

**JUNE 28 –
OCTOBER 6, 2019**

MARGARET HARRISON
DANSER SUR LES MISSILES

49 NORD
6 EST
FRAC
LORRAINE

FONDS RÉGIONAL D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE LORRAINE
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From North American comic-book superheroes to Manet's *Olympia*, Margaret Harrison (Yorkshire, UK, *1940) subverts genre hierarchies and indiscriminately combines the history of art and popular culture. Adopting the strategies of the grotesque, such as exaggeration, parody, and subversion, she humorously questions the codes and stereotypes that separate the sexes.

An influential figure in the feminist art movement in Great Britain, this committed artist has been engaged for over fifty years in a cross-fertilization of class, gender and, more broadly, the place of women in society. For her first major exhibition in France, 49 Nord 6 Est - FRAC Lorraine has chosen to highlight the diversity of her practice which includes installations, paintings, drawings, and texts that aim to challenge visual canons and codes that determine the representation of women as well as their self-perception.

Her drawings of superheroes sporting stilettoes and her portrait of Hugh Hefner, the

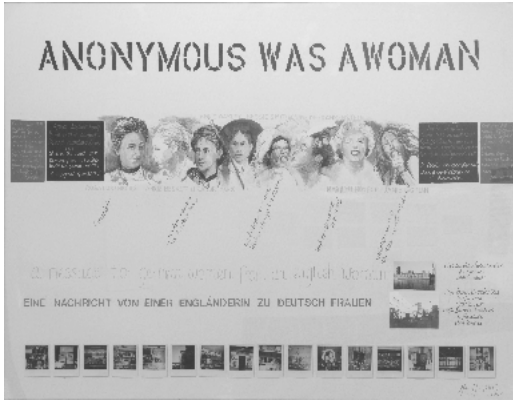
founder of *Playboy*, as Bunny Boy, led to the police shutting down her first exhibition in London in 1971. Going forward, Harrison began engaging with issues of labor conditions of the working class, a preoccupation that spans her entire career.

Attentive to economic and social developments in rural UK and United States, from the rise of Manchester and Liverpool in the late nineteenth century to the industrial crisis of the 1970s, which affected England as well as California, Margaret Harrison has produced an extensive body of work based on sociological surveys.

She also examines Western cultural icons, exposing their normative potential and the power relationships they both replicate and perpetuate. Long available only to limited audiences, her work is now beginning to enjoy wider recognition and renewed relevance in the context of current debates on gender and sexual identity. Harrison encourages us to go beyond binary approaches to race or sex.

GROUND FLOOR

FROM ROSA LUXEMBOURG TO JANIS JOPLIN
«ANONYMOUS WAS A WOMAN», 1977-1991



Acrylic on canvas and photographs
132,5 x 173 cm

© Collection de la Province de Hainaut – Dépôt BPS22, Charleroi (B)

Like Virginia Woolf in her essay *A Room of One's Own*, Margaret Harrison examines the position of the female artist in society and pays tribute to eight women who died prematurely. She talks about the violence inherent in the social invisibility imposed on women, which goes hand in hand with the structural violence faced by these historic female public figures.

The artist invites us to question the connections between the violence of their disappearance from society and the external pressures they faced as successful women in a world where the criteria for success were set by men.

Anonymous Was a Woman was produced for an exhibition devoted to the work of contemporary European women artists (Künstlerinnen International 1877–1977 / Female Artists International 1877–1977, Charlottenburg Palace, Berlin). It was addressed to English and German women alike, who suffered equally in both countries, and examines their individual destinies in a broader context in order to reflect on the universal nature of their exclusion.

Rosa Luxembour (1871-1919) :
Polish militant communist

Annie Beasant (1847-1933) :
English feminist freethinker

Eleanor Marx (1855 -1898) :
English writer and social activist

Annie Oakley (1860-1926) :
famous American sharpshooter

Bessie Smith (1894-1937) :
African-American blues singer

The bride of Frankenstein:
a fictional figure
created by Mary Shelley (1797–1851)

Marilyn Monroe (1926-1962) :
American singer and actress

Janis Joplin (1943-1970) :
American singer

“Women have been excluded from history and barred from participating in it for far too long. I hope my research will trace the beginnings of feminist awareness of the concepts of active, progressive struggle aimed to write us back into the historical narrative.” M.H.

