

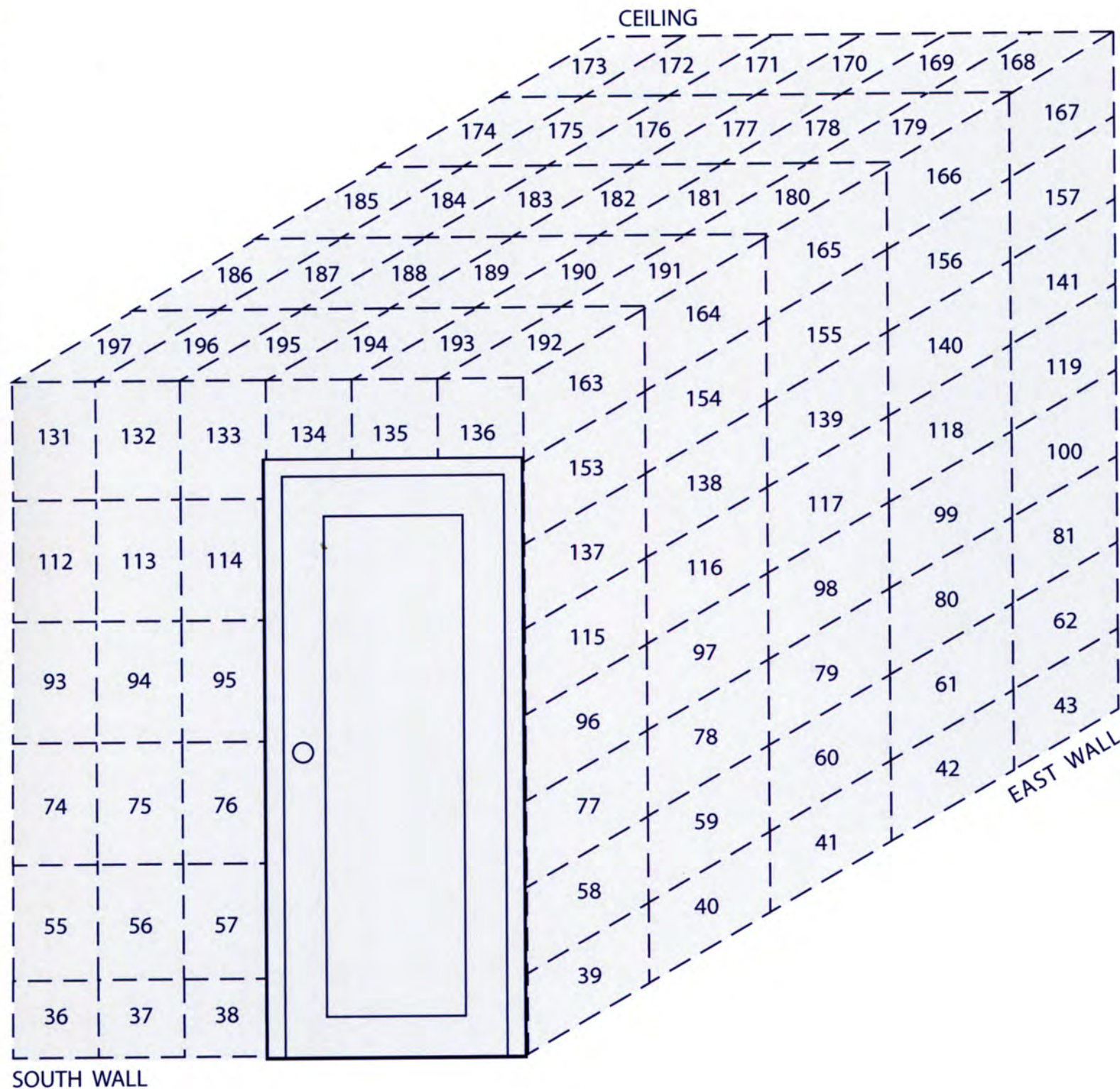
DEMOLITION WOMAN

Kaucyila Brooke
 Kelly Cline
 Veronique d'Entremont
 Danielle Dean
 Lecia Dole-Recio
 Patricia Fernández
 Margaret Honda
 Alice Könitz
 Bessie Kunath
 Young Joon Kwak
 Gina Osterloh
 Gala Porrás-Kim
 Jen Smith
 Ariane Vielmetter
 Brenna Youngblood

September 23—October 25, 2013

The Guggenheim Gallery at Chapman University presents *Demolition Woman*, an exhibition curated by Commonwealth & Council. The exhibition assembles an intergenerational sisterhood of artists whose projects re-envision our shared habitat through inflections of difference.

Utilizing a symbolic stratagem that undergoes both physical and contextual transformations, *Demolition Woman* dismantles shoddy infrastructures of knowledge and social order by regenerating an open system for grafted realities and truths. Adopting various epistemologies of material process, the artists synthesize permutations of language, history, and memory toward divergent forms and meanings.



SOUTH WALL

CEILING

EAST WALL

By Doris Chon

The etymology of the verb *to demolish* includes two Latin roots: *MOLIRI*, meaning to build, construct or erect, and the prefix *DE-*, which undoes or reverses the action of the verb it precedes. Thus *to demolish* indicates razing or leveling a built construction to the ground. In dismantling an existing edifice, the act of *demolition* returns things to a state of potentiality. Simultaneously or subsequently, structures broken down can be rebuilt to signify anew, on revised terms.

The artists featured in *Demolition Woman*, and the works of Margaret Honda, Alice Könitz, Kaucyila Brooke, Patricia Fernández, and Gala Porrás-Kim in particular, contest and interrogate existing institutions and structures of knowledge, history, and power. Their multifaceted works challenge a broad range of inherited doctrines including the nature of artistic labor, art historical and museum practice, the Biblical account of creation, the institution of marriage, official inscriptions of history, and the communicability of language. Their strategic demolitions of these preexisting systems of belief resonate most profoundly in the provocative alternative structures that Honda, Könitz, Brooke, Fernández, and Porrás-Kim have fashioned in their wake. These reconstructions function as proposals to reevaluate the very institutions and systems of knowledge they break down. In the spirit of continued demolition, these artists' works remain open to redefinition and reinterpretation.

Margaret Honda's *Sift*, 1992, 92.17a-c (2013) constitutes one in a series of what the artist calls reconfigured sculptures, works which have existed previously in another form and are in turn subject to further transformation. Currently the work takes the form of five metal ingots displayed low to the ground atop an irregularly-shaped white pedestal. The top surfaces of the ingots are highly textured and uneven, betraying the melting process that reduced them to their current state. In its previous iteration, as *Sift* (1992), the work took the form of three mesh metal sieves, each of which measured approximately four feet in diameter. Commissioned by the Long Beach Museum of Art (LBMA) for the 1992 exhibition *Relocations and Revisions: The Japanese-American Internment Reconsidered*, the three sieves comprising *Sift* were suspended at various oblique angles between the ceiling and the floor of the exhibition space. Charcoal and graphite sullied the surrounding walls of the gallery. Through reference to processes of sifting and purification, Honda's sculpture and installation, alongside works by other third-generation



Margaret Honda
Sift, 1992, 92.17a-c, 2013
reconfigured sculpture: melted steel, copper,
brass, stainless steel
5 elements: 2 3/4" x 3" x 13 1/2" to 5" x 3 1/4" x 13 3/4"
Collection Long Beach Museum of Art

Japanese-American artists, addressed the controversial discourse of ethnic cleansing upon which the internment of Japanese-Americans citizens was justified during the years of the Second World War.

Sift (1992) entered LBMA's permanent collection following the exhibition and in 2013, Honda proposed to reconfigure the work. With LBMA's cooperation, the three sieves comprising *Sift (1992)* were melted down and poured into standard foundry molds to create the five ingots that make up *Sift, 1992, 92.17a-c (2013)*. By including the completion date of the work's previous iteration and LBMA's accession number, the title of the revised sculpture records the history of its transformation. Though *Sift, 1992, 92.17a-c (2013)* bears virtually no formal resemblance to the work it has effectively displaced, the two iterations of Honda's sculpture have become inextricable. Through the process of melting down her own work, the artist has returned *Sift (1992)* to a state of pure potentiality, in the form of the ingots that make up *Sift, 1992, 92.17a-c (2013)*. Honda exercises her agency as the arbiter of her work and her labor. By constructing the pedestal for *Sift, 1992, 92.17a-c (2013)* from overruns of her own exhibition brochures and other printed ephemera related to her artwork (stacked and coated in white acrylic paint), the artist alludes to the institutional and art historical discourses upon which her bold destructive gesture comes to rest, and against which it will ultimately be measured.

The cycles of destruction and reconstruction, displacement and succession that characterize Honda's *Sift, 1992, 92.17a-c (2013)* extend to *4366 Ohio Street Bathroom (2013)*, an edition of 196 prints reproduced on the endpapers of this catalogue. While identical in scale and form, each print bears a unique number on each copy of the publication. If each numbered print were to be assembled in sequence, their sum would form a full-scale sculptural reconstruction in paper of the bathroom of the San Diego home in which Honda grew up, including the floor, ceiling, and all four walls. This work is one part of a larger project titled *4366 Ohio Street*. Begun in 2004, *4366 Ohio Street* entails breaking down each room of the artist's childhood home into a grid of equally-sized numbered cells from which it may potentially be reconstructed in paper. To date, the living room, hallway, patio, garage, and now the bathroom have been reduced into numbered cells, printed, and dispersed as unique editions. Paradoxically, as Honda arrives closer to the end goal of reproducing each room of *4366 Ohio Street* as a printed edition dispersed to a broad and largely anonymous public, the inherent possibility of its full-scale sculptural reconstruction grows increasingly remote. The reconstruction of the childhood home to which the artist no longer has access through these printed editions amounts to a total fragmentation that poignantly puts the house further out of reach.

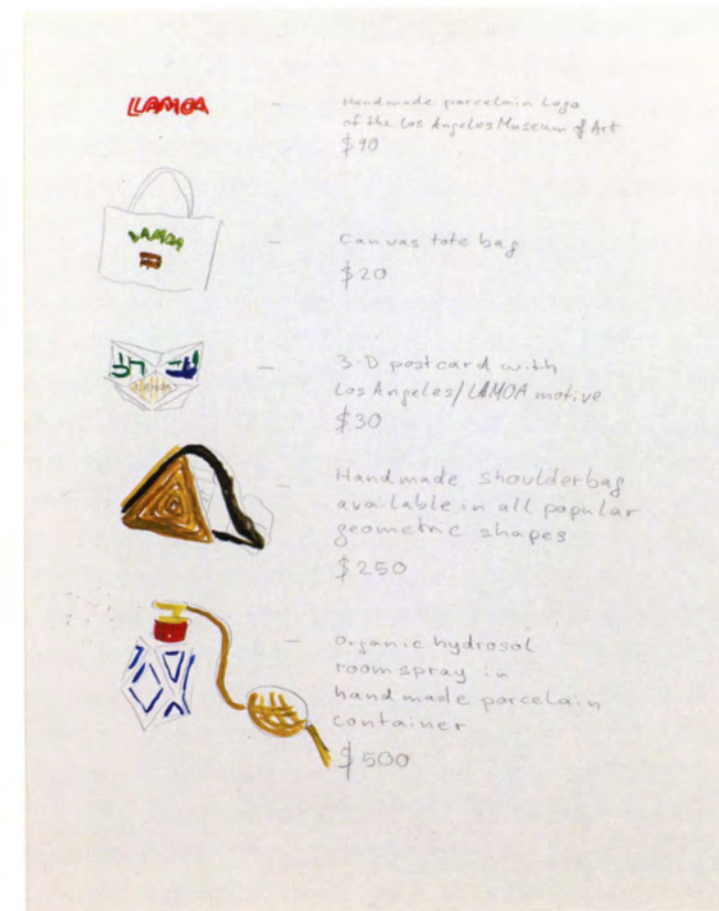


left:
Alice Könitz
LAMOA (Los Angeles Museum of Art) Model, 2013
wood
56 1/2" x 16" x 12"
Courtesy the artist



Questions of access and the distinctions between public and private space raised by Honda's project are central to understanding Alice Könitz's *Los Angeles Museum of Art (LAMOA)* (2012-present) as well. Initially funded through USA Projects (now rebranded as Hatchfund), Könitz conceived of the space as a museum rather than a gallery in order to distinguish it as a non-commercial entity that nonetheless tests the limits of how traditional museums function. *LAMOA* was realized in fall 2012 as a semi-permanent modular museum installed adjacent to the artist's Glassell Park studio in Los Angeles. Its intimate scale (approximately 8 x 12 x 8 feet), space-efficient system of portable walls attached to tracks on the ceiling, and low operation costs allow for a high degree of spontaneity. In its first year of operation, *LAMOA* has featured a series of solo shows by local LA artists, each collaborating closely with Könitz to create a site-specific installation. In the next two years, programming will expand to include exhibitions of international artists, film and video screenings and performance works. Publicity is disseminated via a blog maintained by Könitz, where *LAMOA*'s regular hours (currently Sundays 1-5 and by appointment) are posted. While theoretically open to the public at large, thus far *LAMOA*'s visitors have been limited to a savvy (and growing) art-viewing audience open to interpersonal contact with Könitz as the museum's gatekeeper in both literal and figurative senses. As a one-woman operation currently installed in a private space, Könitz's museum exists as a counterpoint to conventional art museums governed by a board and subject to institutional oversight.

