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REY OF LIGHT

Artist DOMINIQUE REY illuminates the stranger, and strangeness, within

DOMINIQUE REY HAS BEEN INTERESTED in style since she was five, when she remembers suffering the indignity of posing for a class photo in shoes she didn't think matched her dress. Art lured the Winnipeg-based 37-year-old from a potential fashion design career to photography, painting, sculpture, video and performance art. But her work often, on some level, still asks: How do people choose to present themselves, and what might it mean? There are the exotic dancers primping pre-show in her award-winning photo series *Selling Venus*, and the ink drawing and oil paintings in *Pilgrims*, whose subjects each wear items of finery, like Chewbacca's bolero jacket, or a show-girl's opal-studded feathered headdress.

Rey has exhibited across Canada, the U.S. and Europe, while juggling a day job as a University of Manitoba art professor and pulling her weight as half of a creative-class power couple—her husband, Lancelot Coar, is an architecture professor and artist (their joint project won the regionals in the prestigious Migrating Landscapes competition).

Despite her professional sure-footedness, she's drawn to the misfit. For the self-portrait series that made up her 2012 show *Erking*, Rey donned lumpy, colourful stuffed panty hose to become both an evil German forest creature and the unsuspecting traveller he lures: "Panty hose are supposed to constrict and shape a woman's body to an ideal form," she says. "But the way I use them distorts

REY'S BODIES OF WORK



Still Hunters (2011)
from Rey's
Erking project



Untitled from Rey's
upcoming solo show,
Strangers to Ourselves



1 FASHION INSPIRATION

David Bowie. "He is untouchable as a fashion icon. The ripple effects of his wild imagination are still being felt."



2

PHOTOGRAPHER

Gillian Wearing. "Her daring, brilliance and sense of humour make for compelling and original work." Left: *Self-Portrait at 17 Years Old* (2003).



3

BEAUTY ITEM

M.A.C Lipstick in So Chaud. "It pops and makes the most mundane outfit fun."



4

ACCESSORY

BCBGMAXAZRIA clutch, \$98, bcbg.com. "It's feminine and the perfect party accessory."



5

MOVIE

Jean-Marc Vallée's *Café de Flore*. "A love story unlike anything, guaranteed to make you cry."

the body into grotesque shapes, speaking to the unconscious that refuses to be constrained, leading to all kinds of mishaps and follies."

Rey, proudly francophone, is no stranger to feeling Other. Her upcoming solo show, *Strangers to Ourselves*, at the **Langage Plus** gallery in Alma, Que. (Nov. 29–Jan. 27), borrows its title and central ideas from the post-structuralist philosopher Julia Kristeva's book of the same name. Each large-scale "photo assemblage" is formed from cut-up pieces of old colour photos that Rey rephotographed, then reprinted on a larger scale. Yellow roses, snowy mountaintops and fishnet-clad limbs form semi-human figures with an air of both otherworldly strangeness and elegance. The collaged creatures are almost at risk of being swallowed up by their bright white backgrounds, as though lost in a snowstorm—you can feel their loneliness.

"Ultimately, a stranger is a reflection of the unfathomable depths within you that are out of your reach," says Rey. "And if you have the courage, life is about encountering those depths with open eyes and curiosity." —*Nadja Sayej*