

WOMEN'S CAUCUS FOR ART

HONOR AWARDS FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN THE VISUAL ARTS

HONOR AWARDS 2009

Maren Hassinger

Ester Hernández

Joyce Kozloff

Margo Machida

Ruth Weisberg

2009 National Lifetime Achievement Awards

Saturday, February 28th
Wilshire Grand Hotel, Los Angeles

Introduction

Marilyn J. Hayes
WCA National Board President, 2008–10

Presentation of Awardees

Maren Hassinger
Essay and Presentation by Judith Wilson

Ester Hernández
Essay by Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano. Presentation by Maria Elena Gaitan

Joyce Kozloff
Essay by Maria Elena Buszek. Presentation by Sheila Levrant de Bretteville

Margo Machida
Essay by Eugenie Tsai. Presentation by Moira Roth

Ruth Weisberg
Essay and Presentation by June Wayne

President's Awards

Catherine Opie
Susan Fisher Sterling
Presentation by Marilyn J. Hayes

Foreword and Acknowledgements

The 2009 ceremony marks thirty years during which the Women's Caucus for Art has recognized the achievements of some of the most remarkable women working in the visual arts. At this year's ceremony, we honor five women whose achievements over their lifetimes have stood out for their progressive attitudes and their abilities to champion perspectives that have taken the worlds of ideas and images in new directions. Maren Hassinger, Ester Hernández, Joyce Kozloff, Margo Machida, and Ruth Weisberg have struggled in solitude, argued both quietly and loudly in public, and persevered against small and large limits set by others. Yet, they have maintained their unwavering dedication to their creativity. For these reasons and many others, we honor them as models who have clung to their desires to see their visions impact others and, perhaps more importantly, themselves. Their accomplishments, their creativity, and their motivation all give voice to experiences which they successfully translate into forms that expand our world. Their efforts are evidence that they have made a difference.

These women are known to us because of the breadth and depth of their achievements. The catalogue and the ceremony give us an opportunity to review some of the accomplishments of these women, noting in particular their dedication and drive to create but with such force that they have made us see our worlds anew. We are grateful for the rousing essays contributed for this year's awards catalogue and for the presentations offered at this year's awards ceremony. Judith Wilson, assistant professor in the departments of African American Studies, Art History, and Visual Studies, all in the School of Humanities at the University of California, Irvine, gives us an interesting essay on Maren Hassinger's motivating successes as an artist and teacher, in addition to presenting the award as well to Maren. Yvonne Yarbro-

Bejarano, professor of Spanish and Portuguese at Stanford University, assesses the import and impact of Ester Hernández as a significant Chicana feminist and artist. Performance artist Maria Elena Gaitan will present the award to Ester. Maria Elena Buszek, assistant professor of art history at Kansas City Art Institute, acknowledges the scope of Joyce Kozloff's contribution to feminism and visual art. Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, director of the Yale University Graduate Program in Graphic Design, will present the award to Joyce. In her essay on Margo Machida, Eugenie Tsai, John and Barbara Vogelstein Curator of Contemporary Art at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, recognizes Margo's pioneering role in the field of Asian American art and visual culture. Moira Roth, Trefethen Professor of Art History at Mills College, will present the award to Margo. June Wayne, the internationally-renowned lithographer and founder of the Tamarind Institute of the University of New Mexico, has written a compelling and moving personal perspective on Ruth Weisberg's considerable accomplishments as an artist and educator. She will also present the award to Ruth.

The collaborative efforts of many women have helped make this event and catalogue into a reality: Marilyn Hayes, President; Jennifer Colby, Past President; Janice Nesser, President-Elect; Sandra Mueller, President of the Southern California Chapter; Maureen Shanahan, Fundraising Chair; Karin Luner, National Administrator; Holly Dodge, Board Advisor; and the Selection Committee—Eleanor Dickinson, Leslie King-Hammond, Amalia Mesa-Bains, Dena Muller, Howardena Pindell, Lowery Stokes Sims, June Wayne, and Midori Yoshimoto.