THE LAST GAZE, 2013



Oil paint, paper collage on canvas & 14 vintage rear-view mirrors
132 x 161,5 x 3 cm
© Middlesbrough Collection, Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art

This work by Margaret Harrison takes as its starting point an 1894 pre-Raphaelite painting. Entitled *The Lady of Shalott*, by the painter John William Waterhouse, it visualizes a poem by Alfred Lord Tennyson written in 1842 about a woman condemned to look at the world through a mirror, lest she be struck by a curse. In Margaret Harrison's new version, the character confronts her black-and-white double and wears a garment embroidered with American comic-book figures and pop-culture icons (Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, etc.). The artist uses the ornamental motif to usher the character into contemporary imagery. The painting is accompanied by a set of rear-view mirrors that evoke the narrative of the poem. The fragmentation of the image in the mirrors creates the impression of looking at, and being watched by, the *Lady of Shalott*. She seems to be raising questions as to what we have the right to see and what we permit ourselves to look at.

"In the story, the Lady of Shalott turns away from the mirrors and dares to look directly at Sir Lancelot. ... The curse is come upon me', she cries. Many feminist historians have interpreted this as a metaphor for how women were perceived in Victorian times. If they stepped outside the traditional framework (or what was supposed to be a traditional framework) they were really asking for trouble." M.H.

1ST FLOOR



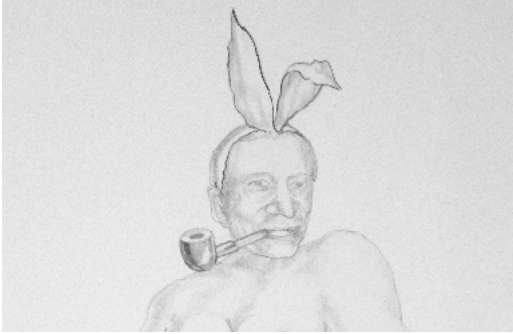
Acrylic on canvas
188 x 107 cm

The images called *Landscapes* are part of a series that plays with the recurrent motif of the eucalyptus leaf. Made during a stay in Australia, home to this species of tree, the images show variations on the leaf's shape by playing with brushstrokes and color combinations. Harrison has written a different sentence on each canvas, emphasizing both the outline of the leaf and the way in which our view of nature is constructed by the culture in which we grew up and the political structures that shaped it. The phrases counterbalance the ideals of the picturesque, quietude, and harmony associated with nature in modern Western culture.

These inscriptions refer to the inability to experience the beauty of landscapes that are too unfamiliar, as well as to the incapacity to understand the rules governing these landscapes, and specifically the relationship of indigenous peoples to nature

and property. The word *Pamma* refers to the indigenous way of drawing power from the earth; by contrast, the European way of seizing power on earth is termed *Parra*. It is also interesting to note that the methods used to expropriate communal land in the United Kingdom were applied in Australia during the colonial period.

HE'S ONLY A BUNNY BOY BUT HE'S QUITE NICE REALLY, 1971-2011



Archival print on paper
42x 29,7 cm
Collection 49 Nord 6 Est - Frac Lorraine

From the beginning of her practice, Margaret Harrison has used popular icons to stimulate reflection on gender codes and humorously subvert traditional roles. These traits can be found in her portrait of the *Playboy magazine* founder Hugh Hefner as Bunny Boy. He is made to look as if he were posing for his own magazine, which in the 1960s embodied a new popular erotic utopia. Assuming a so-called seductive pose, his foot thrust forward, his nipples peeking over his bodice, which contrasts with the pipe clenched between his teeth, he raises questions about the status of women wearing bunny ears, which he himself had envisioned.

