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# M/E/A/N/I/N/G

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CONTEMPORARY ART ISSUES

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# M/E/A/N/I/N/G #4

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## REPRESENTATIONS OF THE PENIS

MIRA SCHOR

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Beginning with a major exhibition in London in 1980, "Women's Images of Men," there has been an increasing amount of work on the subject of male representation, and specifically on the male nude and the penis. In the *Village Voice* the "Problem Lady" writes that "right now, for some reason, penises are the new hot topic of conversation" (January 12, 1988, p. 47). On TV we are treated to diagrams of President Reagan's penis, as well as a nearby part of his anatomy. For perhaps the first time it is acknowledged that our leader *has* a penis (and a nearby part of his anatomy). All we *haven't* seen is a diagram of his brain.

Nevertheless, until very recently, Western Art, and the largely male art historians who have formed the illusory image of its progression, have been singularly protective of the male member. A person who would seek to learn about the physionomy of male genitalia solely through the visual documentation of painting and sculpture (rather than that of pornography) would be sorely puzzled by the discrepancy between the evidently phallocentric world of culture, of political and sexual dominance by men, and the less than impressive appendage to representations of male nudes in art.

When you look for something, you tend to find it, and so this study has undermined my initial assumption that there were few depictions of the penis in Western art. Yet it must be stated that for each image of male genitalia found, there were 100 representations of female genitalia. And, as will become clear, representations of the penis are more often than not, misrepresentations and mystifications. Also, to state the obvious, this essay is not about actual male anatomy but representations thereof.\*

A good deal of writing about representation has been about gender or sexual representation, and most of that has been on representation of woman. Woman is the *site* of representation. Consider an old Swiss postcard from around 1900: four male mountain climbers clamber over the body of a giant, scantily dressed woman recumbent in the Alps, one of her breasts and elbows forming peaks as steep and challenging as those of her granite bed. This woman's body is the stage of a drama whose characters have been particularly developed by Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. One character in the drama, according to Jane Gallop, is the "Phallic Mother," the "pre-Oedipal mother, apparently omnipotent and omniscient, until the 'discovery of her castration,' the discovery that she is not a 'whole,' but a 'hole'."<sup>1</sup>

The "Phallus" which "unlike the penis, is lacking to any subject, male or female,"<sup>2</sup> is the (absent) hero of the drama. "Neither sex can be, or have the phallus." It is an "originary, essential, transcendental power."<sup>3</sup> "This is so for the female too, but the male has the means of representing the phallus as an integral

\*This is a revised version of a slide talk first presented at M/E/A/N/I/N/G's Artists Talk Series at the Sorkin Gallery, New York City on May 3, 1988.

part of his body, in the form of the penis.”<sup>4</sup> And so man privileges (the) visibility (of his penis); yet, paradoxically, representation has focused on the invisibility, the “nothing to see,”<sup>5</sup> the “Lack” of woman. “Lack” is the last character on the stage of woman’s body, in the drama which is all about castration. It is a circular drama: in every mirror, Phallus sees itself, in lack, or it sees the lack in itself. Phallus is Lack. And representation and patriarchy take place in the gaps between Phallus and Lack.

In the painting *Adam and Eve* by Baldung Grien (1484-1545), Adam hides behind Eve, so his penis is hidden, while Eve’s (lack of one) is quite visible, even emphasized by a mimetically triangular sheer cloth over her sex. If penis is hidden, phallus is everywhere, as erect tree, and as Adam’s hand (in front of where his penis would be), and as the apple which serves as balls. But, preeminently, the Phallus is in the veil of woman’s lack, hiding man’s lack.

Phallus is also the law of the Father, language, philosophy, and history, written history which woman has largely been excluded from. Jane Gallop locates the motivation for the Lacanian effort to separate phallus from penis in the desire to maintain the phallocentrism, and the androcentrism of discourse.

The Lacanians’ desire clearly to separate *phallus* from *penis*, to control the meaning of the signifier phallus, is precisely symptomatic of their desire to have the phallus, that is, their desire to be at the center of language, at its origin. . . But as long as the attribute of power is a phallus which can only have meaning by referring to and being confused with a penis, this confusion will support a structure in which it seems reasonable that men have power and women do not. And as long as psychoanalysts maintain the ideal separability of *phallus* from *penis*, they can hold on to their *phallus* in the belief that their phallocentric discourse need have no relation to sexual inequality, no relation to politics.<sup>6</sup>

In the animal world staring is confrontational. In our species it is acceptable for the stare, the gaze to go one way, man looks at woman. The gaze is a male privilege, and what is visible is privileged in Western culture. “But what if the object [of the gaze] started to speak? Which also means beginning to ‘see,’ etc., What disaggregation of the subject [man] would that entail?” This essay is an effort to resituate the gaze. So how does one begin to see behind the screen of the phallus and lack, to speculate on the penis?

I began by taking my camera to the Metropolitan Museum. I imagined the guards commenting on their walkie-talkies as I took point-blank close-ups of the genitalia of Greek and Roman statuary. Time and Christianity have eroded the penises of the large marble statues, and small bronze figurines were endowed with improbably button-sized ones; an over-lifesize Roman bronze figure pointed his left index finger, exactly parallel to his uncircumcized penis — although both pointed to the law, the finger was slightly longer.

The reasons for these proportions can be found in Kenneth Clark’s baseline art historical text, *The Nude*, according to which the nude is an idea, and an ideal. The male nude is conceptualized in terms of mathematics, symmetry, canons of proportion: “The Greeks had no doubts that the God Apollo was like a perfectly beautiful man. He was beautiful because his body conformed to certain laws of proportion and so partook of the divine beauty of mathematics.”<sup>8</sup> In the area

Clark refers to euphemistically as the “division of the legs”,<sup>9</sup> the progression towards the mathematical ideal of proportion entails a shift from the thick set, better endowed early Kouros, to the button-sized penises of later works. The male ideal of perfection is an inconspicuous appendage with no sense of eroticism or verisimilitude.<sup>10</sup> Male nudes which drift into some sort of sensuality are seen as deviant by Clark, deviant in art-historical terminology being “decorative,” “decadent” (i.e. feminine and homosexual).<sup>11</sup> These are not reproduced, merely referred to. Clark uses two languages in *The Nude*: to describe the male nude he uses the language of mathematics and proportion, but he yields to frank eroticism when it comes to the female nude, where the “lust of the goat [the male artist in all cases] is the bounty of God.”<sup>12</sup>

Leonardo’s drawing of *Vetruvian Man* is an effort to schematize the geometrically divine proportions of man. Clark and others hasten to remind us that Leonardo misread Vitruvius and got the proportions wrong so that the man’s arms are too long. But what of the genitalia of this ideal schema of man? Yes, this icon of Western representation has a penis of reasonable proportions. It is close to the center of the circle (the navel), it is the central point of the square. However the radiating arms and legs have a centrifugal effect, pulling our eyes away from the body towards the circle and the square, the geometry which is meant to be the true subject of the image. Disrupting the whole schema is the powerful, square-jawed, lion-maned, sternly frontal face, an overpoweringly expressive idealization of male subjectivity, identity, and authority. Clark, speaking of the shocking effect of Manet’s *Olympia*, notes that “to place on a naked body a head with so much individual character is to jeopardize the whole premise of the nude.”<sup>13</sup> Even Leonardo’s schema for a proportional ideal of male representation is thrown off track, not by its sexual member, but by its intellectual idealization.

In the theatrically condensed moment of the touching fingers, Michelangelo’s *Creation of Adam* from the Sistine Ceiling is a prototypical male representation and allegory of male creativity. But there are curious aspects to this image. Adam is endowed with a splendid musculature, disproportionately wide chest, and disproportionately tiny, limp penis that seems as vestigial as an appendix. It is the same dimension as his (disproportionately wide) navel. Adding to the femininity of the about-to-be enlivened Adam is his lazily recumbent position. God, on the other hand, despite white hair and beard, is an equally splendid muscular young male. His sex may be indicated by his beard, and his procreative finger, but his sex organ is hidden in the folds of a lavender dress. This Father has all the power of the *phallus*, he is emblematic of the triumph of monotheism and the principle of male creativity over the fertility of the ancient earth goddesses; but his penis is covered, and though the drapery of his robe clings to his pecs and biceps, it doesn’t cling to anything in “the division of the legs.”

Leo Steinberg’s *The Sexuality of Christ* (1983) is a significant study of representations of the penis. Steinberg calls our attention to the iconography of an “ostentatio genitalium,” imagery in which the genitalia of Christ receive “demonstrative emphasis.”<sup>14</sup> This iconography is intended to make materially evident the incarnation of the Word of God in man. He was born a man because He has a penis, because the proof is visible, this child who is the product of a penis-less im-

pregnancy. So naked baby boys, tiny penises on *putti* proliferate in Western art. It has been suggested that these are miniaturized adult penises in which "the Renaissance artist uncovers his body and is revealed through the reduction of the scale of proportions and exposed as a sensitive, sensual, corporeal entity."<sup>15</sup> This is already an oddity: adult men able to reveal their penises only in the guise of infantile genitalia. In addition, even their placement is rarely "anatomically correct."

As Steinberg points out, the adult Christ is never naked, but an erection is sometimes indicated via exaggerated drapery — a *symbolic* erection, of course, which denotes the resurrection, not a real erection, since the superior power of the penis of Christ is due to its "abstinence."<sup>16</sup> The Dead Christ is almost never naked. The very fact of his death proves he lived. Yet even in death his hidden penis is covered and emphasized by Mary's hand, his own, or even, in what Steinberg tells us is rare iconography, by the hand of God the Father (rare because the Father/Son relationship is so fraught with taboo).

Christian iconography offers us a naked baby with an uncanny penis, and a dead man in a shroud. And even in death, if there is no loin cloth, no sheet, there are always hands to shield man's sign of "humanation."<sup>17</sup>

The pattern of diminishing or hiding the penis while revealing the phallus, is evident in the work of Auguste Rodin, considered an artist who broke through the politeness and prudery of centuries to bring a frank, realistic sensuality to depictions of the human figure. "No surface aspect of the figure's anatomy seems to have escaped his eye,"<sup>18</sup> except for the penis. *John the Baptist* (1878) sports some sort of fig leaf jock strap without a string. The *Balzac* of Rodin, a single rugged shaft with a massive head, is phallic in the extreme. The sculpture's history is indicative of a phallocentric strategy of power via mystification and occultation: after many initial studies, Rodin modelled a naked Balzac clutching a huge erect penis. This version was well-known in Paris; one contemporary record describes the man "holding himself erect, the hands firmly grasping his virility."<sup>19</sup> (Appropriately Rodin expressed his doubts about the ever-changing sculpture by varying reports: "Je le tiens" — I hold it — or "Je ne le tiens pas" — I don't.)<sup>20</sup> Finally, wet plaster-soaked cloth was draped over the model, transformed into a dressing gown, *et voila!*

John Berger has suggested that the *Balzac* is Rodin's masterpiece, his only masterpiece, because for once in his life the clay seemed to be masculine, in other words equal to him, so that he could not compress, manipulate, and oppress it as he does the clay women of his other figures. But *Balzac*'s "virility" is ultimately, deliberately, veiled, shrouded. As Luce Irigaray writes (about Freud): "it would be good to take issue with the cloak of the law in which he wraps his desire, his penis."<sup>21</sup>

The major developments in male representation, the beginning of a coming to terms with the penis, occurred in the 1960s and 70s, at a time when movements of liberation, including sexual, came to the forefront of society. The feminist movement, in particular, organized a continuing critique of gender and representation, and provoked a group of responses in art by men — either examples of exacerbated misogyny, or attempts at self-representation and analyses.

The works of Herman Nitsch, Vito Acconci, and Eric Fischl exemplify several strategies for male representation and their progression from the 1960s to the 80s.

In his "Aktions," from the early 60s to the present, the Austrian artist Herman Nitsch re-enacts Catholic narrative and ritual, and blends its tableaux of suffering with a Dionysian theater of excess, chaos, and violence. Nitsch strips the shroud off of Christ and casts his own body into the role of Christ as sacrificial animal. Naked and blindfolded, he is covered with the blood and guts of drawn and quartered (and crucified) cattle. In early black and white documentation, his head is cropped out of the picture, his torso is segmented photographically, and his penis appears, amidst animal organs, as glistening, limp animal flesh. In one of these photographs (1965) he is seen from the armpits down; blood from a barely stanch'd wounded heart pours onto his penis, which is ritually placed on a sheet of white paper on a table. His cock is on the block (of art) in a pose strikingly reminiscent of a Man of Sorrows (Michele Giambono, c. 1430), in which a dead Christ stands out of his sepulchre, the rim of which just covers his penis, while a cloth draped over its edge is ornamented with a red spot where his penis would be (would bleed).

