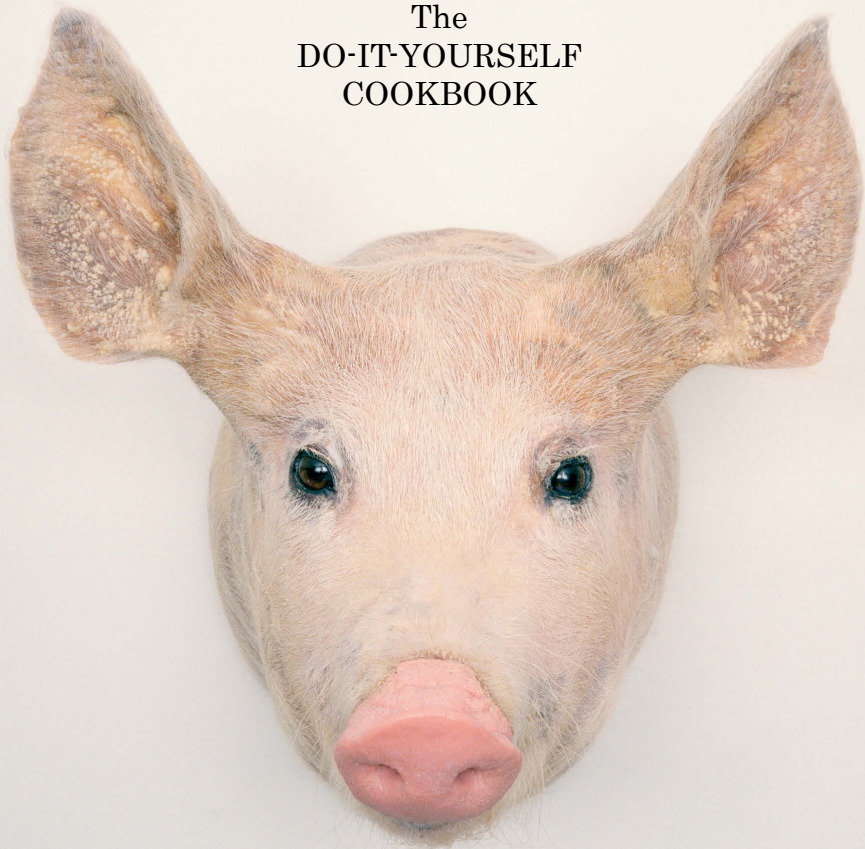


The
DO-IT-YOURSELF
COOKBOOK



Kim Waldron



The
DO-IT-YOURSELF
COOKBOOK

Kim Waldron

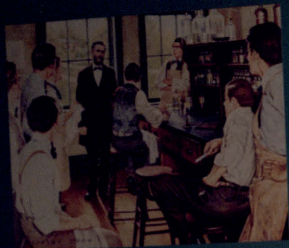


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FORWARD

In our contemporary societies, we are detached from death. Death has become an incidental event, even a media spectacle, beyond which actual contact with pulsing blood is infrequent. There where, as if by magic, a pig's legs are turned into ham and a lamb's into shanks, the death of livestock is hidden. Thus, we almost forget the meat's source, as if the animal and its flesh are two independent entities.

This distinction, which makes living with our meat diet easier, is applied to almost all areas of society, even current art practices. Works in which food functions as a reference to the animal, and vice versa, are in fact rare¹. The project *Beautiful Creatures* (2010-2013), by Kim Waldron, does this without ever sacrificing the eminently complex relationship that links us to the animal. This long-term project explores all the steps involved in bringing the animal to our plates.

Waldron assumes the roles of the hunter, tracking small game, the slaughterer, killing animals from fowl to cattle, the butcher, cutting, carving and preparing red meat and poultry. The cook, who previously worked in a restaurant in Montreal, plans the menus, one for each type of animal slaughtered. They are served at home, among friends, or in the broader context of a restaurant or a spit roast, for the animal's size and the legislation relative to it affects how it is consumed.