Within twenty-four hours of the opening of Harrison's first London show in 1971, this drawing, and others featuring men adorned with female attributes, led to the police shutting the exhibition down on charges of "obscenity." On the same night, this emblematic piece was stolen (probably by members of the Bunny Boy Club) and was never found, which led the artist to reproduce it in 2011.

"I told an acquaintance of Hugh Hefner's in Los Angeles years later: 'Please tell him I forgive him if he has the Bunny Boy, but let him give it back to me!' But it never happened...." M.H.

SCENT OF IDENTITY (I. MAGNIN STORE SAN FRANCISCO), 1993



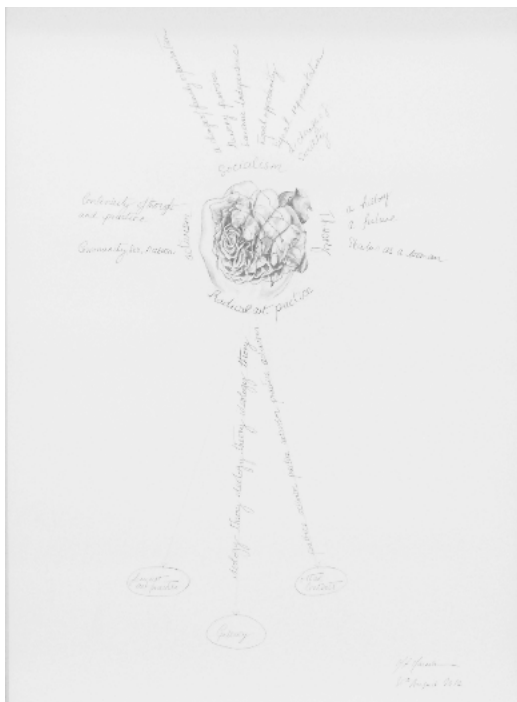
Watercolour on paper
43 x 38 cm (#1 & 2), 45,7 x 35,4 cm (#3)

These three works are part of a series of fourteen watercolors inspired by Edouard Manet's painting *A Bar at the Folies-Bergères* (1881–82). Margaret Harrison explores the seductive world of department stores, filled with lights and reflections. Just like the waitress at the Folies-Bergères in the impressionist painting, the female clerks attract consumers from behind their counters. They remain anonymous, but are quite real since the images are based on photographs the artist took at Bloomingdale's and Macy's in New York.

Social and political questions lurk beneath the elegance of these retail spaces which are in perfect harmony with the products on display promising consumable happiness. Women are depicted in a peaceful and alluring atmosphere, which contrasts with

the reality of their condition. The artist foregrounds the marketing mechanisms that exploit women's beauty, which is equated with the consumer goods they must sell.

SINGING ROSES (ROSES AND FISTS), 2012



Pencil on paper
61 x 41 cm

In this work, we find themes Margaret Harrison tackled in *Anonymous Was a Woman*, namely feminism and socialism. The drawing uses the socialist symbols of the rose and the hand. It is a tribute to Rosa Luxemburg, a Polish communist theorist and activist and assassination victim.

The drawing is framed by lines of text arranged in four axes that schematically represent the major lines of the artist's methodology: radical artistic practice / activism / socialism / theory.

OLYMPIA MODEL ROLE, 2010



Olympia model role
(Obama-Monroe), 2010
Watercolour and graphite on paper
20,3 x 28,6 cm

Olympia model role
(Lopez-Dietrich), 2010
Watercolour and graphite on paper
18,4 x 25,4 cm

Olympia model role
(Hattie MacDaniel-Vivien Leight)
2010
Watercolour and graphite on paper
20,3 x 24,8 cm

In this series of watercolors, Margaret Harrison denounces racism and discrimination against women in the history of art. She revisits, by subverting it, Edouard Manet's *Olympia* (1863), which represents a naked white woman gazing provocatively in the foreground and a racialized companion observing her from the background. The representation of a nude in a domestic space, along with the uncertainty about the social origin of the model (she might be demi-monde), created a scandal. Today, the painting is recognized as a work of art; it is regarded in a new light, and its links with Titian's work have come to the fore, while the moral issues have slipped into the category of history's faux pas. Harrison points to another aspect of the painting, namely the ability of powerful historical images to reinforce social norms. She has several celebrities, living and dead, exchange racially defined roles: white women (Vivien Leigh, Marilyn Monroe, and Marlene Dietrich) appear in the background as the servant, while women of color (Michelle Obama, Hattie McDaniel, and Jennifer Lopez) figure in the

foreground, exposed to the public. As a result, the artist operates a radical shift and draws our attention to issues of ethnicity and class and their influence on compositional decisions, developing an approach that, until recently, had been ignored in art history.

