

Thomas Erben Gallery

ecofeminism(s)

curated by Monika Fabijanska

Exhibition Documentation

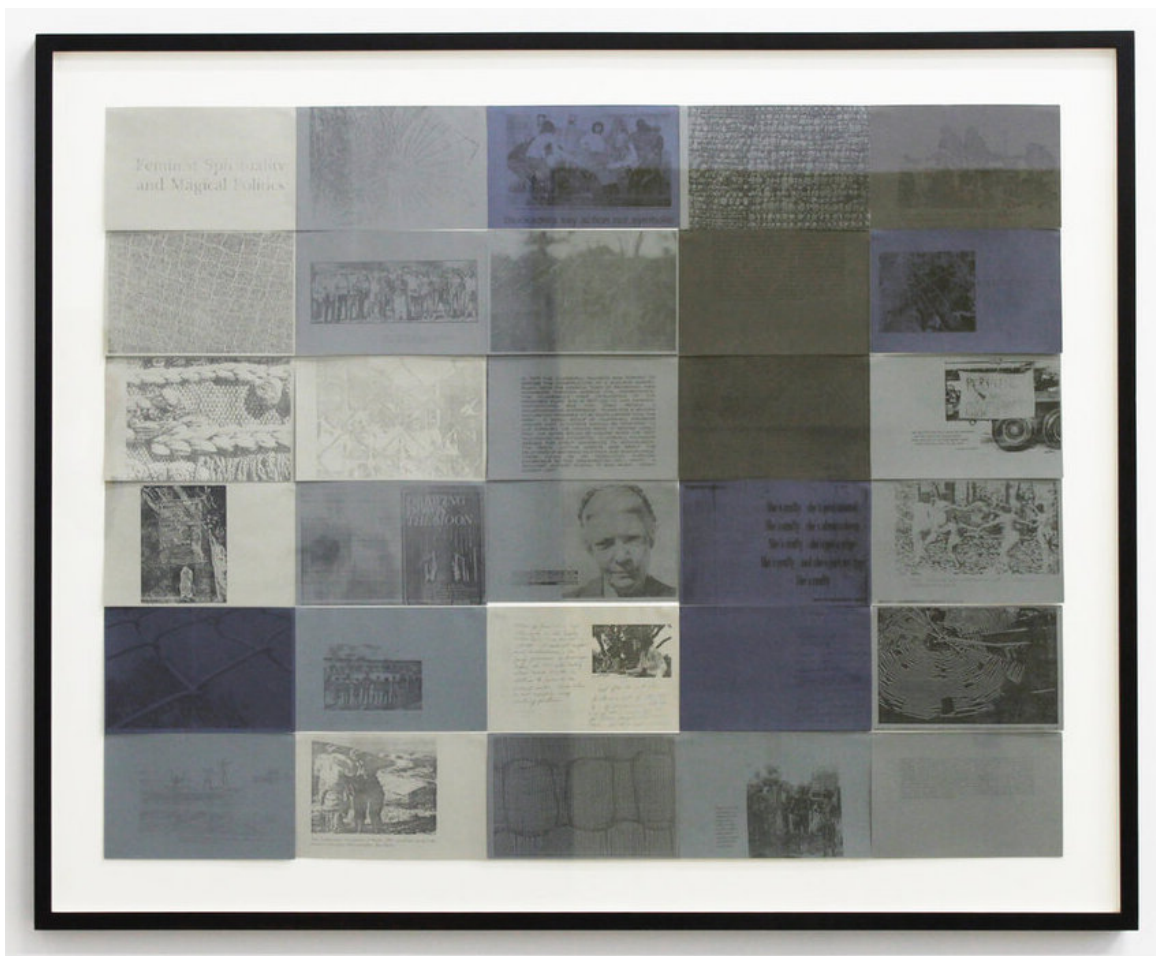
Features excerpts from the curator's essay



Installation view from *ecofeminism(s)*
[west & north walls]



Andrea Bowers (American, b.1965)
Climate Change is Real (Multiple), 2017
Neon, MDO, paint
20 ¾ x 57in (52.7 x 144.8 cm)
ed. 3 of 10 (+2 AP)
Courtesy of the artist and Andrew Kreps Gallery



Andrea Bowers (American, b.1965)
Feminist Spirituality and Magical Politics Scrapbook, 2003
 Photocopy on paper
 33 ¼ x 42 ¾ in (84.5 x 108.5 cm)
 Courtesy of the artist and Andrew Kreps Gallery

Eco-feminism plays an important role in the work of Andrea Bowers', a tree sitter herself. A key aspect of her art is creating and protecting the records of activism, often ousted from the official annals, just like the history of women. *Feminist Spirituality and Magical Politics Scrapbook* (2003) belongs to the series *Magical Politics*, where she analyzed the spiritual roots of pioneer ecofeminist activists and memorialized their acts of civil disobedience, such as the 1980 Women's Pentagon Action, or 1981 Mothers of Peace' protest at the Diablo Nuclear Power Plant.



