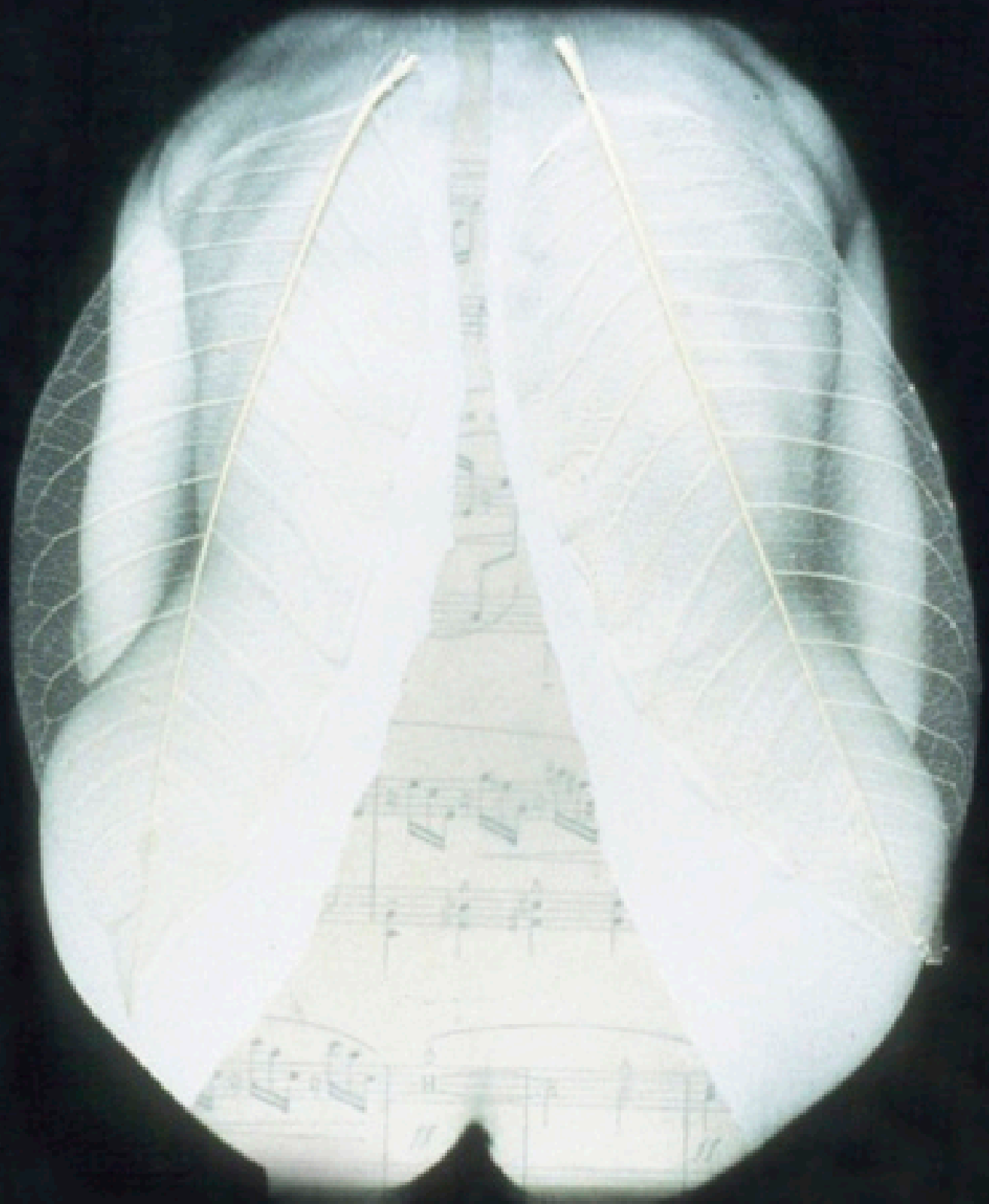


# FEMMESCAPES



This catalogue is published on the occasion of *Femmescapes*, an exhibition organized by members of the Spring 2012 Mills College Museum Studies class: Paige Azaraksh, Rachel Levinson, Keegan Luttrell, Joann Pak, Jenny Sharaf, Bridget Stagnitto, and Anna Vanderslice.

The exhibition was presented at 70 South Park, San Francisco, April 14 through May 7, 2012.

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COVER: Mary Daniel Hobson, *Nocturne*, 1999, mixed media, Collection Lenore Pereira and Rich Niles, San Francisco

# FEMMESCAPES

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## INTRODUCTION

Dr. Stephanie Hanor

The Mills College Art Museum is a forum for exploring art and ideas and a laboratory for contemporary art practices. As a teaching museum at a dynamic liberal arts college for undergraduate women and co-ed graduate studies, the museum is dedicated to engaging and inspiring the intellectual and creative life of Mills students through innovative exhibitions, programs, and collections.

Curated by members of the Spring 2012 Museum Studies Workshop, *Femmescaples*, is a remarkable opportunity for students to learn curatorial practices first-hand through an extraordinary collection of artwork created by contemporary women artists. Bay Area collectors Lenore Pereira and Rich Niles, have generously invited students to curate an exhibition from their collection in their gallery space. The all female group of students were given a unique opportunity to explore the work of an international roster of women artists.

The first resulting show, *Femmescaples*, explores the relationship of a woman's place in the environment, woman as environment, and the environment as woman. The work featured

in *Femmescaples* explores these ideas as well as the ambiguity between the body as a metaphor for land and as an actual landscape in itself. The exhibition also looks at the ways in which women control or alter their environment and how land becomes a canvas for female artists.

Featuring approximately 40 works, including painting, video, photography, sculpture, and works on paper, *Femmescaples* presents work from pioneering feminist artists to emerging artistic talent, including: Louise Bourgeois, Andrea Bowers, Jeanne Dunning, Ann Hamilton, Mary Daniel Hobson, Nina Katchadourian, Lisa Kokin, Lynda Lester-Slack, Ann Mandelbaum, Ana Mendieta, Marilyn Minter, Shirin Neshat, Chikako Okada, Marlo Pascual, Amalia Pica, Liza Ryan, Kiki Seror, Kiki Smith, Oriane Stender, Sarah Sze, Nicola Tyson, Sue Williams, and Francesca Woodman. This accompanying exhibition catalogue examines these artists' interest in landscape as a political, domestic, and/or gendered body.

*Femmescaples* is curated by Paige Azarakhsh, Rachel Levinson, Keegan Luttrell, Joann Pak, Jenny Sharaf, Bridget Stagnitto, and

Anna Vanderslice. Their research and writing are featured in this catalogue and bring new interpretation to the significant group of works they have selected for this exhibition.

The members of the Mills College Museum Studies Workshop and the staff of the Mill College Art Museum thank Lenore Pereira and Rich Niles for their willingness and encouragement in providing this opportunity to learn about and engage with contemporary ideas and practices through their collection.

Ana Mendieta, *El Labertino de la vida/Labyrinth of Life*, 1982, black and white photograph





## THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Paige Azarakhsh

*Femmescapes* explores the female body as a landscape, both literally and metaphorically. Women play a significant role in the political landscape of the world we live in today. Alone or as a group, women have been fighting for their beliefs. A portion of *Femmescapes* represents the political landscape into which the physical presence of the female body has been inserted. From Amalia Pica's *Sorry for the metaphor 3 (with lake)*, where one can compare the vastness and power of the natural world we live in to the strength of a single protestor, to Lisa Kokin's *Bored of Ironing*, that shines a light on the tedium of the domestic woman, in which the artist corrals everything she represents within a single black line on an ironing board.

The political involvement of the artist is generally what guides these works of art as an intervention of the female presence in the political landscape. Using their voice, actions, and creativity, these female artists have created an environment within the art world to speak out for what they perceive as right or wrong in the world in which we live. They must be brave and strong, never once stepping down or denying what they have put out

for the public eye. The female artist that works with the political landscape has chosen to do so in order to educate and speak to every human being.

In *Femmescapes* we see political messages by artists like Shirin Neshat, who speaks out about the religious/political landscape of women in her home in the Middle East, and by Andrea Bowers, who through her sculpture raises awareness about feminist issues such as legalizing abortion and the impact it has had on our society.

Together, the work of Bowers, Kokin, Neshat, and Pica speak to a vast group of individuals, representing issues that involve women on a daily basis. Because these pieces represent the personal as well as the political, the work allows viewers to apply the embedded messages to the world in which they live.

While not all of these artists utilized images of the female body, it is a powerful and unique form. In Pica's installation, a woman stands alone in a vast landscape, revealing meaning strictly through body language. The figure is expressive without the use of words. Equally powerful is the veiled woman, such as the forms that we see in Neshat's work *Rapture Series (Women*

*on Beach Scattered)* where dozens of veiled women line the beach to face the ocean. Despite their anonymous appearance, these women are powerful through the presentation of their silhouetted forms alone; they show no sign of backing off.

The political landscape can be powerful, controversial, and intimidating. While it does not welcome those who are unsure or afraid, it can be an appropriate space for women artists to explore. *Femmescapes* allows for the voices of these politically active artists to be heard through their work, and is a representation of the unique power and strength that women embody and embrace daily.

Andrea Bowers, *Political Slogans and Flower Magick: No Hanger*, 2006, paper, wire, gouache, political button

## Andrea Bowers

American, born 1956

*Political Slogans and Flower Magick: No Hanger, 2006*

Paper, wire, gouache, political button

As an activist and multimedia artist, Andrea Bowers creates powerful political statements through her work. Working in the realm of social issues, her work is a reminder to the viewer of how powerful art can be in reminding us of the individual and their role in politics today.

*Political Slogans and Flower Magick: No Hanger* is a perfect display of Bowers' "no holding back" philosophy when it comes to her art and politics. Vines of delicate white flowers freely work their way across the wall as one of the blossoms opens like an orchid, trimmed in red, and below it a political button stands strong and on its own. The button illustrates a crossed-out hanger, representing the pro-choice stance of standing up for women's right to choose abortion. Like a single protestor among a crowd of the careless, the button and orchid stand strong together, making their voices heard as Bowers wishes her viewers would do.

## Lisa Kokin

American, born 1954

*Bored of Ironing, 1997*

Mixed media

*Bored of Ironing* represents the landscape of the domestic woman. Tied down to mindless chores and simple tasks, such as ironing, sewing, and cleaning, the domestic woman makes her household the single environment she thrives in. Lisa Kokin works in mixed media, artist's books, assemblage, and as we see here, sculpture. Her work focuses on the idea of recording a memory and history for an individual or group.

Many of Kokin's found objects are possessions of those who have passed, serving as reminders of their life for all to see. In *Bored of Ironing* the ironing board plays the fertile land for a small representation of objects from a domestic woman's daily life. A photograph, a rubber toy, a pen, a pair of tiny knitted trousers, etc., grow from the ironing board as crops do in a field. These objects, enclosed by heavy black stitching, sit like a body that has been left for investigation, possibly representative of the artist's desire for the end of the domestic woman.

