

temic oppression, and rallies against tendencies to individualize violences in communities.

Next, in “Refuse,” contributors attend to trash, trashing, and a “turning away” from a national literary culture that has more recently been called out as garbage but is, in actuality, built on a toxic infill; indeed, “the dumpster fire has always been burning.” Alicia Elliott’s essay reads not only as a response to Chelsea Vowel’s poem that reads “tell me all the terrible things so I can be appalled...,” but further, with a call to action, she addresses recent CanLit controversies stemming from repeated mistakes, including UBCAccountable, the “Appropriation Prize” scandal, and Jian Ghomeshi’s sexual assault trial, among others. She rejects repetition, assuring that we “don’t need to wait” for institutional change because there remains “a lot of work to do.” Perhaps then, we must do what Sonnet l’Abbé suggests: “let stews simmer”—maybe while we read this book. Marie Carrière, Kai Cheng Thom, Dorothy Ellen Palmer, Natalee Caple and Nikki Reimer, and Lorraine York also contribute powerful refusal pieces.

Finally, “Re/fuse” “work[s] for something better while resisting the positivism of hope.” Such labour is captured in Laura Moss’s desire “to read the words of people who fight for breath” and is soberingly articulated by Phoebe Wang’s lament: “I have little choice. The need is too great.” For example, Kristen Darch and Fazeela Jiwa consider what CanLit accountability and solidarity might look like, including increased representation, learning about structures of privilege and small acts of radical transformation. Erika Thorkelson showcases one such transformation by exploring her “split” from Margaret Atwood in light of UBCAccountable. She calls for radical listening, particularly in education contexts. Relatedly, voices such as Joshua Whitehead’s,

who pens the searing concluding words of the text, “sling[ing] stories like arrowheads”—in a writing act of “world build[ing],” demand such radical listening. Overall, these voices, including A.H. Reaume and Jennifer Andrews, are restorative in one respect, but also sharply attentive to CanLit’s “fundamental fragmentation.”

(Not so) simply, *Refuse* is required reading. It will appeal to scholars across disciplines such as cultural studies, creative writing, education, gender studies, literature, and publishing, among others. Particularly, feminist activists, artists, scholars, and writers will no doubt find that something in *Refuse* resonates with them. As someone who endeavours to practise intersectional feminism both pedagogically and personally, this text has uniquely informed my teaching and learning and I am grateful for it.

Amber Moore is a SSHRC-funded PhD candidate and Killam Laureate at the University of British Columbia studying language and literacy education with the Faculty of Education. Her research interests include adolescent literacy, feminist pedagogies, teacher education, and trauma literature, particularly YA sexual assault narratives. She also enjoys writing poetry and creative nonfiction.

DESIRE CHANGE: CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST ART IN CANADA

Heather Davis, Ed.
Montreal: McGill-Queen’s
University Press, 2017

REVIEWED BY J. BURBAGE

Desire Change is a collection of essays on contemporary Canadian feminist

art edited by Heather Davis. Davis has studied, written, and taught extensively at the intersection of art and feminism and has edited this volume with care and sensitivity for its subject matter. This is the first collection of essays written entirely about feminist art in the Canadian context and addresses a history often overshadowed by American feminist art. It delivers on its promise to fill this gap by centring issues of on-going settler colonialism and Indigenous art practice throughout the volume, not only in the dedicated section on “Decolonization.” The essays in this collection view feminist art not as a style but as a political stance, and so the choice to include a breadth of Indigenous art and critical essays dealing with Canada’s violent oppression of Indigenous peoples was a vitally important one.

There are very few trans* artists highlighted in this book. The one exception, Alvis Choi/Alvis Parsley, is undercut slightly as it is their work as alien “Captain Kernel” that is under examination in Karin Cope’s “Finding Possible Futures in Loving Animals and Aliens.” Non-binary and trans* identities are only conceived of as extra-human in this volume, belonging to “animals and aliens” and not to artists themselves. Davis does admit to bias in the introductory chapter, namely toward women and toward central and Western Canadian art, and otherwise does an excellent job of representing a wide range of Canadian feminist art and issues. This book is offered as “the beginning to ...a practical solution” to sexist exclusion from Canadian art history, it does not claim to solve the problem of exclusion for all artists. Perhaps a second volume is necessary, one which biases itself in other directions, thereby filling in gaps still left in Canadian feminist contemporary art history such as trans* exclusion and underrepresentation.

