

# The Drawers - Headbones Gallery

*Contemporary Drawing, Sculpture and Works on Paper*

February 16 - March 20, 2008

## **WWW.Women**

Aleks Bartosik  
Louise Bourgeois  
Judy Chicago  
Donna Cleary  
Diane Feught  
Angela Grossmann  
Guerrilla Girls  
Heide Hatry  
Donna Kriekle  
Julie Oakes  
Allyson Mitchell  
Faith Ringgold  
Carolee Schneemann  
Robin Tewes  
Betty Tompkins  
Monika Weiss

WWW.Women - Copyright © 2008, Headbones Gallery

This catalog was created for the exhibition "WWW.Women"  
at Headbones Gallery, The Drawers, Toronto, Canada, February 16 - March 20, 2008

Commentaries by Julie Oakes. Copyright © 2008, Julie Oakes

Commentary for Julie Oakes by Ashley Johnson. Copyright © 2007, Ashley Johnson

Artwork Copyright ©

Aleks Bartosik

Louise Bourgeois

Judy Chicago

Donna Cleary

Diane Feught

Angela Grossmann

Guerrilla Girls

Heide Hatry

Donna Kriekle

Julie Oakes

Allyson Mitchell

Faith Ringgold

Carolee Schneemann

Robin Tewes

Betty Tompkins\*

Monika Weiss

\*Courtesy Mitchell Alpus Gallery, New York

Rich Fog Micro Publishing, printed in Toronto, 2008 - Layout and Design, Richard Fogarty

WWW.Women sponsored in part by Candida Royalle's Natural Contours

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1976 copyright act or in writing from Headbones Gallery. Requests for permission to use these images should be addressed in writing to the respective artist c/o Headbones Gallery. [www.headbonesgallery.com](http://www.headbonesgallery.com)

ISBN: 978-0-9782458-3-2

RICH FOG



Micro Publishing  
Toronto Canada

February 16 - March 20, 2008

# **WWW.Women**

Commentaries by Julie Oakes

# Introduction



Diane Feught - Wonderful, 2007-gouache, acrylic, rust on paper-20 x 17 inches

Women can look at each other and see a reflection that adds up to a powerful, capitalised rendition of their gender for we have come into our own without having to resort to competitive wars over territory. Women have generally acknowledged the maximum that “two heads are better than one”.

The story of the final paring down of a candidate for a University teaching position illustrates the premise. Three women selected as finalists found themselves being asked to win the coveted position by

stating reasons why the other women were *not* suitable for the job. They each began their defence by stating that they could see *no* reasons why the other women should not be chosen in their place. They had decided that they wouldn't gain ground by trampling their competitors. They elected to share the job and - to the great credit of this important institution - they had their desire for co-existence met!

WWW.Women is built on such a premise. Women, long used to task sharing in order to overcome the rigours of childbirth, child rearing, gathering of food, maintaining shelter and the many chores that, born of necessity are best done by grouping together, bring their strength, brightness, intellectualism, capability, technical expertise and creativity to their art work. Women have maintained a dignity of gender in a profession traditionally the domain of men. The work in this exhibition exemplifies the fact that women have staked a self conscious claim within this nourishing field of dreams and in doing so broken ground that grew a different, female form of artistic avatar. Often political in approach, women have used their bodies, their intuition, their ability to nurture and multi-task and their grand operatic voices to shatter many a glass tower. In this Valentine month, WWW.WOMEN follows on the day of paper hearts and cliché promises in a spectacular show of solid womanhood with the female flag flying at full mast.

During the opening, Headbones Gallery is hosting a baby shower for a new member to our feminine cast. Ivy Lumina Kurylowicz, born February 3 to Nancy and Martin Kurylowicz, will be welcomed into the circle of women, her mother's pregnancy celebrated and the male participation in it all, acknowledged and thanked. With an advocacy for inclusiveness, WWW.Women commends the honourable and accomplished advantages of us all, regardless of gender.

# Louise Bourgeois

She is The Role Model of tenacity, endurance, and generosity of self and spirit. First trained as a mathematician, she switched and attended the Ecole Du Louvre and The Ecole Des Beaux Arts in Paris where she also worked as an assistant to Fernand Leger. She married an American and moved to New York City where she studied with the Art Students League of New York. Although she had been a vigorous practitioner of her art forms through out her life, it wasn't until she was in her sixties, (which was in the seventies) and after the deaths of her husband and father, that she achieved recognition. In 1993, she represented America at the Venice Biennale.

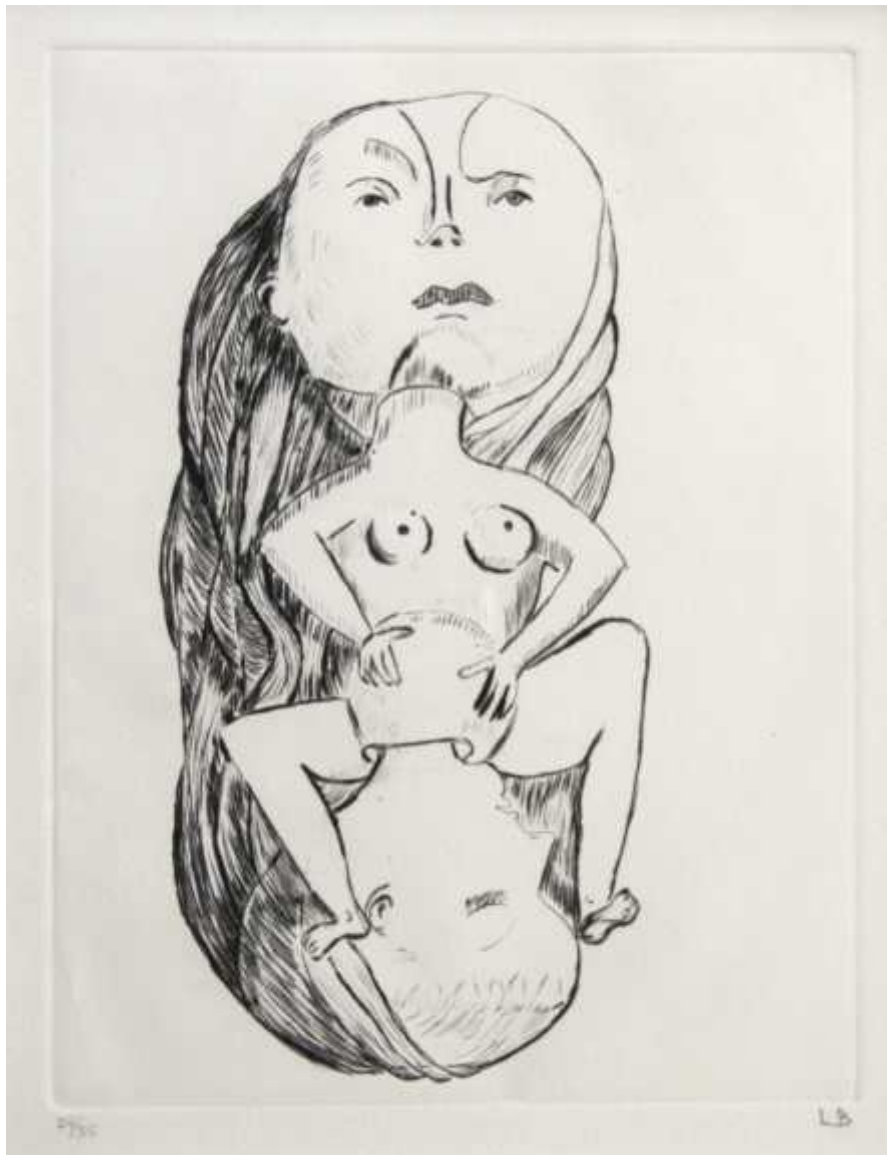
Today, in the same house that she lived in with her husband, with a fading elegance topped by high shuttered windows that look onto a tangled garden that feels more like Europe than America; Louise continues to be a vital part of the growth of art. She hosts her Sunday salons where a small group of artists have one chance to visit the great artist and present what it is that they do. She doesn't appreciate return visits for she understands that her granting audience is an afternoon that many have veered towards and will continue to do so. It is indeed a privilege to be present as she teeters into the salon with the help of her walker. She nods and approves or with a slight wave of her hand signals for the next presenter. The company is international, men and women. Although on the treasured occasion of my visit, it was primarily women.

This occasion is second only to the primary one - that of being in the presence of her work and this will endure long after her small time upon this earth. She has brought to light themes that have been at the heart of women's issues including incest, betrayal and childbirth. The etchings that follow relate to her adulterous father who had an affair with her governess, one that her mother refused to acknowledge. Best

known for her cells and more recently her spiders, the great sculpture that rests outside of The National Gallery of Canada is titled *Maman*. The great role of matriarch is assigned to Louise Bourgeois.



Untitled, 1994-Drypoint on paper-Image 4.5 x 6.5 inches



*Birth*, 1994-Drypoint on paper-Image 9 x 7 inches



Scissors, 1994-Drypoint on paper-Image 14 x 9.5 inches



# Julie Oakes

Existentialism teaches that experience is always modified in the telling; consequently, we are surrounded by fiction. Australian Aborigines value “the dreaming” over a fixed sense of reality and enjoy a multi-layered perception in which identity and objecthood are flexible.

Julie Oakes’s exhibition “Conscientious Perversity” is a rich autobiographical narrative that is laden with metaphor. This is the last element in Oakes’s “Human Sacrifice” trilogy (comprising “The Quercia Stories,” “The Revolving Door” and “Conscientious Perversity”), which draws on libertine adventures and different ways of exploring sexuality as a woman. The main characters are the siblings Juliette and Justine Quercia, alter egos of the author borrowed from the Marquis de Sade. Juliette serves as a foil for the more libidinous Justine.