As an art project, *LAMOA* thus affords Könitz a high degree of freedom to test the conceptual and functional limits of the art museum. Its reduction in scale allows for the expedient handling of every aspect of its management and maintenance. The recent addition of a *Museum Store* constitutes a prime example of *LAMOA*'s potential for growth and transformation. A rectangular vitrine on wheels, the *Museum Store* currently displays and offers up for sale an assortment of sculptural "souvenirs." These include a porcelain rendering of the museum's logo, two types of bags, a 3-D postcard and a perfume bottle, all handcrafted by Könitz. These multiples were originally offered to



left:
 LAMO A (Los Angeles Museum of Art) Museum Store Checklist, 2013
 watercolor and pencil on cardstock
 16 1/2" x 11 1/2"
 Courtesy the artist

opposite page:
 LAMO A (Los Angeles Museum of Art) Model, 2013
 wood
 56 1/2" x 16" x 12"
 Courtesy the artist



Museum Store Items:

LAMO A Logo, 2013
 glazed porcelain
 2" x 8" x 1"

LAMO A Tote Bag, 2013
 potato print on cotton
 14" x 14"

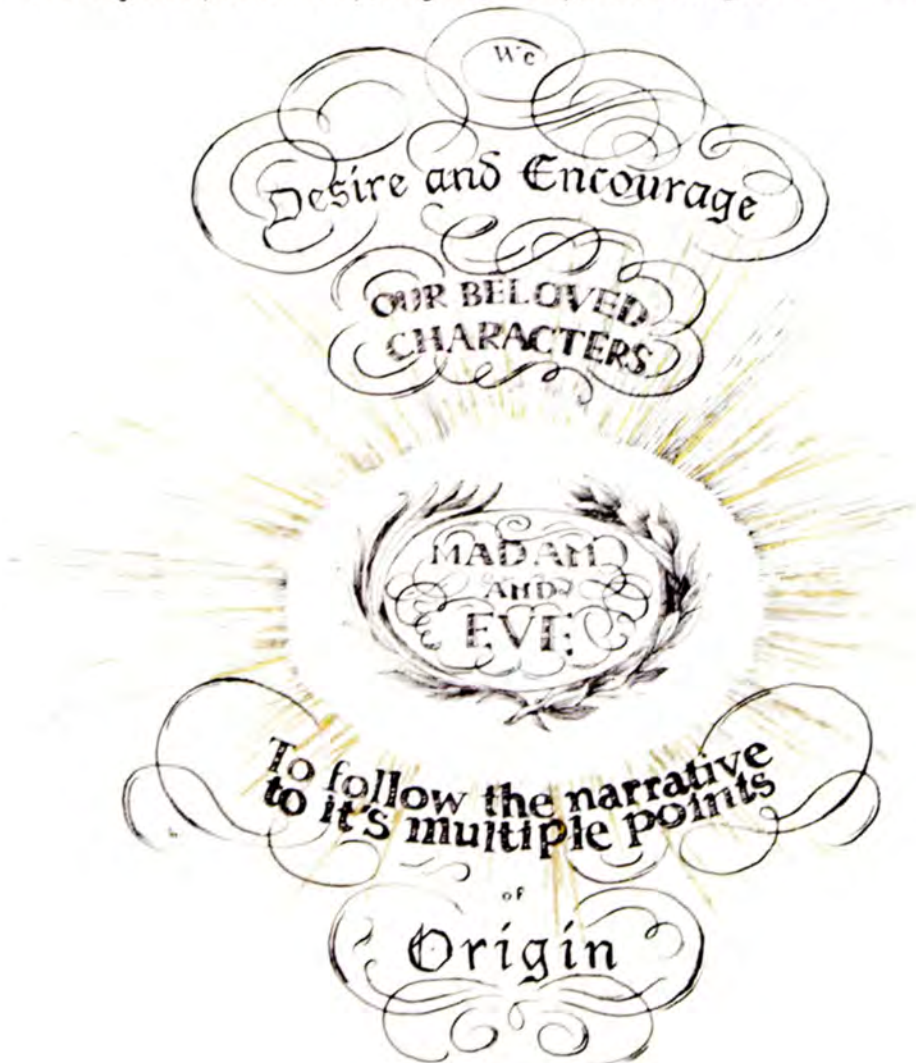
LAMO A Perfume Bottle, 2013
 glazed porcelain, fragrance extraction
 5" x 2 1/2" x 2 1/2"

LAMO A 3-D Postcard, 2013
 photographic print on cardstock
 4" x 5 1/2"

LAMO A Bag, 2012
 wood and cotton strap
 11 1/4" x 12 3/4" x 4"



It is by no special authority and without making a command that



the donors who helped realize the museum as a USA Project and are now offered for sale in the *Museum Store* to support LAMOA's operating costs. Even while the museum's main exhibition space remains at present situated in Glassell Park, the physical mobility of the *Museum Store* as a satellite of the central structure demonstrates the institutional permeability of Könitz's self-styled art museum. The label "museum" affords LAMOA a presumed institutional legitimacy that the artist can break down and redefine as the project continues to evolve.

In her *Un-Entitled Certificate with Unofficial Seal* (2012), Kaucyila Brooke (in collaboration with Gala Porras-Kim) similarly subverts an existing institution, in this case that of marriage defined as a union between a man and a woman. The work featured in this exhibition is the latest addition to Brooke's ongoing *Tit for Twat* project (1992-present), a revisionist account of the Biblical creation story that illustrates the story of Madam and Eve in the form of almost thirty photomontages organized into a kind of photo-novella. Brooke's lesbian protagonists are of African and European origin and their voluptuous nude bodies feature prominently throughout the photomontage panels. Madam and Eve appear in various settings amidst cutouts of celebrity talk show hosts including Oprah, Maury Povich and Geraldo Rivera, who address them in the form of speech bubbles. Equipped with microphones, the hosts pose a series of uncharacteristically profound questions about the nature of truth and identity formation and the hierarchies inherent in acts of naming and classification to the first women in Brooke's origin story. In this way the artist reveals the extent to which the story of creation shapes and sets into motion ideologies that govern every aspect of cultural life, including our understanding of nature and the "natural." Brooke elaborates this key concern in a later chapter of *Tit for Twat*, in which Madam and Eve visit a series of wildernesses and man-made landscapes both historical and contemporary that betray the worldviews of their particular historical moment.

The most recent addition to Brooke's revisionist creation story featuring Madam and Eve takes the form of a lavish mock marriage certificate and wax seal. The handwritten document with its decorative flourishes is clothbound between covers lined in ornamental endpapers and connected by a gold-colored ribbon to a large circular red wax seal. *Un-Entitled Certificate with Unofficial Seal* is loosely modeled on the marriage certificate and seal of one of the grand dukes of Baden, housed today at the General State Archives in Karlsruhe, Germany. The language and imagery of Brooke's certificate and seal, however, detract significantly from the "original" to authorize the dissolution of the Biblical creation story of Adam and Eve and the attendant hierarchies it has set into place, which are so culturally entrenched that they exert their dominance almost undetected. The first page of *Un-Entitled Certificate* proclaims its lack of legitimacy: "It is by no special authority and without making a command that we Desire and Encourage our beloved characters / Madam and Eve / to follow the narrative to its multiple points of origin." The lengthier text on the second page outlines the liberties that the artist has undertaken in *Tit for Twat* as a whole. From the garden setting of Brooke's alternative creation myth, "the heirs of the heirs of all current and future genders and species" shall among other rights, inherit "all domains and the right to name and rename them at will," the freedom to "explore and explode" their own narrative, as well as the "ability to enhance



Kaucyila Brooke with Gala Porras-Kim
Un-Entitled Certificate with Unofficial Seal, 2012
ink on paper, fabric, wax
approx. 22" x 36" x 2"
Courtesy the artists

IT IS FROM THIS GARDEN

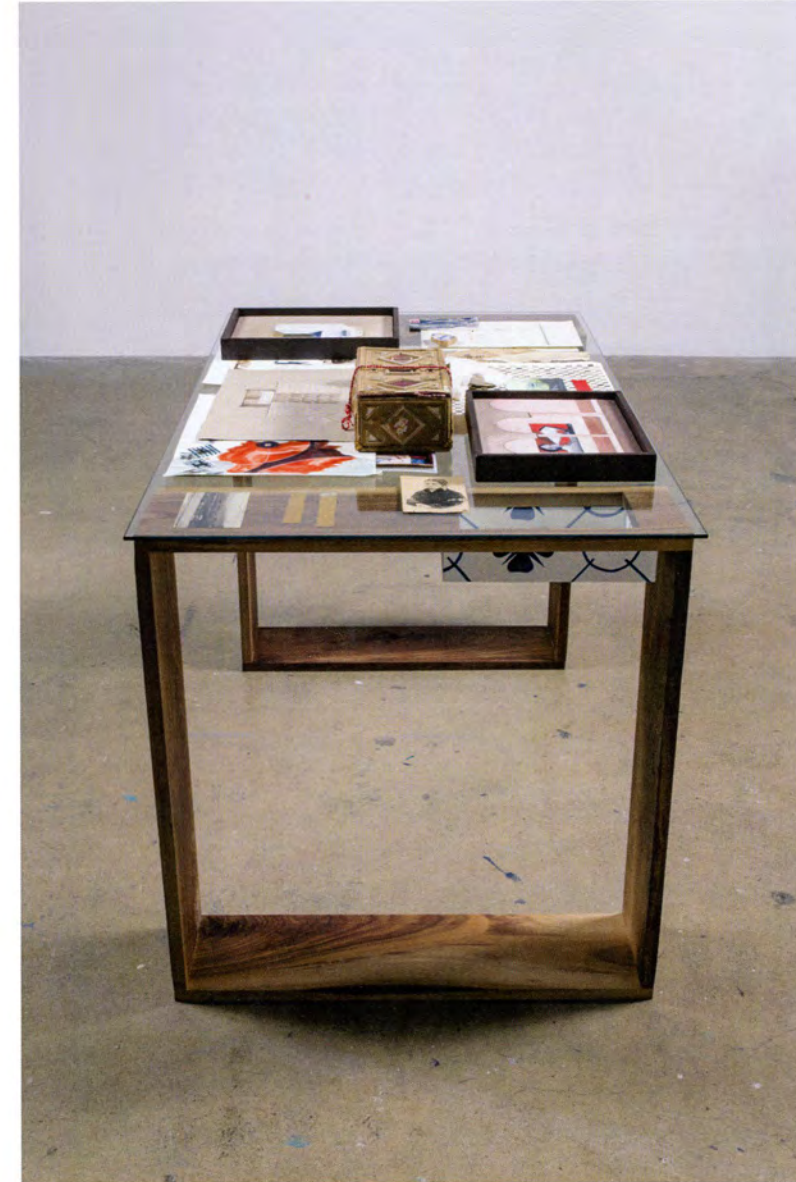
That the heirs of the heirs
OF ALL
CURRENT AND FUTURE GENDERS
and species