Shirin Neshat, *Rapture Series (Women on Beach Scattered)*, 1999, color photograph



## Shirin Neshat

American, born Iran, 1957

*Rapture Series (Women on Beach Scattered)*, 1999

Color photograph

*Rapture Series (Women on Beach Scattered)* is a still from Iranian-born filmmaker Shirin Neshat's film *Rapture*, 1999, an eleven minute, two-channel video projection that is divided by gender. In this image, Neshat takes the concept of a veiled woman out of a religious context and inserts them into a vague setting of landscape and nature. By showing a large group of veiled women walking together towards an expansive ocean, Neshat reveals a powerful parallel between women and the sea.

Neshat's work engages issues of gender roles and traditional Iranian culture. In *Rapture Series*, Neshat steps away from the individual and works with groups, drawing her camera so far away that the women become one with the landscape. One can still see the power of women, despite their cloaked anonymous appearance, even when faced with the strength of the ocean.



## Amalia Pica

British, born Argentina, 1978

*Sorry for the metaphor 3 (with lake)*, 2010

Black and white laser copies

Interested in sparking participation in society, Amalia Pica creates political pieces of art by inserting herself within a familiar landscape. This subtle alteration of what we deem as a normal setting, be it a lake, street, or popular monument, forces us to put politics into a landscape that we otherwise deem as free of conflict. Pica plays with her own body language within the large-scale photographs she takes to further alter the message she wishes to convey.

*Sorry for the metaphor 3 (with lake)* is an installation constructed of over a hundred laser copies. We see a female form, facing away from the viewer, the protest sign in her hand has fallen to the ground. The female figure is absorbed in a breathtaking lake landscape, a reminder of the fragile world into which we bring our politics. By placing the woman protester within the grandeur of the landscape before her, we are reminded of how small our issues are when confronted with the land we live in.

Amalia Pica, *Sorry for the metaphor 3 (with lake)*, 2010, black and white laser copies







Marilyn Minter, *Crisco*, 2003, enamel on metal

## DISTORTING THE PERSPECTIVE

Rachel Levinson

Kiki Seror and Marilyn Minter's works are among the most chic and urban pieces of art that are included in *Femmescaples*. They both focus on the ritual of a woman's makeup routine in a way that distorts the subject's face so that it becomes more of an abstraction than a portrait of an individual. Both Minter's painting and Seror's video use the contours of the models' faces to create a landscape onto which the woman is dousing other materials in order to attain perfection. Both of these artists examine the routine of applying makeup as an act that can transform a woman into something beyond the average person, yet both seem to feel differently about the end result.

Kiki Seror's *Modus Operandi* follows the journey of eyelids from a unique perspective: through the mascara brush's point of view. This not only literally captures the amount of frantic movement a simple task like applying mascara can require, but also causes a rush of energy to emerge from the subject's head. While it can be hard to relate this scenario to a classical definition of landscape, Seror definitely pushes her audience to view this woman's routine as something that violates her natural state. A

lot of her video works use special effects to distort the subject's body into something that is more abstract and sometimes literally blends the form into the surrounding environment.

Marilyn Minter's *Crisco* also analyzes the act of applying makeup, but ends up glamorizing the final product rather than questioning it. The eyelid is painted with gold glitter and the mascara curls and clumps up into a beautiful curve. There is no question that it is a fashion-forward eye, yet there are also dirty brown colors included that makes one question who that eye belongs to. There are rolling curves throughout the painting that allow the viewer to realize the entire form of the brow and lid but the extreme close-up of the image conveys a strong sense of anonymity. The grit of the depiction brings a level of depth to the true beauty of that glitter, rather than seeing the subject's eye in a natural light.

Both of these artists look at the very organ that we use to view the rest of our environment and the ways that women in particular are conditioned to present them. Seror uses an actual surveillance camera that provides an invasive view that matches the rough movements

throughout the film. While Minter's enamel painting creates a glossy surface that matches the abundant glitter and allure of the subject's lashes. The eye is what shows emotion and views the art and land we live among, therefore it is interesting how much of the beauty routine relies on representing the eye to match an ideal of femininity.



## Minter, Marilyn

*Crisco*, 2003

Enamel on metal

This painting provides a great introduction to Minter's work since she often provides close ups of glamorous shots that are both enticing and gritty. Some of her first pieces were photographs of her mother pimping for the day. She continued to distort ideal images of beauty, recently working with Pamela Anderson as a modern muse.

*Crisco* brings a more calming approach to beauty than most of her artwork but still continues to distort the model's eye to a point of taking away everything but the implied sexuality. The awkward curve of the eyelid is framed by thick mascara and doused in glitter. While there is nothing inherently sensual about looking at a sparkling eyelid, this painting creates an image that dares the viewer to complete the rest of her body. Whether she ends up in an evening gown or go-go dress is what Minter pushes you to figure out.

## Seror, Kiki

*Modus Operandi*, 2005

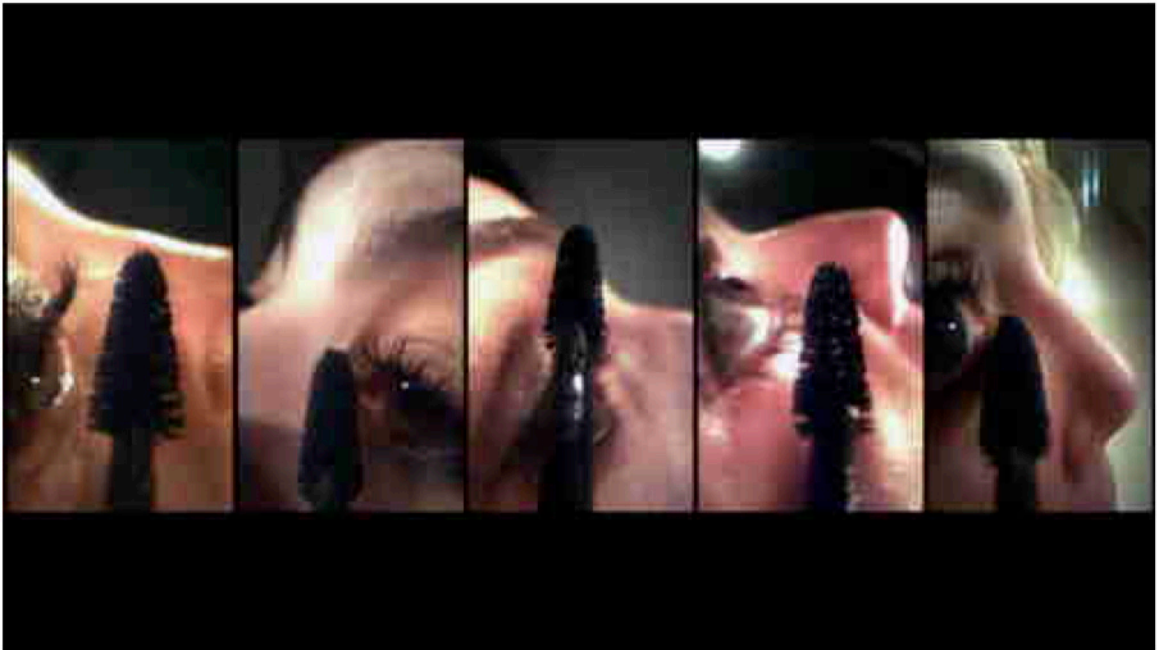
¾ inch surveillance video camera transferred to DVD

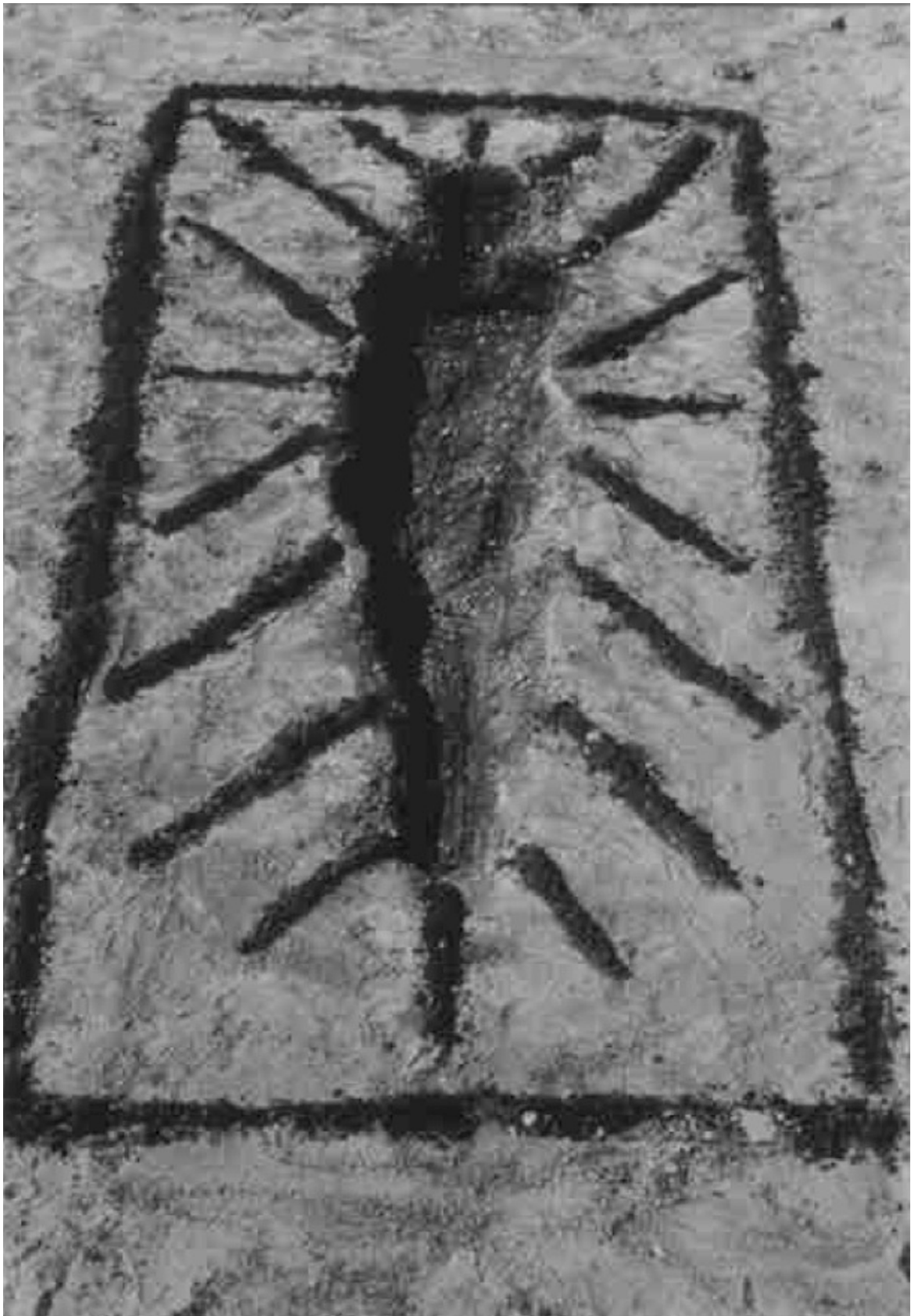
5 min, 13 sec.

Seror has used her video work to distort her subject's body. She creates situations where an original body part is transformed so much that the viewer is forced to reference another more suggestive area. She also uses these tools to separate the cause and effect relationship between her subject and what is often its aggressor.

This video creates a completely different world in which the woman seems to attack the makeup brushes throughout her transformation. The music adds a rhythm that is reminiscent of contemporary house music but also eludes to her earlier works which feature music as an erotic score. The mesmerizing effect that comes from watching this routine, with its unexpected movement, pushes the viewer to be included in the act by experiencing a reaction that is completely different from watching an average beauty ritual.