In the use of blood and body, this work connects to issues of femaleness. Max Kozloff writes about Nitsch and other male body/performance artists of the 60s and 70s: "the most revealing images or presences are males transposing themselves into females." He quotes Nitsch:

Many of the theater actions are like births. And a birth is like a crucifixion and resurrection together. There is blood, and meat, and pain, and then comes the newly born child, and he cries and begins to live. . . . I want to celebrate existence.<sup>22</sup>

Whereas Rodin glorified the male creative principle but veiled his penis, Nitsch, even as he uses his own, for once naked body, looks to the procreative power of the "phallic mother," to the birth blood he truly lacks. To unveil his penis, he must use the language of femininity.

Vito Acconci's performance/body art work of the early 70s also incarnates a struggle over the gender of creativity. In attempting to depict his own body and its creative functions, he is compelled to reinvestigate principles of femaleness and femininity. Acconci, like Nitsch, returns to the female body when he seeks to represent his own. Acconci's work was the subject of lively debate at the time, and is an important focus for any exploration of male representation.

In *Seedbed* (1971), lurking under a wedge shaped ramp constructed in a gallery, Acconci passed two afternoons a week engaged in "private sexual activity" that is to say, jerking himself off. "The goal of my activity is the production of seed."<sup>23</sup> The gallery is thus the site for the production and display (although unseen) of male sexuality. Art and male sexuality are both presented as masturbation. There is reference and allusion to the penis, but the artist and his penis, like the *Balzac* of Rodin, remain hidden in a mantle of art. Despite claims to the contrary, in some ways this is a very traditional art work.

Acconci finds new (but equally traditional) hiding places for his penis in *Conversations* (1971). In one segment he tries to walk and run "all the while at-

tempting to keep [his] penis 'removed,' held between [his] legs." Acconci finds another hiding place in a segment of *Conversions* entitled *Associations/Assistance/Dependence*:

A woman kneels behind me: I push my penis behind me, between my legs, she takes my penis into her mouth... when I'm seen from the front, the woman disappears behind me and I have no penis. I become the woman I've cancelled out.<sup>24</sup>

Acconci, an atavistically hairy male, has presented a male representation by becoming a woman. He strips, but then he seeks to strip away all signs of maleness: first the hairs off his breasts, then the penis from his body. But he *has* a penis and must put it someplace — in a disappeared woman. So the phallus re-inscribes itself over the erased/lacking woman, even as the penis is hidden, as usual.

Acconci's penis is finally revealed, more or less, dressed like a doll, in *Trapplings* (1971). The artist placed himself in a closet space cluttered with shawls, foam, flowers, toys (items associated with femininity and childhood), a "location for regressive activity."

Activity: Turning on myself — dividing myself in two — attempting to turn my penis into a separate being, another person.

1. Dressing my penis in doll's cloths.
2. Talking to my penis as a playmate — talking myself into believing this.<sup>25</sup>

It is worthwhile noting how these experimentations in sexuality were treated by the art press, indicating significant differences in the critical language and reception of body/performance art by men and that by women in the early 70s. Robert Pincus-Witten, for example, stresses the link between Acconci's work and that of Duchamp. The possibility of a genuine discussion on what it might mean that a man was trying to give himself a woman's body is averted by the emphasis on the association to Duchamp's androgynous transformations and objects: the Rrose Selavy portrait and *The Wedge of Chastity*. Acconci's outrageous performance is crucially validated as high art by the linkage to the Big Daddy of Conceptual Art. This is *crucial*: here is a man trying to investigate his sexuality by playing with himself in public and playing at being a woman, at a time when feminism was beginning to question prevailing assumptions, and the male critic immediately relates the work to the transvestitism of another male artist, to an artist who pre-eminently represents the phallus as law, de-emphasizing the visual and the sensual for an ironically distanced intellectual erotica. So Acconci's hidden penis becomes the phallus of Duchamp. Whatever the meaning of Acconci's transexual experiments, male hegemony over art history is assured.<sup>26</sup>

Society often tolerates and even encourages the femininity of male artists. Catherine Elwes, who helped organize the *Women's Images of Men* exhibition in London in 1980, writes that "their role is often to provide the opportunity for other men vicariously to experience their buried femininity. The power and prestige of the artist's biological masculinity is *reinforced* rather than undermined by artistic forays into the feminine. His status as an artist partly depends on this poetic femininity."<sup>27</sup> In fact, Acconci's work is an early example of what has come to be described as the *Tootsie syndrome*, in which the best woman is a man.

A double standard, predictably, exists in the critical reception of works by women who have used their naked bodies in parallel investigations of representation and sexuality. Carolee Schneemann, Hannah Wilke, and others have more often than not had to deal with accusations of narcissism and sluttishness. Instead of phallic validation, they have had to struggle to keep the perception of their work from collapsing into issues of notoriety.

No series of events better documents this than the scandal created by the Lynda Benglis ad in the November 1974 issue of *ArtForum*.<sup>28</sup> Benglis first attempted to have the representation in question placed in the "editorial matter of the magazine, proposing it as a 'centerfold'."<sup>29</sup> While Acconci tries to hide his penis, Benglis — oiled and tanned, bikini marks highlighting her breasts and ass — wears nothing but sunglasses and a huge double dildo, which she holds so that, while it juts out a foot from her vagina, it also hints at a somewhat gingerly insertion. But whereas Acconci was compared in *ArtForum* to Duchamp, Benglis is decried in letters to the editor (*ArtForum*, December 1974) as a "brazen hussy" (in a letter from Peter Plagens). On the same page a disclaimer signed by Lawrence Alloway, Max Kozloff, Rosalind Krauss, Joseph Masheck, and Annette Michelson states that Benglis's ad "exists as an object of extreme vulgarity," an example of self-exploitation, "deeply symptomatic of conditions that call for critical analysis," and that "infect the reality around us."<sup>30</sup>

These editors state that while the Benglis ad "is by no means the first instance of vulgarity to appear in the magazine, it represents a qualitative leap in that genre, brutalizing ourselves and, we think, our readers." Might Robert Morris's ad in the April 1974 issue be one such "instance of vulgarity"? Benglis and Morris lived together at the time and it has been said that they were daring each other to exhibitionist heights in their presentations of self. In his ad, Morris turns himself into a penis, a G.I. helmet forming the head, and his bare and oiled pecs and biceps the shaft. But, decorously, he is shot from the waist up and for good measure you can spot his BVDs waistband at the bottom edge of the photograph.

Both pictures are incredibly vulgar, but Benglis loses the dare because she manages to offend women by using her body in a pornographic display, and men because she doesn't just assume a penis, but a huge and defiant one (or perhaps, as one friend has suggested, her true error was in not giving herself balls as well). While male representations may safely take the route of investigations into maleness, Benglis's venture into maleness is truly transgressive (and thereby dismissed as mere vulgarity).

To turn to the work of a currently successful figurative painter, Eric Fischl's work is chronologically and to some extent conceptually indebted to issues raised by the feminist movement and to the permissions it gave to representations of sexuality and vulnerability. An early work on glassine (1982) presents an interesting baseline for a study of Fischl's representations: men and women shower, a couple of them interact, the others are self-absorbed, and contained in their individual space (and sheet of glassine). The overlapping, autonomous, transparent layers of the drawing surfaces echo the autonomy of the figures. This image is open-ended formally and iconographically.

Fischl, in other works which deal with the male and female nude, continued

to go beyond conventions of representation of the nude in that he not only placed women in situations where nudity seems uncalled for, but also men.<sup>31</sup> Several paintings examine relationships between men, and either reveal or allude to representations of phallus and penis. In *Boys at Bat* (1980) a boy ponders his masculinity in relation, not to the "phallic mother" (as in other works by Fischl, or metaphorically in Nitsch and Acconci's works) but to the big penis, big bat of the adult "boy." For once the child is clothed and the adult is naked, his power marked by the bat on the ball and his unveiled penis.

*Father and Son* (1980) presents an unusual subject — two men on a bed — and an ambiguous situation. The parallel lines between the father and son which emphasize their similarity is broken by the wall of pillows separating them, a wall of taboo that keeps the hairy-chested large male from touching the younger and curiously feminine or androgynous male beside him. The relationship between father and son, father and wife, the interchangeability of son and wife, son and mother, are touched on in a subtle manner. Nevertheless the taboo subject imposes a veil on the representation of the penis, and one might note that again a male artist identifies his sexuality in an allusion to the mother.

*Portrait of the Artist as an Old Man* (1984) imagines the aging Fischl before his (blank) canvas and easel, near a field shaded by a late afternoon sun. Facing us, his eyes are hidden by dark glasses and his hand reaches beneath a folded copy of *The New York Times* to hold his covered penis. In an interview, Fischl equates fears about success in art and the art world with fears about sexual potency. He says of this painting: "You think you caught him or captured him in some way but you haven't gotten him — he remains inscrutable. It's all about the anxiety of whether he can ever get it up again."<sup>32</sup> The assertion of phallic creativity as male sexual act has returned us to the veiled penis of traditional male representation.

The pattern of mystification and occultation of the penis in the service of phallic dominance finds its sources, certainly, in the castration complex. Further, if, as theorists from Levi-Strauss to Lacan have made clear, women are "useful" principally as exchange value between men, patriarchy rests also on repressed and veiled homosexuality. The fear of an open representation of the penis is the fear held by heterosexual male artists of the possibility or the revelation of this latent homosexuality.

As the site of a sublimated homosexual encounter, the male nude may be too explicit and therefore too threatening to encourage fantasy. "Man is reluctant," argues Laura Mulvey, "to gaze on his exhibitionist like. Even Renoir. . . is said to have been too embarrassed to work from a male model. The man who painted 'with his prick' could not countenance the appearance of a rival one."<sup>33</sup>

Rival or eroticized. It is worth considering representations of the penis by gay male artists.

In Florence, postcards of closeups of the penis of the *David* of Michelangelo are perennial best-sellers. Although a conventional representation in its stylization and in the small scale relative to the *David*'s huge hands and feet, it is a beautiful carving and denotes, along with the languor of the contrapposto, an eroticized male.

For gay male artists, the male nude is the sexual object of desire. The penis is larger and, iconographically, as well as formally, more central to homosexual depictions. Note Charles Demuth's long secreted watercolors of sailors and other men with big penises at the beach, at the baths, in bed, or pissing in the street. In Demuth's *Distinguished Air* a group of spectators surround a sculpture of a penis with an eye at its tip. In the watercolor *Harbor* (1986) the Los Angeles artist Tom Knechtel centralizes the penis: the subjectivity of the male figure is erased as the face drowns in the shadows while the penis is spotlit. In this sea, it is the penis (body/sexuality) not the face (mind/subjectivity) that is the harbor.

In their proper British suits, Gilbert and George were personifications of *phallus*: only their red painted faces indicated a difference which becomes explicit in more recent work such as *Two Cocks*, in which two huge cartoon-like cocks sport red heads. Of these giant cocks Gilbert says "Yes, we're very interested in sex. And in sexy art." And George tells a story about a critic who was "furious because one of our pieces had a penis in it. I took him to task on the phone — the only time we've ever responded in this way — I said I was amazed because museums are filled with penises, the National Gallery, the British Museum, I said you can even find them in trousers. Panic, immediately! A few years later he invited us to take part in a group show in Liverpool and wrote us a letter saying but no cocks please."<sup>34</sup>

These big, bright works and G & G's amusing affirmation of penis pride may seem painful right now, in the era of AIDS, (although the interview quoted is from 1987). And works by Robert Mapplethorpe from the late 70s and early 80s now also carry a distressing resonance, made more poignant by the recent public report that the artist himself is suffering from the illness.

Mapplethorpe glorifies the male nude as homo-erotic spectacle: large penises are the isolated subject/still life object of the image. If traditionally, "it is illegal to show an erection,"<sup>35</sup> Mapplethorpe thrusts erections in our face: in one photograph there is nothing but a clenched fist "firmly grasping [his] virility." The confrontational aspect of this imagery is developed in pieces like *Bill, New York* (1976-1977) in which two shots of an erect penis frame a mirror for the viewer's own reacting face.