Helène Aylon (American, 1931-2020)

The Earth Ambulance, 1982

©Helène Aylon. Courtesy Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects.

Helène Aylon tied the politics of war, which affects both human life and the environment, to the roots of our civilization in patriarchal religious systems. The Earth Ambulance carried pillowcases with earth “rescued” from fourteen selected SAC (Strategic Air Command) military bases across the country, from Berkeley to New York’s mass demonstration during SALT disarmament talks at the United Nations. Aimed at “confrontation and surveillance” at SACs, Aylon’s activist art involved ritual (“performance ceremonials”) and the collaboration of thirteen women. At the UN, they carried used army stretchers with the pillowcases, and emptied the earth into containers across the street from the UN.

SUNRISE DEPARTURE OF THE EARTH AMBULANCE

MAY 2, 1982, 5 AM

DEAR FRIENDS,

WE ARE STARTING ON A VOYAGE TO TWELVE MILITARY SITES
AS THE SUN BREAKS THROUGH THE MIST
BEHIND THE BERKELEY/LAWRENCE LABORATORIES:
WE WILL FILL PILLOWCASES WITH EARTH FROM THESE SITES
AND THE EARTH WILL BE DRIVEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS
IN THE EARTH AMBULANCE.

TO AMERICA, I SAY, OPEN YOUR WINDOWS;
THERE ARE ARSENALS IN YOUR BACKYARDS.
THAT IS WHY WE BEGIN FROM THE WEST
WITH LIVERMORE WEAPONS LABORATORY
AND THEN SOUTH, THE HOME OF THE TRIDENT, VANDENBERG S.A.C.
HEADING EAST, LOS ALAMOS WHERE IT ALL BEGAN—
ALSO IN NEW MEXICO, THERE'S THE KIRTLAND WEAPONS STORAGE.
PETERSON S.A.C. AND ROCKY FLATS PLUTONIUM TRIGGER FACTORY—
BOTH IN COLORADO—AND MCCONNELL AIR FORCE BASE
NEAR THE MISSOURI NUCLEAR WASTE BURIAL.
WHITEMAN S.A.C. IN KANSAS AND RICKENBACKER IN OHIO—
BETTIS ATOMIC WEAPONS IN PENNSYLVANIA—
AND AS WE GET CLOSER TO NEW YORK,
THIS VOYAGE WILL END IN PICCATINY
WARHEAD DESIGN ARSENAL IN NEW JERSEY.

ON JUNE 12, THE DAY OF THE MASS RALLY FOR DISARMAMENT,
WE WILL WALK DOWN THE STEPS NEAR THE ISAIAH WALL
ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE U.N.
WE WILL EMPTY THE PILLOWCASES INTO TRANSPARENT FRAMES
TO LOOK UPON EARTHS FROM ACROSS AMERICA.
ON JULY 4TH, WE WILL HANG THE PILLOWCASES—
EMPTIED AND STAINED FROM THE EARTH—
ON A CLOTHESLINE ALONG TREES (BETWEEN FIRST AND SECOND AVENUE
AT DAG HAMMARSKJOLD PLAZA ON 49TH STREET)
AND THE DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES (WRITTEN BETWEEN TWO OCEANS)
WILL BE SCRAWLED ON THE PILLOWCASE SACS.

Helène Aylon (American, 1931-2020)

The Earth Ambulance (detail), 1982

©Helène Aylon. Courtesy Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects.



Eliza Evans (American)
All the Way to Hell, 2020-ongoing
Mineral rights, law, bureaucracy, size: 3 acres x 4,000 miles (depth).
Edition: 1,000 mineral properties
©2020 Eliza Evans. Courtesy of the artist

Eliza Evans offers the mineral rights to 3 acres of her land in Creek County, Oklahoma, for sale to 1,000 people, in order to prevent fossil fuel development in the area. In the vein of Agnes Denes' 1992 project *Tree Mountain – A Living Time Capsule – 11,000 Trees, 11,000 People, 400 Years realized in Finland*, Evans' *All the Way to Hell* (2020-ongoing) offers us the opportunity to participate and the responsibility to make change. The project consists of actual mineral deeds for buyers and an installation.

