

Speakers:

**Sophia Giovannitti** (b. 1992) is an artist and author who lives in New York. Her practice is invested in earnest devotion and fucked up manipulation; what it means to use and be used by power. She works across mediums including text, performance, video, contracts, installation. Her first book, *Working Girl: On Selling Art and Selling Sex*, was published by Verso in 2023; her most recent solo show took place at Blade Study (NY) in 2024. She is presently at work on her second book.

**Avgi Saketopoulou** is a Cypriot and Greek psychoanalyst, on faculty of the NYU Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis. She is the author of *Sexuality Beyond Consent: Risk, Race, Traumatophilia* (NYU Press, 2023) and co-author, with Ann Pellegrini, of *Gender Without Identity* (UIT Press, 2023). She is currently working on her next book project, provisionally titled *The Offer of Sadism*.

**Rachel Ossip** is deputy editor at Triple Canopy and a contributing editor for *n+1*.

**Rachel Ossip** Hi everyone. Thanks so much for coming back for part two. I am the character known as Rachel. I am the deputy editor at Triple Canopy, and Sophia and I have been working on the piece that she was quoting in in her performance that you all, I think hopefully all just saw for a while now, and it'll hopefully come out next month or so, in our issue called our bad which is about sabotage and Workplace Relations and ways of navigating power from different different positionalities. I guess I'm so honored and excited to be here with Sophia, who hopefully you all know, but I'll read Sofia's bio.

Sophia is an artist and author who lives in New York. Her practice is invested in earnest devotion and fucked up manipulation, what it means to be to use and be used by power. She works across mediums, including text performance, video contracts, installation. Her first book, *Working Girl on Selling Art and Selling Sex*, was published by verso in 2023 her most recent solo show took place at blade study in 2024 and she's presently at work on her second book. And with us, we have another character, Avgi Saketopoulou is a Cypriot and Greek psychoanalyst on the faculty of NYU postdoctoral program in psychotherapy and psychoanalysis. She's the author of *Sexuality Beyond Consent: Risk, Race, Traumatophilia* from NYU press in 2023 and the co-author with Anne Pellegrini of *Gender Without Identity*. She is currently working on her next book project, provisionally titled *The Offer of Sadism*. So thank you so much. It's just really exciting to be here with both of you.

I think I'm going to kick things off by starting where we ended the last chapter, which is by thinking a little bit about, and asking a little bit about, this gesture of the NDA. And so presumably, all of you, most of you, were at the performance earlier, and when you came in, you were asked to sign this NDA, which Sophia, then was discussing a little bit at the end of her performance. And usually NDAs are tools that are used in business or by the powerful to silence employees or gag those who have been harmed. There's a 2018 article in the *Columbia Journalism Review* by Michelle Dean where she refers to NDA as contracts of silence, and she traces their early foothold in the tech industry to their wider proliferation and outsize impact on journalism as a field, and particularly their relationship to sexual harassment cases. So it's really a fascinating gesture to begin a performance with an NDA, and it sets up this particular relationship that I think you were gesturing to, a bit a power dynamic between you as the performer in the audience, and but it also opens on to questions of consent, which are such a big part of Avgi's recent work.

I would love for Avgi to speak a bit about that in a second, and think about the NDA in relationship to these frameworks of consent that are familiar to us, and also that Avgi has been kind of innovating, but first maybe Sophia, we can hear a little bit more from you reflecting on how you see the use of your NDA in that context, kind of elaborating on that?

**Sophia Giovannitti** Thanks everyone for coming, and thank you so much, Rachel and Avgi for being here.

Yeah, I think that for me NDA's... I can recall being asked to sign them twice, And in both occasions were in relationship to tech companies. Actually, maybe I've signed other ones, but I think that I'm really interested in them as something that is completely useful, or like useless, dependent on your positionality, basically, and like that, they're only really useful as a gag order, if the person or company asking you to sign it has a lot