From this quickly sketched yet laborious process, that lasted over a few years, follows a rich and protean work, that comes out of performative action and questions the status of documents, since the main remaining trace are photographs, with the stuffed—and emblematic—heads of the slaughtered animals, and an artist book inspired by cookbooks. For every exhibition, Waldron remixes and reorganizes

¹ This observation comes from my PhD thesis on the use of food products in performative practices, from the first avant-garde to relational art (UQAM, 2011).

these documents. OBORO is showing the most complete narrative thread thus far.

The real connection that these photographs show between the artist and her “participants”—from the slaughterhouse owner to the dinner guests—makes evident the contribution of the relational approach to this project. However, its driving source remains autofiction. From this, undoubtedly stems the interest to reengage with the documentation, to recompose the story of the *creature* from the real information gathered. The training that it took to slaughter an animal and carve its meat was genuine, meanwhile Waldron is not a professional slaughterer or butcher. She plays with this dichotomy of fiction and non-fiction but who is she revealing, the worker or the artist?

With *Beautiful Creatures*, Waldron deepens a practice that mixes fiction and autobiography, which she began ten years previously with *Working Assumption* (2001). For this series, she dressed in the clothes of professionals and photographed herself in action in their workplaces, as a way of questioning women's status in traditionally male-dominated jobs. The artist now takes up this type of work once more, expanding her critique of the female body. Firstly, because women are generally compared with animals or meat—a *cow*, a *chick*—and secondly, because women artists make distinctive use of animal flesh. As of the mid-twentieth century, their work has addressed what is at stake in femininity—appearance, sexuality, pregnancy—by suggesting a reversal of the corporeal layer, from the inside out². This proposal, which is perhaps secondary in Waldron's *creature*, is nevertheless reinforced by two juxtaposing photographs in the artist book: on the left, meat on a spit, on the right, the artist several months pregnant.

In 1929, in the sixth issue of the magazine *Documents*, Georges Bataille established a relationship between two photographs: one, by Elie Lotar, of cow hooves leaning against a wall, the other, anonymous, of dancers lined up on a stage behind a

² I am thinking, among others, of emblematic works such as *Spring Banquet* (1959) by Meret Oppenheim, *Meat Joy* (1964) by Carolee Schneemann, and *Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic* (1987) by Jana Sterbak.

lowered curtain with only their legs visible. He associates light entertainment with the serial carving of animals. Thus, the frivolous image is imbued with morbidity and that of the slaughterhouse reveals the carelessness with which animals are killed. In *Beautiful Creatures*, Waldron associates photographs of animals before being slaughtered with photographs of their stuffed heads. Here too, this results in crossing pleasure, of a hunt whose trophies reveal the ornamental aspect, with the impact of a carcass.

Furthermore, this relationship is interested in exposing the delusion taxidermy seeks. The heads with their glass eyes are there to convince us, yet they lose this power. When compared to images of the corresponding animals, such as a cow or a duck, that were photographed in nature, they take on the appearance of death masks.

In *Beautiful Creatures*, Waldron compromises her own individuality, by donning various roles, as well as the individuality of animals, by displaying their heads severed from their bodies, and their bodies cut in pieces. How could we not then pursue this game begun by the artist that consists in combining the distinctive features of beings and categories: the self and the other, the animal and meat, the creator and the worker, man and woman? In doing so, will we not ultimately merge with the animal?

Mélanie Boucher

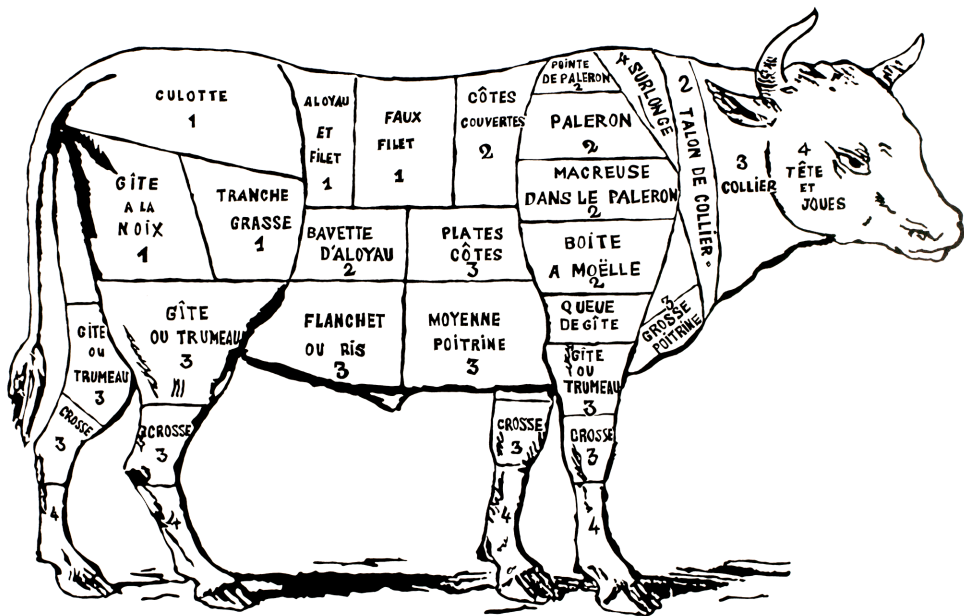
This text was originally published with the title
Beautiful Creatures by Kim Waldron: Back to Animality