QUIT CLAIM MINERAL DEED

THIS INDENTURE, made this ____ day of **June, 2020**, by and between **ELIZA ROBINSON EVANS**, (hereinafter "Grantor") and _____, a single person, as tenants in common, (hereinafter "Grantee").

WITNESSETH, that Grantor, in consideration of the sum of Ten Dollars (\$10.00) duly paid, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, does hereby quit-claim, grant, bargain, sell, and convey unto the Grantee, and to his heirs, successors, and assigns, forever, all her right, title, interest, claim and demand, both at law and in equity, of, in, and to all of the oil, gas, coal, hard rock minerals whatsoever having any economic benefit now or in the future, in and under, and that may be produced, from the following described property to-wit:

A 1/1000th undivided interest in and Eliza Robinson Evans ½ undivided interest in and to the SW ¼ of Section 13, Township 18 North, Range 11 East, Creek County, State of Oklahoma;

together with the right of ingress and egress at all times for the purpose of mining, drilling, exploring, operating, and developing said lands for oil, gas, coal, hard rock minerals, and all other minerals whatsoever having any economic benefit now or in the future, and storing, handling, transporting, and marketing the same there from with the right to remove from said land all of Grantee's property and improvements.

This conveyance is made subject to and includes any rights now existing to any lessee or assigns under any valid and subsisting oil, gas, coal, hard rock minerals, or any other minerals lease of record heretofore executed; it being understood and agreed that said Grantee shall have, receive, and enjoy the herein granted undivided interest in and to all bonuses, rents, royalties, and other benefits which may accrue under the terms of said lease insofar as it covers the above described land from and after the date hereof, precisely as if the Grantee herein had been at the date of the making of said lease to the owner of a similar undivided interest in and to the lands described and Grantee being the lessor herein.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD THE SAME, together with all and singular, the tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining, and all the estate, right, title, interest and claim whatsoever of the said Grantor, either in law or equity, to have and to hold forever the above granted premises unto the Grantee, and his heirs and assigns forever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Grantor does hereunto set his/her hand the day and year first above written.

ELIZA ROBINSON EVANS

STATE OF NEW YORK)
) ss.
COUNTY OF _____)

BEFORE me, the undersigned Notary Public within and for the said County and State, on this ____ day of _____, 2020, Eliza Robinson Evans, personally appeared to me known to be the identical person who executed the within and foregoing instrument, and acknowledged to me that she executed the same as a free and voluntary act and deed for the uses and purposes therein set forth. Given under my hand and seal of office the day and year above written.

My Commission Expires

Notary Public

Eliza Evans (American)
All the Way to Hell, 2020-ongoing
Mineral rights, law, bureaucracy, size: 3 acres x 4,000 miles (depth).
Edition: 1,000 mineral properties
©2020 Eliza Evans. Courtesy of the artist



Sonya Kelliher-Combs (Native American, b. 1969)
Mark, Polar Bear, 2019
Acrylic polymer, polar bear fur, fabric flag, metal brackets,
40 x 65 in
©2019 Sonya Kelliher-Combs.
Courtesy of the artist and Minus Space.

With *Mark, Polar Bear* (2019), Sonya Kelliher-Combs honors the traditions of her people, Iñupiaq from the North Slope of Alaska and Athabascan from the Interior, and makes a damning comment on the American abuse of Alaska.



Installation view from *ecofeminism(s)*
[west & north walls w/ column]



Hanae Utamura (Japanese, b. 1980)
Secret Performance Series, 2010-2013
 HD Video, 19:70 min. looped Edition of 3 + 1AP + 1EP
 ©2010 Hanae Utamura. Courtesy of the artist

Wiping the Sahara Desert, 2010, 1:04 min, Sahara Desert, Tunisia Casting the Wave, 2010, 1:03 min, Den Haag, The Netherlands Splashing Water at Sahara Desert, 2010, 2:26 min, Sahara Desert, Tunisia Scrubbing the Edge of Salt Lake, 2010, 00:45 min, Chott el Djerid, Tunisia Surrender: Practice for Unconditional Love, 2010, 4:30 min, Leyton Marsh, London Snow Balloon, 2011, 1:29 min, Hämeenkyrö, Finland Red Line, 2011, 1:42 min, Dover, England Wiping the Snow, 2011, 1:45 min, Haukijärvi, Finland When a Line Becomes a Circle, 2013, 6:46 min, Baengnyeongdo Island, South Korea.

