

MIA DOCENT TRAINING

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POPTICAL

Jackson Pollock, Autumn Rhythm 1950

- story begins at the end of WW2
- artists looking for new directions
- war was a rift – changed everything
- old approaches to imagery now seemed inadequate to express the emotional effects of the war

- connected to collective unconscious archetypes
- they believed this approach ahistorical
- archetype they wanted to evoke with their imagery were transcendent, heroic, spiritual

- close connection to Surrealism – to express the inexpressible
- but they did not want imager image
- thus the abstraction, with expression

- Pollock's energetic paintings – spontaneous gesture linked to his subconscious emotional life
- vital, primal energy

Mark Rothko, Earth and Green, 1955

- Rothko's were opposite – luminous, slowly created with thin washes
- for him they were religious objects: "I want people to weep in front of my paintings"
- the notion was that imagery as such was not necessary – the religious feeling could be tapped by pure color and primal geometric shapes

De Kooning, Woman I

- de Kooning was one of the few who kept painting figuratively

--but even he worked with Jung's notion of the archetype – the organizing principles of the collective unconscious

--the Great Mother – the figure who nurtures and protects us from harm and comforts us when we are in need

--Ab Ex was a radical and transformative development

--but it was the only style in which you could work if you wanted critical attention

--inevitably it became problematic – many imitators

---style began to feel stale by mid-50s

-- in addition, the heroic model of the solitary artist seemed old-fashioned

--AB Exp “HOT” --emotionally and psychologically charged

--the upcoming generation was “COOL” –more intellectual, literal

-- two artists usually are seen as the bridge between AB EX generation and the Pop generation

--Rauschenberg and Johns

Rauschenberg, Bed, 1955

QUOTE: "I could never make the language of Abstract Expressionism work for me -- words like 'tortured,' 'struggle' and 'pain,' I could never see those qualities in paint. How can red be 'passion?' Red is red. Jasper and I used to start each day by having to move out from Abstract Expressionism."

--BED: an abstract painting on a “canvas” made of his own quilt, sheet, and pillow mounted on wood supports

- high modernist painting that has been “contaminated” by daily life in all its messiness

QUOTE: “Painting relates to both art and life. Neither can be made. I try to act in the gap between the two.”

– suggesting such everyday activities sex, sleep, and even laundry could be appropriate subjects for art

--also mixes painting and sculpture – according to formalist ideology, this made for an impure hybrid work
--this was exactly what R wanted to do.

Rauschenberg, Canyon, 1959

--R made many hybrid painting/sculptures, called COMBINES
--taxidermied bald eagle, pillow –FOUND OBJECTS
--also here – collage, bits of newspaper and printed matter

Johns, Flag, 1955

--Johns approached the merger of art and life differently.
--He painted images of common motifs or symbols – flag, target, numerals.
--they were paintings, but they could also stand in for “the things themselves” – flags, targets, numerals.

-- no real difference between this flag and one you hang on a flagpole except in flexibility
--This one hangs on a wall instead of a pole, but it is still the flag. You could salute it.

--flag, numerals, and targets were banal emblems
– “things the mind already knows”
--not invented by Johns, not expressive of his psyche

Jasper Johns, Painted Bronze 1960

--this a very realistic painted bronze sculpture of beer cans
--this is a lowly subject- one that would not have been considered by AB EX

--Johns has taken a valueless object
--made it in bronze and oil paint
-- expensive, precious -materials usually reserved for fine art
--merging what we would have once called “high” and “low”

-- Johns and Rauschenberg led the way in turning art back toward the real world

--a whole generation of artists grew up around this idea

- they took the real world as their subjects
- the best known of these is Pop art
- fed on the proliferation of consumer products, advertising, and mass media that began to mushroom during 1950s

Claes Oldenburg in *The Store*, 1961

- Oldenburg one of the first to begin working with this subject matter
- in 1961 an interactive environment called *The Store*
- it examined our cultural love-hate relationship with shopping
- he filled his downtown studio with shelves and cases of products, each handmade by him and available for low prices
- there were racks of lingerie, shelves of sweets, and cuts of meat
- MADE of plaster, crudely painted, and oversized – often unrecognizable

Claes Oldenburg, *Cash Register*, 1961

- The Store functioned like a regular store – if you bought something you took it along, and it was replaced by another just like it
- it was a brilliant strategy for marketing his work outside the gallery system
- also aligning art with every other product available in the American marketplace

Andy Warhol, *Icebox*, 1960

- in the 50s, every American middle-class icebox was full of new convenience foods
- these foods and other household products became one of the favorite subjects of Pop artists

- Warhol began as illustrator
- wanted to be a fine artist – worshipped Johns and Rauschenberg
- early works have a handmade quality that capitalizes on his draughtsmanship
- often he lifted illustrations from newspapers and magazines and either copied them

Andy Warhol, *Campbell's Tomato Soup*, screenprint on canvas, 1964

- or later silkscreened them on his canvases
- soup can is reminiscent of Johns' beer cans

--iconic, fills the canvas, no background

--he's removed the gestural background that was in Icebox

--he established a factory like process for making these that was brilliantly reminiscent of the mass production process of making the soup itself

Andy Warhol, *Brillo Box*, 1964

--These sculptures, for example

--they are wood boxes, with the Brillo pad graphics silkscreened on them –meant to look exactly like the cartons shipped to grocers

-- were not made by Warhol himself, but by Warhol and a team of assistants who would build the boxes, paint the background on, and then silkscreen the graphics

Andy Warhol with Brillo boxes, 1964

--He made dozens of these. When he showed them for the first time he stacked them in the gallery as the “real” things would have been stacked in a supermarket storeroom.