HOMeworkERS: MRS. MCGILVREY AND THE HANDS OF LAW AND EXPERIENCE, 1978/1980



Pencil and ink on paper, black and white silver gelatin prints mounted on cardboard
90 x 145 cm

After the forced closure of her exhibition in London, Margaret Harrison turned to activism and examined the relationship between gender and class from a feminist perspective. Alone or in groups (with other artists such as Conrad Atkinson, Mary Kelley, and Kay Hunt), she carried out a sociological reflection on the changes in women's working conditions in the wake of the *Equal Pay Act* of 1970. She interviewed and photographed women in factories, or, as in this work, in their homes, seeking to understand the difficulties they faced. Mrs. McGilvrey was one of the workers interviewed: she assembled tax forms at home, a task outsourced by the central government and sorely underpaid. As evidenced by the excerpts from testimonies, inscribed along the palm lines on the hands outlined in the middle of the image, the situation of these women was so precarious that they had no choice but to accept these jobs, forfeited their salary if the work was late, and could be dismissed if they asked for a raise.

"I had to go through something like a documentary learning process in order to understand how the world functioned. We were all interested in politics and political art at that time." M.H.

DOROTHY WORDSWORTH, 1982



Dorothy Wordsworth (1771–1855) was the sister of the poet William Wordsworth. Her writings describing the daily life and the natural world in the Lake District were highly appreciated during her lifetime. Dorothy, however, refused to consider herself as a writer, and it was only fifty years after her death that her journals were published, followed by her poems, correspondence, and topographic descriptions. At the time, the Lake District was crisscrossed by people migrating to the newly industrialized cities of Manchester and Liverpool. In her writings, Dorothy bears witness to the hardships experienced by the inhabitants. Avoiding grand narratives, she tells the story of a changing society through the lives of individuals. The impressions recorded in Dorothy's journals are a poignant record of ordinary people's day-to-day struggles, and they found their way into many of her brother William's poems.

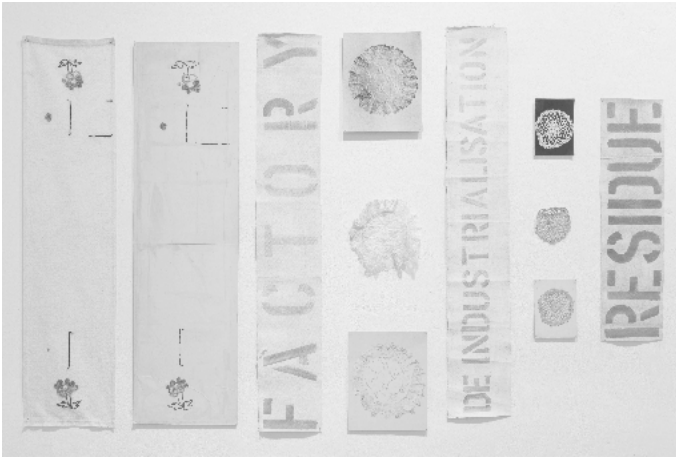
Harrison pays tribute to Dorothy Wordsworth's imagination and precision by combining two passages from her journals with watercolors of Lake District plants. As it happens, Dorothy tended the Wordsworths' home garden; she viewed nature as a place of refuge and her work as a form of discreet care.