Kiki Seror, *Modus Operandi*, 2005, ¾ inch surveillance video camera transferred to DVD





# ANA MENDIETA: GODDESS OF THE LAND

Keegan Luttrell

Throughout her short thirteen year career, Cuban born artist Ana Mendieta created works that examined the physical and spiritual relationship between the body and the earth. Working with multiple media and within several geographical locations, Mendieta's art explored various themes including life, death, violence, place and identity.

An exile from her native land of Cuba at age twelve, Mendieta was transplanted to the state of Iowa without her family, bouncing back and forth between foster homes.<sup>1</sup> Through her work, Mendieta set out to understand her own body's connection to the physical space outside of herself, mostly due in part to her own personal struggles with the feeling of displacement. Mendieta explained, "I have been carrying on a dialogue between the landscape and the female body (based on my own silhouette). I believe this to be a direct result of having been torn from my homeland during my adolescence. I am overwhelmed by the feeling of having been cast from the womb (nature)."<sup>2</sup>

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1 Olga Viso, *Unseen Mendieta: The Unpublished Works of Anna Mendieta* (New York: Prestel, 2008), 14.

2 *Ibid.*, 109.

Using the land as her canvas, Mendieta left her body's physical indentation, filled with red blood-like pigments, outlined and set aflame by fireworks, and camouflaged with mud and dirt, throughout the landscapes of Mexico, Iowa, and Cuba. The forms in many of her *Silueta* series, with arms inviting and raised, remain indiscernible, alluding to a sense of becoming one with the earth. Other works were more pronounced and defined, creating marks of the body that were meant to be distinguishable.

Mendieta resisted the terminology imposed upon her body of work, creating her own language to describe it, specifically identifying it as "earth-body work." She did not consider her pieces to be performances, since an audience or witness was not required to activate her sculptures. Rather they were ephemeral and existed only through photographic and film evidence.<sup>3</sup> Her marks and residues became the remnants of the action, eliminating the need for a direct audience to bear witness to the event.

The ritualistic qualities in her work reveal her interest in ancient burial ceremonies of Latin Ameri-

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3 *Ibid.*, 8.

can cultures, specifically of her native homeland of Cuba and indigenous cultures of Mexico, that emphasize a sense of rebirth found after the moment of death. She sought to find similarities between these cultures as a means for creating a universal bridge between societies. The same history of conquest and migration that she herself was privy to in Cuba, she found in the origins of Mexico's history.<sup>4</sup> Using death rituals and references to Cuban and Mexican folklore, specifically earth goddesses, Mendieta facilitated a re-telling of a narrative that was reflective of her own.

It seems appropriate in the context of *Femmescapes* that Mendieta's work sets the stage for the thematic overlay of women using the environment as their canvas through an altercation with the physical land. She remains the pillar of the exhibition due largely in part of her profound impact in the 1970s feminist art movement. Although Mendieta would have classified herself as an artist first and foremost, her work spans many

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Ana Mendieta, *Incantation to Olokun-Yemaya*, 1977, black and white photograph

4 *Ibid.*, 77-78.

historical movements of that particular era including performance art, land art and contemporary Latin American art. However it was her investigation of the female body within the landscape that lends itself as the binding thread within the context of the exhibition.

The earth becomes a mother or goddess that Mendieta is in direct conversation with, implementing her body as the physical subject to summon questions of female fertility and vitality. This metaphor, as ancient as it may seem, is so often used when referred to earth works that it seems almost expected. However a reviewer of Mendieta's work, Mira Schor states, "Mendieta's woman, particularly in the later works, is only female, she presents a limited view of the form and the experience of femininity out of the limitless possibilities of femaleness."<sup>5</sup> The ambiguity and

the treatment of the form allows Mendieta's audience to question the inherent female association to the land, challenging gender specificity in regards to her work.

The works included in *Femmescapes* survey a variety of types of earth-body works for which Mendieta became revered. Undoubtedly her most famous work, *Untitled (Body Tracks)*, displays the striking and poignant act of smearing blood down a wall. The simple movement appears self-sacrificing and ritualistic as Mendieta creates the evidence of her existence with the physical materials of her body. Other works included depict images where the body is absent, however an indentation of a physical presence becomes what remains. In *Siluetas: Iowa (tree with flowers)*, the body's silhouette is barely recognized, appearing camouflaged

within its environment, unifying the female form with the land.

While deeply influenced by her personal struggles, Mendieta's art connects to a larger collective audience by revealing our intrinsic relationship to the environment. Mendieta's work uncovers many layers of masked cultural, ethnic and gender inequalities to foster a greater comprehension of our diverse humanity. Although her death was tragic and untimely, her legacy as a prominent female artist who collapsed the traditional barriers of defined media, revealing a poignant yet universal language that poses questions of the nature of our existence, has prevailed to our present day. Her presence within this exhibition is mandatory due to her significance as one of the most fascinating female artists of our time.

## Ana Mendieta

American, born in Cuba, 1948–1985

*El Laberinto de la vida/Labyrinth of Life*, 1982

Black and white photograph

*El Laberinto de la vida/Labyrinth of Life* records a *Siluetas* similar to the Venus of Willendorf, yet the figure is carved in a spiral manner in two parts. Created in Iowa, *El Laberinto de la vida/Labyrinth of Life* reveals yet another layer of Mendieta's exploration of the environment. It suggests that there is no beginning or end to this relationship that the body has to the land. Focusing on the cyclical formation of the body implies an association with fertility and the continuation of life through birth.

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<sup>5</sup> Jane Blocker, *Where is Ana Mendieta?: Identity, Performativity, and Exile* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press Books, 1999), 47.



## Ana Mendieta

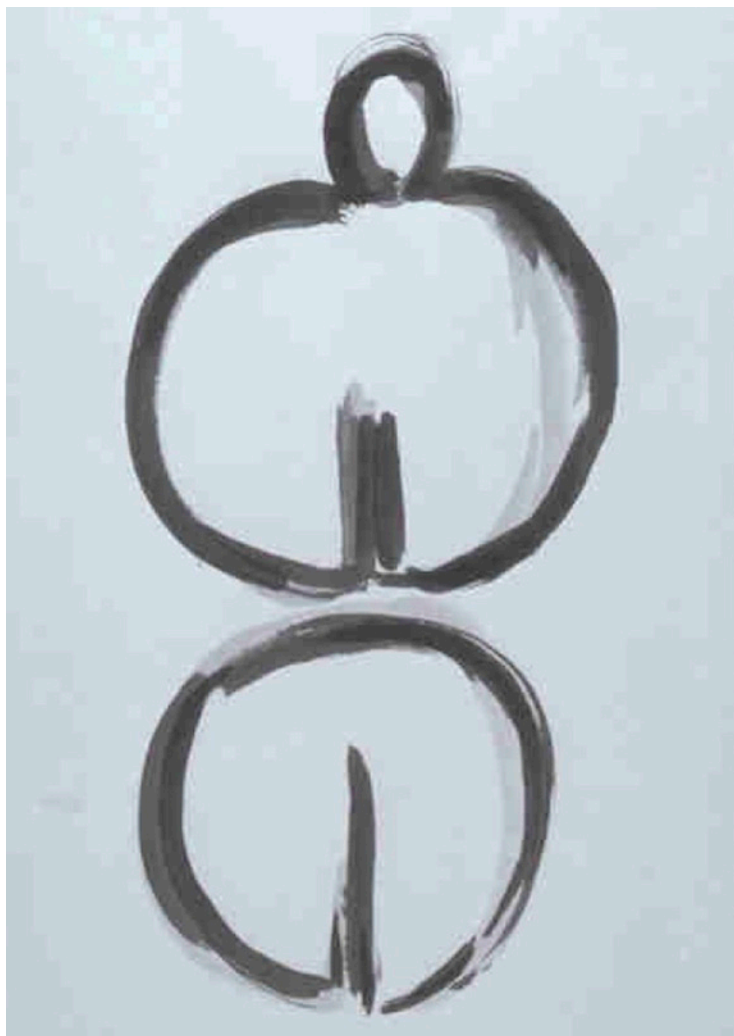
American, born in Cuba, 1948–1985

*Untitled*, c. 1984–85

Wash on paper

Mendieta's drawing *Untitled* is indicative of the time period in which she was studying pre-Hispanic grave sites in Mexico in the early 1980s as well as cave drawings in Zona Camarioca, Cuba. Influenced by the history and the ancestry of the landscape in these locations, Mendieta spent most of this time carving or excavating the landscape in goddess-shaped formations.

This drawing, although a rough sketch for a sculptural earth-body formation, is reminiscent of the form of Venus of Willendorf of Paleolithic times. It is simple and graphic in shape and form, but is identifiable as a fertile female body. Coupled with her interest in the land and ancestry, the shapes and forms remain as relics of Mendieta's response to the earth.



Ana Mendieta, *Untitled*, c. 1984-84, wash on paper

## Ana Mendieta

American, born in Cuba, 1948–1985

*Untitled (from “Fetish” series)*, 1977

Color photograph

Rather than carving into the land, Mendieta herself would form shapes of bodies and camouflage them into the land. Her interest in burial and death traditions specific to Mesoamerican cultures, such as day of the dead, led her to recreate these sorts of ritualistic scenes. Here she digs a small moat or creek around the figure so that it appears submerged in water and pierces the torso with sticks that mimic the shapes of arrows.

Traditionally, a fetish refers to an object worshiped for its mystic powers and the fact that it may be haunted by a spirit. *Untitled (from “Fetish” series)*, becomes not only a scene of a burial, but almost a spiritual resting place, where one is to contemplate life and death.

## Ana Mendieta

American, born in Cuba, 1948–1985

*Incantation to Olokun-Yemaya*, 1977

Black and white photograph

In this *Siluetas*, Mendieta created a concave image of the female body, with energy lines protruding from the figure contained in a carved out rectangle. The title alludes to the Cuban goddess, Olokun and her mother Yemaya, the mother of all oshiras or goddesses. According to Cuban culture, these goddesses are called upon when one is seeking or needing a place to call their home.

## Ana Mendieta

American, born in Cuba, 1948–1985

*Siluetas: Iowa (tree w/flowers)*, 1991

Color photograph

Ana Mendieta’s *Siluetas* series, created mostly in Iowa and Mexico, documents temporal sculptures of her body’s imprint within the natural environment. Made of materials such as flowers, leaves, dirt and mud, the *Siluetas* depict the remnants of her physical presence in the form of earth-body sculptures.

*Siluetas: Iowa (tree w/flowers)* documents a figure framed with white flowers camouflaged in the woods. The delicate, yet mysterious treatment of the body varies from her usual *Siluetas* images that display more of a physical imprint in the ground. Here the image is faint and standing upright in a ghost-like fashion, emphasizing the fragility of the female figure.

