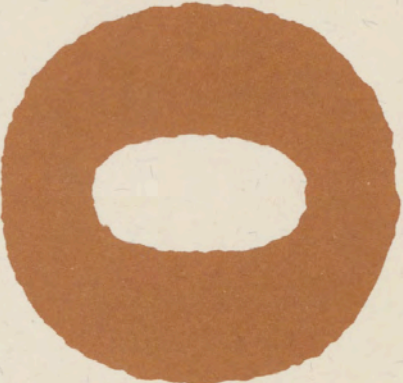
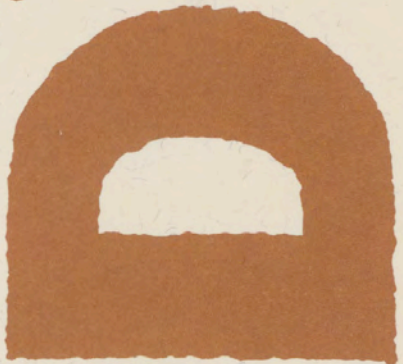
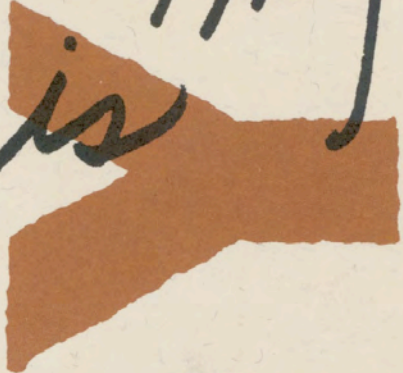
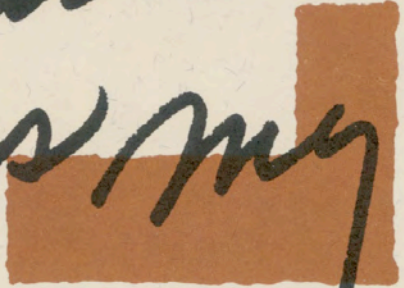


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“This is my body: this is my blood”

OCTOBER 29

TO

NOVEMBER 24

1992

Herter Art Gallery

University of Massachusetts

Amherst

Curated by

Susan E. Jahoda and May Stevens

Edited by

Elizabeth Hynes, Susan E. Jahoda and May Stevens

Catalog designed by

Tekla A. McNerney

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FOREWORD

*The editors of
Rethinking
MARXISM*

Rethinking MARXISM, A JOURNAL of economics, culture and society is proud to be the original sponsor of “**This is my body, this is my blood.**” This exhibition is one among the many panels, multimedia presentations, and plenary sessions at the international conference “Marxism in the New World Order: Crises and Possibilities” organized by *Rethinking* MARXISM at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, 12-14 November, 1992.

The human body has been embraced as the subject for this exhibition because the body mediates the crises and possibilities of our social, political, and personal lives. And yet, these crises and possibilities are often obscured in our culture by senseless dichotomies and needless oppositions, such as the presumed split between the mind and the body. When bodies suffer or are pleased, their sufferings and pleasures both shape and are themselves affected by all other aspects or parts of our being. In like fashion, the body of artwork exhibited here is the result of intricately constituted and inextricably linked physical, emotional, and intellectual labors.

The crises and possibilities we face are experienced simultaneously by our bodies in a multiplicity of ways, from the stress and illness proceeding from personal and social despair, to the energy and health that usher in moments of hope. It therefore seems increasingly urgent to call attention to the crises of the body. Daily we witness the direct impact of seemingly infinite forms of corporal punishment that society metes out to human bodies: from police beatings, drug-addiction, random and senseless murders, to AIDS, domestic violence, hunger and famine. Who will soon forget the televised images of bodily slaughter from South Africa to Iraq to Sarajevo that have ushered in the “New World Order”? In the face of these administered depravities, there exists the testimony of socially afflicted human beings demonstrating, marching, striking, and battling—putting their bodies on the line—for social justice and change. In contrast to these struggles stand the media spectacles of the socially privileged—the “rich and famous”—indulging in bodily comforts denied to most.

The continuing crises of the body have their metaphoric and real expressions in the sexual division of labor. It is women who are most often presented as the “bodies” of society, while men “head” our social institutions from church to state. The body has been part of a personal sphere associated with women who care intimately for the bodies of their family members. This caring labor is complex. It is intertwined, among other things, with love and the constructions of all that is personal and private. The labor involved in and the knowledge concerned with maintaining human bodies are the most unrecognized and unappreciated aspects of female domestic labor. As Marxists we recognize that the crisis of the body often manifests itself as a denial of the body and the labor that maintains it, thus keeping us blind to the domain of household exploitation. This denial enables cheap sentimentality to substitute for the long overdue celebration of the profound human learning achieved by women as they have confronted their own and other’s bodies inside and outside the household. This denial also feeds the ever present fear and contempt for women’s bodies—dehumanized as the ultimate other—often finding direct physical expression in rape and battery and

indirect expression in the denial of abortion rights, the torments of eating disorders, and the humiliation of pornography.

Throughout most societies, the body remains in crisis—certainly in the West, where forms of degradations are attached to the meaning(s) of skin color. We live in societies in which race continues to be reasserted in new and insidious ways as the bodily marker for division, difference, and discrimination. Yet, in contrast, knowledges of the human body are often suppressed for their eloquent testimony to our deep similarities under the skin: our shared structure, physical vulnerability, and final destination. The exhibit **“This is my body: this is my blood”** affirms our similar structures, our vulnerability, and our mortality. It also testifies to the manifold and valid variations among us. Our differences—registered physically or otherwise—cannot be the basis for the notion that there is only one proper kind of human being—usually the wealthy white man, who is presented as the “imperial subject”—while “others,” in contrast, are depicted at best, as exotic and at worst, inferior. The diversity exemplified in the exhibition is an observance of difference raising the possibility of shared resistance to the imperialist “norms” and the life-threatening crises that continue to result from the racialization of bodies.

The crises of the body include the inflictions that are laid upon laboring bodies. Although it is often overlooked, the body occupies a prominent place in the Marxist critique of political economy. From the start, commodities are defined in relation to the body: they are created, elaborately marketed, and consumed by sweating, desiring, thinking individuals—not merely traded as in bourgeois economic theory according to the “rational calculations” of disembodied minds. Exploitation, too, is ultimately a bodily phenomenon. It means usurping the fruits of worker created surplus—ripping off the worker’s “extra” labor—for the benefit of a slave master, or feudal lord, or capitalist. To combat the current social amnesia that has led us to forget the genesis and continuance of capitalism, it would be best to remember Marx’s bodily metaphor—still true at present—that “capital comes dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt (1).”

The task of combating these crises—the possibilities the exhibition also speaks about—is made more complicated by the implication of modern human knowledges, Marxism included. Much recent Marxian and other radical thought and art has been shaped by Foucauldian discussions of the role of “human sciences” in the modern disciplining of the body. Clinical medicine, psychology, criminology, and political economy are among those knowledges permitting very concrete interventions into and inflictions upon the body: from surgery, various “therapies,” and administration of psychogenic drugs to surveillance and ever more efficient administration and accumulation of bodies in factories and prisons alike. The body has also been at the center of the traditional, often oppressive, artistic gaze. This exhibition is part of a broader attempt to reclaim the body, to negotiate its meanings, and thereby expose the mechanisms that control and exploit us, including those that present themselves as “neutral” and “scientific” knowledges and arts.

Rethinking MARXISM joins the artists in the exhibition in seeing the body as a register both for crises imposed by the “New World Order” and as a site for resistance, contestation, pleasure, and the creation of new possibilities. In the pages of *RM*, we have presented multiple visions of the body in order to call attention to and radically change the suffering directly resulting from injustices of gender, race, and class. We are pleased to sponsor this exhibition because it contributes to a Marxian tradition that sees the possibilities of breaking down the frozen dichotomies of mind and body, public and private, white and black, male and female that have made Marxists and non-Marxists all but oblivious to the “overdetermined” nature of the causes and effects of our bodies and lives. *Rethinking* MARXISM affirms its belief—eminently and beautifully demonstrated by the work contained herein—that such a rethinking of the body can produce just those few, perhaps even revolutionary possibilities, that we need to imagine and create.

We thank all those who have contributed to this project: The curators Susan Jahoda and May Stevens and their assistants, the artists who created the works that are reproduced here, and the writers who composed essays for this catalog. We also want to thank those people at the University of Massachusetts who, in the midst of ongoing financial crises, saw the possibilities of this project and contributed the necessary funding: the UMass Arts Council, The Student Cultural Enrichment Fund, the Herter Art Gallery, Dean Lee Edwards of Fine Arts and Humanities, the Inter-departmental Film Studies Committee, and the Department of Art.

Notes

1. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, (ed. Vintage Books, N.Y., 1977), p. 92b.

CURATOR'S STATEMENT

SUSAN E.
JAHODA

IN OCTOBER 1991 members of the editorial board of *Rethinking MARXISM* invited May Stevens and myself to organize an exhibition and symposium for the international conference "Marxism in the New World Order: Crises and Possibilities." Discussions with the group made it clear that a cultural component, with a forum for contemporary art, was essential to the cross-cultural investigations implied by the conference. As artists and educators engaged in cultural work the event seemed to us both relevant and timely. Our aim was to provide a selection from aspects of contemporary art practices appropriate to the intellectual context of the conference. The challenge to produce an exhibition that responded to this need has been, and is intended to be, stimulating not only to artistic appreciation but also to critical debate.

"**This is my body; this is my blood**" evolved from a discussion on "identity" politics within current Marxist debate(1). The exhibition includes works produced over the past decade or in some cases created specifically for the exhibition. The thirteen artists use varied media and have equally varied approaches to content. Selection of works was based on their relation to both the individual and collective ramifications of the body-in-representation. The choices were predicated on a desire to broaden the debate on the body in its personal and social cases.

Despite their diverse formations, the artists share an interest in reconceptualisation of "self" and body through their representational strategies. The terms of their practice are relevant to current theoretical investigation into narrative structure. The work also operates as an intervention in debates over current social policy—censorship, discrimination and prejudice—or, in wider terms, the functional relations of power and difference.

Along with an awareness of the implications of an ahistorical multiculturalism, an effort has been made in the organization of the show to avoid theorization of "individuals" against the "collective." A defining characteristic of the exhibition was a desire to go beyond diffuse and weakening differentiations. Our intentions were to utilize the institutional space as a collective space and to facilitate works which explore the ground somewhere between the "personal as political" and the "political as personal."

The exhibition aims to comprehend the body, fundamentally, as a factor within social construction. From *ante-natal* through *post-mortem* our corporeal selves exist in relation to shifting historical and social conditions. The experience of the body is influenced and shaped by, as well as shaping of these conditions. As the Left acknowledges previous gender and racial blindness, it struggles to create broader coalitions without excluding the pluralities of the personal. The constitution of multiple subject positions requires new theoretical maps with unstable borders. The works in this exhibition speak to this process of re-invention.

Lucy Lippard, in her essay for the catalogue, asks the question: who speaks through the title "**This is my body, this is my blood**"?—*We*, artists and subjects, represented selves and others—yes: and also social voices that recognize the vital necessity for consciousness through representation—in this case, of the politics of the body and the body within politics.

Notes

1. See, for example, the responses to the recent symposium, "The Identity in Question" (CUNY Graduate Center, New York, November 16, 1991), published in *October* 61 (summer 1992), *passim*.

When an artist curates an exhibition the intention is to make it an artwork. Kiki Smith gave me a quote that sums up the fundamental question of the body:

**CURATOR'S
STATEMENT**

**MAY
STEVENS**

*Nothing is corrupted
except by its form being
separated from matter.
A subject composed of matter
and form
ceases to be actual
When the form is separated
from matter,
but if the form subsists
in its own being
it cannot lose its being.*

—Aquinas

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HERE'S WHERE
IT HURTS

LUCY R. LIPPARD

EVERYTHING THAT MAKES THIS EXHIBITION provocative also serves to make it hard to write about. The title, to begin with: “**This is my body: this is my blood,**” with its peculiar fusion of religious and biological metaphors. Who is speaking? The artist? Society? Women? Jesus? In addition, these thirteen artists are not only diverse in their cultural backgrounds, but also in their esthetic foregrounds. Their common ground trembles. When it is confined in one space, my questions will be answered by the works themselves and their installation. In the meantime, not knowing all of the specific works to be shown and deprived of direct experience, I base what follows on preoccupations of my own that seem to cross those of these artists.

My primary clues to the selection of this challenging conglomeration are some phrases about the show: it is to examine “the relationship between the self, the family, and the state” and “the struggle to re-claim the body and negotiate its representation in a moment of global upheaval and re-configuration” (a propos of the *Rethinking MARXISM* conference it accompanies). As racism, anti-semitism, and homophobia ooze through the cracks in disintegrating global structures, as artists often desperately seek their places among the ruins and the sprouts, and as the U.S. Supreme Court hypocritically confirms a woman’s right to her body and makes it impossible for most women to exercise that right, the theme is all too timely.

To begin at the beginning, Karen Atkinson’s *Remapping Tales of Desire* joins the maleficent tourism of the Columbian era with contemporary tourist literature that harps, as it did that in the 15th century, on “virgin” land, “unspoiled” discoveries, “seductive” spots “caressed” by breezes from the past, or by the “exotic” native women who were/are part of the package. Enticement of colonists and tourists, borne into the imagination on the same language: gold and women, women and money; passive female land and mobile, marauding males.

Sutapa Biswas and Yong Soon Min take up the theme of contemporary geopolitical desire. One of Yong Soon Min’s recent installations was called *The Real Estate of Things*. It dealt with displacement, exile, militarism. With a divided Korea in her background and a politically divided U.S. in her foreground, Min, like Atkinson, has become fascinated by maps “real” (royal) and “unreal.” She recommends deconstruction of the Mercator and its replacement by the Peters Projection World Map, which corrects the actual image of European dominance over the planetary body—a symbol of “the post-colonial Third World identity challenging the Eurocentric legacy and the exercise of Western power” that is an everyday reality (Panama and the Gulf were both advertised as “surgical” operations, giving new import to the act of dividing).