of money or a lot of power. And like, usually both. Because basically have to be able to, you know, afford to, heavily litigate. And I feel like that is just such an odd thing that structures..... Our lives, you know that we're kind of constantly in a techno capitalist world and just employment in general . We're kind of constantly signing contracts, agreeing to things that are sort of like a masquerade performance or whatever, of consent, but are much more a site of coercion. And so I think for me, in a two fold way, I feel like, often when I do performances or propose performances, people are sort of like "Well, are you going to, like, perform? Are you going to do something?" Because obviously, you know, I could call what I'm doing a reading. I could call it an artist talk. I could call it anything else. And I think often the NDA sort of like is, is the performance, is the kind of performative gesture that, like, really changes what's going on and... yeah, it's funny, because I feel like, when we met, and we were talking about this a little bit, and I was thinking about it, I feel when I used to do NDAs, I would announce that in a press release or in an announcement for something, and would do this sort of explanation, and I have this, like, language around it where I would be like, you know, I'm the artist, is like asking you to sign an NDA, "neutered" by her own disavowal of legal recourse as a means of justice. And I think that of recent Now, what I've been thinking about, what I was thinking about with this piece, is how, like, sometimes I say things about what I will or I won't do, and that they're like, not true. And so I don't know. Yeah, I didn't say that with this one. And I think it's also something I don't know. I think it's interesting to it's always interesting to it's always interesting to me to ask people to sign something, because I don't know that I would if I was attending a performance. So yeah, those are some of my initial thoughts.

**Avgi Saketopoulou** I'm very, very pleased to be here. Thank you so much for inviting me. I'm really taken by the NDA in some ways. I would say that the performance starts not with the signing of the NDA, but with the announcement that there will be an NDA that you one will be asked to sign if they attend the performance. And it sets up. I think it's interesting, because it raises, as you were both saying, questions of consent. And I'll start with saying that, I think, and I'll use a phrase I write about consent, but I'll use a phrase that comes that was given to me by my my friend and colleague, co author, Mistress blunt, who is a sex worker and who, kind of, like, very succinctly, puts it as consent is a scam, and it is, much as we want to hold on to it as something that can help adjudicate ethical relationships, or can or sensibly keep us safe. But, of course, that doesn't work, but, but what I find really interesting about the NDA is that it can, like, set up a power relation right from the get go, and it is a power relation, it will be violated. Like, there's, there's, I just don't believe that nobody will talk about what happened here today. This is not to impugn anybody's ethics, but it is to say that that's the game, and that, in that sense, it's a power game. It seems to me that it's a power game where you both, like, usually the person who proposes the consent contract, because it is a contract, right? It's supposed to be the person who is in power, and then the other person gets to decide, and then power is given to them by virtue of, like, what they agreed to or what they don't agree to, or how they negotiate it. But it's interesting, because you're inviting, in some ways, it feels to me, the audience into a relationship of violation.

(Laughing)

So it raises the question of what can happen through violation, as opposed to what can happen through the fantasy that by keeping ourselves safe from violation.. I'm going to do the qualifiers. I'm going to do them

once, and then I'm not going to do them again. Get them out of the way. Like, obviously, like, violation is terrible. Obviously, people should not be violated. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, all of these things are by and at the same time we are in such a kind of, like, hyper-securitized, hyper-anxious moment in what can happen in an encounter between people who appear before each other in a way that is both dis-armed and also hyper-armed, like when you talk about like wielding the knife, when you talk about the extra ethical framework of revenge, when you talk about sabotage. These are not words for safety, they're not words for repair or redress. They're words for war. And there's something really interesting about the way in which you're asking us to think, I think the piece asks us to think about war as a mode of relation, because it's impossible to talk about war without thinking about the genocide that's happening right now, and you've also written about that, which I'm very grateful for, but there's a way in which we can be pulled into this, in a way that makes it hard to think about what happens in the wound? what happens in the willingness to be wounded? in the invitation for a wound. Because you are in your shared things today that just hasn't, haven't sent in print, you haven't said before. You're certainly opening yourself up, not with the hope that you can trust everyone, but knowing that eventually, this will leak.

**SF** I feel it's so delightful to talk to you, because I feel like you articulate things so well that I think about but can't quite articulate as well, and it really gives so much shape to my thoughts and the things that I care about. It's really interesting to me that you use, or what you're saying about the language of war and revenge and violation and non-repairs. I feel like a lot of my thinking has been about people's relationship to the state. And, you know, obviously, or not obviously, but whatever, I guess obviously, I'm a person who's very distrustful of this state in the Triple Canopy piece where I call myself an anarchist. I'm a sex worker. There's a very, you know.. I adamantly don't believe that laws keep us safe, et cetera, et cetera...