Although certain photographs show activities that are unclear or unimaginable to an uninitiated audience, it has been noted that Mapplethorpe's male images are in some respects aligned with a phallogocentric ideology, "confirming rather than questioning the myth of masculine virility."<sup>36</sup> These images are in their own way an ideal of perfection, a gay ideal at the very least. Arthur Danto points to the role of "immensity. . . in this aestheticizing, and hence in the vision from within which the (male) genitals are perceived as beautiful. And this is disappointingly as reductive and mechanistic an attitude as that which thematizes big breasts in women" (*The Nation*, Sept. 26, 1988). Certainly many of Mapplethorpe's models lose their individuality, whether to their leather masks or to the exclusive focus on their penis. *Richard* (1978) is the ironically personal title of a diptych of an anonymous penis tightly strapped into a wooden contraption, splattered with blood in the second frame — Richard is his penis and its tortured sexual narrative.

*Thomas* (1987) presents Mapplethorpe's revision of Leonardo's *Vetruvian Man*: a black man pushes at the corners of a square framing his body. His head is bowed so that we cannot distinguish the "individual character" of his face. Set off by his squatting pose, his genitals are literally "well-hung" away from his body to form the center of the square photograph; they are central to this work's geometry. Mapplethorpe's photographs frequently allude to racial myths. Many of his photographs of full nudes and close-ups of penises and other body fragments are of black men. Like tribesmen seen in travelogues, they are pictured as "outside culture."<sup>37</sup> Black men may be allowed big penises because, in the myopia of a Eurocentric culture, they are denied the *phallus* of language and history; like women they are considered closer to nature and unmediated sexuality.

Recent works such as *Calla Lilly* (1988) return to the aestheticized and veiled phallus of a flower's pistil. And, in a striking self-portrait (1988), Mapplethorpe's face floats in blackness, while in the foreground his hand grasps a cane tipped by a tiny skull: a triumphant dick head has become a threatening death's head. It is a powerful recapitulation of a sexual subculture's flowering and suffering.

The gay subculture documented by Mapplethorpe in the 70s and 80s is prefigured in works by Nancy Grossman from the 60s and early 70s. Blackness is transposed to the black leather encasing the taut, erect phallic male figures who have real penises and balls, representationally carved in wood from live models. In collages from the 70s the gun is phallic substitute for the face, so male subjectivity is associated with physicality, violence, and comic machismo. Grossman, as a lesbian artist, is in an interesting position culturally. Her work reflects gay male attire and sensibility, her figures are phallically erect, yet action is prevented by bondage. Whose action, one wonders? That of the male image or of the woman artist? The identification of female artist and male model is one of a variety of strategies deployed by women artists in their representations of men, and of the penis in particular.

In the circular drama of representation woman is a stage and also a specially constructed mirror. In *A Room of One's Own* Virginia Woolf writes that:

Women have served all these centuries as looking-glasses possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size. Without that power probably the earth would still be swamp and jungle. . . mirrors are essential to all violent and heroic action. That is why Napoleon and Mussolini both insist so emphatically upon the inferiority of women, for if they were not inferior, they would cease to enlarge. . . if she begins to tell the truth, the figure in the looking glass shrinks.<sup>38</sup>

Whereas some straight men rely on strategies of diminution and dissembling, or resort to explorations of their femininity, some gay men, and many women accord the emblem of maleness, the sign of patriarchy, a more proportionate degree of centrality and importance.

Women's representations of the male nude, and of the penis, often forego conventional eroticism for a critique based on anger and humor.

In *Male Bomb* Nancy Spero transforms and multiplies the penis into fire-and-blood-spitting weapons. Spero reconnects the phallic weapon to its human embodiment; she does not tolerate the distance between phallus and penis some might seek

to advance. And snake-like penis heads bursting like shrapnel from the head of the male figure replace the legend of Medusa with its connotations of castration and lack onto a male head.

Jonathan Borofsky's *Male Aggression Now Playing Everywhere* is formally very similar to *Male Bomb*: a rampaging male has as genitalia every form of military hardware. Also a critique of phallic oppression and aggression, it is nonetheless a very *cheerful* image. It emits a kind of confidence, unlike the nervous fragility of Spero's explosively violent figure. As a man in our culture, not having to quite the same degree to struggle against patriarchy, Borofsky can afford comfortable humor even as he takes a critical stance.

An ironic and humorous approach is evident in works by such younger artists as Erika Rothenberg. In *Secret Penis* (1986) Rothenberg uses a storyboard/cartoon format to trace the tribulations of the female executive:

"Announcer: YOU'RE SMART AND TOUGH AND YOU'VE MADE IT  
TO V.P."  
(female announcer in an executive suit with little red tie)  
"BUT YOU'LL PROBABLY NEVER MAKE IT TO THE BOARD  
ROOM"  
"CAUSE YOU LACK SOMETHING THAT 99% OF TOP MANAGERS  
HAVE"  
(group shot of successful male executives in suits, seen from the waist up)  
"A PENIS"  
(waist down: a little pink penis swings out of each man's expensive suit).

Rothenberg then suggests (and in other pieces proposes the marketing of "SECRET PENIS," a special kind of pantyhose. She also made a model for this work.

The (eponymously named?) Jane Dickson's *Hey Honey Wanna Lift?* (1981) is a cartoon book documenting the love affair of a man with his Dick, including a tender scene where he, in a suit, has his arm around and eyes on, Her/It (in a skirt). A very proper couple indeed. Later they go dancing.

A recent instance of the ambivalent combination of anger and humor is *Pornament is Crime*, a group of watercolors by Joyce Kozloff, in which characters and styles from Indian, Chinese, Arab and Western art meet in sexually ambiguous and compromising situations. In *Koranic Quotations or Who's King?*, on an Islamic styled background of pattern and writing, Greek figures carry, balance on, and kiss huge penises while a Persian man puts his rather smaller one into an unhappy, bound up donkey. These "appropriated" images are mixed up in an inconsistent manner which suggestss the universality of certain (male) sexual practices and hegemonies.

Even without anger or satire, a degree of unsentimentality permeates male representations by women artists, even when the mutuality and co-existence of the sexes is examined. Joan Semmel paints from a neutral point looking down the bodies of a naked man and woman in bed, barely touching in *Intimacy/Autonomy*; Margaret Doogan in *Couple I* has a man and a woman clinging to each other. Their naked flesh is bloody and translucent, a thread of blood links the genitals of two human beings in a state of mutual vulnerability and fragility.

Alice Neel deserves a special place in any study of male representation, if only for her *Portrait of Joe Gould* (1933), which combines vivid realism, humorous exaggeration in the multiplicity of the penis (three figure studies have a total of 5 penises), and sympathy for this slightly foolish looking individual. His face is easily as memorable as the rest of his richly painted anatomy. As she put it "He was just a little bit off his rocker, of course."<sup>39</sup> Neel is realistic, imaginative, sympathetic, and *irreverent*. One hopes that these are characteristics no one would fear, but, as she continues, "Malcolm Cowley saw it one time, and he said: 'the trouble with you, Alice, is you're not romantic.'"

Neel's *Portrait of John Perrault* (1972) also centralizes the penis without romanticizing it. In both paintings the model's face and his sexual organ are given equal importance and individuality, not often the case in paintings of female nudes by male artists. In a portrait of her infant grandson, Neel approaches a hallowed subject with fresh realism which replaces the uncanny "wee-wee" of the Renaissance Christ by a purple and brown growth of living flesh which foretells his adult sexuality more than his godly death.

If the penis has been hidden to protect it from the female gaze, it is partly because man is uncomfortably aware that, from his birth and infancy, through illness and death, woman, as mother, lover, and nurse, knows the male body in all conditions, from tiny penis to erect sexual organ to the limp, bloodless appendage of the aged father or husband. Neel and Doogan make clear that the penis can be depicted honestly, not as a stylized button, or an afterthought of clay, nor even mythically erect, but as a vulnerable piece of flesh, without the humanity of the man being impaired; rather, in this kind of representation, man's "humanation" is evident. This may impair patriarchal hegemon(ely), however.

A final strategy of depiction of the penis by women artists returns to the "phallic mother." The woman artist arrogates to herself and her creations the power of the phallus and the erect penis. If no one has the phallus, but man has the means to represent it on his body, so one might suggest that while no one, including woman, can return to the phallic mother, woman might have greater access to her legendary power.

Mia Westerlund Roosen's *Orlando* (1982), and Louise Bourgeois's *Labyrinthine Tower* (1968) and *Pregnant Woman* (1947-1968) are all not only phallic sculptures in the traditional sense; despite their degrees of abstraction, these sculptures' shafts and heads more than coincidentally recall the anatomy of the penis, and share a "virile" sense of outgrowth and projection. The assumption of virility by a woman is emphasized by the transvestism of the titles: Roosen's *Orlando* directs the interpretation of the work to the transexuality of Woolf's heroine/hero; similarly two of Bourgeois' penis sculptures are gendered in their titles as female — *Pregnant Woman* and *Fillette* (1968). *Fillette* is the astonishing title to a very graphic modeling of a penis and balls: in a photographic portrait of Bourgeois by Robert Mapplethorpe, she holds her penis/girl doll, and her wickedly witty face lets us in on the sexual nature of her sculpture. The penis is everything, as *Fillette/little girl* it is the baby as penis substitute, as rugged depiction of a stiff penis and big balls it is a sexual instrument of pleasure (again her knowing smile), and as creator of this polysexual object which she cradles in her arms, Bourgeois is indeed the all-powerful phallic mother.

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Feminism, gay culture, and AIDS have each contributed to recent examinations of the phallus and penis. The frequent reference to the female body in attempts to reveal male sexuality may result from millenia of thinking about sexuality in general as a problem of femininity (always from a male point of view), but it also may explain, along with the logical development of feminist thought out from only re-evaluating woman towards examining man, my own interest in the subject. Yet I confess I remain dubious about the wisdom of focusing on man, in an "everlasting return of the same."<sup>40</sup>

Nevertheless, resituating the gaze seems a necessary step. One can hope for a true revelation and "humanation" of the penis. An "if you've got it flaunt it" representation such as the *Cerne Giant* (1st or 2nd century A.D., Britain), a 180 foot figure of a man with a big erect penis and brandishing a huge club is at least refreshingly honest as to his intentions and mentality. The great murals by Giulio Romano in the Hall of Cupid and Psyche in the Palace of Tea, of Venus and Mars, present splendid prototypes of man and woman as equally luscious and strong sexual partners. Although I was not able to discuss non-Western art in this essay, a Dogon Door Post, as well as many other African artworks, speaks to the same vision, of man and woman, together, equals in life and pleasure, without the repression or veiling of either element.

Can penis be separated from phallus? Can phallus/penis as interlinked concepts be separated from narcissism, and function in a more interactive role, as an instrument of desire for another body, rather than a negation of another's subjectivity?

If penis is represented then phallus may become unveiled in the process. Once seen, phallus may be reevaluated, and its power could be undermined, and the "phallosensical hommologue"<sup>41</sup> of Western Civilization might be interrupted, and, only then, when lack is not seen as a "hole" but "whole," and phallus/penis is unveiled can art attain the possibility of its own reintegration, re-animation, reincorporation, and de-castration.

