

Where is your rupture?  
SI/NY - The Swiss Institute, New York  
September 10 - November 1, 1998

This publication accompanies the exhibition  
Where is your rupture?  
curated by Liz Kotz and Annette Schindler and  
organized by SI/NY - The Swiss Institute, N.Y.

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has been made possible, in part,  
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Karin and Peter Schindler,  
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Where is your rupture?

an exhibition at SI/NY - The Swiss Institute New York

Ami Adler  
Hanspeter Ammann  
Lutz Bacher  
Birgit Kempker  
Marlene McCarty

Where is your rupture?

an exhibition at SI/NY - The Swiss Institute New York



Where is your rupture?  
S  
Your  
Mind  
+  
fire?

Amy Adler

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Amy Adler

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Amy Adler: Transfer into Otherness

by **Liz Kotz**

"Every day the urge grows stronger to get a hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction." – **Walter Benjamin**

"The world itself has taken on a photographic face: it can be photographed because it strives to be absorbed into the spatial continuity which yields to snapshots." – **Siegfried Kracauer**

While still in graduate school, Amy Adler began working on an ongoing project collecting images. She clipped photos of figures, mostly actors/celebrities, with whose lives or images she felt a resonance: Jodie Foster, River Phoenix, Mariel Hemingway, Leonardo diCaprio. She later used some of the found images as source material for her works, which consistently take the form of strange hybrids of drawing and photography, with varying degrees of photographic and, at times, digital manipulation.

What is the status of these images in her work? How are they to be read? And what relation do they have (if any) to Adler's admittedly peculiar, even convoluted, process of making her work? We first notice that these images take their place alongside two other main registers of images that appear in her work: anonymous images – such as those of *Team* (1994) or *The Problem Child* (1995) – and images of the artist herself, which may or may not be considered "self-portraits." The uncertainty over whether the works which portray the artist – such as *Surfing* (1997) – should be considered self-portraits is bound up with the problem of how these images of public figures function in her work.

First off, who appears in these images? Since their source materials were film stills, it is not clear whether they depict the actor or the character. They depict the actor playing a character – already something of a slippery position in terms, say, of the assumptions structuring the portrait genre, which presumes a strict and exclusive "fit" between figurative likeness, individual identity and personal history. Since its historical beginnings in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, photography was among the technologies which helped institute and regulate this "fit," as the intertwined histories of the police mug shot and the photographic portrait attest.<sup>1</sup> Yet much as photography, in its supposed documentary nature, is expected to help regulate this economy (one face = one person = one history) it also seems to screw it up. As the quote from Walter Benjamin cited above suggests, photography has a paradoxical tendency to put the viewing subject into a strange proximity and distance to what it depicts, in a way which can promote an instability, and potential reversibility, in positions of perceiving subject and perceived object.

This instability is part of what theorist Celia Lurie terms the "subject effects" of photography, of *seeing photographically*. By its inherent capacity to fix, freeze and frame its objects, photography tends not only to detach them from context but to disrupt or collapse the distance between cause and effect, subject and object, signifier and referent.<sup>2</sup> All this may seem familiar enough, yet despite our intense familiarity with seeing photographically, it is still not clear that we fully understand the enormous effects this has on subjectivity, on the very construction of subjects – and the ways these effects invade and inform domains that far exceed that of photography proper.

One of Lurie's key insights is how photographs act as something akin to perceptual prostheses, propelling the subject beyond prior boundaries of the self. More traditional forms of self-understanding, such as psychoanalysis and philosophical self-reflection – "I think, therefore I am" – work primarily via the subject-effects of narrative: subjects become accustomed to telling stories that simultaneously describe and produce their own senses of self. As increasingly complex forms of technology – photography, cinema, computers, etc. – become available, these function prosthetically, to prop up and expand our sense of personal experience and capacity. This "artificial extension of capability," Lurie argues, promotes a kind of "transfer into otherness," in which the boundaries between the self and

external objects and experiences are perpetually blurred and redrawn. As images, stories and technologies proliferate in advanced industrial culture, our own self-constructions increasingly take on aspects of what Lurie terms "prosthetic biographies," propelling an ongoing process of experimentation in which individuality is strategically disassembled and reassembled.<sup>3</sup>

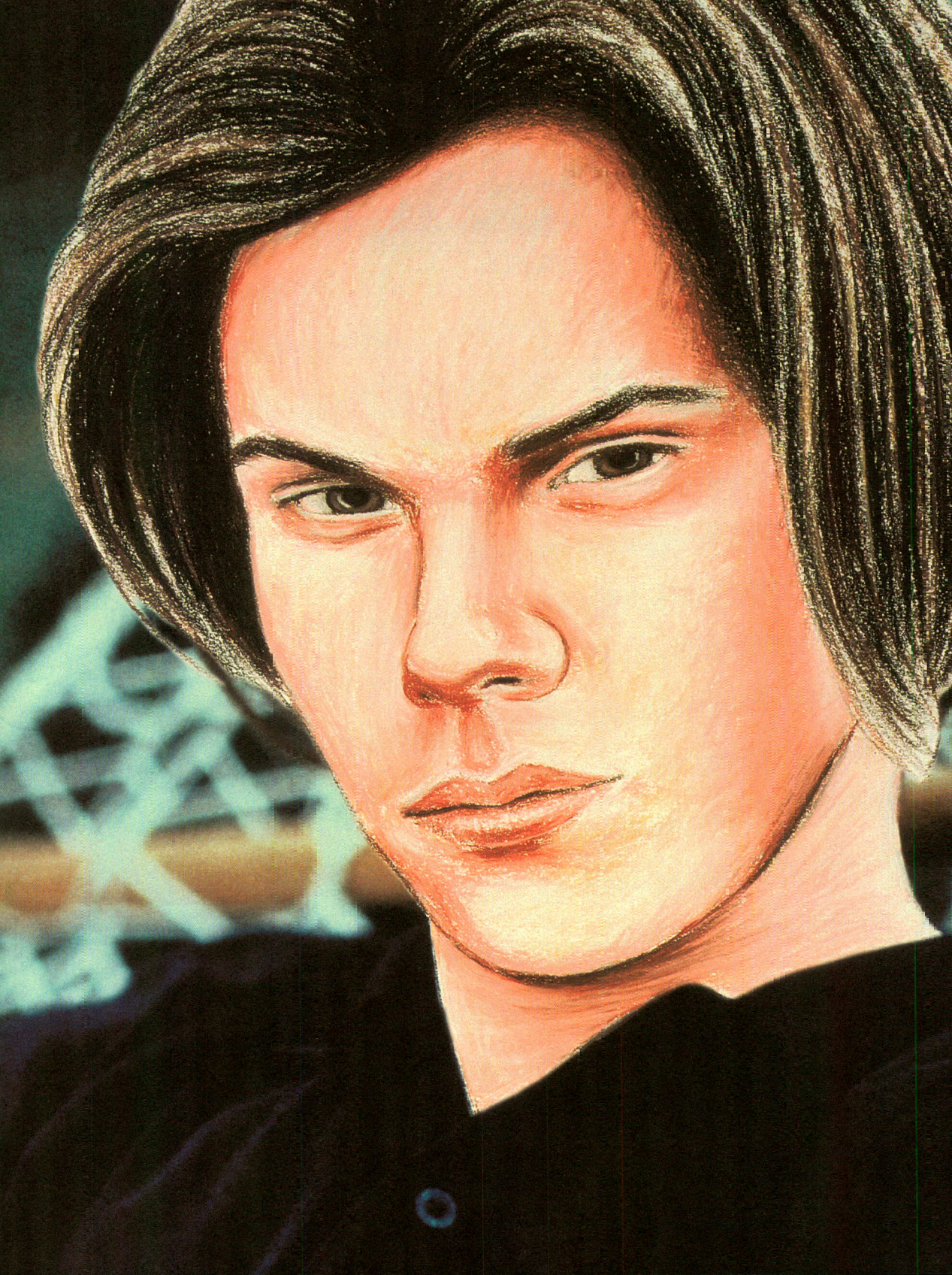
In the past twenty years, a whole range of art practices have emerged which use photography to explore this imbrication of image, identity and technologies of mechanical reproduction. To the extent that selfhood is formed in an intimate relation with the image, the capacities of photographic technologies to continually fragment, reassemble and rearrange the visual image clearly function as both analogue and model for contemporary processes of subject formation. From the careful manipulation of photographic codes to simulate film stills in Cindy Sherman's work, to the more technically seamless computer manipulation in the work of Inez van Lamsweerde, the capacities of digital manipulation increase and accelerate these processes. What is striking in Adler's work, of course, is the return to the very old medium of drawing, which she combines with more conventional photographic (and frequently digital) processes of reproduction. Why does Adler use drawing to intervene into the reproduction of the found and reprocessed image? And why does the drawing have to disappear, to end up in an end product, which takes the form of a photographic print?

Perhaps the consequences of these choices become clearer in looking at those works in which Adler has used computer manipulation to "join" drawn and photographic materials together into an amalgam image, as in *Raising Your Gifted Child* and *Surfing* (both 1997). The image "joins" in *Raising Your Gifted Child* are jarringly anti-illusionist: mixing color and black and white, and see-sawing in and out of focus and perspective, the different pictorial elements refuse to cohere onto a shared spatial plane. Rather than melding into a quasi-seamless whole, the composited image rents apart violently, awkwardly. Not a "successful" or pleasing image, it is somehow monstrous. Do we simply attribute this to Adler's inexperience (this was one of her first computer composited images) or the limitations of technology? Do we note that this is not only one of her only group scenes, but, perhaps tellingly, one which depicts a family? And where would we locate Adler's subjectivity in this image which so dramatically "fails" to hold together?

In *Surfing*, a subsequent work, the pictorial "joins" are managed somewhat more evenly: only after a double-take, perhaps, do we notice that only the figure is drawn, and that the bikini top and background (with distant figures) are photographic. In Adler's work, drawing works as the bearer of the image, it has to hold the image – particularly, it has to carry the human figure, that pictorial element which is the center of every image and yet, systematically excluded from straightforward photographic reproduction in Adler's work.