*shall inherit all domains and the right to name and rename them at will,
a healthy relaxed California lifestyle where ever they may find themselves;
the desire to explore and explode their narrative for curiosities sake;
the right to research and make the connections that they see;
the ability to enhance the legacy of Madam and Eve through the epic
of Tit for Twat for all past, present and future generations;
the gift of time travel through the wilderness and the garden and
the intelligence to understand both the difference that makes the details and the broad pictures
that allow for simultaneous and panoramic views.*

the legacy of Madam and Eve through the epic of Tit for Twat." The wax seal bears images of Madam and Eve as well as multiple references to the artist's own identity as the author and effective authenticator of *Tit for Twat*. The Latin inscription along the perimeter delineates the meaning of Brooke's first and last name, which translates as "Woman of Peace and Divine Love flowing like a serene brook." At the center of the seal is a heraldic shield bearing imagery related to Brooke's home state of Oregon. To either side we find the shield's protectorates, Madam and Eve, whose lower bodies and tattoos refer to the artist's Chinese and western zodiac signs. Flags on either side refer to Brooke's occupation as a photographer and her youth as a Camp Fire Girl, while iconography from the artist's past projects are featured along the lower register. In the upper register, the apotropaic figure of Shellana Gig stands resolutely on top of the globe, unabashedly revealing her genitalia and warding off evil. The artist's fabricated marriage certificate and seal evoke the authority of the traditional marriage contract in order to reveal its limitations by hyperbolically exceeding them. In *Tit for Twat* and *Un-Entitled Certificate with Unofficial Seal* in particular, Brooke demonstrates that re-narrating the Biblical creation story and refusing the presumed heterosexuality of its protagonists entails a comprehensive upheaval of our cultural values and institutions.

The found and constructed archival documents in Patricia Fernández's *Points of Departure (between Spain and France): Bordeaux-Pau-Canfranc-Madrid* (2013-present) constitute one part of an expanding material history of the experiences of Spanish Republicans who went into exile during the Franco regime (1939-75). The larger project began in late 2012, when the artist set out to retrace the journeys of more than 450 Spanish Republicans who fled their home country in 1939, in the wake of the Spanish Civil War. This mass exodus came to be known as La Retirada. Through conversations with relatives, family friends and numerous other Spanish Republican refugees and their descendants, Fernández became interested in the objects and recollections that survived their exilic journeys, as well as those that did not. She planned five walks across the Pyrenees that separate Spain and France; the first followed the path taken by family friend José Garcia along the Mediterranean coast. The ongoing project *Points of Departure (between Spain and France)* became a means of recuperating and inscribing these personal histories through relics and documents both recovered and created by the artist and then loosely organized into an archival format that resists synopsis. The subtitle of the work featured in this exhibition, *Bordeaux-Pau-Canfranc-Madrid* specifies the cities on the trajectory traveled by Fernández in April 2013, on her second walking tour. The journey from Bordeaux to Madrid via Pau and Canfranc prompted the recovery and creation of the works featured in this exhibition.

Points of Departure (between Spain and France): Bordeaux-Pau-Canfranc-Madrid consists of a heterogeneous selection of two-dimensional documents and sculptural artifacts displayed upon a glass-paned table. The glass is placed atop two square-shaped legs made of walnut wood, which bear a series of distinctive incised marks. One of the upper surfaces features the signature X-pattern developed by Fernández's grandfather, while two of the lateral surfaces bear irregular grooves that represent the path across the Franco-Spanish border traveled by the artist on her second walk. Through the horizontal surface of the glass a box inset into one of the table's legs can be seen, lined in paper that bears the blue-and-white floral pattern of the tiles in the train station at Canfranc, which was abandoned after the Second World War. Several other artifacts from the Canfranc train station are also on display. These include a fragment of tile bearing a similar floral motif as well as two newspaper clippings, their edges singed and damaged during the war. Two paintings of architectural monuments located in other cities along Fernández's route also rest atop the table. One is of the Passage de la République, an arcade located in the French city of Pau, wherefrom key members of the Spanish government operated in exile during the early years of Franco's dictatorship. The second painting features a mural of Rosa Luxemburg located in the district named for the German Communist leader in the city of Madrid. The neighborhood was built in the 1980s, and the artist has family ties there. In addition to these paintings are sketches of the façade of the Casa Cuartel de la Guardia Civil in Canfranc (the military station belonging to the Spanish Civil Guard), a stylized watercolor of the border region between Spain and France with indications of aerial warfare, and a diagram of the geometric floor tile pattern of a building near the Canfranc train station. Several vintage postcards as well as a photograph taken on the artist's journey are displayed alongside strips of linen painted red and yellow, which refer to the use of weapons to distribute propaganda printed on red paper during the Spanish Civil War (as documented in George Orwell's 1938 *Hommage to Catalonia*) and the yellow lines that marked the trail hiked by Fernández through the central Pyrenees. At the table's center is a collaged drawing of wildflowers picked along this same journey, attached to a newspaper clipping about the current fate of Syrian refugees which the artist encountered around the same time; these are placed atop white fabric handmade by the artist's great grandmother. Next to this is an embellished cardboard box that Fernández found and later used to transport the photographs and newspaper clippings that she recovered on her travels, many of which are displayed in this installation. A red cord made by her grandmother was used to bind



Patricia Fernández

*Points of Departure
(between Spain and France):
Bordeaux- Pau-Canfranc- Madrid,
2013—ongoing*

reconstructed archive: drawings,
cardboard box, photographs,
found documents, paintings (Rosa
Luxemburgo and Passage de La
Republique), carved walnut, glass

dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist



the box closed while in transit.

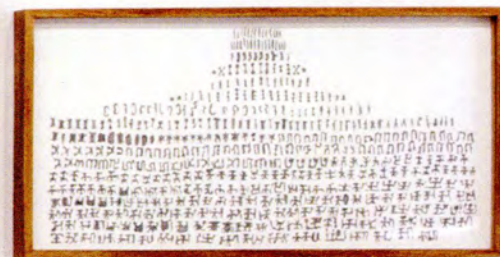
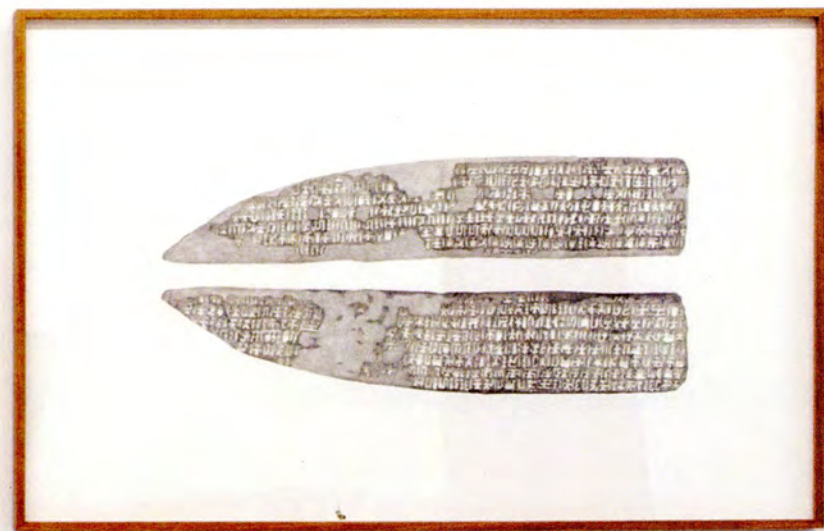
The assortment of found and fabricated items featured in Fernández’s archive and the meticulous quality of its presentation attest to the inextricability of the artist’s own history and personal experiences from the accounts of others that she has brought together in material form. The documents—in the form of photographs, postcards, drawings, newspaper clippings, a found container, textile, pressed wildflowers, paintings, and sculptures—are presented non-hierarchically, and in their heterogeneity they testify to experiences of Spanish Republican exile after the Civil War that cannot be reduced to a single historical narrative. Through the inclusion of personal artifacts and documents created explicitly for the archive, Fernández implicates herself as archivist, historian, and inheritor of these histories that have shaped her identity and her artistic practice. By valuing contingent documents and serendipitous encounters alongside those deemed more objective and verifiable, Fernández’s archive refuses a monolithic model of History and insists upon the interpersonal ways in which histories are transmitted across generations.

In her current series, Gala Porrás-Kim breaks down existing narratives and systems of knowledge in order to engender alternative ways of comprehending them. *Rongorongo text S (RR16), by appendages* (2013) is part of the artist’s ongoing exploration of extinct pictographic languages that have yet to be deciphered. This work takes as its subject an inscribed driftwood panel discovered in the late 19th century on Easter Island, off the coast of Chile. The panel measures approximately 25 x 4.7 x 0.6 inches. Identified by specialists as Rongorongo text S (RR16), the wooden tablet has an oblong shape, with one straight and one curved edge. According to the National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., which owns the panel, its unusual shape and beveled edges can be attributed to the fact that it was cut to be part of a canoe. The tablet is inscribed on both sides with glyphs from the rongorongo writing system native to Easter Island, which consists of human, animal, plant, artifact and geometric forms. Rongorongo is written in alternating directions, meaning that one reads the glyphs from left to right and then turns the panel 180 degrees in order to continue reading the subsequent row, and so on. Over time and in transit, portions of the driftwood panel have been damaged, causing some of the pictographs to be lost.

Porrás-Kim’s engagement with Rongorongo text S (RR16) entails a three-step process through which

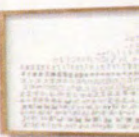
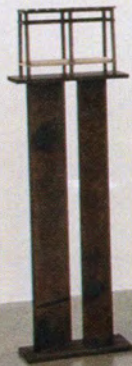
she becomes intimately familiar with the undeciphered language before her and then reinserts its constituent characters into an entirely different system from the one in which they were found. The artist begins by manually drawing a full-scale reproduction of the original tablet. The labor of drawing compels Porrás-Kim to memorize and learn the pictographs as illegible forms. Since rongorongo has not yet been deciphered, the inscribed statement remains in a state of abstraction; the panel and the artist’s drawing consist of intricately inscribed glyphs that convey a set of formal qualities but no reliable meaning in the linguistic sense. From here she begins the equally scrupulous process of cutting out with an X-acto knife each pictograph from her drawing. Once each glyph has been carefully cut and removed, they are grouped and sorted together according to a formal criterion; in the case of Rongorongo text S (RR16), the cut-out glyphs are arranged according to the number of appendages each one has, from fewest to greatest. These glyphs are then glued to a second piece of paper in descending order: the pictographs with the fewest appendages are ordered at the top, with each successive row featuring glyphs with additional appendages. *Rongorongo text S (RR16), by appendages* ultimately takes the form of a diptych. The panel on the left bears the artist’s drawing of both sides of the driftwood panel with each glyph carefully cut out and removed. The panel on the right displays all of the rongorongo glyphs arranged in a new order based on the number of appendages, from fewest at the top to greatest at the bottom.