What I would imagine a lot of us here think, and I think it's been really curious to me then, that there seems to be this kind of way of being, a bit like, we are tricked into thinking that for example violence is not the domain of people and it's just the domain of the state or something? I think that's what I come to think about revenge, like so much of the things that consume me in thinking about sexual violence, is how it feels like, in all the modes of recourse that are available, to have a sort of outright allusion of what you as a human might want to do to someone who did something really bad to you. And there's this kind of demand that one raises above and you let this other entity, the state, kill someone or commit a genocide or do any of these other things. And I actually find that is so dehumanizing. And so I think that, yeah, I really enjoyed what you said about the idea of inviting people to be in a space of violation with you, because I feel like we are kind of conditioned to feel like what the ethical thing to do is to either not be in that space period or like move on from it as quickly as possible in some kind of legible way. And I think what I really appreciate about your work is that that's not at all what you're asking people to do. And I think that that's why your work also has resonated with so many people outside of, you know, the psychoanalytic field or how I think people are really looking for a different way to relate to one another.

**AS** I really, I really love the way you were taking us down to thinking about the relationship with the state, and the way in which the state takes, kind of like the monopoly of violence, imagines itself to have, and narrates its violence to us as being completely desexualized, thereby being and like being presented to us as necessary and under the rubric of necessity. I mean, think about the ways in which thinking about the

nation state like Israel, is presenting itself as genociding Palestinians under the rubric of necessity, right? Kind of like BLM movements, kind of like the uprisings in Baltimore were being, kind of like, really hunted by the police under the rubric of kind of. Like the necessity of keeping the peace. So because part of what your work gets to, which I think is really interesting, is this one-sidedness of violence and the contract, the social contract being that we will agree to not to not do that. And what's really fascinating is that one way that I think about the piece that you presented to us today is that it's a form of withdrawal of consent to the social contract whereby we have all agreed that violence is off the table, that revenge is off the table, that that the ethical thing to do is to be truthful, that that sabotaging and trying to clog the machine by which the other has power is not legitimate. And I really loved, and I was hoping you could say a little bit more about this, that you were talking not just about what's extra legal, which is paradoxical, given that we're starting with a legal document, which, of course, it's kind of a bullshit document, right?

I mean, it's so fascinating because, like, it's a very formal document. It's printed in like, special paper, right, which, which announces its object, its presence as an object as opposed to a meaning. But, it's not just the extra legal, you said, like extra ethical. And I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit more about how you think about the outside of ethics, which I think that you're proposing something different than just ethics, ethical, unethical. It sounds to me like you're working towards a different domain, and I would love to hear your thoughts about it.

SG Yeah... No, I think that I'm quite honestly confused about what I think about ethics, in part, because of reading your book, *Sexuality Beyond Consent*, because I feel like you really offer... (pause) before reading that, I had this sort of disavowal of the ethical in relation to the sexual. And I think that that's ascribed to sexual relations oftentimes. That's just, like, often, really antithetical to the erotic, to what makes something erotic, to questioning what happens between people who are, for example, having sex and probably not communicating perfectly about it. And I think that for me, it's been really freeing to move outside of a kind of ethical framework, or like a demand to be ethical. And in part, there's this part in the sabotage book that my great grandfather wrote, where he says, like, whether we are ethical or not is not our concern. And he's talking about the sort of like anarcho-syndicalist versus the respectable socialist, and how, at the time, people felt like sabotage was, you know, a really disresponsible or "unethical" practice. And he was kind of like, that doesn't really matter to us, like we want to seize the means of production by any means necessary. And I think I don't know this is kind of what I feel like, now that we've started talking about Israel and Palestine and all of it.