Although the works have titles corresponding to chapters in a book by Oakes, they are not strictly illustrative. Indeed, the writing often seems painterly, with expressive metaphors piled up like vehicles in a traffic jam. The artwork is metaphysical and packed with humorous undercurrents that are manifested through cartoonish simplification. Thus the hapless donkey held upside down for a sex act in the colourful story of an incident in a Mexican bar makes numerous appearances. The repeated appearance of the artist’s trademark orange bob hairstyle (even worn by the donkey in *Ludicrous Strangeness*) alerts us to the fact that these are self-portraits.

There is a beguiling menace in these works, like a female spider about to devour her mate in the act of making love. A delicate, feminine sensuality is embedded in the web of imagery with the inclusion of lingerie or exposed limbs. Clairvoyant third eyes peer through various orifices and negative spaces, observing the voyeur. Hilarious silhouettes burst into

life and dash across the works’ surfaces, frantically trying to lose clothing. Carcasses of dead animals become energized again.

The fervid atmosphere is passed on to the viewer, giving one the sensation of entering a whirling mass of imagery. It is an illusion, however; the works are disciplined, with certain forms echoing throughout. Oakes uses dissonance: virulent crimson tones abut oranges and maroons with an occasional startling blue. The inversions of scale conjure a scene reminiscent of Dante’s *Inferno*.

Canadian Art -In Review, Spring 2007 Vol. 24 No.1  
by Ashley Johnson



At The Stake, charcoal and ink on paper, 60" X 44", 2006



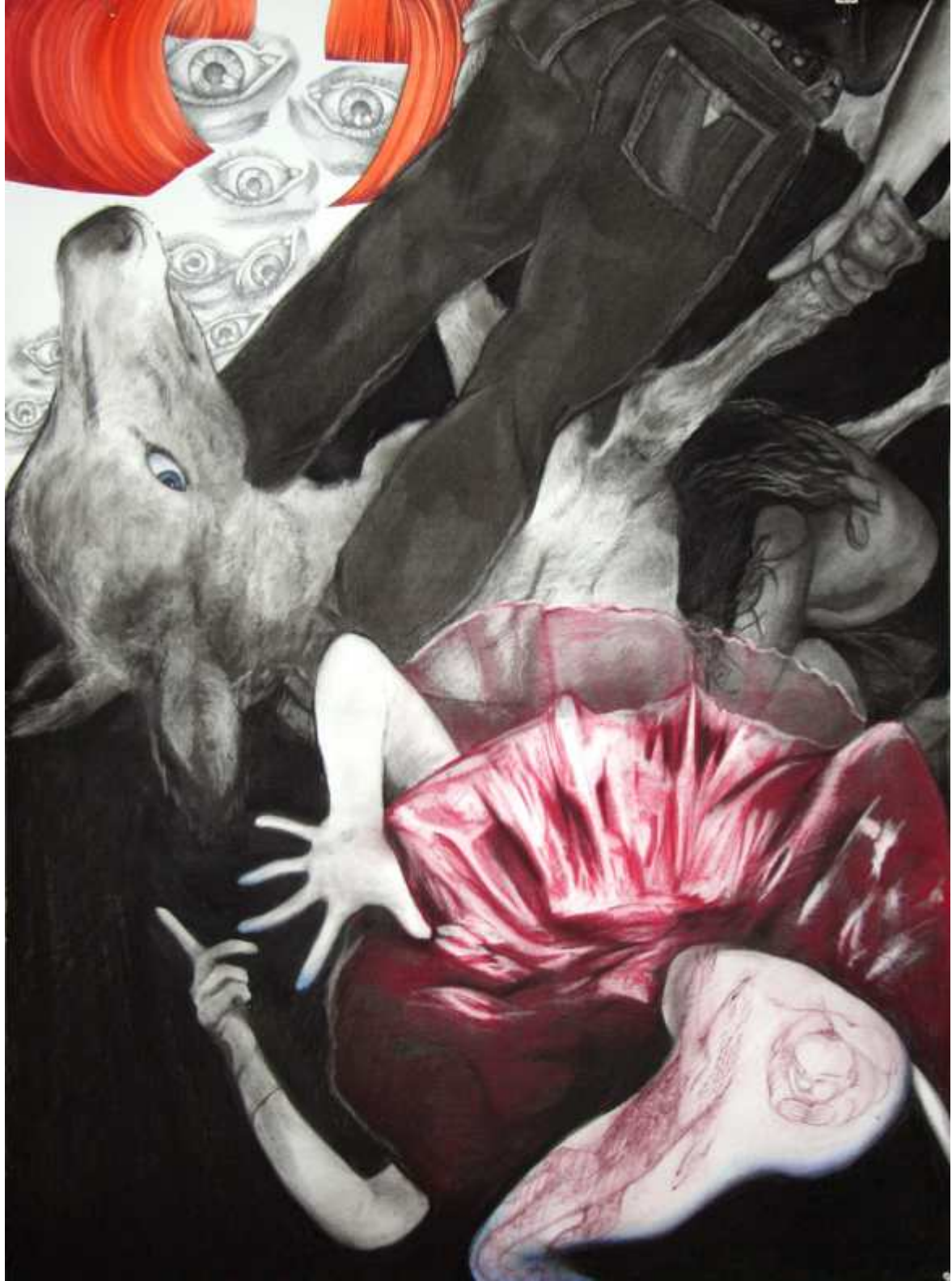


*Cunte-Video, glass sculpture, limited edition hard cover, signed novella *Conscientious Perversity**



*Ludicrous Strangeness*, charcoal and ink on paper, 60" X 44", 2006

Glassy Eyes, charcoal and ink on paper, 60" X 44", 2006



# Carolee Schneemann

*Fresh Blood A Dream Morphology, 1983-2004-Photo, color 15/15-40 x 60 inches*



The words 'risky' and 'brave' are often associated with Carolee Schneemann's work. These adjectives poke into the core of the apple, that forbidden fruit that Eve first offered to Adam, the apple that had the slight perfume of fear to it's ester, the sense of a higher authority lurking in the wings, spying on the sex. After all, there were repercussions to the bite; God asked

Adam and Eve to leave paradise, an embarrassing scene where shameful, original sin had been committed (with Eve probably weeping and Adam kicking himself for having fallen for her seductive ways). Eve was cast as the temptress for although women might have been socialised to behave otherwise, they're not all sugar and spice. Women can



be wild, have a propensity to become hysterical, and possess an intuitive psychic response to unseen forces.

Schneemann began as a painter - always drawing - and yet also underpinning her work with the written word. She emerges just as happenings were coming into being, using her body to draw in as well as mitigate what might have been an even more shocking spectacle had she not been so beautiful. In a time when feminist mores were turning to 'sensible' shoes and unshaven legs, she was riding on Robert Rauschenburg's neck, buff naked, glorious and glamorous.

The history of art has sustained few women artists but those who did surface to float in view alongside the more demonstrative males were exceptional and also in their own way, wild. Artemesia Gentileschi, for instance, took the case of her sexual abuse at the hands of her painting teacher who was also her father's assistant, a man his age - to court. Her subjects were a herald of female emancipation, such as Judith chopping off the head of Holofernes - a brave symbolic act. There were the colorful, exceptional women who lived with the men of the West Bank in Paris and were a vital part of the milieu; Sonia Delauney who married Robert Delauney and Suzanne Valadon, Maurice Utrillo's mother who in 1894 was the first woman painter admitted to the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts. A perfectionist, Valadon worked on some of her oil paintings for up to thirteen years, before showing them. There were women working as artists, once the research was done to find them, and Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* with her memorial plates to female artists brought a lot of those names to the fore.

Carolee Schneemann speaks of the unspeakable side of women, the un-demure. *Interior Scroll* performed in 1975 related a conversation between



*Interior Scroll*, 1975-2003-Photo, color 15/15-40 x 60 inches

herself and “a happy man, a structuralist filmmaker”. The text was a documentation of irreconcilable inequality between the sexes. She read the narrative from a folded paper that she had inserted into her vagina, drawing it out, inch by inch, her body in an unflattering half crouched position. In the text, she brings to his attention the work that she, herself, had done as a filmmaker. He counters her offering of her credentials by referring to her as a charming woman, “We think of you as a dancer,” is his assessment of her filmmaking efforts. Schneemann's take on the story was brilliant. She drew forth, from her mysterious complex womanhood, the story of an unflinching refusal to see the woman as artist. “He said that we could be friends equally but that we are not artists equally”, she read. Then she read her reply, “We cannot be friends equally and we cannot be artists equally”. The final words that she read (his) “We think of you as a dancer”, spoken as she drew forth the last of the long interior scroll; made it's point.

*Meat Joy* with the near naked men and women activating contact improvisations using sausages, paint, fish and raw chickens brings out this same irresistible inclination to tell an intuitive truth. Foucault relates to the idea of *daimon*, that part of mankind that reveals the chaos within and it is by knowing this *daimon* that we are able to shed the borrowed manners that come with our social conditioning and truly get to know what we consist of. This is a dangerous idea for it involves an awareness of the boundaries of acceptability and that becomes a personal delineation that might not fall within the realms deemed 'normal'. It is the principal of the avant garde, an advanced group that goes to the outfields of the discipline. Schneemann's work hovers around the outfield, lingers on the borders. It is truly unorthodox and experimental.

Schneemann approached the borders between the human and the animal. She accepted the ardent kisses of her cat over the course of eight years. She filmed the daily kisses of this persistent event producing a time factored photographic grid in which the agency of the pet cat becomes an erotic delirium.