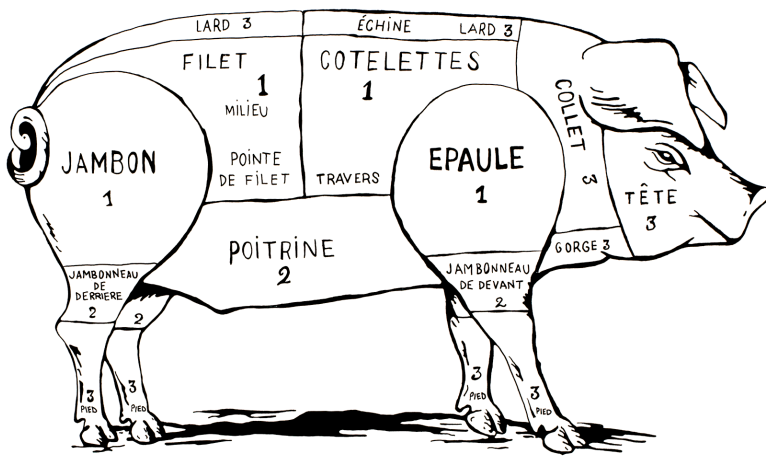
INTRODUCTION

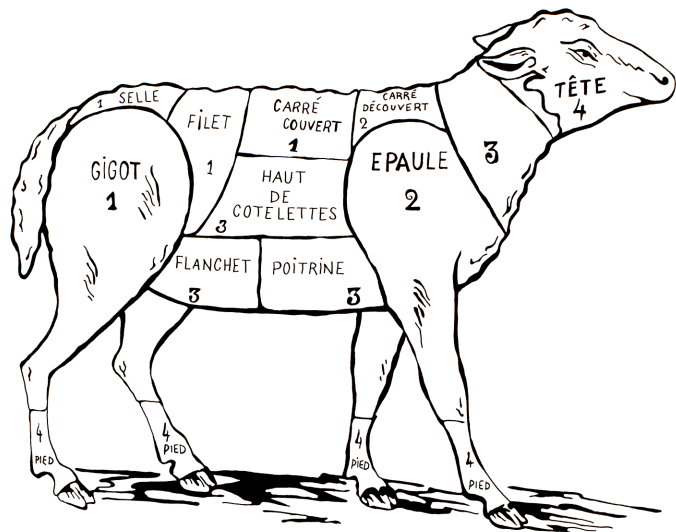
The Do-It-Yourself Cookbook houses the *Beautiful Creatures* project—a series of photographs and artworks that question our profound disconnection to the food we eat. In order to understand how animals are transformed into the meat we consume, I put myself in the shoes of the slaughterer, the butcher and the cook during a one-month residency at English Harbour Art Centre in Newfoundland.

I previously worked as a professional chef in Montreal. For this project I wanted to cook food for people to enjoy free of charge—food that I had processed from start to finish. I first attended slaughtering and butchery courses. I then slaughtered and butchered a calf, a pig, a lamb, a chicken and a duck, as well as caught a rabbit. Afterwards, the head of each animal was stuffed and mounted as a trophy.