The “unfixed” viewpoint of 80’s/90’s theoretical feminism combined with the “unfamiliar” perspectives of recent immigrants on identity and sexuality separates current feminist art theory and practice from its roots in the 60’s and early 70’s, when outrage about the abuse and representation of women’s bodies was first merged with the fundamental feminist credo “the personal is political.” The autobiography and narrative that underlay much of that wave of feminist art have reappeared in the 90’s,

but now they are re-informed by the shifting and wildly diverse grounds of “multiculturalism.” Now we know that while racism, sexism, classism remain widespread, there is no “universal” women’s experience.

Thanks to the revisionisms of 1992, history has taken a newly important role in body politics. Personal and geopolitical narratives are re-entangled, for instance, in Sutapa Biswas “Synapse” series, where slides of Indian temple sites, people, religious maps are projected on a nude woman’s body. As Moira Roth observes, Biswas “likens the tracing of maps to the tracing of memories....the result is like X-rays, representations of a woman crossing and exploring space and time.” These images represent external experience “internalized,” taken “in” and transformed. Biswas herself writes of “Synapse” in anatomical terms, offering the metaphor of migration, meeting and branching impulses: “Desire becomes an important element in this process. Sometimes connected to real experience, conceptually it is an imagined space or territory.” Like Yong Soon Min in a videotape made with Allan de Souza, Biswas looks at the imprint of colonization on the body and on the relationships between bodies and states.

In her big painting, *Women’s History*, May Stevens departs from a video image of a young prostitute patrolling traffic in Detroit (taken from an installation by her friend Carol Jacobsen) against a nocturnal backdrop glowing with neon “Girls” signs. This picture of youthful, miniskirted sexuality channeled by small-time capitalism is juxtaposed against an oblique reference to ideological punishment: a group of long-skirted nineteenth-century women circling a prison yard. The image is drawn from Stevens’ long series of works on Rosa Luxemburg and is restated in the recent painting *Elaboration of Absence*. In *Women’s History*, the small, gray historical figures are superimposed on the tinted present like a dream from the past. The gracefully slouching body of the young prostitute is shadowed by the ominous male presence unseen in the passing car and echoed in the regimentation of the prison yard. The Colonial recipe reappears; woman literally and figuratively forced into static places, to be “taken” by male mobility. At the same time, the women prisoners—dully pacing their courtyard the way prostitutes pace the streets—can also be read as a centered circle of female consciousness.

Anthony Aziz brings the commodification of desire full circle by photographing the Emperor’s new clothes in *Public Image/Private Sector*. Fictional CEOs in traditional dress and in the nude flank a noncommittal list of facts about their size, weight, money, business (and a “personal statement” that is anything but). Aziz simultaneously exposes the corporate corpus, the heterosexual masculine disguise and the male body that is shared by those with different sexual preferences, invisible here beneath the aura of power (although heterosexuality is implied if only by the knowledge that the artist is gay). The aura is so overwhelming that despite imperfect bodies, these rich white men maintain the posture, the pose, even when naked, proving that the psychological privileges of traditional masculinity are more than skin deep.

Susan Jahoda’s video installation, based on a series of narrative texts, comes from the other side of the tracking. *The Unstable Subject* is a complex commentary on

“family values” as they play out in other close relationships. The core story concerns a father and daughter against a background of holocaust survival. Some of the most striking (as in strikes terror) imagery is that of women in drug advertising—an ominous display of medical/patriarchal control. Two monitors dominate the filing cabinets below, which contain (literally) the “subtexts”; a third sits on an office table, suggesting the intrusions of education and industry. A vast variety of found images, including family snapshots and old advertisements, and file designations ranging from “Obstetric Technique” to “Needle Trades” provide further layerings, which resemble both memory and social conditioning. Jahoda’s subject is variously personalized and depersonalized, enabled and disabled as it is filtered through this conceptual network. Images and texts maintain a disjunctive rhythm of familiar and unfamiliar that exposes the pulse of contemporary women’s lives.

Although women and homosexuals are the most obvious public targets of such states of mind, there is not an artist in this show who isn’t aware of the invasion of or potential threat to their own privacy, which is probably where they make art. Some take this awareness of lurking censorship into the public context. Dennis Adams, who has become known in particular for his bus shelters, inverts the invasive tactics by projecting outwards the social imagery and analysis that is hidden or buried in mainstream media. He says that he is interested in “the image of the architectural as a kind of decoy. I want to quote its functional agenda as an entry level into a disturbing confrontation with the image.... My work addresses collective amnesia as a highly evolved program of late capitalism.” For instance, his enlarged photo portraits of the Rosenbergs, placed in a New York neighborhood where their imprisonment was protested in the early 50’s, resurrected history and figuratively resurrected the bodies of its victims, re-projecting them into a time not free of its own witch hunts.

Projection in both senses of the word is also at the heart of Judith Barry’s *First and Third* installations, in which a video-person of color suddenly appears on (or from) a wall, confronting the viewer with a brief personal narrative. The experience is like hearing intimate revelations from a perfect stranger on an airplane. The image is projected and the expectations are projected, then confused. The body is ephemeral and the story is substance.

Pat Ward Williams sees her role as that of witness, commemorating anonymous African Americans who rebelled or lost their lives because of who they were, as well as members of her own family, who emerge from the rural South of the past with their own related tales to tell. The camera lens, and her frequent use of the wooden window frame and antique photographs, helps the audience, like the artist, put themselves in the ghosts’ places, to re-embody an unfamiliar past.

Many of these artists are asking not only where self and society overlap but where body and self separate. Kiki Smith’s new work is deceptively classical in form, subversively obtrusive in content. The de-idealized body finds itself reborn in awkward, submissive, disturbing (and eerily beautiful) positions that evoke rarely pictured aspects of sexuality, the ravages of disease, age, and death. The bodies she sculpts

(from paper, wax, metal, plaster) are often simultaneously vulnerable and powerful. Smith's earlier anatomical fragments and her "packaged" anatomical organs and effluvia turn the inside out, demanding definitions of privacy. Her 1985 *Possession is Nine Tenths of the Law* concerned organ transplants, who gets them, who doesn't. "Who owns the body," she asks in much of her work—"there are zillions of ways the state intercedes, like forcing children to be inoculated—it's an intrusion into the sovereignty of the body."

Of course the major intrusion of this kind is when states go to war—against other states, or against their own citizens. Rudolf Baranik is known for his *Napalm Elegies*, the brutally lyrical images of a child's napalmed head, which led, in the early '80's, to another submerged figure, more personal in content and yet meaningful in the very general context of a world that so effectively submerges its humanity. As in all his work, this adamantly dialectical "socialist-formalist" insists on meaning even as he makes it elusive. In his piece for this show, Baranik places the napalmed Vietnamese boy next to a definition of "body," an excerpt from his ongoing *Dictionary of the English Language, 24th Century*. While focusing on a (relatively) recent historical event, he also puts it into perspective by stating the "archaic" and "obsolete" ideologies served, and at the same time subtly incorporating (so to speak) comments on the current censorship of art—another body blow.

Pepón Osorio's forte is the obliteration of pain by beauty. His up-front Latino materialism (perceived in the dominant culture as "kitsch") exposes cultural bias while impertinently offering a seductive opulence to those who have rejected it as part of their own culture. Yet Osorio's most important recent work has dealt with death in the Nuyuorican community, from AIDS, from police brutality, from the poverty that is gallantly assuaged by cultural celebration and accumulation. Similarly, beneath the encrusted riches of his "costumes," mocking the commodity culture, lies the suffering social body.

In a very different manner, Ashley Bickerton also calls attention to surfaces—the sterile, hi tech containers in which our lives are regulated. In *Style Piece/Head Trip I* the photographed faces of indigenous people from the Americas are strung above the same number of chrome plated "drums." The sound of fury is packaged to be unheard. "What is really desirable is that which has always been desirable," Bickerton has said, "...sunsets, oceans, mountains, love and sex, etc. Yet these have long been overconsumed and cannot be represented outside kitsch. In order to embrace these basic stimuli we must now do so through kitsch. It is necessary to come to terms with and reinterpret kitsch, to make it a desire and not an obstacle."

Little of this work aspires to or achieves the status of kitsch. But much of it strains for a populist appeal in content, if not in form. These are artists who understand the difficulties, even pain, involved in straddling the fence between the necessity to communicate and the necessity not to compromise their art in the process. They put their ideas and others' bodies on the line.

Biography

Lucy R. Lippard is a writer and activist, the author of fifteen books on contemporary art. She has been the co-founder of many activist artists' organizations, including *Heresies*, PADD (Political Art Documentation/Distribution), Artists Call Against U.S. Intervention in Central America, Damage Control; and active in many others, including the Alliance for Cultural Democracy, its Campaign for a Post-Columbian World and *How To '92*. Her most recent books are *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America*, and the forthcoming anthology *Partial Recall*, with essays by Native North American writers on photography. She lives in New York City, Boulder, Colorado, and Georgetown, Maine.

**"BUT THERE
ARE SOME
AMONG YOU
WHO DO NOT
BELIEVE"**

**JUDITH
WILSON**

IF THE PRACTICE OF ANGLO-AMERICAN visual artists during the past decade or so can be characterized by a single pair of tendencies, the foregrounding of signifying processes and the thematization of the human body seem the most likely candidates. The 1980's saw artists as unlike as Jean Michel Basquiat and Lorna Simpson, Martha Rosler and Jo Spence producing work in which the traditional relationship between verbal texts and visual representations was disrupted or indefinitely suspended within a particularly loaded context—i.e., discursive formations of the body. Why?

Perhaps artists in the U.K. and U.S. were finally ready to confront the epistemological crisis attending the shift from a logocentric culture to a "society of the spectacle (1)." For, while this transformation had been in progress since the invention of photography (if not before) (2), new technologies of vision did not achieve the precision, utility or wide distribution necessary to supplant written forms of communication until comparatively recent times. And, as various authors have observed, the "crisis in perception" that accompanied this media revolution was, in turn, "the result of a sweeping remaking of the observer..., derived from new knowledge of the body (3)." Thus, there is an on-going reciprocally instrumental relationship between the ways we perceive, encode and transmit information today and the ways we conceive and experience our bodies.

If we consider the post-World War II era—that is to say, the period that roughly coincides with the move from local to global economies, from production to consumption oriented First World societies and from modes of representation that supplemented communal life to modes of representation that increasingly substitute for it—a pattern in which figuration is interwoven with the demystification of representational processes becomes apparent. Insofar as it aimed to transcribe emotional states and reproduce metaphysical phenomena, Abstract Expressionism ignored its own mediated status as a form of signification. By retaining such Ab. Ex. features as arbitrary drips and process-revealing heavy impasto, while jettisoning illusions about the communicative possibilities of "pure" form, the New-Dadaists Rauschenberg and Johns exposed the arbitrary nature of the painted sign. Like Rauschenberg and Johns, both the media-oriented Pop artists (Warhol, Lichtenstein and Rosenquist) and the object-oriented ones (Oldenburg and Dine) retrieved recognizable imagery in order to extend the New-Dadaist demythologizing of form/content relations to the specific character of representation in commodity culture.

Meanwhile, yet another chain of reactions to the socio-aesthetic watershed of Abstract Expressionism (4) led to a literalization of the ontology of "action painting" via Happenings and Fluxus "events." Here (and in related developments in dance centered around Greenwich Village's Judson Memorial Church), live bodies functioning in real space and time replaced represented ones. But in their refusal of such theatrical conventions as pre-scripted or choreographed performance, narrative structure, and mimesis (5), these artists underscored by omission the signifying practices of traditional drama and dance.

By the late 1960's and early 70's, many of the critical tendencies outlined here, as well as in the non-figurative language of Minimalism, would re-surface in more concentrated form as Conceptual Art. Ostensibly the most cerebral branch of contemporary developments, conceptualism ironically spawned a new brand of performance and a wide range of "body art." Yet this is, once again, consistent with the pattern we have been tracing—a pattern in which the body is almost inevitably recruited whenever prevailing assumptions about visual representation are contested. Consistent with the metaphoric character of human anatomy, such polemical use of the body in recent art should come as no surprise. Since the dawn of the Enlightenment (and with it, the modern era), anatomical dissection has provided a key paradigm for "ways of thinking about and representing all branches of knowledge," according to Barbara Stafford (6). But a review of the metaphors used to frame this exhibition demonstrates that the equation of the body with knowledge, insight, truth, and essence clearly predates the eighteenth century.

The words "this is my body...this is my blood" occur in slightly different form in each of the first three Gospels and are explicated in John 6: 54-55 (7). They are the words with which one Jesus of Nazareth allegedly instituted the central rite of Catholicism, the Eucharist or "Holy Communion"—itself a symbolic reenactment of the blood sacrifice that constitutes Christianity's core myth.

Presiding over a Passover feast with his twelve disciples, in Luke 22: 19, Jesus broke bread then distributed it saying, "This is my body, which is being given for you: do this in remembrance of me." Next, the soon-to-be-crucified Redeemer passed around the table a cup of wine, declaring it "the new covenant in my blood, which shall be shed for you (Luke 22 20)." The choice of emblems here is not fortuitous. They signal that this ceremonial performance is meant to upstage the founding myths of Judaism.

As a passage in John makes clear, the substitution of Christ's body-as-bread for the manna that miraculously fed Moses' followers in the desert operates allegorically:

I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the desert and have died...I am the living bread that has come down from heaven. If anyone eat of this bread he shall live forever...(8)

While the divinely dispensed daily shower of manna is said to have sustained the Israelites during their forty-year search for the Promised Land, consumption of the Messiah's sacrificial body produces eternal salvation—a benefit obviously exceeding God's promises to Moses (9). Similarly, "the new covenant"—ratified by drinking a communal cup of wine that stands for the Redeemer's spilt blood—supersedes the Mosaic pact, which was consecrated by ritual acts that included both burnt offerings and various anointments using the blood of freshly slaughtered young bulls (10). This appropriation of Jewish symbols in order to supplant Judaism exemplifies a sort of ideological cannibalism that is common cultural practice. More startling is the deployment of a set of starkly physical metaphors in pursuit of an anti-materialist agenda:

It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some among you who do not believe (11).

Two operations seem to be at work here. One is a repetition of the strategy of appropriation and subversion we have seen function in the overlaying of Jewish emblems with Christian meanings—i.e., using the body as a rhetorical figure to represent its opposite, the spirit, and thereby stress the insignificance of the physical organism. The other procedure taking place is a test of faith on the most extreme grounds—i.e., asking the beholder to disbelieve his or her eyes in favor of intangible, verbally-communicated information.

