

## Devoted Companion to The Extreme Sacrifice

By Ishai Shapira Kalter

“By loving me she proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man. I am a white man. Her love takes me onto the noble road that leads to total realization. I marry white culture, white beauty, white whiteness. When my restless hands caress those white breasts, they grasp white civilization and dignity and make them mine”.<sup>1</sup>

During the 80's Liu Yiqian was a taxi driver transporting passengers on the streets of Beijing. By all potential forecasts he could have possibly become a 21<sup>st</sup> century UBER driver. The first night Rene Hebuterne met Amadeo Modigliani, her future husband he brutally raped her. Couple of years later, on the ninth month of her pregnancy, she found him drunk dead at their Parisian two bedroom apartment and impulsively decided to commit suicide as she threw herself out of the fifth floor window.

Couple of weeks after my arrival to NYC, I was invited to Christie's Auction House event: “Christie's New York Evening Sale of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art”, which focused on the theme of “The Artist's Muse”<sup>2</sup>. The voluptuous nude painting – *Nu Couché* (1917-1918) attracted the attention of provocative Chinese collector, Liu Yiqian as he bought it with his American Express card. His act illuminated the canvas and turned it into a political surface that holds enigmatic struggles while he ought to bring western culture closer to Asia.

From a foot massage business, through a car accident, a gambling room or a kitchen; *Devoted Companion to the Extreme Sacrifice* is a proposal that brings *Nu Couché* back to New York in order to discuss the outcomes of trade. It seeks to celebrate the chain reaction, to speculate a future of colossal inversions, or daydream about a moment in time when a contemporary work of art evolves into something else, into an ethnographic artifact.

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<sup>1</sup> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, Originally published by Editions de Seuil, France, 1952 as *Peau Noire, Masques Blanc*

<sup>2</sup> Lorena Monuz-Alonso, *Mayor of Modigliani's Hometown Says \$170 Million Masterpiece Should Have Been Kept in Italy*, ARTNET, Nov 16, 2015