Other artists, such as Sherrie Levine or Richard Prince, have used rephotography to re-author an existing image, to refocus and recompose pictorial elements, and to invest new desires into existing visual scenarios. Yet Adler's insistence on manually rendering her figures with pastels, physically re-transcribing them, seems both lovingly intimate and oddly aggressive: the gesture reproduces a pre-existing image but also cancels it out, replaces it: leaving in its place a hand-drawn substitute that cannot be mistaken for the photographic source, that insistently attests to the artist's manual, bodily intervention. Elsewhere I have suggested that this kind of drawing has less to do with traditional associations of the hand with mastery, virtuosity or the expressive subjectivity of the artist than with a kind of emotional weight and bodily transaction, with drawing as a form of subjection and labor. And Adler herself has discussed how the photograph – both as source material and as rephotographed

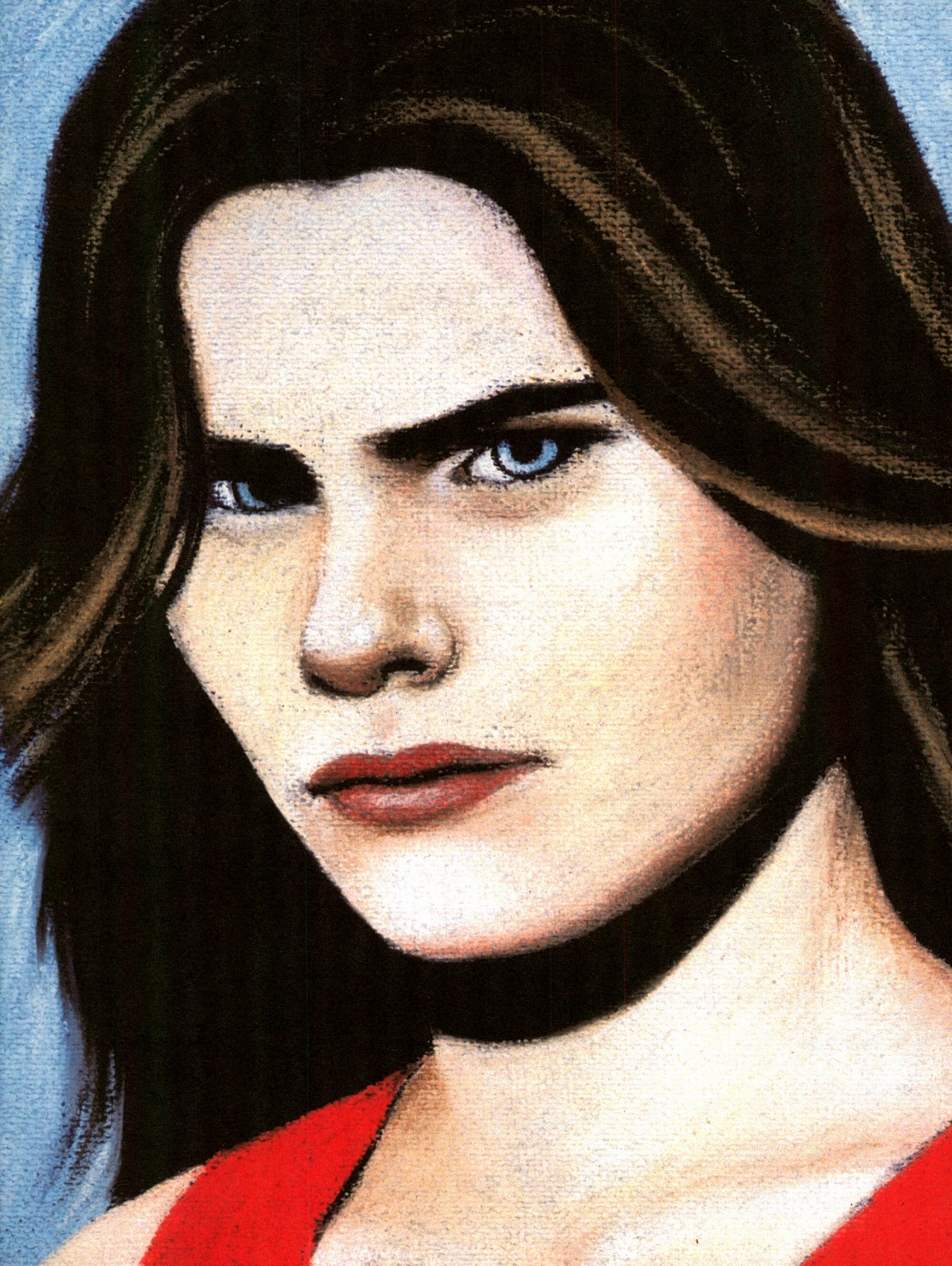


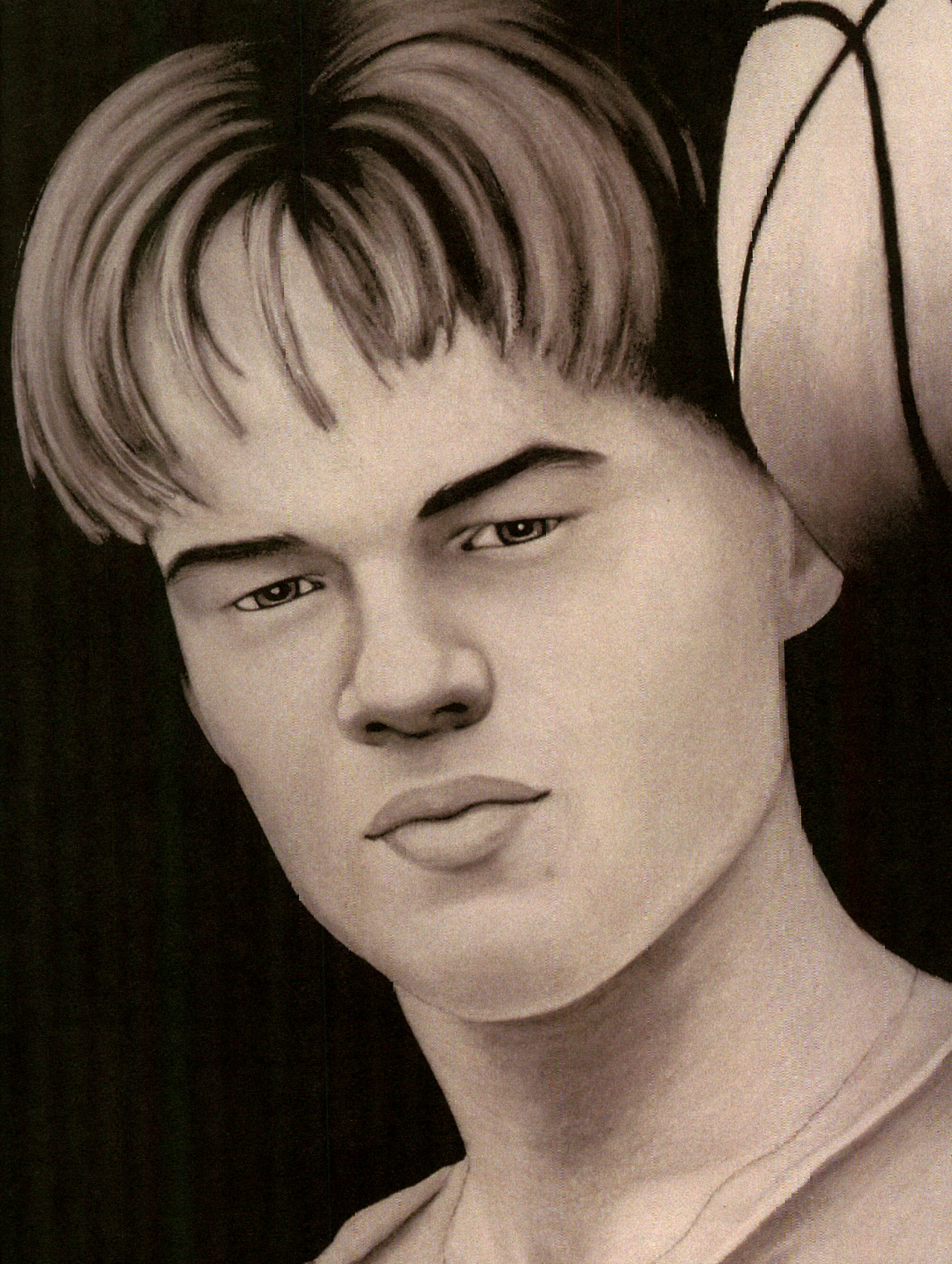












frame – works to set strict constraints on the intervention of the hand, holding the reprocessed image strictly to the visual structure of the original.<sup>4</sup>

In the series of faces that peer out from the pages of this catalogue, all are details from works by Adler from the past few years. The five figures don't particularly resemble one another: two male, three female, all relatively young and attractive, it's not initially clear what holds them together. If anything, they present a catalogue of Adler's different drawing styles and different degrees of technical manipulation. Yet they share a quality of self-consciously rendered interiority that leads me to consider *all* of them to be Adler's "self-portraits." What links them is not so much likeness or resemblance as this intense focus on *touch*, on the hand-drawn mark, that transforms the surface of the drawing into a palpable presence – as if all these figures were different aspects of one person, or as if the same subject were looking at us from different faces, from within different skin. In *Surfing*, the re-photographed background provides a very defined space in which the figure looms oddly: the flesh seems so heavy, so voluminous, the drawn figure isn't fully "in" the scene. Her gaze peers off at something we cannot see; yet the scene visually surrounds her, contains her. She presents herself as an image to the camera, and yet there is this gaze around the figure in which she also takes in the scene surrounding her as an image.

As Lurie notes, part of the conventional appeal of photography is the promise of a seamless, spatially continuous image of a social reality we actually confront as fractured and dispersed. It promises a model of vision which is exterior, stable, veridical and grounded in the referent, so unlike the vision we every day experience as corporeal, temporal, subjective, and potentially faulty. Adler understands that the technology she uses will soon become outdated, replaced by techniques allowing "a more potentially malleable landscape." By inscribing the hand-drawn figure into the center of the photographic image, Adler insistently recorporealizes vision, resubjectivizes it, to insist on the status of perception as inseparably bodily, psychic, and laden with fantasy. And just as the subjectivities which she depicts disrupt continuities of body, memory and identity, Adler's constructions disturb the spatial continuity of the photograph, forcefully presenting her images as amalgams of human and mechanical effort which carry their own history and processes of construction as a visible and even disconcerting residue.

1. The classic analysis of this is Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," *October* #39, 1986, pp.3-65.

2. Celia Lurie, *Prosthetic Culture: Photography, Memory and Identity* (London: Routledge, 1998). This article relies on a number of concepts developed in Lurie's text.

3. The only difficulty with this model is that the very term "prosthetic" seems to imply that things could somehow be otherwise, that a more discrete, bounded selfhood could exist free of such mimetic incorporations. But subjectivity, by definition, is founded on this ongoing internalization of what was once "external"; any sense of self emerges and takes shape precisely through ongoing processes of identification and introjection. What Lurie's work does provide, however, is a means of extending our understanding of subjectivity, to see it as operating to identify with and internalize a whole range of "objects" that include not only other people but also images, capacities and experiences which are continually expanded via technology.

4. Liz Kotz, "Amy Adler: Surrogates," *Art & Text* #61, 1998, pp.28-31.

**Surfing**, 1997, c print 30" x 40" (detail shown in catalogue centerfold)  
Collection of Gary and Tracy Mezzatesta, Los Angeles

catalogue images in order of appearance:

**Raising Your Gifted Child**, 1997, cibachrome print, 50" x 38" (detail)

**River**, 1997, c print, 40" x 30" (detail)

**Surfing**, 1997, c print, 30" x 40" (detail)

**Sport**, 1995, c print, 24" x 18" (detail)

**King**, 1994, silver gelatin print, 50" x 38" (detail)

Images courtesy of the artist and Casey Kaplan, New York.