## Notes

1. Jane Gallop, *The Daughter's Seduction* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 22.
2. Gallop, p. 95.
3. Gallop, p. 96.
4. Victor Burgin, *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and David R. Godine, Boston, 1984), p. 303.
5. Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 135.
6. Gallop, "Phallus/Penis: Same Difference," manuscript pp. 224-225.
7. Irigaray, p. 135. Cf. Irigaray, p. 47: "So Freud will see, without being seen? Without being seen seeing? Without even being questioned about the potency of his gaze? Which leads to envy of the omnipotence of gazing, knowing? About sex/about the penis. To envy and jealousy of the eye-penis, of the phallic gaze? He will be able to see that I don't have one, will realize it in a twinkling of an eye. I shall not see if he has one. More than me? But he will inform me of it. Displaced castration? *The gaze is at stake from the outset.*"
8. Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), p. 35.
9. Clark, p. 42.
10. "As K.J. Dover has shown, the Athenian taste in male genitalia ran to small and taut. Our modern stag party jokes of "well-endowed men" would have been lost on the Athenians. Large sex organs were considered coarse and ugly, and were banished to the domains of abstraction, of caricature, of satyrs, and of barbarians." Eva C. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus — Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985) p. 68. Keuls' study of the phallogocratic regime of 5th century Athens as evidenced on vase paintings of the period contains much that is relevant to the works discussed in my essay, and illuminates the phallogocratic and misogynist underpinnings of Western representation and discourse.
11. Cf. Clark pp. 72, 73, 79, 82 as examples. Note also the ethnocentric howler/critique of sexual, or sexy, representation, p. 52: "The soft, nerveless, and extravagant shapes of Indian art emphasize by contrast the taut, resolute, and economical forms of the Greek. We feel in every line of their purposeful bodies a capacity for endurance and self-sacrifice for which the word moral is not inappropriate." Phallic language ("taut," "resolute"), morality, and de-sexualized representation are here neatly linked.
12. Clark, p. 200.
13. Clark, p. 225.
14. Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and Modern Oblivion, October 25* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1983), p. 1.
15. Lea Lublin, "Painters' WeeWees or the Confoundations of Painting," *Wedge* No. 6, Winter, 1984.
16. Steinberg, p. 46.
17. Steinberg, p. 9.
18. Albert Elsen, *Rodin* (New York: MOMA, 1963), p. 21.
19. John Berger, *About Looking* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 184.
20. Frederic Grunfeld, *Rodin* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1987), p. 372.
21. Irigaray, p. 38.
22. Max Kozloff, "Pygmalion Reversed," *ArtForum*, Nov. 1975, p. 37.
23. Vito Acconci: *Poetry, Activities, Sculpture, Performances, Installations, Video*, compiled by drs. W.M.H. Kaiser, Amsterdam, 1977.
24. Vito Acconci, edited by Judith Russi Kirschner (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1980), p. 15.
25. Kozloff, p. 35.
26. Arthur Danto, in his *Nation* review of Robert Mapplethorpe's exhibition at the Whitney Museum (Sept. 26, 1988), makes the similar comparison: the only artist he summons to his discourse, in his consideration of Mapplethorpe's 1980 self-portrait as a girl, is Duchamp: "One cannot but think of Marcel Duchamp's self-representation in *maquillage*, wearing the sort of wide-brimmed hat that Virginia Woolf might have worn with a hatband designed by Vanessa, with ringed fingers and a fur boa. Duchamp even took on a feminine alias, Rrose Selavy. ('Eros c'est la vie.'")
27. *Women's Images of Men*, edited by Sarah Kent and Jacqueline Morreau (London: Writers and Readers Publishing, 1985), "Floating Femininity: A Look at Performance Art by Women" by Catherine Elwes, p. 188.
28. Indirectly, Benglis's ad was responsible, according to some accounts, for *October* which Krauss and Michelson founded after they quit *ArtForum*, the Benglis incident having been a last straw.
29. *ArtForum*, Dec. 1974.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Cf. Clark, p. 286: "It is curious how seldom the male nude (except in the form of satyrs) appears in Rubens' finished paintings. His men are all draped or dressed in armor, often, no doubt, to provide a contrast with the shining nakedness of his women. Moreover it seems that he was reluctant to accept the convention by which male figures are nude when the subject does not warrant it." Needless to say, the subject always warrants women being nude. Fischl's representations of naked men are to be seen in relation to this convention.
32. *Parkeet* #5, 1985, p. 17.
33. *Women's Images of Men*, p. 60.
34. *Parkeet* #14, 1987, p. 24.
35. *Women's Images of Men*, p. 91.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
38. Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1929), pp. 35-36.
39. Patricia Harris, *Alice Neel* (New York: Abrams, 1984), p. 49.
40. Irigaray, p. 119.
41. Irigaray, p. 240.

## Postscript

This essay has by necessity omitted consideration of relevant works by numerous artists, male and female. I have not discussed Picasso's male representations: the relationship of Picasso's male figures to female nudes could be the subject of a separate essay. Judith Bernstein's huge "screw" drawings of the 1970s are notably phallic; Eunice Golden has devoted a substantial portion of her work to representations of the penis. These works and others came to my attention too late for consideration in this essay. Finally, I did not write about my own recent paintings in which I am working to represent a spectrum of sexualities, bringing into play representations of phallus and penis.

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## A CONVERSATION WITH RICHARDS JARDEN

ROBERT BERLIND

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*The following interview took place on February 15, 1988 during the time of Richards Jarden's show at the Tibor de Nagy Gallery in New York City.*

As Jarden's art is not well known, some description of his work and the various techniques through which he has produced it should help the reader to visualize it.

Schooled in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, primarily at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Jarden's formal training was through some of the most radically committed conceptualist pedagogy then to be found in North America. The premises of the "dematerialization of the art object," in Lucy Lippard's phrase, were fundamental to the studio work of many of the teachers and visiting artists during that period. Although painting, printmaking, and sculpture were practiced, issues of language, site, performance, documentation, self-referentiality, and the transgression of esthetic norms predominated and fast became the basis of the College's reputation.

Like others of his generation who underwent a similar education, Jarden subsequently found compelling reasons to become a maker of objects, though he was never able to take for granted the conventions of painting or sculpture. Each series of works, usually occupying him for several years, sometimes overlapping one another, depends upon an original means of fabrication. These have always been extremely demanding and work intensive, and the viewer's discernment of method has been crucial to the experience the work affords. Each medium, albeit not entirely identical with the message, is certainly integral to it.

In the "Mat" series, executed between 1975 and 1978 and shown at Artists' Space in '78, Jarden formed paper matches into strands by wrapping them with scotch tape, then wove these to form the mats. By coloring certain of the matches before wrapping them and carefully plotting their eventual positions once woven, he was able to form images. These were at first diagrammatical and rudimentary but became increasingly complex and pictorial with each piece.

The closest Jarden has come to employing a standard procedure was in a watercolor series done from 1978 to 1981. These were, however, done entirely with pencil-thin, horizontal strokes in reference to a TV screen and were shaped to infer an oblique view of the screen.

Another series was made between 1981 and 1983 by taking two of the same photo, cutting them into narrow strips, one horizontally, one vertically, then weaving them to make oddly off-register images. There were variations within this method such as involving more than one image and leaving out or rearranging the order of the strips.

Between 1982 and 1984 Jarden worked with wax, dying it different colors and setting it in sheets about 1/16th of an inch thick. These were cut into thin strips, and pieces of various colors were aligned horizontally to form images based on found photographs. These pieces would ultimately suggest fragments of television screens, sometimes with the horizontal lines undulating, and were set in mats within plexiglass boxes.

Jarden's most recent series, the "Columns", begun in 1984, consists of small sculptural objects placed on marbleized wooden columns that are a bit under five feet high. The pieces on top are made by aligning strips of paper to conform to a photographic image and laminating them to form solid blocks with the image on both sides, the ends of the strips forming the actual image. The blocks are then cut so as to make more or less autonomous three-dimensional forms which, in varying degrees, obscure the image.

As with the weavings, watercolors, and wax pieces, the pictures within the "Column" pieces suggest electronic media and are all based upon found images. This interview focuses mostly on issues specific to these working processes. We hope that what follows will be of interest to readers who are not familiar with Jarden's development as well as those who have had the pleasure of following it.

While there is much that links his art with that of his contemporaries and indeed, with a mainstream of concerns since Johns' early targets and flags, Jarden is by temperament a loner. The extreme rigor of his art, combined with his choice to live and work at a little distance from the "scene" (in Nyack, NY), calls to mind artists such as Myron Stout in Provincetown and Joseph Cornell, a world away on Utopia Parkway in Queens. Like their art, his is quiet, small scale, and astounding.

— Robert Berlind

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**Robert Berlind:** What about your training as an artist?

**Richards Jarden:** I spent half a year at the Royal Academy in London doing life drawing in a room that was so dark by four o'clock I couldn't even see my paper, and I was making these 3H pencil drawings because I wasn't really very good at it and I didn't want anybody to see them more than a couple of inches away. I did that and then I came back to Ohio. Then I went to Nova Scotia in the summer of '69 where a lot of stuff was very new to me. I hadn't known about any of the Sol Lewitt, Larry Weiner types of people that were being imported in large numbers to Halifax.

**RB:** You also didn't really know at that time the tradition of modern painting and sculpture did you?

**RJ:** No. I was in Ohio. What could I know in Ohio? So I read books. I was self-educated, frankly, and I have always felt that was a fairly strong thing to be able to do, and I have taught myself whatever I needed to know: that was part of the 60s. I don't think we were taught anything specific — overstimulated and undereducated. What we learned, if we learned anything, was simply that you can make things happen if you want them to. Why it takes four years to learn that and why anyone would spend any great amount of money learning that, I don't really know.

I happened to be lucky enough to go to Nova Scotia and pay \$300 a year or something in tuition and be involved in an incredibly active discourse of ideas, but, at the same time, I didn't really learn anything.

**RB:** Would you argue now for a medium-based approach to teaching?

**RJ:** Absolutely. I think there's no conflict between the kinds of things that are important to me and having them done within the context of a specific technique that one knows. I'm actually quite envious of people who were educated as painters. They have a skill which they can practice for a lifetime as opposed to what *I* do, which is somehow about inventing a technology that is relatively short lived.

**RB:** So do you begin, at some point within a series, contemplating what might be another way to come into it?

**RJ:** No. If I come to a point where that is really a problem, I will probably stop working altogether and find some other outlet. I like to build things with my hands and I like to think about things, and I can satisfy both those either separately or simultaneously. It doesn't have to be art-based necessarily. So far, I've always managed to come to a point of some conclusion and feel like, well, maybe this is when I should give up doing this altogether. And then, finding that the privacy it affords me is valuable, I will invent another technology to give myself another period of five years or so.

**RB:** In your match pieces, the "Mats," there was an incremental shift from one to the next. I suppose because they were so labor intensive that by the time you'd completed one you'd have other ideas and have found out certain ways to put the mats together so that the images became fuller.

**RJ:** Well, it was partly that, but I also felt like I had to teach myself how to deal with imagery because I had not been educated in the permission to do that. I was a "college conceptual artist." The instructional information was something other than how to make images, and so I had to give myself permission to do that in very small increments. These increments would seem ridiculous to anybody else, but to me they were like, can I actually make an image, and if I make it, how can I construct it? So little stick-figure kind of things resulted. After I got over the shock of being allowed to do that, I thought, this image could be more complicated. If I'd kept on doing that work, I think I would have come to the opposite extreme, which is that you can make anything with this technique. You could make a picture of a battlefield scene in Vietnam out of little bits of matches.

**RB:** You had to develop and control an impressive technology to be able to do that. Considering how those were made, it's amazing that you could preplan things in such a way as to construct an image.

**RJ:** I've always thought of what I've done as being about inventing a technology.

**RB:** Would it be reasonable to say that your view of technology itself is, in a way, allegorical? Each way of bringing the thing into being in your various series involves learning certain, particular methods which carry the information as much as the image itself. I look at the "Columns," for example: among the considerations are the image, which is not always so easy to locate, the relation of the image to the shape, and very early on in the process of considering those I'm also asking, "How the hell are these things *made*? How do they come about?" I have

to figure that out in order to get any adequate sense of what they're about. How they're actually made seems very important to what they mean.

**RJ:** That's a good way to describe it. One thing the wax pieces were motivated by was the idea of trying to describe how thick a TV image was. Since it all happens on the surface, it's very tempting to describe television as having no thickness at all. The box that it sits in is twelve inches deep, if you have my size TV, but that's not right either. It's really not twelve inches deep, but it's somewhere in between those extremes, and I decided that maybe it was about an eighth of an inch thick. Eventually I decided that my interest had changed and that I was interested in history and that history was thicker than an eighth of an inch. That's the way the paper sculptures got to be as thick as they were, and that brought up lots of thinking about sedimentation and the process of rock formations and what geology produces and lots of other things spun off from that thinking. So all that is certainly allegorical.

**RB:** There's a range of the degree of resolution of the imagery in your new pieces in the "Column" series. Some of them are very low resolution and require a very specific view, and others carry more immediately in relation to the sculptural form.

**RJ:** I don't know how intentional that really is. In some ways the difference between what reads clearly and what doesn't has to do with technical processes, and one of them is that I discovered over a period of about five years that I could describe things with tremendously more detail than I had imagined. When I first started making these works I thought they would have to be fairly general, that you couldn't recognize a person, for instance. It never occurred to me that that was possible. Actually it's only a matter of patience. They're made of little cut pieces of paper, and if you have the patience to cut a piece of paper that's a sixteenth of an inch wide as opposed to an eighth of an inch wide, you get twice as much resolution. Also I've gotten a little better at what to cut off and what not to cut off, because I take these bricks made of paper to a band saw and start cutting them up without terribly much thought as to what they should look like. I don't do drawings. I don't visualize them. I have a sense that they might be taller or wider, but that's basically it, and so I stand in front of the saw and start lopping stuff off in hopes of not lopping all the parts that I like the most.

**RB:** So you're playing with hours and hours and months of work.

**RJ:** But I really love that part. Yes, months and months of work. I have no idea exactly how many but hundreds and hundreds of hours.

**RB:** But the lopping happens in one day.

**RJ:** It happens in less than a day. The last time I did it I borrowed a band saw from friends and cut four pieces all at the same time. I did a year's worth of work in half an afternoon.