Finally, that is what the current interest in the body and representation seems to be about: reconciling our knowledge of “the” body as simultaneously whole and discontinuous, solid and permeable, individual and social, physical and emotional. Sometimes, it is a matter of overriding direct sensory data; at other times it may be a question of discounting mediated sensations or rejecting socially-constructed “common sense.” More than ever, though, in an age of relentless visual stimulation, we find ourselves challenged to define our bodies, our selves and to exert some control over their representation.

Notes

1. The phrase “society of the spectacle” is, of course, Guy Debord’s. For Debord, “spectacle” is both product and project of a “mode of production” that fragments and alienates perception so that “images detached from every aspect of life fuse in a common stream in which the unity of this life can no longer be reestablished” and “[r]eality...unfolds...as...an object of mere contemplation.” In this context, “spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images.” Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red, 1983), parags. 1-4.

According to Barbara Stafford, “the late twentieth century is...in the midst of a paradigm shift of Copernican proportions in which the optical continues to unseat the ‘solidly’ textual from its former position of intellectual, social, and political hegemony.” For Stafford, the ability of video to reproduce “disembodied simulacra” and of computerized technology to construct virtual realities means that “all bodies lose their former indestructible organic spatial and temporal unity.” Barbara Maria Stafford, *Body Criticism: Imaging the Unseen in Enlightenment Art and Medicine* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), p. 36.

2. Geoffrey Batchen, “Seeing Things: Vision and Modernity,” *Afterimage*, Vol. 19, no. 2 (September 1991), p. 5.

3. Walter Benjamin quoted in *ibid.* and Crary, *ibid.*, p. 103. Crary, “Techniques of the Observer,” *October* 45 (Summer 1988), p. 4-5.

4. My use of the term “socio-aesthetic” is an attempt to reference the substantial body of evidence that Abstract Expressionism’s international “triumph” was as much an outgrowth of mass media sensationalism, Cold War politics and status-seeking among the nouveau riche as it was the result of artistic innovation. See, for example, Erika Doss, *Benton, Pollock, and the Politics of Modernism: From Regionalism to Abstract Expressionism*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Serge Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Annette Cox, *Art As Politics: The Abstract Expressionist Avant-Garde and Society*. (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982).
5. The various artists and dancers whose performance works are generally classified as Happenings, Fluxus events or Judson dance did not all dispense with each of these conventions or always reflect them to the same degree in each of their productions.
6. Stafford, p. 47.
7. Matthew 26: 26-28; Mark 14: 22-24; Luke 22: 19-20.
8. John 6: 48-52.
9. Exodus 16: 4-35.
10. Exodus 24: 5-8.
11. John 6: 64-65.

Biography

Judith Wilson is an acting assistant professor at the University of Virginia, where she teaches the history of contemporary art, 19th and 20th-century African American art, and African art. Some of her most recent publications include articles analyzing 19th and 20th-century representations of miscegenation (*American Art*, summer 1991), conceptual artist Adrian Piper’s explorations of the metaphysics of identity (*Third Text*, 16/17), and DuBoisian ideology in the art of Henry O. Tanner (*Contributions in Black Studies*, 9/10). Her essay on Romare Bearden’s nudes will appear in a forthcoming volume of *Dia Art Foundation/Discussions in Contemporary Culture* (Bay Press). Ms. Wilson is a Ph.D. candidate in the History of Art at Yale University.

BODY LANGUAGES

ROBERT
BLAKE

"We do not *have*
bodies, we *are*
our bodies"

Trinh T. Minh-ha

IT IS AT THE INTERSECTION of the subject and history that the artists included in "**This is my body: this is my blood**" share common ideological and artistic terrain. These artists disclose rather than reveal, addressing and exploring the representation of *otherness* through visual and linguistic projects. Their breach of silence charts wounds, differences, openings, breaks, refusals, recollections, collective and individual sites of resistance. The works share an activity (largely deconstructive) that makes political and social content visible. Efforts to locate and engage the body parallel the need to recognize and interact with diverse cultures without domination and possession being the result of contact. Their efforts are most successful when disruptive, creating a situation that requires the viewer to participate by thinking through and experiencing the piece.

We live surrounded by a blizzard of electronic messages that confirm the degree to which the individual or self has become a fractured, decentered, if not extinct, category. Yet the body remains the contested site where state interests are most determined to control reproduction, nakedness, sexuality, and are equally mobilized to restrict representation. The misrepresented and the invisible seek a process of decolonization where questions of race, class, ethnicity, and gender are not subsumed by an aesthetic gloss. By challenging the structures of representation and the order of patriarchal society, the artists in this exhibition use visual means "to restore the nonsequential energy of lived historical memory and subjectivity as fundamental components of meaning in representation (1)."

The "I" that shows itself within these works cannot but display its construction. For example, the work of Yong Soon Min entitled *Decolonization* is a mixed media piece which employs texts, images, and sculptural elements to explore Korean American issues of identity and difference. The heart of the piece connects composite stories of Asian women and various states of being "occupied" or oppressed. When first exhibited a traditional Korean dress was suspended from the ceiling with a Korean poem entitled, *Home*, handwritten in Korean on one side and in English on the other. The poem by Ko Won reads, "To us already a birthplace is no longer our home. The place we were brought up is not either. Our history, rushing to us through fields and hills is our home."

The installation includes a complex ensemble of four panels, each with a frosted mylar overlay that must be pressed or lifted in order to read the texts and see the photographs underneath. The panels have two letter cut-outs which when read together spell "occupied." They connect visually to the word "territories" printed on the wall, while the word "colonize" is situated elsewhere on the floor. This description cannot convey the directness and variety of the language, nor the tensions between texts and images. One panel reads, "Oh baby you're my first my second my third world girl. OK GI JOE, CHECK POINT CHARLIE, DANDY YANKEE, GRINGO GEORGE—I'M YOUR MAMASAN, WAR BRIDE, MISS SAIGON, MAIL ORDER BRIDE, I'M YOURS." Another image/text panel reads like a personal conversation between a mother and child about a photograph, recounting events in Korea during the war: "Why were we all smiling so, that bright sunny afternoon?...How could you have known that

this is the last time we would all be together before your father and uncle went north to the front? There was not much to smile about right after the war. I was so lucky to have a job then, any job. Especially my job at the U.S. army base. We were at last able to fill our bellies....” The text weaves the contradictions of a sunny day, the last time the family was united, the confusion of army trucks passing, holding on to a skirt, the job that the narrator had at a U.S. army base, gifts from GIs, and an accepting child that liked Ritz crackers and never complained. The final panel returns to the central question, “Who am I?/Am I who I am? It began with a question. Perhaps it always begins with a question. The same one.” Min combines the social and psychological impact of colonization creating a synthetic work that can house the specific stories of her mother and herself. These narratives are set against the ambiguity of the photographs, artifacts of cultural identity, and the harsher language of American military terms. Interpreting a space which holds disparate elements offers the viewer a sense of choice in how to perceive and discover this contested and layered terrain.

Karen Atkinson approaches the body, the map, the territory and travel in her piece, *Remapping Tales of Desire*. This work combines images and texts that confront, literally, the use of “woman” as the site/object of travel and tourism. Lifting texts from travel brochures and citing the journals of the New World colonists produces astonishing comparisons. Consider these sources utilized by Atkinson from 1991 tourist brochures, “An intimate hideaway on an island for your every need and desire. Discover virgin beaches and breathtaking tropical scenery” or “Refined. Laid back. Waiting just for you. Impeccable beautiful” or “Caressed by crystal water, snow white sand, and golden sun. You’ll be seduced by this unspoiled paradise.” In a more historical vein she cites Cristobal Colon (Columbus) describing his Terrestrial Paradise: “it has the shape of a pear, which is all very round, except at the stem, where it is very prominent, or that it is as if one had a very round ball, and on one part of it was placed something like a woman’s nipple...” Other quotes describe the conquest and rape of native women, and the possession or abuse of *others* without hesitation. Get the picture?

Her collages combine past and present using recent commercial imagery and lithographic reproductions of colonists in beach scenes that disrupt and parody the messages of advertising. The work clearly demonstrates how the language of discovery is repetitively *couched* in terms of a woman’s body. In a collaborative text with Andrea Liss entitled *Remapping Tales of Desire: writing across the abyss*, Atkinson cites Madeleine de Scudery’s seventeenth-century novel, *Clelie, Histoire-Romaine* and her *Map of Tenderness*. This remarkable text and map offer an alternative code of love and gallantry, one which does not conclude in a male dominated marriage. These sources are not ambiguous appropriations but serve to locate the feminized territory that has been occupied, and chart desire and travel differently. The method of display offers texts and images to be read against one another. Boundaries are disputed, diffused and erased, while different sources are summoned to combat the pervasive rendering of First world interests in relation to Second World and Third World communities.

Ashley Bickerton has said, "I feel that an art object should be an open vital forum, a podium from which the artist can speak freely about anything they damn well please, to follow lines of research and inquisition, develop curiosity and name desires (2)." For Ashley Bickerton the circuit of ideas and objects resists reductive logic. In *Style Piece - Head Trip 1*, Bickerton employs a suite of black and white photographs of black tribal faces, dramatically showing decorative scars, markings, and physical distortions. Each wall mounted portrait sports an identical, unusual, frame. Rolled canvas is held by straps on the top and bottom of each image, transforming them into a set of linked objects. Visually they cohere as a grid of sixteen, the straps functioning to keep our attention on the faces and add to our fascination. Already the photographs start to shift in meaning. They cannot remain the tokens of ethnographic pictorialism (the exotic natives) separate from the signifying power they have acquired as elements of these new objects. Echoing their size and grid arrangement are what looks like sixteen chrome containers arranged on the floor. Considered together there are a surplus of possible meanings. The incongruity of the images, the containers, and their arrangement provides a linguistic liberation, a sacrificing of terms. However, the viewer is caught in the play between represented pleasure and pain. The desire for the *other* and the privilege of travel cannot return us to Eden. There is an ecological warning here that might go something like this: appropriated, transported, ordered, and displayed, the trophies of the *other* signify not their origin but their displacement. The containers' industrial precision offer an impossible ideal of ideologically neutral travel. Cult value and exhibition value square off while the spectators sail by.

The facts of representation are inseparable, like breathing, from the artwork. Approaches vary but it is evident that something more than an ethical witness is at stake. May Stevens has been an artist whose activism is evident in and outside the studio. She has been most recognized for the series of work *Ordinary/Extraordinary* which contrasts the life of assassinated German/Polish revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg with the difficult life of her mother, Alice Stevens. The working class, undereducated Alice was often in mental institutions and nursing homes. These pieces display a resolute desire to juxtapose and examine the painful experience of two women without reducing either to their tragic circumstances. Stevens says, "When I work, I go to the themes that move me most, where meaning lies for me: women, words, water, speech, silence, loss, time...I see the vertical intersection of all the lives that went before, especially women's and all the other voiceless ones, as they cross the lives of those who live with me, horizontally, in my time. I am connected in both directions: with Alice Stevens and Rosa Luxemburg, with the freedom riders of the civil rights movement, with American labor leader Lucy Parsons, with the vanished Selk'nam women...I use their words and images because I am connected, I am a piece of them, made of the same stuff (3)."

Women's History 1992, continues to identify working women's circumstances and their history. Stevens' imagery often derives from snapshots and photographs, an effective way to be familiar yet challenge the politics of representation. There are two

groups of women walking in this large mural-sized painting. The large foreground figures are young street hookers, “workers” caught in the city chaos, anonymous casualties, defiant yet marked, different. They are in front of red signage of the 42nd street variety. Smaller in scale, drawn in graphite, black and white, are women walking in a circular space. These women are reminiscent of women prisoners of the time of Rosa Luxemburg. The planes of the two groups overlap occasionally allowing the memory and history of each to be seen in and through the other. The walking of both groups takes on the emblematic power of death marches, protest marches, silent rituals. The painting asks that we “read” it, but it is not a didactic assault. This weaving of art and politics is informed but not driven by theory. Her works do not admit that the “postmodern” condition has brought about the death of the subject. Her images provide some shelter from the harrowing notion that in resisting mastery we are without history. Steven’s offers, “The painting under discussion is part of a long-yearad flow of an oeuvre in which an expressionist syntax carries deep personal emotions, which by their strength become a voice which is liberationist.”

Susan Jahoda finds much useful visual and textual material in historic sources. Her piece, *The Unstable Subject*, is a video installation whose sculptural elements include filing cabinets, an office desk, dining-room chairs, and three video monitors. The filing cabinets have labelled drawers with categories such as Obstetric Technique, Eating Disorders, Needle Trades, Fashion, Business Management and Industry, which serve as categories, subject to the deconstructive activity of the videos. The space is simultaneously clinical, secretarial, and domestic. This suits her intentions, for it is the slippage between the strained relations of the family, the state and the female subject that animate this work. Jahoda directed live-action studio sequences of an actress preparing a cake, unpicking the seams of a child’s dress, pouring milk from a surgical bowl, and watching herself in the mirror—intercutting these acts with film clips from the 1950’s through the 1980’s. The archives utilized may be those associated with academic research, but often the artist provides us with the result of having scavenged warehouses full of industrial films, or the cheesy relics of home economics audio-visual programs. The footage is further recontextualized by the use of stills from fashion magazines, advertising for tranquilizers targeting women, and old family snapshots. The use of this material and the associated audio texts remains complex, weaving a set of representations: the traps and trappings of the construction of the “female subject.”

Jahoda’s selection of the represented domestic labor of women and the roles proscribed for them is challenged by layers of personal history which investigate family, friends, and sexual partners. Nine emotionally charged diaristic texts comprise the piece, placing the viewer in the position of listening, looking, and sorting through the representational fragments.

“...One night she dreamt they were identical twins. One night she dreamt they were identical twins. They dressed up like Mediaeval

Madonnas. They dressed up like Mediaeval Madonnas. Like Joans of Arc. Like Joans of Arc. Like Ingrid Bergmans. Like Ingrid Bergmans. Like Winnie Mandelas. Like Winnie Mandelas. Like Lizzy Bordens. Like Lizzie Bordens. They sought their reflections in mirrors. They sought their reflections in mirrors. They didn't recognize themselves. They didn't recognize themselves. Only the other. Only the other. They became the other. They became the other. Her father became confused. He asked them to identify themselves. They couldn't. He became frightened. He decapitated them. He interrogated their bodies. He took them to a hospital where an attempt was made to put them back together. She always had the feeling she wasn't herself."