Anne Swartz
Honor Awards Chair

Women's Caucus for Art

Statement of Purpose

We are committed to:

education about the contributions of women
opportunities for the exhibition of women's work
publication of women's writing about art
inclusion of women in the history of art
professional equity for all
respect for individuals without discrimination
support for legislation relevant to our goals

In 1979 the Women's Caucus for Art (WCA) Lifetime Achievement Awards were established with the first five awards presented in President Carter's Oval Office. The annual awards celebrating the extraordinary lives of accomplished women have been the centerpiece of carrying out our mission to expand opportunities and recognition for women in the visual arts. The 2009 awards ceremony continues a proud 30-year tradition of documenting the impact of the more than 150 women we have honored. They are artists, feminist activists, art writers, curators, and art professionals—women who have made a lifelong contribution to the arts. We are grateful for their passion and commitment, and their persistence in realizing their visions. They inspire us—we stand together here and now because of them.

WCA is an affiliate society of the College Art Association. An early advocate for gender equity in all aspects of the study, teaching, and practice of art, today WCA is a national organization with 27 chapters throughout the United States. Each chapter is a community of women dedicated to expanding the role of the visual arts in society. As a dynamic national community we build on the feminist principles of our founders, and are committed to generating a world where we all can thrive.

Celebrate our history and create our future!

Marilyn J. Hayes
WCA National Board President 2008-10

Maren Hassinger



Photo by Mitro Hood

We honor you,
Maren Hassinger, for your
passion and pursuit of art using
any means necessary,
and for your commitment
as an educator.

Maren Hassinger

by Judith Wilson

“... Somehow there's this feeling that if you become an artist it's like a moral thing to do. It has to do with your ethics, your personal ethic.”

—Maren Hassinger

Maren Hassinger's way of being an artist evokes a word seldom used today without apology—“purity.” It is an odd word for the career of someone who has embraced multi-media collaborative performance, used industrial materials to recall our Edenic past, and plunged headlong into the seething cauldron of film and

video representations of race. But the through line of her artistic practice is a singularly pure notion of her calling. “The one thing that art means [to me] is discovery,” she has stated. “Every day, to make a discovery.”

Daily discovery requires acute attentiveness. In 1972, while doing graduate work in University of California, Los Angeles, Fiber Arts Department, Hassinger found that using steel cable salvaged from a junkyard solved a technical problem, allowing her to make huge, noose-like rope pieces that stood upright. Not content with this successful application of her newfound material, she began investigating other properties of wire rope. As a result, she learned she “could weld it and bend it with heat, but also do all the fiber stuff with it—unply it and weave the ends together.” In 1973, an Eva Hesse exhibition at the Pasadena Art Museum brought further insight: “I saw the extent to which you could move people by a very simple manipulation of material...I saw that I could stack things, or I could put something up sequentially,...that I could do a process...and within the process could possibly come the answer to a communication problem.”

These, of course, are the techniques of Minimalist and Process Art. But, for Hassinger, they became means to a very different set of ends. That is, they enabled an engagement with Nature and history that is neither representational nor symbolic, but instead involves our visceral response to specific qualities of form and material, and specific experiences of space. Deeply rooted in the tangible, the resulting work evokes powerful intangibles at the same time. The turning point came when, as a result of using “the cable in a fiber-like manner,” the artist “notice[d] that the material began to resemble living, moving, growing things.” This, in turn, led to the “whole notion of making gardens.”



Maren Hassinger, *Message From Malcolm*, 2008
glass mosaic, various surfaces throughout the train station at 110th Street and Malcolm X Blvd
of the 7th Ave IRT Line, New York, NY. Photo by Patrick J. Cashin

For the next thirteen years, Hassinger produced a wide range of sculptural variations on the Biblical theme “Wind in the Garden.” Meditations on humanity's “shared beginnings” and the artist's own “longing for a remembered past,” these are pieces she has described as “quiet” and “egoless,” terminology that suggests mystical concerns. Again, a far cry from Minimalism's formalist preoccupations, but rooted in the artist's personal history and cultural location. A Los Angeles native, Hassinger recalls being impressed by the Zen sparseness of her mother's arrangements of “tropical flowers like birds of paradise” that grew in the family's yard.