**RB:** This is more perverse than I thought. (Laughter) In some pieces there is a closer correspondence between the image and the shape than in others where the shape flagrantly disregards the image and sets up a tension. In the newer works there seems to be a different kind of consideration given to the sculptural form. There are various new shapes, including certain ones where the striations of paper curve and twist rather than remain horizontal.

RJ: That's sort of an accident that turned out well, so once I saw it happen I went to some lengths to do it again. It's simply an exaggeration of a gluing problem that starts at the bottom and gets worse by the time it gets to the top. It's like abstract expressionism and the old drip-that-makes-the-wonderful-painting kind of attitude. It doesn't take terribly much imagination to recognize things that are good.

RB: How much in your work do you think of as private information?

RJ: I think it's largely privileged, private information. There's some stuff that just doesn't ever make it to a public level.

RB: That seems intentional. One could describe the work as being in certain senses, very hermetic. The work intensiveness itself involves a sort of hermeticism.

RJ: Yes. I'm not sure whether that's an intention or a matter of personality. I'm very much committed by now to the idea that people have habits that are, in some ways, more important than their thoughts. I once thought of the world as a place completely open to choices, that you could pick to be this or something else. I don't feel my range of choices is nearly as large as all that by now; I do what I do because it satisfies something personal. I don't know whether that needs to reach a public level. I think that choices are vastly more limited by life experience and that the way things turn out are pretty much the way that one's life goes. I make these works because I do enjoy spending time that way, and I'm not unaware that it would drive other people completely crazy.

RB: So you take limited communications to be simply a condition of life?

RJ: Yes, sure. I don't know how limited or how thorough the communication is, so, I take it as a condition of life.

RB: At the same time, somebody coming on the work today, seeing your work in the context of the theoretical discussion that's going on, would be likely to see the work as extremely strategic in character. There are various cultural vectors in the work. There is the column, which serves as a kind of distancing device, a sculptural pedestal, a high-art or possible kitsch quotation. There are the references to television, to electronic communications, to the original images that yours derive from, clearly photographic and out of the culture: that part of the work links up to Pop. There is also the hermeticism that we were talking about, the viewer's need to figure things out. On all those levels one would take the work to be cool, deliberate, conceptual. So it's interesting that you're speaking about it as being, in fact, the consequence of personally motivated choices and even something that goes on below the level of choice, just personal givens.

RJ: Yes. Right.

RB: Not that one has to exclude the other, but there's a tension between them, isn't there?

RJ: Well, I guess I intended there to be some tension although I don't know that I would be able to describe exactly what I wanted it to feel like. I think it's interesting that you mentioned Pop art because it has all of those qualities.

RB: What were you about in 1962?

RJ: I have this theory that people sort of spend their entire artistic careers trying

to resolve what it was that attracted them to art when they first entered it on a serious level. I came into things at the level of fascination during the heavy Pop Art period in the Sixties, and at some level of cognition during Conceptual Art.

RB: Was it specifically Lewitt's notion of Conceptual Art?

RJ: Yes: the idea is the machine that drives the art. I own a Lewitt wall drawing jointly with Jerry Ferguson that exists somewhere ethereally since neither of us have drawn it for fifteen years.

RB: Would you execute that now?

RJ: I'd even sell it under the right circumstances. (Laughter) That period somehow allowed access to people like me, who are in some ways by nature more detached. It allowed us into this little window of opportunity. People who might otherwise have become accountants became artists because they could do irrational bookkeeping and just write numbers on the wall in sequence or something. It was very open-minded as to which kinds of temperaments artists could have. I think if I were nineteen now, I would probably not become an artist.

RB: Although, in all the things I've known you to make, through your own auto-didactic processes you have the kind of touch and skills that I would think of as being, on some level, traditional.

RJ: I enjoy all those processes too, but I really started thinking about what I was doing when art had gotten a little cool and intellectualized. If I had to follow my skills and my temperament at that age in 1988, I would probably have become a graphic designer or something. I would find a different outlet.

RB: Not a critic?

RJ: No, I don't think a critic. I don't read enough to be a critic. I like using my hands. I would be some sort of craftsman.

RB: Well, I mentioned critic because of the way in which the work looks out from itself to its various possible sources. One doesn't stay with the authority of the object itself. To deal with the work necessitates dealing with the things that it looks like, that it might be related to. The columns most emphatically insist on that. One sees they're not simply pedestals but a whole set of references we talked about before. So, given that, the work might seem to proceed from some sort of analytic process. I could imagine somebody constructing an essay about the work that would see it as a postmodernist critique that reprioritizes, reconfigures various elements from the culture. But the work evidently doesn't come *out of* that even though it may come *to* that.

RJ: No, it doesn't come out of that, and I think it *couldn't* come out of that because whatever one may think about the perversity of various things that have gone on here — it would seem to me to be even *more* perverse to spend five years making ten objects that simply illustrate a critical position. That's *too* weird. (Laughter) If the intention were to take a critical stance and describe that in some physical way, there would be ways that would be faster, and more expedient, and infinitely more successful. So, although there is something to that critical idea, it happens as a simultaneous product of the other reasons why I'm working. They're not all entirely laudatory, by the way. I mean, there's a great deal of laziness in-

volved in just sitting there pasting paper all the time. I travel around a lot and don't have a great deal of time to work, and so it's nice to be able to sit down and be productive within five minutes of deciding to work. Maybe laziness is not the right word, but there's a certain retreat from other ways of making art involved in it.

**RB:** Hearing you say that makes me think of Benjamin's "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," where he talks about the classical notion of art being one of concentration. One concentrates one's energies to bear on the piece, whereas the new art, which he speaks of as film, but video exemplifies his idea even better, is best perceived in a state of distraction: one's energies and attention are moving in many directions. Instead of a consolidated image there are blips on the screen. I see that as another source of tension in your work. It's so concentrated in its labor intensity, in its insistence on being taken seriously. And, yet, the closer one gets to it, the more there are these blips on the screen, signals from disparate sources that seem to feed into the piece. So one never knows entirely what one is bringing to it and what was actually programmed by you into the piece.

**RJ:** When I was making the mats, often under a great deal of emotional tension, somehow I related to those matches as being little increments of something or other... not that I could go to this match and say "that's when this thing happened," but somehow they seemed to embody some very specific tensions. I thought, really very honestly, that all that angst was somehow communicated to people. What I learned (which seems quite obvious to anyone who is not under the spell of that kind of thinking) was that no one else saw that kind of stuff.

**RB:** There *were* dates incorporated into those pieces.

**RJ:** There were dates and I wanted to commemorate all this bad stuff or good stuff, mostly bad stuff [going on in my life]. I came to learn that that was really just my business; it took me a while to come to some reconciliation between the fact that *I* thought I was being very open and other people found it very — as you said before — cool and strategic.

**RB:** But I think that in conceptual art, which is really your schooling, what one sees — in *good* conceptual art as opposed to trivial conceptual art — is the notion that meaning itself is fugitive. One might have a clear idea that fuels the work, but the *significance* of the work and the way one receives it are open-ended. A Lewitt seems entirely clear and self-referential, and yet when one looks at it, one discovers the discrepancy between looking and knowing. On the other hand, with *bad* conceptual work, we get one idea that is exemplified but doesn't go anywhere.

**RJ:** I made some of that kind of work too. (Laughter) There's a great deal to be thought about once you realize how disrupted your original thinking could be by getting things from another view. What pleases me most about the columns is when people have told me that it took them a long time to see that there were images in them at all. There is a great deal of interference, and there is the point where some of that falls away and you can actually see. "Oh, there's something in there. What is it?" Once the idea that there is something there to be seen registers consciously, then there is a certain interest in seeing all of them and trying to figure out what they actually are. I like the idea of that moment. I must admit I've never had

it myself as constructor of the work because I don't have that point of recognition. But I can imagine and hope that it's there.

My art education involved a prescription for how one reads art work, and certainly conceptual works were like this: we started at a certain point and we read backwards to the artist's intention. It was as though artist A made a list of 27 things that the work involved, and you, as the viewer, started at point 27 and kind of worked backwards, and if you got 27 out of 27, then you were incredibly involved, if you only got five, then you were sort of involved. The object simply served as an entry to the thought. I've always thought the worst conceptual art — the student kind you were talking about — had nothing to offer you once you made the move towards becoming involved with it. It just fell apart on every level: technically, conceptually, and every other way. I've always hoped that I could be fulfilling at various levels, that, since I've been there in the first place, and I've thought about this too, there would be a kind of sharing between the viewer and me.

**RB:** With more conventional methods, so much gets caught up in generalities, and only occasionally will a conversation reveal that some viewer has gotten through to something with the kind of specificity you're talking about. Nature-based painting like mine makes an open invitation for people to see it on whatever terms they're most comfortable with and then to stop at that point. Your strategy involves setting up some barriers and then a path of discovery. In a sense, what you're saying is that, in spite of all the distancing that the work involves on various levels, there remains the hope that another mind will move through it all.

**RJ:** Yes, that's what I think.

**RB:** It's the Romantic theory of art, that the object serves as a kind of stepping stone from the heart and soul of the artist to the heart and soul of the viewer. It's the contact point that makes for a sense of epiphany, of recognition.

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## REORGANIZED MEDITATIONS ON MNEMONIC THRESHOLD

JOSEPH NECHVATAL

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Previous cultural forms have been exhausted as self-consciousness has turned into self-enclosure. Self expression is eclipsed by a field-network of interaction. The next phase in consciousness will only come when all our attachments to the old forms and methods have been obliterated. Everything has become transparent. Information bits flow in a vague whirl while this proliferation, which seems to have no purpose, forms slowly, imperceptibly, bit by bit, into a mass somewhere deep in the gray recesses of the neural cortex; remnant whispers of a once dominant cultural form. Congealed skeletal formation is in a state of information and dismemberment. Fleeting solidity, (matter-spirit) rips out and dissolves form from its old content, providing visions of resolve and improvement over dilemmas left behind. Substanceless collectivity reverberates internally, beyond intellect and will, in an inner-external detoxification which breaks pop open and drains mythic consciousness of authenticity. In our media-permeated atmosphere the search is to not repeat what has been learned. The learned form must be cracked open through chaos to make room for other views. Fast paced dumbness and reactionary codes are made difficult and resistant to bourgeoification. The logic of the image, of the whole media society, of postmodernism in general, is satiated in an overabundance and counter-fusion. One goes all the way through and comes out the other side, ecstatic and covered in excrement. This hyper overproduction is the space of refusal today. The only space from which to develop an awareness, a theoretical awareness, of the reification of consciousness. Are we at the beginning of a new metaphor for the system? A Big Bang theory pushing us beyond the vanishing point? A theoretical black hole? The aftermath of the dissolution of form is not a reductive simplification. Rather, an analogy can be drawn to the primordial plenitude, subject-object unity, or Benjamin's dialectical image. The money mushroom cloud is seeking repose, as astonished eyes behold the self-cannibalization of nostalgic fetishism. Distorted ideologies bubble and burp their way to the top of the cesspool. Media adulation, commodity consciousness, technocratic mind set, all collide and cancel each other out in an orgy of fazed media mirages, a mindless bombardment of consumption — consumption, resolving itself in an all-round social awareness. Complete self-consciousness is a meta-consciousness. Depth consciousness is formed from the debris of superficiality and fragmentation. New neurological circuits are connected, mutating consciousness. The characteristics of this new neurological mutation are high velocity, multiple choice, relativity, and the fission-fusion of all perceptions into alternate possibilities. From Overload to Overmind.

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## THE MYTH OF AESTHETIC AUTONOMY: ON ALLAN KAPROW

JOHANNA DRUCKER

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Allan Kaprow's work raises certain fundamental questions: Does the significance of the work depend upon its historical moment and context? Can its values be "universalized" and discussed in aesthetic terms without reference to that context? While it was significant in 1959-60 to use the "happening" as a means of introducing new territory for exploration, the gesture of breaking certain conventions about art (art as object, commodity, etc.) was as important as the substance of the pieces. Do Kaprow's works lose their value if considered without relation to a historical period (the early 60s) concerned with questioning the parameters of social institutions — art, education, religion, government? Since Kaprow's work has always focused on process, on self-reflexion, and participation, it seems appropriate to reflect upon his "retrospective" as a means of understanding the processes by which art continues to historicize itself.