Ritual at the sites of nuclear contamination, and in landscapes generally, plays a special role in the art of Hanae Utamura who was born 80 miles from the Fukushima plant, a daughter of a scientist involved in the research of nuclear power generation. Utamura explores the connection between humans and earth using her physical body as a conduit. The central focus of her practice is the negotiation between nature and civilization, specifically, the relationship between man, science, and nature. By decentralizing human perspective, she enters the imagination of nature. In *Secret Performance Series* (2010-2013), the artist's petite figure performs rituals in open landscapes some of which seem to be Sisyphean acts of taming nature; where nature itself is the main doer.



Betsy Damon (American, b. 1940)
The Memory of Clean Water, 1985
©Betsy Damon. Courtesy of the artist.

Betsy Damon's motivation for her large public projects, like Living Water Garden in Chengdu, China (1998), a six-acre city park created to educate and demonstrate how water can clean itself through the use of natural processes. *The Memory of Clean Water* (1985), a cast of a dry riverbed in Utah in paper pulp, memorializing a river before it was dammed, was her pivotal work. Damon, active in 1970s in New York as a performance artist, whose work was strongly influenced by spiritual feminism and healing rituals, devoted her subsequent practice to public space projects focused on decontaminating waters.



Betsy Damon (American, b. 1940)
The Memory of Clean Water, 1985
Installation view from *ecofeminism(s)*
©Betsy Damon. Courtesy of the artist.



Aviva Rahmani (American, b. 1945)
Physical Education, 1973
Performance documentation: slide projection
©Aviva Rahmani. Courtesy of the artist.

Physical Education (1973) was the first performance in which Aviva Rahmani made the connection between ecocide and the abuse of women. Its documentation, a photo essay symbolizing the man-made water cycle, is presented in its original format of a slide projection. Rahmani's earliest, experimental body of work concerned with rape, which she created as part of early California performance scene, formed the base of her practical ecofeminism – "the work of artful repair to damaged ecosystems."



Installation view from *ecofeminism(s)*
[west wall w/ column]



Jessica Segall (American)
*A Thirsty Person, Having Found a Spring, Stops to Drink,
Does Not Contemplate Its Beauty*, 2011
Performance / video still, Archival Print, ed. 3 and AP
©2011 Jessica Segall. Courtesy of the artist.

Segall's performances often involve perceived danger and propose tools for survival or provoke ideas for environmental conservation – a mourning ritual, *A Thirsty Person, Having Found a Spring, Stops to Drink, Does Not Contemplate Its Beauty* (2011), took place at the Global Seed Vault on the island of Spitsbergen.



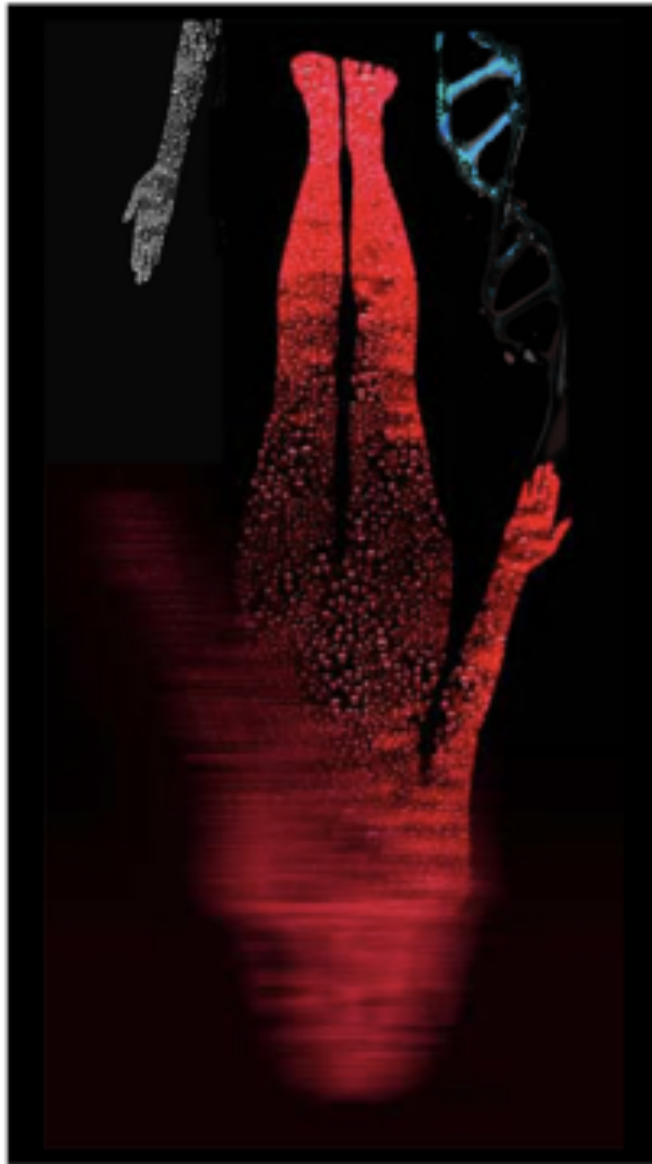
Bilge Friedlaender (Turkish American, 1934-2000)