This is sort of like an aside, but is something that I thought a lot about this year, is some quote that I read on Twitter from a philosopher whose name I don't recall, where he says *the world would be like a much better place if there were a lot of actual pacifists*. But what I actually see is just this kind of, you know, special pleading for people to be civil to one another while states carry out massive violence, etc. And I think about the same in relation to ethics. I think that for me, I often just feel like I almost don't deserve, not, I maybe deserve, not the right word, but I'm just kind of like, I can make something sound ethical, but I think doing something ethical should have some force behind it, and you should really believe in it. And that's not the driving force of, like, a lot of the things that I do. So I guess... yeah, I think for me, in those certain terms that are kind of like, considered, you know, just good or positive. Like, Ethical. Peaceful. Justice. You

know, Healing. like, whatever. All these different things. I just kind of feel like my practice, my use of language, whatever is only committed to using them, if I, like, really immune them, and understand what they mean. And at this point, I don't, I feel like the idea of ethics has been extremely bastardized for me.

RO I have some speculation here that I might offer. I mean, I think both in your work, and maybe I'll just read a little bit of the quote that you're referring to from Arturo. But also, I think it is something that's reflected in Avgi's work. It's like, where, where does the presumption like? What presumptions it is a particular system, or supposed system of ethics based on, and do we believe in that initial presumption for that is serving as the basis for what is being called ethics. Does it hold or not for us personally, for us politically? And I think one of the things that Arturo points to is like, when people are talking about whether or not sabotage is ethically justified, they're operating in the system that believes that the state is protecting the values of the people, and that capitalism is natural and right, and that if you're functioning with those, presuming those to be true, and buying into those ideals, then sure that system of ethics you know, the functions of sabotage in the actions of sabotage are not "ethical". But he's, you know, he says, but if it be true that labor produces everything, it is both moral and just that it should own everything.

So the thing is, is that the fundamentals of the system that these supposed ethics are based on are themselves unethical, if you're looking from a different vantage, right, from the vantage of the worker, that, like, we are producing value, and therefore we should own the value that we produce. It shouldn't be owned by somebody else who's not producing the value. So I think in a similar way, it's like, it's, it's about this idea of, like, what maybe we could refer to as a pseudo ethics, right? Or, like, this projection of ethics that is based on a fundamentally corrupt system. So I think a lot of what people refer to, when they're referring to ethics, is this kind of corruption of ethics, the bastardization of ethics. And I think both of you, in your own ways, are seeking, through your work, to find a truer and truly ethical mode, right? And that might mean operating in, or considering, or pushing boundaries, of what other people would call unethical, but it's unethical by these other terms that we do not buy into.

SG I think that that lands really well. And also, yeah, I would love for you. I feel like I agree. I think we both sort of are searching for something potentially similar. But I think you in your work have really articulated a particular what I would say, Yeah, is maybe like a new kind of ethics, or a particular kind of ethical relation that isn't based on affirmative consent or avoiding harm. And I wonder if, if you might speak to that a little bit.

AS I'm happy to do that I was but, but I want to start with kind of like picking up on a point that you were making, Rachel, because I I'm a little surprised in an interesting way, to hear my work described to me as offering a different kind of ethics, because it's not necessarily how I would have described myself, and it's always interesting to hear yourself narrated to, you know, in a different language. Because it seems to me that perhaps the question is not how to have a better ethics, or how to have an ethics that is more fair or more just, but you were actually speaking about this in the piece today, like, if we're going to contest the terms by which ethics has been given to us, and we can't just change the world with one move, what does that mean for our interpersonal relationships? And I think the answer that you give us in what you're talking about today, at least the way that I read it, is that, rather than ethics or non ethics. You give a surprise. All right,



what does it mean? Correct, that there's particular kinds of intimacies that happen at the intersection of violating the social contract of I said, I'm not, I recorded you, and I said, I'm not going to leak it, but I will, like I said, that I'm not going to do this, but I will, because you took something from me. I'm now, I'm going to take it from you. And this generally, particular kinds of relationships that become interesting, like the word interesting kept coming up. And ethics are not about something being interesting or something having something opaque or enigmatic. They're about stabilizing things. They're about reaching solutions. Again, this is not to. Make an argument that we should be unjust, or like, I care very much about social justice, racial justice, queer justice, but, but there's something about the notion of surprise that completely it like throws us off the dialectic, and it breaks through the dialect of ethical or unethical.