What is at stake is the identity of a female subject whose family history includes the Holocaust and contains a series of concealments and wounds. It is the transformation of this information, its extension and permutation, that gives the videos their perceptual and visual character. Work of this kind accepts hybridization and offers a place for the self that only a few years ago would have been received as a contaminant within Marxist theoretical circles. This is central to the premise of the exhibition and deserves further critical discussion. As Cixous has written of women's voices, "Her discourse, even when theoretical or political, is never simple or linear or objectivized, universalized; she involves her story in history (4)."

By contrast it is interesting to consider the work of Dennis Adams and Anthony Aziz, male artists who address issues of power, the State, and gender. Adams' commitment to public work and a political unconscious is nowhere more apparent than in the selection for the exhibition, *La Pissotière*. The 1988 version of this work was a maquette originally intended for an installation in Dijon, France. Invited by the city to produce a public work, Adams chose to address the role of the French colonialists and the Algerian War of Independence. The degree to which this subject remains abrasive and taboo became apparent when, upon learning of the subject of the work, the city *fathers* rejected the proposal. It is revealing to understand the way that Adams chose the elements for this piece.

As the war neared conclusion in 1962, an effort was made to repatriate eight statues from the Palais d'Été, busts of the previous French military governors. It was obvious that they represented the domination of the country and that their loss would have been an additional defeat. Their removal was recorded in photographs providing documentation of the symbolic and actual dismantling of French authority. In the images the heads sit disoriented in sand as they await shipment back to France: fallen, bodiless, powerless. Several further discoveries aided Adams in conceptualizing the work. He chose to create an alternative monument situated at one end of the Avenue Charles de Gaulle (itself commemorative of French nationalist pride), utilizing an echo of public architecture found on the opposite end of the boulevard, the *pissoir*. The proposal involves a fabrication which duplicates the bunker-like

concrete public urinals. Two illuminated display transparencies of the dismantled statues occupy the position where men would habitually relieve themselves. From the outside the work appears harmless and it is only upon entering (to visit, to see, to urinate?) that the work acquires its derisive function. What family would not remember, differently, their trip to the urinal and the fate of the military governors? With an economy of means Adams has opened the male territory of the pissoir to a broader critique of the institutions of colonial power, modernism, and patriarchy.

Anthony Aziz's *Public Image/Private Sector* completed in 1991 pairs two lifesize color photographs for each white, middle-aged man depicted. The men are displayed face forward, fully dressed on the left, naked on the right. A central plaque separates the pairs slightly below waist level, offering information such as height, weight, age, corporate rank, income, children, and an executive "personal statement." The individual's name is withheld offering a degree of anonymity. The combination of a corporate identity photograph, complete with suit, tie, and executive shoes, does not jive with the matter-of-fact nude. The viewer is left to wonder about these men and their power, and to question the effect of seeing them naked. Are they "stripped" of their power? Is corporate virility a projection of a dress code, and limited to older, white, heterosexuals of European ancestry? As naked, aging males, their physical vulnerability is evident despite varying gestures that lack excessive self-consciousness.

There is something more insidious that undermines the representations of these men. Why would corporate heads participate in this kind of exposure? Could it be that these images are *fakes*, using representation and simulation, to construct and displace the *subject*. This is in fact the case. The artist has offered a production, a constructed "real," supported by conventional data. The degree to which we are taken in by the ruse is proportional to our complicity in maintaining their privilege. The humorous side of this parody collides with corporate interests that continue to limit the participation and representation of *other* men. Choosing nakedness and masquerade to locate this representational conflict continues efforts by feminists and gays to redirect and reclaim the use of the body.

Rudolf Baranik has contributed a definition of the body (see page 39), part of his extended *Dictionary of the English Language, 24th Century*. Having recognized the degree to which we are subjected by language, Baranik has opted to define key words and concepts from the vantage point of a future utopian civilization. Looking back offers a disjunctive, Brechtian perspective which opposes the capitalist situation of our present. There is wit and humor aimed at such terms as postmodernism, "a movement within the arts (obsolete) ... related to the *Je sais mieux que toi* games in the kindergartens of Belgium and France..." while new media such as video are labelled anachronistic and obsolete. The mood however is somber when focused on the definition of war, institutionalized murder, or the State.

State (stat)n.1. A condition or mode of being with regard to a set of circumstances. 2. A condition of being in a stage, form, as of growth and development. 3. A mental or emotional condition or disposition.

STATE, political (archaic) The definition given to the instrument of inter-human oppression which withered away in the early 23rd century, as predicted by marxists in the 19th century and strived for by anarchists of the time.

Baranik has linked the definition of the body with a photograph, one which confronts the viewer with the memory of human suffering. The image, offered to Baranik by a Vietnam veteran, shows the form of a napalmed child. The choice returns us to the moral and ethical issues that are the legacy of Vietnam and all wars. This body is our body. Just as Baranik's painting series, *Napalm Elegy*, functioned during the late sixties and early seventies as an act of artistic resistance against U.S. policy, today the image repudiates our collective amnesia. For Baranik art can serve the need to commemorate and restore the body and life of victims of aggression. The precision and depth of his anger can perhaps best be seen in the last variant of the entry for body in the section entitled, *terms of violence*.

...body count (obsolete), a term formed in the second half of the 20th century by the retarded caste called military planners of the North American Empire. The term was prevalent during the Empire's intervention in Vietnam, Southeast Asia. Body count went out of usage when near the end of the century, during the war (archaic) in the Persian Gulf the term was collateral damage, believed at that time to be less incriminatory.

It is with the furniture of the familiar that Pepón Osorio has been able to focus on the Nuyorican and his own specific history. He utilized his Puerto Rican heritage and sensibility, encrusting bicycles, beds, chandeliers, couches and other familiar objects with an exuberant assemblage of toys, ribbons, plastic cigars, miniature cars, plastic animals, insects, decals, and colored mass-produced trinkets. This decorative ornamentation invokes popular culture, religious iconography, and a celebratory, commemorative practice. In Osorio's work, life feeds art and serves memory. The experience of racism within and outside his own community has motivated Osorio. Twelve plastic clocks in a piece called, *Time Will Tell*, display the faces of black Puerto Ricans in old photographs, inviting the viewer to question how much longer the African experience in Puerto Rico will remain silenced. Dolls and babies that cover the bedboard of *La Cama* (the bed), a 1987 work, are in the majority black, offering an alternative notion of the cultural and ethnic pool from which the plastic toys are modeled. If this is kitsch, it is with a critical distance that it politicizes the work. Yet *La Cama* also serves as a collective, cultural vessel uniting him with Merian Soto, his wife, and Juana Hernandez, the second mother who cared for him as a child. Covered with photos of young Pepón and Merian the bed is resplendent with *capias* (ribbons) given to Pepón by friends in the community. This is a symbolic celebration of matrimony and an ornate connection to a continuing cultural identity.

El Velorio, The Wake, was originally created for the Museo del Barrio in 1991. This work touches a very sensitive nerve in the Latino community for it deals explicitly with the AIDS epidemic. The installation resembled a funeral parlor, with caskets, floral arrangements, chairs, and body bags. Coco Fusco compared the piece to a morgue (5). Texts hover on the walls, the carpet, and the chilling body bags, citing parts of conversations with mourners acknowledging the sentiments of gays, drug users, lovers, and family members. References to earlier epidemics striking Puerto Ricans, most notably cholera, are also evident. This is a work aptly chosen for the current exhibition for it honors the dead, and adds the voice of the Latino community. The body bags are grim reminders of the abandoned ones, the ones whose anonymity indict everyone.

Sutapa Biswas' work has addressed issues confronting women of color, and specifically, her Indian ancestry. She has used the icons and mythology of the Hindu religion in a way that recalls the past to redirect its energy and significance. Central to her efforts has been the use of the female body as a vessel of cultural resistance. A work entitled *Housewives with Steak Knives* 1985, depicts a multi-armed woman with a garland of men's heads around her neck. In her four hands are a large steak knife, the head of a white man, a rose, and a flag. By invoking the image of Kali, goddess of both war and peace, Biswas offers us an empowered black female symbol whose task it is to purge the world of evil. The identifiable male heads are a cast of assorted contemporary political figures representing a patriarchal, colonial system that must be opposed. Gender, race, and power are given a positive female value in the form of this mythic being.

The *Synapse Series*, 1990-91, are large scale black and white photographs which continue to explore the relationship of the female body and the terrain of history. In her own words Biswas has offered "the notion of synapse as a metaphor for the human condition with particular reference to the experience of memory. Synapse here is symbolic of an undefined territory or space. Memory is itself of a shifting nature, vivid in places, with blind spots. Desire becomes an important element in this process (6)." Her return to the culture and history of India (which she left at age three) is itself an immersion in the reconstruction of identity. Images of temples, sacred spaces, and temple sculpture are overlaid by slide projection on her body. Literally receiving the imprint of these sources on her flesh opens a speculative and vulnerable space, a shifting map of sensation. Other projected images show people standing in water, fragments of buildings, a statue of a goddess without arms, purposefully held in the artist's outstretched cupped hands, or over her bare stomach. The discourses of deconstruction, feminism, and postcolonialism are not cloaked by the directness of the work, but neither are they the only navigational tools employed. There exists a charged fissure both secular and sacred that runs through the piece. The cumulative effect of the images is to offer the possibility of journeying in a personal, political, and cultural space which honors the body, resolutely refusing passivity and rejecting colonization.

Judith Barry's project *First and Third* is a video installation that uses oral histories to address the desires of immigrants and their often painful American experi-

ence. Talking heads deliver stories collected by Barry which reveal narratives of oppression. The stories are projected as if they emanate from the walls, literally engaging the viewer in the radical distance between dream and reality.

South American Woman in her 20's or 60's:

Let me tell you a folk tale about the intersection of your country and mine. It's about a young girl who wanted to come to the states. She was working in an office. She wasn't educated, just a poor girl from the country-side whose family had sent her to Buenos Aires to see if she could get a better life for herself. She'd never been to such a big city before, so all the time she is reading and going to the cinema. She liked very much the cinema of the U.S., especially the love stories. Gradually, she is befriended by the man who owns the business where she works. He asks her if she would like to accompany his children, as a kind of companion, on a trip they will make to New York. Before she leaves she visits a fortune teller. She is told that she will get a white dress when she goes to New York and that a gringo will come and take her away. Sure enough, her boss brings her a present of a white dress the day they arrive. She is so excited, that she changes into it and goes for a walk. But as she is crossing the street, a car driven by a white man runs a red light and accidentally kills her.

Central or South American man in his 20's:

In El Salvador everyone asks if you are for the police or the communists. Most of the time when men ask you can tell who they are for, so you know how to answer. But if a woman asks, it is impossible to tell. And if you give the wrong answer, you could be arrested or killed. I was afraid to talk with women on the street. And here in Los Angeles it is the same. I walk down Sunset Boulevard on my way to work, and I can not tell if the women are for the police or for the communists. The women are so friendly. Finally someone explained that on Sunset Boulevard there are a lot of hookers as well as women under-cover cops.

Barry's work employs a video beam projector which can project directly onto existing walls and adapt to each specific location. She sees this piece as being open-ended and plans to add to it as more stories are collected. The current version utilizes nine "as told to" narratives. The projected video removes the intimacy of a body contact or presence. However, it is unnerving to be transfixed by the hovering faces as they command our attention to the specificity of each person's story.

Many of the artists represented in "**This is my body: this is my blood**" have held jobs which helped to establish a connection to their work as artists. Pepón Osorio worked in the child abuse division of the department of Human Services serving the

Latino community; Kiki Smith was trained as an emergency medical technician. Smith uses the body as raw material capable of signifying life sources. Silkscreens of internal and external organs, shrouds, blood smears, bottles of blood, body castings in wax, fragments of body parts in media as diverse as bronze and glass are members of the ensemble of pieces she has made. There is a connection between reproduction and biology, in the subject matter and construction of her work. The internalized body the one available to science but more difficult to manifest as art has often been her target. Sperm, ovum, hearts, kidneys, bodily fluids find their place in Smith's vocabulary of body knowledge, or body sense. Out of the clinical discourse these parts begin to take on an alchemical power, using life processes as art practices, her own body and other bodies as collaborative media. The body casts maintain an anonymity which allows them to exceed the specific and address the circumstances of legal and medical representations of the body. As the divide between nature and culture grows ever larger in the postindustrial societies of the first world, blood and body knowledge charts a collective contact shared in women's experience. This is an art of empowerment, using the biological and representational to activate a physical and emotional relationship with the organism.

Pat Ward Williams is represented by *Oh She Got a Head Fulla Hair*, a homage to a young black girl, childhood, and Afro-American identity. This piece is a soothing familial record connected in feeling to the imagery of her family life that fills albums spanning three generations. She often uses the photographs as a point of entry, to ask questions about race, gender, and history. These inquiries are suffused with the tales of family, friends, and passing events. There is another side to this inquiry into the heritage of being a black woman: it is an encounter with racism, violence and death. In *Accused/Blowtorch/Padlock*, Williams shows a photograph, which can only be described as horrific, taken in 1937 and reprinted in one of *The Best of Life* annuals. A black man is shown tortured and lynched, horribly burned with a blowtorch. Williams shows the photograph in the book and three close-ups, united in a white, weathered, window frame, one that might have been found discarded, behind a house. The text scrawled around it interrogates the picture and her/our reaction to it: "What's goin on here. I didn't see it right away. After all you see one lynched man you have seen them all. He looks so helpless...How long has he been *locked* to that tree? Can you be *Black* and look at this? Who took this picture? Life magazine published this picture. Could Hitler show pictures of the Holocaust to keep the Jews in line? Did he take his camera home and come back with a blowtorch...How can this photograph exist. Oh God. Somebody do something." Your eyes go back and forth from the pictures to the text, from anguish to anger. The familial and the political constantly interact in her work.

By remembering and demanding an emotional response to this image, Williams is participating in an act of defiance and healing. The official record must be challenged. This is even more explicit in *Move*, a video piece which examines the fire-bombing and assault in Philadelphia of a black activist organization of the same name. In both cases, representation, be it photographic or electronic, is implicated in the distortion of facts and the inadequacy of response. Williams is participating in an extended dialogue

with media and history, insisting that we are in a position to intervene in the production of our image.