Ana Mendieta, *Siluetas: Iowa (tree with flowers)*, 1991, color photograph

## Ana Mendieta

American, born in Cuba, 1948–1985

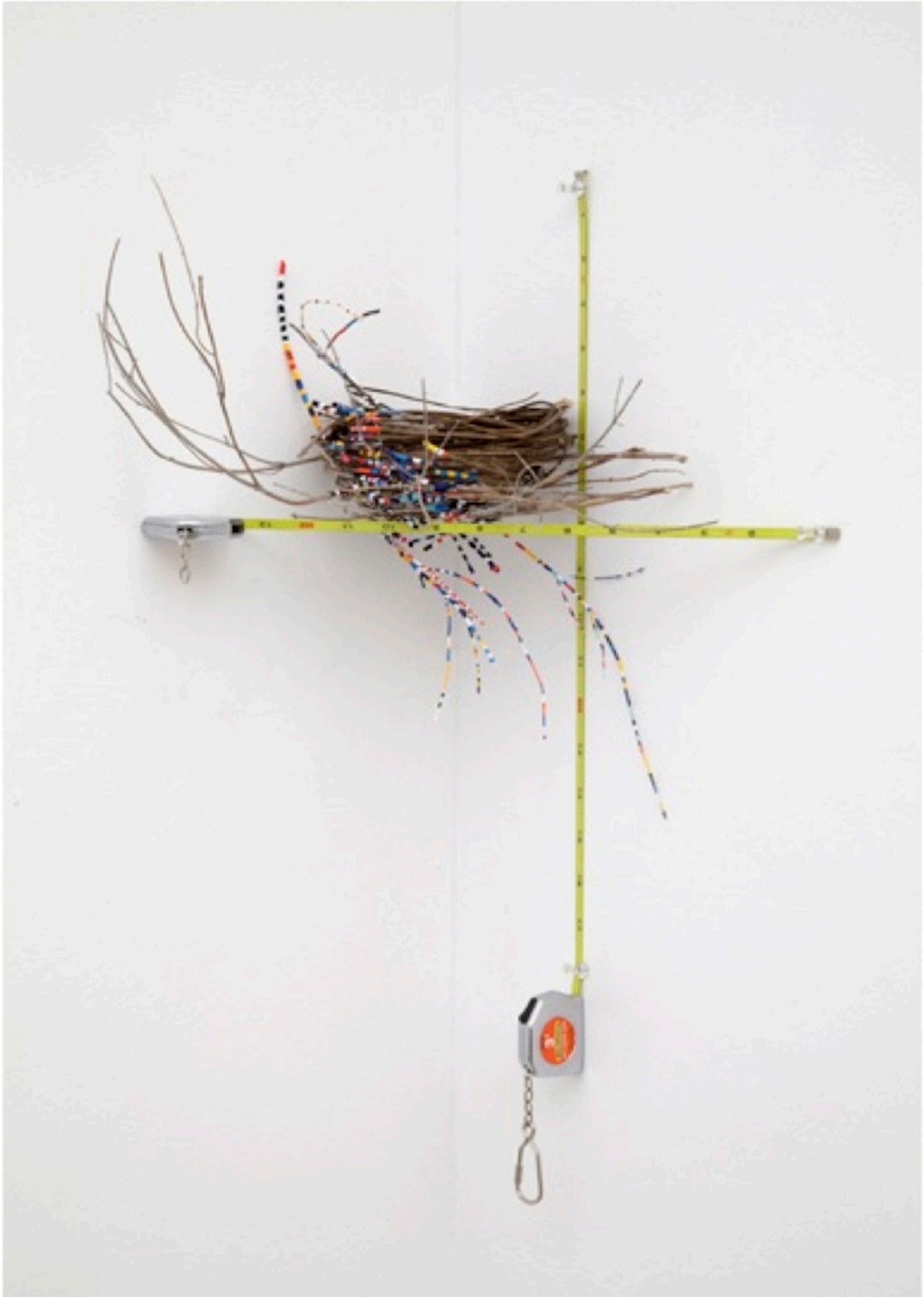
*Untitled (Body Tracks)*, 1974–97

Suite of five Chromogenic prints

Cuban-born artist, Ana Mendieta's *Untitled (Body Tracks)*, documents a short performance created in 1974 where she uses her blood stained arms to create a poignant mark of her body on the surface of a fabric covered wall. Mendieta's work catalogs her relationship to the earth, using her body as her tool and the literal material of her body to create the residue of her existence.

*Untitled (Body Tracks)* remains one of her most famous works to date, revered for its simple yet powerful action. The work is visceral, rather than violent, suggesting a spiritual physicality to the work. As her body exits, the mark is what remains of the temporal moment.





## ABSTRACTING THE RELATION

Joann Pak

Exploring the literal and figurative notions of the relationship between women and the environment, *Femmescaples* considers a wide spectrum of work that exhibits different aspects and intersections of the two entities. Four artists in the show—Jeanne Dunning, Nina Katchadourian, Kiki Smith, and Sarah Sze—effortlessly encapsulate the depth of this multifaceted exhibition. Through their work, the viewer can see that even though there are pieces that literally exemplify the concept of “femmescaples,” there is also an abstract notion that is embedded in the exhibition’s theme. This particular set of artists elucidate and complete the sweeping spectrum of the exhibit through conceptual pieces that invariably echo deeply within the realm of “femmescaples.”

Each artist holds a specific presence in telling a female perspective on the environment. For example, in Katchadourian’s *Mended Spiderwebs* there is painstaking and studious attention to altering natural order, in this case a spider web. With the best of intentions, the artist aides in repairing damaged spider webs with red sewing thread, an act that directly correlates to a quintessential female household

chore of mending. Katchadourian enters the environment and literally alters it with her own hands, a physical act upon nature that is documented through photography.

Similarly, the sculptural installation by Sze explores the female role of altering existing environmental expectations by constructing a bird’s nest adorned with beads and a tape measurer. A nest fashioned with household items makes for a whimsical interpretation of the relationship between what is natural and manufactured. Also appealing unconventional is Dunning’s *Icing*, a color video examining and reconceiving conventions about natural order. In the piece, a female head resting on a doily becomes in fact a human cake being delicately iced with frosting; an image that is surreal and oddly satisfying. The act of baking and icing a cake often coincides with an image that is specifically female. Baking is an activity traditionally associated with housewives, but in Dunning’s work can be seen as a different expression of landscape, alteration, and creativity that causes a viewer to think deeper into the issues that underlie societal and gender norms.

The allure of utilizing the female head as a form of landscape ready

to be altered extends to Smith. In her untitled sculpture, she presents a bronze female bust decorated with coins. Using a traditional medium and subject matter, Smith’s bronze female bust distorts into a nontraditional realm. The intentional choice to not make the distinguishable feature of the bust be that of a aquiline nose or a pair of piercing eyes, but rather the coin, repurposes the ideals of typical female beauty in our society.

There is a strong, definitive notion of pushing boundaries within the context of redefining landscape and its relation to expectations of femininity in all four artist’s work. The conceptual form and abstraction they use creates different and unexpected kinds of relationships between women and landscape. All the artists in their own right modify the natural systems of the “landscape” in non-traditional ways, helping to define the importance of the role females enact. Through scrupulous attention, the viewer is a witness to the nuanced essence of the exhibition.

Sarah Sze, *Addition (Birds Nests and Measuring Tapes)*, 2011, wood, enamel, wire, plastic, metal



## Jeanne Dunning

American, born 1960

*Icing*, 1996

Color video with stereo sound

30 min. 24 sec. color video

Redefining assumptions about the physicality of the human body through photographs, sculptures, and videos, Jeanne Dunning's work examines and pushes boundaries of preconceived norms of the human form. Through subversive and sensual images, the audience experiences a different aspect of the body and its perceived normality.

Known for her oddly fascinating and engrossing work, we see the head of a woman being iced like a delicate cake. With a paper doily adorning the nape of the woman's neck, viewers are asked not only about blatant objectification, but its relation to gender. The unlikely pairing juxtaposes serious and humorous tones conveyed through the meshing of elegant strokes of icing atop of a human cake, helping to interrogate and engage the normative notions of sexuality and gender that society faces today.

## Kiki Smith

American, born Germany, 1954

*Untitled (Head with Coins)*, 1998

Bronze with silver nitrate

A curiosity and fascination with the human form and natural space has driven Kiki Smith throughout her art career. Known for her sculpture and obsession with anatomy, she is known to cast both the living and the dead. Though she is a distinguished sculptress, her body of work is not limited to a single medium but rather a diverse set of media.

Interested in manipulating the human form in different realities, the bronze bust creates an intriguing sculptural form. The head is adorned with coins, creating an almost mystical figure. The stark color of the bronze and the glint in the coins gently hanging creates an unconventional character in the piece by repurposing the classical notion of a bronze bust. By redefining "landscape" to include the undulating surface of the female face, the viewer is encouraged to explore the manipulation of the female figure and landscape through nontraditional abstracted forms.

Kiki Smith, *Untitled (Head with Coins)*,  
1998, bronze with silver nitrate



## Nina Katchadourian

United States, born 1968

*Mended Spiderweb #8 (Fish Shaped Patch)*

*Web Mended July 16, 1998, 5am, 1998*

Chromogenic print

Raised in the Bay Area, many of Nina Katchadourian's childhood memories are filled with adventures and exploration in nature. Known for her work within public spaces as well as the natural world, her conceptual pieces are often whimsical reinterpretations and alterations of reality and systems.

In the *Mended Spiderweb* series, Katchadourian adeptly ventures into the forest to find spider webs that have been ripped and repairs them carefully with the help of red sewing threads. With immense care she creates an artificial alternate environment in nature for the spiders. Katchadourian noticed throughout the duration of the project that her repairs were discarded by the spiders and re-mended by the next day by the spiders' own threads.