This project culminated in two private and three public feasts with forty people in attendance. The chicken, the duck and the rabbit were slaughtered or trapped outside, then cooked as private meals. The lamb feast took place at the English Harbour Arts Centre as a buffet where people served themselves. The pork and veal feasts were five-course meals served at the Fisher's Loft Inn. The dinner menu consisted of grilled and braised meats in a selection of Indian, Italian and Quebecois dishes. I made everything from scratch, including fresh pasta, and picked locally grown ingredients. The wait staff of the inn agreed to help with the project in exchange for fresh meat.









MENU

Private Meals

(served October 24 and 28, 2009)

Butter Chicken and Asian Duck à l'Orange with Cucumber Raita
Braised Rabbit with Red Wine, Rosemary and Homemade Gnocchi

~

Lamb Feast

(served November 1, 2009)

Cabbage Soup with a Chicken Base
Dhal, Cucumber Raita and Spinach Garam Masala Puree
Braised Lamb with Red Wine and Thyme served with Fresh Pasta
Indian Style Ratatouille
Lamb Shanks Rogan Josh and Cardamom Spiced Lamb
Lemon Mint Barbequed Lamb Chops
Roasted Lamb with Garlic, Rosemary and Anchovies



Pork Feast

(served November 4, 2009)

Salad with Asian Pears / 18

Pumpkin and Parmesan Soup with a Pork Base / 24

Guinness Braised Pork Shoulder with Sweet Potatoes and Dried Cherries / 30

Tourtière / 44

Apple Crumble with Whipped Cream / 114

~

Veal Feast

(served November 7, 2009)

Potato Leek Soup with a Veal Base / 50

Layered Veal and Root Vegetables in a Coconut Curry Sauce / 72

Roasted Beet and Goat Cheese Salad / 98

Osso Bucco, Lasagna and Braised Sweet Onion Veal Breast / 108

Apple Crumble with Whipped Cream / 114



Chapter One

RABBIT HEADS







RABBIT HEADS

When I was working as a chef in a kitchen, I ordered some rabbits and they arrived with their heads still attached to their bodies. I couldn't bring myself to cut their heads off. Their size reminded me too much of my cat. There I was, cooking meat for people all the time and I couldn't stomach thinking about the actual animal. I became interested in this idea of disconnection between our food and the animals our food comes from.

Rabbit Slip Trail / 20

Rabbit Skinning / 21

Rabbit Entrails / 22

We set the rabbit slips along a moose trail. We placed rings of wire in the small pathways created by movement to catch the rabbit's neck as it runs along the path. If the night is cold, the rabbits will run. It was. We were supposed to check the traps the next day but we arrived a day late and four out of seven had been eaten by other animals.



Chapter Two
BIRD FOOD







BIRD FOOD

I lost my ducks during my first attempt at slaughtering fowl. It must have been nerves or stress but I fumbled getting them out of the cage. One went out the back door of the fishing stage and the other fell through a hole in the floor that is used as a garbage shoot when gutting fish. They both just swam away. It made me quite sad. They were grain-fed ducks. They wouldn't survive on their own.

Second Attempt
/ 26-27

Chicken and Duck
Murder / 28

Determined to become more comfortable handling birds, I went back to the man who sold me the ducks and purchased one more. So that I could practice, I brought the duck to a farm where I was storing chickens to fatten them up. A couple of days before my second attempt at slaughtering, I received a telephone call from the farm owner. During the night a weasel had murdered my birds. The head of one of the chickens was gone. The weasel had sucked the blood of the other two birds. In the end, the farmer fed the carcasses to his pigs.