Dorothy Wordsworth (Ferns), 1982
Watercolour on paper
111 x 95 ; 62 x 87,5 cm

*Dorothy Wordsworth
(The White Foxgloves), 1982*
Watercolour on paper
146 x 95 ; 62 x 87,5 cm

"Dorothy talked to the people crossing Cumbria on their way to new industrial cities, because the communal land they had been able to freely enjoy was shrinking and they could no longer afford to feed their families. She recorded their testimonies in her journals." M.H.

CRAFTWORK (THE PROSTITUTION PIECE), 1980



Audio, fabrics and mixed media on paper
Variable dimensions

This major work was created by Harrison as a part of the emblematic feminist exhibition curated by Lucy Lippard at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London in 1980. Harrison draws a relationship between the loss of women's manual skills and the development of factories. This situation caused a shift in activities and created a dependence on machines, both in terms of livelihood and production, and curtailed collective, homespun production. As holders of fragmentary skills, women employed in factories naturally suffered when they had to retrain following the industrial crisis of the 1970s in the United Kingdom. It was in this context that women resorted to prostitution as they confronted the loss of resources and impoverishment, as is evidenced by the sound recording featured in the installation, made with the help of the English Collective of Prostitutes. In the words of the artist and writer Chris Crickmay, "Margaret Harrison's work reflects concerns that formerly had no place in art galleries."

"There has been a gradual de-skilling of working-class women since much of the work traditionally done at home in a group setting, (...) is now performed in a fragmented way outside the home." M.H.

SUPERHEROES



Son of Rob Roy, 1971
Graphite on paper
32 x 26 cm
© Tate: Acquisition 2008

Captain America I, 1971-1997
Pencil and Watercolour on paper
30 x 45 cm
© Collection particulière

Captain America II, 1997
Pencil and watercolor
71 x 51 cm
Collection privée
Courtesy Nicolas Krupp, Bôle

Two Princesses, Two Hands, 2009
Pencil and watercolor
38,5 x 54 cm
© Collection particulière

*What's That Long Red Limp
Thing You're Pulling on*, 2009
Pencil and watercolor
67 x 54,5 cm
© Ronald Feldman Gallery, New York

Some of Margaret Harrison's drawings belong to the satirical tradition, in the vein of the British cartoonist James Gillray or the American underground cartoonist Eric Stanton, featuring sexually liberated characters. As she did in *Bunny Boy*, in her watercolors of hyper-sexualized superheroes Harrison uses the same codes of representation as those applied to women in pop culture and advertising.

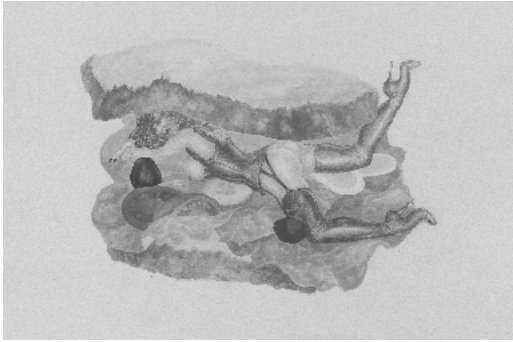
By drawing *Captain America I* with fake breasts, high heels, and garter belts, the artist not only challenges the machismo implicit in representations of women, but also, during the sexual revolution, the norms of sexual identity and heterosexuality. Her appropriation of the superhero Captain America, the emblematic defender of the free world and a standard-bearer of democratic values, also echoed, in its first version, the demonstrations against the US-led war in Vietnam.

In the 1990s, Harrison returned to this body of work, abandoned after the 1971 controversy, and began redrawing famous comic-book characters alongside icons from art history, opening a new category for feminist visual criticism while continuing to challenge gender roles.

In *What's That Long Red...* we find the comic-book character Lady Deathstrike sizing up Willem de Kooning's *Woman and Bicycle* (1952–53), while Captain America crouches at her feet; in another piece, Batman poses before Diego Velazquez's *Infanta Margarita* (1656). These works counter the traditional image of passive womanhood which continues to influence the course of history and inform our gaze.