Representational conflicts and artistic activity are not isolated phenomenon; they reflect and locate significant sites of difference. What distinguishes the effort to group these sensibilities together in **“This is my body: this is my blood”** is not the adherence to a particular theoretical directive. The insistence of interplay between personal and public contexts, the relationship between the body’s collective and specific history, and an active participation in a practice of cultural resistance unites their efforts. It is also important to note the collaborative labor which brought the exhibition into being. Artist organized exhibitions are themselves interventions in the institutional circulation of art. The representational conflicts that are the concern of the artists in this show will not be resolved by purely representational solutions. Yet their efforts contribute to an enlarged discourse that artwork can embrace, and the diverse audience it serves. This essay has not been an attempt to rewrite, or disarm these works of art. In the process of redefining the body, the map, and the territory, the artworks defy such containment.

The author would like to mention two texts that have been central to the research of this essay:

Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 1991, and Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other*, 1989.

Notes

1. Edward Said, *Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community* (Seattle: Bay Press, *The Anti-Aesthetic*, Ed. Hal Foster, 1983), p. 159.
2. Ashley Bickerton, interviewed in *The Journal of Contemporary Art* (New York: Vol.2, No.1, Spring/Summer 1989), p.79.
3. May Stevens, *The White Paper*, talk given March 5, 1992, The Butler Institute of Art, Youngstown, Ohio.
4. Helene Cixous & Catherine Clement, *The Newly Born Woman*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minneapolis Press, 1986), pp. 146, 92.
5. Coco Fusco, “Vernacular Memories,” *Art in America*, December, 1991, p. 102.
6. Moira Roth, “Reading Between the Lines: The Imprinted Spaces of Sutapa Biswas” in *Disrupted Borders* (London: Rivers Osram Press), (forthcoming).

Biography

Robert Blake is an artist and writer who directs the General Studies Program, International Center of Photography, New York. Recent projects include, *Between Two Worlds*, a video which explores the conflicts and needs of Native American children; and *Beauduc*, an ongoing photo/text work about an unofficial waterfront village in Provence, France.

with health and history, insisting that we are in a position to interpret in the present

the complex and often contradictory and even chaotic history of our nation's past.

These concerns are not simply academic; they are the concerns of a people who are

in a constant state of flux, a people who are constantly redefining themselves and their

relationship to the world around them. The history we study is not a fixed and

unchanging record of events, but a living and breathing entity that is constantly

being rewritten and reinterpreted. It is a history that is constantly in flux, a history

that is constantly being redefined and reinterpreted. It is a history that is constantly

being rewritten and reinterpreted. It is a history that is constantly being rewritten

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It is a history that is constantly being rewritten and reinterpreted. It is a history

ARTISTS

“This is my body: this is my blood”

This project was initiated by the Consortium for Dijon. Its proposed material, structure and scale were based on the city's old public pissoirs. Made of cast concrete, these bunkerlike pavilions house two urinal chambers that each conform to the proportions of the human body. The displaced look of these worn, urban remnants against the background of the developing city suggested the appropriation of their form as an image of collective memory, and as a potential vessel for the distribution of historical photographs.

Specifically, I proposed to construct a schematic replica of a pissoir's exterior shell and inside, in place of the urinal niches, to display two identical back-illuminated photographic transparencies. Taken in 1962, these images show the dismantled statuary of French military governors lying in the sand, awaiting shipment back to France during the closing moments of Algeria's War of Independence. The pavilion was proposed for the entrance of the boulevard Charles de Gaulle.

Because of the controversial form and subject of this project, it has not yet been realized. It exists only in maquette form. It was first exhibited in April 1989 at Christine Burgin Gallery in New York, behind a wall housing a life-sized, back-illuminated photograph of one of Dijon's existing pissoirs.

Biography

Born in 1948 in Des Moines, Iowa, Dennis Adams lives and works in New York City. His bus shelters and other public commissions can be seen in Germany, Austria, Canada, Switzerland, and the United States. In addition to other projects, Adams has been working on a series of site-specific projects in France since 1988 dealing with the Algerian war of independence. Adams has exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, 1991, The Whitney Museum of American Art, 1989, and several New York galleries including: Kent Fine Art, 1990, The Kitchen, 1984, and Artist's Space, 1979. The artist has been the recipient of National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships in 1984 and 1980. In addition, he received a DAAD Fellowship in Berlin in 1988. Articles and reviews of Adams' work appear in many catalogues and journals including *Art in America*, *Art News*, *Flash Art*, *Afterimage*, *Arts*, and *Artforum*.

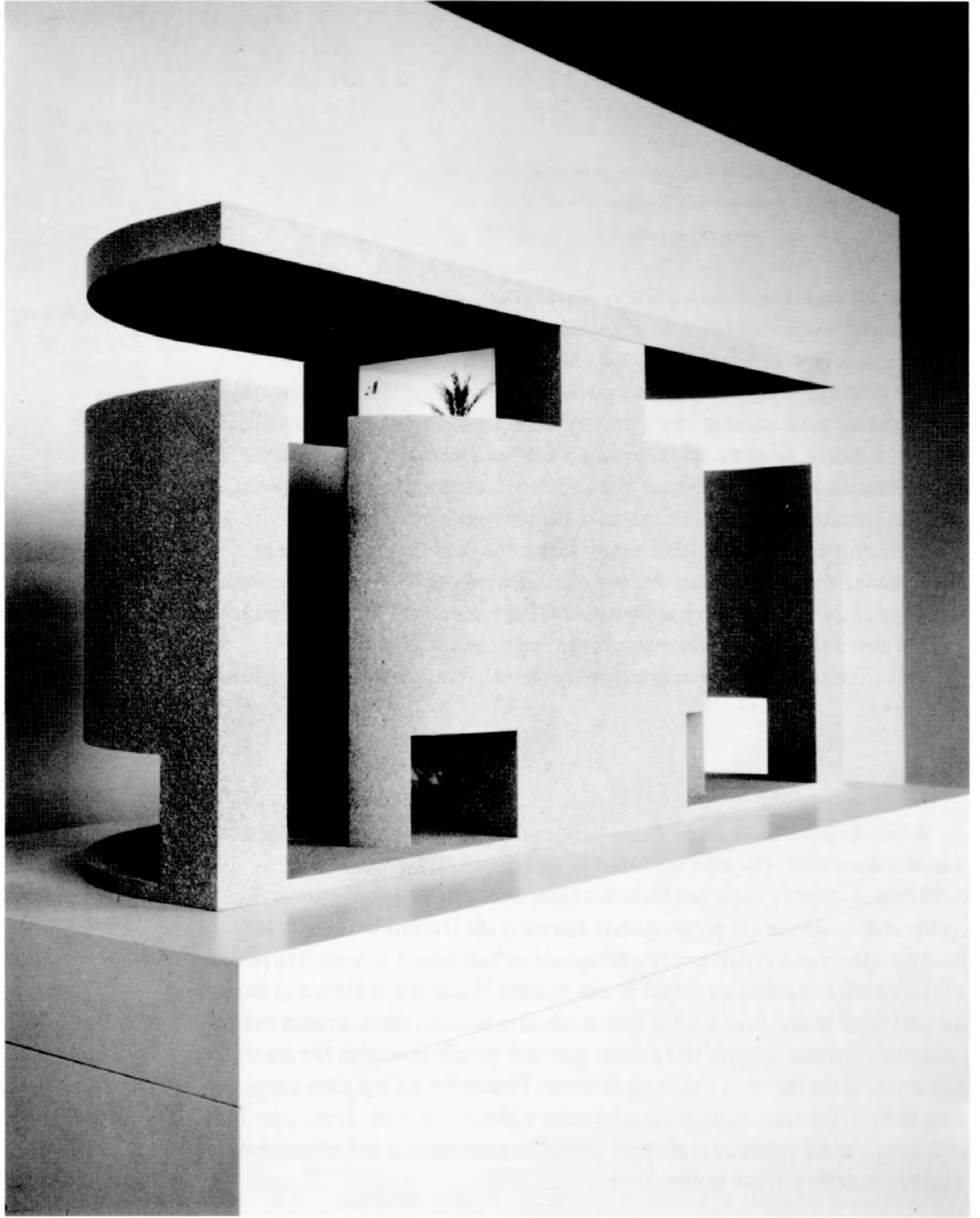
DENNIS ADAMS

**LA PISSOTIÈRE
1988**

*Maquette for
Dijon, France*

mixed media

17 1/2 x 33 1/4 x
12 1/4



A poem by John Donne, early 1600:

*Licence my roaving hands, and let them go,
Before, behind, between, above, below.
O my America! My new-found land,
My kingdom, safeliest when with one man man'd,
My Myne of precious stones, My Empire,
How blest am I in this discovering thee!*

This work takes us through a history of metaphors within the language of discovery and travel which continue to be inscribed within colonialistic desire projected onto the description of women's bodies. It links history to the present.

The language of discovery is couched in terms of a woman's body, often using works such as "penetration of virgin territory", using a woman's body in describing the world's landscape, using the words "roving hands" as a metaphor for discovering new lands. Often the language of tourism uses such words as need, desire, virgin, seduced, caressed, unspoiled, laid back, etc., evoking desirous qualities.

Through presenting a confined history to redefine pleasure, where sexuality, giving, taking and promising become acts of insinuation that will not be suspended in exploitive gazes, it asks for a reconfiguration of our recourses to different maps, a place for both men and women to refuse boundaries and reinscribe desire.

This work uses images of mapping and photos to create a place to address these questions.

Biography

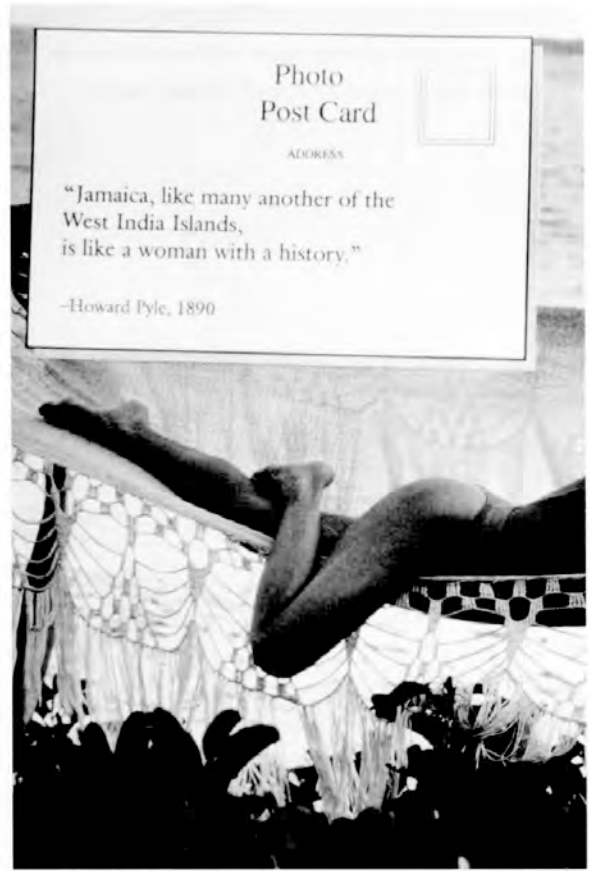
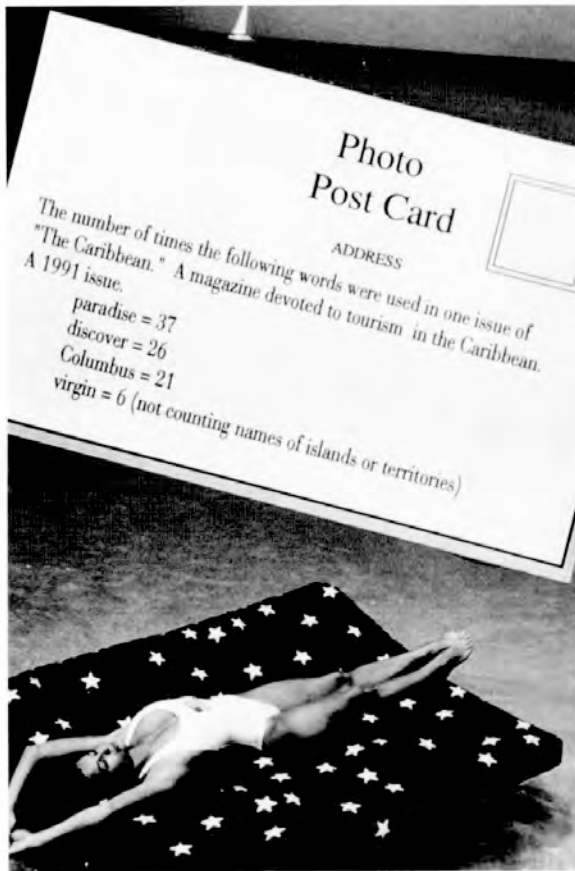
Karen Atkinson has been on the art faculty at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia since 1988. The artist is a founding member of ARTorneys at Work (a collaborative artist's group), and Projected Light Collective (a group of artists that creates slide projections in public spaces). Currently she is coordinating with Judy Baca a project with Cal Arts and SPARC involving high school students. The project will culminate in a public art project in Los Angeles. In addition to exhibiting throughout the United States, Atkinson has been involved in museum administration and numerous curatorial projects. Her eclectic activities include co-editing *The Journal*, a publication of the Southern California Women's Caucus for Art and guest editing an issue of *New Observations* magazine. Atkinson's most recent work, *Remapping Tales of Desire*, is being exhibited at the New Gallery in Santa Monica and subsequently is traveling to Artist's Space in New York.

KAREN ATKINSON

*REMAPPING
TALES OF
DESIRE
1992*

mixed media

*approximately
9' x 30"*



Public Image/Private Sector is a large-scale photographic installation addressing the representation of power and the role of photography and language in establishing systems of authority. Consisting of 12 life-size portraits of fictional corporate leaders, both clothed and unclothed, the piece addresses issues of class, race, nudity, gender and oppression. Formally, the work is inspired by the court paintings of Goya and Gainsborough as well as the Dutch portraits of 17th century civic leaders. When viewed together, the photographs form a boardroom, or pantheon, of capitalist heroes, calling into question the language and rhetoric behind corporate control.