Chapter Three
ANIMAL HEADS









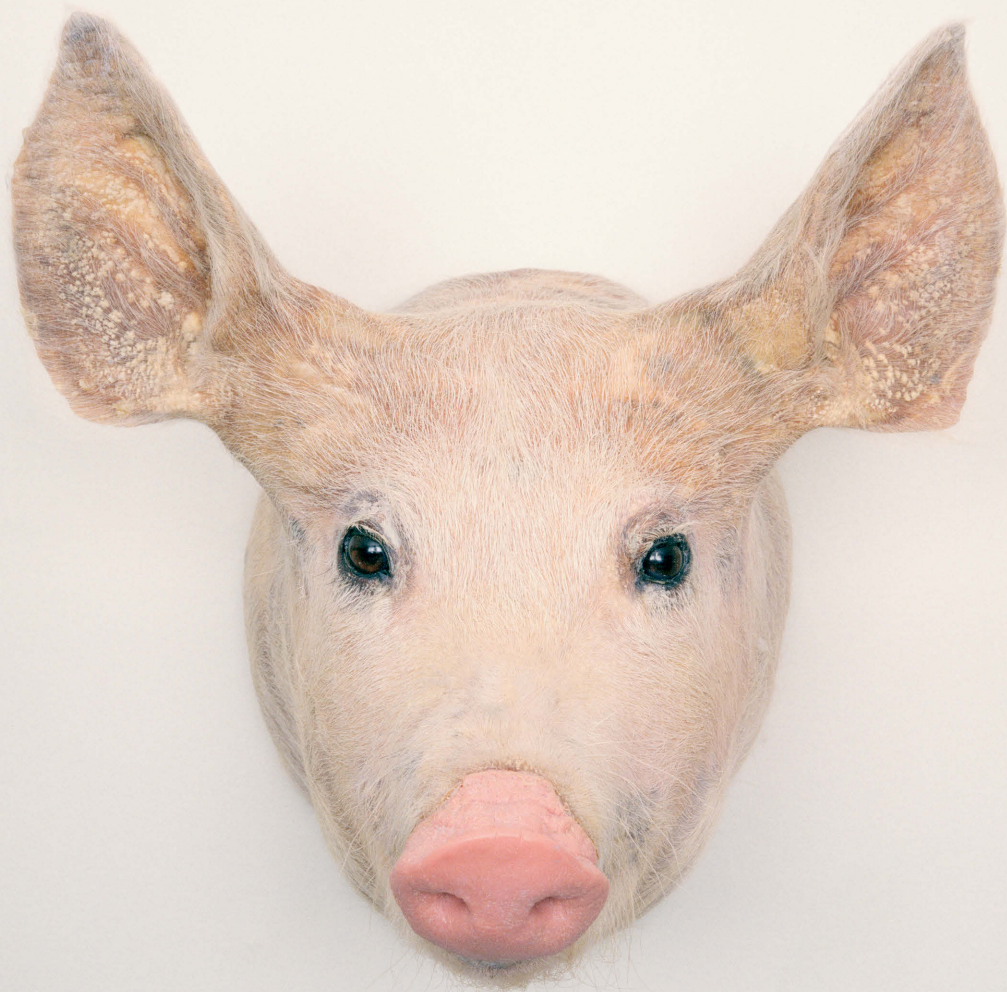


















Chapter Four

BEFORE AND AFTER





FAST AHEAD





Chapter Five
PIG SLAUGHTER







PLEASE ADD APT

CANAL





PLEASE DO NOT

CANADIAN



FRONT AND BACK

CANADIAN





55
PAGES 40.00
100000

CANADIAN





62

CANADIAN

PLEASE AIR DRY





PLEASE DO NOT
SMOKE

CANADIAN





Chapter Six

LAMB SLAUGHTER



























Chapter Seven

THE MEDIA

THE MEDIA

Veal / 101

Skinning / 102

Veal Entrails / 103

Chicken Entrails / 104

Duck Entrails / 105

Decapitation / 106-107

These images depict a romanticized version of meat production. Although I had to process the animals in a licensed slaughterhouse in order to cook and serve them to the public, I worked with a small facility that has very little in common with the industrial processing plants that produce the meat we buy at the supermarket. For the smaller animals, I cooked private meals so that I could explore trapping and slaughtering in an outdoor setting.

Because of the seal hunting controversy in Newfoundland, it was very difficult to find a slaughterhouse that would let me take pictures in their facility. The owner of a slaughterhouse said to me: "How is what you are doing any different than images used in the media?" From his perspective, visuals of slaughtering are bad for business.

