Confronted with a language that has yet to be translated, Porrás-Kim offers the viewer an alternative means by which to make meaning from these otherwise inscrutable glyphs that can transmit only their formal qualities to us. By removing the characters and inserting them into a new typology based on some formal criterion, the artist invites us to notice and continue to seek out other correspondences between the pictographs, to generate sense within a system that might otherwise foreclose definitive meaning. In *Rongorongo text S (RR16), by appendages* Porrás-Kim quite literally breaks apart an extinct language that has yet to be deciphered. Despite this act of demolition, however, she preserves the syntactical connections between those characters inscribed on the driftwood panel from Easter Island. The grammatical logic of this unreadable language is still contained in the visible spaces between the vacated pictographs. By reducing a selection of rongorongo to its constituent glyphs in the second panel, Porrás-Kim offers us language as pure potentiality. Here we find words and parts of speech that have been carefully sorted and await recombination into new sentences and new narratives, which may be possible at a future date when rongorongo has been deciphered.

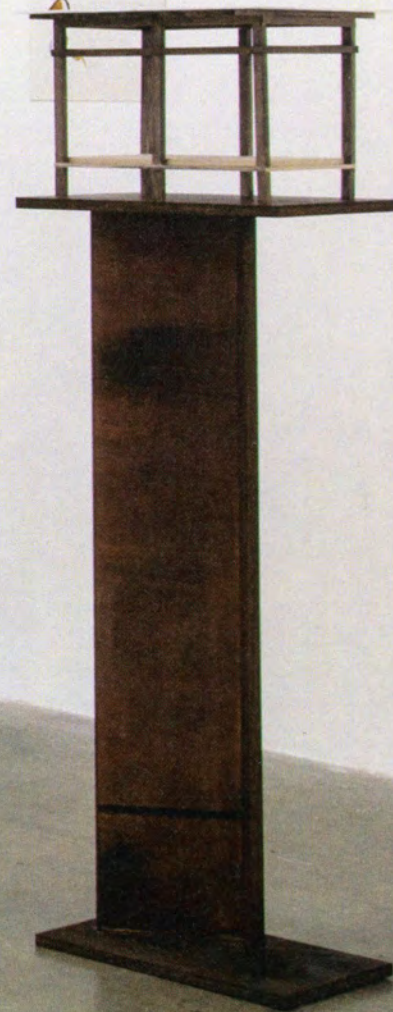
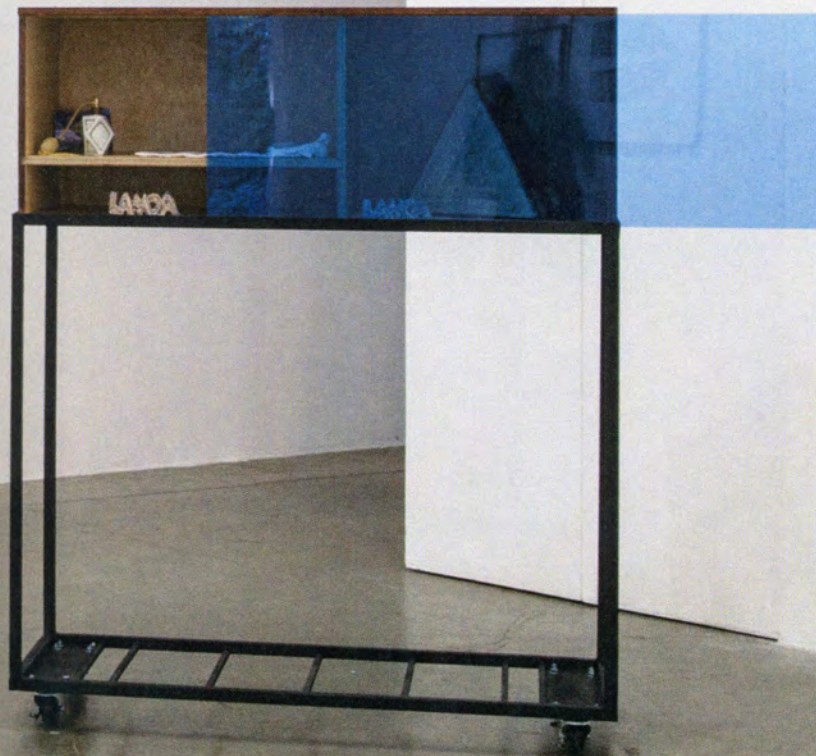


Doris Chon is a writer and art historian based in Los Angeles. Her research interests lie at the intersection of photography, historical narrative, and the ethics of representation in contemporary art. She holds a PhD in Art History from the University of California, Los Angeles and is a graduate of the Whitney Independent Study program, where she was a Helena Rubinstein Fellow in Critical Studies. She has received fellowships from the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD), the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA), and the UCLA/Mellon Program on the Holocaust in American and World Culture, among others. From 2010-12 she was a visiting assistant professor of Art History & Humanities at Reed College in Portland, Oregon and is currently a lecturer in the Department of Art at UCLA. She has authored essays on the work of numerous contemporary artists and writers, including Rheim Alkadhi, Félix González-Torres, Gabriel Orozco, Walid Raad, and W.G. Sebald.

Gala Porras-Kim
Rongorongo text S (RR16), by appendages, 2013
graphite on paper, adhesive, artist's frame
diptych: 28" x 43" x 2" (L); 13 1/2" x 25 3/4" x 2" (R)
Courtesy the artist



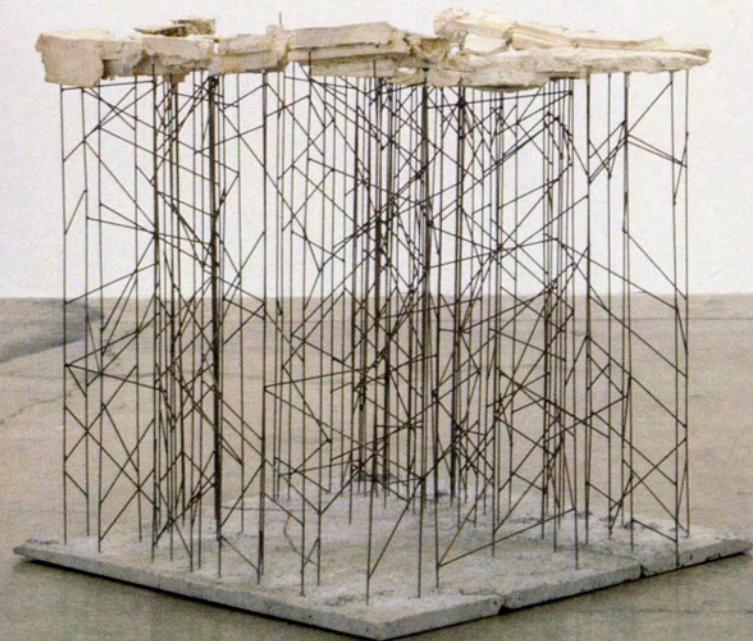
OH DISMIAL COSMIC PENIS



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absence,
of the object,
of which is left a trace, *see* residue
the ability to tolerate,
which leads to a capacity,
for desire,
to mourn,

actions,
that can produce objects as well as meaning,
compressing,
constructing,
casting,
firing,
shattering,
cooling,
searching,
arranging,
rebuilding,
through remembering,
that object which has been lost,
through which an object transitions,
from one state into another,
through which the object is transformed,

burning,
by which an object is lost,
through which the nature of an object changes,

constructing,
the boundaries of a space,
that will be filled, *see* casting
that will be destroyed, *see* burning

casting,
against these boundaries,
through which an object takes its form,

constant,
comparison of the present to the past,
sense of searching,
as though that missing piece,
could make it whole again,

domestic,
objects as,
familiar,
absent,
bodies,
space,
by which we are constructed,

foundation, *see* domestic

mold,
as a system of reproduction,
within which an object is formed,
destruction of,
implications of,

moment,
that is experienced,
which cannot be recreated,
the memory of which,
is recreated,
each time it is remembered

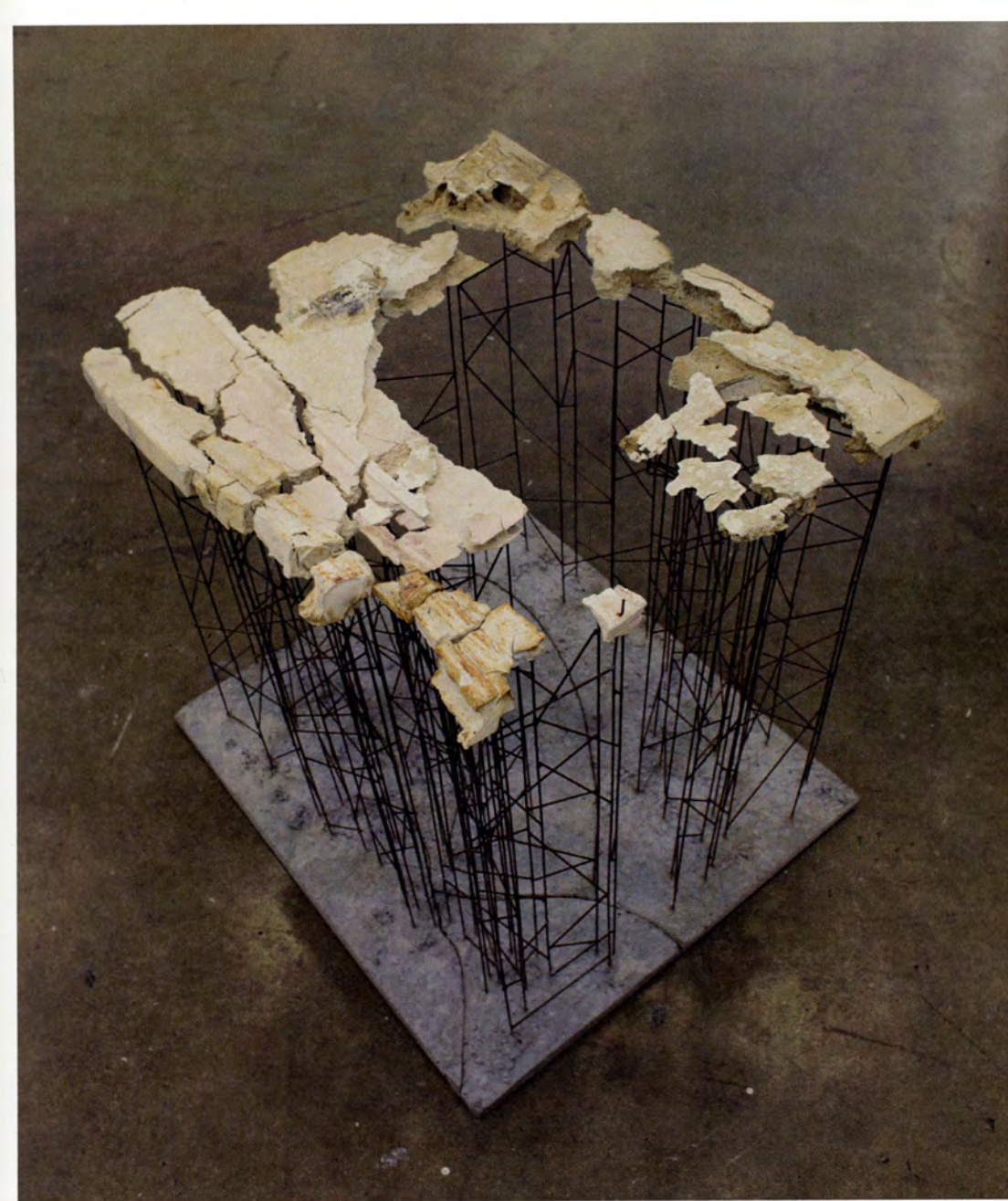
object,
that is lost,
which must be destroyed,

representation,
of a space which no longer exists,
through an object that stands before us,

residue,
through which history may be deciphered,

support,
which gives solid footing,
to our memories,
of the object,

weight,
emotional,
of materials,
see also absence



Veronique d'Entremont
*reconstructing a space
from memory*, 2012
porcelain, concrete, steel
36" x 36" x 36"
Courtesy the artist

left:
*reconstructing a space
from memory*
mold



right:
*reconstructing a space
from memory*
detail





Kelly Cline
Untitled, 2013
wood, paper, charcoal, wood stain
approx. 15 3/4" x 16 1/2" x 3 1/2"
Courtesy the artist



By Catherine Wagley

Artist Liam Gillick, deeply interested in things like cabinets and shelving units, has a soft spot for old school minimalist, Carl Andre. He had Andre over for dinner once and, according to a story he told when lecturing in Houston, Andre drank a bit, then announced to Gillick's wife Sarah Morris, a painter of stain-glass-like geo-abstractions, "The trouble with people like you is that you're only interested in skirt lengths." People like her change from season to season, he meant, like fashions do.

