

Guild & Greyshkul

28 Wooster Street, New York, NY 10013 | (212) 625 - 9224
info@guildgreyshkul.com Tuesdays - Saturdays 11 am - 6pm

THE HUMAN FACE IS A MONUMENT

March 30 - May 3, 2008

Sarah Charlesworth
Sara Greenberger Rafferty
Dana Hoey
Anya Kielar
Martha Rosler
May Wilson

Gallery 2: Stan VanDerBeek — Works From 1950 - 1980

The Human Face is a Monument presents a continuum: a lineage of ideas, processes, and execution that connects all of the participating artists and spans generations. Within the exhibition, collage is treated as an approach and not just an activity or technique. Whether an artist has found context or raw material in extant images, the collage approach encompasses a re-presentation and manipulation of images in order to alter meaning from the original source. The social life of photographic images: engaging in war, politics, identity, adornment, performance, is put into play in large part through the use of figurative images, while the underlying chaos of our culture is manifested in the disruption, cutting, splicing, quoting, re-photographing, and pasting of discrete images.

SARAH CHARLESWORTH (b. 1947, East Orange, NJ) Lives and works in New York City
Figure Drawings, 1988/2008

Figure Drawings is an installation work originally conceived in 1988, completed and produced in 2008. This work is comprised of 40 individually framed images of the human figure, drawn from a variety of public sources, particularly monuments and iconic statuary. Ranging from ancient to contemporary, these figures - gesturing, marching, dancing, fighting - become a kind of map of human endeavor. Installed from floor to ceiling, archetypes of power and invisibility interact to describe a cosmology of human self-image and social value.

SARA GREENBERGER RAFFERTY (b. 1978, Chicago, Illinois) Lives and works in Brooklyn
Egg on My Face and a Fly in My Soup, 2007 - 2008

Sara Greenberger Rafferty presents a series of eight new photographs. The work is related to Rafferty's previous work in that it presents a vision of performers and performance, using comedy as an underlying theme. While most of the performers are alone, there are two pictures that represent groups of alienated performers with digital fried eggs as masks. Pictures of eggs play a large role in this series - as masks, pies, acts, cheek blush, and placards. In one picture a lemon plays an egg. Perhaps in botched reference to a Dylan lyric, the egg in this series is not an egg, but yellow. These works reference female performance, revelation, and concealment, but they are also color studies at the same time. Relying on pigment-based primary colors, the works reflect a recent effort by Rafferty to put color back into her work. The red of the red card, the blue of aluminum, the yellow of a chicken's egg. These works can be seen as performance documents or studio-based formal color studies.

DANA HOEY (b. 1966, San Francisco, CA) Lives and works in Rhinebeck, New York
Crazies, 2006

Hoey's anti-pictorial collages invite new participants, champions of the first wave of feminism, to enter the work and demolish their "pornification" via quilt-like yet misaligned, dusty, and gluey flat patterns. Dirt and dust are buried under the smooth photographic surface and the "sentimental" hand associated with such craft is eliminated. The result of this grotesque process is a large, vibrant collage that plays with geometric patterns and twisted social norms.

ANYA KIELAR (b. 1978, New York City) Lives and works in Brooklyn
The Geeks, 2008

The Geeks, a large scale multi panel collage, involves shadowy figures holding photocopied images of female Roman busts over their faces and ghostly figures holding the same images but photocopied to be the negative version. The figures are set in a background of eyes varying in color and polka dot mesh is laid over the entire collage so that at certain points the dots line up with the Roman faces to become pupils. *The Geeks* continues Kielar's examination of portraiture and the way a subject is portrayed with the intention to reveal or capture the soul in some way. She is particularly interested in the way women have been classicized in art and culture throughout history. Recently, Kielar has been looking at various ways the portrayal of the human form has been informed by ideology. In early sculptural portraits from the Egyptians the figure was stylized in order to look like a temporary vessel for the eternal soul. They distinguished that the soul could never be present in the object. The Greeks idealized the body, as they believed it was the only reality and the soul was nothing more than a transient breath that inspired the body. It is widely known that the Romans copied the Greeks but the reason why some feel they excelled at portraiture was because of their adherence to realism. The Romans were primarily interested in creating an accurate copy of life. The detail or the likeness to the individual was crucial as it was viewed as a true depiction of nature and of man. Drawn to the Roman busts of women because they represented an actual individual with expressive features seemingly responding to their condition, Kielar's silhouette is hiding behind the heads and in a way behind the history of western representation of humanness. In flattening the figures into a one-dimensional space by affixing all of her alter egos on to this patterned background made up of eyes looking at the viewer, just like the classic portraits, *The Geeks* are looking at you or themselves, or in to the mirror of their other selves.

MARTHA ROSLER (b. 1943, Brooklyn, NY) Lives and works in Brooklyn
Martha Rosler Reads Vogue, 1982

In this live performance for Paper Tiger Television's public-access cable program in New York, Rosler deconstructs the messages in *Vogue* and its advertising. Rosler looks at the institutional slants of the magazine industry and the fashion industry's reliance on sweatshops.