Kaprow's work was featured in a retrospective of "thirty years of participatory events" sponsored by the Center for Research in Contemporary Art at University of Texas at Arlington in April of 1988. During the weeklong event the public participated in pieces which were reminiscent of Kaprow's Happenings of 1959-60. In one piece, participants entered a stairwell unaccompanied and according to instructions moved cinderblocks from a pile at the bottom of the stairwell, one at a time, placing them throughout the stairwell. Once the number of blocks which corresponded to the participant's chronological age was used up, the participant was to stop, contemplate the activity, reflect upon the scene, and then return the blocks to their original position. Thirty years ago such a piece was almost without precedent; now it reiterates the characteristic features of Kaprow's work: a zen doing and undoing in counterpoint designed to preclude an easy resolution for the participant, engaging her or him in a meditative process of investigation.

Thirty years ago this work was seen as a radical gesture against the goal-oriented commodity mode of art production; in the end Kaprow's process-oriented idea art has netted him a place in the annals of contemporary art. That Kaprow's art should end up to have been a bid for a place in art history is no surprise. The stairwell piece no longer strikes us as radical, anti-art or anti-art establishment (indeed, the site — a university art department — reinforces the conspicuous fact that even the ephemeral art of Kaprow has been appropriated and placed into the canon).

The symposium consisted of two panels, clearly demarcated by their historical period: morning — 50s and 60s; afternoon — 70s and 80s. The first panel consisted of male contemporaries and collaborators of Kaprow's (with the exception of Barbara Smith). All were friends of Kaprow's whose contribution to the avant-

garde (*sic*) is incontestable: George Segal, Claes Oldenburg, Richard Schechner, Michael Kirby, David Antin, Francois Deak, and Kaprow.

This group set a tone of nostalgia: Kaprow served as a reference point for the late 50s and early 60s, when these men came into their own as artists. Each spoke, largely in a personal vein, recalling his training, response, contact with Kaprow. The comments were mythic, apocryphal, condensing into small, anecdotes the spirit of an age now past. This is not history, but memory; it is the normal retrospective meandering through recollection. As each of the participants spoke in turn, however, certain patterns emerged and certain systematic exclusions and denials became evident. There was a continual emphasis upon *work*, Kaprow's, one's own, or others', as if it existed completely within the parameters of aesthetics *without* political, cultural, or social context.

The second panel consisted of: Lucy Lippard, Moira Roth, Ingrid Sischy, Suzanne Lacy, Jeff Kelley, Robert Morgan, and Kaprow. These were people whose concerns identified them with the 70s and 80s.

Articulating Kaprow's place in history through this retrospective mode demonstrated the extent to which this construction is concerned with repression not only of facts or events but also of new forms of art and processes which do not conform to the age-old models. In this instance, the repression operated, and not at all accidentally, along the lines of an issue related to gender. What was left out of the first panel (and was represented by the second panel though never clearly pointed out even there) was not only recognition of significant work which has occurred in the last twenty years in relation to feminist criticism and women's assertion into the realms of visual and performance art, but also more subtly, the links between art and the situation of its production, ideological considerations foregrounded as part of that feminist practice. Women performance and conceptual artists have developed and kept alive some of Kaprow's ideas for their liberating, anti-commodification values more truly, adventurously, and politically than he has. The conspicuous but unnoticed, or unremarked, absence of strong arguments for the historical, political, and feminist aspects of art practice was carried out largely under the sign of a single occulting concept: aesthetics — or, more precisely, the myth of aesthetic autonomy.

David Antin began the morning's discussion. He used an anecdote intended to point out, by analogy, his understanding of Kaprow's aesthetic. The anecdote, by the way it framed the discussion, epitomized the conceptual terms on which the first panel's comments were based.

Antin had recently seen a play in which two homosexuals were condemned to a concentration camp and given a task designed to be demeaning by its futility and its capacity to physically and emotionally exhaust them. The task consisted of taking stones from one pile in order to make another and then moving them back into the original configuration until the men were completely done in by the task. Antin compared this to Kaprow's work by way of demonstrating that the men in the play could *transcend* their situation by appropriating Kaprow's techniques. According to Antin, the essence of Kaprow's work was aestheticization, a perfecting of the act, the gesture of making the perfect pile.

There were several problems with this analogy. First of all, even if one

grants that within the boundaries of each specific piece Kaprow's work makes use of banal tasks and grants them aesthetic value, the work emphasizes a meditative attention to increased consciousness and awareness, *not* transcendence *out of* the situation. Any critical appreciation of Kaprow's zen-oriented task-making has to take into account the extent to which this is a demonstration of the object and goal-oriented mentality which dominated western art. The aestheticization has two purposes in Kaprow's work — enlightenment and dematerialization — *not* oblivion and obfuscation of political reality. Making an analogy to the concentration camp victims, as if Kaprow would agree that their situation could be redeemed as an aesthetic experience, seems an obscene and highly reactionary position to take vis a vis the actual conditions of these men's existence — and it seems to be a perversion of Kaprow's sensibility.

But Kaprow's work is only the incidental point of reference here, because it is not his pieces which Antin's anecdote calls into question, it is the invoking of aesthetics as a denial of historical and political realities. The notion of aesthetic transcendence is equivalent to the notion of religion as opiate — the use of a representation to deny the examination of the historical condition.

The repressive and reactionary force of this use of aesthetics is clear. What is astonishing is that the anecdote hung on the air and was accepted until Ingrid Sischy called it into question in the afternoon, saying that she was disturbed by a comparison between artists and homosexual prisoners that did not take into account the differences in choice and control over their activities and circumstances. But the extent to which the anecdote was well received, enjoyed, even applauded was shocking and provides evidence of the link between Antin's anecdote and ways in which the entire symposium was about the repression of certain aspects of the processes of art historicization.

For instance, Claes Oldenburg, when asked about the political implications of his work, flatly denied that it had any. As work which evidently was premised upon the critique and examination of material culture, this denial is patently absurd. George Segal described his dissatisfaction with his education in Abstract Expressionism (we were supposed to go to the hardware store, get big brushes, stand in front of our big canvas, and make big strokes) and his desire to get back to some relationship with the "real" in his work. This explained his dissatisfaction with abstraction and his motivation to deal with objects and everyday life, but he did not follow through on the political implications of this attitude. When Richard Schechner, whose *Dionysius* and *Paradise Now* performances of the late 60s moved theater out of its proscenium once and for all, mentioned the link between his work, that of the Happenings, and the street activity of the Civil Rights movement, Segal and Oldenburg both seemed determined to negate the connection, again reinforcing the notion that they had done their work independently of any political motivation. Kaprow talked mainly about the phenomenological experience of the blank page as his point of departure, not the blank page of Mallarme but the blank — that is *not ever* blank — page of Cage, the one on which the ticks and marks determine the course of the event, demonstrating either his obliviousness to the conditions of his own formation or his desire to ignore them.

This generation of men who participated in the Happenings, in Pop art, in

the explosion of the avant-garde in theater, all attempted to mythify their history according to aesthetic principles, and, even when they spoke to historical or political notions, as Schechner did, invoked what have become highly cliched terms of the avant-garde — the terms of rebellion, of generational (oedipal) struggle for domination of the aesthetic field, and of a privileging of their own forms (theater and sculpture) over newer forms to which they had vague but definite objections.

Thus the proceedings can be summarized as follows: aesthetics was invoked in order to deny history; history was invoked in order to deny politics; and both aesthetics and history were invoked in order to deny the impact of the feminist movement on the forms and processes of art and art history. For instance, Segal and Oldenburg bemoaned the absence of a generation of new sculptors and in the process reinforced the conventional definition of sculpture and excluded projects like Suzanne Lacy's recent Quilt Project from it. This process of definition and exclusion is neither new nor surprising; the extent to which it is fully operative, even in a forum which by its own self-conscious sense of its "avant-garde-ness" ought to have had a more self-critical perspective, is however alarming. The repressive aspects of historical discourse are always insidious — what is unsaid is difficult to point out, what is excluded is often unmarked, given no means by which to lay claim to its existence or legitimacy. But we are not talking here only about the exclusion of information, but also about the exclusion of processes and the repression of questioning of the terms according to which the history is constructed.

The second panel opened with a question posed by Jeff Kelley: to what extent do you think that the impact of the feminist movement in the early 70s changed the paradigm of performance art? Feminist theory has not only had an impact on specific genres, but also has questioned most of the terms on which the conventions of art were established as a discourse. Women critics and artists from Judy Chicago and Lucy Lippard through Kate Linker and Griselda Pollock have radically reexamined the hierarchies of mastery and masterpiece, of high art vs. popular art, of art vs. craft, of the control of social institutions and patriarchal power structures, which privileged genres — such as painting, sculpture and other "achieved objects" — at the expense and exclusion of forms which were more process and participation oriented, or more functional and decorative forms, that have traditionally been open to women. Not only have they criticized the themes and genres of conventional art, demonstrating their grounding in patriarchal systems of control and value, but they have also questioned the ways in which the very terms according to which the narrative of traditional Art History and the (patriarchal) canon are constituted.

Despite the significant achievements in art production and the critique of art history represented by the women panelists, what is conspicuous in a forum situation is the extent to which old paradigms still dominate discussion and procedure, and the ways in which the active critique of these paradigms is so difficult. Each of the women addressed Kelley's question to some extent: Lippard used the metaphor of collage and spoke of women collaged onto the page of art history; Lacey spoke of important concerns raised by feminist criticism — of the site of art, institutional as well as cultural, of thematic concerns such as the dematerializa-

tion of art, of the body, women's bodies in particular as flesh and metaphor; Sischy took Antin to task for his anecdotal analogy and in the process made the distinction between history and memory, calling on memory as a necessary means of questioning history. But while discussion of the shift in the paradigm was taken up in presenting their own work, the women who represent that change did not address the metacritical level which had implications for the process under scrutiny in this symposium.

Griselda Pollock and Rozsicka Parker, in the introduction to their book *Old Mistresses*, make a useful distinction between the history of art as a sequence of material events, and art history — the discipline according to which these events are institutionalized as history. The material events are a factual record of objects, occurrences, which taken as a whole would form the history of art. The discipline of art history, however, constructs a particular narrative through that material history, giving it a form according to the prejudices and priorities of the discipline at any given time. Kaprow's place in the first still raises questions about the way in which it should be instituted in the second. This event was very much about the processes of the second. A masculinized art historical process was still operative epitomized by the directing memory of the first group of panelists, whose place in the history of art confused them as to their role in the creation of art history, conflating their memory with history, without acknowledgement of the discursive practices.

Kaprow seemed content to sit back and be historicized as if it were after all inevitable, natural, in the way that history renders things natural through its narrative processes. Kaprow kept describing his work only as projects, ideas, pieces — moving from the 60s to the late 80s acknowledging the distinctions between these periods only with an occasional glib aside about the 'current' state of things. The aesthetic values were always presented as autonomous, as separate. Kaprow was not simply denying the specific history of his work but that it had a history and was defined by that history. In this canonizing moment he seemed to reveal the extent to which he had always been ready to allow himself to be canonized on the basis of his aesthetics and had, also quite conventionally, always seen his own "radical" critique of art history within the terms of an "inevitable" historical process in which his place would be identified retrospectively. And this is exactly what was happening in the week long event and the symposium.

In this process, whole areas of feminized or feminist influenced work in performance art and in theory were also excluded because the terms of their conception had to be repressed for the mythifying operations of this 'historicizing' process to work. Although, the presence of the second panel of women seemed to contradict this exclusion, the terms according to which Kaprow and his work were discussed by the audience and panelists went unchallenged and unquestioned. The women were present, but muted, their theoretical contribution ignored as they were brought into the canonizing process by their participation in an activity to which some of them have articulated strong opposition.

The notion of aesthetic autonomy denies all of the deconstructive, relativizing criticism inherent in feminist theory. Segal, Schechner, Oldenburg fail to recognize that the terms of art process and change have moved into a domain

where the 'new' is no longer simply, oedipally, defined by its rebellious relation to what is already in place. The denial of the feminine, perpetrated by the invoking of autonomous aesthetics, is not merely a repression of a *whole body* of women's work, but also of the major changes in the generating, conceptualizing, and ordering of discourses which have occurred and cannot be recognized within a set of a conceptual parameters which are now inadequate by reason of their obsolescence.

Women are now visibly present. That the process of historicizing would deny the feminine, the political, and deny both history and its processes, demonstrates again the need to continue the work which the feminist critique of art and art history began. This was *an* historicizing moment. The symptoms which its processes display could be those of a new repression, the attempt of the old paradigm to repress the existence of the new by not naming it, not seeing it, condemning it to the familiar (feminine) place of exclusion; or it could be a lingering symptom of the old repression. The function of history, whether examining Kaprow's work or the processes by which it is historicized, must not be merely a nostalgic attempt to mythify and reinvent the past, but to set up the terms on which the future will be framed.