Chapter Eight

BOUCHERIE DE DÉTAIL







BOUCHERIE DE DÉTAIL

I wanted to process the animals that I eat with my own hands. I took some courses to learn how to slaughter and butcher animals. The butchering course ended with me accidentally stabbing myself with a slender boning knife and fainting. The knife had pieces of meat on it when I stabbed my palm, and even though the cut was only half a centimeter wide, it felt like a deep wound. I became paranoid that I might have some meat stuck in there. I went to the sink to wash it out. The stream of water revealed a small piece of meat that would not dislodge from my cut as I rubbed gently. I finally pulled on the tiny piece of flesh and I felt pain. All the blood drained from my head. After making it through the entire training process of slicing jugulars, separating skin from the carcass with my fist, being surrounded by red meat for days on end, I couldn't handle the realization that it was my meat in my wound.

Packaged Lamb / 110

Packaged Pork / 111

Packaged Veal / 112

One of my butcher classmates asked me if I enjoyed butchering as a profession. I replied that I liked touching the meat, that I found it sensual. The first time I grasped the scalded pig's leg and all the hair was removed, the skin was still warm. The texture was strangely human. It occurred to me in that moment that most of the touching I do in life is intimate.



Chapter Nine

DESCHAMBAULT-GRONDINES











DESCHAMBAULT-GRONDINES

The first animal I ever slaughtered was an old sheep. After having three lambs she was suffering from mastitis, an inflammation of her udder. I remember she had a big belly, short hair and tough skin. When I returned to the agricultural college the following week, my teacher gave me some sausages made with her meat. Meat from older animals is usually ground, as it is not tender. That evening I chewed the rubbery texture of the sausages and understood that we eat babies.

Méchoui / 116-117

Untitled (Anne) /118

Untitled (Feast) /119

Untitled (Buffet) /120

I roasted a whole lamb on a spit and served several Indian lamb dishes during the opening of the group exhibition *La Colonie* in the town of Deschambault-Grondines. The feast accompanied the presentation of a selection of artworks from *Beautiful Creatures*. The exhibition space was a converted old mill on the border of a river. Originally I had planned to serve the food on picnic tables outside, but the whole event was moved indoors due to rain. The visitors ended up eating the lamb among the artworks.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To everyone near and far who contributed to this project, please know that your help was greatly appreciated. The *Beautiful Creatures* project was supported by the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Fonds québécois de la recherche sur la société et la culture. The slaughterhouse training was provided by Eric Shelly at SUNY Cobleskill Agricultural College and the butcher training was provided by Centre de formation professionnelle Calixa-Lavallée. Photographic assistance was provided by Jaime Leblanc, Jack Stanley and Eleanor King.

The Newfoundland portion of this project was made possible thanks to Jack Stanley, Jaime Leblanc, English Harbour Arts Centre, the owners and staff at the Fishers' Loft Inn, the Bonavista Cultural Institute, Northern Taxidermy, Lorie and Mike Paterson, O'Flaherty's Slaughter House, Morry's Sheep Farm, Leamington Farms, Stan Tobin, Ed Abbot, Kay and Walter Young, Harry Wareham, Mervin Wiseman, Eleanor King, Brian Ricks and Marion Cheeks.

The Deschambault-Grondines portion of this project was made possible thanks to the curator of *La Colonie*, Jean-Michel Ross, Oeil de Poisson, Donald Vézina, Jaime Leblanc, Andrée Brisson, Martin Dufrasne, Thérèse Mastroiacovo and Sarah Greig.

I would also like to thank the curators of ORANGE, L'événement d'art actuel de Saint-Hyacinthe 4e édition - *Les Mangeurs*, Ève Dorais, Véronique Grenier and Eve Katinoglou as well as Marcel Blouin and the staff at Expression.

Thanks to Thérèse Mastroiacovo, Sarah Greig, Milutin Gubash, Peter Flemming and Darsha Hewitt for coming to dinner.

LIST OF WORKS

- 2 *Pig Entrails*, 2013, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm
- 11 *Boeuf*, 2013 offset lithograph, 76 x 107 cm
- 12 *Cochon*, 2013, offset lithograph, 56 x 76 cm
- 13 *Agneau*, 2013, offset lithograph, 56 x 76 cm
- 20 *Rabbit Slip Trail*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm
- 21 *Rabbit Skinning*, 2013, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm
- 22 *Rabbit Entrails*, 2013, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm
- 26-27 *Second Attempt*, 2013, diptych, inkjet prints, each image 61 x 61 cm
- 28 *Chicken and Duck Murder*, 2013, inkjet print, 61 x 61 cm
- 32 *Chicken*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm
- 33 *Duck*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm
- 34 *Rabbit*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm
- 35 *Pig*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm
- 36 *Lamb*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm

