

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



IS IT MY BODY?

Lauren Taylor

November 4th – November 26th, 2017

Opens Saturday, November 4th from 3-6pm

Please note this exhibition marks the end of Freddy's 2017 program. Many thanks to everyone who has supported the project! Please check back later for 2018 programming.

I have experienced sleep paralysis throughout my life. One time, I woke up lying on my side. I saw a blurry figure standing inches from the mattress, observing me, stalking me. The figure was tall, built, ambiguous gender. It walked toward the foot of the bed, keeping its face square to my body. As soon as it left my field of vision, something grabbed me by the T-shirt collar and threw me to the floor. I screamed! It was flinging me around like a wet towel. Pinned to the ground, I could hear the back door of the apartment swing open then footsteps in the hallway outside my bedroom. A shadow wavered under the door; my restrainer tightened their grip. Still screaming, I felt my heart thumping up my windpipes and into my throat. And then, like a cheesy fade effect used to frame a flashback scene in a film, I woke up; my body still in bed.

In her essay "Her Body, Himself," Carol J. Clover writes about the Final Girl, a character archetype in slasher films. Inevitably female, she epitomizes sweetness and helplessness, at first glance. She is desired by both villain and audience. She witnesses and endures sadistic acts of violence and psychological trauma inflicted by the killer. Clover writes, "[She] perceives the full extent of the preceding horror and her own peril: who is chased, cornered, wounded; whom we see scream, stagger, fall, rise, and scream again. She is abject terror personified."¹ The Final Girl is resilient, fights back, and eventually escapes. Sometimes she kills *the* killer herself: she is the only survivor.

"I'm into survival."

The killer embodies a questionable sense of masculinity. A body masked, rarely seen, at first lurking in the shadows. Sometimes his true identity is revealed later, sometimes "he" *is* a woman. Just as the killer is not fully masculine, the Final Girl is not fully feminine—



Still shot from John Carpenter's film, *Halloween* (1978)

not, in any case, feminine in the traditional sense. "Slasher films present us a world which male and female are at desperate odds but in which, at the same time, masculinity and femininity are more states of mind than body." (Clover, 188)

Sleep paralysis unlocks my subconscious fear of being manipulated and controlled by men. I often sense another "body" in the room with me. I become aware of my physical "self-ness," my woman-ness, sharing space with a vaguely male other. I can only describe him as "matter," a reflection of my own flesh, my fearful, heat-emitting, vital matter. The frequencies of my screams violently reverberating in the space surrounding and in between us:

They hit my cheek (*smack!*) g r a z e
the collarbone(*shhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh*) and kick me in the stomach

(*thud*)

The exhibition is on view by appointment only. For more information (including exact location) and images, please contact info@freddygallery.biz

1. Carol J. Clover, "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film." *Representations*, no. 20, 1987, pp. 187–228. Originally published in *Men, Women, and Chainsaw: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*, Princeton University Press, 1992.