Martha Rosler. *Martha Rosler Reads "Vogue" 1982*. Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York.

MAY WILSON (b. 1905, Baltimore, Maryland) Died in 1986
Snowflake Collages, 1965-1972

A pioneer of the "Mail Art" movement of the 1950s and 1960s and a singular voice in the artistic landscape of Feminism, May Wilson defied the accepted standards of the art world and of society, creating mixed-media works that explore the construction of gender and identity in both two and three dimensions. Born in Baltimore in 1905, Wilson's life as a suburban housewife seemed a likely fate. At the age of 42, however, she committed herself to the idea of becoming an artist, enrolling in correspondence classes in fine art and art history (anticipating the departure of her grown children.) By promoting and selling her early efforts, Wilson was able to sustain a viable career as an artist. She produced what were regarded as "primitive" paintings by those in the surrounding suburban area, brightly colored canvases that lacked the spatial depth of Realism, reflecting the Modernist influence of Cezanne and his followers.

In 1956 the artist's son, author and critic William S. Wilson, introduced his mother to the founding father of the network of Mail Art, the artist Ray Johnson (1927-1995.) The artistic exchange between the two not only fostered the growth of this ever-expanding network, but also provided Wilson with the much needed support and encouragement to experiment with unconventional materials and ideas, eventually working through the visual logic of abstraction to the expressive possibilities of three-dimensional construction. Wilson's move from married suburban life into the avant-garde art scene of New York City in 1966 quickly won her the moniker "Grandma Moses of the Underground." This well-deserved title not only reflects her leap from one life into another, but also a desire to liberate herself and the things around her from the strictures of convention. May Wilson's daring reconstruction of art and life not only pushed the boundaries of polite good taste, but also offered an alternative vision of the world, one in which our trash became her treasure.

Excerpt from Pavel Zoubok Gallery: *Woo Who?* May Wilson, exhibition press release, New York, NY, 2008.

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Gallery 2

STAN VANDERBEEK

Works from 1950-1980

A pioneer in the development of experimental film and live-action animation techniques, Stan VanDerBeek achieved widespread recognition in the American avant-garde cinema. An advocate of the application of a utopian fusion of art and technology, he began making films in 1955. In the 1960s, he produced theatrical, multimedia pieces and computer animation, often working in collaboration with Bell Telephone Laboratories. From 1963 - 1965, he constructed a "Movie Drome" in Stony Point, New York, which was an audiovisual laboratory for the projection of film, dance, magic theater, sound and other visual effects. His multimedia experiments included movie murals, projection systems, planetarium events and the exploration of early computer graphics and image-processing systems.

VanDerBeek was also intimately involved with the artists and art movements of his time; he filmed Happenings and merged dance with films and videos. VanDerBeek was a preeminent thinker, scientist, artist, and inventor who forged new links between art, technology, perception, and humankind. In 1966, he wrote a visionary manifesto about man losing his way in his place on earth and the power of artists to rectify the course.

VanDerBeek wrote: "It is imperative that we quickly find some way for the entire level of world human understanding to rise to a new human scale. The scale is the world. The risks are the life or death of this world. The technological explosion of this last half-century, and the implied future are overwhelming; man is running the machines of his own invention... while the machine that is man... runs the risk of running wild. Technological research, development, and involvement of the world community has almost completely out-distanced the emotional-sociological (socio-"logical") comprehension of this technology. The "technique-power" and "culture-over-reach" that is just beginning to explode in many parts of the earth, is happening so quickly that it has put the logical fulcrum of man's intelligence so far outside himself that he cannot judge or estimate the results of his acts before he commits them. The process of life as an experiment on earth has never been made clearer. It is this danger — that man does not have time to talk to himself — that man does not have the means to talk to other men. The world hangs by a thread of verbs and nouns. Language and cultural-semantics are as explosive as nuclear energy. It is imperative that we (the world's artists) invent a new world language..."

Stan VanDerBeek was born in 1927 and died in 1984. He studied at Cooper Union and Black Mountain College, and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Black Mountain College in 1957 and from Cooper Union in 1972. Among his numerous awards are grants from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts; and an American Film Institute Independent Filmmaker Award. He was artist-in-residence at WGBH and the University of South Florida, and professor of art at the University of Maryland, Baltimore. His work was the subject of retrospectives at The Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

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STAN VANDERBEEK FILMS ON VIEW

A La Mode, 1959, 6:18 min, b&w, sound
Science Friction, 1959, 9:46 min, color, sound
Breathdeath, 1963, 14:33 min, b&w, sound
See Saw Seams, 1965, 9:06 min, b&w, sound
The Human Face is a Monument, 1965, 10 min, b&w, sound
Poemfield No. 2, 1966, 5:40 min, color, sound
Symmetricks, 1972, 6:12 min, b&w, sound
After Laughter, 1981, 7:28 min, color, sound

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