East Asian aesthetics and philosophies were also a part of the artist's early training in Southern California's pre-eminent brand of modern dance. From age ten or eleven until she left for college in New England, Hassinger studied with dancer/actress Lelia Goldoni (star of John Cassavetes' “Shadows”) and Yvonne de Lavallade (sister of the more famous Carmen de Lavallade), both disciples of Lester Horton. The creator of one of the most influential techniques of modern dance and founder of one of the first racially integrated dance companies in America, Horton had arrived in California in the late 1920s equipped with training in Russian ballet and extensive knowledge of Amerindian dance. In Los Angeles, he joined the company of dancer Michio Ito and imbibed Japanese theatrical techniques, which he would subsequently inject in the training and performance of his own dance troupe. As practical and democratic as he was innovative, Horton financed his artistic endeavors by choreographing dance sequences in B movie musicals and performing in nightclubs. Transmitted to Maren Hassinger a decade after its creator's death, “Horton technique” reflected a uniquely West Coast cultural synthesis that, she recalls, “incorporated Eastern, yogic ideas.”

In 1993, when asked what she considered “the greatest challenge for you personally as an artist” and “the greatest possibility,” Hassinger replied: “Just to keep going, just to keep making [art].” Today, we are celebrating her success at having done just that. For over forty years, Maren Hassinger has pursued the making of fine art with a stubborn indifference to fashion, commerce, and ideology. Not because she was oblivious to these forces, but because her primary concerns have been, paradoxically, both intensely personal and profoundly elemental. Echoing captions for two recent works, her art displays “love in detail” and delivers “wrenching news.”

Biography

Los Angeles native Maren Hassinger is a visual and performance artist and educator. She has been Director of the Rinehart School of Sculpture at Maryland Institute College of Art since 1997. Her work has been the subject of many solo exhibitions and she has participated in more than 120 group shows. Her work is included in several public collections such as The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, New York; Williams College Art Museum, Williamstown, Massachusetts; and Greater Pittsburgh International Airport, among many other institutions. Her public art works are installed in many temporary and permanent sites, including Grant Park, Chicago, Illinois; St. Mark's Church, New York, New York; and Socrates Sculpture Park, Queens, New York. She has performed at many different sites, festivals, and situations, including the Museum of Modern Art and has been active as a performance artist since the 1970s.

Hassinger is the recipient of grants and awards such as The Anonymous Was A Woman and International Association of Art Critics Award, the Gottlieb Foundation, Joan Mitchell Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. She has served on many selection boards for prestigious grants, fellowships, and festivals like the Hamptons International Film Festival; the MacDowell Colony; and the New York Foundation for the Arts.

She resides in Baltimore, Maryland.



Maren Hassinger, *Love (in corner)*, and *Wrenching News (on floor)*, 2008. *Love* is 30' high and inflated (with mostly human breath) and is pink plastic shopping bags each filled with a love note. *Wrenching News* is 12" high by variable dimensions and is made of torn, twisted and bound *New York Times* newspapers. Photo by Mitro Hood

Ester Hernández



Photo by Almac

We honor you,
Ester Hernández,
for your role as an artist and
pioneer activist in the
Chicana/Chicano civil rights
art movement.

Ester Hernández

by Yvonne Yarbrow-Bejarano

For over thirty years, Ester Hernández has made art that incites political passions. In California's San Joaquin Valley, she drank in its natural beauty, the artistic traditions in her farmworker family, and her community's political militancy. The social movements of the 1970s also shaped her, especially the Third World Women of Color movement. She participated in the Mujeres Muralistas, the first all-women's mural group. As a Chicana feminist artist she fiercely engages the legacies of colonialism in the Americas, and puts women in the center of her frames who conjure those histories as women. The political desire that infuses Hernández' work is for transformation on all levels. She discerns a kernel of truth in the women she

draws, of agency, dignity, defiance, and inner strength. Her aesthetic blends an abiding humor, ranging from the acerbic to the playful, with a pervasive spirituality rooted in an indigenous worldview. In its apprehension of the multiple particularities of Latinas' socially constructed identities, her art has contributed directly to the development of Chicana feminist thought. Striving to make sense of the world, Hernández's art teaches us about gender as interwoven with race and ethnicity, socioeconomic position, and sexuality in the lived experience of Latinas.

Hernández depicts goddesses, national icons, celebrities, and everyday women, yet these categories bleed into each other as the quotidian lends humanity to the mythic and ordinary women take on the strength and power of the larger-than-life. Two of her best-known images, *Libertad* and *La Virgen de Guadalupe Defendiendo los Derechos de los Xicanos*, incorporate a self-portrait of the artist to re-vise complex icons from two different national imaginaries. The visual statement of a long-haired woman sculpting the Statue of Liberty into a Mayan stele in *Libertad* redresses the erasure of the ordinary and enduring presence of indigenous peoples in the Americas. *Libertad* captures a state of flux in which both statue and stele are visible, theorizing mestiza identity as inhabiting the in-between, and extending both agency and critical consciousness to the woman artist. Created in the year of the Bicentennial, the piece challenged official discourses of the "nation" and continues to resonate in today's anti-immigrant context.