--Warhol reminds us that art is a commodity just like Brillo pads and Campbell's soup

--his approach is another way of demystifying art, linking it more closely to the things we do each day – like shopping and eating and cleaning

Wayne Thiebaud, *Cakes*, 1963

--the 60s was all about excess, plenitude

--for the middle and upper classes there was more of everything than anyone could need

--an artist like Thiebaud celebrates this rather fat and happy era with pictures of confections

--cakes, pies, lollipops in sweet colors

--we often think of Pop as being a critique of consumer culture

--but it's more ambiguous

--artists celebrated some aspects of it – direct, brash, vivid, colorful, active, NOW!

Roy Lichtenstein, *Shipboard Girl*, lithograph, 1965

--mass media was a great source for Pop

- newspapers, magazines, pulp fiction, movies, comics
- the notion that an artist would expend so much energy reproducing a comic strip panel owes everything to Johns' ale cans and Rauschenberg's Bed
- elevation of "low" or "kitsch" into fine art

James Rosenquist, with billboard 1954

- another important pop artist, Rosenquist
- started as a billboard painter (they used to be hand painted)

James Rosenquist, *Spaghetti*, 1964 (MoMA)

- he took those skills with him when he began making easel paintings
- as if he had simply taken a detail from a billboard
- also very reminiscent of a Pollock all-over drip painting
- another way of taunting high modernism

James Rosenquist, *I Love You with My Ford*, 1961

- food – sex –fast cars
- things Americans were in love with during the early 60s
- the extreme close-up of the couple's faces suggests another mass media subject -- movies
- this also shows up in Pop art, especially Warhol, a celebrity hound

Tom Wesselmann, *Great American Nude #32*, 1962

- as we all know, sex sells
- Wesselmann made this his signature theme
- works like this (walker collection) are modern riffs on Matisse with a little Playboy thrown in
- easel and guitar maybe a sly reference to Cubism
- Wesselmann's is all American, red white and blue palette – even a flag
- as if to signal that American art has trumped French
- the view out the back window –a photograph, collaged

Tom Wesselmann, *Expo Mouth #10*, 1967

- sex again, on a billboard scale – about 10 feet tall

--this one is painted on wood and cut to shape

Man Ray Lips

--Wesselman is so constantly quoting art history I had to throw this in

--what a difference 30 years makes

--Man Ray's is dreamy, surreal, and set in a context

--Wesselmann's are slick, glossy – like an ad

--it's all about the come-on

Andy Warhol, *Marilyn Monroe*, 1967

--in many ways Warhol's celebrity portraits exemplify Pop

-- they are based on widely circulated images of stars

--they are bright, vivid, and altogether unreal

--yet they are accurate depictions of the media persona that was "Marilyn"

--celebrities were a special kind of commodity

--bought, sold, used, and thrown away just like every other product

Andy Warhol, *\$1.57 Giant Size*, 1963

--if what Pop is talking about is capitalism and commerce

--sometimes Pop artists went straight for the nugget of that, which is money

--advertisements themselves became the image

Warhol, *200 one dollar bills*, 1962

--even money itself

--the almighty dollar

--this is a silkscreen, so Warhol literally was printing his own money

--and selling it as a painting

--last Nov. this painting sold for more than \$43 million

--a kind of brilliant joke that one-ups Johns' beer cans

Wayne Thiebaud, *Twin Jackpots*, 1962

--Warhol wasn't the only Pop artist to take money as his subject

--Thiebaud's slot machines are as seductive as his rows of pastries

- not slot machines, but jackpots
- as if we've already won
- another come-on, like Wesselmann's lips
- Get rich quick! part of the American dream

Roy Lichtenstein, *Art*, 1962

- by the mid 60s, Pop Art itself had become had the ultimate commodity
- this piece one of he very few Lichtensteins that are pure text
- the block letters and bright colors are like Pop itself – clear, straightforward, unembellished
- the painting becomes its own advertisement

- every aesthetic innovation has its day
- By the late 60s first generation Pop Art lost its freshness
- the art world was growing and diversifying – many more modes of working
- no longer a dialectical structure in which younger generation reacted against and revised the older generation
- rather it became more pluralist:
- no dominant style, no dominant medium

- however, the Pop sensibility continued
- during the 80s, a generation of artists emerged who had an interest in the conceptual underpinnings of consumer culture
- --many artists produced works that came out of theoretical discourse on:
 - ideologies of consumption and production
 - how the objects are distributed
 - how consumer desire is stoked by marketing
 - the creation of brand identity
 - the seductiveness of surface and display

Haim Steinbach, Charm of Tradition, 1985

- Steinbach focused on the shelf
 - he builds shelves and stocks them with carefully chosen objects that set up a dialogue
 - this one features Nike Air Jordans and a sort of trophy lamp painted with a deer, with deer hooves for a base
 - both objects communicate something its owner
 - in capitalist system, products become markers of personality
 - “we are what we buy”
-
- as an artwork, it is very like a store display
 - people often would walk in to the gallery, pick up the shoes and ask if they were for sale

Ashley Bickerton, Tormented Self Portrait (Susie at Arles), 1987-88

- Bickerton also approaches our identification with objects
- he reduces a self-portrait to a collection of logos,
- even his signature (along sides) is logo-ized

QUOTE "What exactly constitutes our notion of individual identity? We wake up in the morning and select our individuality from a finite catalogue of readymade possibilities."