In *Terminal Velocity* (2001), she structured enlarged photographic sequences of people falling from the twin towers, plunging to their death. Pushing the boundaries, once again, but this time sexuality is not the issue. But the question “What is decent?” is still there. Schneemann has put herself out there. She has not done anything vicariously. She has been there herself, making the plunge with the air singing around her and a “break on through to the other side” awaiting. She has been a brave artist.

*Water Light/ Water Needle*, 1966-2003-Photo, color 15/15-40 x 60 inches





# Donna Cleary

At one time, children meant the continuance of the tribe. Birth was a natural process but so also was death and the survival rate was not as secure as in the western world in modern times. Fertility figures were a common artifact, a necessary prayer or good luck omen towards the continuance of life. In some cultures, these artifacts were worshiped, even elevated to a God or Goddess like status. When male, the figurines or statues would often sport erect phalluses. When female, it was not the genitalia that was glorified, as much as the state of gestation. Pregnant women with milk filled breasts symbolized bounty, prosperity and good fortune.

Modern western culture is proportionately bereft of fertility figures. In fact, with the population still growing, it could be accused of holding a somewhat jaded view of childbirth. The pressures of modern living have necessitated double income families and the 'job' of rearing the child can be farmed out to care facilities. Family time has, sadly, been shortened and the term 'family values' has an undertone of suspect political positioning that is quite often adverse to the natural concept of family.

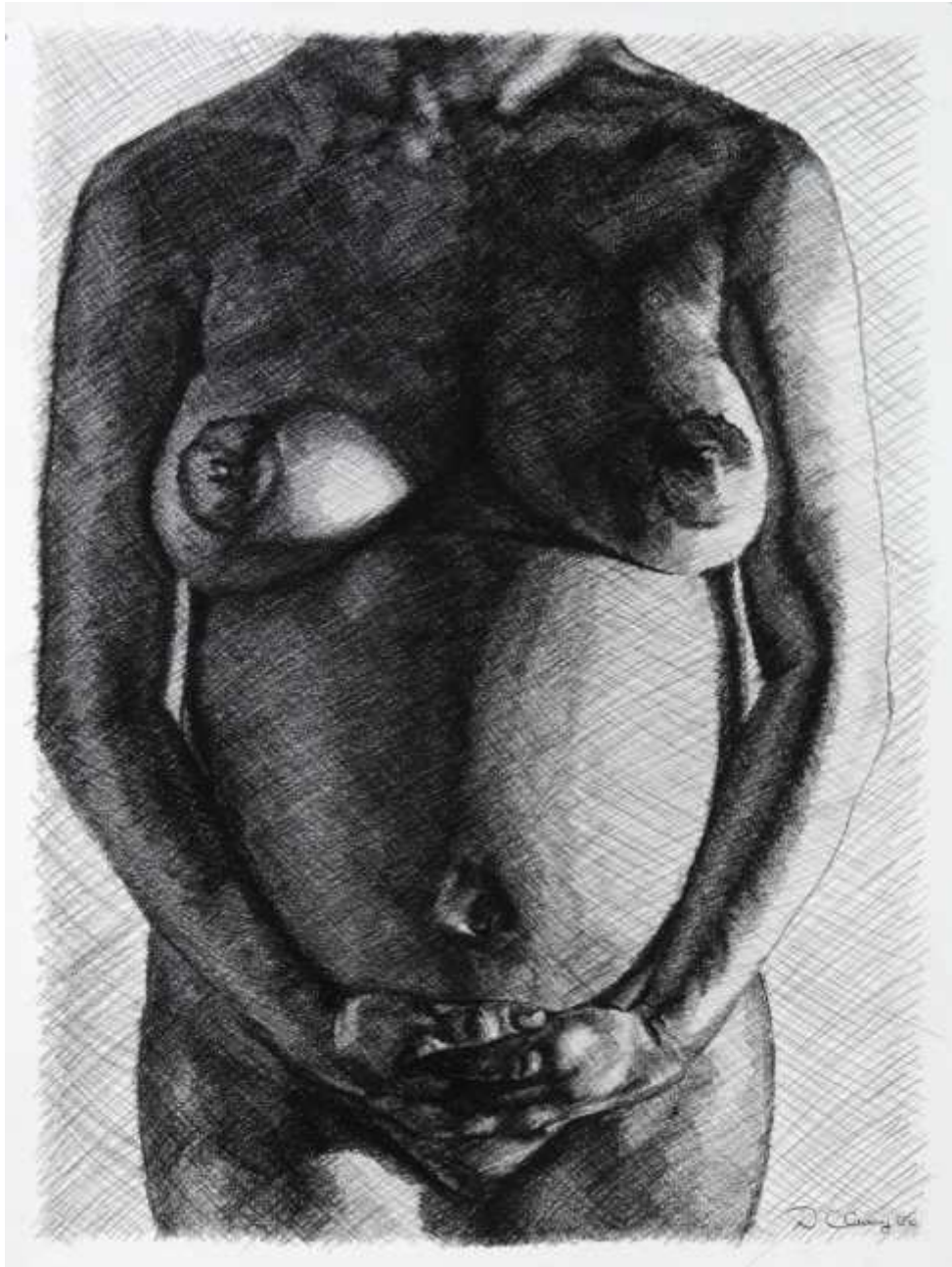
Who then, is culturally elevating the pregnant women? As ever – artists. Both male or female, once hit with the indelibly magical circumstance, they celebrate their engagement in the process with as much fascination as if they were the first ones to ever produce a baby. The birth of a child is indeed marvellous and the anticipation of the marvel is held within the physical aspect of the pregnant body. Pregnant women still garner the emotional response of compassion, their swelling bellies being patted, rubbed and listened to.

Always a clear symbol of the bounteous and beautiful, the pregnant body, nude, is glorified in Donna Cleary's drawings and monoprints. To omit, in an exhibition that celebrates women, imagery pertaining

to the solely exclusive female state of pregnancy, would be close to a slight to the gender. Women, capable of being 'with child', are hence the ones who know best how to visually speak of the experience. Donna Cleary represents the natural phenomena well.



Monoprint #10, #17, #23, 2007-10.5 x 8 inches



*Heavy, 2007-Pencil on paper-40 x 30 inches*









# Do women have to be naked to get into the Met. Museum?

Less than **5%** of the **artists** in the Modern Art Sections are women, but **85%** of the **nudes** are female.

**GUERRILLA GIRLS**

532 LA GUARDIA PL. #237, NY 10012  
CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

*Guerrilla Girls XOXO*



# Monika Weiss

Although there is an invitation to look at the curled body, the identity is not revealed. The presence of humanity is denied, manipulated away from the one who is watching by the artist who had originally extended the invitation to look by placing the image on the paper, within the framework of an exhibition space and the overall context of creating art. This seduction to participate, having been denied the consummation of fully knowing and hence understanding, is much like the dichotomy of the human condition, whereby life is granted with awareness in varying strengths, but the reason for the gift is unexplained. It is the blind spot of Derrida, that understanding in the mind of the existence, but not being able to keep the knowledge and the experience in the field of immediate vision.

Like a wintry day when freezing temperatures lead the inclination to burrow into the warm envelope of hearth and home, the figure wraps upon itself. As in the womb or sleeping in cosy seclusion, the figure turned in upon itself, signals privacy and introversion. Yet the display of the body is extroverted. Weiss has used her corporeality as the basis for her mark making, drawing around her crouched position, tracing the outline of her body. She is realising her shape as she draws, but she cannot see it until she moves and looks back upon the paper. It is this distance from her habitation of the flesh that creates the necessary objectivity towards her being. It is a philosophical perspective, a logical rationality placed upon the immediacy of being present. As if she has managed to step away from her shadow or to rise above her frame in an out-of body-experience, the artist has been able to 'be' in two places at once - both within her body and viewing it. By inserting the performative, a more modern practice, into the traditional borders of drawing, the representation of the self encompasses the time dimensions - the *present*, the *future* life of the piece and

the *past* as she steps away from the active practice where body and mark making have coupled. Rigorously intellectual, the work of Monika Weiss recreates the illusion of omnipotent dimensional manipulations of both time and space as it moves from point to line to the illusion of a third dimensional reality.

Women who use their own bodies as the image within their art expose themselves in a public way while leaving themselves as they inhabit their body. They become open to critical attention and comment. Weiss is not a blatant exhibitionist. She strikes a balance between presence and absence, revelation and concealment, body and mind (as the element exposed), art practice and bodily practice. With one foot in the traditional - she is an accomplished and expressive drawer - she also straddles the river of ideas and stretches the limits of the discipline by drawing with her entire body.