With *La Virgen de Guadalupe Defendiendo los Derechos de los Xicanos*, Hernández became the first Chicana artist to remake the icon of the Virgen de Guadalupe on paper, drawing power from the centuries-old syncretic icon already layered with multiple meanings. This controversial image has



Ester Hernández, *Sun Mad*, 1982
Screenprint
Photo by Bob Hsiang

become iconic in its own right, synonymous with Chicanas' militant energy and refusal of restrictive gender and social roles. In another well-known and controversial image, *La Ofrenda*, Hernández retains the traditional form of the Virgin of Guadalupe, but transgressively positions it as a tattoo on a Chicana's back, offered a thorny rose by a feminine hand in the foreground. The imaginative recontextualization of the icon sacralizes the pain and passion of love between women. With these pieces Hernández simultaneously respects the communal significance of the Virgin and claims her right as a working-class mestiza to see her as uniquely her own, combining her spiritual roots in family and community with a call for social and personal transformation.

The starkly ingenious *Sun Mad* deploys the aesthetic of the double take, reversing the image on the Sun Maid raisin box from healthy abundance to a specter of destruction. Unlike Hernández' portraits, the figure is turned against itself to comment on the corporate use of the female body to sell commodities, revealing in one bold stroke the death-dealing lie and the harm done to farmworkers and consumers alike through the use of pesticides.

Similarly, *Tejido de los Desaparecidos* departs from Hernández's signature female portraiture, and also requires a "second look" to allow the elements bespeaking genocide to float to the surface of the weaving, traditionally created by women. The piece bears witness to the forced displacements, disappearances, and massacres during Guatemala's civil war in the 1980s. In a 2008 installation Hernández incorporated a large kite in front of a mural-size recreation of *Tejido*. The kite references the spiritual practices and political desires of Mayan women who seek information about the disappeared. This revisiting of *Tejido* is a perfect example of Hernández' artistic vision: an unflinching gaze at inequality and suffering, and an uncompromising commitment to art's power to trace a path to truth and justice.

In her honoring, questioning, and creation of iconographic traditions, Hernández has put images into circulation that counter dominant representations of mestizas and indigenous women. Hernández—fierce and tender, militant, and loving—has given us new ways to imagine ourselves.

Hernández cultivates a variety of media, primarily pastels and screenprints, painting and installation. Her artwork graces a number of permanent collections including the Smithsonian. Researchers can access her artistic and personal archives at Stanford University.

Biography

Ester Hernández is a San Francisco visual artist who is a pioneer in the Chicana/Chicano civil rights art movement. In the 1970s, she was involved with Las Mujeres Muralistas, an influential San Francisco Mission district Latina women's mural group. Her childhood on the western slopes of the Sierra Nevadas as the daughter of farm workers and the politically charged world of the University of California, Berkeley in the early 1970s helped Hernández develop her socio-political artistic identity and her consistent commitment to political activism.

Hernández's work has appeared in numerous group exhibitions both here and abroad and internationally. Her work has been the subject of many solo exhibitions at such institutions as Museo Santo Domingo, Oaxaca, Mexico, and Gorman Gallery, University of California-Davis, Davis, CA. Her artwork was recently featured in the inaugural opening of the Museo Alameda-Smithsonian in San Antonio, Texas. Her work is in permanent collections of the Smithsonian National Museum of American Art, the Library of Congress, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Mexican Museum in San Francisco and Chicago, the Cheech Marin Collection, and the Frida Kahlo Studio Museum in Mexico City. Stanford University has acquired her artistic and personal archives.

She currently resides in San Francisco, California.



Ester Hernández, *La Virgen de las Calles/The Street Saint* (this is the flower vendor), 2001, pastel on paper
Photo by Almac

Joyce Kozloff



Photo by Joan Braderman

We honor you,
Joyce Kozloff, for your
unflinching approach to an
art of engagement and
for your activism.

