

**THE DARK, UNFORMED NATURE OF QUEER CHILDHOOD
EXPLORED BY ARTIST CATALINA SCHLIEBENER IN *GROWING SIDEWAYS***



Catalina Schliebener, *Peek-a-Book 31*, cut paper and ink on paper, 8.5 x 5.5 inches, 2016

"Scratch a child, you'll find a queer." -- Kathryn Bond Stockton

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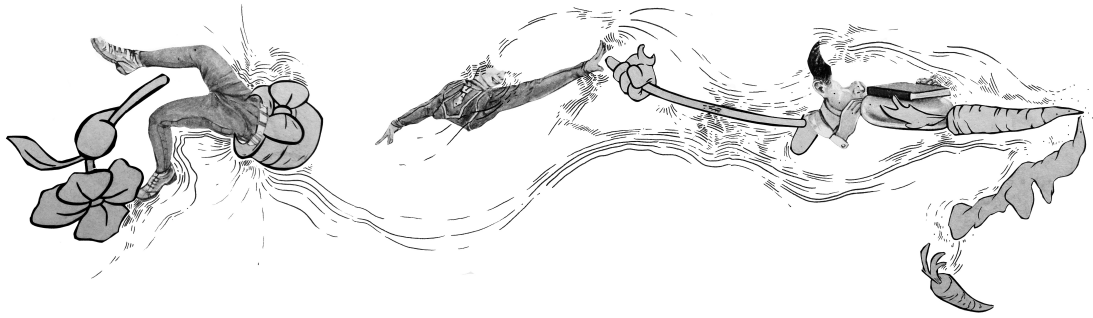
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New York, New York--The Bureau of General Services Queer Division presents ***Growing Sideways***, an **exhibition of new work by Buenos Aires-based, Chilean artist Catalina Schliebener**, organized by independent curator John Chaich, **on view December 2, 2016 through January 22, 2017** with an **opening reception on Friday, December 2 from 7-9 pm** at 208 W 13th Street, New York, NY, on the 2nd floor of the Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, & Bisexual Community Center.

Growing Sideways presents over five dozen drawings on collage that will frame the space and culminate in a site-specific floor-to-ceiling installation, growing across two and three dimensional surfaces and creating a disjointed narrative exploring gender formation and erotic curiosity through Schiebener's combination of cuttings from found children's books with abstract drawings and felt pieces that recall organic sensual shapes in nature and the body. Two series--"Peek-a-Boo" and "Sassy and Butchy"--comprise this show.

The exhibition takes its title, and somewhat its conceptual and formal inspiration, from queer scholar Kathryn Stockton Bond's notion that rather than the normative view of "growing up", the non-straight child "grows sideways"¹ through life-long, lateral interactions between childhood motivations and adult identifications, formed by sly intentions, blurred chronologies, and animalistic attachments.

¹ Bond, Kathryn Stockton. *Growing Sideways, Or Queer Children in the Twentieth Century*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.



Catalina Schliebener, *Sassy and Butchy 8*, cut paper and ink on paper, Polytych, 5.5 x 8.5 inches each, 2016

For Bond, queer children "grow meanings by putting people and things rather oddly besides themselves" ² -- not unlike the medium of collage.

As the critical acclaim of the recent exhibition *Cut Ups* at the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art and the popularity of the queer collage workshops at the Bureau attest, collage particularly speaks to queer artists and audiences alike as a medium for reclaiming queer desires from prescribed or mediated sources.

However, while collage often fills a surface with cut-and-pasted content, Schliebener isolates and reconfigures shapes as decorative details enhanced by the feathery, light strokes of ink drawings and recreated in felt details against a mysterious, generous use of negative space.

"Whether drawing and collaging on individual paper panels or creating a mural on the floor-to-ceiling wall, Schliebener combines the additive qualities of drawing, reductive acts of cutting, and nuances of figure and ground to explore the ambiguities of gender," notes curator John Chaich.

Moreover, Schliebener intentionally cuts elements from children's books--making the exhibition's setting at a contemporary, independent bookstore within one of the country's oldest LGBTQ community centers, which houses work by highly regarded queer artists such as Keith Haring and Fierce Pussy, all the more fitting. Apropos, a selection of books of artist-curated books will be on sale especially for this exhibition, as well as a black-and-white coloring book based on the "Sassy and Butchy" series, produced by Publishing Puppies press.

Free, public programs will accompany the exhibition:

- **Saturday January 7, 2017, 3pm, Hands-On Queer Collage Workshop**
- **Thursday, January 12, 2017, 7pm, Artist Dialogue** with curator John Chaich and Kris Grey, Deputy Director of Education and Visitor Experience at the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art.

An extension of *Growing Sideways* will be mounted in Buenos Aires at Haché Gallery in March 2017, co-curated by Chaich.

Catalina Schliebener (born in Santiago, Chile, in 1980) received her bachelor of philosophy of Universidad de Arte y Ciencias Sociales ARCIS, in Santiago. Afterwards she studied visual arts at the same university. From 2002-2008, she worked as an assistant professor within the areas of philosophy and art theory at several universities in Chile. Schliebener's work has been exhibited individually and collectively in galleries, museums and art fairs in Santiago de Chile, Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Lima, Belfast, Londres, Miami and New York. She has also received scholarships granted by the Development of Culture and the Arts Fund of the Government of Chile (Fondart), the Board of Cultural Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Relations of Chile (Dirac) as well as the Henry Moore Foundation of the United Kingdom. Recent exhibitions include the solo show, *Pin the Tail* at Point of Contact Gallery at Syracuse University, and the group exhibition, *Queering the BibliOject* at the Center for Book Arts in Manhattan.

² Bond, Kathryn Stockton. "Growing Sideways, Or Versions of the Queer Child." *Curiouser: On the Queerness of Children*, Ed. Steven Bruhm and Nathasha Hurley. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004.

The Bureau of General Services—Queer Division is an independent queer cultural center, bookstore, and event space that opened in New York City in 2012 and has been hosted by The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center since 2014. We aim to foster a community invested in the values of mindfulness, intellectual curiosity, justice, compassion, and playfulness. The Bureau seeks to excite and educate a self-confident, sex-positive, and supportive queer community by offering books, publications, and art and by hosting a wide variety of cultural events, including readings, performances, film screenings, book discussion groups, and workshops. We provide local and visiting queers and friends with an open and inclusive space for dialogue and socializing. The Bureau of General Services—Queer Division welcomes you.

Hours: Tuesdays—Sundays, 1-7 PM. Mondays, closed

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