Morris shot back, "Well that must be nice for you, because your lasting contribution to history has been kitchen design."¹

At least in Gillick's telling, Morris is the victor, because she doesn't bother arguing him out of his position, just throws out a zinger that trivializes him as much as he's just trivialized her.

I thought about this story in relation to the artists in *Demolition Woman*, brought together by Commonwealth & Council, because, in it, a strong woman breaks down a historical icon in a way that's efficient and un-dramatic. I also thought about it because the work in *Demolition Woman* does resemble something fashionable. Exposing infrastructure and melting things away, muddying and yet still somehow revering the language of minimalism, is trending in art of the moment. I can close my eyes and picture mounds of dirt on top of raw wood tabletops, or half finished house frames built from two-by-fours inside of galleries. This must have to do with a general taste for structure and simplicity combined with suspicion of grand gestures and, of course, tight budgets.

There's usually an easy apolitical feeling to this kind work, however – a feeling *Demolition Woman* does not communicate at all. Margaret Honda's *Sift*, for instance, five bronze blocks, made from melting down previous sculptures and laid out over white paper, feels dense, weathered and highly intentional in its structure and misshapen roughness. It makes construction and deconstruction too close to tell apart, as does other work in this show, and conveys no ambivalence about that closeness. The lack of ambivalence is key.

1. Demolish what?

"Demolition," unlike "destroy," connotes an act with a plan behind it. You can't demolish unless you have some sort of construction to begin with, and, the demolishers in this show being artists, the constructions I initially imagined them beginning with resembled minimalist sculptures: Women going after too-perfect geometric wood, metal and fiberglass forms, not necessarily obliterating them but changing them irreparably.

In retrospect, it is obvious that women couldn't be all-out minimalists in the 1960s and 70s, when John Chamberlain, Robert Smithson, Carl Andre and others were hanging out at Max's Kansas City bar, jostling each other, going off on grand rants. Or not-so-grand rants. Sculptor Richard Artschwager remembers Andre pontificating about the evils of smoking for a good thirty minutes then pulling a cigarette out of his overalls pocket, lighting it, smoking it.²

Certainly, women at that time – Eva Hesse, Yayoi Kusama, Lynda Benglis or Louise Bourgeois – were building structures, being repetitive and paring forms down. But not one of them could have put down a slab of metal or balanced some sheet of steel against a pole as confidently.³ Even Alice Aycock's feats in concrete and wood often

1. Liam Gillick, "Tuesday Evening Lecture with Liam Gillick," Lecture, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, March 15, 2010.

2. Judith E. Stein, "Art's Wager: Richard Artschwager and the New York Art World in the 60s," in *The Reading Room/4* ed., Barbara Probst Solomon (New York: Great Marsh Press), 98.

3. The main real exception to this I can think of is Agnes Martin. Drawing and painting unambiguous grids did not bother her, but she also worked two-dimensionally, kept some distance from New York and was much older than most of the feminist critics and artists entering the scene in the 1960s and 70s.

veered toward the illustrative, resembling houses or cities, which made them about something other than force and effect of material. The women artists were always referencing the real world in some way, disrupting its perceived orderliness, maybe by making their materials bodily, idiosyncratic or descriptive. Otherwise it would have been like they were ignoring all the social complications, systems and prejudices that had and still did limit them, and what good would that have done?

Women could love minimalists, though. When forty-nine-year-old Andre married thirty-six-year-old artist Ana Mendieta, who used her body as material in ways as punk as they were poetic, in 1985, they honeymooned in Egypt. Andre kept a diary on the trip in which he recorded his many dislikes. He did not like his tour guide's anti-Christian bent; he did not like his fellow travelers (the Americans were "boorish," the Europeans "intrusive"); he did not like a commercial for men's cologne that played at top volume on TV screens at the airport. "If Egypt had opened on Broadway," he apparently concluded, "it would have folded that morning."⁴

But he appreciated the Nile and how competently Egyptian seamen negotiated its wind and currents, and he liked some things about the pyramids and temples. His honeymoon diary only twice mentions Mendieta. He recalls complaining about the redundancy of wall carvings at Edfu and her commenting that they were probably made with stencils. Later, in the temples of Ramses II, she had mentioned division of labor among ancient Egyptians, a topic Andre, always intrigued by skill and power, cared about.

It is hard to picture Mendieta having as much difficulty with Egypt as Andre did. She was from Cuba, had worked in caves in Colombia and had recently dreamt of herself as an Egyptian cat with a diamond on her tail; she would not have approached travel so legalistically. In fact, it is hard to picture her and Andre approaching much the same way. This gulf between their sensibilities must be why, before and after their marriage and certainly after Ana's traumatic 1985 death, possibly at Andre's hand,⁵ people would say things like Ana's friend, feminist journalist Ruby Rich, did:

[T]hey were probably using each other—she representing to him politics that he never really had and always claimed to have and always aspired to, and he representing to her the legitimacy in the art world.⁶

But looking at images of hers and his art together now—his grids next to her silhouettes dug into dirt or her blood-red hands dripping down walls—their opposition feels less absolute, more like a challenge. It's no longer a given that these sensibilities, the minimalist's and the body artist's, have to stay separate, violently separate as they did in Mendieta's and Andre's morbidly symbolic case. What happens when clear-headed, structural legitimacy merges with a politically-charged urge to break apart or melt down?

The *Demolition Woman* artists are particularly structure-conscious. Think of Alice Könitz's pared-down plans for a renegade museum, or Brenna Youngblood's gritty composite of color and texture in the neat shape of a diamond, even Jen Smith's *Mission Impossible* anagrams (letters reconfigured on banners that say, for example, No Mess Homicidal Pics). Kelly Cline's burnt and bending wood, sometime held up by clamps or poles, has a damaged, irregular quality, but it usually looks like, had it not burnt, it would have held a fairly standard shape. The *Untitled* char-colored wall work by Cline in this show resembles a rectangular slab of infrastructure that's been warped by exposure to many heavy gusts of wind and scraped repeatedly as if swiped by some heavy piece of equipment that kept brushing against it.

4. Robert Katz, *Naked by the Window: The Fatal Marriage of Carl Andre and Ana Mendieta* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 1990), 346.

5. She fell from the 34th floor window of Andre's apartment under suspicious circumstances; he was the only other one there; a trial ensued, and he was acquitted given the judge's reasonable doubt.

6. Katz, 150.

To do away with structure isn't the point for these artists. Instead, they are demolishing the notion that structure and its antidote become lesser when forced together.

2. Demolish how?

Artist Rachel Lachowicz, who redid sculptures of minimalist male icons in the 1990s by casting melted cosmetics (lipstick feminism, literally), has talked about her fascination with Carl Andre each of the three times I have heard her lecture. She also spoke about it in an interview she gave in the late 1990s:

I realize I'm mostly attracted to male artists. I don't appropriate these "masters" because I think they are bad people—I am truly seduced by their role as artists and their innovative production. I mean given Carl Andre's history with Ana Mendieta, how do I deal with the fact that I idolize this person?⁷

The Andre work she redid in lipstick were floor tiles, flat red squares installed in a corner. Unlike Andre's, you could not walk on hers, at least not without ruining their shape and surface. They were more susceptible, in multiple ways, susceptible to critique too. She did similar work in response to sculptors Donald Judd and Richard Serra, lipstick chairs for Judd and a lipstick rendition of Serra's lead *One Ton Prop*, each side held up by balance and gravity. Kirk Varnedoe, the long-time chief curator at the Museum of Modern Art, uses her lipstick Serra as a counterpoint in his 2001 tome *Pictures of Nothing*, his comments evidencing his struggle to think about how a vulnerable, puncture version of structural art like Serra's could still be about the way things work. He writes of Lachowicz,

Hers is an accusation that the seeming neutrality of Serra is again intensely masculine and delimited, that the abstraction that Serra claims is only coded representation, that abstraction is in some sense impossible. . . . Is it more knowing than the Serra? Is it wiser?

He goes on, and it's worth quoting:

Or is this one-liner only a natural part of a recurrent life cycle, the cycling back and forth between the pursuit of the neutral and the abstract and the recursion of social meaning and metaphor? If Lachowicz makes a mistake about Serra, it is the classic mistake of essentialism I think—essentialism and meaning. The point about these four plates of steel, put together in a balanced cube, is not what these things are, what this thing is, but what you can do with those things, or this thing. What can be done with plates of steel and balance? Because that is still being done. And it is being done in fact by the same artist in some of the most remarkable work of the last ten years.⁸

At this point, the curator returns to a subject he is more comfortable with, describing in detail the 1980s and 90s work of Serra. But that passage includes so many strange gems—his description of the cycling back and forth, for one. I picture a Ping-Pong ball sailing between the "neutral and abstract" and "social meaning and metaphor," the one always returning the ball across the net to the other. That would be such a frustrating game, one in which neutrality can never consort with social meaning and metaphor always opposes abstraction. Varnedoe is not saying art works that way, suggesting instead that Lachowicz's intervention reduces structurally conscious and socially conscious art to opposites. Her appropriation might be too straightforward, but can't a balancing act in a different material still be about what material can do, how we can interact with it, physically as well as theoretically?

7. Michael Cohen, "Discussion with Rachel Lachowicz," *Art Commotion: Visual Arts*, no. 2 (1997): <http://www.artcommotion.com/Issue2/VisualArts/index2.html>.

8. Kirk Varnedoe, *Pictures of Nothing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 260.

Veronique d'Entremont's sculpture in *Demolition Woman, Reconstructing a Space from Memory*, conjures a construction site in miniature, like scaffolding from an unfinished building with part of a roof dropped in. Depending on the angle, it can look like the roof has decayed over time or like the roof is a strange experiment by a forward thinking architect, landform-inspired masses dropped in before the rest of the infrastructure. Given its relative smallness, d'Entremont's work does not confront viewers forcefully with the possibility of "what can be done" with materials such as hers. It eases us into such considerations instead, resembling a familiar scene but keeping that scene unfamiliar enough that it's hard to understand exactly what you're encountering, although, whatever it is, you know it's comfortable holding its own somewhere between built and un-built.