Biography

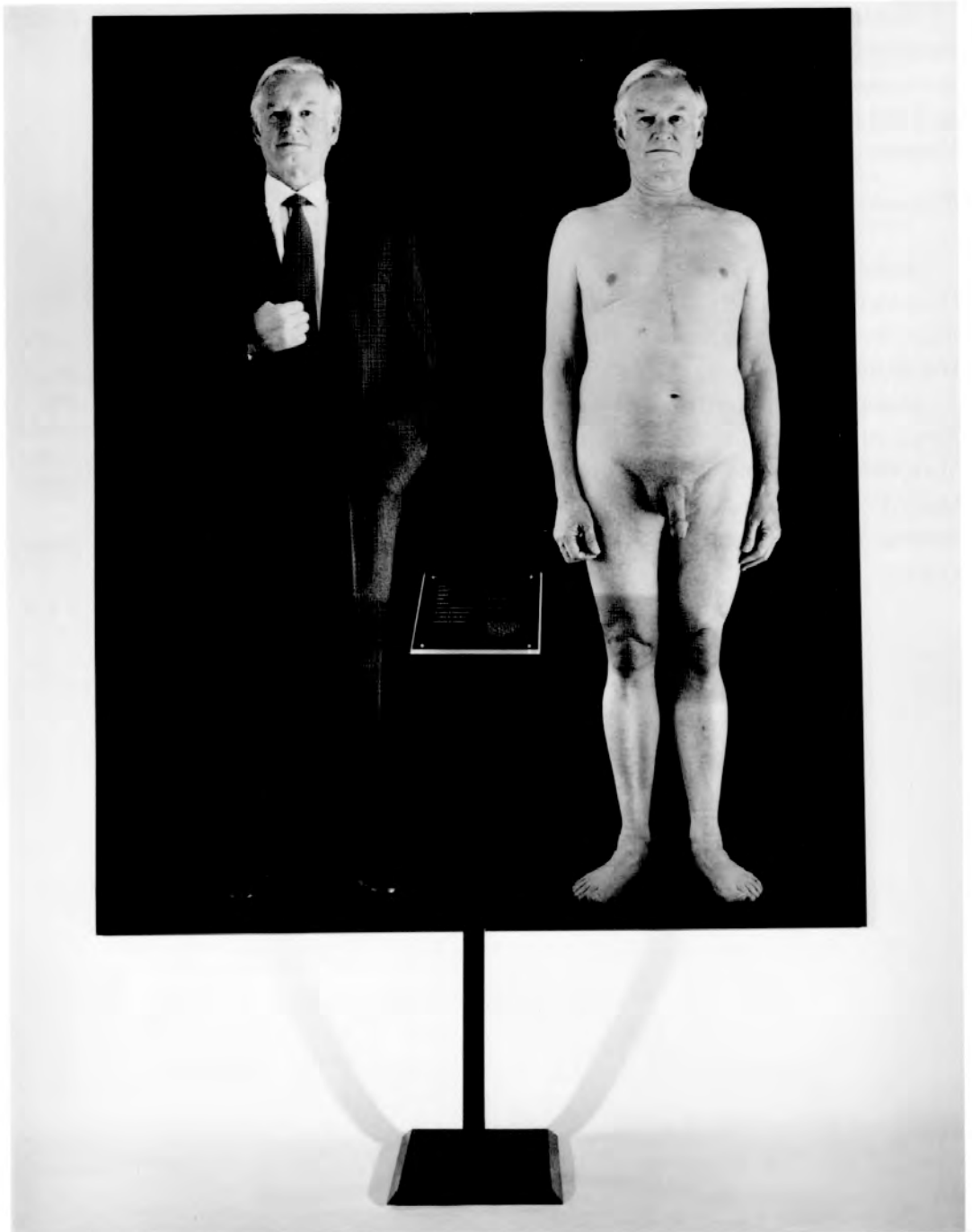
Anthony Aziz was born in Lunenburg, Massachusetts in 1961, and presently resides in San Francisco. Aziz has exhibited at the Haines Gallery and New Langton Arts, San Francisco as well as the Los Angeles Center for Photographic Studies. The artist has lectured at the University of California at Berkeley, the San Francisco Art Institute, and the Art Institute of Boston. In 1991, Aziz received an National Endowment for the Arts Regional Fellowship Award. In 1992, he was a panelist at the annual conference for the Society of Photographic Education. The panel entitled, "It's a Dick Thing" examined photographic representations of "masculinity." Reviews of his work appear in *AfterImage*, *Arts*, and *Village Voice*.

ANTHONY AZIZ

*PUBLIC IMAGE/
PRIVATE SECTOR
1990-91*

type C prints

*three panels
each 72" x 60" x 12"*



Age: 52, Height: 5'9", Weight: 163, Firm: Lexall Industries, Position: Executive Vice President, Annual Corporate Sales: \$1.2 billion, Number of Employees: 12,450, Number of Children: 4, Personal Statement: "Our immediate goal is to play hard ball with the big guys by strengthening our financial base. Currently we are implementing aggressive strategies to effectively and efficiently keep pace with the complicated modern society in which we live. Interfacing with clients *and* personnel is what we seek to achieve."

The text is part of a series from a 24th Century Dictionary. This sporadic, non-linear string of definitions reveals the present as it will be seen centuries hence—thus an ideological weapon which is given to us by the future. The image of the napalmed body was the trigger for a long series of paintings I developed during the war in Vietnam—a series which became known as the Napalm Elegies.

Biography

Rudolf Baranik, born in Lithuania, currently lives and works in New York City. His work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, New Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Hirshorn Museum, Washington, D.C.

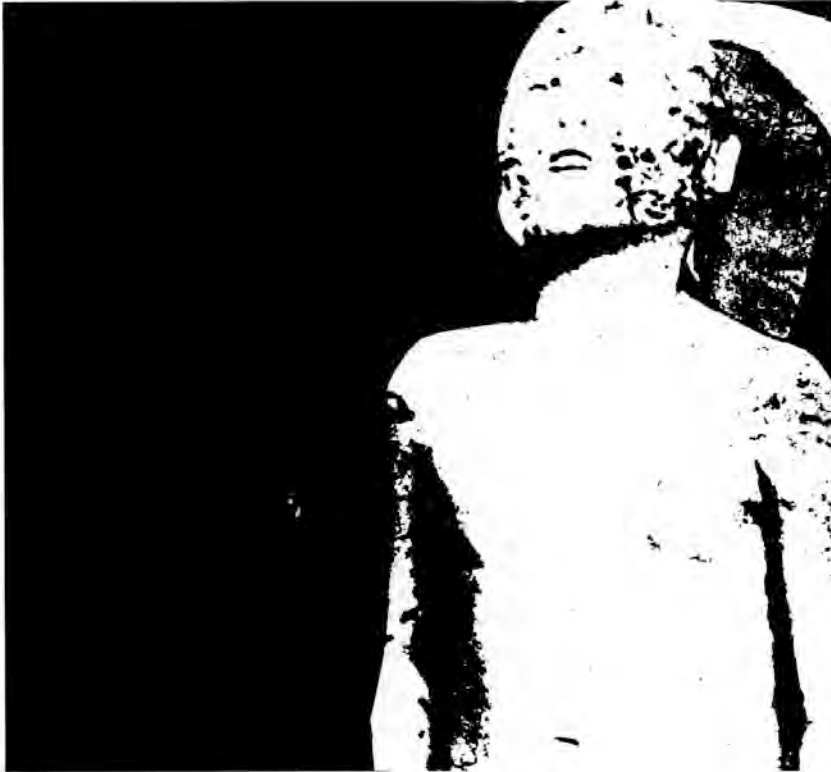
Baranik's writings on issues in contemporary art have been published in *Art Forum*, *Art in America*, *Art Criticism*, *Art Monthly*, *Tracks*, *Up Front*, and *Rethinking MARXISM*. Exhibitions of his work include the international exhibition "Konkrete Utopie/Concrete Utopia" in Dusseldorf, Germany, "Painting After the Death of Painting" in Moscow, and "A Different War"—a traveling exhibition curated by Lucy Lippard.

RUDOLPH BARANIK

BODY:
DICTIONARY
DEFINITIONS
FROM THE
24TH CENTURY
1992

photostat

4' x 5'



B O D - Y (bod'ē) Described as late as the 20th century as "the physical structure and material substance of an animal, including humans, and plants, living or dead."

Body and soul (or *spirit*) a concept held by the majority of humans around the globe until the middle of the 21st century, though the unity or sameness of the two was better understood in some religions/cultures than in others: the most advanced views on the subject of unity were embedded in Hinduism and the religions of Native Americans.

Body and mind a term developed by secular thinkers of the 19th century and continued through the 20th century with *mind* substituting for *soul* or *spirit* perpetuating the dichotomy. 20th century neurology started to reveal that thinking and feeling are physical functions, though more difficult to trace. Simultaneously philosophers were arriving at similar conclusions by a process of logical reduction.

Bodily functions (archaic) a popular expression during the 20th century designating various physical processes of living creatures, especially excretory functions such as perspiration, defecation and urination.

TERMS IN VIOLENCE various archaic terms incorporated the word *body* to designate now extinct barbaric practices, such as *body blow*, depicting a blow driven at the opponent's body between the breast-bone and the navel; *body guard*, a term used to describe people who were paid to defend other people from *physical violence* (archaic); *body slam*, an act of throwing a human being to the ground on the back, a method in a violent activity called *wrestling* (archaic); *body count* (obsolete), a term formed during the second half of the 20th century by the retarded caste called *military planners* of the North American Empire. The term was prevalent during the Empire's intervention in Vietnam, Southeast Asia. *Body count* went out of usage when near the end of the century, during the war (archaic) in the Persian Gulf the term was *collateral damage*, believed at that time by the war planners to be less incriminatory.

This piece is a series of nine stories by 'other' Americans, those of Third World heritage. It reflects the contradictions inherent in the immigrant experience of the American Dream. This work premiered at the Whitney Museum Biennial where the narratives of the 'talking heads' took on a particular significance in the context of an institution which parlays a contemporary American cultural experience in the language of the white male power structure. The speaking videos are seen via a video beam projector which is hidden from view and which does not project a cone of light (as in film). This gives the impression that the walls themselves are talking.

Biography

Judith Barry, born in Columbus, Ohio, is based in New York City. She has exhibited at both the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art. In 1991, Barry's installations at London's Institute of Contemporary Art involved the publication of *Public Fantasy*, a collection of critical essays, fiction, and project descriptions. Barry's work *First and Third* was shown in the 1990 exhibition "Rhetorical Image" at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York. Her writings include *Cup/Couch* which appeared in the September 1978 issue of *High Performance* magazine and "Arts Project: Tear" in the January 1989 issue of *Artforum*. Her most recent works have been installed at Foundation pour l'Architecture, Brussels and Nicole Klagburn Gallery, New York.

JUDITH BARRY

FIRST AND THIRD
1987

video projection

variable



Biography

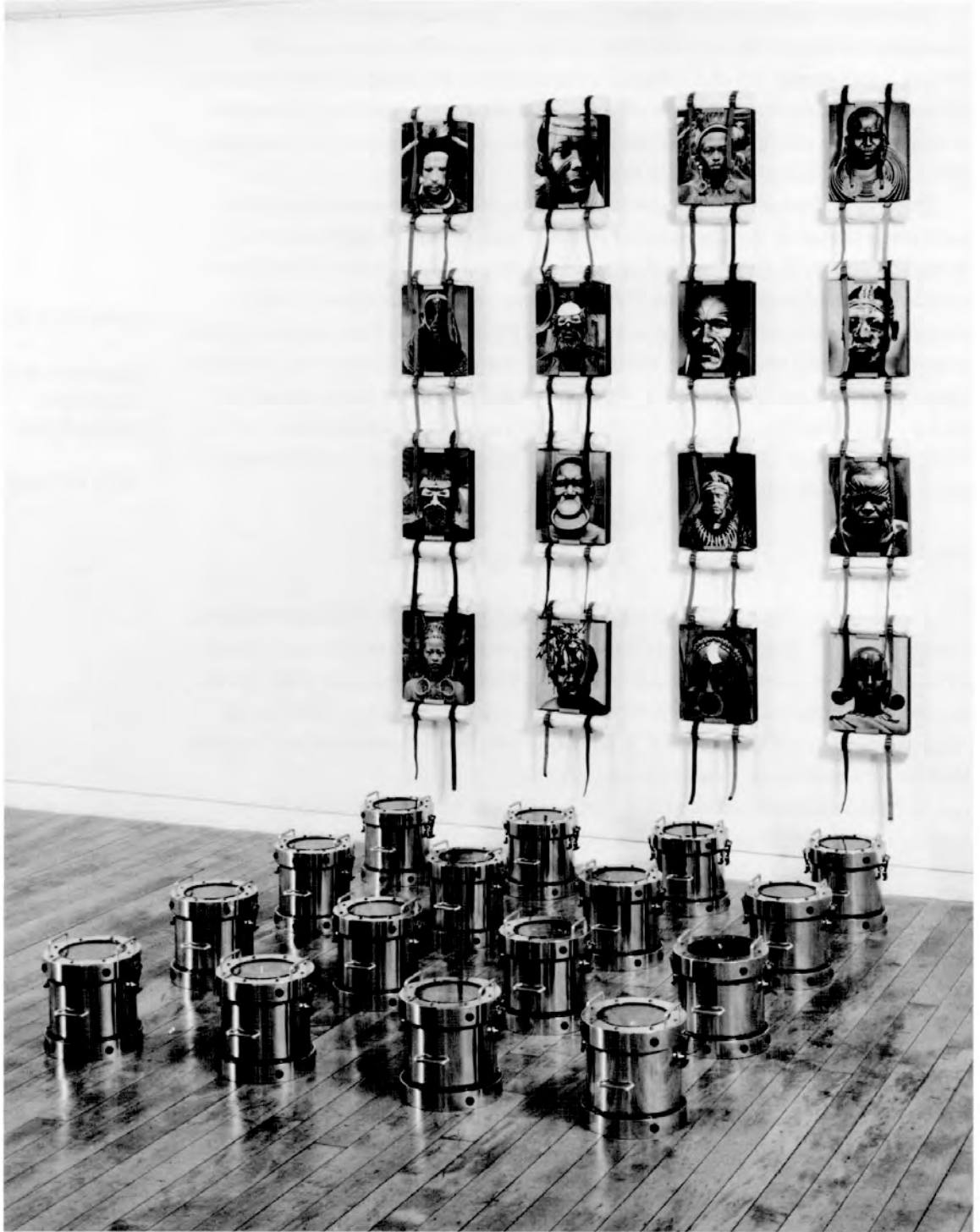
Ashley Bickerton, originally from Barbados, West Indies, resides in New York City. His first one-person exhibitions were at Artists Space and White Columns, New York in 1984. He has exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, 1988, The Whitney Biennial Exhibition, 1989, and the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 1989. In 1990 his work was included in the Venice Biennale and as part of the Museum of Modern Art's exhibition "Allegories of Modernism: Contemporary Drawings" 1992. Major reviews of his work appear in *Art Forum*, *Art in America*, *Arts*, *New Art Examiner*, *New Observations*, and *Flash Art*.