Heart Nests III, 1977

Beeswax, wire, string, pigment

10 x 7 x 3 in (25.4 x 17.78 x 7.62 cm)

©Mira Friedlaender. All rights reserved. Courtesy The Estate of Bilge Friedlaender

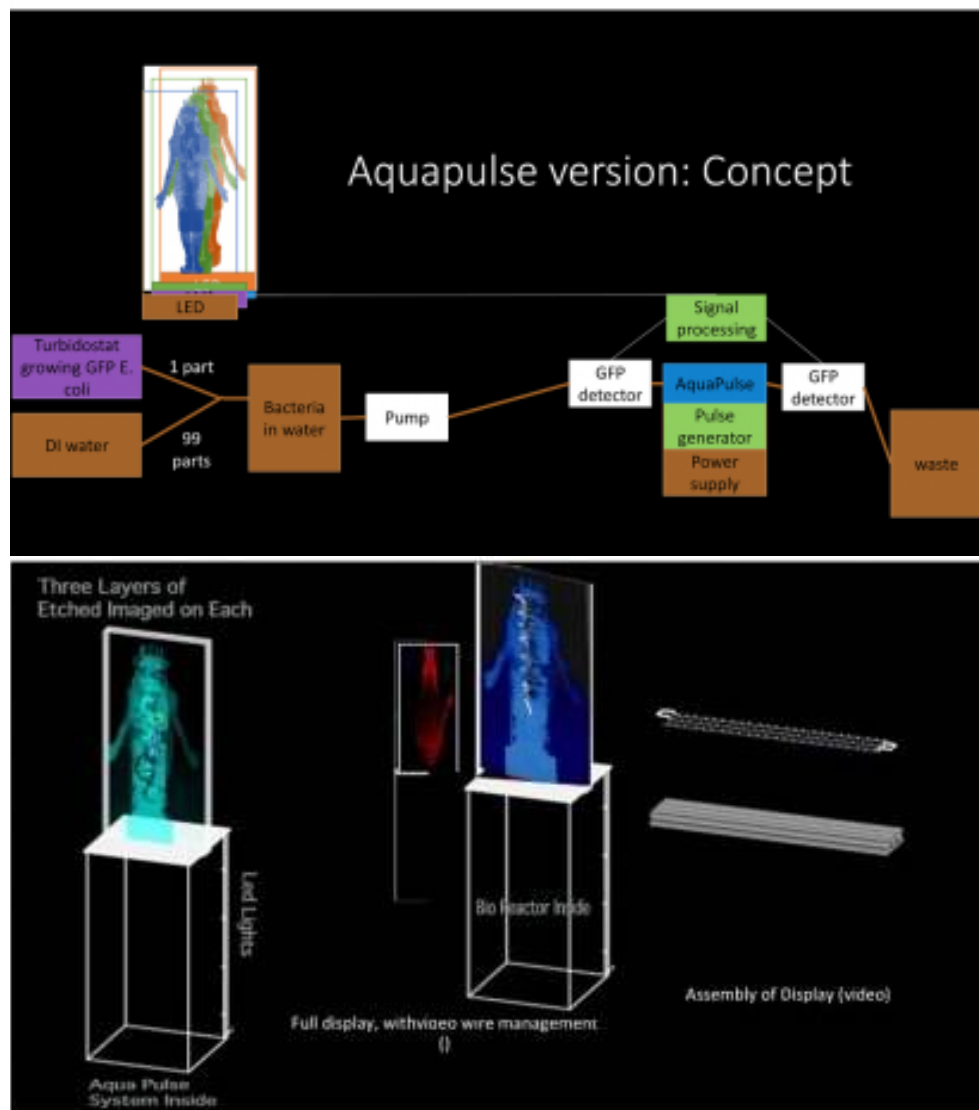


Lynn Hershman Leeson (American, b. 1941)