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Amy Adler

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Born 1966 in New York City; lives and works in Los Angeles

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EDUCATION

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1987 Hochschule der Künste, Berlin, Germany  
1989 The Cooper Union, New York, BFA  
1994 American Photography Institute, National Graduate Seminar, NYU, New York  
1995 University of California, Los Angeles, MFA

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ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS

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1994 **Amy Adler – Photographs**, TRI Gallery, Hollywood  
1996 **What Happened to Amy?**, Casey Kaplan, New York  
1997 **Once in Love with Amy**, Casey Kaplan, New York  
1998 **Focus Series: Amy Adler**, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles  
**The Problem Child**, Entwistle Gallery, London, England

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SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

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1990 **Empire State Biennial**, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse  
1992 **Twisted Vision/Version (The Irony Show)**, Four Walls, Curated by Trudie Reiss, Brooklyn, New York  
**Neurosis**, Artists Space, New York  
1993 **Loose Slots**, Temporary Contemporary, Las Vegas, organized by Richard Kuhlenschmidt  
1994 **Summer 1994**, TRI Gallery, Los Angeles  
**Super Woman**, University of California, Irvine  
1995 **In A Different Light**, University Art Museum, Berkeley  
**A Glimpse of the Norton Collection**, Santa Monica Museum of Art, Santa Monica  
**Self-Portrayal**, POST, Los Angeles  
**Greatest Hits**, TRI Gallery, Los Angeles  
**Smells Like Vinyl**, Roger Merinas Gallery, New York  
1996 **Stream of Consciousness: 8 Los Angeles Artists**, University Art Museum, UC Santa Barbara, curated by Liz Brown  
**Skin Deep**, Thomas Solomon's Garage, Los Angeles  
**Be Specific**, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Santa Monica, curated by Michael Duncan  
**Gender, Fucked**, Center of Contemporary Art, Seattle, curated by Catherine Lord  
1997 **Spheres of Influence: Selections from The Permanent Collection**, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles  
**The Name of the Place**, Casey Kaplan, New York, organized by Laurie Simmons  
1998 **Phoenix Triennial**, Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix  
**Where is your rupture?**, The Swiss Institute, New York

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AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

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1994 American Photography Institute, Fellowship, National Graduate Seminar  
1994 Levinson Scholarship, University of California, Los Angeles  
1994 Los Angeles Center for Photographic Studies, Olson Materials Grant

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PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

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Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

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SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

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1996 Elizabeth A. Brown, **Stream of Consciousness: 8 Los Angeles Artists**, University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara

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 "P.S. I Love You," **Bop**, March, p.69  
 Rebecca Solnit, "Berkeley Fax: In A Different Light," **Art Issues**, March/April, p.33  
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 Michael Duncan, "Queering the Discourse," **Art in America**, July, p.28  
 David Pagel, "Art and Youth," **The Los Angeles Times**, August 24, p.F12  
 Cecilia Dogherty, "Identity Crisis," **New Art Examiner**, September, p.31  
 Chris Myles, "City of Now," **Lingo**, April, p.56
- 1996 Roberta Smith, "Enter Youth, With Subtlety," **The New York Times**, May 17, p.B1  
 Elise Harris, "Ajit Pop," **Out**, July, p.44  
 Shelia Farr, "Gender Discomforts," **Seattle Weekly**, July 31, p.35  
 Todd Hovanec, "Eight is (Sometimes) Great," **Daily Nexus**, October 31  
 Christopher Knight, "Riding Traditions' Currents to a Higher Consciousness," **The Los Angeles Times**, October 10, p.F4  
 Elizabeth A.Brown, "Stream of Consciousness: 8 Los Angeles Artists," **Exhibition Catalogue**, September, p.18  
 Ingrid Schafner, "Amy Adler" **Artforum**, May, p.99  
 Amy Bloom, "A Face in the Crowd," **Vogue**, December, p.295
- 1997 David Frankel, "The Name of the Place," **Artforum**, May, p.104  
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 Holland Cotter, "Amy Adler," **The New York Times**, September 19, p.B33  
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Where is your rupture?  
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# Birgit Kempker

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Birgit Kempker

Where is your rupture?

## Die Engel geben das Ruder ab an die Vögel

Wer den Kopf öffnet, ertrinkt, in der Welt. Explosion. Wer den Kopf nicht öffnet, ertrinkt, in sich selbst. Implosion. Wen die Welt ordert, singt. Wer in der Welt steht, schwimmt. Wer, im englischen, bei den Fischen schläft, ist ertrunken.

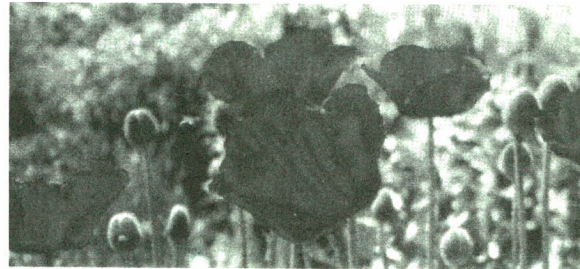
Wen die Welt trinkt, den liebt sie. Wer geliebt ist, ist in sich selbst in der Welt. Osmose. Wer in sich selbst in der Welt ist, ist ausser sich. Glück. Wer sich in die Welt setzt, trinkt die Welt.

Wer zwischen sich und die Welt Sätze setzt, ist ein Fisch. Sätze sind Dachse und sitzen vor den Höhlen, vor den Rissen, vor den Eingängen, vor Feuer, Wasser, Licht und Luft und auf der Fontanelle, im Gletscher und auf den Füßen, dem Spann, tief in der Erde, im Vulkan, in Wolken und im Drachenatem, sie heissen auch: Maulwurf und: Ich.

Jeder weiss, das Fisch Vogel ist. Jeder weiss, dass Vogel Engel. Jeder weiss: die Engel geben das Ruder ab an die Vögel, wenn es Liebe ist. Jeder weiss, dass ohne Liebe nichts ist. Jeder weiss, dass wo nichts ist. Elemente spielen.

Wer in der Liebe ist, ist kirre im Leib. Jeder weiss, dass Leib von hinten Beil ist und mit ihm und durch ihn zu spalten. Jeder weiss, dass Öffnen Liebe ist. Jeder weiss, dass in der Liebe Spalten sind. Jeder, der in der Spalte steckt, steckt in Gefahr und jedes Wissen ist Spalte.

Jeder weiss, dass Liebe den Leib in alle fünf Winde pfeffert und in Gegenden, von denen wir nichts wissen und aber viele Legenden anlegen, weil die Liebe den Leib beileibe nicht will, sondern durch ihn hindurch auf eine Weise hindurch will, die wir nicht wollen können, weil wir es nicht sind, die dann sind. So liegen in uns die Toten ertrunken und jeder weiss, dass Zoo Friedhof ist und die Tiere alle und Blumen und Steine und Strassen in uns und aussen um uns und wir Sputnike sind. Kometen.



**Die weiteste Verbreitung auf der Erde hat der Mensch erlangt. Er vermag in den Eiswüsten der Arktis wie in dem heißen Dschungel der Tropen zu leben. Mit Hilfe von Geräten forsch er sowohl unter dem Wasser als auch über den Wolken.**

The angels give the rudder to the birds

If you open your head, you'll drown in the world. Explosion. If you don't open your head, you'll drown in yourself. Implosion. If the world gives you the order, you'll sing. If you stand in the world, you'll swim. In English, to drown is to sleep with the fish.

If the world drinks you, it loves you. If you're loved, you're in yourself in the world. Osmosis. If you're in yourself in the world, you're beside yourself. Happiness. If you bring yourself into the world, you'll drink the world. If you put sentences between yourself and the world, you're a fish. Sentences are badgers; they sit in front of caves, in front of cracks, in front of entrances, in front of fire, water, light, and air; they sit on their fontanels, in the glacier, and on their feet; they sit on their insteps, deep in the earth, in volcanoes, in clouds, and in dragon breath; they're also called mole – and I.

Jeder weiss, dass wir in der Welt sind.  
Jeder weiss, dass wir lieben und trinken.  
Jeder weiss, dass wir aus Wasser sind – die  
Männer weniger, die Frauen mehr aus Fett –  
und was uns tötet, Liebe nennen, wenn wir ins  
blanke Messer rennen.

Wenn uns wer die Haut abzieht, das Fleisch  
von den Knochen schabt, die Venen ritzt, die  
Organe zerteilt, das Nervengeflecht zerstückelt,  
uns bis aufs kleinste Atömchen halbiert, dann sind  
wir in Behandlung, der Geister, in schönstem Transit.

Wer im Tunnel steckt, ist abgegeben. Wer sich abgibt,  
ist aufgegeben, ist adressiert. Mit Spucke. Wer  
adressiert ist und noch nicht ganz da, dem kann es wie  
Kafkas in die Briefe geschriebenen Küsse geschehen,  
die auf dem Weg von Geistern ausgetrunken und  
dann aber um so mehr da und nämlich heiss und  
süchtig aufgelesen sind.

Everybody knows fish is bird. Everybody knows  
bird is angel. Everybody knows the angels will give  
the rudder to the birds if it's love. Everybody  
knows there's nothing without love. Everybody knows  
the elements play where there's nothing.

If you're in love, you're crazy in your body.  
Everybody knows body is axe backwards  
and can be split with it and by it.  
Everybody knows splitting is opening. Everybody knows  
opening is love. Everybody knows there are cracks in love.  
Everybody hidden in the crack is in danger, and every knowing is a  
crack.

Everybody knows love throws the body to the five winds,  
into regions we know nothing of,  
which there are many legends about, because love  
doesn't want the body at all but does want  
to go through it, legends we can't  
want because we aren't what then is.

So the dead lie drowned in us  
and everybody knows zoo is cemetery and we and  
all the animals and flowers and stones and streets  
inside us and outside of  
us are sputniks. Comets.

Everybody knows we're in the world.  
Everybody knows we love and drink.  
Everybody knows we're made of water – and  
of fat, the men less, the women more –  
and we call what kills us love when we run into  
the open knife.

When someone skins up, scrapes the flesh  
from the bones, opens up the veins,  
takes apart the organs, cuts up the web of nerves,  
reduces us to our smallest atoms – then we're in  
treatment, by ghosts, underway in the most beautiful way.

If you're in a tunnel, you've been delivered. If you've been delivered,  
you've been mailed. If you've been mailed,  
you've been addressed. With spit. If you're addressed and not yet  
really there, what happened to the kisses Kafka wrote in his letters  
might happen to you – drunk up by ghosts on the way and then  
there even more, hotly and greedily taken in.

Übung im Ertrinken Exercise in Drowning

Ich I

Das wär gesprochen.	That was spoken.
Der See sieht verzettelt aus.	The sea looks wasted.
See, stellst du dir U-boote vor?	Sea, are you imagining submarines?
Arche Noah? Tiere? Sprich!	Noah's ark? Animals? Speak!
Sprich keinem See von Autonomie!	Don't talk to any sea about autonomy!
Sprich: Übung im Ertrinken.	Say: exercise in drowning.
Der See schüttelt sich.	The sea is shaking.
Sprich: Traktate über Wege.	Say: tracts about ways.
Nicht Traktor!	Not tractor!
Traktier!	Way!

Weg Head

Das Schwarz der Vögel ist voll.	How does head start to open?
Die Vögel fallen vom Himmel.	If it itches, call it head.
Wege, kreischen die Vögel.	Once it's named, it gets lost outside.
	Don't call it head.
Kreischen?	Stick it into other words.
Kreischen die Vögel auf die Leute?	Sew it a magic hat every day.
Wohin fällt das Kreischen?	Start with Monday.
Sind die Leute voll?	Monday's a magic hat for your head.
Voll Kreischen?	It's easy to sew a magic hat.
Ist das Fallen Weg?	you sew the Monday.
Wann? Wie lang?	you pull the Monday over your head.
Aus welcher Entfernung?	Say: it's Monday, but it's your head.
Brodelt Magma?	
Ist Entferno?	You others?
Echnaton?	You, the body's many faithful limbs,
Ferner Ton?	which struggle with you day in, day out
Ist Not und Entfernung?	through all the gray days?
	Protest!
Erst ist der Weg, auf dem Weg: du,	Get sick!
darüber die Vögel, dann schwarz.	Emigrate!
Viel Schwarz.	Keep flowering somewhere else!
Dann Kreischen.	Ache from now on!
Dann Fallen.	Team up with the head.
	Bundle yourself up in big heavy bird bundles.
Siehst du den Zipfel?	Buzz off.
Ist es Zeit für Taubenköpfen?	
Ist es persönliche Zeit?	
Ist Untergang schön?	
Sind schon Reiter zu sehen?	