- but of course the art object is also a commercial product
- this one has its own shipping devices (leather cover) and hanging system
- a “metaproduct”— a product that comments on the way products are made and sold

Jeff Koons, Hoovers, 1981-86

- Koons the best known of this generation
- early work -- sculptures in which pristine consumer items are showcased in vitrines
- same themes as Steinbach – display, fetish – but more lavish
- Koons works in series – this one is from a series called The New

Jeff Koons, Balloon Dog, 1994

- from his “Celebration” series
- a balloon dog, made on a gigantic scale from stainless steel

- like Warhol elevating a soup can to iconic status, or Johns with his ale cans
- the series was inspired by Koons' preoccupation with childhood experiences
- the works isolate moments and objects associated with life's celebratory events such as birthdays and holidays.

- installed at Versailles!

- looks right at home – it is an incredibly luxurious, incredibly expensive object, affordable only by the very rich (contemporary equiv of royalty)

- Koons is very much a contemp version of Warhol – seemingly vacuous, superficial,
- but brilliantly able to mirror our obsessions with celebrity, glamour, sex, and wealth

Keith Haring in subway, 1980s

- an alternate strategy was pursued by Keith Haring, also active during the 80s
- began as guerrilla artist, art in subway stations

Keith Haring in Pop Shop, 1986

- when people began stealing them to resell, he stopped
- opened the Pop Shop in a storefront in lower Manhattan
- sold inexpensive items like t-shirts, watches, magnets, posters and buttons, with his signatures graphics on them

Haring, selection of objects from Pop shop

- he saw them as art objects but wanted to reach as broad a range of people as possible
- youthful energy to his work—cartoonish, simple, very straightforward

Yoshitomo Nara, Wendy on the Stilt

- the influence of both Haring and Koons can be seen in the work of a generation of Japanese artists who came of age in the late 90s

- I will talk about Nara and Murakami, the two best known and the two in this show

- both of these artists use a bright palette and a cartoony, “low” style that owes something to Haring and American Pop from the 60s

- they both make luxury goods meant for collectors and museums
- easel paintings and sculptures

- this is a painting by Nara
- he draws on childhood memories but they are not the rosy nostalgic images of Koons
- they have a dark, fairy-tale edge
- Wendy – one of Nara’s recurring characters – stands in a dark void, frowning, and looking as if she is frozen on her stilt
- it’s kind of the existentialist Pop – Samuel Beckett meets Walt Disney
- the style comes out of Japanese anime and manga

Nara, Dish (Too Young to Die)

- Wendy on the Stilt* is conventional in the sense that it’s expensive, unique, made in traditional format and materials
- Nara also makes cheap multiples that are affordable by a much larger group of consumers
- very different --cost about \$100 – unlimited edition
- cheap enough so that you could use it if you wanted
- the style is consistent, though – the figure is Ramona –one of his stock characters
- (named after the Ramones)

- Nara also makes Tshirts and toys, but he doesn’t run his own shop
- he takes the more modern approach – he sells them through chain stores like Urban Outfitters
- this has made him an international star – his reach is far greater than if he had confined himself to the art world, or run a one-off shop in SoHo as Haring did
- this kind of strategy is made possible by globalization

Takashi Murakami, *Panda*, 2002

- better known than Nara
- also has a cast of hyper-cute characters that appear again and again in his paintings and sculpture, such as Panda
- his style is closer to anime

-he calls it Superflat – emphasis on flatness, stylized drawing, and bright colors
--according to him, Superflat suggests “the shallow emptiness of Japanese consumer culture”

Takashi Murakami, *Eyeloove SUPERFLAT*, 2003

--Murakami is really interesting for the way he has aligned himself with haute couture
-- he has a relationship with Louis Vuitton, maker of luxury handbags
--here, he made a painting that combines one of his signature motifs, “jellyfish eyes”, with Vuitton’s LV logo

Takashi Murakami, Vuitton Greta handbag

--he’s also designed dozens of products for Vuitton, from small stuffed versions of the Panda figure to fabric for handbags
--the design is identical to the eye-love superflat painting
--a seamless conflation of art with luxury consumer goods

Takashi Murakami, convenience store figurines, 2003

--but Murakami, like Nara, also markets to a broader audience
-- this line of “snack toys” was sold in convenience stores for \$3
--like baseball cards: you got a piece of chewing gum with it, along with a certificate of authenticity and documentation about the object and its inspiration

SUMMARY

--much more neo-Pop around
--this is a way of working that will not disappear
--it is spreading, as more and more countries are infiltrated by Western goods and mass media

PASSAGES

--Passages explore some of effects of globalization:
-- migration (voluntary movement out of native land),