Twisted Gravity, 2020

Photography, etched plastic, AquaPulse, LED lights, polluted water being filtered, electricity, GMO bacteria or waxworms, petri dishes, Plexiglas casing. Edition 3 +1AP

Lynn Hershman Leeson in collaboration with Dr. Thomas Huber, Technology Leader and Head of Antibody Research at Novartis Institute for BioMedical Research; Dr. Richard Novak, Senior Staff Engineer, Advanced Technology Team at Harvard University Wyss Institute for Biological-Inspired Engineering and Aqua Pulse Technology; Lab Team: Elizabeth Calamari, Martinez Flores, Manuel Ramses. Originally commissioned by Margot Norton, The New Museum ©Hotwire Productions LLC 2020.



Lynn Hershman Leeson, acclaimed for the pioneering use of new technologies, is an artist who “lives” in the future. In *Twisted Gravity* (2020), being developed at Harvard University, she engages with the latest in applied science – a revolutionary off-the-grid water filter able to kill bacteria and degrade plastic through electricity (Aqua Pulse) and by using waxworms to digest plastic (*Evolution*). The project grows out of her early feminist works that examined woman’s perpetual transformation and survival – *Roberta Breitmore* (1974–78) and *Water Women* (since 1978). In the new work, the idea of survival through change meets the feminist interest in change as a life cycle. The filter’s action is made visible when purification cycle sends light through the body of *Water Woman*, etched in a transparent plate. She “comes alive” the moment bacteria are killed and plastic disappears.



Jessica Segall (American)
Fugue in B Flat, 2016
piano, honeybees, audio
approx. 5' x 4' x 1'
©2016 Jessica Segall. Courtesy of the artist



Installation view from *ecofeminism(s)*
[east & south walls]



Carla Maldonado (Brazilian, b. 1986)
Dystopia of a Jungle City, and the Human of Nature, 2019
Digital video with sound, 31 min. Edition of 3 + AC
In collaboration with Cipiá Indigenous Community Center, Manaus, AM, Brazil ©2019
Carla Maldonado. Courtesy of the artist.

The film *Dystopia of a Jungle City, and the Human of Nature* (2019) by Carla Maldonado is a haunting ode to the daily life of indigenous people in fragile harmony with nature, and an alarming call for action against the far-right regime of Jair Bolsonaro, which aggressively attacked the laws protecting the Amazon Jungle and its people.



Mary Mattingly (American, b. 1978)

Swale, 2017

Archival Pigment Print

30 x 30 in. Edition 1/5

©Mary Mattingly. Courtesy of Cloudfactory and Robert Mann Gallery



Mary Mattingly (American, b. 1978)
Microsphere: A Breathed Commune, 2012
Archival Pigment Print
30 x 30 in. Edition 4/5

©Mary Mattingly. Courtesy of Cloudfactory and Robert Mann Gallery



Mary Mattingly (American, b. 1978)

Life of Objects, 2013

Archival Pigment Print

30 x 30 in. Edition 5/5

©Mary Mattingly. Courtesy of Cloudfactory and Robert Mann Gallery

The awareness that artists contribute to solid and chemical waste informs the scale of works and use of materials by such artists as Friedlaender and Vicuña. Among younger artists, this concern is strongly voiced by Mary Mattingly, who wrapped all her belongings into seven bundles, isolating them away from her life to “make monuments to things I stored.” She pushed or pulled these sculptures through streets in performances, and photographed them against the scale of human body (*Life of Objects*, 2013) or in natural habitats, pointing to their organic beginnings (*The Damned Titian*, again, 2013). By focusing on the mass-produced objects that she owns, Mattingly addressed the economy of global supply chains, which is based on the exploitation of resources and people.