RO Maybe also going back to these ideas of violence and the violence of the state, and kind of extrapolating that a little bit into the interpersonal is one of the other contributors To the current sabotage issue. Andreas Malm has written recently in a book how to blow up a pipeline, about what's called Radical flank theory. And basically one of the major, you know, interventions of this book is just to reiterate, go back and look at all of the major social movements of the past many centuries, particularly the ones that are referred to as non violent movements. And actually, what you will see is a radical flank of people doing extremism, violent actions, and then that shifts the terms of what is considered permissible, right, and allows you know what would have otherwise been seen as radical ideology to become more acceptable, more palatable and incorporated. And I think there's maybe a little bit of a way in which both of you are kind of serving this function right. Let's push beyond what is ethical, to find what is surprising, to find what is interesting. And by doing that, shift the terms of what is able to be comprehended, what, what we're able to see as potentially ethical, or as potentially, you know, like, uh, palatable, interesting, incorporable into daily life, into our experiences, and to, you know, how we comprehend sex in particular? Yeah?

SG I think one of the main questions that often comes up on like whether that helps me understand, like if, I'll have a lot of common ground with someone or not, is if someone has kind of, like a wholesale, you know, disavowal of violence or not, or if someone is sort of like, we live in the world that made us like.... we live in a really violent world. And there were so many things that were on the auspices of my thoughts when I was writing this Triple Canopy piece that I ultimately didn't put in, but when I was talking about obsession, thinking so much about things, whatever, like, one of the things that I think really impacted, like my thoughts and the world this year, right was like the Luigi Mangione shooting. And I think also, it's so interesting how there was like, such an outpouring of love and sexual obsession for him. And obviously, like, he's very, you know, classically beautiful and whatever. It's not that surprising in a certain way, but there was like, such a it felt like there was such an erotic charge to the entire thing. And it was so exciting. And now, similarly, like... When I saw the headline that was like, you know, they're seeking execution, like I felt so re, you know, like viscerally upset and in a similar, like, not, you know, but like, bodily, whatever kind of way. And I think that I don't know, yeah, I feel like that was just such a sort of, like, spectacular encapsulation of so many of the things we're talking about. And I remember there was, you know, I again, I was gonna write about this, but I didn't. But, um, I had this kind of, you know, there was this, like, night with my family, friends, whatnot, people who have me or like, yeah, speak. I had this night where I was speaking with people who maybe have a much more liberal political view than I do. And there was this kind of really red line, like, you know, people, some people being like, violence is terrible, and violence is never the answer. And then

other people being like, well, sometimes it is. And I think really, what kind of helped cut through it, or just, I don't know what helped sort of shift the conversation a little bit. Was like, basically just talking about, like, how do you see the landscape? Like, do you feel that you know Brian, whatever is the CEO? Is he, like, a civilian? To you, you know, and like, to me, someone like that is not a civilian. And Luigi is a soldier, and that's okay, if you're wholesale against war, then go off and be wholesale against war. But if you're not, do you know what I mean? So anyway, that was a tangent, but I just feel like I've really been thinking about him a lot, and wanted to share and shout him out.

AS I really appreciate you also talking about, like, the erotics of the excitement of tracking the case and perfect before he was caught, like we were all like, watching, are they going to catch him like we hope they want? And there's this kind of energy, of revolutionary energy that perfect the insurrectionist energy that we don't allow ourselves to have. And I think it connects to what you're saying about revenge, by all means necessary. Reminds me of the colonial struggles. It reminds me of black radicals have been saying some of these things for a very long time, kind of like Fanon, but, but I was hoping that we could also think about this in the context of the performance, because the piece, like when I saw as Sophia was very generous to send me the essay that she's been working on with, together with Rachel, and I wrote to her, and I was like, This is Great. It's so relentless, and there's a kind of militancy also in the way that you do, kind of like this work here today, like in your relationship with the audience, there's the militancy of this is going to happen on my terms, even though nobody believes that your terms will be actually received, kind of like obeyed, but, but you kind of like, push us, and then there's the play, and there's there's the play of ambivalence, the way in which you question yourself, you talk about your own projections, but then you're back at it. You're at it with us. And you kind of, like, in a way, like, I don't know how other people experience that, but as the audience, as an audience member, I experienced that as a certain kind of pressure. Don't let up. Don't let up. Every time there's there's a feeling like you can get out from that way, like you're right before me closing the door, and kind of like there's something claustrophobic, in a way that feels actually like a deep act of care, like not quite letting me get away with trying to find an out. And there's a militancy to that. So I was wondering how this sounds to you? Does it speak to you?