- diaspora (scattering of a people in lands where they live as minorities),
- dislocation (forcefully moving or expelling people);
- shifting notions about race in a “post-racial” world;
- the legacies of colonialism
- feminism , especially in developing nations;
- and a more and more homogenous society in which it is harder and harder to define oneself as an individual

- the themes I just mentioned have been prominent in art of the past 20 years
- as an introduction to Passages, I want to look at some work done in the 70s and early 80s
- a time when women, people of color, and GLBT were finding their voices – claiming their identities
- at time when colonized people were struggling for freedom in Africa, SA, and other places
- during that time art took on the urgency of the political and personal struggles that people were going through

- the content was radicalized –
- but so were the means
- performance, hybrid works, appropriation began to be the norm
- I will show some of that work as background
- very limited selection of what was going on

Adrian Piper, *Mythic Being: Cruising White Women #1 of 3*, performance, 1975

- Piper a multiracial woman, trained first at art school (SVA)
- later got a PHD in philosophy at Harvard
- began in the mid 70s to make work that brought themes of races and gender into what had been a very dry, abstract, theoretical practice (conceptualism)

- two works from her Mythic Being series
- in this series she created a persona:

- a racially indeterminate young man, dressed in black T-shirt and flared jeans, big sunglasses, an Afro wig and a Zapata-ish moustache, often smoking a cigarette.
- Mythic Being was a racially and sexually charged figure
- and therefore frightening
- this photograph to document a performance- “cruising white women”

Adrian Piper, *Mythic Being I/ You (Her)* 1974

- by confusing her own racial identity Piper suggested that race itself is an indeterminate and unfixed category of identity
- it’s more like a construct, even a performance

- here, a series of nine photos
- she morphs from apparently white female to male person of color
- addresses the viewer with a series of confrontational confessional statements about intimate relationships

- Piper work is confrontational and addresses the complexities of race relations at a time when the Black Power Movement forced a public discussion of the issues

Faith Ringgold, *Flag for the Moon: Die Nigger*, oil on canvas, 1967-69

- born 1930 and raised in Harlem—older generation, who experienced firsthand the precivil rights era in US
- MA from City College of NY, studied with Kuniyoshi
- best known for painted story quilts, but began with more conventional media
- she painted this in response to the US moon landing in July 69
- astronauts planted a flag on the moon
- planting a flag is the act of a conqueror, a colonizer
- Ringgold suggests that the AF AM population felt colonized, disenfranchised
- and that the heroic American way of life, built on the backs of black slaves, still concealed a message of hate

Faith Ringgold, *Weeping Woman #4*, from the Witch Mask Series, raffia, bead, appliqué, 1973-1989

- Ringgold was an activist

--In 1971, she became a founding member of "Where We At" a black woman's artists' collective organized to lend visibility to African American visual art and to reconcile the exclusion of women artists from all-male collectives.

--today she is recognized as a founding member of the Black Arts Movement (Afro-centric)

--much of her work unites traditional African craft with contemporary concerns

--this series of Witch Masks commemorates anonymous women of the past

--obvious ties to African mask – materials, form – is consistent with the Afro-centric values of the 70s, when Af-Americans proudly reconnected with their heritage

-- title also suggests Picasso Weeping Women

--his works – and works of the modernists in general – appropriated formal aspects of African art, particularly masks

--Ringgold reclaims and recontextualizes this for African American WOMEN

Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party* (detail), ceramic, 1973-79

--Feminism also developed during late 60s and 70s

--most famous feminist work of art

--the work posits a fictional dinner party among notable women from history and myth

--place settings, table runners, and floor tiles represent more than 1000 women, from primordial goddesses to Georgia O'Keeffe

--many plates have vulva-like imagery

--Chicago celebrates the importance of women and their contribution to society

--as well as the autonomy, sexual independence and beauty of the female body

--the vulva imagery was a way to reclaim images of women's bodies from porn movies and girlie mags

--Like Ringgold, Chicago uses traditional craft mediums—ceramic, china painting, and needlework -- rather than fine art material

-- a way of validating women's domestic activities and crafts as valid ways to make art

--the dinner party itself is also a female oriented theme – a gathering centered on food, cooking, friends, and home

Ana Mendieta, *Untitled (Facial Cosmetic Variations)*, C-prints, 1972

- Cuban born artist, family emigrated in 1961
- MFA at U of Iowa
- earliest works explored notions of feminine beauty
- she used stockings, makeup and wigs to disguise and distort her features

Ana Mendieta, *Silueta, earth and gunpowder*, 1980

- best known for this series of works, Siluetas,
- she made impressions and reliefs of the contours of her body in the earth
- or posed herself covered with plants, leaves, earth, etc
- documented the performances photographically

- connects women's body to the earth, fertility, primordial nature
- and to the Earth Goddess spirituality embraced by feminists of the 70s
- also refers to Afro-Cuban religion of Santeria – based on rituals and ceremonies
- it was a way of mixing the personal and the political -- exploring her own identity and heritage while making work that advanced feminist ideals

- in this one, Mendieta made her silueta as a dark, cement-lined gash in the ground, almost like a narrow fertility figure
- filled it with gunpowder, then set it ablaze.
- looks like a sacrificial site or a grave
- photographed the results

Text slide

SUMMARIZE

- these works from the 70s and 80s they lay the groundwork for much of what you will see in Passages
- the themes
 - affirmation of self
 - celebration of difference – body, gender, race, sexuality,
 - engagement with politics and topical issues

exploration of non-mainstream history and culture
mixing of personal and political

--the aesthetic strategies

performance – time based, ephemeral

hybridity

revival of traditional craft

appropriation

IDENTITY – first group of artists I will talk about

Lorraine O'Grady, *Nefertiti/Devonia Evangeline*, 1980

--O'Grady an Af-American who came to art when she was in her late 40s after a varied career as a music critic, a translator, and a govt intelligence analyst

--she works in performance, photography, text, and installation

-- defines the issues in her work as diaspora (of Africans), hybridity, and black female subjectivity.