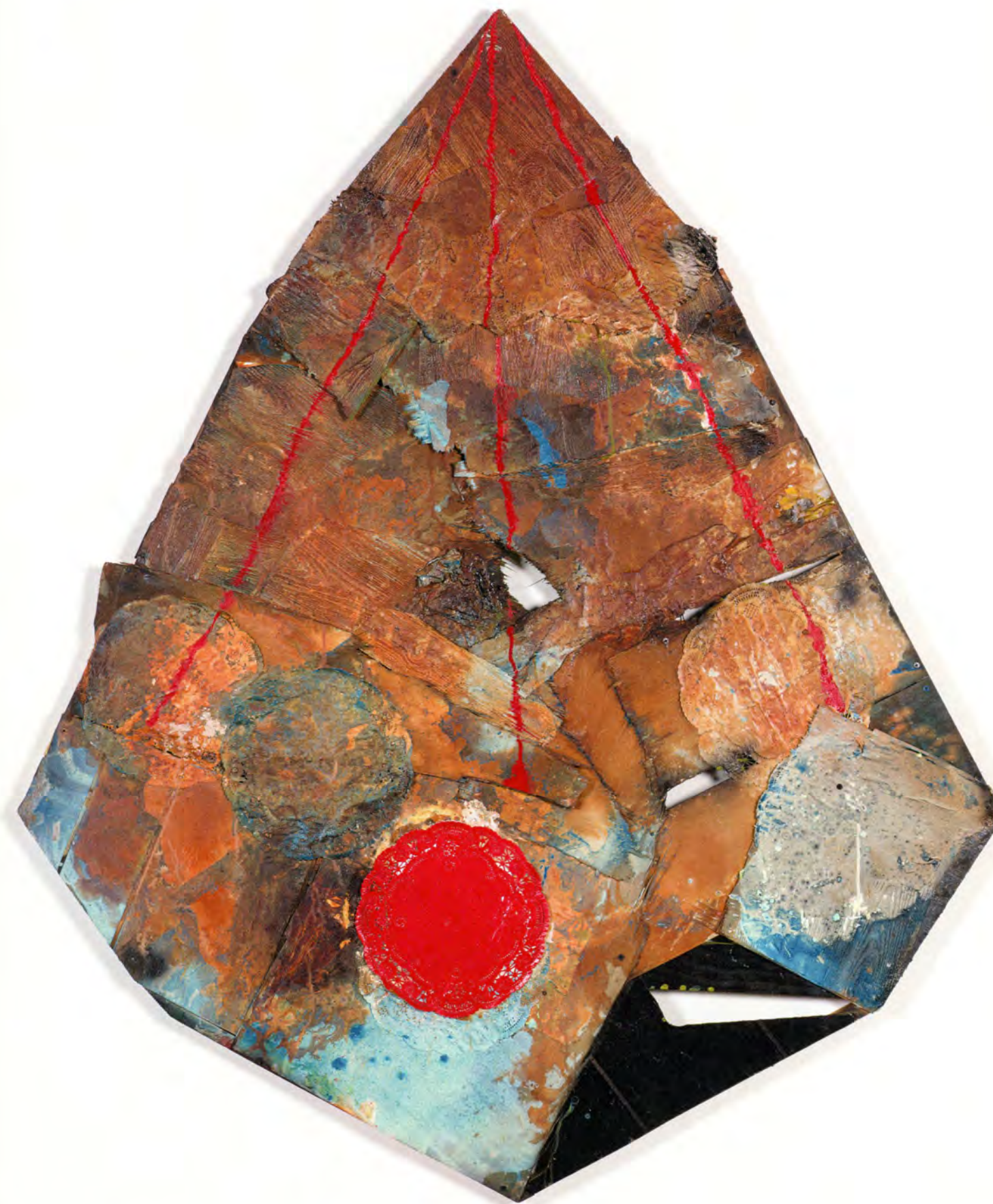
3. Demolish why?

After Ana Mendieta's death, Andre continued to live in his Mercer street loft, on the 34th floor. This has been baffling to many people, probably as much to those who suspect he caused her death as to those who don't. Artist Carolee Schneeman, who once helped heights-fearing Mendieta change light bulbs in that loft, called it "eerie."⁹ I suppose it also reinforces Andre's image as the uncompromising, unapologetic minimalist who isn't going to retrench and rebuild even after trauma, which relates to why I keep returning to Andre, minimalism and Mendieta: their stories stand-in for how the sensibilities of artworks spill over into lifestyles and for the promise that changing up such sensibilities or mixing one with another could propose different ways of living.

Almost four minutes into Danielle Dean's video *No Lye*, Mireya Lucio, performing as one of five women shut into a pleasantly-lit, blue and white bathroom says, "I can not describe the specific methods used." She then picks up a bar of soap. "White like a dream come true liberty," she continues. The women next to her, artist Dean also performing as one of the women and sitting on the closed toilet seat, turns to Lucio sort of gleefully: "To begin with, our borders have been porous for decades." All of the sometimes-politically, sometime-inspirational words the women say come from political speeches or magazine ads—Obama and Romney, up against Vogue and Ebony—, and they begin to make a bomb while reciting the aphorisms, working intuitively and cleanly. "You're the color of the future, the taste of paradise," says Dean as the video ends, and the women all line up in the space to the right of the bathtub. There's a sense of respect for authority, rules and structure throughout *No Lye*. But authority is being reconfigured and whatever the rules are that these women seem to know so well, they're not necessarily rules the rest of us know, though we could probably learn.

In this regard, the artists in *Demolition Woman* are the most level-headed kinds of iconoclasts. Even if they're tearing apart what already exists they're putting it back together for us, and probably for themselves too. This means none of us have to flounder in fragments. We can encounter the evidence of demolition inside a frame that's more or less whole, if damaged. This isn't a cop-out, a compromising middle ground; it's pragmatic and functional, which can be more affecting than far-flung idealism.

Catherine Wagley is an art writer and critic based in Los Angeles. She is a columnist for LA Weekly and writes regularly for Photograph magazine. She recently contributed essays to the *The Unveiling of Michelle du Bois*, a.k.a. Cricket, an art book by Zoe Crosher published by Aperture Ideas, and *Julie Heffernan: Infinite Work in Progress*, an exhibition catalog published by the Oklahoma City Museum of Art.



Brenna Youngblood
Diamond Life, 2013
mixed media
approx. 62" x 50 1/2" x 2 1/2"
Courtesy the artist and Honor
Fraser Gallery

⁹ Gillian Sneed, "The Case of Ana Mendieta," *Art in America Online*, Oct. 12, 2010, accessed Oct. 8, 2013: <http://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/news/ana-mendieta/>.



Zoe, Snap, Snap, Snap back
Snap, Snap, Snap back
We are Con-facing the dangers of the future
Please do not sit on the fence
We must secure our borders
Knowledge is skin deep
Deep is the skin, faced with an uncertain threat
We must secure our borders
Kill
Kill germs
I will kill you Zoe
No Lye or with Lye
Lye, no lye
No Lye
We are fighting for our way of life and our ability to
fight for freedom
Born better
Nasha, born better, this is a complete reversal of the
truth
We should make it easier for the best and brightest to
come
I will crack down on those that bring folks here
Liberty, curl up, weave a story, let it be a natural,
Relax
Naturalize, it is in our nature to be strong and
balanced. But yes, I say no lye
Porous true, white wish come alike
I cannot describe the specific methods used, white
like a dream come true Liberty
To begin with, our borders have been porous for
decades
Tea and biscuits, it was raining outside, People
gathered all around a room, strangers making small
talk trying to be normal people in an abnormal
situation
You think this is pretty brilliant
We should make it easier for the best and brightest to
come
Savored, the best and the brightest
Pleasure tastes good in red
The Génifique shines from within the Génifique
Zoe, a light that shines for all who seek freedom
My Black is my beautiful
They operate in the shadows of society
Who had attack us
I'll never forget your face
We demand freedom as pleasure taste good in red in
so far as they do not endanger its existence or offend
the moral and ethical sense of the Génifique
Delightfully drip defying
Génifique
Fair, fair, fair
An act of evil
You're the color of the future, the taste of paradise

Danielle Dean
No Lye, 2012
HD video (TRT: 10:00)
Courtesy the artist

Collaborators:

Miriam Conner: performer
Jasmine Hughes: performer
Francisco Janes: sound work, editorial advisor
Mireya Lucio: performer, continuity
Emilie Sabath: camera, performer

Text Sources:

Barack Obama, Speech about Guantánamo and
Terrorism, May 21, 2009
David Cameron, Speech on Radicalization and
Islamic Extremism, Munich, February 5, 2011
George Bush, Speech on Terrorism, September
2006
Mitt Romney, On Immigration, 2012
Nazi Party Manifesto, Dachau Concentration
Camp Memorial Site, 1920
Tony Blair, Speech at the Labor Party
Conference, October 2, 2001
Ebony Collector's Edition, January 2009
Ebony, May 1946
Ebony, February 1946
Ebony, November 1955
Essence, November 1978—April 1979
Ebony, September 1989
Ebony, March 1990
Ebony, May 1998
Ebony, December 2011
Ebony, April 2011
Ebony, September 2011
Vanity Fair, June 2011
Vanity Fair, August 2011
Vogue, July 2011

COLD ICON PSS SHAMMIE

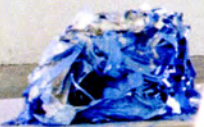
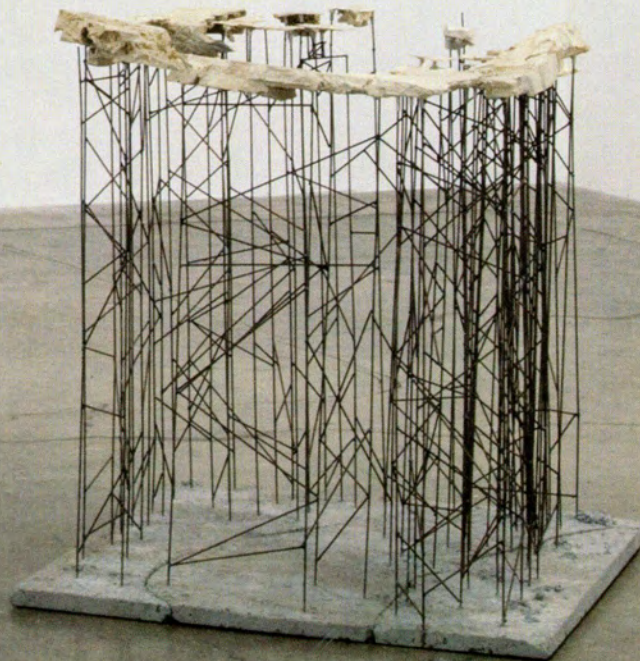
OH DISMIAL COSMIC PENIS

NO MESS HOMICIDAL PICS

Jen Smith
Mission Accomplished I, II, & III, 2009
satin on linen
triptych: 30" x 240" ea.
Courtesy the artist

NO MESS HOMICIDAL PICS

COLD ICON



This Body is Not

By Chương-Đài Võ

A twist of the wrist
Flick
Splat
Twist, flick
Shake
Splat

She flicks her wrist, and we hear the sound of clay splattering on the unseen floor. The hand shakes, a catching of nerves, a robotic malfunction. A controlled, precise flick.

Against this minimalist frame of form, structure, and sound, the pink nail polish teases the viewer's eyes. A close-up of her fingers. The hand. Sometimes the gray background. Again, the hand and arm from the right side of the frame. A discarding.

For the duration of Young Joon Kwak's video *Uh, As if*, we only see a woman's right forearm and hand covered in wet layers of clay. With time as the material, the repeated motions suggest a sculptural process of subtraction. A performance that calls to mind Judith Butler's theorization of gender and sexuality as repetition. Through molting.