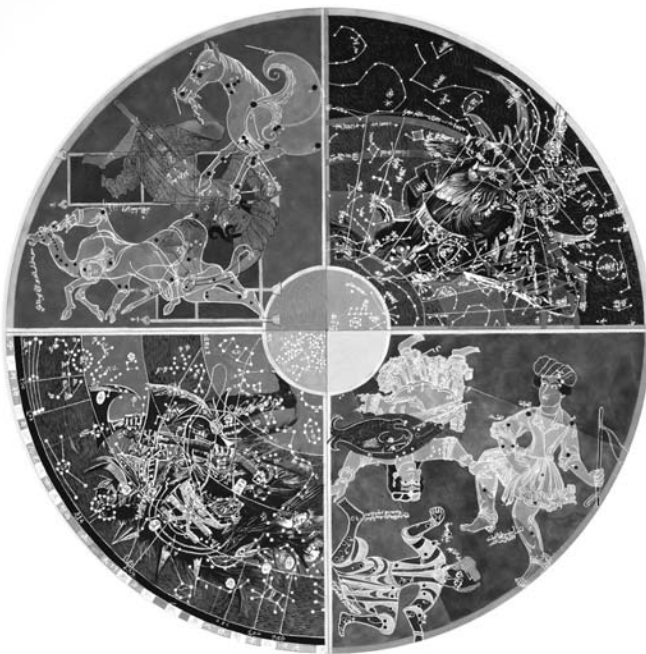
Joyce Kozloff

by Maria Elena Buszek

The life of artist, activist, critic, and educator Joyce Kozloff has been, in the artist's own words, dedicated to the notion of "infinite variation." Since the early 1970s, Kozloff's studio work has ranged from ceramics to collage to fresco painting, from jewel-like watercolors to sprawling architectural installations. But, as critic Janet Koplos has succinctly summarized, at the root of this variety is Kozloff's masterful merging of "words, patterns, and images into complex, layered works that catch such issues as feminism and colonialism in a net of pure pleasure."

Indeed, it was arguably Kozloff's determination to reveal the activist potential of pleasure that first led to her groundbreaking work as a founding member of the Pattern and Decoration movement. After receiving her B.F.A. from the Carnegie Institute of Technology, and an M.F.A. from Columbia University, in the early 1970s Kozloff turned her growing interest in Mexican and Islamic decorative art into experiments with pattern-based abstract paintings and—taking cookie cutters to slabs of rolled clay—ceramic tile. That her studio practice was growing along these lines along with her dedication to feminist and anti-war activism was certainly no coincidence; Kozloff's gesture was not just a defiant return to a notion of beauty that had been summarily dismissed by the extremes of the period's dominant, Minimalist and conceptual art, but the overwhelming Euro- and androcentrism of the same. On the one hand, her work drew attention to the parallels between the analytical, grid-based work captivating the 1970s gallery-art world, and millennia of similar work from the history of decorative and utilitarian arts. On the other, this comparison also forced her audiences to ask questions about the racist and sexist reasons for such distinctions—questions that Kozloff increasingly began to address in her published writing as well as her visual art, which in 1975 would lead to her co-founding of the Heresies publishing collective.

By the end of this decade, this conflation of Kozloff's activist, artistic, and critical practices grew as she embarked upon a series of wildly successful public projects that began in the 1980s, inviting audiences to both appreciate and critically consider the patterns and rhythms of everyday life. With tile murals and mosaics, Kozloff created what she would call “workable decoration for our visually impoverished times” in public projects from Buffalo to San Francisco, Turkey to Japan, where her work didn't just adorn but force a new awareness of the airports, train stations, universities and embassies in which it appeared. The title of her major, traveling exhibition of this decade,



Joyce Kozloff, *Revolver*, 2008
96" diameter, acrylic on canvas,
Photo by Kevin Noble

“Visionary Ornament” expresses the nearly prophetic quality of Kozloff’s work from these years—particularly as the urgency with which she approached public art seemed to anticipate the national debates on the subject that would soon rein in these very projects.