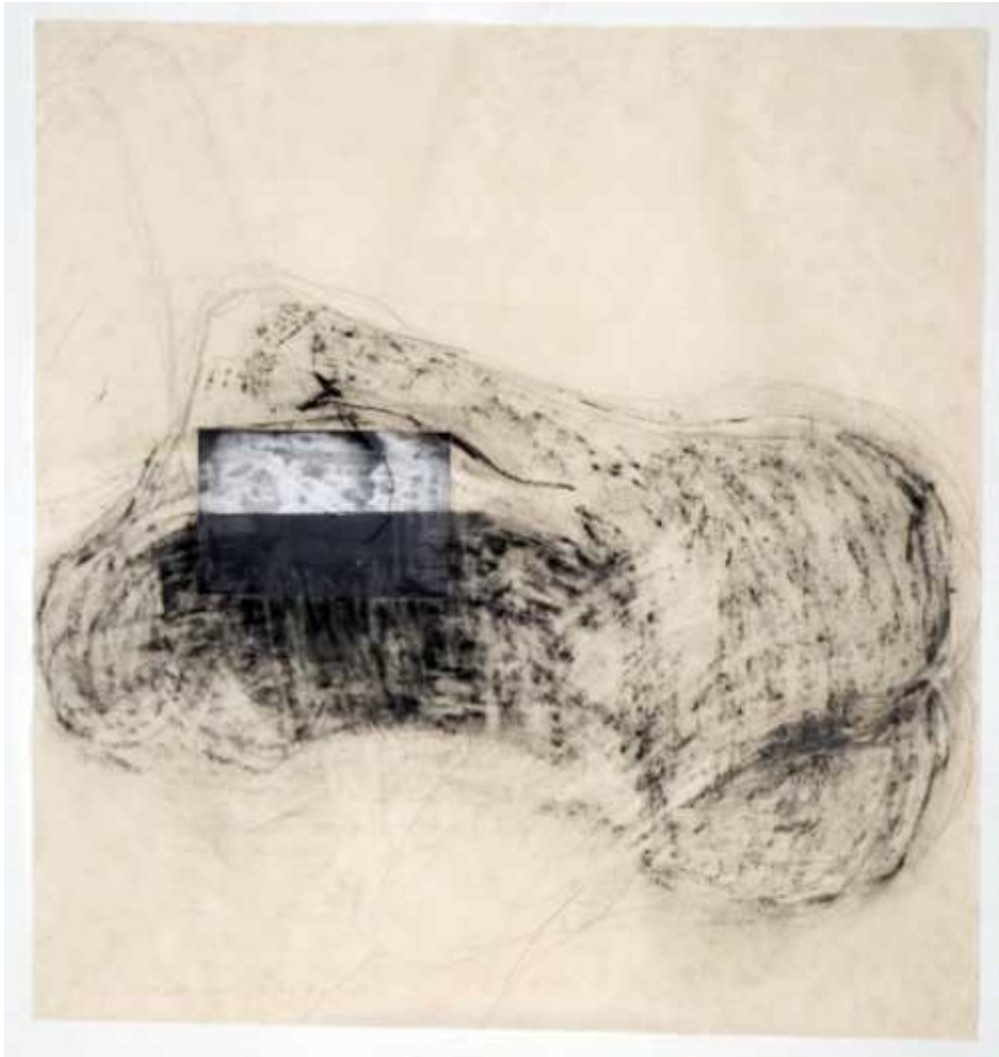


*Ennoia*, 2004-Limited edition photograph-28 x 36 inches



*Urlar 1*, 2007-Graphite, pencil, charcoal, archival glue and found images-39 x 36 inches





*Urlar 3*, 2007-Graphite, pencil, charcoal, archival glue and found images-39 x 36 inches



*Urlar 2, 2007-Graphite, pencil, charcoal, archival glue and found images-39 x 36 inches*



*Miniature 27*, 2007-oil on photo, 3 x 2 inches

# Angela Grossmann



Miniature 14, 2007-oil on photo, 3 x 2 inches

Current reality is a series of overlays on the past and the separation between the tenses is dependant on the conceptualisation of them. It is this overview of time and imagined space, alongside the rational capacity to anticipate that places us in the liminal position - on the threshold of knowledge, away from the beasts. Angela Grossmann depicts this wavering of tenses with her paintings on photographic images taken from the turn of the century. That she overlays the remnants of the past with images that can transmit a sensational message straight to the libido grants a dynamic to the work that is evermore poignant than the

always present realisation that without effort, time is passing. Part of the appeal to the senses is derived from the handling of the paint. It signals the presence of a free hand, a self referential, libidinous messiness, a relish in the sensuality of paint.

Beauty is fleeting and the depiction of the world of beauty is an attempt to unfasten beauty from the embrace in the passage of time. This has been the subject of convoluted philosophical treatises that turn back into themselves in the ambitious task of pinning down what might be described as an allure comparable to an aura - outside of the subject, emanating from the matter and overriding the temporal. It is this elusive aura that is depicted in Grossmann's work and she does so by using the medium with metaphorical advantage. A drip, for instance, as it wanders leaves a trace in time, so does a spatter. The gestural application of paint speaks of a presence before solidification of the art work - that which becomes the arrested object. When energy is fastened to the object by way of the art making, there is room for desire to enter, an element of beauty.

Grossmann, herself, could be described as an Alpha Girl (the title of a series by the artist made in 2004) for as one of the Young Romantic Painters, she entered the art scene as the girl amongst titans and had no trouble keeping up with the boys. With a dextrous hand and facile bravado she created a 'look' that made her dripping young women into 'it girls' - saucy, cheeky and self assured even in the midst of tears or a nervous breakdown. Her figures embody the range of human emotions, pathetic to pithy, that embody everything that the title Young Romantic Painters could have hoped to invoke. Lounging superbly in attitudes gothic, gauntly adolescent, and egotistically whimsical; Grossmann's figures capture all of the highs and lows of yearning for impossible beauty.



*Miniature 13, 2007-oil on photo, 3 x 2 inches*





Miniature 17, 2007-oil on photo, 3 x 2 inches

# Judy Chicago

Although Georgia O'keefe had painted flowers that were suggestive of vaginal imagery, it wasn't until Judy Chicago and *The Dinner Party* that female sexuality found due attention in the echelon of acceptable subjects for the attention of the visual arts. Adopting art forms taken from the womanly crafts (china, painting, needlework and ceramics), she rallied the support of helpers and made a project that was beyond the accustomed scope of female, certainly, and even most male precedents. It was a starting point, the avant garde step that set women into great stride and Judy Chicago, as well, not only kept pace with her first glorious stepping-out but superseded herself with other work such as the *Birth Project* and the *Holocaust Project*. The resounding confirmation that she is indeed The Avatar is in the work.

It is fitting that the suite of prints from the *Birth Project* should be part of WWW.Women and that her definitive imagery and energy should stand beside many successful women artists whose work has been influenced by Judy Chicago in one way or another. Printed in 1985, when the technical rigor of serigraphy meant that the stencils were applied by hand, rather than photographically adhered to the silk as they are often made today, the prints are adept and flawless in execution. The shading, done with a stippled touch creates voluminous folds and curves much like a heavy set airbrush. The soft modelling is sensuous. The paper itself has been lifted from inclemency to become a lively presence, radiating self assurance and confident femininity. Chicago has reclaimed the subtle, reaffirmed the curve, opened the center and bloomed. To see the work that was made twenty years earlier, as vibrant and seductive as ever, from the hand of an artist who has been held as an iconographic figure in the art world, still as beautiful as ever, inspiring the desire to

possess - is a heartening affirmation that the place women have managed to secure in the arts is not only blossoming but managing to maintain a full bloom.

Judy Chicago, to many women artists, has been the grand dame of contemporary art because she organised art projects such as *The Dinner Party* and *the Birth Project* that went way beyond the size limitations and ambitions of women artists previous to her. She has inspired artists and artisans to feed their expertise into her visionary overview while granting an enabling legacy to the following generations of women artists.



Ceramic Goddess #11, 1977-Bisque, mounted in frame with plaque-From the Dinner Party-9 x 7 x 3 inches





*Earth Birth*, 1985-Serigraph on black paper, Edition of 75; 34/75-24 x 35 inches