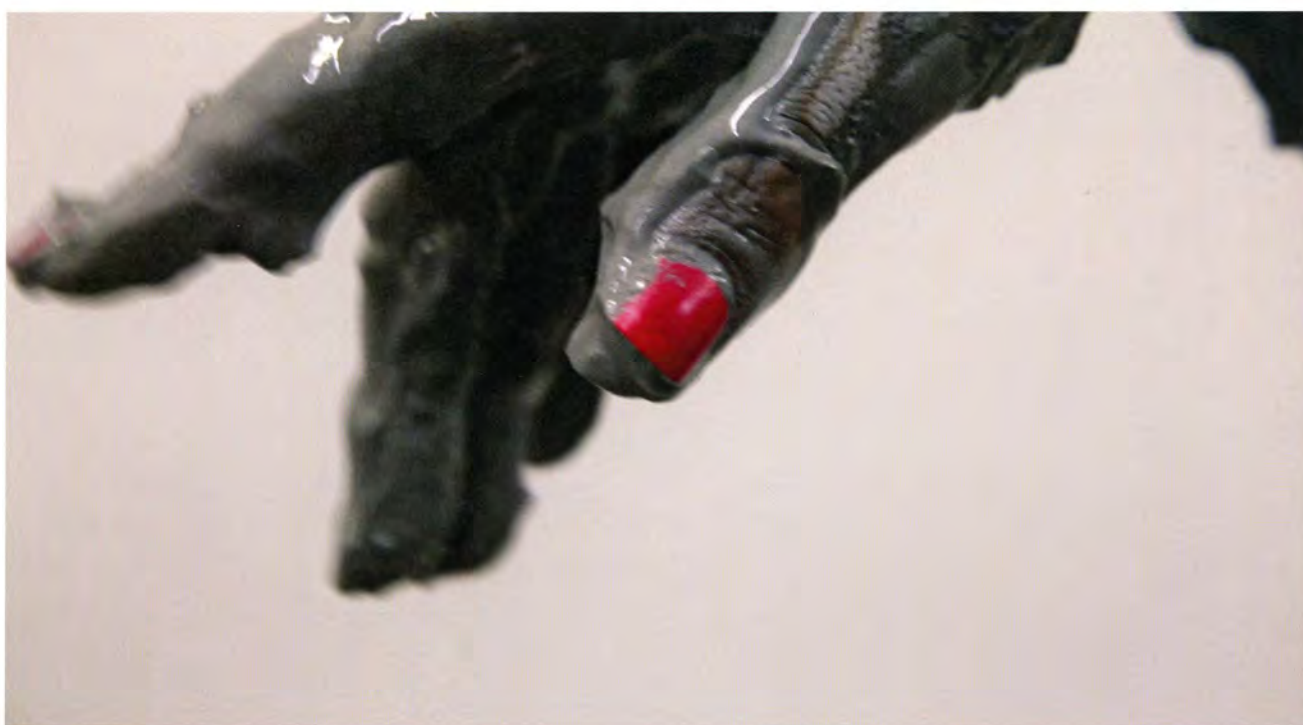
Ariane Vielmetter takes the discarded as the material for her still lifes. *Knaepchen* is a gesso and watercolor drawing of seven bread ends, lined up at the top of a piece of paper the artist made from her recycled drawings. In a long line of European and American still life artists that stretches back to the rise of the bourgeoisie in 17th century Europe, Vielmetter's work pays homage to the mundane and the domestic. But there is no soft lighting to play with shadow and volume. The bread ends are drawn flat, delicate, a layer on top of the paper so that object and background are part of the same space. Content and material derive from a shared philosophical approach to food and art.

On the gallery floor is a set of nine implements, *Tactical Utensils*, made of paper clay and composted animal bone placed on handmade paper. An assemblage of curves and edges, white clay tops and brown bone handles, the utensils propose the compostable as the building blocks of our basic needs.

Bessie Kunath also draws on recycled material for her sculpture/video installation *The Covering Up of "Plastic Parts Block in Blue."* An accumulation of debris from her studio held together with latex paint, the pile of plastic container strips looks like an architectural ruin from afar. It is a sculptural form seemingly built up with haphazard layers. They double as background and screen for a video projection of black marks, a series of flickers. The glow and animation of the marks transform the discarded forms into a kinetic work. Playing with the process of marking the material to create a sculpture, the projected flecks are impermanent and insubstantial and draw the accumulated form outward into the space of the installation.

Lecia Dole-Recio's *Untitled (crdbrd.mgnt.ppr)* takes us back to the flat plane of the work. The magenta colored paper is canvas and content, with parts of the paper cut and pieced back together. In between the cut-out paper is a diagonal row of stenciled cardboard, shaped like cleavers. The curved shapes of the heads and handles create a rhythmic dance along one axis, in counterpoint to the juxtaposition of cardboard and magenta paper along the other axis. Influenced by the Bauhaus and New York School of painting, Dole-Recio moves in between painting and drawing. Up close, one sees the cardboard shapes rising slightly from the plane of the magenta paper. The combination of movements—diagonals, back to front, surface to canvas—creates a subtle diagram of form and repetition.

Gina Osterloh's *New Family of Chance* insists on flatness and repetition to unsettle our sense of space and form, identification and subject-position. The photograph is a group portrait she made as part of a four-month solo project at LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions). She created the anonymous portraits by shining a light



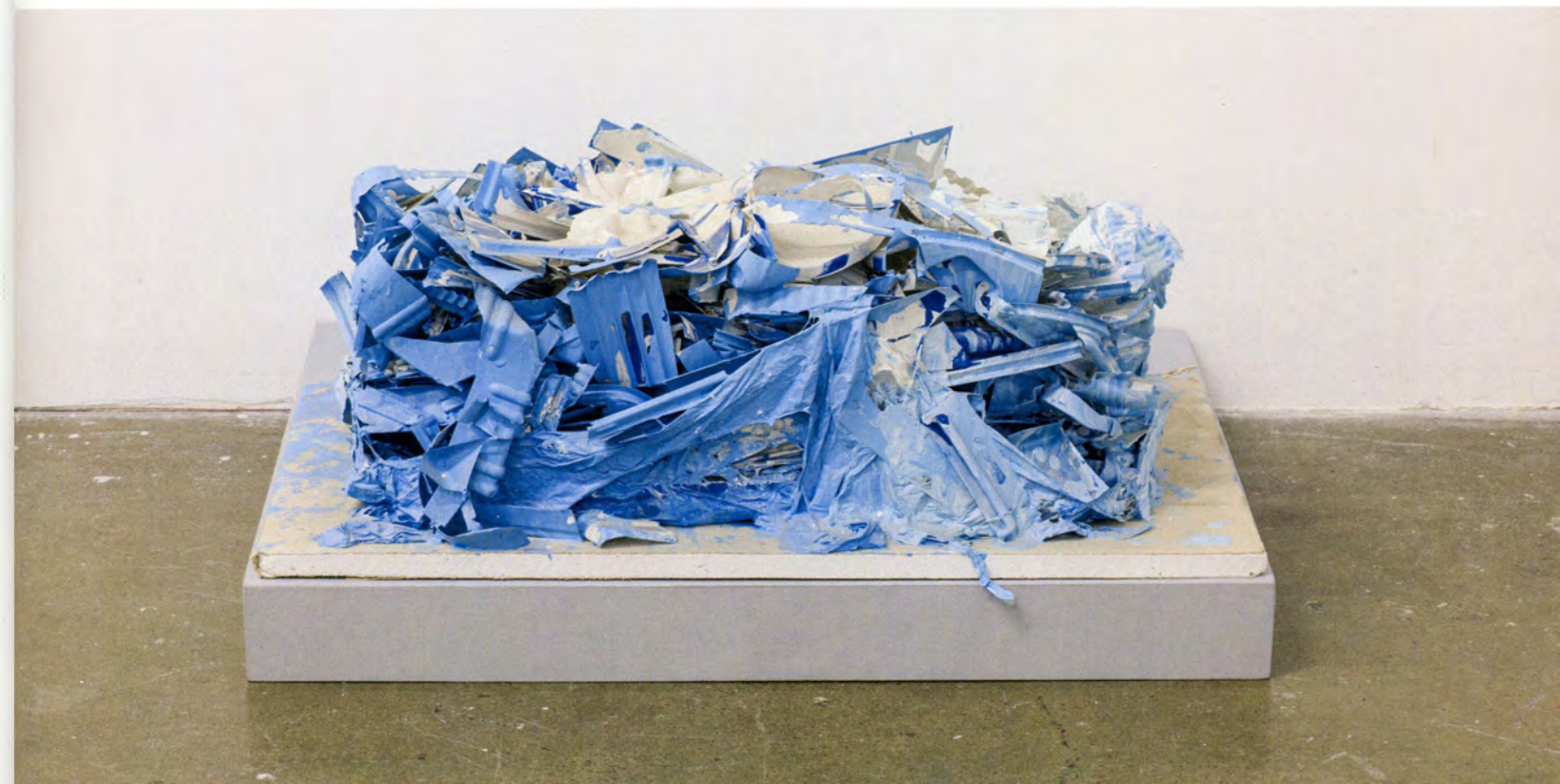
Young Joon Kwak
Uh, As if, 2012
HD video (TRT: 2:22)
Courtesy the artist

on visitors to the gallery and tracing their shadows on cardboard, which were then photographed against a studio set she constructed in the gallery. Like the background, the faceless figures are marked only by black horizontal stripes. They stand out from the background, however, through their gestures—reclining figures with raised knees, standing figures with raised arms, a tilted head, an arm akimbo. And like the body in Young Joon Kwak's video *Uh, As if*, these figures refuse to give us legible markers with which to navigate and name.

Chương-Đài Võ is a writer and curator based in Southern California, and a Visiting Scholar at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at UCLA. She is writing a poetry collection, and a scholarly manuscript titled *An Assemblage of Fragments: Transnational Vietnamese Culture and Post-War Returns*. She has received fellowships and grants from the Mellon Foundation, Fulbright Program, Puffin Foundation and University of California Pacific Rim Research Program, among others.



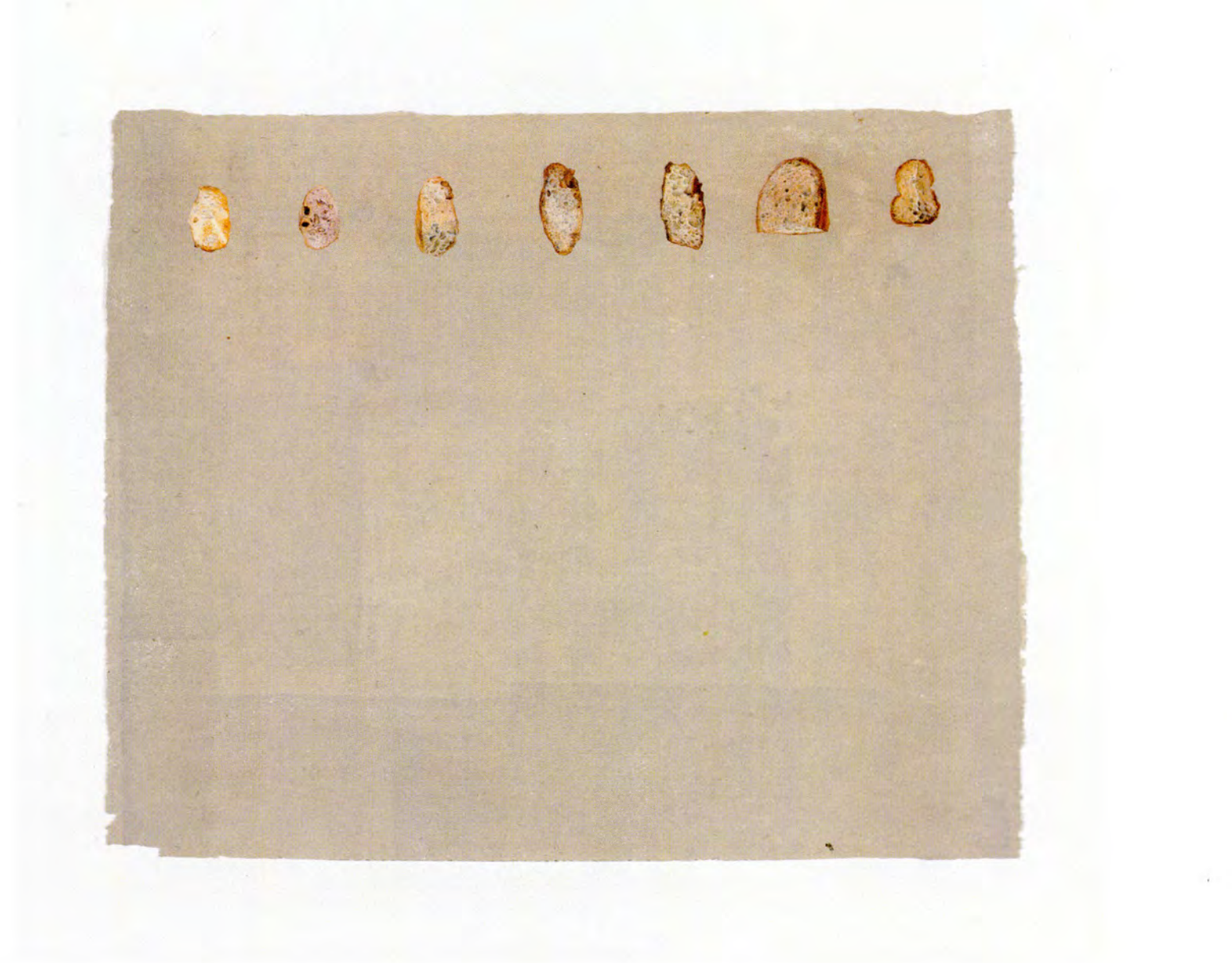
Bessie Kunath
The Covering Up of "Plastic Parts Block in Blue," 2012-13
plastic bottles and containers, latex paint, drywall, digital
video, video projector, DVD player, pedestal
dimensions variable
Courtesy the artist