## Sarah Sze

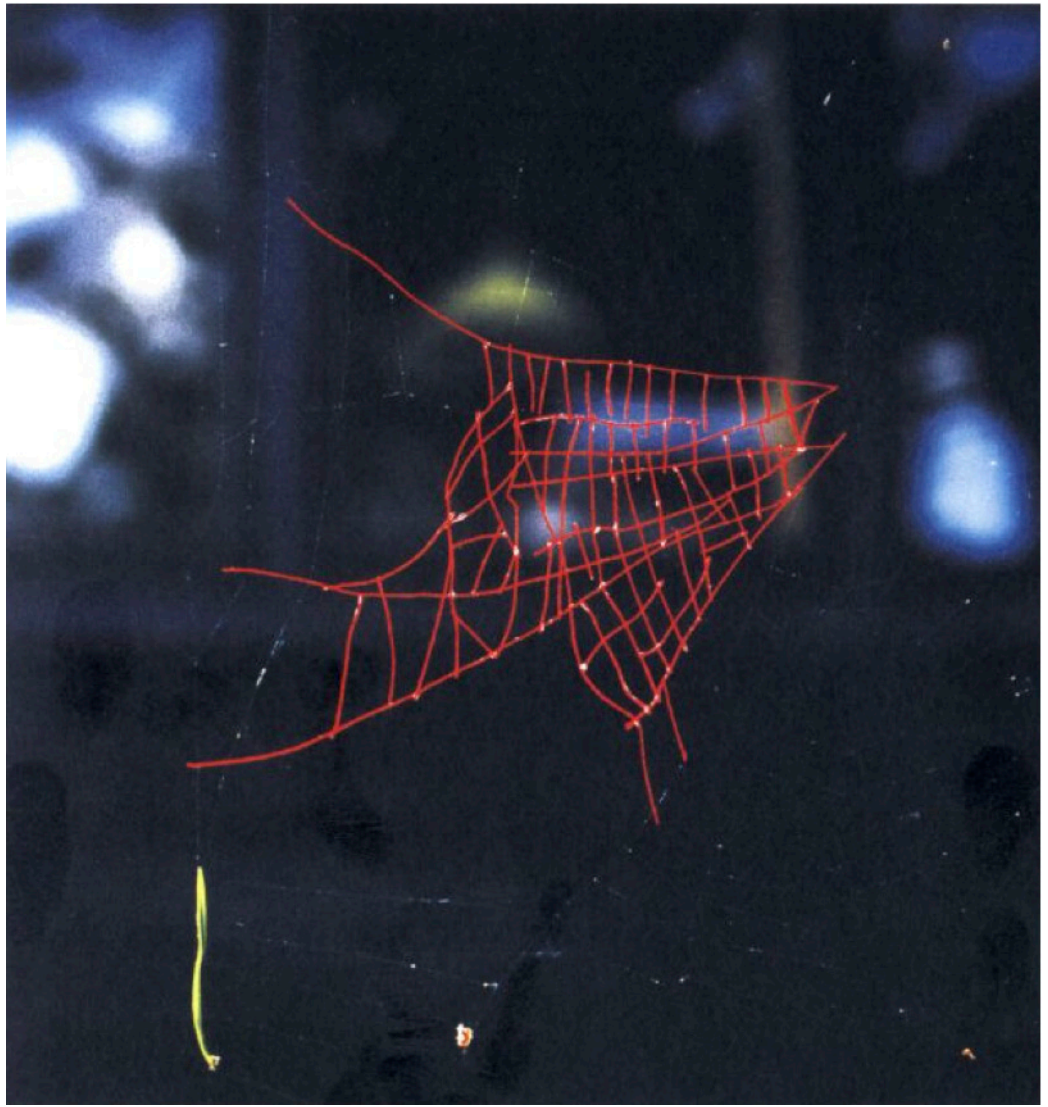
United States, born 1969

*Addition (Birds Nests and Measuring Tapes)*, 2011

Wood, enamel, wire, plastic, metal

New York-based artist Sarah Sze is known for her conceptual sculptures that delve into the relationship between everyday household items with unlikely media. From site-specific installations to small personal sculptures there is consistency in her work, from a critique of American consumerism to architectural integrity.

Her laborious compositions and process are exemplified by the bird's nest crafted from wood and miniature colorful beads and hung delicately by measuring tapes. The nuanced piece reexamines an object that is found in nature and fabricated from items far from that environment to create a sculpture that intricately questions the essence of each existence.



Nina Katchadourian, *Mended Spiderweb #8*  
(*Fish Shaped Patch*), *Web Mended July 16,*  
*1998, 5am, 1998*, Chromogenic print







## MOMENTS ON FILM

Jenny Sharaf

The collection of Lenore Pereira and Rich Niles serves as the basis for the work in *Femmescaples*, a group show featuring a cast of all female artists who explore the relationship between women and the environment and the environment as woman. Marlo Pascual, Liza Ryan, Kiki Smith and Francesca Woodman use the medium of photography to investigate the theme of “femmescaples.” In documenting a singular moment on film, subtleties are exaggerated, performative actions are recorded and moments last forever. This small group of photographs (within the larger context of the exhibition) addresses important issues such as the image of women, the power of images to generate narrative, and the body as an interior landscape.

Marlo Pascual’s work speaks to the power of photographs as objects. Her psychologically-charged photos play on our relationship to ordinary snap-shots. Pascual manipulates her pieces both physically and digitally, always revealing her own gesture. Using found images in unexpected ways results in a visual trickery for audiences to access. There is always a kind of tension in the work, adding a complexity to the beauty.

Liza Ryan’s photographs use

juxtaposition as a tool to reorganize information. Interested in mundane and domestic interior settings, Ryan’s work uses light and ephemera that results in a poetically muted final piece. The work invites the viewer to spend some time within an interior-scape. Even though the compositions do not feature a distinct figure, the female body is implied throughout the work. For example, in *Displacement 12*, the couch cushions have a mark of being sat in; the figure is therefore implied. Ryan’s work asks you to be still and quiet with them, contemplative of their suggestive complexities. The sequence of images implies a passing of time or an unknown narrative, resulting in a mysterious and lyrical quality.

Kiki Smith is a conceptual artist who works across many media. She approaches photography with a certain intention and directness that is not seen in her other work. *Las Animas* appears as a documentation of the artist’s body. Made up of black and white photogravure images, the piece explores the relationship between the body and identity. The narrative becomes Kiki Smith’s performance in front of the camera.

Francesca Woodman places herself front and center in her work.

Her camera documents the intimacy of her performances and we are lucky enough to see the results. Impulsive and playful, Woodman’s images are still relevant and fresh nearly thirty years after they were taken. She uses her vulnerability while posing in interior landscapes, often covering her face, as a powerful tool to connect with audiences. The viewer enters into the artist’s space, with all of its voyeurism, never quite sure of the narrative. Woodman’s photographs are poetically ambiguous and anything but conventional self-portraiture. Using photography to document a performative impulse, Woodman places herself into that particular discourse.

*Femmescaples* is curated to tell the story of women as landscape. Through photography, Marlo Pascual, Liza Ryan, Kiki Smith and Francesca Woodman investigate a woman’s place within society. Whether focusing on the body, the missing figure, or the manipulation of the image, these works demonstrate the power of photography and the female form.

Marlo Pascual, *Untitled*, 2010, digital Chromogenic print on watercolor paper

## Marlo Pascual

American, born 1972

*Untitled*, 2010

Digital Chromogenic print on watercolor paper

Marlo Pascual has produced manipulated found images since 2000. Her work is a fusion of photography, sculpture and installation, resulting in sublime moments of visual trickery. Based in New York, Pascual's practice is full of dramatic effects, humor and complex subtleties.

Pascual works her photographs in unexpected and intuitive ways—cutting, folding, and manipulating—giving amateur photographs a new life. Simple snap-shots transcend into lyrical objects of our visual desire. The final product always has a sense of being theatrical and psychologically charged. Even the simplest of Pascual's gestures implies a timeless tension between beauty and violence.

In *Untitled*, 2010, Pascual appropriates a found image of a ballet dancer. The folds create a tension of still movement, turning the image onto itself, interacting with the space and viewer. The image feels referential to the work of photographers Man Ray or Weegee, always showing the artist's hand within the photographic elements.

## Liza Ryan

American, born 1965

*Displacement 12*, 1998

Chromogenic prints

*Displacement 13*, 1998

Chromogenic prints

Liza Ryan's work is a poetic embodiment of everyday life through photography. The Los Angeles-based photographer's use of light and ephemera turns the mundane into the precious. There is a sense of realism and tranquility in most of her work, although the fragmentation of the images suggests a deeper contemplation of muted human experiences.

Ryan often juxtaposes two images, as can be seen in *Displacement 12* and *Displacement 13*, 1998. The suggestion of the female form can be seen in many of Ryan's compositions. In *Displacement 12*, there is an implied physical presence of a figure in the rustled couch cushions. She achieves a panoramic narrative in the presentation, telling a fleeting story of passing time through sequential images.

Liza Ryan, *Displacement 12*, 1998, Chromogenic prints

## Kiki Smith

American, born in Germany, 1954

*Las Animas*, 1997

Photogravure

Kiki Smith uses her own body as central part of her practice. Smith's work revisits subject matter of domestic objects, animals and narrative rhetoric from classical mythology and folktales. She is a prolific producer, whose ideas take her work in myriad directions.

*Las Animas*, 1997, a large collage of black and white photogravure images, details Smith's body in a documentary fashion. An armpit, an ankle, a fist, and a relaxed hand are part of the ten close-up abstractions of the artist's body that comprise this piece. The work invites viewers to scrutinize the surface and question the relationship between the body and identity.



## Francesca Woodman

American, 1958-1981

*I. 177 Roma, May 1977–August 1978, 1999*

Gelatin silver print

*N. 303/New York, 1979–80, 1999*

Gelatin silver print

Francesca Woodman's photographs are still dazzling viewers, nearly thirty years after her untimely death. The complex body of work that was left by the young artist before her suicide at the age of 22 investigates female subjectivity as she placed herself front and center. The camera documents Woodman's impulses and vulnerability, and her black and white self-portraits within interior spaces suggest the influence of surrealism. Woodman's pictures always leave space for the viewer to enter.

Simultaneously photographer and model, subject and object, Woodman used voyeurism and the camera's gaze as powerful tools. In *I. 177 Roma, May 1977–August 1978, 1999*, Woodman lays on the ground next to a sculpture pedestal, bringing into question the objectification of the female form. There is a poetic darkness in the way Woodman covers her face, looking away from the camera. Woodman's photographs are never conventional self-portraits, as she is always partially hidden or concealed by the camera's blur. Long exposure times obscure faces and cause the subject to merge with the surroundings, resulting in a complex psychological state.

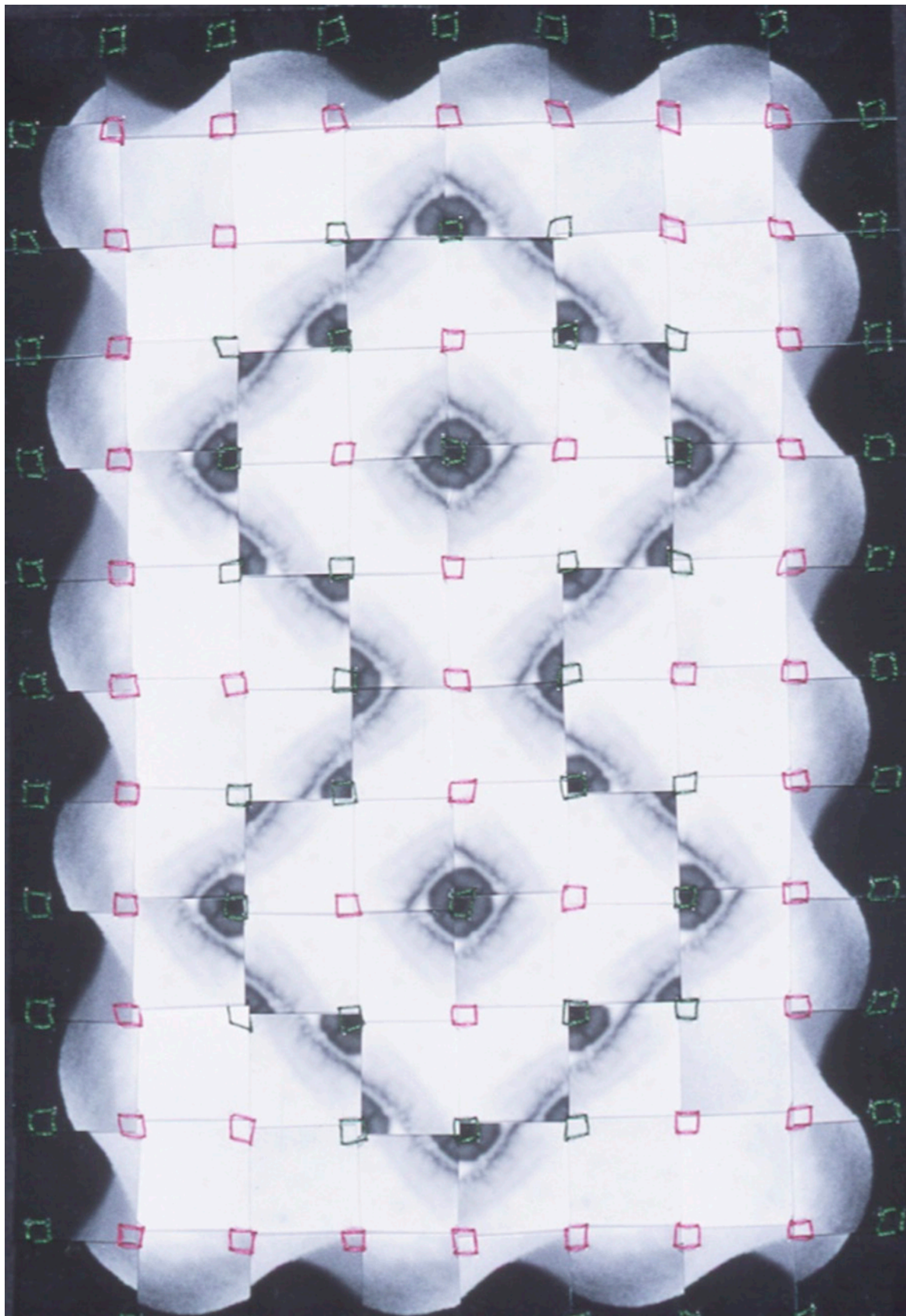
The whole truth is never revealed in Woodman's photographs, as can be seen in *N. 303/New York, 1979–80, 1999*. Combining performance and play into her work, Woodman presents more secrets than she does anything else. The viewer questions her location and the situations that Woodman places herself in. There is always a mysterious narrative in every picture.