Desire Change is organized into three sections, each prefaced by a “Proposition for Twenty-First-Century Feminism” in keeping with the section’s themes. The first section, “Desire: Intersections of Sexuality, Gender and Race”, includes art and essays dealing with themes including embodiment and the gaze, lesbian abjection, cultural appropriation, and the exoticism of Asian “ethnic apparel” in diasporic contexts. Section two, “Desiring Change: Decolonization” is organized around issues relating to settler colonialism in Canada, Indigenous mothering-as-resistance, Indigenous futurities, and the afro-futurism of Camille Turner. Section three, “Forms of Desire: Institutional Critique and Feminist Praxis,” concerns itself with practice-based research, problematizes “community,” and highlights institutional complicity in colonialism and the exclusion of female and Indigenous artists in Canada. The book begins and ends with historical context, opening with a genealogy of feminist art in Canada and closing with a timeline of same.

This collection is beautifully illustrated, providing the perfect amount of visual context for the reader. Particularly striking are the photos of Rebecca Belmore’s work, still images nestled in amidst heartbreaking and graphic descriptions of her endurance art process. The essays in this book are well organized and mostly flow well together. Things become a little messy in section three, the pieces in this section ranging from interviews to short pieces to critical essays in a way that mostly works. Amy Fung’s “How to Review Art as a Feminist and Other Speculative Intents” fits awkwardly in this section as a sort of half-poem, half-prose rumination on the anti-feminist nature of art reviewing as a process. In a volume filled with carefully historicized and thoroughly researched essays, this

short piece may have worked better as a prologue to the institutional critique section of this volume. Placed as it is between Noni Brynjolson’s critique on MAWA’s Crossing Communities collaborative art project and cheyanne turions’ critical piece “How Not to Install Indigenous Art as a Feminist”, Fung’s piece seems connected to the rest of the essays in name only; a personal feminist reflection that does not situate itself specifically in the Canadian context as the other pieces in this collection do. As a text considered on its own, Fung’s piece is well written and gives the reader (and reviewer) a lot to consider despite its brevity, but in this collection it feels superfluous.

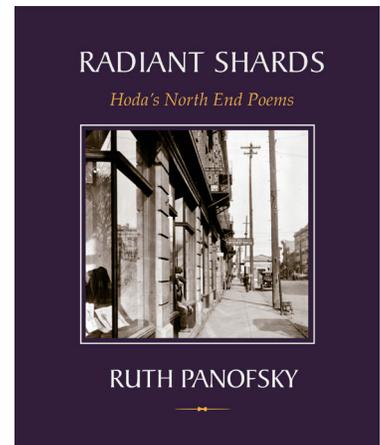
Desire Change is a valuable resource for researchers in art history, gender, feminism, and sexuality studies, as well as artists, curators, and Canadian feminists generally. It is a welcome and much needed source on feminist art in the Canadian context, and will hopefully inspire the creation or compilation of more books on this under-researched topic.

J. Burbage is a second-year PhD candidate in the Communications, New Media, and Cultural Studies program at McMaster University. She holds a BA and an MA from York University’s Gender, Feminist, and Women’s Studies program where she focused on sex and subjectivity for the bisexual subject. She is currently engaged in research related to the liberatory uses of the abject in art and body practice from an anti-assimilationist queer perspective.

RADIANT SHARDS: HODA’S NORTH END POEMS

Ruth Panofsky
Toronto: Inanna Publications, 2020

REVIEWED BY CAROL DEBRA
LIPSZYK



What does it mean to be so absorbed and compelled by a female character, one realized in fiction and modelled from an immigrant, that a poet imaginatively brings her back to life again?

The answer comes in Ruth Panofsky’s new work of poetry, *Radiant Shards, Hoda’s North End Poems*, narrated by Hoda, daughter of early twentieth-century Jewish immigrants to North End, Winnipeg. Hoda is a child born and trapped in poverty, her father, a blind storyteller, “benign and blessed,” her mother, a cleaner of houses who negotiates with the world from a fearful distance as a tumor grows like a “pink melon/seeding/ her stomach.”

The answer comes in Panofsky’s “yielding” to the character’s “rare dignity/compassion/and grace,” thus redeeming for Hoda the self-respect and worth she was robbed of throughout her life. The work is a searing yet loving portraiture which, true to character and circumstance, poignantly and credibly presents Hoda’s story