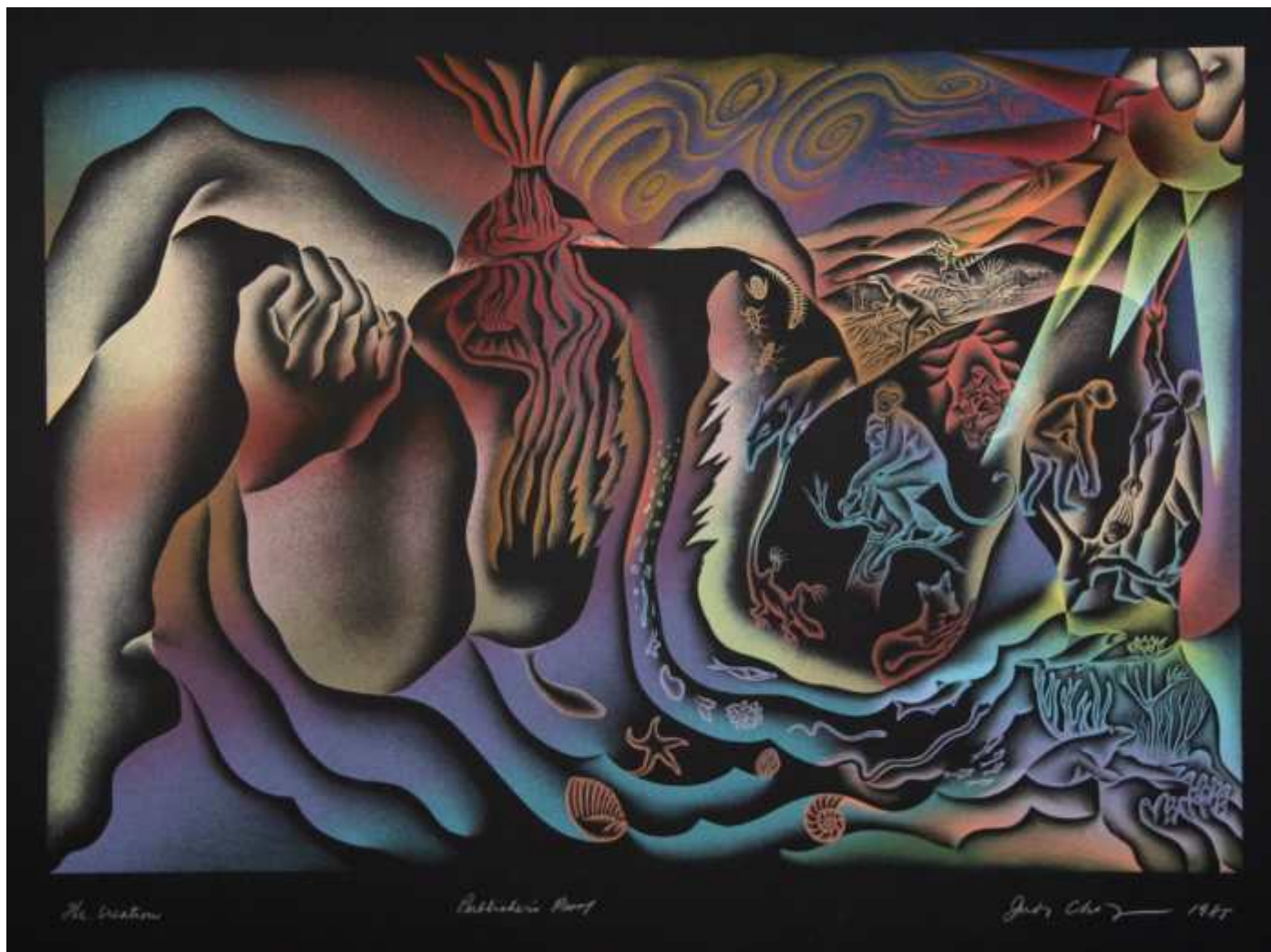


*Birth Trinity*, 1985-Serigraph, Edition of 75; 34/75-24 x 35 inches





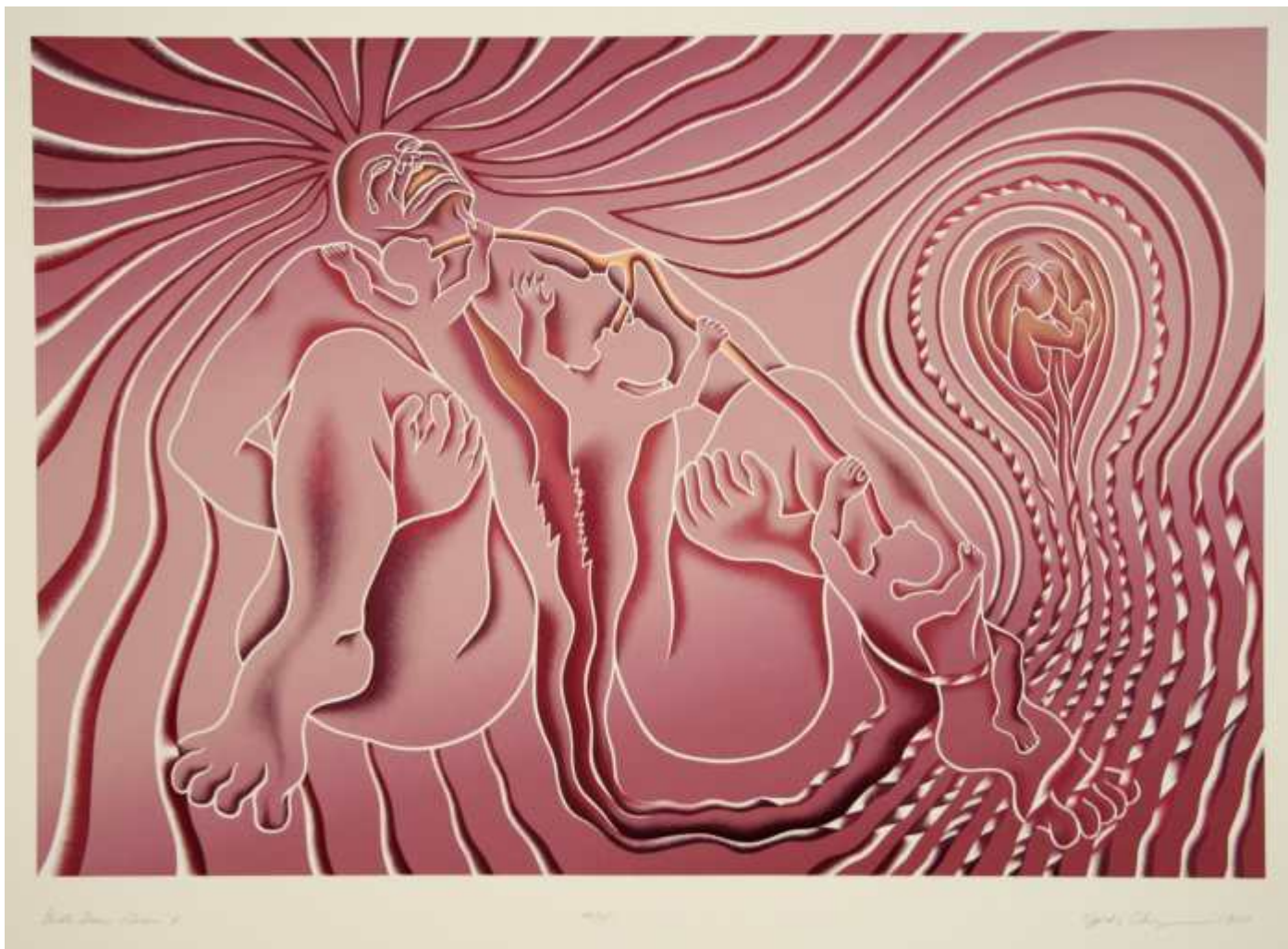
*Guided by the Goddess*, 1985-Serigraph, Edition of 75; 39/75-24 x 35 inches



Creation of the World, 1985-Serigraph on black paper, Edition of 75; P. Proof-24 x 35 inches







*Birth Tear/Tear*, 1985-Serigraph, Edition of 75; 34/75-24 x 35 inches

# Betty Tompkins



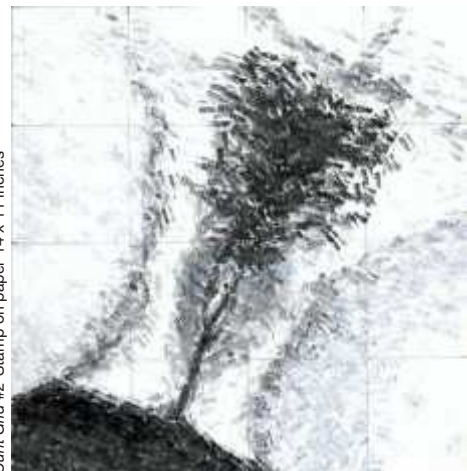
Cunt Grid #6-Stamp on paper-14 x 11 inches

Big, strong, aggressive imagery, indecorous subject matter, explicit content - all words that describe a phallic centric orientation. Tompkins redresses a subject, one that had been a specifically male point of view and does justice with a female perspective on the same issues.

Standing up to the possibility of being deemed an 'unwomanly woman', she takes the initiative and directs her gaze and hence her attention upon the act of copulation. Referring to French philosophical writings on the gaze, this is a male attribute. When the object is seen or captured by the gaze, the consummation of the male gaze upon the object takes place.

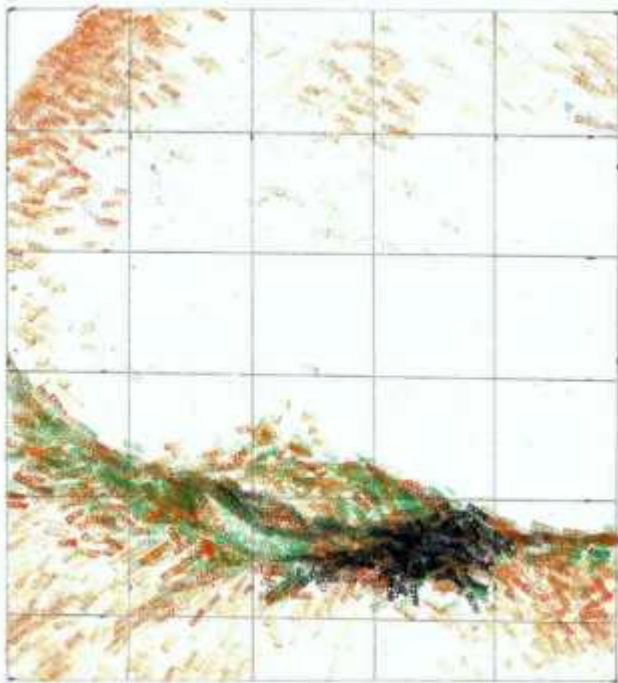
She chooses a technique that distances herself from a tactile involvement in the rendering. Take the drawings, or paintings, where the mark has been made by stamping a word or a number of words, over and over again so that they form a crosshatching on the pristine white paper and model the subject matter. The word itself - speaking out - is seated firmly within the male realm as it is a didactic, outgoing expression of self, as opposed to the female 'listening' position. On a closer inspection of Tompkin's renditions of this very private, intimate act, the words used to render the figure become clear. It is, in this instance 'cunt' and 'cow' repeatedly stamped so that the words form the pubis and vaginal lips.

Betty Tompkins could be called a feminist philosopher for she has taken on an issue that is not traditionally familiar to women - the close scrutiny and subsequent depiction (blown hugely out of scale) of the sex act. It is an unflinching call to attention. Gustave Courbet's painting *The Origin of the World* made a frank statement that the human species all passed through the woman's sex on their way in to this world.