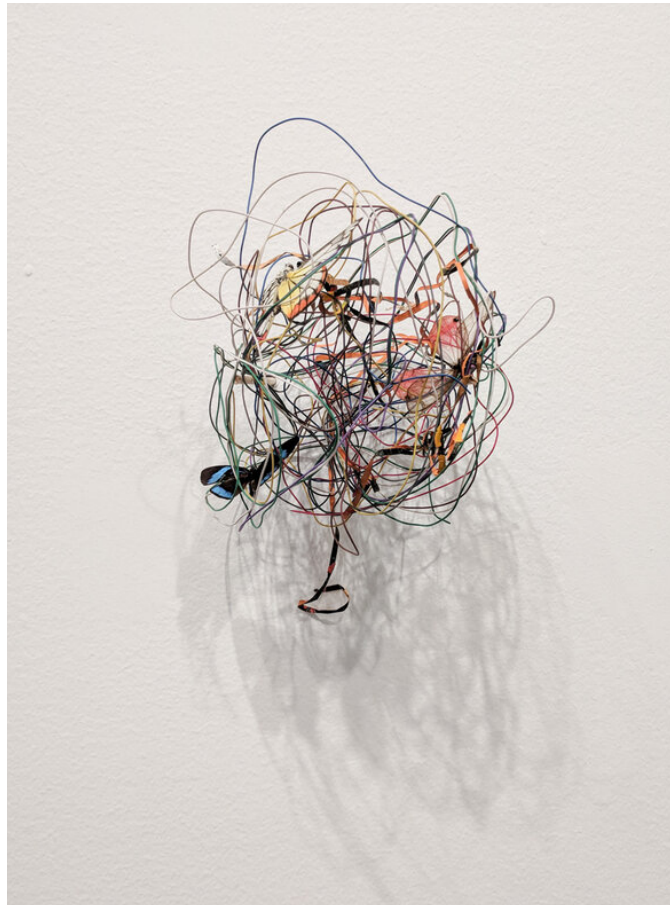


Mary Mattingly (American, b. 1978)
The Damned (Titian, again), 2013
Archival Pigment Print
30 x 30 in. Edition 2/5

©Mary Mattingly. Courtesy of Cloudfactory and Robert Mann Gallery



Installation view from *ecofeminism(s)*
[east & south walls]



Cecilia Vicuña (Chilean, b. 1948)

Bola de cable (Precarios), 2014.

Mixed media

5.75 x 6 x 4.675 in (14.6 x 15.2 x 11.9 cm)

Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul

The unique oeuvre of Cecilia Vicuña is grounded in her understanding that the political, environmental and indigenous are inherently connected and must be addressed as such. In her vision, the object is merely the tangible manifestation of our will to return to being one with nature. Her precarios (1966-present), tiny arrangements of natural and man-made materials such as driftwood, feathers, yarn, or wires, combine ritual and assemblage. According to the artist, they belong to the oceans from which many of their parts were collected and will not be fully complete until they return to the sea.



Cecilia Vicuña (Chilean, b. 1948)
Tres elementos (Precarios), 2014.
Mixed media

6.875 x 5.75 x 0.25 in (17.5 x 14.6 x 0.6 cm)

Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul



Cecilia Vicuña (Chilean, b. 1948)

Untitled (Precarios).

Mixed media

12 x 34.25 x 0.125 in (30.5 x 87 x 0.3 cm)

Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul



Bilge Friedlaender (Turkish American, 1934-2000)

Cedar Forest, 1989

Nine freestanding handmade linen paper sculptures

variable dims: 34 in. (86.36 cm)

©Mira Friedlaender. All rights reserved. Courtesy The Estate of Bilge Friedlaender.