And, while her work has steadily grown more interested in history, it has never lost this visionary sensibility—indeed, as Kozloff’s work has looked more intently backwards for inspiration, it does so in ways that consistently put our contemporary world into sharper focus. Her *Pornament* series leapt into the fray of the feminist “sex wars” by offering a wildly nuanced and up-to-the-minute perspective on the subject via watercolors that juxtaposed thousands of years’ worth of international erotica; her interests in the histories of navigation and cartography—disciplines about the naming and claiming of places—led to a series of works in which Kozloff’s manipulation of the boundaries and names of nations, cultures, regions underscores what Kozloff calls “the arbitrariness of the known” today; and most recently, she’s paired this mapmaking with her vigorous organizing against our country’s war in Iraq in her *Boys’ Art* series, which integrates fussy maps of sites from military history, war-inspired work by art history’s “bad boys”—Goya, Manet, Grosz—and superhero drawings from her son Nik’s childhood to address the problems of patriarchy and imperialism in light of a current war effectively sold to the country as “child’s play.”



Joyce working on *Voyages + Targets* at Thetis, a not-for-profit space in the Venice Arsenal, September 2006. Photo by J. Braderman

Considering her facility with connecting seemingly disparate eras, communities, and ideas in her art and writing, it is unsurprising that Kozloff has been a highly effective educator as well. Since the late 1960s, she has taught at dozens of colleges and art institutes across the United States, lectured at dozens more and, even as she has actively resisted being tied down to a single faculty position, to this day Kozloff continues to both energize and be energized by students in the myriad studio programs of which she has been a part.

In the art world, where feminism is far too frequently viewed as an interpretive tool rather than an activist history, and feminists viewed as megaphones rather than mentors, for 40 years Joyce Kozloff’s career has exemplified the myriad possibilities of truly integrating the personal and the political—with ferocity, humor, generosity, and tremendous beauty.

Biography

Joyce Kozloff is recognized as a major artistic and activist force in today's contemporary art world. Born in Somerville, New Jersey, she moved to New York City and then relocated to Los Angeles where she became radicalized as a feminist, which began a lifelong interest in political organizing.

Kozloff's art has been the subject of sixty-five solo exhibitions at institutions both here and abroad, including Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Villa Croce, Genoa, Italy; Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania; Tile Guild, Los Angeles, California; and DC Moore Gallery, New York, NY (which represents her). In addition, she has been included in numerous group exhibitions since she began exhibiting in 1972. She has completed many public and corporate commissions and is highly regarded for her public art work. Kozloff is recognized as one of the founders of Pattern and Decoration, a movement of the 1970s and 1980s. She remains active in artists' political groups.

Additionally, she has received several significant fellowships, including receiving a Yaddo Fellowship, Sarasota Springs, New York, and a Jules Guerin Fellowship, Rome Prize, American Academy in Rome, Italy. Her work is held in important public collections including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, and The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, among many other places.

She resides in New York, NY.



Joyce Kozloff, *Descartes' Heart*, 2008
48" diameter, acrylic on canvas
Photo by Kevin Noble

Margo Machida



Photo by Bruce Myren

We honor you,
Margo Machida, for your
dedication to chronicling and
interpreting the achievements
of contemporary Asian
American artists in art and
visual culture.

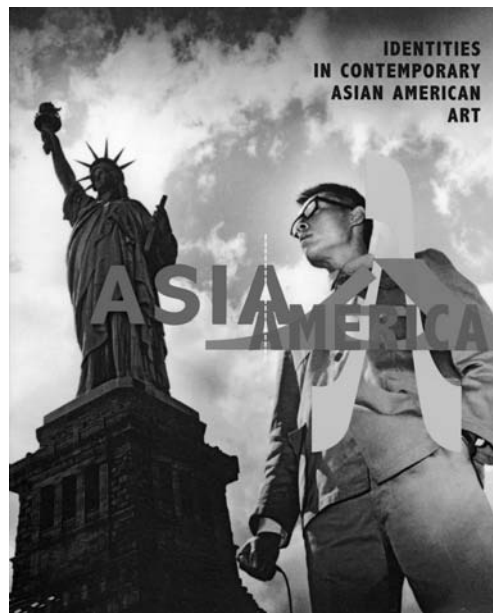
Margo Machida

by Eugenie Tsai

A pioneer whose exhibitions and critical writing of the past two decades have played a major role in defining the field of Asian American Art and visual culture, Margo's intellectual contributions and personal sense of mission richly deserve to be publicly acknowledged. Margo and I met in 1990, when I surprised myself by joining a small group of artists and arts professionals that was to become *Godzilla: Asian American Art Network*. Founded by Margo, along with Ken Chu and Bing Lee, two artists, the consensus that emerged out of far-ranging group discussions was the need to increase the visibility of Asian