Cunt Grid #2-Stamp on paper-14 x 11 inches





Cunt Grid #1-Stamp on paper-14 x 11 inches

Tompkins traces the origins of the world back further to the pro-creational duality. It is not the woman's genitals *alone* that are the source of birth. The genital union between the male and the female is the source. Perhaps Courbet was saying that the sight of the female, as the *object* captured by his gaze, is the provocation for the eventual act of sex that will let loose the sperm and fertilise the egg? Tompkins is explicit. Human life is the result of a grand and momentous moment. And humans also have the extra bonus of experiencing pleasure with no other end in mind than the 'boink' (another Tompkins stamp).

There has been a massive politicisation of the ways we have become accustomed, and allowed to view sex, especially for women who have been historically 'protected' from seeing the sex act. After all, biologically, it is difficult for a woman to see herself having sex without the help of a mirror. Men can have sex and watch.

It took a feisty woman to monumentalise the genitals, using the popular vernacular ('cunt', 'cock', 'fuck') in the titles in place of the clinically correct terminology, and to come up with a handsome product in doing so.



*Dick Grid #2-pencil on paper-14 x 11 inches*

*Cunt Grid #8-pencil on paper-14 x 11 inches*



# Faith Ringgold

Women of color have had to address an expanded platform in terms of their gender because of the long history of abuse, discrimination and superficial categorizations of their race. There could also be a valid argument that where white women have had to challenge the hierarchical inconsistencies between male and female in order to gain a secure footing in Fine Arts, women of color have had the added challenge of overcoming stereotypical translations of gender that have been perpetuated concerning their particular racial backdrop. All women who have managed to stand at the forefront of the art world are to be applauded but the women of colour who have managed to do the same, deserve a standing ovation. Not only have they had to overcome gender and race prejudice but they have also been operative in bringing people of colour into view. Fine Arts has always been an opportunity to pay tribute to ideas and record history, which can be easily discerned through a quick scan of western art and civilization. But the story of people of color has not been put forward with the same insistency. Faith Ringgold is visually speaking of her people and is filling the spaces denied her people in the books of yore with new and vibrant pages.

With a philanthropic and compassionate personal history of charitable and social actions, she has gained the admiration and respect of those who came in contact with either her or her proxy - her art. She has used both the written word as well as the visual realms to put forward the particular advantages of her African Americanism. Ringgold's sure hand provides a quick graphic read, similar to the clear pop imagery of Warhol, yet it is seated in a different premise. Rather than accelerating a case for the celebration of culture as we live it in the world of popular commodities, Ringgold tells of the cultural specificity of people of color.



*Jazz Stories, Mama Can Sing* 2001-04-Acrylic on Paper- 19.5 x 13.5 inches - 2/9

The dreadlocks on the woman in “Mama Can Sing” spring from her head like a fountain of glory. She is as black and glamorous as the nightlife of Harlem. Ringgold, herself holds the stature of a queen and, dressed in African styling with her own magnificent head of dreadlocks, she poses a commanding figure. Her regal dignity carries through with soulful energy into her art work. She has become a respected master (gender non-specific), not only as a female artist but also ringing loud and clear with her clarion cry for black women.



Jazz Stories, Mama Can Sing 2007-04-Acrylic on Paper- 19.5 x 13. 5 inches - 8/9





# Robin Tewes



Fuck me, Fuck you, 2000-Pencil on paper-29 x 23 inches

Robin Tewes has been on a dogged pursuit of understanding with a Zen persistence that interprets her research with the simplicity of a Koan. As in a Koan, the original question posed has an element of the nonsensical and yet the answer is an illumination. What makes up the domestic environment? Since the rooms that Robin Tewes draws represent an interior where the majority of North American women spend their days - the furniture is mid-range, even the size seems 'normal' - and noticing that she has drawn and painted these typical spaces for years - what has her search revealed? The pieces speak the answers in the

aberrations from normality that occur within the picture frame, like a message read between the lines or a subliminal voice-over.

To have recorded these spaces connotes that she has observed and documented them. Has she invented rooms, or are they rooms remembered where the details are specifically tied to impressions that were large enough to leave a mark on her consciousness? The insignificant details would have faded away so that the import of the room leapt forward and assumed the attention. To read the messages scribed on the walls (or in an instance on a table top) requires an attention to detail. Often the words have been written and then erased as if the significance of the message is not worthy of being viewed or, if it is a visual, the relationship to the environment is tangential as in the ink blot images. A timorous stance has been taken to the intrusive presence. It is revealing and necessary to spend the time reading, for this is not a loudly proclaimed declaration of being. The walls are whispering. What do they whisper? They say that they have forgotten something, they ask why he is always late, they list the groceries and they talk about art. At the same time as the Cy Twombly-like scribble registers, the words themselves communicate the artist's thoughts about her discipline.

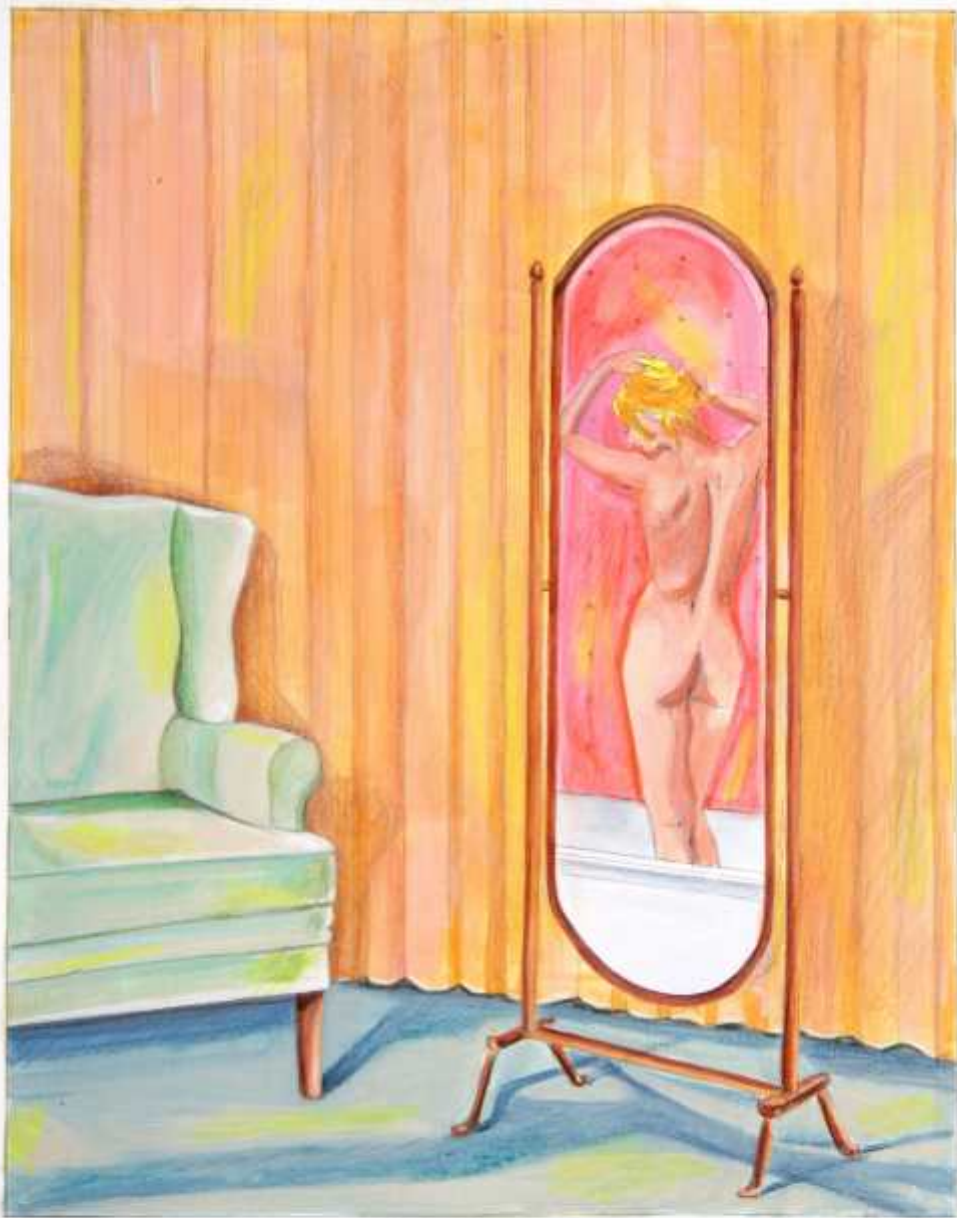
Within quiet domestic environments, aesthetically arranged, chosen with a particular eye for order and cleanliness, in the intact, pristine expressions of place - Robin Tewes is firm and exact in her presentation of her world. She turns the potential to be picayune, the nonsensical aspect of her Koan, into a dignified illumination. It is the skew in the picture that heightens the revelation - the scribbled insistent messages, often confused and muddled like the niggles of things lost or a reminder to focus - on art, on love, on anything outside of the perfect pristine, seemingly normal, room.



Down the Drain, 2006-Gouache on paper-29 x 23 inches



*I'm a Good Listener*, 2002-Gouache on paper-29 x 23 inches



# Donna Kriekle

"One in nine women!" Whenever the statistics are high, the shivers set in. The fight against breast cancer has been engaged with a vehemence and strength equal to the laborious act of giving birth. Kriekle's video, originally commissioned for "Survivors, In Search of a Voice: The Art of Courage", is titled *If I Were to Need a Mastectomy...* It is a poignant piece and, for some, may be difficult to watch but due to Kriekle's compassionate nature and video acumen, it is a heartening experience as it encourages hope while demystifying a delicate subject.