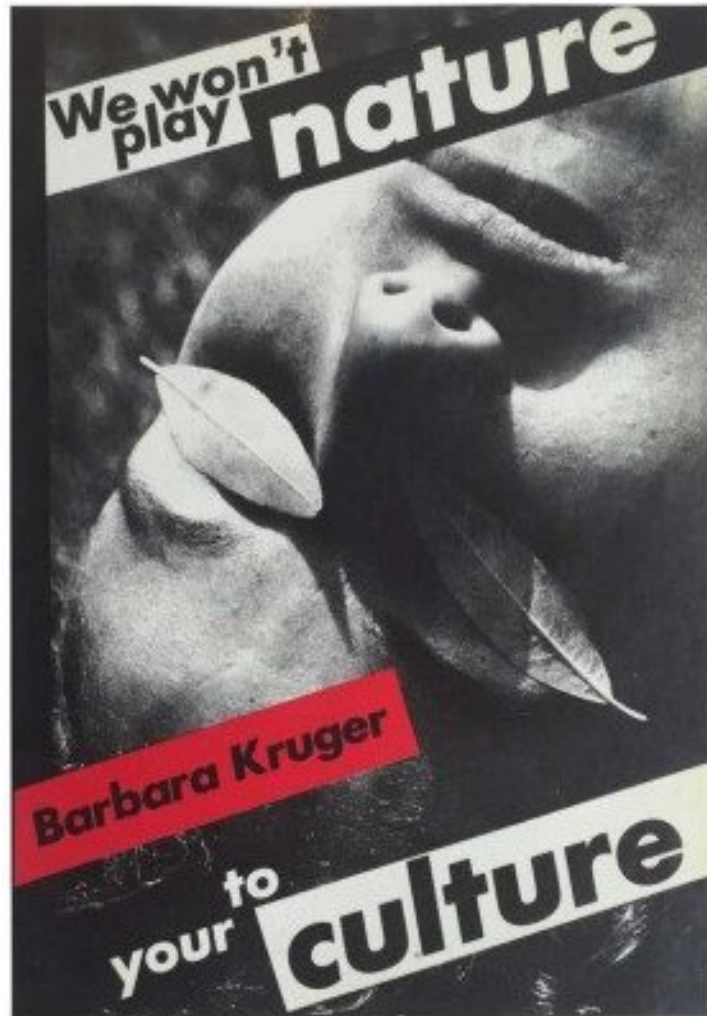
In the series of works about Gilgamesh, which included handmade paper sculptures *Cedar Forest* (1989), Friedlaender exposed the story of the Sumerian king cutting the sacred cedar forest in quest for fame. She questioned the myth of the male hero, and reclaimed a female Goddess, Ishtar, as a metaphor for “the awakening of female consciousness.”



Ana Mendieta (Cuban American, 1948-1985)

Bacayu (Esculturas Rupestres) [Light of Day (Rupestrian Sculptures)], 1981 / 2019
Black and white photograph, 40 x 55 in (101.6 x 139.7 cm). Edition 2 of 3 with 2 AP
© The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC. Courtesy Galerie Lelong & Co.

Bacayu belongs to *Esculturas Rupestres*, a group of works she incised in natural caves during her trip to Cuba in July 1981 and named after the goddesses of Taíno, the indigenous people of Cuba. It was Mendieta's "return to my land, to mother earth." The feminist artist subverted monumental gestures of Land Art by working at a human scale in the landscape, and leaving no, or minimal, footprint.



Barbara Kruger (American, b. 1945)

Untitled (We Won't Play Nature to Your Culture), 1983

Book cover, 11.82 x 8.27 x 0.2 in (30 x 21 x 0.5 cm)

Softcover catalogue of the exhibition, Barbara Kruger: We Won't Play Nature to Your Culture. Authors: Barbara Kruger, Iwona Blazwick, Sandy Nairne, Craig Owens, Jane Weinstock Publishers: London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, Basel: Kunsthalle ©1983.

Historically, ecofeminism was marked by the struggle with patriarchal dualism between culture (a notion almost tantamount to civilization and progress) and nature; the dualism inseparable from the issue of gender roles. One response was Goddess art, aimed at reclaiming Herstory and the creator as a female, and at empowering women by asserting their connection with nature, yet the essence of the fight of early feminists may have best been expressed on the witty and perfectly aimed cover of Barbara Kruger's exhibition catalog, *We Won't Play Our Nature to Your Culture* (ICA London, 1983).



Agnes Denes (Hungarian-born American, b. 1931)
Rice/Tree/Burial: Preparations for the Rice Field with Irrigation System, 1977-79
 ©Agnes Denes. Courtesy Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects.

Rice/Tree/Burial was first realized in 1968 in Sullivan County, NY, as a private ritual. In 1977-79, this ritual was re-enacted at a much larger scale at Artpark in Lewiston, NY which was a former industrial dumpsite near Love Canal. Denes planted rice to represent life (the rice grew mutant due to soil toxicity), chained trees to indicate human interference with nature, and buried a letter to people in the future. The act of burial symbolized passing, reconnecting with soil and earth, and transformation. A synthesis of Land Art and performance, the project paved the way for Denes' commitment to ecology in monumentally-scaled site works, "I do very large projects because there's no sense doing little things in the corner to teach the world what needs to be done."



Agnes Denes (Hungarian-born American, b. 1931)
Rice/Tree/Burial: Chaining the Sacred Forest, 1977-79
 ©Agnes Denes. Courtesy Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects.



Agnes Denes (Hungarian-born American, b. 1931)
Rice/Tree/Burial: Burial of the Time Capsule, 1977-79
 ©Agnes Denes. Courtesy Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects.