It contained several small doors behind which parts of the body copy were mounted so that people could touch them in the dark. He even added a device to make them pulse as if alive."

AM: "Impressive."

MV: "The performance itself started rather late in the evening. We killed the lights. By the time, I had spent half an hour pumping up. The day had been stressful like no other. It took three hours to make the make-up perfect, two hours to get my hair done and three more hours for the general skin. I slid into the darkened room, Francesco installed the copies and he turned on the power."

AM: "What happened?"

MV: "The copies heated up and were made to move as if breathing and hold

different poses. We added a little light, to make it clear that something was going on. People started moving in the darkness, fumbling their way through a forest of muscular flesh."

AM: "Cool."

MV: "Definitely. I stood there, holding my pose, waiting as people lost their hesitations and started touching the models. Of course, after a while, some of them began touching my body. It felt incredibly erotic. It was an air of hesitant exploration. I was being explored. They worked their hands over the ridges and bulges of my muscles, clearly impressed by the verisimilitude, even the realism. I focused on the situation, trying to remain immobile. The guests became more comfortable with the grotesque shapes we presented. Then, Francesco activated the secondary effect and the light focused on me. The guests started moving over to me, their ministrations becoming more intense. Clearly, my body was an intense experience."

AM: "They really went for it."

MV: "Of course, after all, we spiked their drinks to increase the intensity of the experience."

AM: "And you were at the centre of it."

MV: "Absolutely. Then, when the overall dynamics of the crowd reached their apex, I suddenly switched poses. They were completely astonished. I switched into another pose and showed off my body."

AM: "So what happened then?"

MV: "They went crazy. I don't know, maybe it was the drugs, maybe it was the ambiance, probably both, but all of a sudden, the atmosphere went insane and I found myself in the center of the total adoration of my guests."

AM: "You had your scandal."

MV: "I had an orgy. I mean: we had an orgy. It totally degenerated. I was right in the middle, drunk on the ecstasy of their desire, fucking and licking and fingering their minds out. My recollections are hazy, but I remember that I was there, clit-fucking the manager of the S\*-festival and licking her husband at the same time while my feet were being worshiped by Mrs. B\*, the politician."

AM: "Absolute scandal."

MV: "Everything you could imagine. The press loved it. When everything calmed down, I was there, sweaty and muscular, my arms wrapped around two of the more famous theatre personalities and having my abdominals kissed by L\*. And we had the cameras running."

AM: "That was the moment were you skipped town."

MV: "The next day, I went to Italy again. Francesco was already there, cutting the material. 'The Ecstasy of Anatomy'."

AM: "Quite a lot of blurs and black bars."

MV: "That was necessary. But I guess you'd be able to deduce their identities anyway."

AM: "So, what happened next?"

MV: "Of course, there was a lot of legal trouble afterwards. The fallout was quite impressive. Still, art's freedom, so they just had to get on with it. The legal waiver we had them sign before the whole thing started was quite a stack, so they could argue, but nothing much."

AM: "And what happened to your body?"

MV: "Honestly, I learned later that I was on the brink of death. I was two weeks away from liver failure. It took me several months to recover from my hormonal catastrophe and even now, there's still some trouble. My voice is still deeper than it should be, my clit is huge and I got more acne scars than a fifteen-year old in a wood-chipper."

AM: "That's a horrible analogy."

MV: "Want to take a look?"

AM: "Wow. That looks pretty bad."

MV: "The pain of art. I also had surgery to get my nose and jaw back to normal. Worked quite well. I kept some of the muscle too. Look here."

AM: "Impressive."

MV: "I'm still in training and I stay at 170 pounds most of the time. Body fat is quite low. Watch my abs!"

AM: "Cool. I wish I had some of these."

MV: "I can train you if you want."

AM: "No thanks. I like to look, but I can't stand the sweat. So what's next anyway?"

MV: "It's a bit of a spoiler, but I have a new project. Keep quiet about."

AM: "Sure."

MV: "Okay. Over the last months, I had eight eggs collected from my ovaries."

AM: "And..."

MV: "I'm going to have them re-implanted at the same time. I also had over one hundred men from all over the world donate sperm for my project. The plan is to give each one a fighting chance for one of the eight prime spots."

AM: "I may be an hypocrite for saying this, but that's sick."

MV: "Yes. Definitely. Don't you love it? I call it "Darwin's Path". There's going to be an exhibition in nine months. Here are some tickets. Bring a friend. "

###

Roy Ellison writes weirdo erotic fiction. Despite evidence to the contrary, he insists it is about the characters and the plot.

He thanks you deeply for your trust and support.

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