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## With A Flick of a Tale

Linda Voorwinde and Ashley Cook

October 27, 2022



Our intimate experience with the German Cockroach species taught us that they have a pattern on their underbelly that resembles a six pack of abs. They have six legs, two antennas. The females are larger than the males and can be identified because they carry around a yellow sack of eggs that they drop in order to further populate their community, hatching 30-40 eggs at a time and averaging about 350 offspring in just one insect's lifespan. The larger the population there is living in the walls, the stronger an odor they emit, which resembles a pile of stale, dirty laundry. The process of extermination is delicate because squishing them would spread the eggs so we needed to spray them with bleach and then burn them to death, and even then, they did not die easily.

It was October in Detroit and we had just arrived from Switzerland. The air was eerie for many reasons that we will get into as we unpack this story that developed during this month in 2017. We were just about to settle in a cozy apartment in Hamtramck, an island city surrounded by the much larger city of Detroit, when we heard warnings from passers-by and news stations to remain alert. Within the past couple weeks, women had been chased down and abducted on two different occasions while riding their bikes on the stretch of St. Aubin between Holbrook and Clay. This was on our minds constantly since we heard this news. We would often drive around with the windows down, wondering who these abductors were, realizing that at any point they may be the person driving the car next to us with their window down and their radio playing loud enough to sync up perfectly with ours. This chilling thought came with a tinge of dissociation that made the world around us feel like the setting of a true crime documentary, and we were sandwiched somewhere between the beginning and the end.

It seemed that 88.1 had discovered a way to play Top 40 tracks without having to pay for the rights, by playing them at two times the speed. The station is based in Detroit's other island city, Highland Park, and usually features local programming so we thought the songs were by locals before we heard the same song on another station at its actual pace. Honestly, this short-lived radio trend of high-pitched, sped-up rap songs delivered the perfect soundtrack to illustrate just how surreal things were about to get. We soon realized the apartment we had was infested with thousands of cockroaches, which finally explained the perpetuation of the sour smell that came with the place despite our thorough attempts to clean it. While binge watching *Handmaid's Tale*, we would see them out of the corner of our eyes, quickly scurrying up into the attic to join their highly saturated dwelling before we had time to grab the torch we used to kill them. It quickly became a massacre and we were the murderers. We had no choice but to attack these poor creatures out of concern for our own health, but with each killing our guilt became heavier and heavier. Everything had to remain packed until the professional extermination service would clear the space of our vermin roommates as the landlord promised, but of course that did not work. Everybody knows that those chemicals cannot stop this indomitable creature that has proven to be able to survive for weeks without a head, up to a month without food and water and even tolerate nuclear radiation fairly well. They love the darkness; they would make a pattering sound that further animated this nightmare while we tried to sleep, scavenging for kitchen crumbs or darting across the room to rest in the houseplant in the corner. Their fast and tiny bodies were tormenting our psyche like we had died and ended up in Dante's Vestibule of Hell.

Outside, the wind was brisk as it blew the Halloween decorations from side to side, clanking them against the old homes and businesses in tandem with the sound of rustling leaves that had fallen off the trees days before. Places with four seasons are reminded annually of nature's process of catharsis and it is tradition to welcome this season with the exploration of darkness in many forms. We heard about *Freakish Pleasures* at City Club and planned to use the party as an opportunity to participate in the holiday festivities as a catharsis of our own, to somehow purge ourselves of the mental anguish. We did, and then drove through Canada to Niagara falls the next morning.

Catharsis is a word originating from Greece meaning "purification", "cleansing" or "clarification". It is used to describe the purification and purgation of emotions through a dramatic act that results in renewal and restoration.



# With a Flick of a Tale

at Loner

Linda Voorwinde and Ashley Cook

Opening September 23 5pm-8pm 15 rue Jacques Kable 75018, Paris

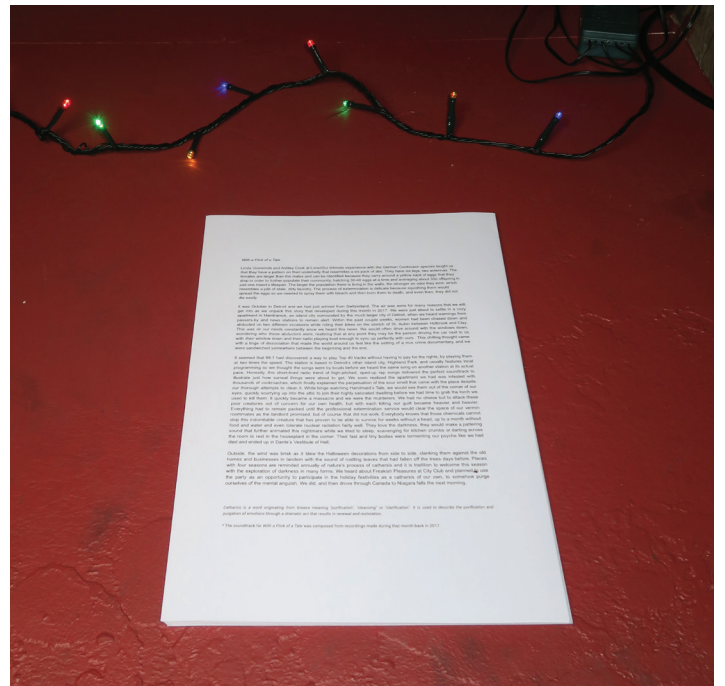
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On September 23, 2022, the exhibition *With a Flick of a Tale* opened at Loner, an unconventional exhibition space in Paris located in the attic above the apartment of Gilles Jacot, who directs and curates for the space. As a collaborative project between Linda Voorwinde and Ashley Cook, the show served as a recollection of a series of chaotic events in Detroit and Hamtramck that happened 5 years ago in 2017. Materials came together from that time to form this work in order to tell the story and participate in the ongoing relevance of art as an agent for catharsis. The show featured a framed photograph coupled with a string of twinkle lights, a text and a soundtrack which was composed from recordings made during that month back in 2017. The soundtrack and the text accompanied the work in the attic as well as the guests downstairs.

You can hear the sound track for the exhibition at <https://soundcloud.com/runnermagazine/with-a-flick-of-a-tale>

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Loner is a platform for art and friends in the attic of 15 Rue Jacques Kable 75018 Paris. It was initiated by Gilles Jacot in April 2022. Open by appointment only.

The space opened with their first exhibition, *Life's Beauty Makes Me Think* by Jake Shore on May 4, 2022

*With a Flick of a Tale* was their second exhibition.

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