My thanks to Judith Piper and Christina de Gennaro whose discussion of the day's events helped generate the points elaborated in this article.

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## NANCY SPERO: SPEAKING IN TONGUES

PAMELA WYE

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Tongues, gaping mouths, stuffed mouths, gagged, suppressed, exterminated, mother tongues, speaking, uttering, screaming, liberated, joyous, purposeful, active, text, codex, testimonies, speaking in tongues, glossolalia, glossitis, glossaries, tongue-lashings, knife, knife-cuts, betongued, be tied, be tongue-tied, give tongue, kiss, lick, defeat, tickle, bootlick, lickspit, tongue-less, limp tongues, stiff tongues, swollen tongues, snake tongues, wise tongues, glib tongues, wagging tongues, but no, no tongues in cheek.

An abundance of tongues exist in the art of Nancy Spero. They appear in many guises and contexts, and they sport widely varying meanings. Spero has made of them a powerful body language.

The muscular structure known as the tongue resides in the head, the seat of the mind and the intellect, yet it is particularly animalistic, wet, enclosed, if not hidden, and primitive in its shape. It is at once a personal organ, identified with pleasure, eating and sexuality, and a public one, as the instrument of speech. It forms the link between the inner and the outer, the private and the public, the self and the world.

But who was this artist? Me! That's why all these tongues; in French 'tongue' is 'langue,' tongue and language — I was sticking my tongue out and trying to find a voice after feeling silenced for so many years. — Spero<sup>1</sup>

Excesses are often the reaction to extreme denial. Silence or the denial of a voice can be imposed from without as the silencing of whole groups of people through political repression ranging from the denial of the vote to torture and murder. Or through social prohibitions/conventions like the "seen but not heard" adage functioning as the preferred state for women and children. A voice can be rendered inaudible and eventually silenced through a systematic lack of interest in those who have the power to hear or ignore it. The history of art, as a reflection of our culture, shows us that woman is "seen but not heard" — her presence is that of object not artist. Or, silence can also be imposed from within by the internalizing of the muzzles of convention, or from psychological trauma, as in shock, which also lends its name to the institutionalized silencing of the "mad" through shock-treatment. Or in a combination of these, as in the mystic's denial of bodily needs including speech. Spero, in her dense and far-ranging work, speaks of all these silencings, and she uses the tongue to do so.

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A retrospective *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950* will travel to the Albert and Vera List Visual Arts Center (MIT), Cambridge, Mass. (Oct. 7 - Nov. 27, 1988); The Power Plant, Toronto, Ontario, Canada (Jan. 20 - Mar. 5, 1989); The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, N.Y. (May 17 - July 9, 1989).

Logorrhea combines “logo” (word, speech, discourse) with “rrhea” (stream, flow, discharge) to mean excessive, often uncontrollable talkativeness. The obsessive proliferation of tongues as instruments of speech in Spero’s work is her long-overdue reaction to her lack of a voice as a woman and as a woman artist. The tongues are not only building blocks in the creation of her language, but also the symptoms of the need that precedes the finding of a feminine language within a patriarchal culture.<sup>2</sup> Glossolalia, more commonly known as “speaking in tongues,” is “an ecstatic or apparently ecstatic utterance of unintelligible speech-like sounds, viewed by some as a manifestation of deep religious experience.”<sup>3</sup> Spero’s work is not religious through her adherence to any dogma or institution, but rather because she is concerned with power or powers — both human and divine — as the creators and the rulers of the universe. Her involvement with the mythical dimension is a way for her to speak of “first and last things.”

Spero’s art resists our easy grasp, but we don’t easily elude hers. When one is captured by her work, one is in a potent and perplexing snare: of myth and fact, words and images, contemporary poses and ancient archetypal figures, poetry and Amnesty International torture reports, spiritual yearning and sexual devouring, suicide and dance, insanity and love. This art does not fit into a neat little package. Rather, it hides and resists lest we not know how to deal with it, but expands and deepens on sustained viewing. Her impulse to resist being easily grasped is a positive one — it gives her work a better chance of living, of being alive, of resisting death. Why such talk of life and death? Because that is the territory that Spero, in her art, has staked out. Over time, the images in her work have evolved, transformed, and proliferated, and in so doing, have brought about new births from old deaths. That is both the form and the content of her work.

Spero’s relationship to the archetypal imagery of myth is complex. Myths are more than explanations that give forms and names to what otherwise is experienced as chaotic — namely life. Myths embody emotionally charged systems of belief through which one “sees” the world. When mythical characters are created or eliminated, or when details of mythical events are tampered with, the meanings imbedded within those mythical constructs are revolutionized and reborn. Spero snatches figures and abducts meanings from ancient mythology, religion, art history, contemporary media, scholarly texts, and her own earlier work; she re-draws them, prints them, dismembers and rearranges them, cross-fertilizes, and makes of them a new community.

Spero exploits the printing process to help weave meaning. Images are printed over other images; the surfaces of some figures appear scarred, weathered, or distressed, giving them the look of images that have “been around”; others are blurred or smeared as though disintegrating, losing their identity. Some figures carry echoes of other figures on their “skin” and evoke indwelling presences — past or future powers that live through the present figure.

All true language is incomprehensible, like the chatter of a beggar’s teeth...  
— Artaud.<sup>4</sup>

Simple linear narratives are not what Spero’s work is made of. Her work is multi-layered, symbolic, seemingly enigmatic, and experienced as expanding just

a little bit out of one’s reach, in a perpetual state of pre-narrative tension. It encompasses and refers to something that is at the same time equal to but greater than oneself. And it is this which gives her work its poetry. As her images are pieced together from far-ranging sources and her juxtapositions bear that mark of seeming randomness, a close reading of her work can lead one into an ever-expanding room of mirrors that transforms the willing spectator into an active questor after the truth, a protagonist on a dangerous and transformative journey of understanding.

Spero’s use of the mythological process is not an escape into a fanciful past, but a vehicle on which to ride deeper into the grinding tensions, clashes, quests, and frailties of the world and the underworld. In this way, her work is not narcissistic, but political.

The hero... is the man or woman who has been able to battle past his personal and local historical limitations to the generally valid, normally human forms.<sup>5</sup>

I’ve moved increasingly away from the ideas of Western art towards something less individualistic and personalized. — Spero<sup>6</sup>

To defy, protest, bear witness, counteract, or sometimes simply to speak, is to be political. As such, political content is a constant in Spero’s work though its expression is neither didactic nor propagandizing — its dose of ambiguity is an homage to the complexity of the world. Fragmented, non-linear morality plays, stitched together from a world in which there is an overabundance of information, and in which all systems of belief are created equal, Spero’s concoctions yield potent stories about struggles for and struggles against.

\* \* \*

An early use of the tongue in “Les Anges, Merde, Fuck You” (“The Angels, Shit, Fuck You”) (1960) hints at struggles that will reach full force in later works. Like the figures in her “black paintings” (from the 50s and early 60s), the angels in this work are delineated from a painterly ground by only a sketchily drawn line. Figure/ground separation is not yet pronounced here as it will be in later work. Rather, the three angels are one with the all-over ground except for their white mask-faces. Spero employs the convention of depicting an angel with a head and shoulders, but no gendered body. These strange angels are subversives who strew disorder, wreak havoc in the status quo, and ultimately provoke new life through change. The middle angel is sticking out a red tongue which, though small, is emphasized because it is the only spot of color. The tone of defiance is reinforced by the scrawled obscenities “merde” and “fuck you.” These obscenities and the small tongue prefigure Spero’s later use of more elaborate texts and more ghastly tongues as her agents of outrage, irreverence, and change. These insurgent angels refer back to the Christian “bad” or “fallen” angels (the same derogatory terms used to debase a sexualized woman) who offended God-The-Father through pride in their own intelligence by not accepting on faith the divine mysteries. Spero’s angels, however, do not believe themselves fallen. Heads high, they stick a tongue out at the notion of their “badness” and continue to fly straight ahead, not down.

They are prototypes for Spero's later female rebels with a cause of empowerment and non-submission.

Tongues shoot forth from the mouths of helicopters, bombs, pilots, and victims alike in Spero's "War" series, produced between 1966-1970 in reaction to the Vietnam War. In 1966, Spero became involved in the peace movement, and she stopped working with oil on canvas. Small in scale, many of these drawings have a sketchy, manic line and the urgency of political graffiti. War as a form of madness. Madness as an uncontrollable, destructive force of nature. The rawness, the irreverence, the absurdity, and the scatological transformations push these works into the realm of black humor, cousins in sensibility to the monologues of Lenny Bruce. Black humor is no laughing matter. It can be a weapon, and has its targets and its victims.

These are ugly and dirty images but exact as metaphor. The most ferocious and repulsive image is that of victims who lick the Bomb, also victims who lick the chimney, the swastika-marked crematorium. . . . On occasion, the effulgent Deity or Christ rides the Bomb, appears apparitionally or uncertainly presides or remonstrates over the scenes of carnage and havoc below. . . . Planes and helicopters are similarly anthropophagous, pitiless, glutinous. . . . The helicopter ingests its victims, regurgitates and shits out blood and entrails, drags and smashes bodies. . . .<sup>7</sup>

"Pilot, Co-pilot, Eagle, Victims," (1970) is a "War" drawing whose structure is totemic and whose forms are solid and enclosed rather than sketchy and loose. Three images are stacked in the middle of a vertical rectangle. At the top of this "totem" is the profile of a pilot like a primal demonic deity with a hugely open mouth from which a thick tongue is thrust like a fist. This tongue/fist has also a small head at its end which in turn has an open mouth and a hissing tongue. In addition, the fist has a bomb stuck out in the position of a hand on a throttle. This tongue/fist/man is the co-pilot, appendage to the pilot. The middle figure of this totemic drawing is an abstracted eagle with head down and wing outstretched as though surveying the ground for prey. The bottom figure, the skull of a victim in profile, rendered in a very pale gray wash, faces down toward the ground, disintegrating and ephemeral compared to the hardy physicality of the bronze pilot, the co-pilot, and eagle. The victim-skull too has a huge tongue, but it is dangling from its broken jaw like a dried bone. These figures function as signs in a hierachal configuration (where the winner is on top), and could be a logo for the business of war.

So after completing the War series I felt the necessity for using language, texts, and Artaud's own sense of social victimization opened up a way for me to externalize my position as an outsider. . . . I was so far out in the art world — on the edge, if not actually over it — that by using the language of Artaud I could expel my hostility and resistance. . . . The voice of the 'other' (though masculine), provided a vehicle for my silenced voice as an artist.

— Spero<sup>8</sup>

The Artaud drawings from the late 60s and early 70s differ in scale and format from the later room-sized scrolls. They are rectangles of white, uniformly-sized sheets of rice paper that have the look of self-contained "pages." This suits a series in which she "collaborated" with the poet, playwright, actor, Antonin Artaud, by using excerpts and translations of his writings as major components of

her drawings. Spero makes other references to the idea of the "page" by collaging torn corners and scraps of other pages on which she has drawn and written. In some drawings, she hand-prints Artaud's text much smaller than the image so that the text reads as a concentrated aside. In other drawings, her scrawl of Artaud's text dominates and engulfs the image, and claims as much presence as the physical bodies that are depicted. Thoughts are freed from the claustrophobic space into which they are born (the head), and are given voice in the palpable, physical realm of the written word. The world as depicted in the Artaud drawings (as well as much of her later work) is made up of words and thoughts as much as it is made up of bodies.

For the ego and the male, the female is synonymous with the unconscious and the nonego. . . . The womb of the female is the place of the origin from whence one came, and so every female. . . . threatens the ego with the danger of . . . self-loss — in other words, with death and castration.<sup>9</sup>

A tongueless, wide open mouth in sexual terms is woman who lacks a phallus but possesses a void: the womb, that primordial emptiness synonymous with the abyss, the grave, death, and perdition. "The human face in effect carries a kind of perpetual death with it. ARTAUD," appears in a 1969 drawing. A head at the right of the page is that of an even-featured youth, and a head at the left, without features except for a small black eye socket and an enormous cavity of a mouth, is that of death's skull which looms larger than the youth's head. They face in toward each other and the hand-written text that fills the great divide between the living and the dead. The head of death is tongueless. Its strong, wide-open jaw emits a silent scream that reveals to the youth that this mouth of death into which he stares resides within himself, is his own life consuming itself. As the sex of woman "devours" and "consumes" the phallus during sexual intercourse, the image of death as devourer and consumer of life can not but have sexual references. Artaud's words, which speak of death as the ultimate self-fulfillment, resound between these two heads in that space "between our eyes and the grave."<sup>10</sup> It is the moment of a horrifying revelation, the loss of innocence.

