

# GAGOSIAN GALLERY

## MONICA MAJOLI ARTIST STATEMENT

For the past thirteen years my work has engaged issues of identity, intimacy and mortality. While predominantly sexually explicit, the primary focus of my work has consistently been on the psychological aspects of physical experience. The underlying content addresses the quest for emotional closeness and connection.

In 1999 I began an extensive project depicting men engaged in a fetish, which involves donning multi-layered rubber suits. I employed a new medium, watercolor (transparent and opaque, i.e. gouache), as I felt it best described a fluid, disembodied consciousness encased within a confining structure. The rubber suits act as a second skin, while the opaque shapes that surround the men describe both the isolation within the suit and a location or barrier around the men. The highly deliberate subtlety in value and form created by delicate washes, give a vaporous quality to the figures. The shape around the men becomes symbolic of both a specific space and a void, echoing the men's transparent bodies within their suits.

This work has evolved into its current form, which involves life-size figures in rubber, suspended from trees in the woods. Identification either with the hanging masochist or the controlling sadist is immediate due to the large scale of the bodies. The woods, painted in gouache, in which the figures hang are blurred, are muted and abstracted to create the muffled perception of the landscape in a combination with the luminous transparency of the figures acts as a disjunctive element between exterior and interior dimensions.

The larger than life watercolor heads included here are my most recent works. The pumps and tubes emanating from the anonymous heads highlight the psychological and physical aspect of the suffocation and heightens awareness of both confinement and breathing that is essential to this activity. The liquid, impenetrable rubber acts as a kind of mirror for the viewer; not allowing interpretation of facial expression, one is prone to projection of self-reflection. Landscape in these works is internalized, echoing or superimposing the landscape within the boundaries of the body and mind.