Recently the recipient of a retrospective show at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Woodman's legacy is cemented into an art historical context. Her photographs speak to a certain era of photography and performative impulses, but hold a relevance and staying power for contemporary audiences.

Francesca Woodman, *I. 177 Roma, May 1977–August 1978, 1999*, gelatin silver print







## FEMMESCAPE: A MAP TO AUTHENTICITY

Bridget Stagnitto

A “femmescape,” or a landscape of a woman, has myriad connotations and possibilities for conceptual meaning. This particular group of works—Louise Bourgeois’ *Anatomy*, 1990, and *Untitled*, 1995; Jeanne Dunning’s *Sample 8*, 1992, and *Untitled (Hole)*, 1991-93; Ann Hamilton’s *Face to Face-33*, 2001; Mary Daniel Hobson’s *Nocturne*, 1999; Oriane Stender’s *Eye/Chin (self/image series)*, 2000; and Sue Williams’ *Darker Aspects*, 1997—are related by their exploration of identity. All of these pieces deconstruct identity as an existential theme through photographs, prints, paintings, and with other media in a way that is relatable to the viewer. The result is a mixture of emotional, humorous, magical, hypnotizing, unseemly, personal, and absolutely beautiful interpretations of the self.

Society is teeming with entities interested in influencing what kind of person one should be, such as the government, family, peers, educational institutions, or economic forces. In a Foucaultian way, these systems are constantly imposing information of control upon the body. The media is a central source for effecting the individual, but the most direct impact comes from ones peers; one wishes to be relatable to

other people. By exercising existential thought processes one can become free of outside influences and become your true self. These artists and their work demonstrate self-evaluation and separation from constructed, force-fed identities.

Looking directly at one’s self is the best strategy for understanding one’s self. Ann Hamilton conducts this analysis on herself in *Face to Face-33*, using a pinhole camera placed inside her mouth, by which “the orifice of language becomes the orifice of sight.”<sup>1</sup> Think about the definitions that have been uttered from that orifice, and the product stares back at you, searching for the source of these interpretations. In Hamilton’s work, “The resulting image is a trace presence of the time of standing or sitting face-to-face with a person . . . or landscape.”<sup>2</sup> These images result in a landscape of clues to the world of others and the influence inflicted upon the self. One can then step back and evaluate these scenes that one encounters from day to day, assessing the self and viewing the effect of these scenes on the

existential landscape.

The deconstruction of the self is also used by some of these artists in order to demonstrate one’s individuality through original compositions. Photographs of two simple parts of the body, the eye and the chin, are arranged to create another object of beauty in Oriane Stender’s *Eye/Chin (self/image series)*. The piece alludes to personal reinvention through abstracted images of the body and the use of thread to sew the parts together. The parts create a three dimensional figure eight, perhaps alluding to the infinite task of maintaining one’s identity. The bright highlights glow in contrast with the deep blue coloring, creating a calming effect similar to the ocean or the sky.

There is a topography that is specific to an individual which maps out that individual’s emotions and specific personality. The spiraling watercolors of Louise Bourgeois are singular to her particular emotional topography. Bourgeois had a troubled childhood full of loathing for her abusive and unfaithful father. In her untitled drawing, the circular

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1 Joan Simon and Ann Hamilton, *Ann Hamilton: An Inventory of Objects* (New York: Gregory R. Miller and Co., 2006), 215.

2 Ibid.

Oriane Stender, *Eye/Chin (self/image series)*, 2000, black and white photograph, thread

ink and watercolor lines spread out unevenly and layer on top of each other, reflecting the suffocation she must have felt in her childhood home.

The body, inside and out, has a universe hidden within it which can be revealed when you look at it from different angles. These artists deconstruct the physical and mental figure, opening a door to a landscape of truth. Deconstructing one's personality is helpful not only in understanding one's own self but also for navigating surrounding personalities and the contemporary world. The works discussed are a small part within this exhibition that investigates the woman's body in search of authenticity.

## Louise Bourgeois

American, born in Paris. 1911–2010

*Untitled*, 1995

Ink and watercolor on paper

Born in Paris, Louise Bourgeois came to America in the late 1940s with her husband and was an important and innovative artistic talent. Emotionally fueled by her abusive and unfaithful father, she created beautifully fervent sculptures and prints.

This ink and watercolor drawing is representative of the landscape of fear she kept inside herself as a child. When one is fearful one seems to spiral through the possibilities and causes of that fear. The lines in this piece are tight, shaky and uneven, as if Bourgeois is examining the suffocating and intersecting causes of her emotional landscape.

## Louise Bourgeois

American, born in Paris. 1911–2010

*Anatomy*, 1990

10 drypoints, 1 etching, 1 multiple

In this series, the body becomes subject to Bourgeois' interpretation. While each print is rendered similarly to actual parts of the body, they

Louise Bourgeois, *Anatomy*, 1990, 10 drypoints, 1 etching, 1 multiple (detail)

capture an unusual aspect: a black and white rib cage turns into tall hills and deep valleys; a metal gadget creates the illusion of a bellybutton. Each of these parts become a stand in for something else. They reflect a part of the universe, as if nature is embedded in everyone's anatomy.

### Jeanne Dunning

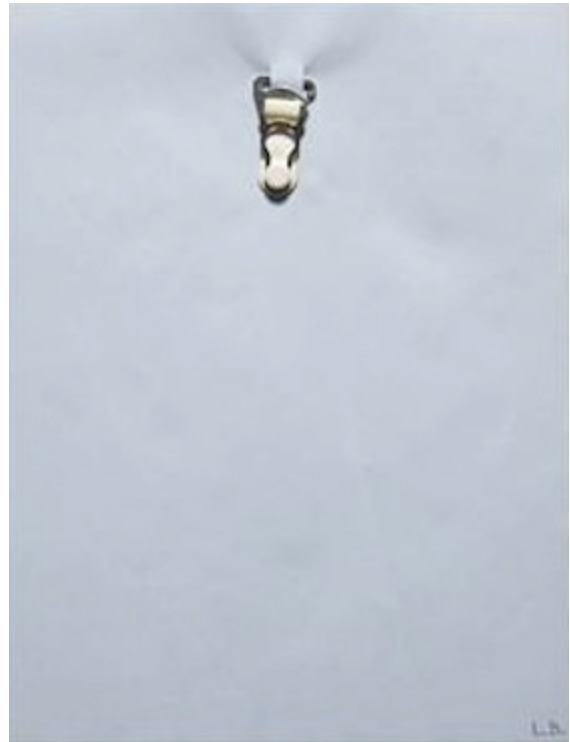
American, born 1960

*Untitled (Hole)*, 1991–93

Cibachrome print

Jeanne Dunning explores the topics of sexuality, gender, and the interior and exterior self through photographs that are imaginative and playful. She explores the human body to find new meanings in the most unseemly places.

*Untitled (Hole)* is a peculiar piece that is humorous, intimate, and ambiguous. Is this a hole for hearing? If so, what should we be listening for? Is it a black hole? Is it a cave full of fertile secrets? Dunning has turned the body into a landscape full of mystery and one that allows for personal interpretation.



**Jeanne Dunning**  
American, born 1960  
*Sample 8*, 1992  
Cibachrome print

Since the dawn of time women have used their hands to support themselves in work, home, and family. They have used those same hands to fight for equality and better quality of life. In Dunning's photograph, a pair of women's arms with red balls balanced on each palm appear to morph into two abstract phalluses, perhaps a subtle nod to the "femmescape" of women's struggle for equality.

**Ann Hamilton**  
American, born 1956  
*Face to Face-33*, 2001  
Pigment print in artist's frame

Ann Hamilton is world-renowned for her work with installations, textile art, sculpture, printmaking, photography, video, and video installation. In a world that increasingly sees through digital devices, Hamilton re-evaluates the lens through which the world sees and translates it into a poignant sensory language.

*Face to Face-33* was created with a pinhole camera inside of the artist's mouth that she used to take pictures throughout the day. The artist's daily landscape is captured within the randomness of everyday experience. The viewer sees what the artist sees, but in a distorted way. The photograph is similar to the way we see one another: always malformed, never perfect or the same.

**Mary Daniel Hobson**  
American, born 1968  
*Nocturne*, 1999  
Kodalith and mixed media

Mary Daniel Hobson, a San Francisco born photographer and collage artist, is interested in the portrayal of emotion through the physical body. Influenced by the surrealist photographers Man Ray and Dora Maar, she began making collages using images of the human body as the underlying structure.

Hobson uses a material called Kodalith for her photographs because of the transparent quality it produces. The photograph is then layered with collaged items. In *Nocturne*, the result is a delicate image of a woman's back that coalesces with leaves and sheet music, as if those objects were

Ann Hamilton, *Face to Face-33*, 2001, Pigment print in artist's frame



always a part of the woman's body. The body has a light blue-green glow against the black background, allowing a magical body to seemingly emerge out of the dim of night.

### Oriane Stender

*Eye/Chin (self/image series)*, 2000

Black and white photograph, thread

Oriane Stender conducts an exploration of the body using only two parts: the eye and the chin. Carefully sewn together with thread, aspects of the female figure begin to emerge from the abstracted close-up images. The fact that the work is made of images of the female body that are then sewn together is related to the tradition of quilt-making as a female craft. Stender creates an ethereal illusion through the repetition of seemingly ordinary features, similar to the work of quilt-making which uses a tedious process to create exquisite imagery.