"Je suis suspendu a vos bouches. . . . Artaud" [I am hanging on your every word. . . .] (1970) has white handwriting on white paper, giving the words the effect of a visual whisper that becomes so low (pale), that we are unable to "hear" the last few words. In the bottom half of the drawing is a Classical head in profile with a huge tongue coming out of its mouth like a person being born. Artaud replaced "levres" (lips) with "bouche" (mouth) in his use of this idiomatic expression. The hole of death is also the canal of birth. The mouth, out of which the tongue/voice is born, is the site of an emerging identity. In place of the eye of this head there appears a tiny head with a long projecting tongue facing in and reaching toward the temple (mind) of its host head. Voice, words, reading, a collaboration with a dead poet. This image of a head with another person's head/tongue in place of eyes evokes the idea of seeing the world through the words/ideas (voice) of another. Love is cannibalism: we want to merge with the other, take into ourselves that the other has to offer. In a review of Marguerite Duras's *The War*, Francine du Plessix Gray writes: "Duras's women identify so totally with the male object of

their obsessions that their loyalty is ultimately a form of fidelity to the self.”<sup>11</sup> Spero’s relationship with the work of Artaud has some of these qualities of a love relationship. In this work, the utterance of the other (Artaud) is visually and mentally absorbed (read), to the point that the other’s words become her eyes — the lens through which the world is seen. Artaud helped Spero to begin to speak to the world. She used him as a guide, as someone who has gone before and so could help her give birth to a new form of herself. He was an unknowing midwife.

Speaking is an imposition on silence. It is the active penetration by the self of the world which surrounds it. Intercourse. In more than just its shape, the tongue is phallic. Spero proposes an image of the tongue as phallus in a detail of “Codex Artaud XVII,” a panel in her first scroll work that is comprised of 33 separate panels (1971-1972). In this panel, a small woman is penetrated, as though impaled, by the reddish tongue of a huge male head. She is anatomically complete except that she is cut just above the knees. As a result, she does not stand on her own two legs, but rather she is grounded by the tongue/phallus of the man, and as such appears as the permanent appendage of his appendage. Her head is tilted back as though in an ecstatic trance and resembles photographs of heads of ecstatic/hysteric women which appeared in Surrealist publications.<sup>12</sup> The Surrealists held that the irrational is the domain of the feminine, and they mined the “feminine” ecstatic/psychotic discourse for their own artistic purposes. Woman was the muse, men were the artists. Consequently, “feminine” discourse entered the art of this century on the tongues of men not women. This discourse, this “speaking in tongues” is that of Spero’s male tongue in “Codex Artaud XVII” and it is that of Artaud himself:

Why couldn’t it have been some world without numbers or letters  
yam CAMDOU  
yan DABA  
Camdoura  
yan CAMDOURA  
a DABA ROUDOU  
ARTAUD<sup>13</sup>

What Artaud returned to Spero was femininity, but femininity in a different light, and paradoxically in the accents of a man empowered to speak his sexual fluidity, madness, marginality and curious passivity: a subject able to sublimate his pain in language.<sup>14</sup>

Tongues also figure prominently in “Codex Artaud VI.” This panel contains two distinct groups of images separated by a large blank which functions like a long pause between the signals in a message of Morse code, or the lull in a conversation. Both groups combine typewritten words and cut-out painted images. One speaks about the silencing of a voice, the other speaks about the seizing of a voice. On the left is the cut-out figure of Artaud the madman. Painted in gold metallic paint, this figure is on his knees, arms strait-jacketed to his body, forcibly subjugated. His head is hairless — shaved as to erase his identity and to further the process of rendering impotent and dependent (feminizing) the institutionalized. The tongue of this alienated figure is shoved like a stick in his mouth. Rather than as an instrument of speech, this wooden protrusion reads as a stopper, preventing him from speaking for fear of the chaos that will spew forth. The

insane fracture and violate the coherence of our existential order; we, the “sane,” consequently feel compelled to treat them as subversives to be deadened into manageable silence.

... I am vacant through the paralysis of my tongue. — Artaud<sup>15</sup>

In the other half of the “Codex Artaud VI” panel, we see one of Spero’s key constructions, the “Sky Goddess,” in her prototypic form. In an effort to right the imbalance of power between the masculine and the feminine, Spero goes back to symbolic sources and attempts to re-envision history through a re-feminized imagery.

Thus all great Myths are dark and one cannot imagine all the great Fables aside from a mood of slaughter, torture and bloodshed, telling the masses about the original division of the sexes and the slaughter of essences that came with creation. — Artaud<sup>16</sup>

Spero reenacts the mythic motif of the splitting into opposites of the androgynous Original One that was at the origin of the universe. Her figure, bent and on all fours, in the posture of the Egyptian sky-mother, is headless and hermaphroditic. Spero has endowed it not only with numerous breasts, but a phallus as well. This figure has straight vertical legs, it is bent at the waist with a horizontal back, and its arms reach down to form the hieroglyph of a flat-roofed house (the sky). At the point where the waist bends, Spero has positioned a female head with a wide open mouth on the verge of swallowing the phallus — poised to seize its power. She is cannibalizing and taking into herself male powers by swallowing the phallus, the Word, the godhead, the divine. She seems to be trying to possess a symbol of the Logos as creative power associated exclusively with a patriarchal god-the-father. “God... ‘speaks’ his creation into being. His realm is the realm of the spoken, his word. . . . Creation, unlike procreation, depends on conceptualizing.”<sup>17</sup> By swallowing the phallus, the female head in this work will castrate the hermaphroditic figure, thus freeing its femininity from the androgyny in which it is trapped. This foreshadows the later (1976) transmutation of this hermaphrodite figure into the strictly feminine incarnation of the “Sky Goddess.”

A tongueless morsel of a woman appears in “Knife Cut” (1974), originally part of a series of tiny works called “licit exp” — a cut-up variation of “explicit explanation,” but which was later absorbed into, and made a part of, the huge scroll installation “Torture of Women” (1976). Huge yellow block letters spelling “Knife Cut” form the background, and a big male head in profile with a thick, but sharply pointed, tongue is at the right edge of the paper. Two pieces of a female body fall into the void between the words. She is decapitated and what’s left of her is only belly and upper thighs, the region of her sex. Her mouth is open as in a scream, but her tongue has been excised, so she can neither voice horror nor cry for help. The large man, anchored firmly on the right edge of the page (of history), dominates the words “Knife Cut” which read like the tabloid headline of this grisly crime. The female victim disappears unanchored into non-being. The man’s tongue was the instrument of punishment used to cut her down to size and out of the picture, before she could cut him off, interrupt him, with a voice just as remarkable as his, only different.

Spero's art from 1974 on focuses exclusively on the issues of women. "Notes in Time on Women," 1976-79, is a room-sized, multi-paneled, paper scroll installation which surrounds the viewer like an embrace or a womb. One detail of panel 18 is that of a small head in a field scattered with blocks of text. Compared with some of the tongues in other pieces, the one sticking out of this profiled head is only slightly larger than a normally proportioned tongue. Printed over the top half of the head and ending above the mouth, is a sentence that reads: "Throughout male literary history, gorgons, sirens, mothers of death, and goddesses of night represent women who reject passivity and silence."<sup>18</sup> Here the tongue embodies a woman's right to expression without, as a result, her being perceived as, or being thrust into the role of, an aberration, a monster, a harpy, or any other negative personification.

A turning point for the tongued head occurs in Spero's series "To The Revolution". The same tongued head (discussed above) undergoes a healing transformation in the double portrait of the Greek goddess Artemis in "For Artemis that Heals Woman's Pain" (1979). Spero has printed twice an image of Artemis with her left arm raised and bent. Within the crook of the arm of the Artemis figure on the left, Spero has nestled the tongued head. She has placed this troubled head in direct line with the sympathetic gaze of Artemis, "guardian of women of all ages."<sup>19</sup> The tongued head has found in her a haven, a healing protectress. We are witness here to a "talking cure" inspired by the sympathetic listener. For finding a voice is only half of the problem that faces women in a patriarchal society. Finding a listener is the other half.

... I wanted to continue depicting woman as activator, to get away from this 'lack' — the loss and castration of the tongue. I wanted to depict women finding their voices, which partly reflected my own developing dialogue with the art world, that somehow I had a tongue... — Spero<sup>20</sup>

With Spero's "To The Revolution" series, her work becomes increasingly celebratory and unabashedly "carnivalesque."<sup>21</sup> In a work from this series, also entitled "To The Revolution" (1985), the tongue has become untied, and its voice is shouting in joy and expansiveness. Modeled in black and white, and with her back to us, a classical female figure tiptoes almost sheepishly. She is surrounded by three versions of a running "primitive" female. These three are defined linearly, without modeling; one is orange, one blue, and one red. They leap a leap that enjoys itself. Two of them have, superimposed on their otherwise featureless faces, the delicate linear face of the tongued head, still sticking out their tongues, but for joy. These light-footed spirits surround the timid classical figure as though to incite her to abandon her restraint and join them. With this raucous threesome, we come full circle from the three angels of "Les Anges, Merde, Fuck You."

Spero's tongued figures have gone down to the depths and they have come back up energized. In these celebratory works, Spero's women hoot and holler in pride, and jabber for joy. It is a sign of life. I am here. It was not always so, and it will not always be so. But while I am here, I am going to make a noise, yell my lungs out, speak till I'm out of breath. Because, who knows, maybe this voice will continue to echo through space long after I am gone. So, by all means, these works seem to say: babble, gossip, and utter, discuss, confess, shout, and disclaim. Con-

verse and articulate. Talk back, talk big, talk off the top of your head, sing if you can, sing if you can't, talk to yourself, talk through your hat, speak up, speak clearly, mumble if that's all you can do. But do it. Now.

#### Notes

1. Nancy Spero as quoted in Jon Bird, "Nancy Spero Inscribing Woman — Between The Lines," in *Nancy Spero* (London: ICA/Fruitmarket Gallery/Orchard Gallery/Foyle Arts Project, 1987) p. 24.
2. For in-depth discussion of feminine language with numerous source references, see Lisa Tickner, "Nancy Spero Images of Women and La Peinture Feminine," in *Nancy Spero* (London: ICA/Fruitmarket Gallery/Orchard Gallery/Foyle Arts Project, 1987) pp. 5-19.
3. Webster's New World Dictionary of The American Language, Second College Edition (Cleveland & New York: William Collins + World Publishing Co., Inc., 1974) p. 595.
4. Antonin Artaud in "Here Lies," *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, ed. Susan Sontag, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976) p. 549.
5. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 3rd printing, 1973) pp. 19-20.
6. Spero as quoted in Bird, p. 36.
7. Leon Golub, "Bombs and Helicopters: The Art of Nancy Spero," in *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950* (Syracuse, NY: Everson Museum of Art, 1987) p. 39. (Originally published in *Caterpillar* 1, 1967.)
8. Spero as quoted in Bird, pp. 24-25.
9. Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963) pp. 157-158, as quoted in J.A. Phillips, *Eve: The History of An Idea* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1984) p. 181.
10. Campbell, p. 206.
11. Francine Du Plessix Gray, "The Power of Our Obsessions," *The New York Times Book Review*, May 4, 1986, pp. 1, 48-49.
12. See photographs from *La Revolution Surrealiste*, No. 11, March 1928.
13. Antonin Artaud, in a 1969 drawing by Spero see *Nancy Spero, 48 Works on Paper Excerpts From The Writings of Antonin Artaud* (exhibition catalogue). (Cologne: Galerie Rudolf Zwirner, 1987) p. 18.
14. Tickner, p. 12.
15. Antonin Artaud quoted in Martin Esslin, *Artaud* (Glasgow: Williams Collins, 1976) p. 65.
16. Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre And Its Double*, (London: John Calder, 1977) p. 21. (Originally published in *Antonin Artaud: Oeuvres Complètes, Tome IV*, Paris, Editions Gallimard, 1964.)
17. Phillips, p. 13.
18. Susan Gubar, "The Female Monster in Augustian Satire," *Signs*, Winter 1977, p. 393 as quoted by Spero.
19. C.M. Bowra, *Classical Greece*, (New York: Time, 1965) p. 180.
20. Spero, as quoted in Bird, p. 34.
21. For in-depth discussion of "carnivalesque" see Jo-Anna Isaak, "Nancy Spero: A Work in Comic Courage," in *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950*, (Syracuse, NY: Everson Museum of Art, 1987), pp. 24-37.

WIE AHNENKO

und der 8. und 9. Januar

der 10. Januar 1860

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