

BROADWAY 1602 is pleased to announce the first solo show of New York based French artist Nicola L who began her career in Paris in the 1960s as a conceptual artist working in installation, performance, functional art, - and since 1976 in film.

The show presents a parcours of works central to the artist's career from the 1960s to the present and focusing on Nicola L's radical perspective of the painfully or joyfully gendered body and its presence in states of fragmentation, penetration and disintegration.

Nicola L had her first exhibition at Galerie Daniel Templon, Paris in 1969, where she introduced her performance-based sculptures – Penetrables - in conjunction with her functional art objects. Critic Pierre Restany targeted the exceptional vision expressed by Nicola L in his essay "A Long Journey to the End of the Skin."

Nicola's intriguing larger-than-life-size installation penetrable sculpture for three performers, The Cylinder, debuted at La Biennale de Paris in 1967 with the rock group The Soft Machine and was then invited to LA MAMA Theater in New York City, marking her first trip of many to the US.

From the beginning she has engaged a feminist perspective in her work, producing erotically charged objects such as La Femme Commode (1969-2012), The Lover's Wardrobe (1967-70), The Lips Lamp (1969) and soft sculptures such as The Giant Foot (1967-2013) and Giant Woman Sofa (1970-2012). Nicola's functional objects became classics of 1960s - experimental furniture and soft art design. In 1974, Nicola participated in the exhibition "Grandes Femmes, Petits Formats" at the innovative Galerie Iris Clert in Paris, presenting her provocative multimedia sculpture, Woman Pregnant from TV (1970).

Nicola L created The Red Coat for Eleven People or Same Skin For Everybody in 1969. Described as "her pivotal "collective object of performance," it was first performed in 1969 with legendary Brazilian musicians Caetano Veloso and Gilberto Gil at the Isle of Wight Pop Music Festival. Henceforth, Nicola L carried The Red Coat in a suitcase to various places and unfolded her performances with spontaneous participants in the streets of Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam. During her performance in Barcelona Nicola was arrested by the militia of the Franco regime. Another Red Coat performance - documented on film - was enacted on the snowy slopes of the French Alps with 11 professional skiers trying to ski collectively down a mountain. This hilarious scenario anticipated the surreal comedy of Beatles films and Monty Python. In 1973, Charlotte Moorman invited The Red Coat to her 12th Avant-Garde Festival in New York. The original Red Coat still exists and is in the show at BROADWAY 1602.

By 1979, Nicola moved definitively to New York City where she witnessed and was inspired by its new counter-cultural movements and vibrant experimental art milieu. In 1981, she directed a film on the radical social activist and leader of the "Yippie" movement, Abbie Hoffman: My Name is Abbie: Orphan of America.

Nicola L continues to work on her Penetrable Universe series. The first Penetrables were life size canvas sculptures with extensions for the head, arms and legs for the performers to step into. An intriguing film from 1975 shows the performance group Plan K enacting a spontaneous intervention with the Penetrables in the Palais des Beaux Arts Brussels and on the streets and in the subway of the city. Nicola L created the first Giant Penetrables for her 2002 show in Cuba. No longer performance-related, they were now autonomous sculptures. Animated in character, eerie and whimsical, they are emanations of shiny vinyl and rough canvas representing the elements and planets: Ocean, Forest, Earth, the Sun and the Moon.

"If the PENETRABLE is on a different scale to the human body (either infinitely smaller or much bigger) then the penetration is only visual. While the small ones challenge our perception of inside/out, the larger ones take on the divine qualities of gods." (Nicola L)

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