SHEGAZES

Women's bodies have been used to a maximum extent for voyeuristic male sexual pleasure. Through cinema and literature we grew up offered images of naked, sexualized women, displayed for, and created by, the male gaze. Most of us (men and women) have internalized these images as normal and common and we unconsciously reproduce them through our art. If we want to change the perception of women, we need to change their representation in literature, art and fashion. We need to destroy the images that we consumed growing up, we need to unlearn what we think is a good and appealing picture.

Every image we shoot, every image we show is political.

The paradox of phallocentrism in all its manifestations is that it depends on the image of the castrated woman to give order and meaning to its world. An idea of woman stands as lynch pin to the system: it is her lack that produces the phallus as a symbolic presence, it is her desire to make good the lack that the phallus signifies. Recent writing in *Screen* about psychoanalysis and the cinema has not suffi-

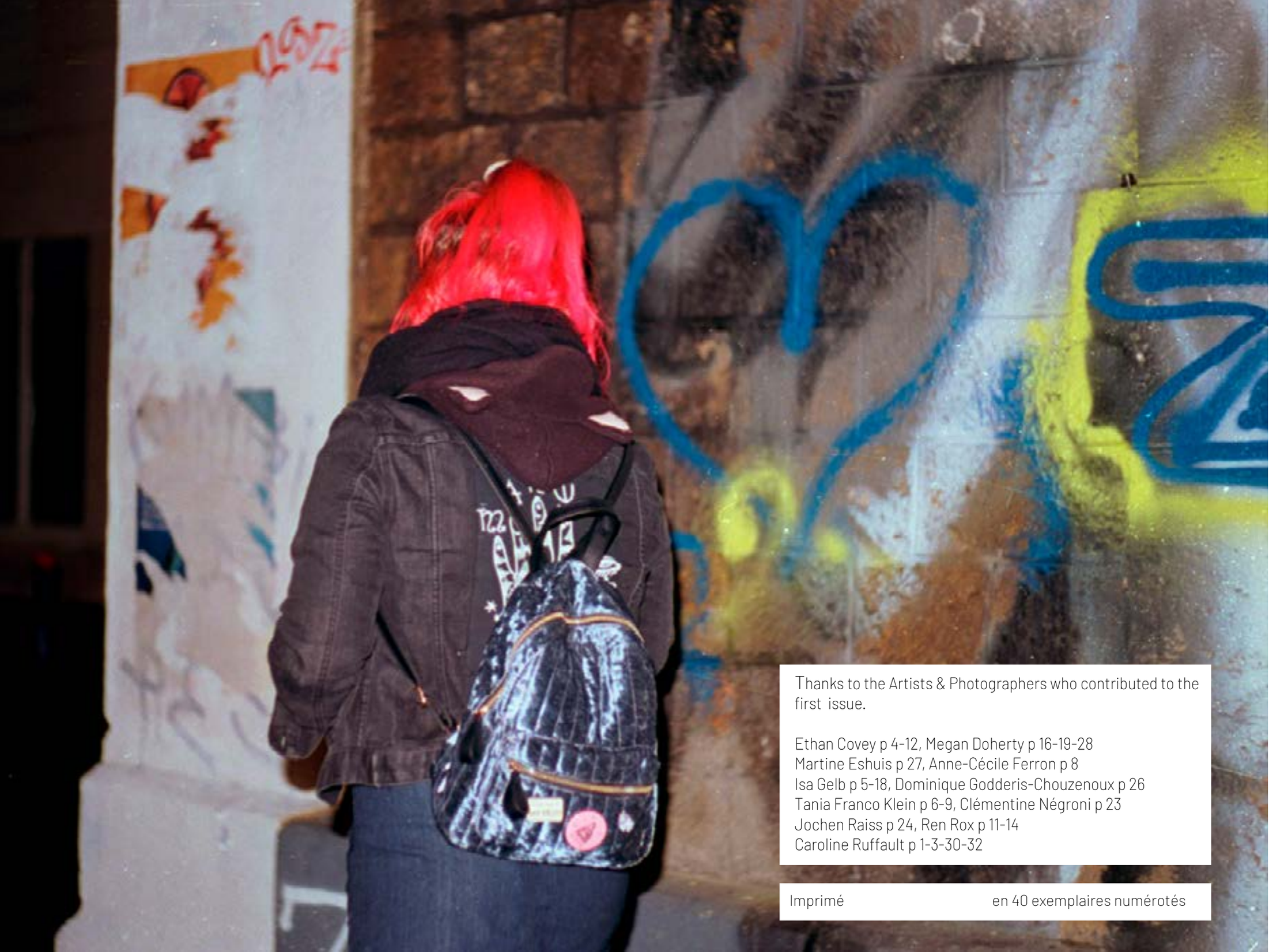
WOMAN AS IMAGE, MAN AS BEARER OF THE LOOK

PLEASURE IN LOOKING/FASCINATION WITH THE HUMAN FORM

story without distraction.) Traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tension between the looks on either side of the screen. For instance, the device of the show-girl allows

LAURA MULVEY
VISUAL PLEASURE AND NARRATIVE CINEMA

DIVISION



Thanks to the Artists & Photographers who contributed to the first issue.

Ethan Covey p 4-12, Megan Doherty p 16-19-28
Martine Eshuis p 27, Anne-Cécile Ferron p 8
Isa Gelb p 5-18, Dominique Godderis-Chouzenoux p 26
Tania Franco Klein p 6-9, Clémentine Négroni p 23
Jochen Raiss p 24, Ren Rox p 11-14
Caroline Ruffault p 1-3-30-32

Imprimé en 40 exemplaires numérotés

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