SG For me, so much of performing, speaking publicly, gathering an audience, you know, forcing people to respond, signing an NDA, or whatever it is, I feel there's a way that it's a response to feeling very, you know, nihilistic or like, cynical at times. And in terms of what you're saying about care, I feel like there's... I enjoy being forced to, for example, go to the movies. Like, I never go to the movies. I always don't want to go. And I always think about how, a few years ago, I went to the David Cronenberg movie *Crimes of the future*, which is, you know, a huge, super famous movie that I was so resistant to seeing. And I saw it at some point in the throes of being really depressed, because, like, my boyfriend forced me to, and it was so, you know, life changing, and it really reoriented me, and I had this huge encounter with art. And so I think there's something where I think so much of our culture, so much of the culture around art, around the art world in New York, even like the literature world in New York, but certainly the art world, like really doesn't reward a kind of, like earnestness and and like, really earnest engagement. And, you know, people might call it like cringe or whatever, there's this kind of, like, disaffection or disaffectedness. And so, yeah, I think that, I think it is important to me, when I am doing something I care about to be like, if you're gonna be here, you should care too. Or like, Don't or be committed in some kind of way. And let's, like, try to have an



experience where some commitment is occurring and some kind of, like, admittance of the stakes here. Here, and sort of, like, why we're all here. And I think some of it is, is a gesture to that, which I think is, and I think it, on the surface, I think it's a very like, antagonistic gesture, but I think underneath, there's quite a, yeah, like, okay, you know, come in. Like, I care. Do you care? We can be here together.

**AS** Very interesting. I was going to ask, and you're beginning to touch on this. Do you see this as an invitation, or do you see this as I mean, when you say that your boyfriend took you to the movie, he forced you, I'm taking that very seriously, because I you're saying it very seriously. One might say, like, what's the big deal about a movie, whatever, but, but there is a kind of force in the performance. And I was wondering, like, how do you see this question of invitation? Because when you say, if I care, you should care. And there's this seduction of, like, bringing somebody in. But then there's also, like, the kind of bludgeoning. There's a bludgeoning quality to the fucked upness of the piece. There's aspects of the piece that are fucked up, right? Totally.

**SG** I think that certainly, like for me in my interpersonal relationships, and particularly, like a romantic partnership, I my disposition is definitely being kind of like a brat and like I don't, you know, like make me type thing, but in a, in a, really, but, like, a, not that part of this is a little bit of what I was trying to get out in the piece. You write a lot about BDSM, about, you know, certain perversions, etc. And that's not, you know, usually, like, put my relationships in those terms, or I'm not really part of those, like communities or scenes, but I think on an interpersonal level, I certainly am, and I think that, yeah, again, like in an interpersonal relationship where you know someone incredibly well, are very connected to them, where there's like, a lot of a lot of like, love and trust and whatnot, there's also like intense power dynamics at play.

And I think that I experience a kind of submission within that, that's, that's, that's like, necessary to, I feel like there, you know, there's a bit of a like, yeah, I won't do this unless someone puts their foot down. And that's, like, the result of, you know, that's obviously a lot of people who, like, get depressed, are familiar with that experience, or whatever. And so, yeah, I think that there's, like, I think for me in a performance setting, I think that there's kind of many different elements at play, like, I do really enjoy and play on kind of, like, bludgeoning, forcing, I want. There's a part of me that, like, wants someone to be afraid of me. You know, I want to, like, induce fear in people. And then also, when I do that at times, then I feel really lonely sometimes, and then I might try to do a different thing. So I think it's a little bit different every time.

**AS** It's very interesting because it makes me think about the erotics of this work like that. The work is, like, very heated, and I think everybody would respond to it in a different way. But there's something about there's a moment where the piece talks about people thinking that it's play, but it's not play. So it kind of teeters on the end of like, Is this happening? or is this an as if, is this pretend? or is this the real thing?

