

AnOther Thing I Wanted to Tell You...

HEROES

Kembra Pfahler, performer, on an EXPLODING WHALE



Hair: Maarit Niemela at Bryant Artists using Bumble and Bumble. Make-up: Jenny Coombs at Streeters using NARS Cosmetics. Styling assistants: Rebecca Perlmutter and Maria Martinez Regidor. Make-up assistant: Porchie Poon. Post-production: Labyrinth Photographic. Special thanks to Clapton Train

"In 1949, Joseph Campbell wrote a book about the journey of the hero, about this path through the belly of the beast that people can take to have a personal, spiritual transformation. These days, for most of us, that would be a luxury: we are born in the belly of the beast, and we don't have time to traipse around taking these 12 steps to self-discovery. A while ago, there was a story about a whale found on a beach in Thailand; it had died swimming for food in our dying oceans. The whale exploded on the beach because of the gases inside it: literally, it was viscous blood and guts for blocks. So today, rather than feeling we are in these fairytale stories about sitting in the belly of the beast and contemplating the world, we have to explode ourselves out of it. The surrealist future that Philip K Dick predicted is here, and the time is nigh to act quickly, aggressively, to be explosive."

Since the Eighties, Kembra Pfahler's explosive approach to performance art has championed subversive ideals of what it means to be a woman. From acting as frontwoman to theatrical death-rock outfit *The Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black*, to suturing her vagina shut for Richard Kern's film *Sewing Circle*; singing alongside punk provocateur GG Allin, to co-authoring the radical manifesto of *Future Feminism* (alongside Anohni, Johanna Constantine and Bianca and Sierra Casady), hers is a practice that has consistently centred around transgression, and maintained a furious intention to "change the world one show, one photograph, one picture, one poem, one song at a time".

Kembra is wearing
a shirt dress by
PHOEBE ENGLISH

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Words Olivia Singer

AnOther Magazine