Kriekle explains in the catalogue that accompanied the original exhibition. "On the issue of breast cancer, it is a table of contents. As we gather around this cancerous table of chance, each of us becomes a player, either as spectator or as a

participant. What are the odds?"

With the cult of the breast growing in numbers and size as implants have become a more common cosmetic choice, the shape of a woman and the glory of her breasts are as ever, a cause for wonder. The loss of a breast due to cancer is as traumatic for the self esteem as it can be for the physical well being of the woman. Breast cancer research has made the diagnostic process and the subsequent examinations, biopsies and surgery less intrusive and painful but the subject itself, particular to women, continues to stymie the afflicted and provoke concern. It is more than a worthy subject for cultural research and subsequent interpretation. Kriekle's take on the matter touches the heart.



*Language - Iris* 2003-watercolor on arches paper-11 x 30 inches (rotated 45 degrees)



*If I were to Need a Mastectomy, 1994-Video, approx. 5 minutes*



Still from *Expectations*, 2007- Video, 3 minutes, edition of 5



# Heide Hatry

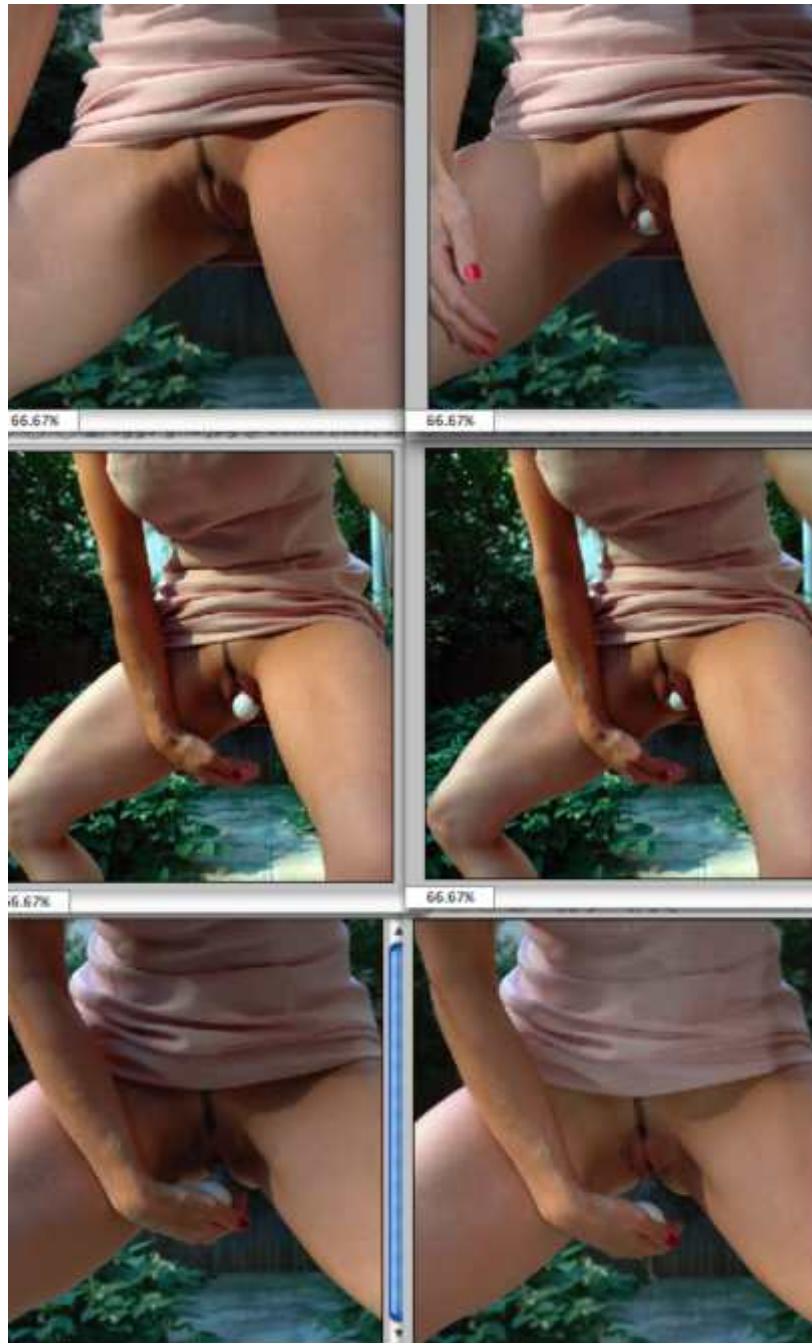
The British show *Sensation* contained art works that were *sensational*. The word 'sensation' is described as "a mental process that is due to immediate bodily stimulations as distinguished from perception". 'Sensational' is described as often pertaining to the lurid - quick, intense and, sometimes, superficial. When the *perception* stimulates the *sensation* and in doing so triggers a mental response, it awakens cognisant connections that further that immediate reaction. Heide Hatry's work with blood, for instance, can be associated with the luridus realms of death and provoke a reaction akin to having witnessed a murder. A shiver runs up the spine, a step is taken away from the spectacle and an expression of awe emitted. It is because there has been 'blood let'. For example, Hatry, dressed in a chic, short white wedding gown, skinned a pig in one of her performances. She ended up covered in blood, the beautiful white garment gradually stained a deeper red over the course of the performance. Awful! - 'awe full', and yet blood is also a traditional element of matrimony. The hymen is broken, the sheets hung out for inspection and until the egg is fertilised, the woman bleeds each month.

Hatry has captured herself on video as she 'lays' an egg. In one instance, she is nude, covered with dirt and the scene is set in nature. This is the 'wild' woman who perceives the event is nearing and quite naturally from her vagina, the lips swelling as they release her bounty - an egg is laid. In the second video we see a smart, seemingly sophisticated woman (the artist) in business attire - although the skirt *is* very short and the legs *very* long and bare - carrying a shiny silver laptop. She, too, 'lays' an egg and then ends the dynamic performance dramatically. Much like a movie review, it is better not to tell the ending for it is worth not knowing the ending in order to catch the *sensation* from the initial viewing of the piece. Once again awe! Hatry has

created an art work that causes a reaction in the senses. It is not solely a sexual reaction, although this is not to be ignored for it is titillating to watch a woman push an egg out. It is more than a pornographic response, however. It provokes a sense of wonder at the connection having been made between the idea and the physical enactment of it. It is a mental placement of oneself in relation to the artist - "she did that! Could I?"

Is there that great a difference between standing in front of any phenomenal art piece? An early Bellini, Botticelli's *Venus*, Picasso's *Guernica*, Gericault's *Raft of the Medusa*, a large Jackson Pollock drip painting, Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party*, all of the phenomenal art works that cause the "wow!" reaction. Are they not all based on a *sensation*?

Heide Hatry is one of those women who run with the wolves. She expostulates against the prim and brandies a new essentialism, a credo that acknowledges the primal, that celebrates basic instincts and expands the notion of femininity. She does this with her body, and with fit, sexy assurance turns heads at the outset, using her female allure to gain attention. Then she grants a peak at something beyond the pale of the more discretionary set. With video, photography and sculpture coalescing her conceptually avant-garde subject matter, she offers a fresh take on the 'gentler sex'.



Egg Birthing #1,2,3,4,5,6-Photos, color, 24 x 20 inches



Stills from *Expectations*, 2007-Video, 3 minutes, edition of 5





Eggs in the Box-photo, b&w, image 9 x 7.5 inches

# Allyson Mitchell

*Helena, 2005/06-Mixed media sculpture-Length 34.5" x Width 11" x Height 10.5"*



Little girls are surrounded by the pink fuzziness of stuffed animals. Bedded down with them, they ritualistically line their cute furry bodies up in an order that works before closing their eyes, now safe to sleep. Carrying them around like little babies, dressing them up, combing their hair and grooming their inanimate bodies, they can become closer than real friends, a quietly sympathetic and non-judgemental ear for secrets yearnings. Many women, grown and way past puberty, still decorate their beds, armchairs and dressers with dolls and cuddly animal surrogates that range from pussy cats, through the more seemingly masculine teddies and puppies to the grand queen of the beasts - plush, and often royally expensive, lions and tigers. They are the first fetish objects of childhood. They signify a more innocent hierarchy of attachment

than the adult has to contend with as life becomes complex and rife with the pressures of social awareness and emotional attachments.

The magic of the myth of the Sasquatch is partially embodied in the unattainable. 'Sasquatch' even roams outside of the net of spell check. Never verified as a 'real' animal, rumoured to be shy yet big (and usually homely), they trudge the woods, staying clear of the misguided attention of humans. They are hairy mammals, elusive and unable to be captured, even on film although there are many claims to their virtual existence. Allyson Mitchell has placed her own version of their physicality on the bulky beast giving them a face, a sense of warmth and endearment. In claiming the responsibility of having captured the sasquatch, she has also proclaimed discovery. The sasquatch is

Gretchen, 2005/06-Mixed media sculpture-Length 6.5" x Width 4" x Height 7"











*Carla, 2005/06-Mixed media sculpture-Length 12" x Width 6.5" x Height 6.5"*



*Paula, 2005/06-Mixed media sculpture-Length 7.5" x Width 4" x Height 5.5"*

Jade, 2005/06-Mixed media sculpture-Length 3" x Width 7" x Height 11"



female! Much like the Amazons, her sasquatch has no need for men. They have figured out the secret of self-love and in doing so have established a strong self esteem. No need for the interaction with the more polluted tribes of human descent, they roam the same planet, free of technological constraints, not experiencing the discontents of modernity but instead enjoying the enlightened moments of females interacting with females. The smaller pieces are sasquatch familiars who live near and around the large giantesses. When they are in the same space together it is unclear who is protecting whom - the giant "hideous" monsters or the tiny feminized pink and more domesticated familiars. This is the narrative that speaks from the fuzz clad bodies of Mitchell's

sculptures. She has managed to provoke a welling up of compassion for her sculptures. Mitchell has reclaimed cute, sweet, soft, and even pink all in a sweeping gesture of acceptance.