**SG** Absolutely, yeah. And I think that that was quite a theme in my work, and still is, yeah, where, like, I'll say things and people are sort of either, like, you don't really mean that, or, um, yeah, or I'll have, like, an interpersonal dynamic, particularly around, like, transactional, sexual scenarios, right? I've had this many times where, like, it's always so, because I'm very fixated on, like, words and language, in a different version of the piece. I said this, and then I took it out, but I said like, I often experience myself as, like, remembering

exactly what I or another person said, even though obviously that. It's an incredibly fallible memory. But actually, I also have so so many things in writing. Like, I write to people a lot, and they write back to me, and then it's always like, so strange then to me when something happens, like someone completely, you know, reneging on something, or like, acting like, we're in an entirely different scenario than we're in where I'm like, we both have like, in writing that I said X, Y or Z, that you agree, like, agreed to it and like, is that a game or is it not? And often, with people you don't, you don't know, like, I think a lot of my practice in terms of, like, the things I've written about in the Triple Canopy piece, some of the things I was talking about here, even though it feels a bit different now, is kind of like, um, the aftermath of, like, what happens when you're in a really volatile dynamic with someone, it kind of explodes, and then You're sort of left alone, like if you stop speaking, or if you and I don't think like the dynamic ends there, and so I think some of that erotic charge energy then gets put into the work.

RO One of my favorite lines from the piece, which you also quoted in this performance, is that being wronged by another person makes me feel a lot of things, but one of them is free, and I think that touches on so many of the different elements we've been talking about, right? And I can have speculated and will publicly speculate on, you know what I think you're saying there and and I think the direct interpretation right is that when someone wrongs you, it then gives you permission to act however you would like, back to them, right? Like, it opens up this field of possibility that maybe brings it into a different conception of the ethical or something like that, like we were pointing to before.

I think about Luigi, it also in the concept of him as a soldier, identifying a soldier. It's like, it's also like, when someone reveals themselves to be at war, then you can also engage with them in that way. It opens up again, like that different frontier of understanding, and it just also, I think there's maybe in relationship to the audience, though, is like, is that? What Do you feel like, when you are harmed? It creates the sense of freedom, that the relentlessness or something about this, in this sensation of entrapment is like, maybe then that gives permission to an audience or to the people engaging with your work as well, and that's something you're actually trying to generate for them. Is, is the sense of possibility and permission because something has been done, and what it means to react to a thing that has that, that one perceives as being done to us.

There's so many different directions in which we could go from here and we don't have a ton of time left, because I think we'd wanted to open up to questions at some point. So maybe we'll skip to the end of my little questions. And, you know, I think one of the things that avgi was was mentioning earlier, too, is, or alluding to, is a moment in the piece where you're talking about about the genocide in Gaza. I mean, well, all of Palestine, and you're talking about that really specifically in the context of of the *#metoo* movement, and how you experienced me too, as this failure of language for you, and that it was like it was a confrontation with the limits of what a declarative proposal could hit, and then how it became recuperated in this this final gesture, looking at this documentary that was, you know, making all of these claims about sexual assault, and specifically focusing on the supposed claims that of sexual assault on October 7, and then, you know, ignoring so much else, and how this felt kind of like the ap it gets into all of these, like very tricky questions of harm and language and the things that we're discussing, and I'm curious, like, If we could talk a little bit more about the *#metoo* and that relationship, and how it relates to and like maybe spurred some of your work as well, and how it also relates to some of these conversations of consent. And maybe, would you like

to read, or should I read a little bit of this section from where you're talking about this. Okay, so Sophia writes,

*"When #metoo popped off in late 2017, hundreds of gallerists, artists, writers, editors, curators, directors, arts administrators, assistants and interns, workers of the arts world signed an open letter published in The Guardian condemning rampant sexual exploitation in their field. Quote. We are not surprised when curators offer exhibitions or support in exchange for sexual favors. We are not surprised when gallerists romanticize, minimize and hide sexually abusive behavior by artists they represent. When I look back, I think I didn't know what to do with these unsurprising realities, other than to embody them",*

and that last sentence is, Sophia's

*"Available working conditions and the coerced erotic surrounding them made me feel hopeless. Widespread girl bossified efforts to fight such conditions using lawsuits, call outs, firings, promotions, HR trainings, the tools of capitalism, a fundamentally sexually and economically abusive framework, made me feel worse in my mind, I was choosing between submissive nihilism and individual power, and I chose individual power. I treated the possibility of receiving support for sexual favors as a legitimate strategy. I myself arguably engaged in sexually abusive behavior which future gallerists of mine then romanticized."*