-- one of her earliest works was a performance in which images of her sister Devonia and the Egyptian Queen Nefertiti, and their families were projected behind the artist's live action.

--the performance was a kind of ritual of reconciliation that has its roots in her life experience

--O'Grady and her sister were estranged, and Devonia died unexpectedly before they could reconcile

--Two years after the death, O'Grady went to Egypt.

--found herself surrounded for the first time by people who looked like her

-there, the loss of her only sibling was offset by the image of a larger family that she gained.

-she began researching the history of Egypt and found that Nefertiti disappeared from history at about the same age as Devonia, probably banished by her husband Akhenaten

--Nefertiti also left a sister behind, Mutnedjmet

-- the performance examined the visual and narrative similarities of the two families' stories

Lorraine O'Grady, selection from *Miscegenated Family Album*, 1980-1994

- she retired the performance in 1988
 - but selected 16 diptychs from the 65 image pairs she had used in the performance
 - these became the installation
- QUOTE: "make the historic personal and the personal historic."

Lorraine O'Grady, selection from *Miscegenated Family Album*, 1980-1994

- miscengenation – marriage between members of different races
- title references what she considers the inherent racism of Egyptology as a discipline
- because Egypt is not considered part of Africa, while its people are clearly ethnically related, as she had discovered

Kara Walker, *African/American*, linoleum cut, 1998

- miscegenation is also important theme in the work of Kara Walker
 - Af American artist, now 40 yrs old
 - deals with history of American race relations, specifically slavery
 - she uses images that are stereotypes, but only in order to complicate and question them
 - she describes this as "your essentialist token slave maiden in the air"
 - stereotyped hair, features, grass skirt, beads
-
- she doesn't present a clear cut story
 - and she is not interested in easy answers-
 - she also does not offer strictly affirmative images of Af-Americans
 - in her work, everyone is implicated

Hollow-cut silhouette, early 19th century

- she often uses the silhouette as her technique
- a sort of parlor technique used for portraiture and sentimental genre scenes during the 19th c
- the silhouette gives minimal information—they are specific, yet non-specific
- this is exactly how stereotypes operate
- you have an outline, and you have to fill in the detail
- too often we rely on assumptions and prejudice to do so

Kara Walker

***Look Away! Look Away! Look Away! / The Battle of Atlanta, Being the Narrative of a Negress in the Flames of Desire / The End of Uncle Tom and the Grand Allegorical Tableau of Eva in Heaven* 1995**

- the images are often explicit and offensive
- protagonists – both black and white - are sadistic, sexually voracious, lazy, and opportunistic
- the work references stereotypes propagated by Uncle Toms Cabin, minstrel shows, and the European construct of “primitivism”
- but also to slave narratives, which often were ghost written by well meaning abolitionists
- the wall mural format one of her favorites

Battle of Atlanta, Atlanta Cyclorama (detail), 1885-1886

- is based on the diorama / cyclorama— large, concave backdrops used in theater and popular entertainments
- Walker spent part of her youth in Atlanta
- she has talked about going to see this painting, a tourist attraction in Atlanta
- an oval shaped painting detailing the Battle of Atlanta
- 3-D figures and décor in the foreground
- one enters through the floor , the painting turns slowly around the audience

Wangechi Mutu, Tree Spirit, ink, spray paint, collage, fur, glitter on Mylar, 2004-2006

Kenyan, b. 1972

Educated in UK and US, MFA Yale

- her works also question representations of black women
- she does this by combining two stereotypes – tribal primitives and hypersexualized pinups

QUOTE: “Females carry the marks, language and nuances of their culture more than the male. Anything that is desired or despised is always placed on the female body.”

- she is a collagist

--signature works are like this one – drawn on large sheets of Mylar, then filled in with paint, magazine images, glitter, fur, etc.

--the women she depicts are simultaneously monstrous, exotic, and desirable

Wangechi Mutu, *Cancer of the Uterus*, 2005

--other works are more traditional collages – this from a series done on pages from a 19thc book on diseases of female reproductive system

--introduces the notion of pathology to the depiction of women – illness as the core of the portrait

--the black glitter covers her face, as if she has some kind of creeping skin disease

--yet the image has a strange beauty

--combination of textures, surfaces, and the shell like forms of the uterus

-- the work suggests a mask, and of course masks are traditional art form of Africa

- but also evokes the late collages of Dadaist Hannah Hoch

-- and even Surrealist images of women as monstrous insects or dangerous birds

--Mutu brings the voice of an African feminist to the contemporary conversation

Belmore, *Rising to the Occasion*, 1987

--Canadian Anishinabe, lives in Vancouver B.C.