ASHLEY BICKERTON

**STYLE PIECE—
HEAD TRIP I
1991**

mixed media

101" x 88 1/2" x 70"



SUTAPA BISWAS

The work is part of a series entitled "Synapse." Synapse in medical terms is the anatomical relation of one nerve cell with another, the junction at which a nerve impulse is transferred, which is affected at various points by contact of their branching processes. The state of shrinkage or relaxation at these points (synapses) is supposed, in some cases, to determine the readiness with which a nervous impulse is transmitted from one part of the nervous system to another.

Drawing in the notion of synapse as a metaphor for the human condition, with particular reference to the experience of memory, synapse here, is symbolic of an undefined territory or space in our thoughts. Like memory itself, it is a shifting nature, vivid in places and with blind spots. Desire becomes an important element in this process. Sometimes connected to real experience, conceptually it is an imagined space or territory. Largely photographic, the images are many layered. Dream-like, the use of light creates spaces within spaces, in which the relationship of my body, central to the image, is questioned in relationship to the projected surfaces, or landscapes, as well as to the viewer's gaze. This process of 'mapping' is a significant aspect of the work in that it is not a static relationship.

SYNAPSE SERIES

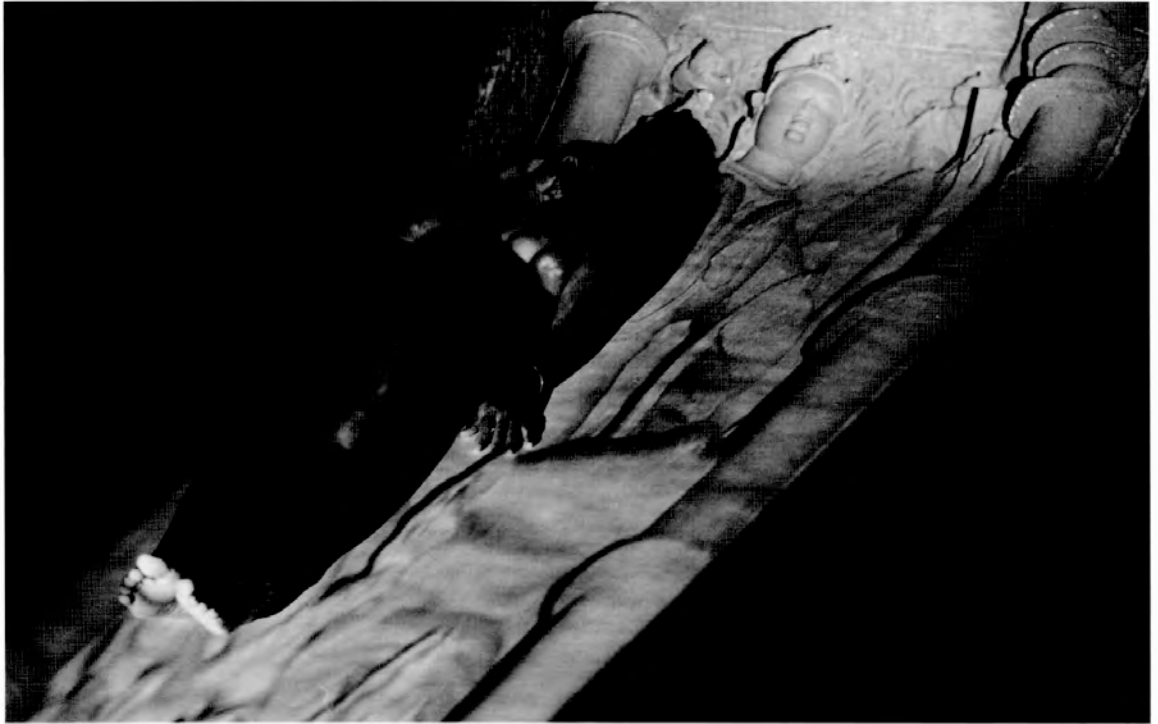
*black and white
large scale
photographs*

30" x 40" each

Biography

Sutapa Biswas, born in 1962 in Bolpur Santinethan, India, now lives and works in London, England. Biswas has curated exhibitions, designed theatre sets, and has been a visiting lecturer at Saint Martin's School of Art, London and professor at the University of Leeds, England. She has participated in the group exhibitions: "State of the Art, Ideas and Images in the 1980's" at the Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle, 1987 and the Institute for Contemporary Arts, London, 1987.

In 1992, exhibitions included solo shows at the Los Angeles Center for Photographic Studies, the Photographer's Gallery, London, and the Leeds City Art Gallery. Most recently, Biswas was invited to be an artist-in-residence at the Banff Center for the Arts in Canada.



I began work on *The Unstable Subject* (a video installation) in 1991. The project evolved out of a series of diaristic texts (written over a period of years) alluding to the complex interplay of "self," the family and the State. *The Unstable Subject* is constructed to pose questions about the ways in which social groupings interact, and subsequently, how these interactions are continuously determined by a fluctuating process of acting and being acted upon by history, culture, and language. The questions emerge through deliberate slippages in the relationships between image/sound/text and indicate disjunctures between the varied representations we reproduce in records of ourselves and others.

This piece allowed me to incorporate a number of concerns that have surfaced in different bodies of my work: the location of a feminist voice within my practice; silence, silencing and resisting silence; the juxtaposition of political and personal family histories with conceptions of collective Holocaust memory; and an examination of the family as a social and cultural construct.

Biography

Susan Jahoda was born in the United Kingdom and now lives and works in Amherst, Massachusetts. Over the past five years her work has been primarily focused on depictions of insanity and neurosis in historical and contemporary representations of women. She has been the recipient of grants and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1980, New Jersey State Arts Fellowship 1985, and the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, 1988. Articles and reviews of Jahoda's work appear in many catalogues and journals including *Arts*, *Rethinking MARXISM*, and *Heresies*. Her solo exhibitions include: The Photographer's Gallery, London, 1979; Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey, 1985; "Susan Eve Jahoda: Family Picture(s)," Area X Gallery, 1986; New York, 1985; Gallerie Munsterberg, Basel Switzerland, 1986; and Franklin & Marshall College, P.A, 1991.

She has been included in "Contemporary Photographs" Fogg Art Museum, 1980; "Some Contemporary Portraits" Contemporary Arts Museum, Texas, 1982; "Photography Invitational...Manipulated Images" Jersey City Museum, 1985; "Rattle Your Rage" ABC No Rio, New York, 1990; and "Singing No: Aesthetics & Outrage" Hampshire College, Massachusetts, 1992.

SUSAN JAHODA

*THE UNSTABLE
SUBJECT
1992*

*video installation/
mixed media*

variable



I feel ill. My nerves are raw and I have pains in my groin. I sit with my head down. The shadows in the room are creating faces, intestines and petals. She is staring at me. An image on the wall. Pain(t)ed face—yellow, green, pink flesh.

I am aging. My body is changing shape. I crawl into myself, into my mother. If only I could sever the root. Starve the egg. Murder the connection.

Imago.

I saw my newly born daughter encased in a tall, transparent body. Half female. Half male.

She wandered out of her room, across the hallway and disappeared. I breathed a sigh of relief. A sharp pain traversed my chest. My breasts filled with salt water. I expressed it into a watering can. I fed it to a dying jade plant in the living room. My daughter re-appeared and asked me for some milk. I explained that I



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didn't have any. I said it had turned to blood. I suggested she ask her father. I said he might be able to produce some.

We visited my parents last week. As I unpacked the children's clothing I suddenly remembered a remark the doctor made to my husband after the birth of our daughter. "Congratulations" he said "and oh, by the way, I put in an extra stitch for you."

The conjunction of race and gender is the focus of “deCOLONIZATION,” a mixed media ensemble installation, whose primary subject is the colonized/ decolonizing Korean woman. Her symbolic traditional dress is inscribed with a poem entitled “Home” written in both Korean and English which locates a sense of identity and belonging not in a specific place of origin but in the coming to terms with one’s history—the process of becoming.

My construction of female subjecthood is infused and informed by the specific geopolitical history of my native country Korea as well as that of my Korean American immigrant identity. Through the voices of various women, “deCOLONIZATION” negotiates and (re)constructs an identity based on interrogating the history of colonization, imperialistic interventions and the ongoing Cold War division of Korea. Throughout the work, the specificity of the Korean situation is integrated with broader references to the post-colonial condition.

Biography

Yong Soon Min was born the year the Korean war ended. She left Korea in 1960 and now lives in Brooklyn, New York. Min’s *de-COLONIZATION*, a recent mixed-media installation was exhibited at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, New York, in 1991. Group exhibitions include “Committed to Print” Museum of Modern Art, 1988; “The Decade Show” co-organized by the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art, the New Museum, and the Studio Museum of Harlem; “Occupation and Persistence: American Impressions of the Intifada,” Alternative Museum, 1990; and the Havana Bienal. In 1988, she received a New York State Council on the Arts Artist-in-Residence Grant and in 1989 she received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship. Min serves on the Board of Directors for Artists Space and the Asian American Arts Alliance, Inc. in New York. Reviews and articles of her work are included in *Village Voice*, 1987, *New Observations*, 1988, *New York Times*, 1990, and Lucy Lippard’s *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America*, 1990.

Recently Min was a visiting artist-in-residence at the University of Southern Maine where her project involved creating a site-specific installation for the permanent collection of the University.

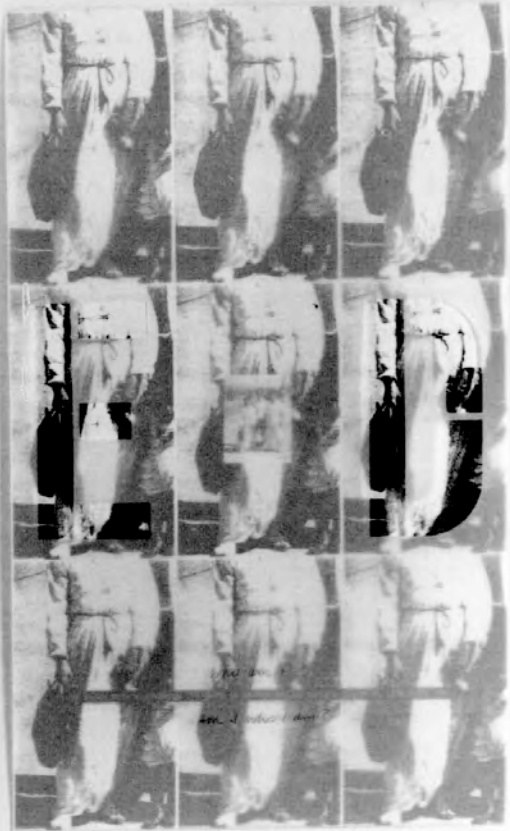
YONG SOON MIN

DECOLONIZATION
1991

mixed media

4 wall pieces
25 1/2" x 16' and
hanging garment

Why were we all smiling so that bright sunny
 afternoon? What I most vividly remember of
 that day is the roar and noise of all the army trucks.
 You clung so tightly to my 2/4t... You must have
 been frightened by the confusion around you. You were
 too little then to understand what was happening.
 How could you have known that this was the
 last time we would be all together before your
 father and your uncle went north to the
 front? There was not much time to smile
 about it after the war. I was so
 busy to have a job, any job, anywhere, any job
 at the US army base. We were at the front
 of our bellies. You didn't see very much
 of me in those days because I worked
 long hours. I left at the crack of dawn to
 take the cross train bus to the very edge of the city where
 the base was located and arrived back home much
 after you had asleep. But you were curious about my
 strange American-style dresses and would, whenever I
 brought you yellow-headed dolls and other gifts from the
 front, be especially glad to see crackers! You never
 seemed to complain much. You were so accepting an



Biography

Pepón Osorio has been living and working in New York City since 1975. His performance/installations focus on the Latino community, examining the cultural and daily lives of people and their environs. These pieces include *Cocinando*, 1985 (commissioned by Institute for Art and Urban Resources) at P.S.I., New York, and *Chupate esta en lo que te mondo la otra*, 1986, at the Public Theatre, New York.