"We were immersed in American culture. This was during the Vietnam War. One of my first pieces was Captain America, who in the comic book was supposed to be a good guy, but looking at it from another angle, we thought they [the Americans] weren't all that good. I thought, 'I'm going to challenge that'; followed by, 'I'm going to challenge that notion of masculinity.'" M.H.

GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT



In this series Margaret Harrison appropriates the pin-up style of the illustrator Alberto Vargas, known for his work for *Playboy magazine* in the 1960s and 1970s. Harrison's series of drawings was made in response to a broadcast by the radio commentator Jimmy Young who featured a new recipe every morning, often comparing women to edible, juicy ingredients. Harrison ironically mocked this formula by drawing lascivious women as slices of meat in sandwiches, or squeezing a juicy lemon. The women are clones of Betty Page, a model made famous by pin-up photographs.

It is very telling that images of overly sexualized, submissive, and "good enough to eat" women did not shock the censors of Harrison's exhibition in London in 1971. They perceived nothing disturbing about the images, and certainly nothing ironic, in contrast to their response to the drawings which parodied men.

Good enough to eat, 1971
Pencil and Watercolour on paper
77 x 57 cm

Good Enough to Eat 2, 1971
Pencil and Watercolour on paper
60x75cm

Take one lemon, 1971
Pencil and Watercolour on paper
78 x 57 cm

Banana Woman, 1971
Watercolour, coloured graphite and graphite
on paper
63 x 87 cm
© Tate: Acquisition 2008

"When I asked the gallery owner (as my exhibition was being shut down in 1971) what people didn't like about it, she replied: "The images of men. They thought the images of the women were OK, but that the images of the men were disgusting.'" M.H.

2ND FLOOR



Margaret Harrison has often used traditional media to manifest political engagement. In *Common Land / Greenham*, she addresses a political question in its apparently most banal aspects (a fence, images of household objects, a shoe, a blouse). The works are part of an installation presented in 1989 at the New Museum in New York, in which the artist described various aspects of the women's peace camp at Greenham Common Air Force Base in southern England, which has since become a symbol of civil disobedience and the peace movement.

The movement began in 1981 with a protest march against the British Government's decision to keep American cruise missiles on land that had been communal property since 1845. United by a chain-letter, 30,000 women arrived in Greenham on December 12, 1982 and encircled the 15 kilometers of the perimeter fence of the military camp by holding each other's hands. On December 30, 1982, some even used ladders to get over the barbed wire fence and climb on top of the missile silos, where they danced for hours.

Drawing the attention of the media, women from all generations and walks of life joined the anti-American cruise-missile campaign, which ran continuously from 1981 to 1989. They created the *Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp*, which remained active until 2000. The solidarity movement in Greenham has become an international model and a source of inspiration for political activists around the world.

Produced during a month-long residency in New York, the series of works tells the story of both the confrontation between the American airbase and the strategic creativity and tenacity of the women protesters, and of the effects produced by the change in ownership and relationship to the land.

Common Land / Greenham,
Diary of events, 2012
Watercolour on paper
83,5 x 169 cm

Common Land / Grennham,
Corrugated metal sheeting, 1989-2012
Pictures on metal, mirrors
284 x 800 cm

Common Land/Greenham (New York)
Painting (II), 1989
Acrylic on canvas, sweat shirt, photos, watercolour
on paper, shoe, lettering stencils
274 x 482 cm

BEAUTIFUL UGLY VIOLENCE



In this series of oil paintings on canvas, Margaret Harrison highlights the common representation of violence in the media and in film. She appropriates this aestheticization of violence only to better denounce it, presenting cool, balanced still-life compositions that include objects used as weapons against female victims of domestic abuse. The paintings are accompanied by transcripts of interviews with prisoners as part of a reintegration program called *ManAlive*. The prisoners look back at the circumstances in which they committed acts of aggression against their partners or families, and what that made them feel. The transcripts are combined with watercolor drawings of domestic objects (telephone, water kettle), which appear harmless.

This piece was created for the artist's solo exhibition at Intersection for the Arts (San Francisco, 2010), while some drawings were presented during the group exhibition *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (Los Angeles—Washington—New York, 2007).