Es wimmelt.	<b>Hat</b>
Es wuselt.	
Es gibt keinen Platz.	Go under the hat.
Es gibt kein bisschen leere Zeit.	Hat is brake above head.
Keinen Fingerhut voll.	Hat is comfort full of curve.
Die Ohren voll mit Lamento.	Hat is stable.
Dann Hörsturz.	Hat is shoulder.
	Hat is shelter and hat is protection.
<b>Hörsturz</b>	Hat is hiding place for head.
	Hide head!
Crescendo.	Hiding place from bird shit,
Die Pferde, die Hunde, die Katzen.	hide.
Die Reiter.	Snow, sun, pine needles, car exhaust;
Die Läuse auf den Stengeln	bumblebees, hornets, horse flies;
auf den Honigwegen;	defiance against delusion,
die Frösche, die Vögel, die Wolken.	the open head can hold hat.
Carambolage. Geklumpe. Konglomerat.	Hold the open head!
Konklusion.	
Zusammenschluss.	Hat keeps head and earth together,
	except in Berlin,
Stein, Schwimmweste, Baum,	where Berlin stands on sand,
das geht nicht ohne Vokabeln.	fallen from the moon, historically.
Traktier Vokabel!	Fallen from the moon, historically,
	hat keeps the head in Berlin
	and sand together.
	<b>Feld</b>
Zuerst ist das Hören.	<b>Pompom</b>
Das Echo des Hörens steigt hoch	
zu den Vögeln.	What the knot is for the pompom,
Kreischen die Vögel vor dem Hören?	the pompom is for the cap.
Fallen die Vögel nach dem Hören auf den Weg?	Know the pompom.
	Through its pompom, hat keeps in touch with heaven,
Diese Vögel halten den Abstand nicht ein.	ray after ray.
Diese Vögel wollen zu nah ran.	Pompom, spread out your arrival up there.
Die Vögel sind schuld.	Arrive, pompom!
	Fly!
	Hats without pompoms will be represented below and above
<b>Familie</b>	by the pompoms of hats
Ellipse, Parabel, Hitchcock.	with pompoms. Absented?
Sei voll mit Zeichen auf den Wegen.	Have a chat
Verständnis, breite dich aus.	under a hat.
Sieh Muster, sag dazu: Kohärenz.	
Oder Familie. Oder Verwandtschaft.	Whoever lives under the hat will be warm
Tauchen. Schwimmen. Hai.	and in good company with himself
Öffne den Kopf!	and quest for other guests
	and radiating via pompoms.

## Weite Nietzsche

Die schönste Art von Weite. Tritt aus.	Rest your head on the pillow.
Es verlässt dich.	Head calls: memory to memory.
Entlass dich.	Nietzsche calls:
Lächel.	When man considered it necessary
Sei nicht hoch,	to invent memory, it never worked
nicht gewölbt,	without blood, martyrs, sacrifices.
nicht ausgestreckt,	So, you bodies, open up your heads without delay.
nicht gespreizt,	
nicht pudrig,	<b>Substance</b>
nicht wattig,	Take substances.
nicht Sand,	Why should you take substances
nicht Kieselstein.	to see what you know --
Nicht Gebüsch, nicht Hügel, nicht Muld,	that you're full of substances?
nicht Pfütze, Moor, See.	Be full of substances!
Nicht Sieb.	Be tender.
Nicht Schwamm.	Drown in tenderness.
Nicht Adjektiv.	Go a little underway.
Nicht scheu.	Swallow water.
Sanfter.	To not want the wave not over you.
Sei porös.	Want wave.
Sei eine dieser tentakligen	
mysteriösen Monstranzen?	
Polyp? Dieser mentalen Osmosen?	<b>Knowing</b>
Tabernakelchen?	To shut the knowing.
Dies spitze Kehlchen zu Gott?	To open the not-knowing.
Tunnelkelchkanal?	To put sentences in front of the entrances
	and badgers in front of the sentences.
<b>Rotkehlchen</b>	To attract sharks.
Freu dich.	To tie fear to the sharks, tied fast
Kurze schöne leere Zeit.	and forgotten,
Aus dir ausgetreten, verdichtet es sich.	to float forgotten in the bubble, tied fast.
Hat es dich verlassen, erkenn es.	Closed and osmotic.
Erkenn es als Form, die dich verlässt.	Osmotic, then open bubble.
Erkenn dich als das, was du nicht bist.	Blow.
Sei froh, dass sie geht, diese Form.	Be clever and idiotic.
Wie geht das ohne Form?	
	<b>Snake</b>
Dem Erkennen hängt Traurigkeit an,	Look: the way is heavy and full.
wenn das Erkennen Verlassen ist: Liebe.	Far and wide, no place for you.
Komisches Spiel.	For you, the master of the foot,
Brave Welt, die solche Leute hat.	the master of the foot, assuming:
	the way on which you set your foot
Die Form reitet davon, als Figur.	is not the snake which swallows you.
Austritt, aus den Feldern der Bedeutung.	

<b>Wald</b>	Fall on what's crumbling, on what's rotten. Fall, eyes first, toward it.
Kein Wort.	Sail away beneath yourself,
Freies Feld.	you speck of dust.
Freu dich zu Ende.	Spastic dud?
Kurze schöne leere Zeit.	
Dann Krawall, denn Karawane mit Karacho auf dich zu.	<b>Claw</b>
Duck dich.	Sign with red claw.
Schütte dir Sand auf den Kopf.	Build an ibis.
Reib dir die Augen.	Fetch wood.
Atme nicht.	Cut the body.
Beweg dich nicht.	Cut the white egg as body.
Stell dich tot.	Sand it with bacon rind.
Sei doch nur dies Häufchen Asche eben ausgestreut.	Glue the body to the neck. Drill holes.
Häng dir das Schild vor das Haupt:	Stick the legs in the holes.
Herberge heute geschlossen.	Say: ibis. The ibis belongs to Pessoa.
Wort für Wort treten sie in deinen Kopf.	Shout out loud: togetherness in the woods.
Mit Blume, mit Mehl, mit Muscat?	Thoughts black.
Mit Zimt, mit Rosen, Zimbeln? Wald?	Birds heavy in the sky.
Liebstöckel, Myrrhe, Vogelbeeren?	Connect like Goethe. Melt like Hamlet.
Legtest du deinen Kopf auf den Weg?	Shit yourself into the air like Beckett.
Sagtest du: nichts, nur Worte?	Get in line.
Sagtest du: ertrinken?	Mix with ghosts. Drown!

### **Blaue Stellen**

Veilchen.	<b>Pulse</b>
Mit dem Wort tritt das Fleisch und das Ding, mit dem Fleisch und dem Ding die Not in den Kopf:	Fly and scratch the pulse. Touch the stream. Sit on the roof.
die Hortung, Stafflung, Verpekung. Bäume, Äste, Nester.	Where's the blood? Ask your guide.
Dreiergruppen, Rhythmen, Ton. Explosion.	Nothing streams from the pulse. Feel like stream.
Nester wackeln.	Glisten like gold from the cut.
Piepmätze sperren Schnäbel auf. Vögel fliegen durch den Kopf,	Put the joint in a splint, wrap gauze around the hand.
Würmern durch den Wald, der dein Kopf ist, und schwirren.	Fly higher. Don't touch a telephone pole. Don't touch a tree. Wrap red wool around the hand. Don't forget yourself in the dream.

## Kopf Hedgehog

Wie fängt Kopf an sich zu öffnen? Stand in the hallway!  
Wenn er juckt, nenn ihn Kopf. A hedgehog in each hand.  
Ist er genannt, geht er draussen verloren. From the left, the rat jumps onto your pulse.  
Nenn ihn nicht Kopf. Forget yourself!  
Steck ihn in andere Worte.  
Näh ihm täglich Tarnung. **Rudder**  
Beginne mit Montag. The angels give the rudder to the birds.  
Eine Tarnung für Kopf ist Montag. Stand in the hallway!  
Tarnung ist einfach zu nähen. Throw your head back.  
Du nähst den Montag. Call: give me my bird!  
Du stülpest dir den Montag über den Kopf.  
Sag: es ist Montag, doch es ist dein Kopf.

## Autonomy

Ihr anderen?  
Ihr vielen treuen Glieder des Körpers, Sit at sea and say: autonomy.  
die sich tagaus tagein mühen mit dir The sea laughs.  
durch all die grauen Tage? Olson says the sign for I is boat.  
Protestiert!

## Tipping

Werdet krank!  
Wandert aus!  
Blüht anderswo weiter!  
Tut ab sofort weh!  
Verbündet euch mit dem Kopf. Think something simple while opening.  
Bündelt euch zu grossen schweren Vogelbünden. Float slantwise to the ceiling.  
Schwirrt ab. Drink tea upstairs with Uncle Albert.  
Dangle your legs.  
**Wand** Tip back your chair.

Zwirbel. Do you want to go down?  
Durch den Silberfaden. Think something hard.  
Durch den schnellen Schnürchenweg. Be sad.  
Düse durch Korridore. You are as soon as you ask yourself what you are:  
you are sad and down  
and being down just happens.  
Hau dich aus den Wäldern. Few know the art  
Wenn du im Wald stehst: sing. of being awake overhead,  
Wenn du in wem begraben liegst: schwimm. and they are the ones who know falling.  
Wenn es abend wird: ertrinke! Fall upwards.  
**Der Morgen nach dem Ertrinken** Be shat into the sky.

Sieh am morgen Schatten ums Wasser  
huschen. Tuscheln.  
Sieh sie Pfähle ins Wasser rammen.  
Sieh sie Grenzen abstecken.  
Lächle.



**Hasenherz Star**

Schön ist es, nicht verstanden zu sein. Look at the way.  
Auf dies Verständnis lauf zu Is it rearing?  
Haste nicht. Touch the star  
Verzweig dich. between your eyes.  
Strauchel. In which contexts  
Spring. do ways rear up?  
In which contexts

**Heiterkeit** do stars bloom between your eyes?  
Bloom!

Sieh Heiterkeit! The tissue between the eyes  
Heiterkeit sähe so aus, is moored, stitched, and so on to the back –  
als rolle das Verständnis auf dich, read anatomy!  
am Rand sitzend,

**Way**  
mit den Beinen baumelnd,  
auf Igefinken, auf pelzigen Pantöffelchen,  
auf Schlittenkufen, The black of the birds is full.  
auf Röllchen dir unter die Füße, The birds fall from the sky.  
rolle, rolle nahtlos, Ways, shriek the birds.  
wie ohne Übergang,  
rolle wie Weg ohne Weg. Shriek?

**Schlaf** Where does the shrieking fall?  
Are the people full?

Du willst nicht dein Kopf sein. Full of shrieking?  
Was aus deinem Kopf tritt Is the falling way?  
und schlendert When? How long?  
und schlummert, From what distance?  
was schlendert und schlummert, Does magma bubble?  
das willst du sein, Is diferno?  
abgehängt sein. Akhenaten?  
Koppel dich ab. Distant tone?  
Steh auf der Koppel und schnaufe. Is distress and distance?  
Vergiss das Rückholband.

**Gegenstand** First the way, on the way: you,  
the birds overhead, then black.  
A lot of black.

Hast du einen Ekel, hast du einen Gegenstand. Then shrieking.  
Ekel dich vor deiner Grenze zum Gegenstand. Then falling.  
Ekel dich vor deinen toten Flecken. Can you see the tip?  
Deiner Eisenhaut. Is it time to chop the heads off pigeons?  
Dem tumben Fleisch. Is it personal time?  
Is going under nice?  
Are riders already in sight?

## Kombinieren Hat

Ertrinken?	Go under the hat.
Den Haifisch stimulieren in dir.	Hat is brake above head.
Mit weissem Bauch nach oben	Hat is comfort full of curve.
Fencheltee trinken im Dunklen	Hat is stable.
lenkt die Angst um, auf Haifisch.	Hat is shoulder.
Simulier mit weissem Bauch Haifisch.	Hat is shelter and hat is protection.
Simulier Haifisch und beleuchte den See,	Hat is hiding place for head.
in welchem Dunkel?	Hide head!
Heisst es: verlasse den See,	Hiding place from bird shit,
wenn darin Haifische sind?	hide.
Keine Angst geht in dir unter.	Snow, sun, pine needles, car exhaust;
Sie ist grösser als du.	bumblebees, hornets, horse flies;

## Unterscheidung

Sitz vor dem Fernsehen und krieg davon Angst.	Hat keeps head and earth together,
Steiger dich in deine Angst.	except in Berlin,
Lenk die Angst um auf Haifisch, zoologisier.	where Berlin stands on sand,
	fallen from the moon, historically.