### Sue Williams

American, born 1954

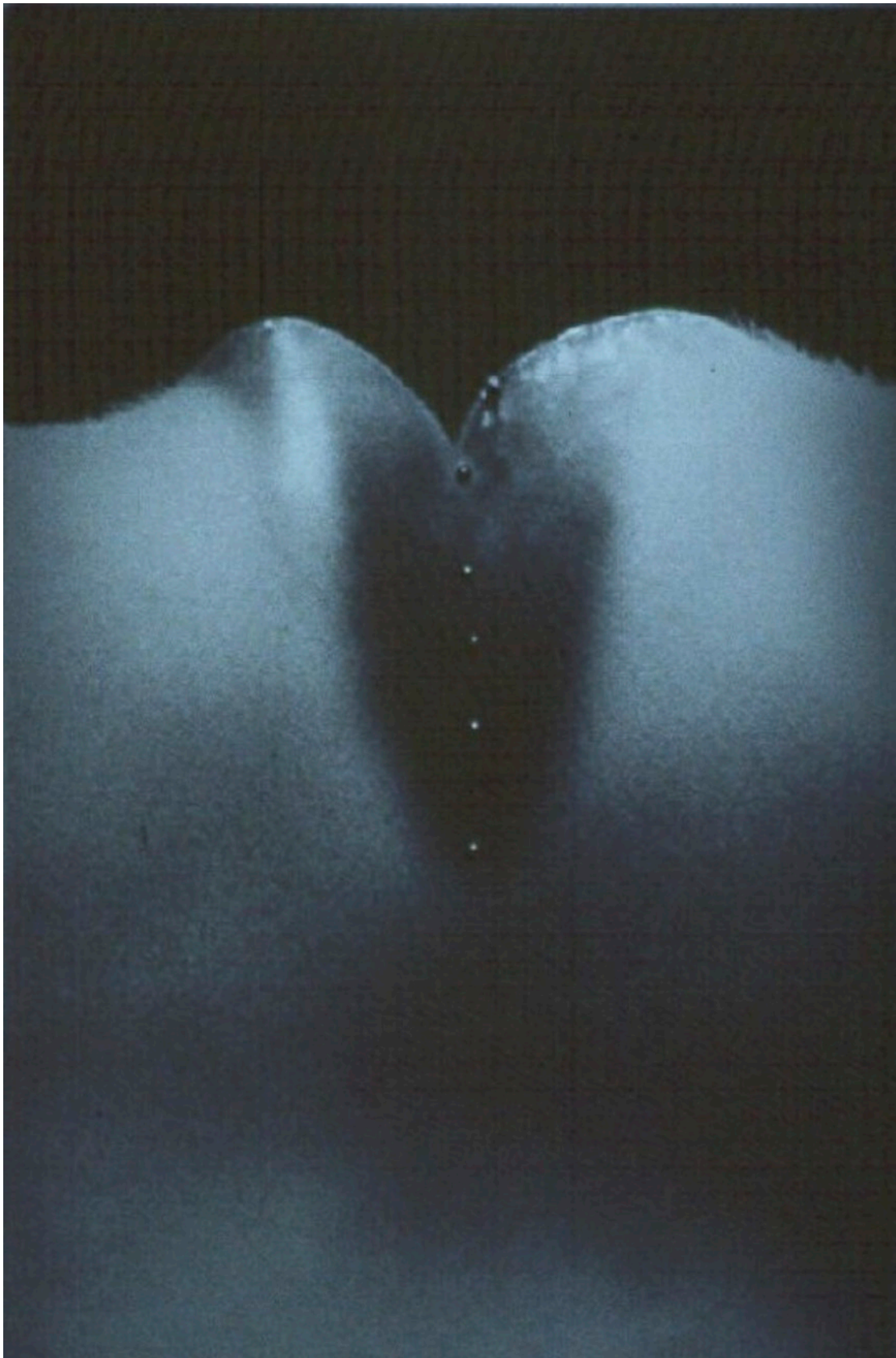
*Darker Aspects*, 1997

Oil and acrylic on canvas

Sue Williams' paintings have characteristics that are similar to comics, but in an abstracted form. In the chaos of the worlds she paints one will find objects: hands, feet, butts, heads, penises, vaginas, legs, arms, and much more. They are all put together to form a narrative that is passionate, emotional, and political.

*Darker Aspects* creates a landscape of struggle and enigmatic events. Elements within the work appear to be ingesting other components and also regurgitating them. A struggle can clearly be seen in the action and positions the forms are taking.





## THE FEMALE BODY AS A LANDSCAPE

Anna Vanderslice

In *Femmescapes*, female artists play with the idea of women's bodies and their relationship to the environment. This particular grouping of eight works from *Femmescapes* specifically addresses a woman's body as a landscape in itself. Like fruitful domestic farmland, women's bodies have historically been considered property, valued for their fertility and admired for their lush beauty. Both have been represented in art for their possessor's enjoyment, often together. Their ripeness highlights and complements each other, with messages of fecundness, ownership, property, and pleasure for others. The suggestion that the woman's body is symbolic of land becomes clear. As works created by women, the role of the woman's body as a landscape is subtly shifted. The works contain a playfulness, an aggressiveness or an elusiveness that suggests that it is the woman who is now proprietor, both of herself and the image her body is conveying.

In Chiikako Okada's *Quiet Invitation*, the parallel between a woman's body and a landscape is overt. A curvaceous bare breasted woman reclines on a scarlet sofa in a pose designed to expose her body fully to the viewer, while behind her on

the wall hangs a landscape painting of gently rolling hills and a calm still lake. The landscape's richness echoes her own curves and tranquil sprawled presentation. She is being offered up to the viewer, an object to be enjoyed, like the vista in the painting behind her. Evocative of countless Venuses sprawled across grassy meadows, the woman's body and the landscape painting behind her are objects intended for the delight of others. Both appear to be waiting for someone's pleasure, and it is to this other that the "quiet invitation" is being offered. There is a playfulness to the scene, however, that suggests the woman has full understanding and control of the associations being made.

In some of these works, the artists have addressed female bodies as actual, no longer metaphorical, landscapes. The tight camera focus given to parts of the female body tricks the eye, causing the body parts to appear initially as exotic stretches of earth. It is only on closer examination that the viewer realizes they are looking at body parts that have been removed from their context with the rest of the body, creating the illusion of a landscape. In Ann Mandelbaum's black and white photo *Untitled #92*,

a wild lonely tree crowned island appears to sit in an empty silver nighttime ocean. When observed closely, though, it becomes apparent what appeared to be an island is in fact the mound of a woman's eyelid. In Mandelbaum's photo *Untitled #67* a similar illusion is created. A pair of lips in reclined profile could be mistaken for bare desert hills cleft by a dark valley. By creating these associations with edgy haunting images, Mandelbaum's pieces seem to suggest that rather than existing just as a decorative property for others to view, the woman's body is its own unexplored wilderness. This is woman's body as a landscape, but not the safe tamed lands of *Quiet Invitation*. Here is a terrain that although appealing in its sensuousness has not been domesticated yet.

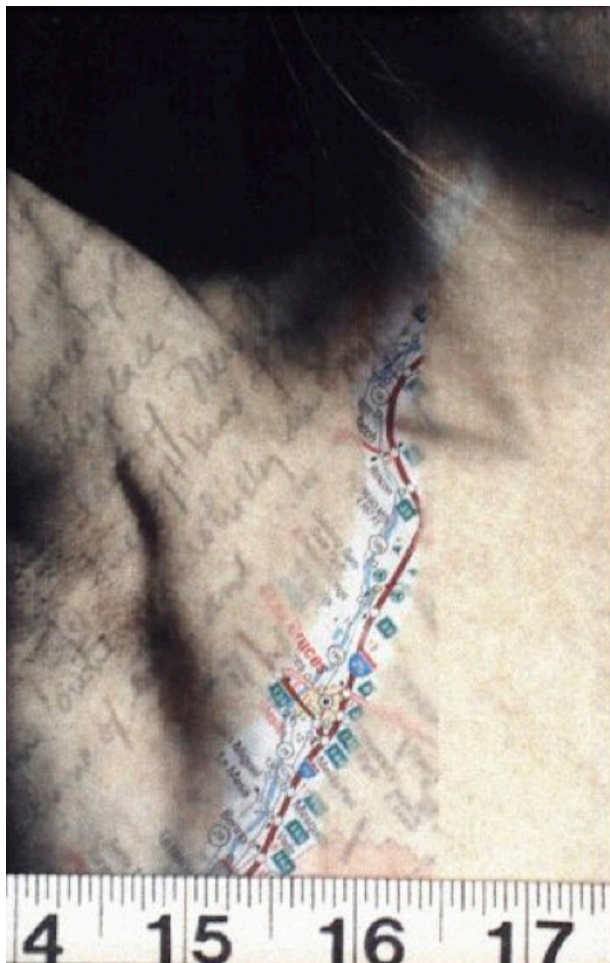
Two fleshy hills and a dark mound stretch beneath what could be a blue sky in Nicola Tyson's acrylic painting *View 2*, creating another visual puzzle for the viewer. The mind searches for representations in the large simple shapes. Is

Ann Mandelbaum, *Untitled #67*, 1994, gelatin silver print

this a landscape, a woman's body, or both? It appears unclear. The abstraction of the work allows the viewer to decide, but within the context of this grouping it appears as another form of a "femmescape;" one in which it is possible that the body and the earth are entirely interchangeable with each other. Mother earth, earth goddesses and fertility figures, although ancient, still resonate in the human consciousness.

An inviting fertile domestic property, a menacing wilderness or a personification of mother earth: what is the woman's body? This

grouping in *Femmescapes* presents opportunity for the viewer to ponder these ideas. With women as artists, the simple role of the viewer as proprietor of the body and of the land is changed. Assumptions and relationships are to be questioned. Above all, in this art, the woman's body remains an object of intrigue. These works, with their visual play, resonate with their timeless mystery.



Mary Daniel Hobson, *Measure*, 1998, mixed media



**Louise Bourgeois**  
American, born in Paris. 1911–2010  
*Remembering*, 1999  
Pink fabric

*Remembering*, a pink fabric sculpture by Louise Bourgeois, reduces a woman's upper body to abstracted curves. Reminiscent of early fertility figures, the piece features a lack of specific identity and exaggerated breasts. The emphasis on the womanliness of the shape and the embracing gesture of the arms suggests this could be a mother figure, or even an incarnation of the earth herself as a mother. In *Remembering*, the embracing arms create a caring protective image, but the mask-like features suggest impassiveness or even an eerie hostility could be present, too.

**Jeanne Dunning**  
American, born 1960  
*The Edible 3*, 1997  
Cibachrome print

Strange creamy loops and waves rest on a pink fleshy body part. This rather disturbing image could be intestines, an uncovered brain, or rippled dunes. *The Edible 3* is from a series of works by Jeanne Dunning that create strange juxtapositions between the human body and food. The resulting images are perturbing, although created from such innocent and sweet things as frosting and pudding.

The body, usually a thing of beauty, becomes suddenly entirely alien when seen through Dunning's camera. Why does this image cause a sense of revulsion and fascination? Perhaps it is because with its unexpectedness, these works tap into some inner fear of the human body.

**Mary Daniel Hobson**  
American, born 1968  
*Measure*, 1998  
Mixed media

Native San Franciscan Mary Daniel Hobson gives the concept of a woman's body as a landscape a literal twist in *Measure*. In Hobson's collage, there is no ambiguity as to the image's comparison of the two. A highway map is layered over a photograph of a woman's portrait, so its path seems to deliberately proceed up the shoulder, even appearing to bend slightly for the road to traverse the woman's clavicle.