-- she was sent to attend high school in Thunder Bay and billeted with a non-Native family.

-- her multi-disciplinary work has addressed history, place and identity as it speaks of the cultural and personal loss she has experienced

--the mix of personal and political is key to her work

--this is one of her better known works

--she described it as " Victorian ball gown meets Canadian beaver house"

--she created the piece in response to a visit by the Duke and Duchess of York (Andrew and Sarah Ferguson) to Thunder Bay, in 1987. During the visit they toured a pioneer fort and rode in a birch-bark canoe – tourists in a land they had colonized

-- QUOTE "The front looks like some strange version of a Victorian ball gown with teacup saucers as breastplates. And in the back is this bustle which resembles a beaver dam, and

within this beaver dam are Royal Family memorabilia, trinkets, shiny objects, perhaps trade goods, bits of birch bark and a whole bunch of sticks."

-- it combined clichéd objects associated with both British and First Nations cultures. She wore at a public event connected with the visit

Rebecca Belmore, *Fringe*, transparency in light box, 2007

--her work has gotten darker in tone since then

--this piece: seemingly depicts a medical situation—

--but sexual overtones as well – she is posed like an odalisque

--narrative very unclear:

--is that a wound on her back or a decoration?

--is it being inflicted, or treated?

--who has done it?

--since -the fringe is beadwork in the beginning stages, perhaps a native

--since it resembles a wound, perhaps an colonizer

--whatever is happening, it is being carried on out the body of a woman

-- as a continuing project her work brings attention to the ongoing colonization of native people, particularly women

Glenn Ligon, *Untitled: Study #4*, oil and gesso on linen, 1991

--Ligon, like Walker, engages the history of Af Americans in this country

--it is way for both of them to keep alive the discussion and questions around race, which remains a very difficult subject, nearly 50 years after civil rights act was passed

--Ligon gained prominence for works like these – excerpts of texts that he stencils on canvas with oil stick, using the same stencil as he repeats the text down the canvas

--it gets darker and less legible the further you move down

--a visual metaphor for the invisibility, and lack of legibility that people of color have in the eyes of the mainstream

--“You’re turning me into a specter before my very eyes but I’m going to haunt you”

--text in this work comes from *The Blacks* by French playwright Jean Genet.

-the play uses motifs of masks and playacting to explore identity and power relations between blacks and whites

Glenn Ligon, Malcolm X

--this one based on an image of Malcolm X from an AfroCentric children's coloring book of the 70s

--Ligon gave the coloring books to children

--copied their artwork on larger scale

--appropriations, quotations, collaborations - hybrid

QUOTE: "The works were about "breaking free of constraints by using children's drawings and inhabiting their casual, indifferent relationship to the images and the whole project of liberation that those images were about in the first place."

--it also takes an irreverent attitude toward the heroes of that liberation

--Malcolm X with eye shadow and lipstick --re-presents him as a drag queen

--this is relevant for Ligon, who is gay and explores that aspect of his identity in his work

MORIMURA, Olympia

--Yasumasa Morimura - Japanese artist, works primarily in photography

--defines himself as a cross between an actor and an artist.

--kind of Japanese Cindy Sherman

- he uses a mix of heavy makeup, costumes, painting, and digital manipulation to transform himself into iconic cultural figures -- Marilyn Monroe, Judy Garland, Che Guevara, and even Cindy Sherman

--also restaged classics from art history by Leonardo, Goya, Brueghel

-- and this, based on Manet's "Olympia"

--these are homages, but they also explore his own identity as an artist, touching on themes such as gender, sexuality, theatrics, and the culture of celebrity.

--his turns in drag are also a way of validating his own identity as a gay man

--in 2001 he showed a series of photographs based on the work of Frida Kahlo, a longtime interest of his

--he did not look at the originals, but based these on reproductions --his usual practice

Yasumasa Morimura, *An Inner Dialogue with Frida Kahlo (Hand Shaped Earring)*, 2001

AND

Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait Dedicated to Dr. Eloesser and Daughters*, oil on canvas, 1940

- remarkably similar to its model but Morimura has changed a few details.
- Kahlo's Mexican shawl, for example, has become a stylish Louis Vuitton wrap,
- instead of fresh flowers Morimura wears fake flowers – a kind of Japanese hairpin
- Frida's thorny necklace draws blood
- Morimura's is hung with delicate coral branches that resemble capillaries, hung with gemstones

--QUOTE " It is not my intention to reproduce Doña Frida's life and work per se. This is not a look-alike contest. It's all a concoction of my imagination. The various elements of Doña Frida and myself mix into a muddle and a chemical reaction occurs, creating this imaginary Frida of mine."