## Wahnsinn

Der Mann in Hildesheim,	Fallen from the moon, historically,
der mit der Klobürste	hat keeps the head in Berlin
vor dem T.V.	and sand together.
die liegende Acht schwang,	<b>Pompom</b>
damit die Nachricht sich ändert,	What the knot is for the pompom,
der ekelt dich nicht.	the pompom is for the cap.
Du stellst dir Wahnsinn	Know the pompom.
als uneklige Methode vor,	Through its pompom, hat keeps in touch with heaven,
zum Baum Baum zu sagen,	ray after ray.
uneklig,	Pompom, spread out your arrival up there.
zu Nachricht,	Arrive, pompom!
liegende Achten schwingend:	Fly!
Nachricht.	Hats without pompoms will be represented below and above
Ekel dich, dass du dir	by the pompoms of hats
Wahnsinn als Methode vorstellst.	with pompoms. Absented?
Ekelig.	Have a chat
	under a hat.

## Acker

Es geht aus deinem Kopf.	Whoever lives under the hat will be warm
Sag: raus, sag: fall auf deine Füsse.	and in good company with himself
Du willst es nicht füttern.	and guest for other guests
Du willst nicht sein Dach sein.	and radiating via pompoms.
Du willst es nicht kennen.	
Geh weg, das willst du.	
Stoss es mit deinen Füssen	
aus deinem Kopf!	

Willst du der Weg sein? **Yellow Belly**  
Willst du der Weg  
voll mit vollen  
auf den Weg gefallenen Vögeln sein? It's nice not to be understood.  
Run towards that understanding.  
Du willst schwarz sein, Don't hurry.  
Branch out.  
doch nicht gefüllt mit Vögeln. Stumble.  
Du willst mit nichts gefüllt sein  
und schwarz sein. Pfefferschwarz. Jump.

Du willst nicht leer sein. **Rudder**  
Du willst leicht sein. Wachtelleicht.  
Du willst nicht gefressen sein. The angels give the rudder to the birds.  
Die Schwere soll schwarz sein, Stand in the hallway!  
voll und nicht du. Throw your head back.  
Die Schwere soll den Hunger fressen, Call: give me my bird!  
friss die Angst, du, sagst du.

**Schwarz**  
Whirl.  
Die Schwere auf die Äcker scheissen. Through the silver thread.  
Dem Weg ins Maul, Through the cord's speedy way.  
der ihm aufsteht. Speed through corridors.  
Als die, die im Sturz ihren Weg steht.

**Kanal**  
Schönes Gefühl, When your in the woods: sing.  
der Ort für das zu sein, When you're buried in someone: swim.  
was raus geht. When evening comes: drown!  
**Semantics**  
Schön, die Unterkunft des Verlassens Drive now!  
plus des Verlassenden A nice way. Juniper.  
gleich Verlassensexzess. To run into yourself in a circle.  
Die schönste Art, weiter zu gehen, To roll.  
geh durch die Strasse und lächel und sei To collect borries.  
ein Verlassensexzess. Experience.  
Reception.

**Hörsturz**  
Crescendo. You drive.  
Ask: what drives my head?  
Die Pferde, die Hunde, die Katzen. Throw up.  
Your head is everybody's skull.  
Die Reiter. Semantic totality.  
Die Läuse auf den Stengeln Fragile soil.  
auf den Honigwegen; Brain's flight jitters.  
die Frösche, die Vögel, die Wolken.  
Carambolage. Geklumpe. Konglomerat.  
Konklusion.  
Zusammenschluss.

Stein, Schwimmweste, Baum,  
das geht nicht ohne Vokabeln.  
Traktier Vokabel!

**Autonomie Walter Benjamin**

Sitz am See und sprich: Autonomie. Walter Benjamin,  
Der See lacht. after ingesting a substance:  
Das Zeichen für ICH ist Boot, spricht Olson. "You get so tender, fearing that a shadow  
falling on the paper could hurt you."

**Schatten**

**Channel**

Die Schatten sprechen. Beautiful feeling,  
Die Schatten sind zu voll für Schatten. to be the place  
Zu fett. for what's leaving.  
Ein Schatten, der spricht ist kein Schatten. Beautiful to be the shelter of leaving,  
Sein Fleischdouble ist in Gefahr. plus of the one who leaves,  
Sei in Gefahr! plus of the one who's left,  
Die Schatten stürzen in die Fleischdoubles, equals excess of leaving.  
die Fleischdoubels empfinden The most beautiful way to go on:  
den Sturz wie Ertrinken. go through the streets and smile and be  
Im eigenen Fleisch ertrinken, Embolie? an excess of leaving.  
Empfinde!

**Logic**

**Logik**

Be like logic.  
Sei wie Logik. Logic knows where it's good.  
Logik weiss, wo es gut ist. The head may be wooden-headed.  
Der Kopf mag schwer von Kappe sein. Logic wants to go under hat.  
Logik will unter die Mütze. Message to word: out of head.  
Botschaft an Wort: raus aus Kopf. Chop word out of head.  
Hau Wort raus aus Kopf. Chop head out of woods.  
Hau Kopf raus aus Wald. Out of the board woods.  
Aus dem Bretterwald. Out of the forest of boards  
in front of your head.  
Aus dem Wald der Bretter, Ask the question now.  
die vor deinem Kopf sind. Question: it is decidedly an advantage  
Stell jetzt die Frage. to be out of a blockhead.  
Frage: Aus einem Dummkopf raus sein, For whom? Is that also decided?  
ist entschieden ein Vorteil. For what's out of a blockhead?  
Ist auch entschieden für wen? For the blockhead?  
Für was aus einem Dummkopf dann raus ist? For advantage?  
Für den Dummkopf? For some fourth thing?  
Für Vorteil? For decisiveness?  
Für was Viertes? Prepare the head for questions, then let go.  
Für Entschiedenheit? Let your head go for questions.  
Stell den Kopf auf Fragen ein, dann lass los. Roll on the ghost train.  
Lass deinen Kopf auf Fragen los. Meet ghosts.  
Rolle auf der Geisterbahn. Meet ghosts.  
Triff Geister. Mix ghosts.  
Misch Geister. Get in line, circulate!  
Reih dich auf, zirkulier.



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Visuals / Collage: Birgit Kempker

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Birgit Kempker

by Annette Schindler and Liz Kotz

With a background as a writer, Birgit Kempker became known in Switzerland as a frenetic sampler of spacial, textual, visual and acoustic material. Kempker's products simultaneously condense and confuse meaning and media.

In her new project the artist offers comfortable deck chairs for the audience. Associated with vacations, they allude to the pleasures of relaxation and recuperation beside the sea or a pool. Kempker's self-contradictory title, *Exercise in Drowning*, however, turns the element of water in a quite different direction: here it has the connotation of fatal danger, of threat, but also of an uncertain feeling of being lost and helplessly immersed, without control. And "exercise," of course, suggests both the exertion of athletics and the repetition of schoolwork, of routines repeated until they are done right, become automatic.

Installed in the library of the gallery of the Swiss Institute, Kempker's beach chairs are peculiarly, perhaps humorously, de-contextualized. They overlook a confusing amount of books and an array of office paraphernalia. Rather than resting on vacation, we are perched above Broadway, with its busy traffic and scenery of shopping, leisure and, occasionally, art. Accompanying each beach chair is a set of headphones, so that the visitor, perhaps expecting relaxation or something calm, curiously lies back and listens – and may find that the drowning-associations of the title link well with the acoustic material, coming through the cables with overwhelming speed and up-beat rhythm.

The audio-material consists of text written by the artist and interpreted by boy choirs. Kempker chose to collaborate with boys in the age of their voices breaking, an age in which they actually don't sing in choirs – for obvious reasons. She convinced the choir-directors and the boys anyway, collaborated with them overlaying classical as well as rap-music with her text and rehearsing with the choirs. Even though permanently on the edge of the embarrassing squeaking of their voices, the boys obviously enjoy the singing of Kempker's texts.

The age of the breaking of the voice is not a time of accomplished performance, but of awkward, often ungainly transformation, of the change from the boy to the man, which nonetheless carries intense and even euphoric new dimensions. Although the human voice is always a potent bearer of emotion, of personal states of mind and feeling, rarely does it carry the signs of social transformation so clearly: from the unformed, nearly androgynous state of preadolescence, where the outward signs of gender are not yet so marked, the almost girlish tone of the young boy gives way to the deeper, more pronounced adult male voice. Rather than occurring smoothly, this change literally takes the form of a break: the voice cracks, squeaks, jumps from one register to another. And, of course, it is a time when new desires, fears and hopes emerge, tentatively and forcefully. Although the squeaking that accompanies the breaking of the voice can be considered embarrassing, it is accompanied by a feeling of pride: it is an obvious proof of the transition to adulthood, and all this promises. Yet this period of transition is also a period of uncertainty, of threat, of not knowing about the new expectations to be assumed and the possibilities to cope to them.

Kempker uses the already conflicted emotional associations of these voices, voices in this slippery, uncontrollable state of in-betweenness, to animate her dense and often jarringly fragmented texts. She turns to this very precarious, transitory subject – a collective male voice teetering on the edge of social maturity – to ventriloquize her words. In this project, the fragmented texts are edited together into hard, fast, often disjunctive rhythms: they are driven by a breathlessness, by an overloading with associations, metaphors, and divergences. The densely-layered audio work, recorded, engineered and realized in collaboration with her brother, Berndt Kempker, creates a sense of sonic and psychic immersion on the part of the listener; reclining on our deck chairs, instead of relaxation we find ourselves sinking into a chaotic state of anxiety and confusion, yet one with unexpected moments of joy and beauty. The breaking voices bring a visceral sense of vulnerability, of uncontrollability, to Kempker's already volatile and surrealistic texts; the sliding, jumps and squeaks break the texts up, deliteralize them, slice them open: "Everybody knows splitting is opening. Everybody knows opening is love. Everybody knows there are cracks in love." With rapid jumps of logic and association, the sentences speed by, leaving the visitor to drown in the sampling and dissolving of sentences, meaning, contexts.

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Birgit Kempker

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Born 1956 in Wuppertal; lives and works in Basel, Switzerland

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EDUCATION AND WORK

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Studied Art and Literature. Professor for Language and Image.  
Radio play, Installation, Theatre, Performance, Essays, Texts on Art, etc.