*Measure* is part of a series called *Mapping the Body*. Hobson takes black and white photographs and builds layers, adding elements such as

old maps and letters. These collage-like mixed media pieces explore the body, suggesting that beneath its skin lies another, more complex, inner environment that can only be hinted at.

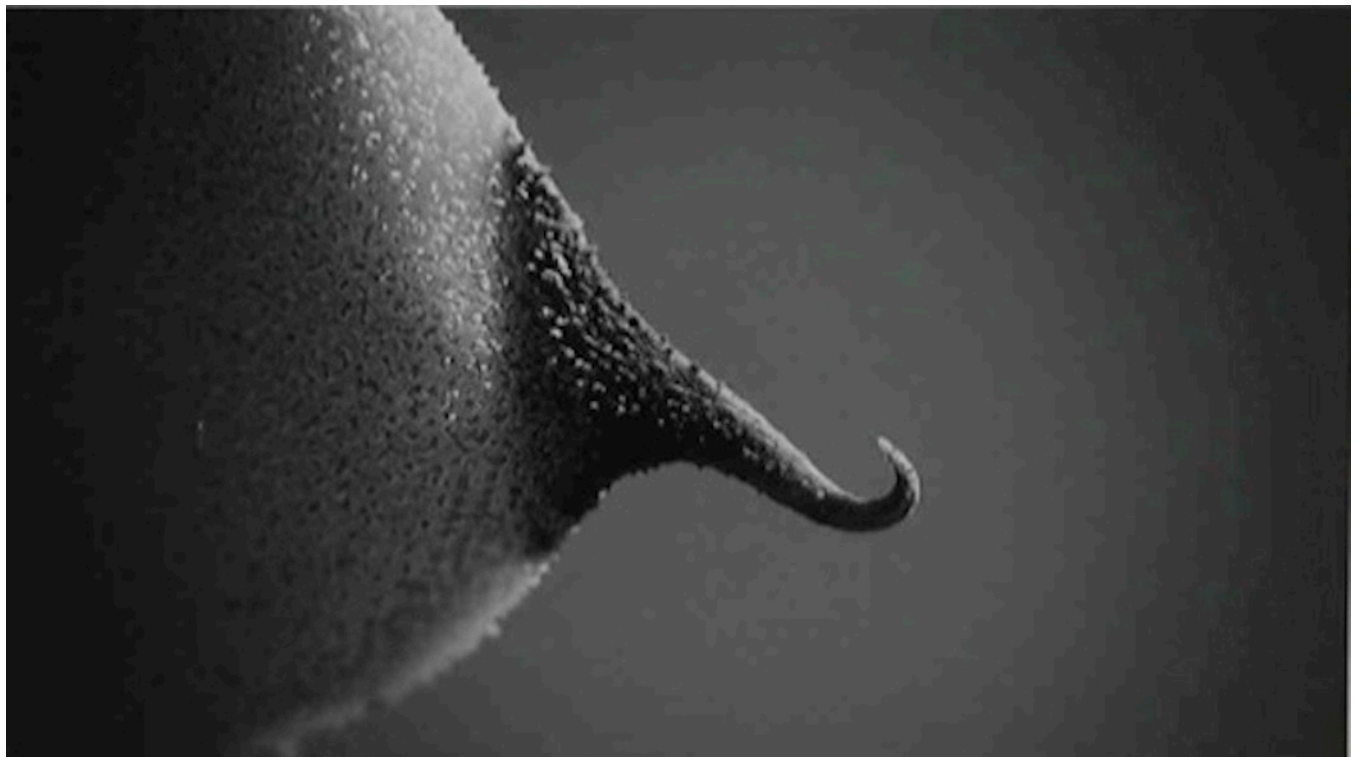
## Lynda Lester-Slack

*Vamp*, 2005

Chromogenic print

*Vamp*, a black and white photo by Lynda Lester-Slack, appears to be an unabashedly erotic image. But are tricks being played with the viewer? The image is of some exotic yet clearly breast-like form. However, the sexual connotations immediately made by the viewer exist only in the interpretation of the image. The mind spontaneously searches for female shapes in nature, and what appears to be a strange and slightly menacing photo of a breast is in fact the spine of a cactus. Upon learning this, one can ask oneself why the association between the female form and shapes in nature is so strong.

*Vamp* is part of a series of photos by photographer Lester-Slack called *Succulents*, that depicts the sleek shapes and curves of cacti and succulent plants. Even the name of the series, *Succulents*, hints at the plants' woman-like forms, and the tricks that are played with the viewer's perception of them.



## Ann Mandelbaum

United States, 1945

*Untitled #92*, 1995

Gelatin silver print

In Ann Mandelbaum's photo *Untitled #92*, an island crowned with pine trees sits in a smooth silver nighttime sea. Or does it? Closer inspection reveals that what at first appears to be a ridgeline of trees are in fact eyelashes, and the soft mound of the island is an eyelid. *Untitled #92* plays with the idea of focusing on pieces of a woman's bodies until their context is lost, and they appear to be a landscape in themselves.

Mandelbaum is known for her series of close ups of the human body. In this series, what the viewer initially perceives is not always what has been photographed. Like an optical illusion in which the viewer can see two different images, Mandelbaum's works can flicker back and forth between appearing as either landscapes or body parts.

## Ann Mandelbaum

United States, 1945

*Untitled #67*, 1994

Gelatin silver print

What qualifies as a landscape, and how does the viewer know? The pair of lips in Ann Mandelbaum's *Untitled #67* are disconnected from the other features of the woman's face, and magnified until they become steep bare hills and a canyon. *Untitled #67* shifts between portraying the sensuous and the sensual depending on how the viewer first processes the smooth curving shapes and darkened valley. Can this even be considered a picture of a woman, or are we now, with the hyper-focus of Mandelbaum's camera, now looking at a terrain?

*Untitled #67* challenges what we can define as a landscape. The body has not traditionally been thought of as one, yet clearly this black and white photo could not be considered a portrait. With its cool, detached reduction of a woman's lips into environmental shapes, this work is the type of art the term "femmescape" was coined to describe.

## Chikako Okada

*Quiet Invitation*, 1995

Oil on canvas

Which is offering the *Quiet Invitation* in this painting, the woman or the welcoming landscape hanging on the wall behind her, or both? The parallel between her curving hips and the curves of the lush hills are clear. Both are could be described in the language that is used for nature and women's bodies: rich, fertile, and fecund.

It is no coincidence that the same language can be used to describe them both. Like land, women's bodies have historically been valued for their fertility. Both too have been painted as a means of allowing one to take pleasure in the ownership of their beauty. In this oil painting, the woman has actually become the personification of the landscape that hangs behind her, suggesting both are beckoning the viewer in to enjoy their riches.

## Nicola Tyson

British, born 1960

*View #2*, 1999

Acrylic on canvas

Large flesh colored hills and a single dark furrow fill the canvas of *View #2*. Is it a landscape by a woman? Or a landscape of a woman? The ambiguity leaves the viewer to decide just what sort of "femmescape" they are seeing.

Using a very limited palette of colors, and large shapes and brushwork, the visual simplicity of Nicola Tyson's acrylic painting belies its emotional complexity. One is rendered uncomfortable at first struggling to identify what the image represents. Then, surrendering to the work, the need to identify what her painting actually portrays diminishes before its spare beauty.

Nicola Tyson, *View #2*, 1999, acrylic on canvas





## WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

All works in *Femmescaples* are from the collection of Lenore Pereira and Rich Niles, San Francisco.

Bourgeois, Louise  
*Anatomy*, 1990  
10 drypoints, 1 etching, 1 multiple

Bourgeois, Louise  
*Untitled*, 1995  
Ink and watercolor on paper

Bourgeois, Louise  
*Remembering*, 1999  
Pink fabric

Bowers, Andrea  
*Political Slogans and Flower  
Magick: No Hanger*, 2006  
Paper, wire, gouache, political  
button

Dunning, Jeanne  
*Icing*, 1996  
Color video with stereo sound  
30 min. 24 sec. color video

Dunning, Jeanne  
*The Edible 3*, 1997  
Cibachrome print

Dunning, Jeanne  
*Untitled (Hole)*, 1991-93  
Cibachrome print

Dunning, Jeanne  
*Sample 8*, 1992  
Cibachrome print

Hamilton, Ann  
*Face to Face—33*, 2001  
Pigment print in artist's frame

Hobson, Mary Daniel  
*Measure*, 1998  
Mixed media

Hobson, Mary Daniel  
*Nocturne*, 1999  
Mixed media

Katchadourian, Nina  
*Mended Spiderweb #8  
(Fish Shaped Patch), Web Mended  
July 16, 1998, 5 am*, 1998  
Chromogenic print

Kokin, Lisa  
*Bored of Ironing*, 1997  
Mixed media

Lester-Slack, Lynda  
*Vamp*, 2005  
Chromogenic print

Mandelbaum, Ann  
*Untitled #67*, 1994  
Gelatin silver print

Mandelbaum, Ann  
*Untitled #92*, 1995  
Gelatin silver print

Mendieta, Ana  
*El Labertino de la vida/Labyrinth  
of Life*, 1982  
Black and white photograph

Mendieta, Ana  
*Untitled*, c. 1984-84  
Wash on paper

Mendieta, Ana  
*Incantation to Olokun-Yemaya*,  
1977  
Black and white photograph

Mendieta, Ana  
*Silueta: Iowa (tree with flowers)*,  
1991  
Color photograph

Mendieta, Ana  
*Untitled (from "Fetish" series)*,  
1977  
Color photograph

Mendieta, Ana  
*Untitled (Body Tracks)*, 1974-97  
Suite of five Chromogenic prints

Minter, Marilyn  
*Crisco*, 2003  
Enamel on metal

Neshat, Shirin  
*Rapture Series (Women on Beach Scattered)*, 1999  
Color photograph

Okada, Chikako  
*Quiet Invitation*, 1995  
Oil on canvas

Pascual, Marlo  
*Untitled*, 2010  
Digital Chromogenic print on watercolor paper

Pica, Amalia  
*Sorry for the metaphor 3 (with lake)*, 2010  
Black and white laser copies

Ryan, Liza  
*Displacement 12*, 1998  
Chromogenic prints

Ryan, Liza  
*Displacement 13*, 1998  
Chromogenic prints

Seror, Kiki  
*Modus Operandi*, 2005  
¾ inch surveillance video camera transferred to DVD  
5 min, 13 sec.

Smith, Kiki  
*Las Animas*, 1997  
Photogravure

Smith, Kiki  
*Untitled (Head with Coins)*, 1998  
Bronze with silver nitrate

Stender, Oriane  
*Eye/Chin (self/image series)*, 2000  
Black and white photograph, thread

Sze, Sarah  
*Addition (Birds Nests and Measuring Tapes)*, 2011  
Wood, enamel, wire, plastic, metal

Tyson, Nicola  
*View #2*, 1999  
Acrylic on canvas

Williams, Sue  
*Darker Aspects*, 1997  
Oil and acrylic on canvas

Woodman, Francesca  
*I. 177 Roma, May 1977–August 1978*, 1999  
Gelatin silver print

Woodman, Francesca  
*N. 303/New York, 1979–80*, 1999  
Gelatin silver print

