

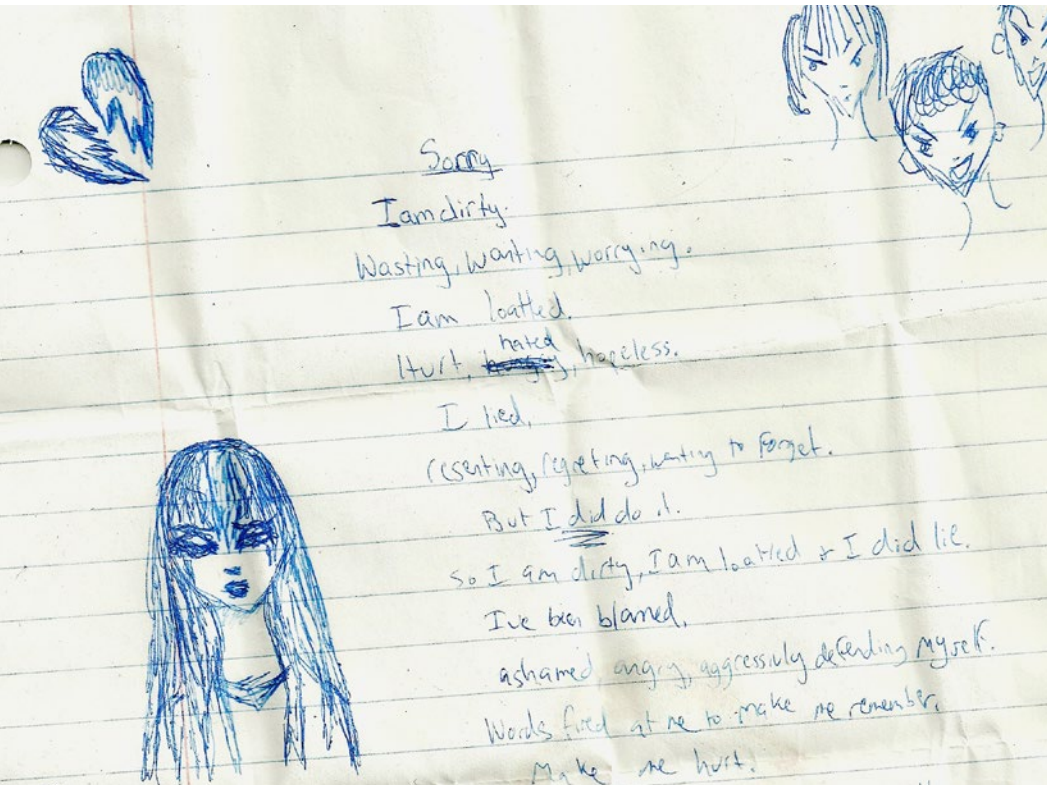
MIT List Visual Arts Center  
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## [ LIST PROJECTS ]

Ann Hirsch

January 5 – February 21, 2016



FRONT Still from *Here for You (Or My Brief Love Affair with Frank Maresca)*, 2010, video, color, sound, 14 min.  
Courtesy the artist

INSIDE Still from *Scandalishious*, 2008–2009, video, color, sound, 42.5 min.  
Courtesy the artist

ABOVE *My Starving Public*, poem written as thirteen year old now part of *Twelve app for iTunes (censored)*,  
1998/2013, still from iPad application (detail)  
Courtesy the artist and Klaus von Nichtssagend Gallery



MIT List Visual Arts Center

In 2008, while in graduate school in upstate New York, Ann Hirsch developed the character Caroline, a college freshman and self-described “hipster” running a YouTube channel named “Scandalishious.” This channel is the source of the monitor installation *The Scandalishious Project* (2008–2009) shown in the artist’s solo exhibition at the List Center. Over the course of two years, Hirsch posted more than 100 videos of Caroline speaking to the webcam, describing her life and likes, and most often showing her dancing in a variety of outfits including vintage leotards, granny blouses, and boyshort underwear. Caroline’s dance moves are both comically awkward and unabashedly suggestive, gathering her a cult following with the now-familiar share of ardent fans and abusive haters. Hirsch’s project was geared towards creating a persona that would undermine prevalent stereotypes of young women on the web by combining tropes of the geek with glasses, the needy oversharer, and the provocative dancer. Yet, as Hirsch states, the intent of the project was not satire. Rather, becoming a “camwhore” served both as an actual tool of sexual expression as well as a kind of social research. In this vein, she is part of a young generation of artists using the Internet and social media as platforms to investigate representations of gender and sexuality in popular culture. As Johanna Fateman writes in *Artforum*, these artists “push back” against rampant misogyny and trolling directed at women and “seem to pull off the paradoxical feat of taking back their images at the very moment of surrender.”

Hirsch’s video projection *Here for You (Or My Brief Love Affair with Frank Maresca)* (2010) is derived from her 2010 stint on a reality television show as one of fifteen women competing to date the eponymous male protagonist. Hirsch appeared as Annie, an artist and wide-eyed ingénue who initially won Frank’s attention, but was obviously cast as an unlikely romantic companion for him. She strategically exploded her assigned role of sweet innocence by performing an explicit rap song that resulted in her getting kicked off the show. My goal as a contestant on the show,” Hirsch explains, “was to disrupt...power by taking back control of the character that the producers had tried to fit me into...My hope was that this reveal would then make viewers at home question their assumptions about the other women they see on reality television.”

The iPad application *Twelve* (2013), the most recent work in the exhibition, is based on Hirsch’s adolescent experience in an AOL chat room in the mid-1990s. The interactive piece (which was banned from the iTunes store) narrates twelve-year-old Anni’s online relationship with a predatory man more than twice her age and calling himself “jobe.” Recreating the design and online lingo of the early Internet environment, the story ventures into increasingly dark territory as it charts their unfolding sexual interactions. While astutely presenting a manipulative relationship between a child and an adult, Hirsch also keenly captures Anni’s curiosity and excitement coupled with her shame and fear. Throughout her work, the artist eloquently conveys online culture’s coexistent thrills and dangers, which is perhaps the reason she continuously skirts crossing over into outright parody. Rather, the artist cites Cindy Sherman’s strategy of mirroring clichéd or sexist images back to the viewers—or in Hirsch’s own case, media consumers—as influential. Although the Internet has intensified sexism and harassment, Hirsch argues it has also “provided us with the medium to fight back.”



## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ann Hirsch (b. 1985, Baltimore) lives and works in Los Angeles.

*List Projects: Ann Hirsch* is curated by Henriette Huldish, Curator, MIT List Visual Arts Center.

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## SUPPORT

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