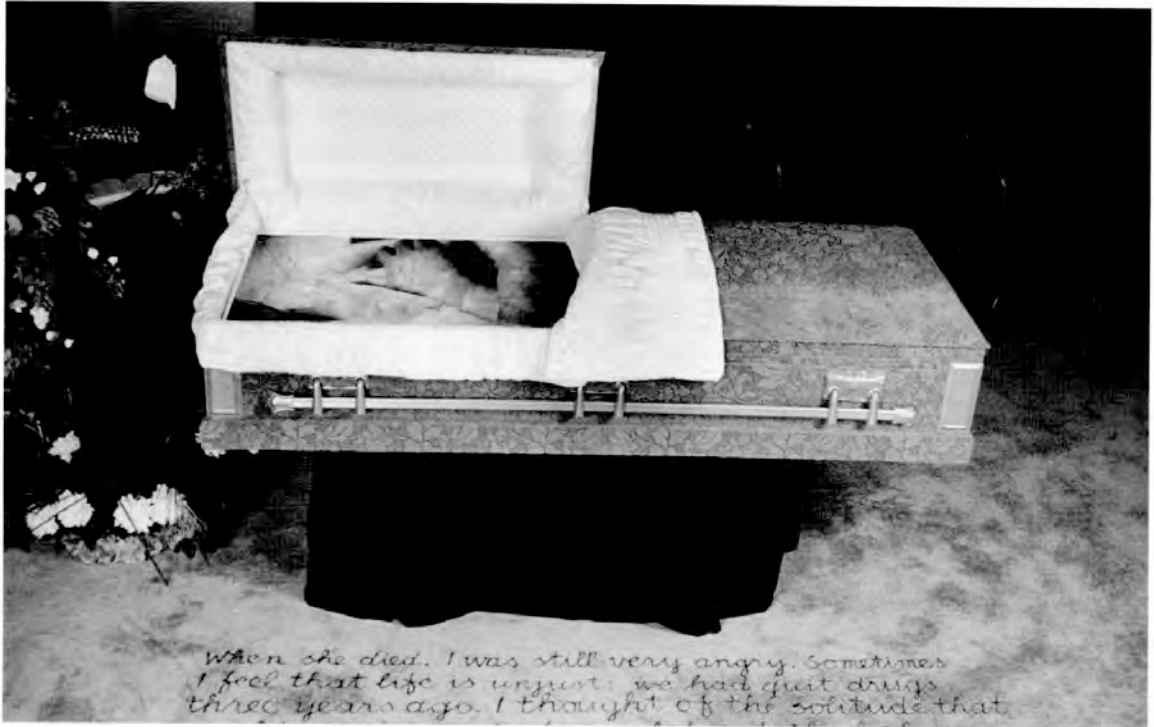
In 1987 the artist received a Sponsored Project grant from the Visual Arts Program, New York State Council on the Arts, to create the installation piece *la Cama*. Later the same year, Osorio collaborated with Merian Soto to create the performance/installation called *Wish You Were Here* at Whitney Museum at Phillip Morris, New York. He received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship and a New York Foundation for the Arts Gregory Millard Award in 1988. In 1990 he was awarded a Designer's Fellowship from the Theatre Communications Group and the National Endowment for the Arts. He was an artist-in-residence at the Museo del Barrio in New York where he developed a Latin American art curriculum for children. The artist also had a major retrospective exhibition at the Museo del Barrio, New York in 1991.

PEPÓN OSORIO

THE WAKE

installation

variable



Translation

Quando ella murió, yo tenía mucha ira. A veces pienso que la vida es injusta. Hacían ya tres años que habíamos dejado las drogas. Y de momento pensé en la soledad que ahora enfrentaría y sería parte de mi vida. Me acordé en la mirada de los vecinos, en el maldito nudo que se me forma en la garganta al pensar que esto no es un sueño y que nuestros sueños han desaparecido. Lo único que te pido es que ayudes a otros en el tiempo que te queda.

I intend my work as a meditation on the varied systems and functions of the body through which we decipher meaning and bear witness to life, which enables us to examine the responsibilities to that primary vehicle as a user and part of a collective whole of humanity.

Biography

Kiki Smith was born in 1954 in Nuremburg, Germany. She now resides in New York City. Over the last decade Smith has been making art about the human body: the internal, external, the spiritual and the political. Her one-person exhibits include venues at Fawbush Gallery, New York 1988, "Projects: Kiki Smith;" Museum of Modern Art, 1990, New York, and Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany 1992. Smith has participated in numerous group shows including "Committed to Print," the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1988; Witness Against Our Banishing, Artist Space, New York, 1990; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York in 1992. Her work has been reviewed in *New York Times*, *Art Forum*, *Art in America*, and *Art in New England*.

KIKI SMITH

BLOOD POOL
1992

wax, pigment

42" x 24" x 16"



Today in Detroit (where unemployment is among the highest in the U.S.), at the truck stop on Wyoming and Michigan or at the Kentucky Fried Chicken Down the Street, young hookers cruise the street, calling out to the passing cars. In Berlin's prisons at the beginning of the century women prisoners—prostitutes, thieves, women who murdered their fathers, husbands, lovers—took their exercise in walled courtyards watched by trustees. Women walking in circles confined by walls that keep them going in the same deepening grooves. Over and over. Then and now. But the painted circle lights up from within; the young bodies burn as they pass. Women's history is being re-imagined.

Thanks to Carol Jacobsen for transcripts and stills from her videotapes "Night voices" 1990 and "Whos's Going To Take My Word?" 1990.

Biography

May Stevens, born in Boston, Massachusetts has been living and working in New York City for many years. Her work has been exhibited at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 1988; the Orchard Gallery, Derry, North Ireland, 1988; the Greenville Museum, South Carolina, 1991; and the Herter Art Gallery, University of Massachusetts, 1991. She has participated in a number of group exhibitions including "Committed to Print," Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1988 and "A Different War: Vietnam in Art," Wight Gallery, University of California at Los Angeles, 1990. Stevens has been a senior visiting critic at Cornell University, a visiting artist at Syracuse University, Rhode Island School of Design, and California State University at Long Beach. Most recently, the artist taught at the Skowhegen School of Painting and Sculpture. Stevens has lectured at Royal College of Art, London and the Orchard Gallery, Derry, North Ireland. Awards include New York State Council on the Arts 1974, National Endowment of the Arts, 1983, a Guggenheim, 1986 and a Radcliffe Bunting Institute Fellowship 1988-89.

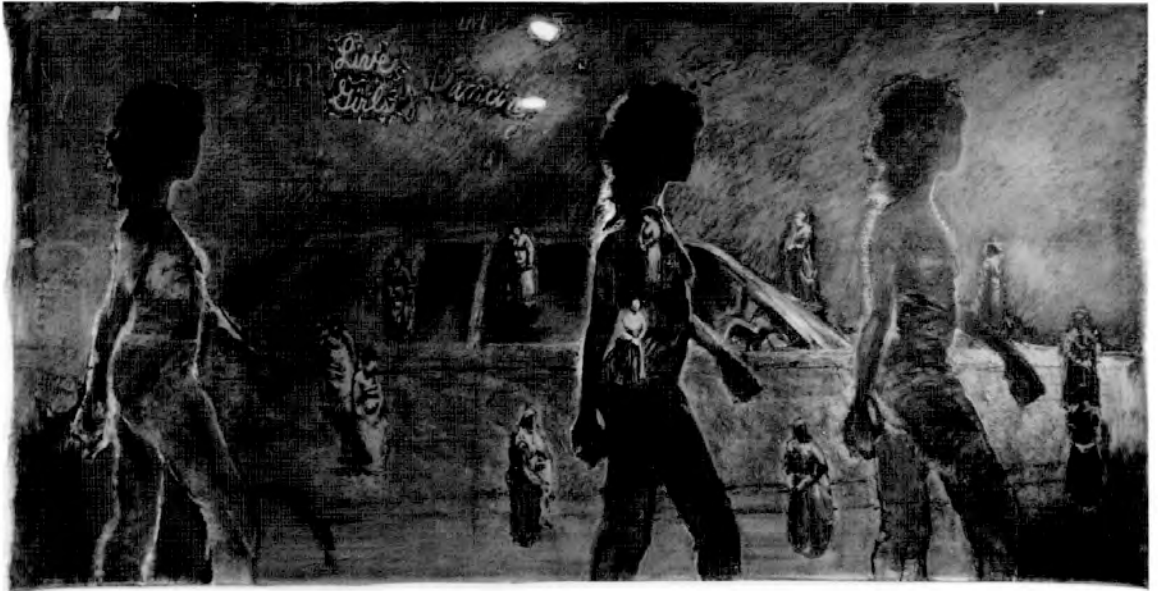
Stevens was a founding member of *Heresies*, a journal of women's art and cultural issues. Her essay "Taking Art to the Revolution" (*Heresies* #9, 1980) has been anthologized in *Visibly Female, Feminism and Art* today edited by Hillary Robinson, 1987. 1993 solo exhibitions will include Exit Art Gallery, New York, and the University of Colorado, Boulder.

MAY STEVENS

WOMEN'S
HISTORY
1992

acrylic, canvas

66" x 134"



Biography

Pat Ward Williams, a resident of Santa Monica, teaches at the University of California at Irvine. She has had several one-person exhibitions including "Social/Sexual/Personal Politics," The Gatehouse Gallery, Washington, D.C., 1987, "Move?" LACPS, Los Angeles, 1990; and "Vantage Point," Santa Monica Museum of Art, 1992. Williams has also participated in many group exhibitions: "Constructed Images," Studio Museum of Harlem, New York, 1989; "The Decade Show," The Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 1990; and "Bridges and Boundaries: African-Americans and American Jews," The Jewish Museum, New York, 1992. The artist currently serves on the board of directors for the Society for Photographic Education and the exhibitions committee for Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE). Awards include a 1990 National Endowment for the Arts Photography Fellowship and a 1991 City of Los Angeles Community Appreciation Award.

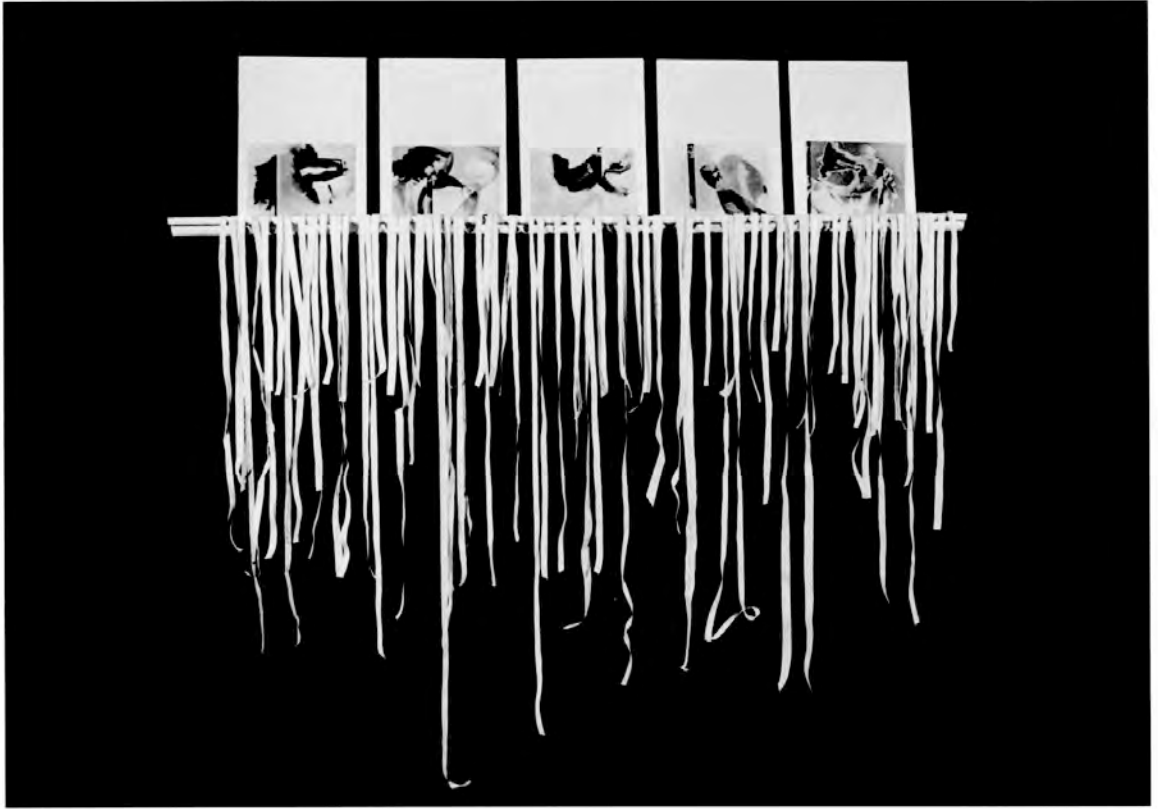
Williams has been reviewed in *Arts*, *The New Art Examiner*, *Art Forum*, and *Village Voice*.

PAT WARD
WILLIAMS

OH SHE GOT
A HEAD
FULLA HAIR

mixed media

6' x 6'





DENNIS ADAMS

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1980-1981
1982-1983

1984-1985

1986-1987

1988-1989

1990-1991

1992-1993

1994-1995

1996-1997

1998-1999

2000-2001

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The realization of “**This is my body: this is my blood**” has involved the collaboration of many people who have generously donated their time and energy. First and foremost we deeply thank the artists without whose commitment the project would never have occurred; their visions and presence are at the very center of the exhibition. Secondly, the editorial staff of *Rethinking MARXISM* who created the contextual space for the exhibition and symposium. For their advice, encouragement, and support we thank in particular Jack Amariglio, Antonio Callari, Harriet Fraad, David Ruccio and Richard Wolff. We also thank the writers who have contributed to the catalogue: Robert Blake, Lucy Lippard, and Judith Wilson. Their insights, perspectives, and interpretations on the exhibition and selected works have greatly enriched the project. To the panelists involved in organizing and participating in the symposium—Robert Blake, Sutapa Biswas, Jerry Kearns, Yong Soon Min, Mary Russo (moderator), and Kiki Smith. We also offer special thanks to Tekla McInerney, for her patience, skills, and fine work in designing the poster and catalogue.

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CONTENTS

Back cover credit: Rudolf Baranik, *Body: Dictionary definitions from the 24th century*

B O D - Y (bod' ē) Described as late as the 20th century as “the physical structure and material substance of an animal, including humans, and plants, living or dead.”

Body and soul (or *spirit*) a concept held by the majority of humans around the globe until the middle of the 21st century, though the unity or sameness of the two was better understood in some religions/cultures than in others: the most advanced views on the subject of unity were embedded in Hinduism and the religions of Native Americans.

Body and mind a term developed by secular thinkers of the 19th century and continued through the 20th century with *mind* substituting for *soul* or *spirit* perpetuating the dichotomy. 20th century neurology started to reveal that thinking and feeling are physical functions, though more difficult to trace. Simultaneously philosophers were arriving at similar conclusions by a process of logical reduction.

Bodily functions (archaic) a popular expression during the 20th century designating various physical processes of living creatures, especially excretory functions such as perspiration, defecation and urination.

TERMS IN VIOLENCE various archaic terms incorporated the word *body* to designate now extinct barbaric practices, such as *body blow*, depicting a blow driven at the opponent's body between the breast-bone and the navel; *body guard*, a term used to describe people who were paid to defend other people from *physical violence* (archaic); *body slam*, an act of throwing a human being to the ground on the back, a method in violent activity called *wrestling* (archaic); *body count* (obsolete), a term formed during the second half of the 20th century by the retarded caste called *military planners* of the North American Empire. The term was prevalent during the Empire's intervention in Vietnam, Southeast Asia. *Body count* went out of usage when near the end of the century, during the war (archaic) in the Persian Gulf the term was *collateral damage*, believed at that time by the war planners to be less incriminatory.