GLOBALIZATION, MIGRATIONS

Chuck Close, portrait of Zhang, 2008-09

- born in 1965 and raised in a small farming community in central China.
- At age fourteen he began his artistic training in the so-called Su-style, or Soviet style
- went on to study Chinese and Western traditions of painting, drawing, and art history and in 1993 earned a graduate degree in painting from the elite Central Academy of Fine Art in Beijing.
- By the time he graduated Zhang had already begun searching for an alternative to painting.
- began to perform, using his own body as material
- in his breakthrough work, *12 Square Meters* (1994) he covered himself in honey and oil, then sat for motionless for an hour in a sweltering, smelly public latrine and allowed hundreds of flies to feast on his flesh
- he did many other actions—within a few years he had become one of the best known artists in China and abroad

Zhang Huan, 1/2 (Meat), 1998

- this is a sort of hybrid – a performance, but done only for the camera
- part of a triptych of photos inspired by his daily routine
- two photos pictured him with the rib cage of a pig wrapped around his torso
- QUOTE: “Every morning in the market where I had breakfast, I could see rows and rows of ribs on sale at different stalls,” he has written. “When I saw the ribs, I saw myself. I imagined what the pigs looked like when they were alive. It was very pitiful. I was pitiful too. Half of a person is his body and the other half is his soul.”

- the two meat photos in the triptych represent the body

Zhang Huan, 1/2 (text), C-print, 1998

- the third photo represents the soul
- he invited friends to write characters on his face and body.
- QUOTE “I asked them to write whatever they wanted. Some of the characters were about concepts, Buddhism, tolerance and so on.”
- this was the last work he made before relocating to the US
- suggests that he was thinking about the difficulty of transcultural experience.
- The artist’s ethnicity is literally inscribed on his body, and yet for most Western viewers the characters are unreadable.
- same problem one has when entering a culture other than one’s own
- As a human being, is he legible to those outside his immediate context?
- QUOTE “The body is the only direct way through which I come to know society and society comes to know me. The body is the proof of identity. The body is language.”

Zhang Huan, Zhu Gangqiang No.0

- in 2006 Zhang returned to China
- he gave up performance and returned to traditional object-making practices
- today he presides over a large studio/factory in Shanghai, where over one hundred assistants work in teams to produce his sculpture, prints, and paintings

- many of them are made from one of Zhang’s favorite materials: incense ash, which his assistants collect in large quantities from Buddhist temples around Shanghai.

--applies the ash to an adhesive ground and then builds up the surface by mixing glue with larger flakes and joss stick remnants.

--this painting is one of a series honoring a pig that survived the 2008 earthquake in Sichuan Province which killed more than 60,000 people.

--the pig lived, trapped, for 49 days, surviving on rainwater, rotten wood and a small amount of foraged feed

--His survival was hailed as a miracle and he was given the name 'Zhu Gangqiang' ('Cast – Iron – Pig').

--the story resonated with Zhang, but I mostly want to point out the traditional realist style he has adopted

--a return to his training in the socialist realist style

--an ambiguous move that suggests his allegiance to tradition at the same time as he embraces reform in his home country

[see Zhang's ash painting in MIA permanent collection galleries]

Yue Minjun, *Untitled*, oil on canvas, 2003

--another Chinese

--based in Beijing

--paints self portraits, in which his face is frozen in hysterical laughter

--associated with the Cynical Realism school of Chinese Art

--Cynical Realism developed in the aftermath of the events of 1989

-- demonstrations at Tiananmen Square

-- also the closure earlier that year of the China Avant Garde exhibition at the China National Gallery in Beijing by the authorities.

--in China the 1980s were characterized by great idealism and hope in the artistic community that they would be able to contribute to the regeneration of Chinese culture

--the 1990s were characterised by a loss of idealism, a more ironical or personal viewpoint and a greater detachment from the hope of any regeneration of society or culture.

-- Yue's motif - the hollow expression of mirth- - is his response to the numbing conformity of life in communist China and the inability to speak freely

Yue Minjun, Amazing Laughter installation

QUOTE: “I paint people laughing, whether it is a big laugh, a restrained laugh, a crazy-laugh, a near-death laugh or simply laughter about our society: laughter can be about anything.

Laughter is a moment when our mind refuses to reason. The 90’s is the time when everyone should laugh.”

Yue Minjun, *Contemporary Terra Cotta Warrior No. 10*, bronze, 2007

--Yue Minjun also engages with the HISTORY of China

--THIS IS from a series of over life-sized sculptures first made in fiberglass and painted

--later made in bronze editions

Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor, 210. B.C.

--based on the famous Terra Cotta Army

--discovered in 1974 by farmers digging a well

--they uncovered the mausoleum of the Chinese emperor Qin Shi Huang (259 – 210 B.C.).

– they found over 8000 life-sized terra cotta sculptures of warriors, war chariots, and horses, whose function was to protect the massive gravesite.

BACK

--he turns the figures into Everyman – contemporary clothing, the frozen smile

--suggesting that contemporary Chinese citizens have as little choice about their lives as ancient Chinese had

-- the only option is a blind and heedless embrace of the paths set before them

Subodh Gupta, *Spill*, 2007

--as different as they are, the artists in *Passages* share one commonality – their work uses an aesthetic language that is legible the world over, yet the imagery refers to their own cultures and countries

--think of it as the art world version of “glocal”

--Gupta is an Indian artist based in New Delhi

--he works in many media – also common among younger artists

--painting, sculpture, video, performance, photography

--his works often recycles found objects, such as this large scale sculpture in which a sculpted steel pail overflows with smaller stainless steel cooking utensils, which are found objects

-- the everyday objects he uses are ubiquitous throughout India, used by millions to carry their lunch or cook their meals

--QUOTE: "All these things were part of the way I grew up. They are used in the rituals and ceremonies that were part of my childhood. ... Hindu kitchens are as important as prayer rooms".