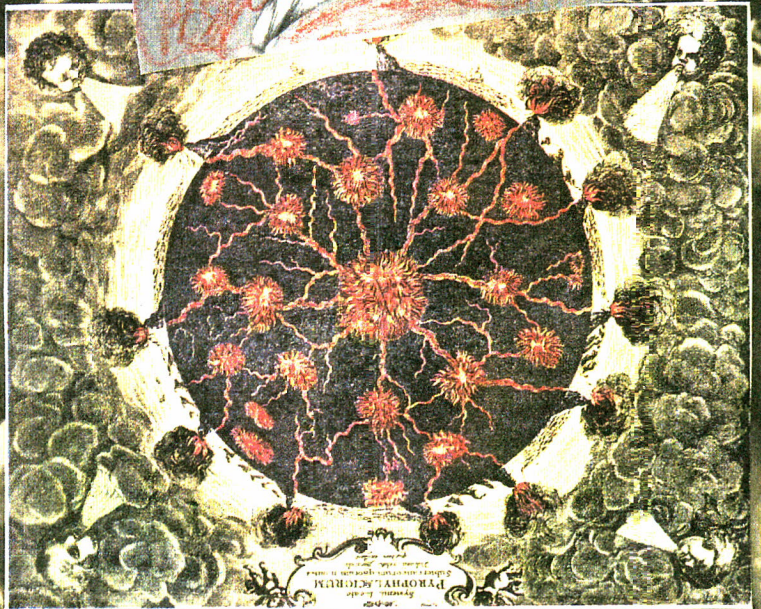
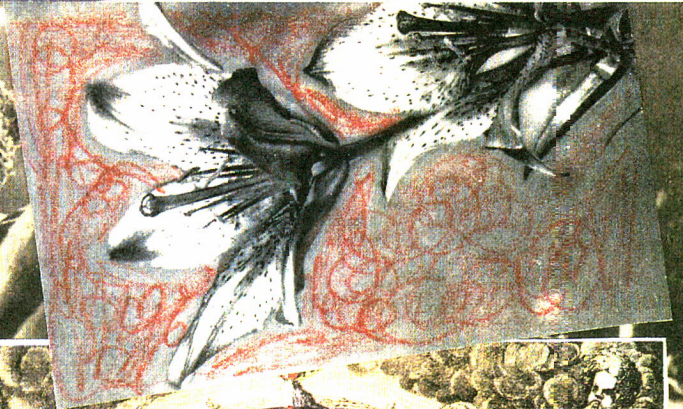
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- 1986     **Der Paralleltäter (The Parallel Culprit)**, Ammann Verlag, Zurich, Switzerland  
          **Schnee in der Allee (Snow in the Alley)**, Ammann Verlag, Zurich, Switzerland
- 1987     **Auch Frieda war jung (Frieda Was Young, Too)**, Ammann Verlag, Zurich, Switzerland
- 1988     **Rock Me Rose**, Ammann Verlag, Zurich, Switzerland
- 1992     **Dein Fleisch ist mein Wort (Your Flesh Is My Word)**,  
          Rowohlt Verlag Reinbek, neu: Basel 1997, Switzerland
- 1997     **Liebe Kunst (Dear Art)**, Essays, Literaturverlag Droschl Graz, Austria  
          **Anleitung fürs Blut/Ich ist ein Zoo**, zwei Hörstücke, CD Audio and Booklet, Basel, Switzerland  
          **Ich will ein Buch mit dir. (I Want A Book With You.)**, Book and CD Audio, Basel, Switzerland
- 1998     **Als ich das erste Mal mit einem Jungen im Bett lag**, Graz, Austria





WHERE IS YOUR RUPTURE?  
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# Lutz Bacher

Where is your rupture?

SI/NY - The Swiss Institute, New York

September 10 - November 1, 1998

This publication accompanies the exhibition  
Where is your rupture?  
curated by Liz Kotz and Annette Schindler and  
organized by SI/NY - The Swiss Institute, N.Y.

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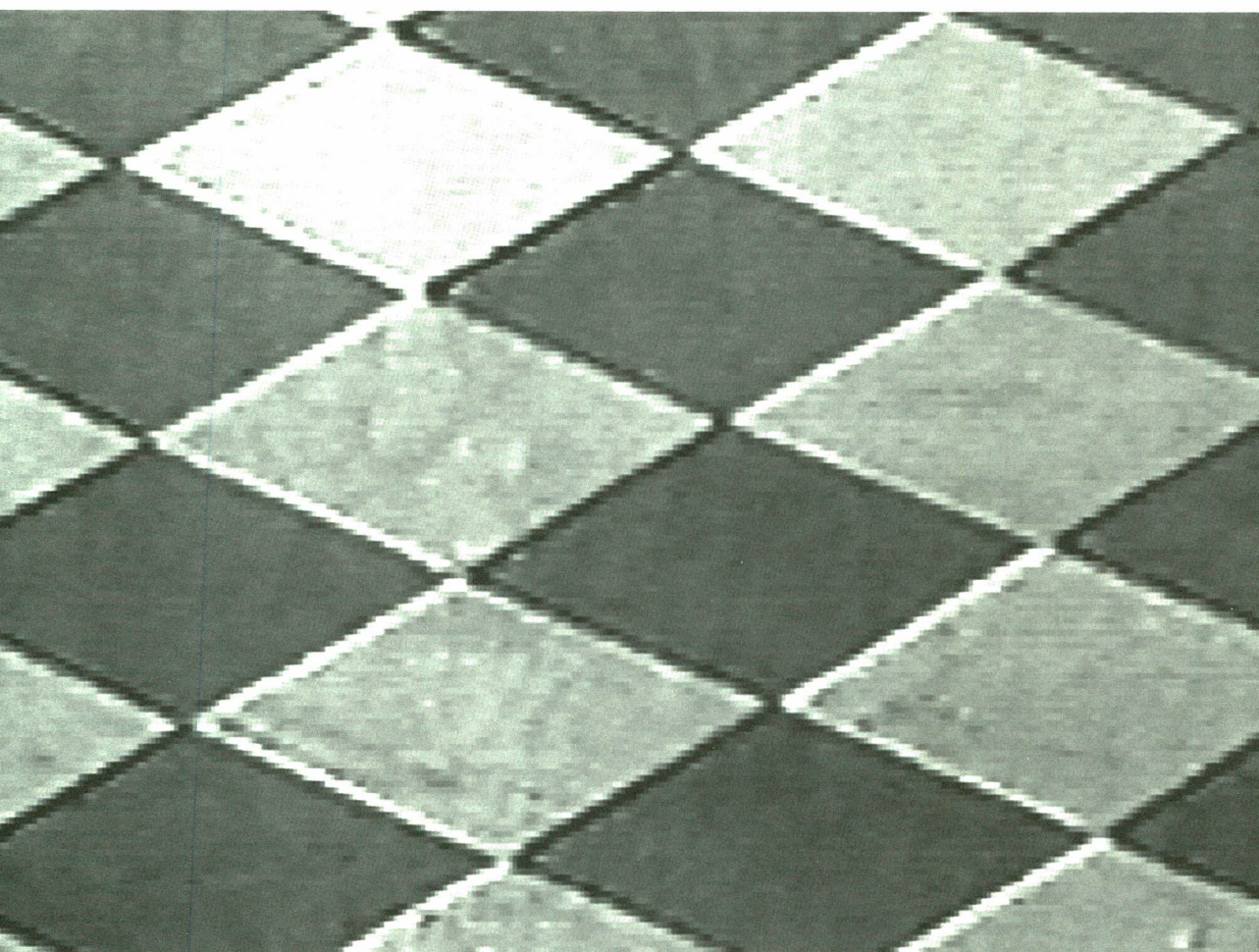
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Lutz Bacher

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Where is your rupture?

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Watching Lutz Bacher's recent videos, the ostensible subjects always seem to slip further and further out of reach. After sitting through almost 12 hours of conversations with Bacher's friends, colleagues and family discussing the artist in *Do You Love Me?* (1994), we emerge exhausted, knowing somewhat more, and also somewhat less, than when we started. Over two dozen people share their anecdotes, reminiscences and analyses of "Lutz" (also occasionally referred to as "Susan"); most of them seem fairly close to the artist, though certain perhaps "key" individuals (husband and son) do not appear. An artworld viewer might recognize one or two curators, artists, writers or dealers, but it's not necessarily a power scene.

Faced with the admittedly awkward prospect of addressing the viewer about the person who is (off camera) interviewing and recording them, the subjects often can't seem to figure out who they are addressing: they shift back and forth between "she" and "you," sometimes try to bypass their interlocutor and address the camera (and imagined viewer) "directly," sometimes keep glancing up awkwardly as if trying to forget that they are being (belatedly) observed. If all statements are implicitly constructed with an imagined recipient in mind, the spoken statements in *Do You Love Me?* seem to falter on this precipice – among others – and fall into perpetual vagueness, repetition, endless anecdotes, and overcompensation. In the end, we are left with details like one woman (Pat Hearn) chiding the artist for her odd, "childlike" clothes and shoes or another (me) admitting she didn't even know the "real" name or age of the person she considers a close friend. Needless to say, these details do not add up to anything like a coherent, intelligible picture, and we are left with a growing hole in the center of the "image" – a recurring void that incrementally comes to stand for the huge gaping hole at the center of all subjectivity.

A simple underlying structure (Lutz interviews her friends talking about her) has the potential to generate seemingly unlimited amounts of material, and the extreme temporal distention produces epic implosion. The ratio of "noise" to "signal" quickly becomes overpowering, as hours and hours of hesitations, false starts and asides frustrate and undermine any narrative or informational build. The tape begins to remind one of the Bruce Nauman videos in which a simple, seemingly meaningless activity ("Bouncing two balls around my studio," "Manipulating a fluorescent light around the perimeter of my body") is rigorously executed to the point of exhaustion, rage or enervation, as fatigue takes its toll on performer and viewer alike. In Nauman's work, what keeps his minimalist structures from looping endlessly is the unforeseen outcomes his "tasks" produce, the metaphorical and narrative elements that gradually emerge through repetition – in particular, the overriding effort to control, to produce a repeating structure, which ultimately always *fails*. Bacher ups the ante by honing in on the emotional center of every bid for attention: as the title itself proclaims, the very subject of Bacher's video is the demand for love – though who is asking, and to whom it is addressed, seems at the least open-ended. One is reminded of Lacan's dictum that "love is something we don't have that we give to someone who doesn't exist."

One of the truisms of psychoanalysis is that any two-person relation actually involves a suppressed third (or even fourth) person or position: from the family triad (mommy-daddy-me) on, desire is always the desire of another, or for another. The woman is exchanged to cement the bond of two men, the joke exchanged between two people to aggress upon a third, the love object chosen to both reproduce and replace the lost original object, and so on. And love triangles, as we know, are often messy. And as Freud demonstrates in "A Child is Being Beaten," these positions and the relations between them are intrinsically unsteady and reversible: love transmutes into hate, active into passive,

male into female, and a single individual can occupy more than one position at once.

One of the recurring structures in Bacher's work is the setting up of situations in which these configurations repeatedly come together and come apart. In *Do You Love Me?* the points in the structure interviewee-artist-viewer keep coming apart, as if we're drawing a triangle where the lines perpetually overshoot, undershoot, cross, miss their mark, go a little haywire. As speakers project their own stories and concerns onto "Lutz," they are in turn projected in video onto the wall of the gallery. The collapsing of analogous psychic and technical operations reinforces the sense that the real subject of the video is literal (psychic) projection. This triangulated structure of projection condenses and intensifies in the more compact "Amy" section of *A Normal Life* (1995-96) where a young woman tells Lutz a story about what happened between her and an (other) older woman. Yet what one is left with most powerfully after *Do You Love Me?* is the strange pathos created by the absence of the very subject of the tape, of this figure supposedly at its center. As a speaker at the end of the tape (the writer Laurie Weeks) analyzes the situation: "it's about being erased, this gap... The artist's body is absent, but really *present* in its absence, it's a glaring hole."

This notion of a structuring hole or absence animates much of Bacher's subsequent work. Talk, rather than providing a vehicle for apparent "content," increasingly feels like a device for keeping the demons of loss and emptiness at bay. In the center section of *A Normal Life*, two women's heads are reflected together in a window as they pursue a routine conversation at a family get-together: "So Marge, what've you been doing with yourself lately?" "Don't ask me, time just comes and goes." "Isn't that *creepy?*" And Marge proceeds to recount her days – filled with doctors' appointments, watering the grass, and attending other family functions – as a louder male conversation in the background constantly verges on drowning her out, and the two small heads bob slightly in the empty expanse of the window. It's a moment echoed in a later work, *You Could Live Forever* (Dec., 1996) in which we look on while gallery owner Pat Hearn nods her head slowly, spending what seems like hours engaged with apparently mundane phone conversations: "okay, okay, yes, alright, that's fine..." At one point, on the phone with a doctor's office, she has to spell out her name, "H - e - a - r - n..." The interaction feels unexpectedly tragic, as we witness this weird moment which is both completely personal and completely depersonalized. Spelled out, the name becomes emptied, a mere point of interface with the bureaucratic system: breaking down the word, down to its smallest parts, effects a complete pulverization of meaning.