Her statement is a lesbian propagation of the sensibility of identification of women towards women. She proclaims the light side of the mysterious animal nature of the female. Mitchell's work takes the proactive stance of gay rights into an arena where the distancing of myths is brought closer in order to comprehend the drama unfolding between the sexes, as well as between the animal and the human. And through the use of synthetic plush and fake furs, she is also bridging the narrowing gap between art and popular culture.



G.B., 2005/06-Mixed media sculpture-Length 28" x Width 10" x Height 9"



(above) *Hairy Girl*, 2001—conte, charcoal and oil stick on paper—100 x 60 inches



(left) *My Friend and I*, 2001—conte and oil stick on paper—100 x 60 inches



# Aleks Bartosik

These are provoking drawings, rebellious stances that push the unconventional. They are pugilistic with the boxing gloves loaded - clenched fists ready to punch. They're masochistic and appeal to the sadistic side of the psyche, that unacknowledged cry to be beaten and receive the full brunt of nastiness and humiliation. Aleks Bartosik reconciles the opposites of human grossness and glamour with the dramatic brashness of size and theatrical composition. Primarily focusing on the female figure, she creates situations that suggest a tangential perversity. None the less, there is a sexy allure and it is in this respect that the unconventional comes into play. They appeal to the fascination of a big naughtiness like a Roman overindulgence that is so over-the top that it is destined to implode but tastes delicious until that final cut is made.

Alice went down the rabbit hole and in wonderland she met up with grotesques, exaggerations of the world as she had left it. There was always a resemblance to the 'real' world but the skewing raised questions, entrapments, predicaments and drugged perceptions that begged to be acknowledged. Alice, a pretty little blonde girl confronted the unusual, fascinated with the revelations. Aleks Bartosik is taking a similar trip and exploring temptation. She indulges her curiosity and hence furthers the voyeuristic interests of the viewers. The presentation of her compromised females - fat and clumsy or tastily dainty, pinioned and stuck, gloved for battle but hung, or small before a beastly headless adversary - allow the contemplation of gothic possibilities without a self righteous prod. There is no moral. There is no need to rescue. There is only the shock, the recoil, and then the step forward for a closer inspection.

A gutsy hip chick who steps outside of constraints, Aleks Bartosik uses the full force of her

appearance as the autobiographically based subject of her bold yet intimate narratives. Using a storyline of self exposure, Bartosik allows her bad girl inclinations free reign. With a repertoire ranging from expressionist drawings to performances, Bartosik has distinguished her persona as a force to be reckoned with, peaked at and exclaimed upon.

*Self Contained, 2000-conte, charcoal and oil stick on paper-112 x 61 inches*





*Untitled, 2007*- pencil on paper mounted to board-16 x 21 inches



*Untitled, 2007*- pencil on paper mounted to board-16 x 21 inches



*Untitled, 2007- pencil on paper mounted to board-16 x 21 inches*



*Untitled, 2007- pencil on paper mounted to board-16 x 21 inches*

# Diane Feught

A Queen is a figure head, one who rules. She can be a consort to a King or she can reign alone. She is an example to her subjects and upholds the laws or regulations prescribed by the members of her kingdom. She is the shining light that illuminates darkness, dispels chaos and inspires right living. Queens are fairytale, mythological, fantastic figures and yet there are also 'real' Queens. A Queen is the highest ranking female within a kingdom. She is a woman of great power and effectiveness. She is also a solitary being for there can only be one Queen although there can be many realms.

That Diane Feught should create a series of paintings on paper addressing the theme of women by creating images of Queens and accomplish such a regal display of beauty and strength, is a royal curtsey before the gender. She recognises the potential of her feminine perspective and uses that potential personally to summon up her slate of women. Women have a large range, of colors, textures, dispositions, levels, overlaps and tendencies. They talk with the moon and receive messages from the other side while still taking care of the necessities. They possess a dignified patience that oversees differences and difficulties and yet are susceptible to bouts of self immersion. Against a hand painted, deep brocade background, Diane Feught's luminous beings become votive icons, offered in devotion to womanhood and continuing with a life of their own to inspire and serve as an example of the force of females.

Women have been said to love beautiful things as well as embodying beauty themselves. Feught has the intuition to call to mind and hence to bring to her creativity, a range of women. She has painted traditional goddesses such as Q'uan Yin (the Chinese female principal), Mara (the evil one who tried to tempt the Buddha and whom Feught depicts in the same

frame as a snarling bear with a fire raging above her head) or Mamakala (the avenging Hindu deity). She also presents women who appear to belong to today such as the ones depicted in the realms denoted 'shelter', 'jewel' or 'ghost'. The pearl in 'jewel' is suggestive of a woman's sex, her precious treasure, hidden in the deep dark cave of her physicality and rendered to nestle in amorphous golden folds like the crown jewel of a private realm. Even the comic character Wonder Woman is extended to 'wonderful' by Feught's titling and has been given noble status through the elegant depiction.

Diane Feught, like a Queen, has granted titles to each of her women, allotting them kingdoms and an aristocratic dignity. With a style of depiction that leaves the old masters behind, she makes paintings on paper of women who become accentuated through her skill and elevated taste. She has made art work fit for a palace, as rich as any of the phenomenal works of the Renaissance that were made for the grand castles, ecclesiastic collections and public interiors of yore. There is, in fact, a large degree of 'yore' - and suggested lore - in Feught's recent series of Queens. These regal women awaken yearnings. This is the effect of being in the presence of Queens.



Jewel, 2007



Shelter, 2007





Qian Yin, 2007-gouache, acrylic, rust and metal foil on paper-20 x 17 inches

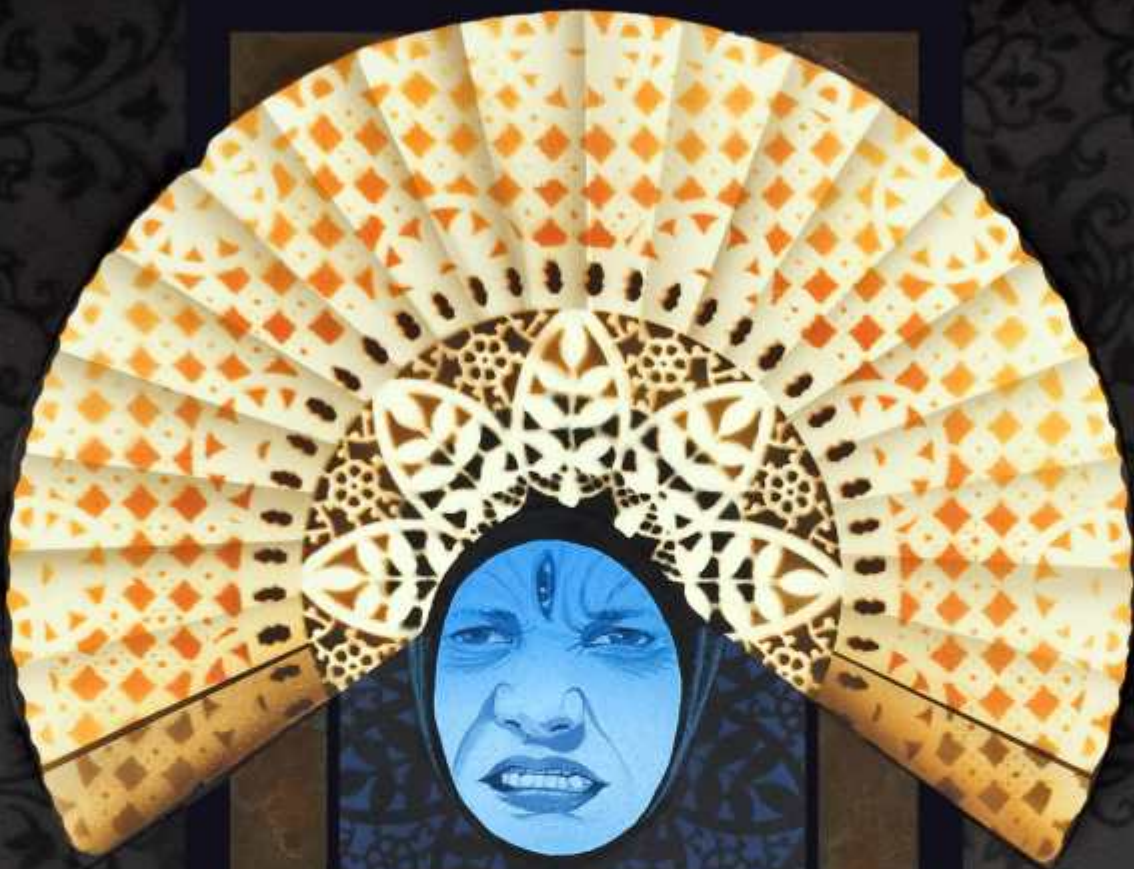
Mara, 2007-gouache, acrylic, rust on paper-20 x 17 inches







Deer Park, 2007-gouache, acrylic, rust on paper-20 x 17 inches



*Mamakala*, 2007-gouache, acrylic, rust on paper-20 x 17 inches





Yama, 2007-gouache, acrylic, rust on paper-20 x 17 inches

RICH FOG



Micro Publishing  
Toronto Canada