And I think there's this way in which, like one could see your work as preempting harm, as this defensive posture that you're also gesturing to within the piece that you presented today as like if I am the first to strike, then any thing that happens to me afterwards is itself, maybe revenge for what I have already done, which then means that you're shifting a lens and creating kind of this, um, this armor where you cannot be a victim because you have already victimized to the other. And so I think there's this way in which you're creating these like very complex power dynamics and and really troubling these quite rigid categories that both #metoo and ideas of affirmative consent set up, which is like you are either a victim or a perpetrator, and there's no blurriness or boundary there. So I've rambled for a bit, but I wonder if you just want to kind of say a little bit more about this dynamics?

**SG** I think that yeah, for me, so much of that was also a question of, like, erotics, right? And being like, Okay, if, if work is a site of, like, massive, um, sexual exploitation, like all, you know, all work, even though, also the kind of me too, movement coincided with, like, when I got into sex work, basically, which I think was also its own, um, like, shaping factor in my mind, because also that was such a that was like a really different, you know, sex work is, like, quite mainstream now, and that was still kind of slightly a moment where, like, a lot of feminists were like me too, and also were like criminalized sex work. It was sort of a tipping point a little bit. So there was kind of an odd, whatever relationship around it, then where so much of that movement, like left out sex workers, trans women, you know, whatever, many other kinds of women. But anyway, that was on my mind, but also even more so I think that, I think that for me, like, if there's a lot of sexual exploitation happening somewhere, then there's like, a lot of sexual energy in that space. And that's like a, you know, power differentials are extremely erotic, and so it just never made sense to me that, like, that would go away. And then I felt like there was this question of, sort of like, what to do with it then. And so I was kind of like, Okay, I'll do the opposite, you know, I'll respond to this kind of new, you know, stance of

like, you know, prohibition and like, erasure by really drawing it to the surface. And I think that that was defensive in a lot of ways. I think it was, like, curious in a lot of ways. I think it was strategic and in certain ways.

I think that my whole, like, I have a really, sort of, like an aversive, or, negative...I feel extremely disconnected from the #metoo movement, and I feel like I have a lot of like, negative things to say about it, which I, you know, mostly have, have said around, like language, feeling really suspicious of what kinds of language are rewarded, the way language is just then, like, immediately assimilated into the war machine, the way, like Sheryl Sandberg is, like me too, you know, like, support the IDF, and it's just like, that's that's to me, like, where that goes. And so I feel incredibly suspicious of it. But also I just. Read this book, *Trauma Plot* by Jamie Hood, who writes of her experiences being raped. And it's a really amazing book. It just came out, and she writes of being really like, moved and inspired by the metoo movement. And for me, it was just like a little there was something helpful about it, about feeling less, kind of a pressure to like, universalize like, I don't, I think it didn't have like, it wasn't a movement that made me feel at all, like, personally empowered. But I do understand that it did make a lot of women feel per and people feel personally empowered who have similar politics to me and who are like, you know, antagonistic to all the same things I'm antagonistic to. So that was just quite interesting and illuminating for me to read that and be like, Well, yeah. Also, if you have been, like, really silenced around sexual violence, it would probably have a different impact on you. So those are my random thoughts on the topic.

RO it's 21:45. I think we should wrap up, but maybe I will just end on a little quote about money, which from the piece where Sophia is talking about in a chapter of the piece, or section called Sophia

*"I began escorting in 2017 when I was 25 I've written about this before, how and why I began to the best of my ability to Remember, my understanding has evolved somewhat, and this is a new page, so I'll say I used to give a solely material answer, which wasn't untrue, but also wasn't honest. I was a writer, an artist. That was what I wanted to dedicate my time to, and it didn't pay me enough to live in New York. There is so much money to get, and a lot of it sits in the pockets of bored, horny men, barely professionalized. High end escorting was a practical solution. Nothing else I was qualified to do would pay my rent in two hours."*

Thank you everyone for coming. Thank you so much Avgi and Sophia.