- 37 *Calf*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm
- 38 *Rabbit Head*, 2011, inkjet print, 33 x 33 cm
- 39 *Chicken Head*, 2011, inkjet print, 33 x 33 cm
- 40 *Duck Head*, 2011, inkjet print, 33 x 33 cm
- 41 *Pig Head*, 2011, inkjet print, 61 x 61 cm
- 42 *Lamb Head*, 2011, inkjet print, 61 x 61 cm
- 43 *Calf Head*, 2011, inkjet print, 83 x 83 cm
- 47-49 *Before and After*, 2010, diptych, inkjet prints, each image 102 x 102 cm
- 53-71 *Pig Slaughter*, 2010, inkjet print, nine images printed on a 94 x 94 cm sheet
- 75-95 *Lamb Slaughter*, 2010, inkjet print, nine images printed on a 94 x 94 cm sheet
- 97 *Bleeding Out*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm
- 101 *Veal*, 2013, inkjet print, 102 x 102 cm.
- 102 *Skinning*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm
- 103 *Veal Entrails*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm

104 *Chicken Entrails*, 2013, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm

105 *Duck Entrails*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm

106-107 *Decapitation*, 2010, diptych, inkjet prints, each image 76 x 76 cm

110 *Packaged Lamb*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm

111 *Packaged Pork*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm

112 *Packaged Veal*, 2010, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm

116 - 117 *Méchoui*, 2013, diptych, inkjet prints, each image 76 x 76 cm

118 *Untitled (Anne)*, 2013, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm

119 *Untitled (Feast)*, 2013, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm

120 *Untitled (Buffet)*, 2013, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm

122 *Supper*, 2012, inkjet print, 76 x 76 cm

Back cover, *Pig Skin*, 2013, inkjet print, 102 x 102 cm

BIOGRAPHIES

Kim Waldron's art practice frequently uses self-portraiture as a means of engaging with various contemporary social situations. Through addressing the idea that reality is always a construction, over the years her work has questioned the role of images and the importance of context as discourse. The conceptual framework of her photographic series is based on the boundary that defines reality and fiction. Not only is self-representation an integral component of her work, the contexts that she uses to create these narratives are equally as important. Kim Waldron was born in Montreal, Canada and graduated from NSCAD University in 2003. She has exhibited extensively, most notably at Musée régional de Rimouski, Oeil de Poisson, Vu, Gallery 44, Eyelevel Gallery, Eastern Edge Gallery, Art Gallery of Windsor and La Centrale. She took part in a three-month residency in Vienna in 2007 offered by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and a one-month residency in Newfoundland in 2009 offered by the English Harbour Arts Centre.

Mélanie Boucher holds a PhD in art history. The focus of her doctoral thesis is food and performance art. She teaches at Université du Québec à Montréal, Université de Montréal and Université Laval. She has curated exhibitions and edited publications for the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (2008-2009, 2002), Galerie de l'UQAM (2011, 2009, 2007) and Musée d'art de Joliette (2009), among others. She co-founded Orange, a contemporary art event in Saint-Hyacinthe (co-curator, 2003; publishing director, 2005). She has also published texts in several books and journals. In 2005, Boucher received the Société des musées québécois Emerging Talent Award. Her latest research projects are about food and living pictures in current art and about taste, smell and touch in aesthetics.

The DO-IT-YOURSELF COOKBOOK

by Kim Waldron

Editing: Claudine Hubert, Emily Southwood, Jean-Michel Ross

Translation: Oana Avasilichioaei

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THOMAS HENRY ROSS

art contemporain

Galerie Thomas Henry Ross art contemporain

MTL 514-993-7673

NYC 718-502-6764

info@thomashenryross.com

thomashenryross.com

A photograph of a pig's head and skin on a bloody floor. The pig's head is in the foreground, looking towards the camera, with its snout and eyes visible. The skin is laid out on the floor behind it. The floor is covered in blood, and a knife is visible in the upper right corner. The background shows a wooden structure, possibly a stall or part of a slaughterhouse.

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