Beautiful Ugly Telephone
Beautiful Ugly Hammer
Beautiful Ugly Hand gun
Beautiful Ugly Kettle
Beautiful Ugly Knives
Beautiful Ugly Scissors
Beautiful Ugly Stones
2004
Oil on canvas
69x69 cm

Beautiful Ugly Violence 2003-2004
24 watercolour on paper
21,6 x 27,9 cm each

"Violence is not always where you think it is. It often hides beneath beauty, beautiful houses and beautiful objects. This is what I have tried to show in this series of revolvers, knives, etc., placed on precious fabrics as a metaphor for invisible violence." M.H.

MARILYN IS DEAD, 1994-98



While Marilyn Monroe's youthful portraits evoke innocence, her last image reveals the dull violence suffered by this pop culture icon who had become a fantasy of the silver screen. This work extends Harrison's reflection on the mechanisms of desire, the criteria for seduction, and women's exploitation. In 1953, the inaugural issue of *Playboy* featured a color photograph of Marilyn Monroe as the centerfold, generating a lot of buzz. Margaret Harrison's touching images are quite varied: three are "banal" and look like snapshots taken for fun, evoking a form of innocence; the fourth is a sophisticated Hollywood close-up of Marilyn; and the last one is the only published photograph of the deceased actress. Taken in the morgue, it shows the number assigned to the body when it arrived.

While the watercolors capture Marilyn's nonchalant grace as a young woman, the acrylics on canvas evoke the "ideal" woman present in the collective imagination, then finally the death of a dream. Her premature departure, which is the subject of speculation to this day, raises questions of the relationship between narrative, representation, and reality.

Marilyn is Dead, 1994-98
Watercolour on paper (#1,2,3)
51 x 46 cm
52,5 x 40 cm
60 x 48 cm cm
Acrylic on canvas (#4,5)
50,5 x 51 cm

"I loved reading about her life and wondered how it could be possible that one of the supposedly most beautiful women in the world could have stayed in the morgue for seven days before someone came to claim her body?" M.H.

MARGARET HARRISON

Born in 1940 in Yorkshire, UK.

Lives and works in the United States and the UK.

Margaret Harrison (b. 1940, Yorkshire, UK), radically challenges sex segregation—whether in classical and popular culture, still lifes and portraiture, or in terms of masculinity and femininity—by feminizing men’s bodies and humorously inverting the power structures reinforced by society and the media. A product of the women’s liberation movement of the 1970s (she co-founded the *Women’s Liberation Art Group* that same year), she became aware very early on that the private space was also political space.

Harrison’s work was featured in the exhibition “Issue: Social Strategies by Women Artists” curated in 1980 by Lucy Lippard at the Institute of Contemporary Art (London), an emblematic group show that highlighted feminist artistic practices nourished by social considerations. Most recently, Margaret Harrison participated in the major travelling exhibition “WACK! Art & Feminism Revolution” (Los Angeles, Washington, New York, 2007).

She currently splits her time between the United States (San Francisco) and England (Carlisle, Cumbria), where she has held solo exhibitions, notably at the New Museum in New York and

the Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art. In 2017, the Azkuna Zentroa Society and Contemporary Culture Centre in Bilbao also hosted her solo exhibitions.

Margaret Harrison has participated in several group exhibitions at international institutions: at the Tate Modern, Tate Britain, and the Victoria Albert Museum in London, the MOCA in Los Angeles, and the Museo Chiado in Portugal, among others.

In 2013 she received the Northern Art Prize. Her works have entered public art collections, such as those of the Tate, the Arts Council of Great Britain, Manchester Metropolitan University, the Kunsthaus in Zurich, and more recently the Province of Hainaut Art Museum BPS22 in Charleroi (BE).

Margaret Harrison studied at the Carlisle College of Art (1957–61), the Royal Academy Schools in London (1961–64), and she graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Perugia, Italy (1965).

She was research director at the “Social Environmental Art Research Centre” at Manchester Metropolitan University while conducting research as part of her own artistic practice.

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