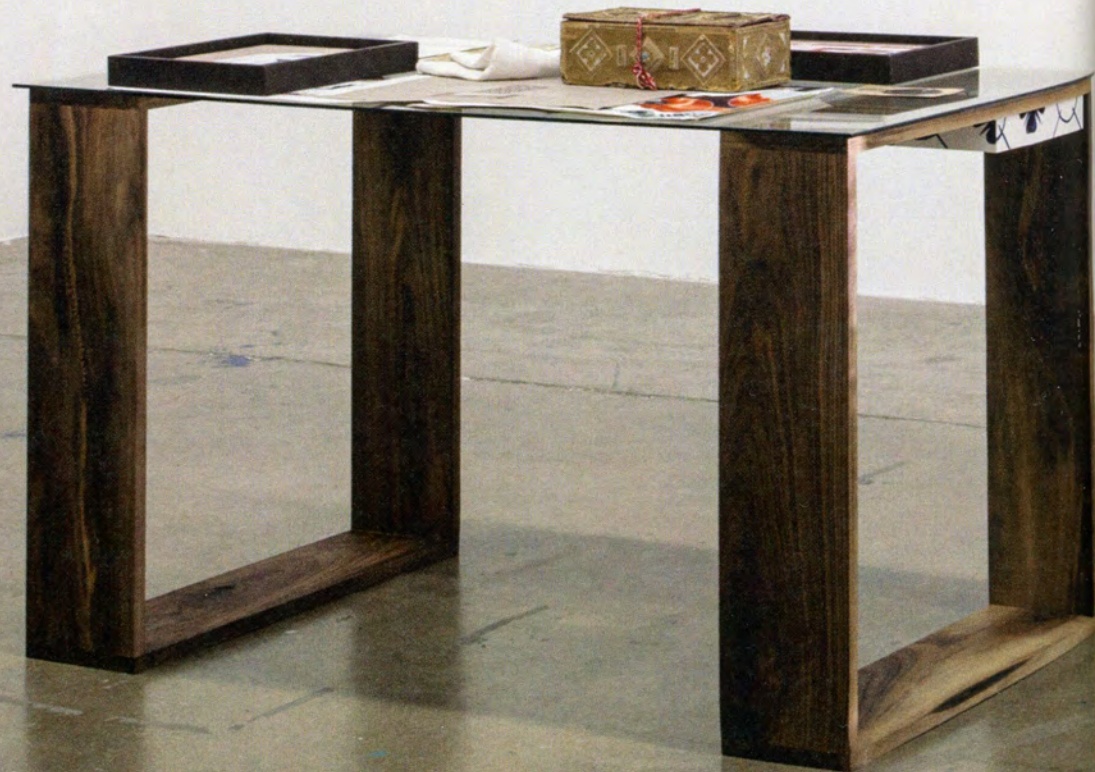
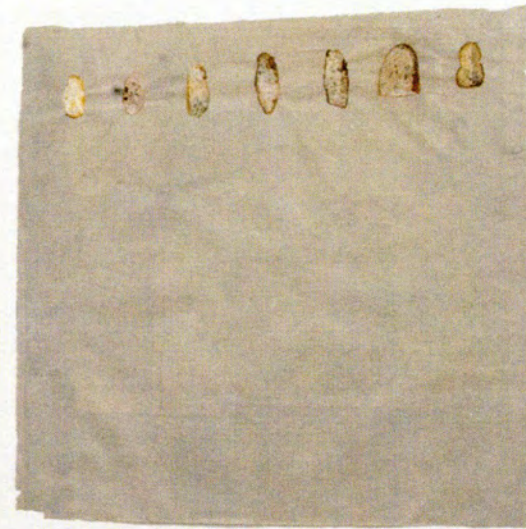


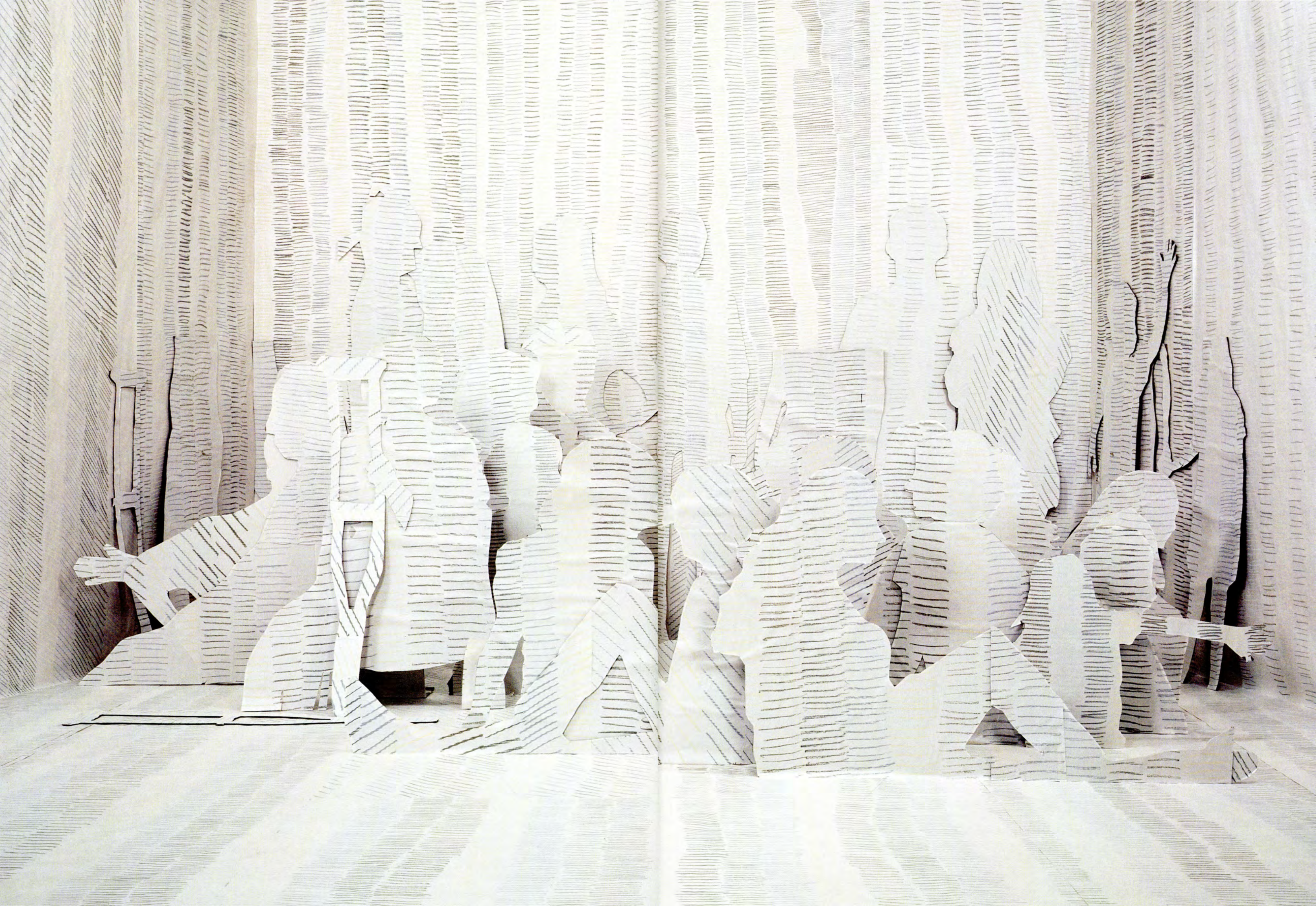


above:
 Ariane Vielmetter
Tactical Utensils, 2011-13
 paper clay, composted animal bones, handmade paper
 approx. 35" x 35" x 1 1/2"

opposite:
 Ariane Vielmetter
Knaepchen, 2012
 gesso and watercolor on handmade paper
 approx. 30" x 30"
 Courtesy the artist







opposite page:
Lecia Dole-Recio
Untitled (crdbrd.mgnt.ppr.), 2010
acrylic, tape, cardboard, paper
32 1/2" x 25 1/2"
Courtesy the artist

previous pages:
Gina Osterloh
New Family of Chance, 2012
archival photograph, frame
25" x 30" x 1 1/2"
Courtesy the artist and François Ghebaly Gallery



The Mission of the Department of Art at Chapman University

The Mission of the Department of Art at Chapman University is to offer a comprehensive education that develops the technical, perceptual, theoretical, historical and critical expertise needed for successful careers in visual art, graphic design and art history. The department supports artists, designers, and scholars within a rigorous liberal arts environment that enriches the human mind and spirit. We foster the artistic and academic growth necessary to encourage lifelong study and practice of the arts through a curriculum that contains strong foundation and history components as a basis for continued innovations in contemporary practice and scholarship.

Guggenheim Gallery Mission Statement

The department of art will provide provocative exhibitions and educational programming that provide a local connection to the national and international dialogue about contemporary art and provide a framework for an interchange between artists, scholars, students and the community at large. While the exhibitions feature contemporary art, they often address other disciplines and societal issues in general. Integrated into the curriculum, these programs contribute significantly to the Chapman education.

Special thanks to: Sue Ann Robinson and Candice Reichardt at Long Beach Museum of Art; Nadja Quante and Anja Casser at Badischer Kunstverein; Karisa Morante, Tyler Park, and François Ghebaly Gallery; Honor Fraser Gallery; Marcus Herse and Guggenheim Gallery at Chapman University; Blake Besharian / New Byzantium; Nicolau Vergueiro; Doris Chon; **Chương-Đài Võ**; Catherine Wagley; and the artists.

designed by Blake Besharian / New Byzantium

Eknaes font / cover design by Nicolau Vergueiro

photography by Yongho Kim with additional images provided by Gala Porrás-Kim, Young Joon Kwak, Veronique d'Entremont, Bessie Kunath, Danielle Dean, and Gina Osterloh

back cover:

Young Joon Kwak

Aggregate Body, 2013

archival inkjet print, adhesive

83" x 33"

Courtesy the artist

inside front and back covers:

Margaret Honda

4366 Ohio Street Bathroom, 2013

ink on paper

196 prints, each 12 x 17 in / 30 x 43 cm

overall bathroom dimensions: 96 x 72 x 84 in / 2.4 x 1.5 x 2.1 m

Produced in an edition of 196, this catalogue's number [//] also refers to an individual print within *4366 Ohio Street Bathroom*.

4366 Ohio Street (2004--ongoing) is a full-scale reconstruction in paper of Honda's childhood home in southern California. Its format is a series of print editions, each reproducing one room and published in catalogues and periodicals. The conditions of a specific publication determine an edition's size and dimensions. Each copy of *Demolition Woman* contains a unique print that functions as a 1:1 scale segment of the bathroom's walls, floor, or ceiling. If these numbered prints were assembled according to the diagram they would form a life-size rendition of that room and, together with prints for the other rooms, the entire house.

SCALE 1:1