This close attention to the use of language in everyday social situations is both maddening and heart-wrenching. Increasingly evacuated of meaning, language proceeds by interminable repetitions, hesitations, pauses and indirectness. Yet the viewer is nonetheless left with the incredible emotional load of all this inarticulateness. Subsequent videos, from *Sleep* (May, 1996) to *Blue Moon* (June, 1996) to *A Closed Circuit Installation* (1997-98) follow a transition where the subjects get more and more attenuated, talk dies down, and much of the apparent "content" is drained away so that just a basic structure or configuration remains: a person alone in a room (Lutz sleeping, Pat in her office) and a separating pair: the moon and its reflection, which keep pulling apart until just an empty black screen is left. This increasing tendency towards abstraction, with its apparent minimizing of represented content, pares these videos down to an emotional core. In *Sleep* and *A Closed Circuit Installation*, the use of a time-lapse video surveillance recorder has the effect of greatly abstracting and pixelating the image, breaking down movement into crumbling jerky gestures. The wide rolling scan-line in *Sleep* repeatedly obstructs the image of Bacher's face, blocking out entirely her (nearly inert) figure:

a multi-hour performance in which apparently “nothing happens,” the work formally and thematically addresses the complete eradication of the artist’s subjectivity. The figure of the completely effaced image, reduced to the limit of emptiness or unintelligibility, recurs throughout Bacher’s more recent work. In *Olympiad* (1997), the disruption of the video signal causes jerks, stops and flare-outs that at times completely efface the image. And at the close of *Blue Moon*, as refrains of the song “Danny Boy” and other ambient sounds are heard in the distance, the light of the moon hovers at the extreme edge of the frame, leaving an almost empty black image on the TV monitor. Despite the seemingly pure formal abstraction of the image, melodrama leaks out of the soundtrack, provided by the sound from an off-screen television set. In her incremental eradication of the image, it is as if Bacher is testing the limits of the minimum visual presence necessary for empathy and emotional involvement.

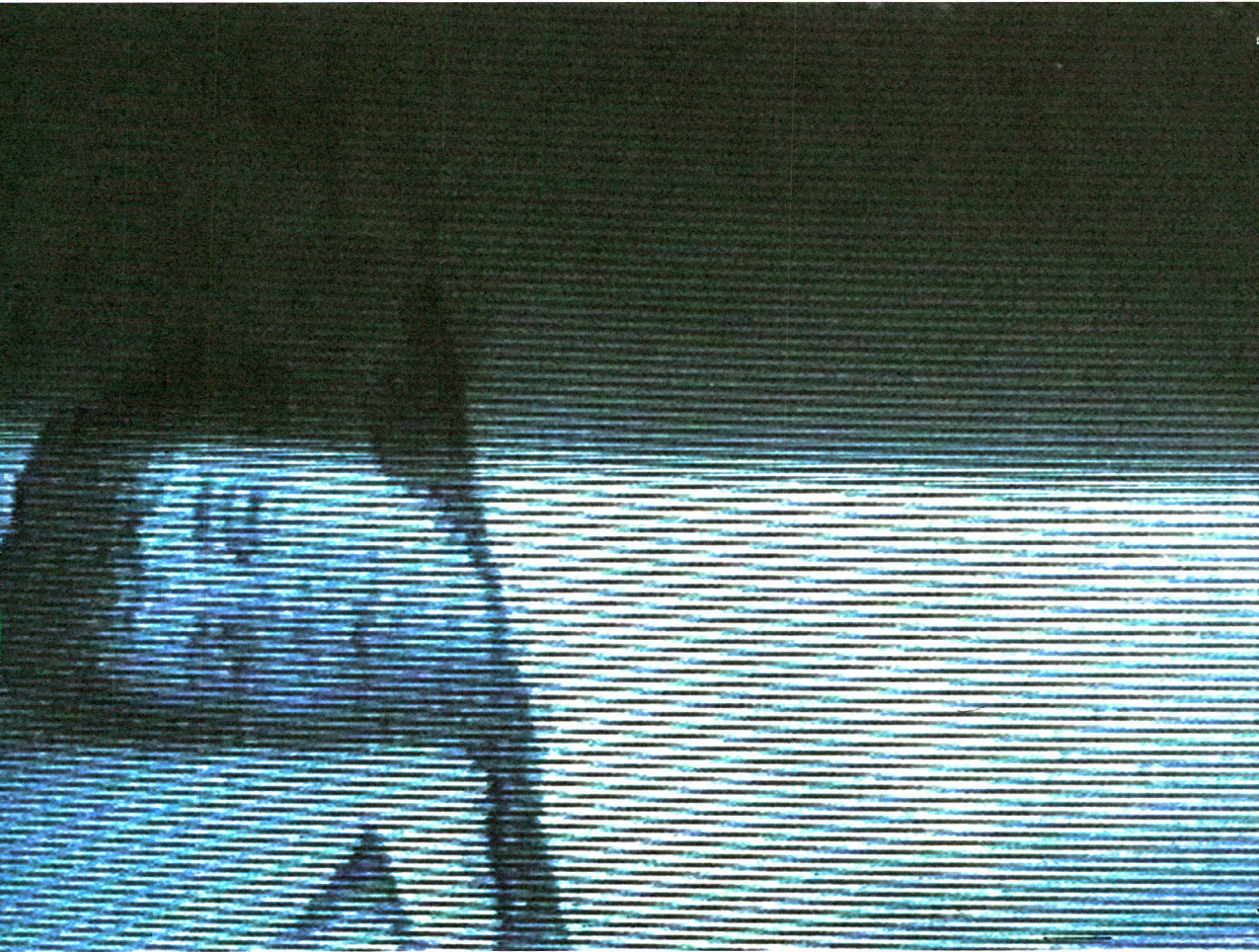
In *Untitled* (1997), the subject is literally absent, dead: the video loops a short segment of Princess Diana’s coffin as it is carried through Westminster Abbey by members of the Welsh Guard, accompanied by the harshly dissonant sounds of an organ and tolling church bells. Again propelled by a structuring absence, the tape presents Diana’s lurching coffin, continually pressing forward into the frame, as a pulsing figure for the constant propping up of a continually effaced and eroded subjectivity. As the tape begins, it’s already over: the girl is dead, we already know all the stories, Bacher is not going to tell us anymore, not going to use any of her surrogates to do so. It’s over. Yet the tape goes on, and on: the video loop creating a visceral, throbbing, sensuous presence that is arguably the most sensually intense (in terms of sound, color, rhythm, etc) of any of Bacher’s works. The uniformed men carrying the coffin, propping up this (dead) subject, perpetually reanimate the corpse: topped by madly swaying flowers, the coffin keeps lurching forward, looks for a moment like it’s going to fall out of the frame, then restarts its apparently endless movement.

Despite what would seem like a violation of the minimum conditions for human subjectivity – the absence of the living figure – subjectivity nevertheless endures, shorn up by sheer will and desire on the part of the viewer: the sign for this being the only fragment of language which appears in the tape, the word “Live” which hangs on the top left corner of the image. In Bacher’s work, perhaps “Diana” is a figure for this intensely palpable absence that we perpetually mourn and perpetually remain in thrall to. She becomes the dead girl, the missing person, the stand-in for an endless list of others: “Pat,” “Laurie,” “Amy,” “Lutz,” and all the rest. The continually-looping re-enactment of her absence is doubled by the other figure of relentless repetition: the overpowering, almost psychotic dissonance of the bells as they echo and cascade over the murmuring drone of the organ, the two rhythms forever out of sync. It is in this pulsing, throbbing presence that “death” and “life” seem to converge, each propelled on by the uncertain rhythms of the human body and mechanical repetition, harder to separate than ever.