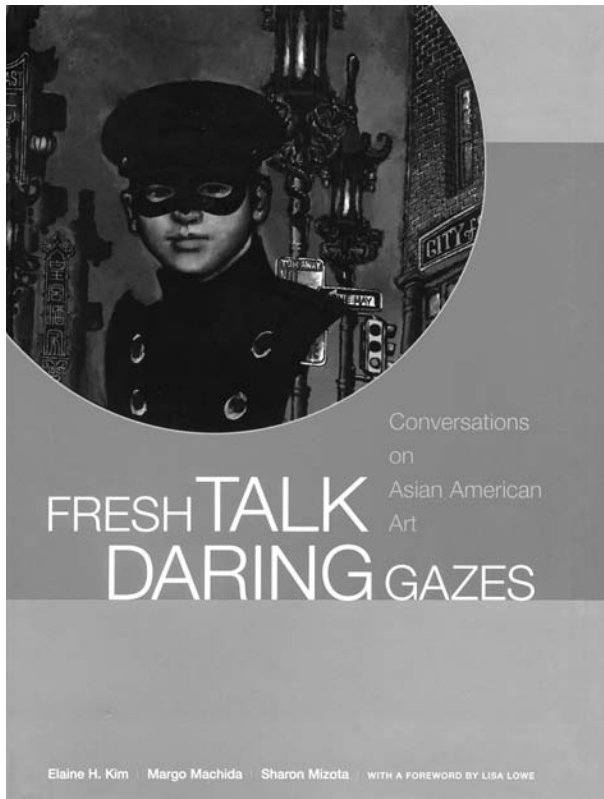
American artists. By examining the existing framework of the art world, we decided we could attempt to intervene in whatever ways we thought possible and/or provide viable alternatives. Initially nameless, the group met at members' studios or homes for lively evenings that were both social and intellectual. As leaders, Margo, Ken, and Bing each championed particular courses of action. Margo stressed the importance of documenting the work of Asian American artists, of creating an archive to ensure that these artists could become a visible presence in mainstream art history or in new art histories that had yet to be written. In addition, she advocated for a journal devoted to issues pertaining to Asian American art and artists who were often left out of the singular art historical narrative. Clearly, the strategies Margo pushed for early on provided the basis out of which her subsequent work grew.

Godzilla emerged in the heady days of the multicultural 90s, when various constituencies challenged the dominant power structure of the art world. Through word of mouth, the membership roster grew to well over one hundred, demonstrating the great need it fulfilled amongst a previously invisible demographic in the New York art world. Instead of a journal, in 1991 *Godzilla* launched a newsletter with national distribution that informed readers of exhibitions, panels, open calls for slides as well as providing a forum for Asian American artists and writers. In response to the 1991 Whitney Biennial, *Godzilla* took on the museum by sending the board members and director a letter that voiced our dissatisfaction that no Asian American painters, sculptors or photographers had been included. Margo and I were both on the committee that drafted the letter and that later met with David Ross, who was the director at that time. *Godzilla* also exhibited as a collective, producing *The Curio Shop* in response to an invitation in 1993 to take part in a series entitled *A New World Order* at Artists Space. The following year, the influence of Margo's ideas and advocacy resonated in the larger arena of the art world. Her groundbreaking exhibition *Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art* opened at Asia Society, the first contemporary art show and the first show devoted to Asian American issues organized by that institution.



Book cover:
Margo Machida, *Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art*, edited by David Sternbach and Joseph N. Newland.
[Exh. cat. New York: The Asia Society Galleries and The New Press, 1994]

Since *Godzilla* expired in the mid-90s, Margo has continued to advance the field of Asian American arts as an educator, cultural critic, and curator. She returned to school to obtain a doctorate in American Studies and now holds the position of Associate Professor of Art History and Asian American Studies at the University of Connecticut. Her numerous publications include the co-edited volume *Fresh Talk/Daring Gazes: Conversations on Asian American Art* (2003) and *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary* (2009). Recently she curated *Icons of Presence: Asian American Activist Art*, an exhibition that examined the significance of three Bay Area artists in relation to the burgeoning Asian American arts movement of the 1970s and 80s. Organized for the Chinese Cultural Center in San Francisco, it opened in October 2008.