--Gupta also talks about his use of found objects in art historical terms

-- readymades -- part of the legacy of Marcel Duchamp

Subodh Gupta, *Dubai to Calcutta #19*, bronze with gold patina and aluminum, 2006

--a second theme Gupta has focused on is travel:

--Baggage, migration and the "return home"

-- he uses baggage trolleys of modern airports to allude to the historical reality of migration in and from India, especially his home state of Bihar.

--many of these migrants travel to other parts of India for work, sparking resentment and violence against them

--migration also linked to students seeking better college educations in other parts of the country

Sebastião Salgado, *Church Gate Station, Bombay, India*, 1995/2004

--this image shows some of the massive movement that occurs in India every day

--migration is spread through all castes and social classes

--marks a new way of life for India, fueled by economic growth and more materialist ways of life

CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATIONS OF MIGRATION/PASSAGE

--last group

--two of the artists are white American males – no direct, immediate experience with migration or diaspora

--explains their more removed approach

Doug Aitken, still from *migration (empire) - linear version*, single channel video, 2008

[title: the first installment in a three-part trilogy entitled empire]

--theme: a nomadic passage across America from east to west,

-- mimics the westward journey of settlers who began the process of expansion that has transformed the American landscape

-- in Aitken's- video, the story is inverted

--instead of humans passing through animal's habitats

-- he follows animals as they pass through the built human environment

-- indigenous, migratory North American animals, such as the bison, deer, owl, mountain lion, raccoon, fox and jackrabbits

-- in vacant hotel and motel rooms

Doug Aitken, still from *migration (empire) - linear version*, 2008

-- Aitken and his crew released the animals in the rooms and recorded their interactions with the space and furniture

-- the video has moments of humor and pathos

-- animals confront televised analogues of themselves and all the unnatural comforts of beds, lamps and running faucets

-- to me the video suggests that we need to embrace the changes America is undergoing in the 21st century-

--that we are all visitors, we all need to coexist,

-- we need to show empathy for the transcultural experiences of immigrants

Siah Armajani, *An Exile Dreaming of St. Adorno*, mixed media, 2009

--Armajani, local artist

--In 1960 left his native Iran to study at Macalester College in St. Paul, where he majored in philosophy but dreamed of being an artist

--known for public artworks—WAC bridge, Atlanta Olympics cauldron, etc
--also series of indoor sculptures that explore language of domestic architecture and ideas/writings of poets and philosophers who have inspired him

--in this brand new piece he explores exile as a physical, political, and emotional condition.

-- cagelike structure

-- faceless figure who sleeps at a desk

-- outside, his double watches

--exile: being simultaneously on the outside and inside of a culture, unable to fully participate even though one can see what is happening

Siah Armajani, *An Exile Dreaming of St. Adorno*, mixed media, 2009

-Armajani's title tells us that one – or perhaps both -- of these exiles is dreaming of Theodor Adorno

-- a philosopher who wrote on aesthetics and one of the writers whose work has been impt to Armajani

--Adorno himself was an exile

--because he was of Jewish descent, he was forced to leave Germany during the Nazi regime

--he emigrated to the US, where he stayed until 1949

--For ADORNO, exile could be understood an ethical choice. He wrote, "It is part of morality not to be at home in one's home."

--in other words, we must be able to see what is going on around us, in order to speak out against wrong

--but it is difficult to see the ideologies of your own time, unless you remove yourself to some degree

--Armajani of course is in self-imposed exile

--he has recently made works about the govt crackdown on protesters following the Iranian elections in 2009

--Armajani has loaded this piece with references

--besides Adorno and the notion of exile

--domestic, vernacular architecture, and glass houses

-he also refers to an iconic work from art history -- Alberto Giacometti's surrealist masterpiece *The Palace at 4 a.m.* (1932)

COMPARE TO Alberto Giacometti, *The Palace at 4 a.m.*, wood, glass, wire, string, 1932

QUOTE: "I saw Giacometti's *The Palace at 4am* in the Sixties. This sculpture has remained with me all of my life. It dozed off in the niches of my memory. The themes of death and dreams are set in a theatrical space."

Bill Viola, still from *Three Women*, color high-definition video on plasma display, 2008

-- best-known video artist of his generation

-- explores the big issues -- birth, death, and spirituality

--his videos are usually screened or projected on very large scale

--gives them an operatic impact – dramatic, tragic, transcendent

--his use of simplified imagery and ultra slow motion also lends gravity to the work

--this is the most abstracted work in *Passages* in terms of its relationship to the theme of Migration

-- from the series "Transfigurations."

--In Christian theology the word refers specifically to an event on a mountaintop during which Jesus' body began to radiate a divine light after he momentarily became one with the Godhead.

--Viola uses the word to refer to the complete transformation of self that occurs after one crosses a spiritual threshold.

--To describe the effect of such a transfiguration, Viola quotes the Sufi mystic Ibn al'Arabi: "A morning has dawned whose darkness was you."

--In this video, a mother and her two daughters enact a transfiguration when they choose to pass through a wall of water, after which they briefly enter into a place of clarity

--so this is a spiritual passage, elucidated through the physical body

CLOSE