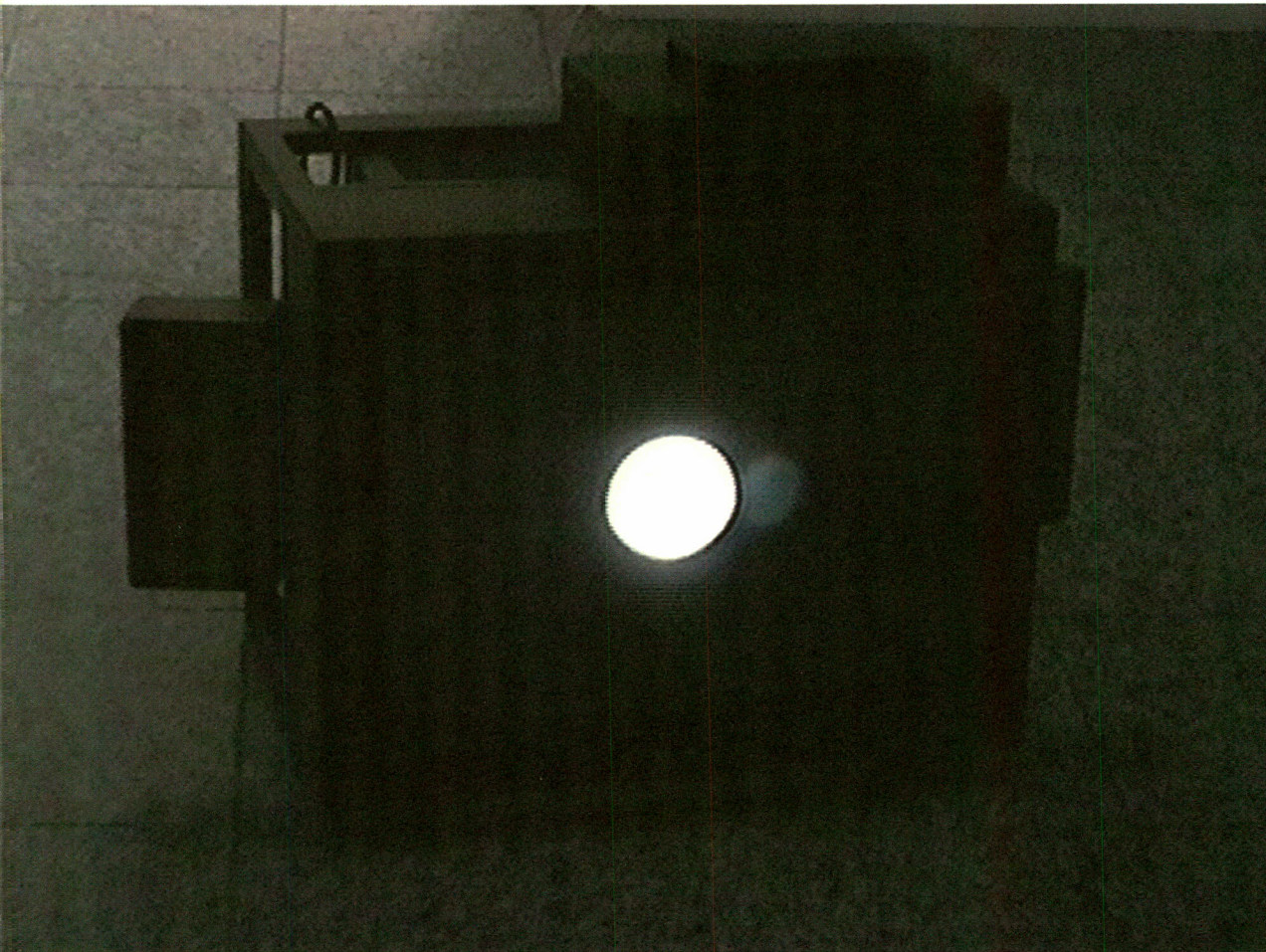


You Know More Than I Know, 1995-96

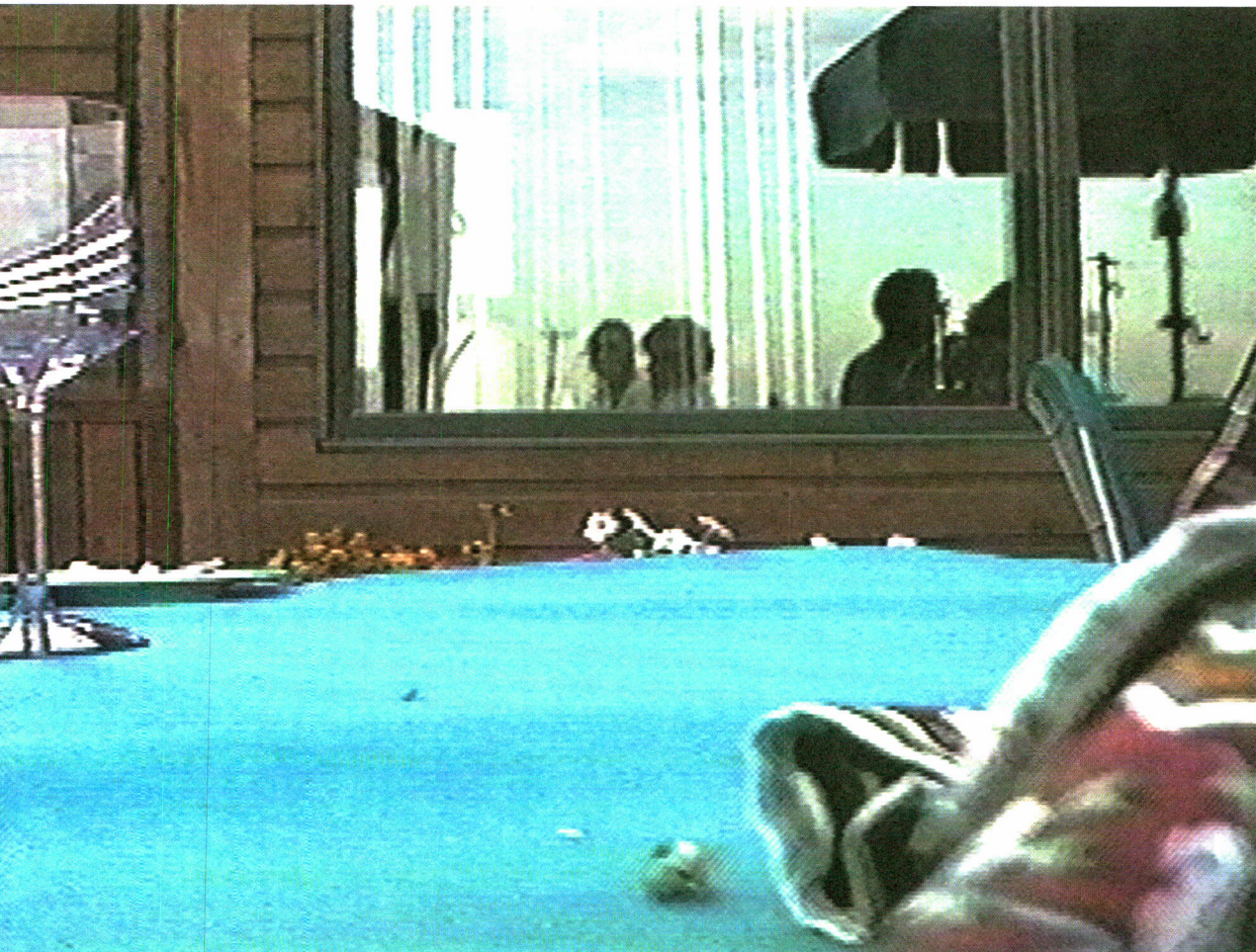




Sleep, 1996



Blue Moon, 1996



A Normal Heart, 1995-96



Do You Love Me?, 1994



A Closed Circuit Instalacion, 1997-98



You Could Live Forever, 1996



Olympiad, 1997

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Video by Lutz Bacher

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**You Know More Than I Know, 1995-96**

3 split-screen VHS color with sound 1 hour each  
Three tarot readings over the course of a year by phone/video link from San Francisco to Los Angeles. With Kristen Morse.

**Sleep, 4-6 May, 1996**

Time lapse VHS black and white no sound 72 hours  
Lutz writes: A real time performance with closed circuit TV of me sleeping and trying to sleep in the Gramercy Park Hotel.

**Blue Moon, 1996, June 30**

VHS color with sound 78 minutes  
Single 27" monitor or multiple monitors in different locations.  
Ambient sounds of home TV and street are heard as the moon and its reflection move inexorably across the sky in opposite directions.

**A Normal Life, 1995-96**

VHS color with sound  
Three screen projection, 13 minutes  
Two people tell about their past and a third person returns to her past in the form of home videos.

**Do You Love Me?, 1994**

EP VHS color with sound 12 hours  
Large scale video projection installation  
Lutz writes: In this tape, friends, colleagues and family talk about me as I remain unseen behind the camera.

**A Closed Circuit Installation, 1997-98**

Time-lapse VHS color with sound  
A year-long real time constant monitor of Pat Hearn working in her gallery.

**You Could Live Forever, 1996**

VHS color with sound 45 minutes  
Single channel video  
Camera roll study tape for year-long-closed circuit TV of Pat Hearn working in her gallery.

**Olympiad, 1997**

VHS black and white no sound 36 minutes  
Video projection installation  
A walk through the Olympic Stadium in Berlin in June 1997 displays the tracking problems, burnouts and other artifacts of a corrupted tape processed through a time base corrector.

**Untitled, 1997**

VHS loop color with sound 2 hours  
Large scale video projection installation  
The Welsh Guard carry Diana's casket through Westminster Abbey as chimes and organ repeat.



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Lutz Bacher

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Lives and works in Berkeley, CA

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ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS

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- 1990 Simon Watson, New York  
1991 **Men in Love**, Mincher/Wilcox Gallery, San Francisco  
1992 **Sex with Strangers**, Trial Balloon, New York  
1993 **Playboys**, Pat Hearn Gallery, New York  
**Jim & Sylvia**, Matrix Gallery, University Art Museum, Berkeley  
1995 **Do You Love Me?** TRI Gallery, Los Angeles  
1995-96 Pat Hearn Gallery, New York  
1997 **Video by Lutz Bacher**, Bunny Yaeger LA, Los Angeles  
1998 **Olympiad**, Rupert Goldsworthy Gallery, New York

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SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

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- 1990 **The Clinic**, Simon Watson, New York  
**How Can They Be So Sure?** LACE, Los Angeles  
**Video Installations**, New Langton Arts, San Francisco  
1991 **Miss California**, Mincher/Wilcox Gallery, San Francisco  
**White Room**, White Columns, New York  
**Dismember**, Simon Watson, New York  
Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York  
**AIDS Timeline/Group Material**, Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum, New York  
**The Body in Question**, Burden Gallery/Aperture, New York  
1992 **Dissent, Difference and the Body Politic**, Portland Art Museum, Portland; Otis/Parsons Gallery, Los Angeles  
**Update**, White Columns, New York  
**Clinic and Recovery Center**, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles  
1993 **The Subject of Rape**, Whitney Museum, New York  
**Coming to Power**, David Zwirner Gallery, New York  
**I Am the Enunciator**, Thread Waxing Space, New York  
**Privacy**, Forum, Milan, Italy  
**1920**, Exit Art, New York  
**Tri-Sexual**, TRI Gallery, Los Angeles  
1994 **Game Girl**, Shedhalle, Zurich, Switzerland; Kunstverein, Munich, Germany  
**Pop Politics**, Tyler Gallery, Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia  
**A Selected Survey**, Pat Hearn Gallery, New York  
**Ciphers of Identity**, Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York  
**Bad Girls**, New Museum, New York; Wight Gallery, UCLA, Los Angeles  
**New World (Dis)Order**, Center for the Arts, San Francisco  
**The Use of Pleasure**, Terrain, San Francisco  
1995 **In a Different Light**, University Art Museum, Berkeley  
**Altered States**, The Forum for Contemporary Art, St. Louis  
**The Outburst of Signs**, Art Forum, Munich, Germany  
1996 Rupert Goldsworthy Gallery, Berlin, Germany  
**La Toilette de Venus**, CRG Gallery, New York  
**Real Fake**, Neuberger Museum of Art, SUNY, Purchase  
1997 **Figure**, Betty Rymer Gallery, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago  
1997-98 **A Closed Circuit Installation**, Pat Hearn Gallery, New York  
1998 **Spectacular Optical**, Thread Waxing Space, New York  
**White Noise**, Kunsthalle Bern, Bern, Switzerland  
**100 Years of Sculpture**, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis  
**American Dreamin**, Art + Idea, Mexico City, Mexico  
**Diana 98**, Museum of Contemporary Art, Zurich, Switzerland  
1999 **Searchlight**, Logan Center for Contemporary Art, San Francisco

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**AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS**

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1993 California Arts Council Grant

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**PERMANENT COLLECTIONS**

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Museum of Fine Arts Houston  
Walker Art Center  
Kunsthaus Zurich  
University Art Museum, Berkeley

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**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS**

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1990 **The Body in Question**, Aperture, New York  
**How Can They Be So Sure?** LACE, Los Angeles

1991 **Contemporary American Women Artists**, Photovision, Madrid, Spain

1992 **Dissent, Difference and the Body Politic**, Portland Art Museum, Portland  
**Update**, White Columns, NY

1993 **The Subject of Rape**, Whitney Museum, New York  
**Lusitania**, Vol. 1, No. 4, New York  
**Dirty Looks**, BFI Publishing, London, England  
**Atlantica #6**, Canary Islands, Spain

1994 **The Use of Pleasure**, Terrain, San Francisco  
**New World (Dis)Order**, Northern California Council, San Francisco

1995 **In a Different Light**, City Lights, San Francisco  
**Altered States**, Forum for Contemporary Art, St. Louis  
**The Outburst of Signs**, Art Forum, Munich, Germany

1998 **Spectacular Optical**, Threadwaxing Space, New York  
**White Noise**, Kunsthalle Bern  
Kathy O'Dell, **Contract with the Skin**, University of Minnesota Press  
**MATRIX Berkeley: 1978-1998**, University Art Museum, Berkeley

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**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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1991 Kenneth Baker, "Art That Runs Off in All Directions," **San Francisco Chronicle**, September 19  
Maria Porges, "Lutz Bacher," **Artforum**, March

1992 Liz Kotz, "Sex with Strangers," **Artforum**, September  
Robert Mahoney, "Lutz Bacher, White Columns," **Arts**, January

1993 Sarah Ballister, "Playboys," **Flash Art**, December  
Laura Cottingham, "New York Fax," **Art Issues**, November/December  
Michael Kimmelman, "Lutz Bacher Playboys," **The New York Times**, September 24  
Faye Hirsch, "Playboys," **Art In America**, November  
Elizabeth Hess, "Gallery of the Dolls," **Village Voice**, October 19  
Holland Cotter, "At The Whitney Provocation and Theory Meet Head-On," **The New York Times**, August 13  
Christopher Knight, "Disputable Assertions in 'Body Politic,'" **The Los Angeles Times**, February 26  
David Bonetti, "Fresh Reading on Relationships," **San Francisco Examiner**, February 19  
Glen Helfand, "Rough Sex," **SF Weekly**, February 10

1995 Susan Kandel, "'Love Me?' Shows Off Self-Obsession," **The Los Angeles Times**, April 6

1996 Howard Halle, "Lutz Bacher, Pat Hearn Gallery," **Timeout New York**, January 10-17

1997 Susan Kandel, "Intimacy and Terror," **The Los Angeles Times**, March 2  
Peter Frank, "Tony Oursler, Lutz Bacher," **L.A. Weekly**, April 11-17

1998 Holland Carter, "Lutz Bacher: Olympiad," **New York Times**, May 8  
Claudine Ise, "Babes," **The Los Angeles Times**, July 24

