



CHIMERA.

Charlie Arden

On performance,
complacency &
cognitive decline

JULY 10

Criticism, conversation & community are all,
unfortunately, a privilege that those in any form of power
are willing to use as collateral damage in favor of
upholding their failing systems. Open the discourse.
Answer me. Parallel me. Do as you please. I will see it.

JULY 10

I feel the need to be grossly disrespectful toward normal society. It disrespects us daily by feeding on our insecurities, feeding on our nightmares, preying on our food and drink & water and air...why I sit and watch complacently, I do not know. I am paralyzed, sometimes, by both my lack of forward movement and the chains I feel twisted around my shoulders and armpits. I was born human and will die human, not some faceless, cognitively challenged disassociation that they call *well rounded* and respectful because it is music to their ears for me to be complacent, unmoving and dead.

It's not that deep.



JULY 10

I have had that melodious phrase told to me countless times and all I can do is laugh. It's not that deep but it will be scar tissue and late-night sweats when your body has failed you and so has the health system and you're left to rot out in the sun. When your father has died and you are forced to mourn from your cubicle office and when the news of war has reached your doorstep alongside a carefully worded draft.

My desire to make films analyzing these atrocities might actually be seen as campy and unoriginal now that it has become a performance to care...we can no longer hide in anonymity or blame the collective lack of knowledge on our cognitive apathy...so we do the bare minimum – or possibly even more – to receive a one-time accolade validating the graciousness of our inherent spirit.



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Look at me! I am not like the rest. I care, see? I have signed a petition and messaged my state representative, and I have now done enough to sleep without sweats and do not fuel my decline through denial and distraction.

What of building community? Facilitating open communication? Treating people humanely in mundanity so we are not forced to be performative when the eyes of the world are upon us? What of sharing food and knowledge, resources and collective pain to unravel years upon years of normalized dysfunction?



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Am I asking too much now? Has the performance become complicated in its second act? Were you hoping the fellow actors around you would pick up the slack and no one in the audience would notice that you failed to identify the reasoning in your words and actions thus far in the script? Does this feel foreign?

We are afraid of being on the wrong side of history so we stay stagnant and paralyzed in the quicksand of a failing system. That is where the pain lives, in stagnancy. Lack of motion means either rest, complacency, or death, and God knows we are not allowed rest. I can't remember the last time I took a nap.



Phyllis Cole