**Discussion questions, Gender & The Body, Week 7**

**1. How can one listen to an image in Campt's terms? What are the lower frequencies of the ‘quiet’ photographs she discusses?**

An image is silent in the literal sense and the space in which the images Campt writes about is too. Campt insists however that this silence “couldn’t have been louder” (pg. 18). Silence forces onto the surface a multitude of feelings surrounding the photographs, “where gnawing questions simmer and send one searching for more complicated answers” (pg. 18). Therefore, one might conclude that these images emit sound (pg. 23).

When one looks at an image only by seeing, one takes the images for granted and this is the boundary of vision in Campt’s opinion. Listening to an image causes a reaction within you by it and its vibrations, which simultaneously generates vibrations in your own being. Therefore, you are connecting to the image on a deeper level, intellectually or spiritually and not only visually. This act of listening to the images is not simply about hearing but feeling, as quiet images are on lower frequencies, that are not just sound but “felt sound” (pg. 7). These lower frequencies Campt explains are a hum “full of reverb and vibrato” (pg 45) that are felt in the throat.

When one listens to an image, one sees past the image itself by “attending the musical patterns” and “rhythms” of the image (pg. 23). One finds the images' vibration by contextualising them or even recontextualising them (overseeing (pg. 45)) to understand what they stand for on an intellectual level. Then one can hear the message of the images, their possibility, the “unsayable truth” within the hum that they generate (pg 45).

**3. What is ‘gaga feminism’? How does noise, breakdown, resonance, rhythm and dissonance relate to Campt’s concept of the hum and practices of refusal? (Think about the scream vs. the quiet images)**

Jack Halberstam defines Gaga feminism as “a form of activism that expresses itself as excess, as noise, as breakdown, drama, spectacle, high femininity, low theory, masochistic refusal, and moments of musical riot.” (p. 125) Halberstam associates it with punk music and its divas. Its aesthetic is partly chaotic creativity, performative excess and creative anarchy, questioning all dominant structures related to gender, race and class.

Halberstam writes about many “punk divas” that channel gaga feminism, or “going gaga”. One of which is Lady Gaga, who goes gaga by being radically ambivalent, but Halberstam coined the term based on her name. He implores however that she is not its greatest example and points instead to Rhoda Dakar’s loud dissonant scream at the end of her song about rape, “The Boiler” by The Bodysnatchers, as an example of “the performance of sonic forms of chaos” and “a journey to the edge of sense” that define gaga feminism (p.127). It is important to note that acts of gaga feminism is not to make crude oppositional statements but rather to cause chaos to “the landscape of pop and popular femininity” by both using its characteristics and symbols, while also destroying them. This can be seen in The Boiler, where Rhoda uses the common themes of clothes, cute guys and dancing only to end up screaming for two minutes, to signify her rape.

Campt’s concept of the hum seem the exact opposite of Dakar’s scream, instead of it being loud, chaotic and in your face they are quiet and demand listening with thoughtfulness and context to be understood. However, both are forms of protest and emanate potential, power and unsayable truths within their sounds, whether in a scream or hum.