

GLADSTONE GALLERY

William J. Simmons, "Portfolio by Anne Collier," *Bomb*, October 29, 2018

***BOMB***

## Portfolio by Anne Collier

*Circulating selves and images.*



Anne Collier, *Woman Crying #7*, 2016. C-print. 35.26 x 53 inches. Courtesy the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York.

According to C. Namwali Serpell's essay "A Heap of Cliché," the term cliché has an art-historical root in nineteenth-century printing technologies. French print-workers would mimic the sound of the press—cliché, cliché, cliché. By

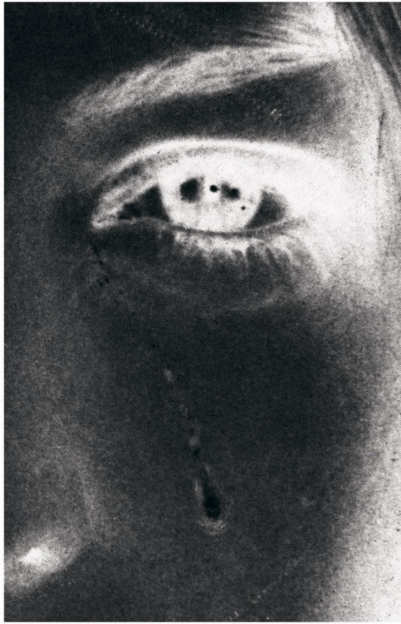
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the end of the nineteenth century, that onomatopoeia had entered colloquial use as we know it today: an ersatz copy of something purportedly truer and more deeply felt. There are always people onscreen or encased by a viewfinder whose emotions seem simultaneously manufactured and awash in authenticity. Each time, we feel that we have seen these people before, that they are a cliché; and each time we set that knowledge aside and view them with newly astonished eyes.



Anne Collier, *Woman Crying #1*, 2016. C-print. 35.26 x 53 inches. Courtesy the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York.

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Anne Collier, *Crying (Negative)*, 2017. C-print. 49.7 x 86.4. Courtesy the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York.



Anne Collier, *Window*, 2018. C-print. 78 x 45.59 inches. Courtesy the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York



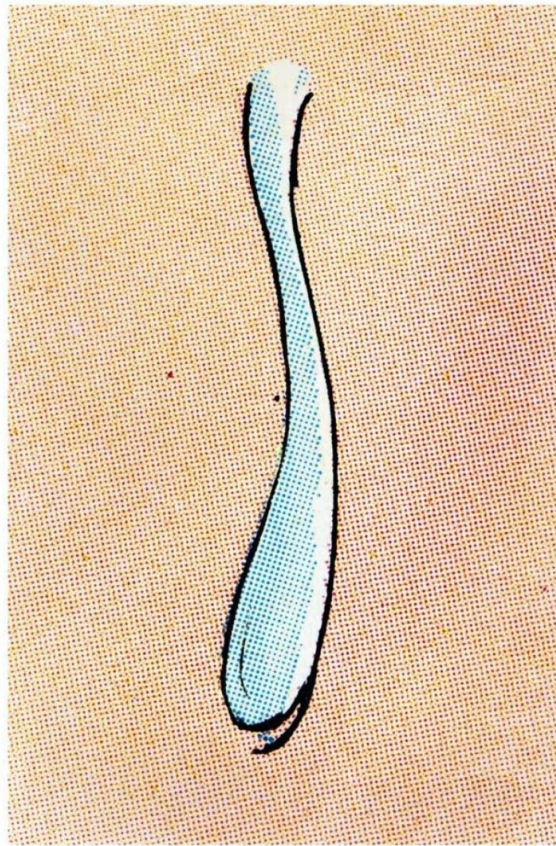
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The monikers of “cool” and “detached” have been applied to Anne Collier’s work. The sexist implications of those terms aside, I find that Collier’s photographs are just the opposite. They love judiciously and with abandon. They take their objects of inquiry and hold them close and spurn them only to ask them to return. In this vein, Lauren Berlant argues in *Desire/Love* (2012) with regard to writing about gender and sexuality: “There are only reintroductions, after all, reencounters that produce incitements to loosen, discard, or grasp more tightly to some anchors in the attunement that fantasy offers.” Collier’s photographs momentarily arrest these reencounters. They do not merely deconstruct clichés, they are clichés; and they are that combination of formalism, historicism, and bodily articulation from which the word emerged.



Anne Collier, *Woman Crying (Comic) #3*, 2018. C-print. 49.7 x 68.84 inches.  
Courtesy the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York.

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Anne Collier, *Tear (Comic) #2*, 2018. C-print.  
49.7 x 73.39 inches. Courtesy the artist and  
Anton Kern Gallery, New York.

In her book of poems *Shiner* (2001), Maggie Nelson writes: “You don’t really / have to believe in / yourself, only / in your circulation.” It is easy to reduce Collier’s work to so many references, to an unending stream of visual similarities and art-historical happenstance. This is the postmodern critical mode that allows historians to order the art object to dissolve and to abdicate itself for the benefit of good conceptualism. Like Nelson, I think, Collier believes in both the self and its circulation, in the grit of embodiment alongside the endless loops of discourse. Her work is not always deconstructive or paranoid, though it retains a proximity to these necessary hallmarks of criticism. Collier asks us to love an image, object, or idea, and to love it again



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after she has revealed it to be debased, trite, and anti-progressive. We long for the good life even though it is dangerous and unattainable. We crave to snatch the photograph from its interpolation into capitalist visual regimes. We must be seen, despite knowing that everyone is looking elsewhere, toward that image whose glamour, poignancy, and rigor perpetually outshine us.



Anne Collier, *Woman Crying (Comic) #4*, 2018.  
C-PRINT. 49.7 X 62.83 inches. Courtesy the  
artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New York.



Anne Collier, *Tear (Comic) #4*, 2018.  
C-print. 49.7 x 66.49 inches. Courtesy  
the artist and Anton Kern Gallery, New  
York.