Book cover:
Margo Machida, *Fresh Talk/Daring Gazes: Conversations on Asian American Art*, edited by Elaine H. Kim, Margo Machida, and Sharon Mizota. [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003]

My participation in *Godzilla* provided a much broader perspective than my graduate studies in art history at Columbia could possibly have offered. New artists, ideas, and ideals opened my eyes. *Godzilla* played a significant role in shaping my professional aspirations. Times have changed and Asian American Art has moved from the margins to become a legitimate area of study at universities proving that action can result in change. For the leadership and inspiration she has provided over the years, Margo has my eternal gratitude.

Biography

Margo Machida is a Hawai'i-born scholar, independent curator, artist, and cultural critic specializing in Asian American art and visual culture. She is Associate Professor of Art History and Asian American Studies at the University of Connecticut. Her publications include the co-edited volume *Fresh Talk/Daring Gazes: Conversations on Asian American Art* (University of California Press, 2003). In 2005, this volume received the Cultural Studies Book Award from the Association for Asian American Studies. Her forthcoming books are *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary* (Duke University Press, February 2009) and *Visualizing the Local: Contemporary Asian American, Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Artists of Hawaii* (working title), University of Hawai'i Press (2010).

The author of numerous exhibition catalogue essays, Machida is also a curator, who recently curated the historical survey exhibition, *Icons of Presence: Asian American Activist Art* for the Chinese Cultural Center in San Francisco, California. Among Machida's awards are a Rockefeller Foundation grant; an appointment as Presidential Fellow at SUNY Buffalo, in the American Studies Department (1995-96), and a Rockefeller Humanities Fellowship, Queens College, City University of New York, Asian/American Center (1989-90).

She currently resides in Storrs, Connecticut.



Book cover:
Margo Machida, *Unsettled Visions: Contemporary Asian American Artists and the Social Imaginary*
[Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008]

Ruth Weisberg



Photo by Kenna Love

We honor you,
Ruth Weisberg, for your
activism in all forms, your
dedication to your art, and
your service to visual arts
and academia.

Ruth Weisberg

by June Wayne

In the early seventies, when Ruth Weisberg and I hardly knew each other, we happened to be making lithographs at the same time at Cirrus Editions. Ed Hamilton (a Tamarind Master Printer—as is Jean Milant who owns the Cirrus atelier) was printing for both of us. Ruth was brushing in rich wet washes of tusche in dilutions of almost-nil to black. She seemed so confident that Ed could hold the transparencies, I was unnerved; tusche washes being among the most challenging litho techniques for a printer to pull. I sneaked

a look at her stone's progress every chance I got. From her inner serenity, Ruth took it for granted that her image would come out exactly as she laid it down, a calm I never achieved although litho is a print medium I am alleged to know a little something about. (Truth is, I approach a stone like an aging toreador, battle scarred and slightly seasick, trying not to throw up on my "suit of lights.") The litho Ruth Weisberg was drawing at Cirrus had re-assembled images of some children of the Holocaust. The stone became the equivalent of a court stenographer's transcript. However peaceful, tender, and layered the composition, I was looking at an art unlike that of my other colleagues or my own. It was the testimony of a witness to what had happened decades ago, captured as clearly as photos in a black-paged album. The children were unaware of what was about to happen to them, although the viewer (in this case, me) knew full well. Their staring eyes and my presence became a single storyline in which the artist, by refusing to editorialize, trapped me in the real time of the late thirties. Then and now, I wanted to warn those children to run, hide, somehow to get off that page, pretend to be actors in an old French film where a Basque peasant (played by Jean Gabin) could lead them through the snowy mountains into Spain. Weisberg's lithograph offered no hope, no commentary. Her objectivity kept the victims and the deed vividly alive. Her ability to keep such a loving distance made it possible for her to reinterpret the works of other artists, a creative feat I could not and cannot accomplish.

Like Christopher Isherwood in *I am a Camera*, Ruth notices and records life according to her sense of right and wrong without attempting to change it. Thus in her current exhibition at the Norton Simon Museum, *Ruth Weisberg: Guido Cagnacci and the Resonant Image*, she painted



Ruth Weisberg, *The Floating World*, 2003
78x62", oil and mixed media on canvas

herself into the narrative and we watch her watching. Although there is no sound track for this exhibition, these recent works whisper and hum. She is cinematographer, editor, and champion of special effects—an artist with a sense of historic patience, a taking-in of everything at the same time whether past or present. As her graphics grew larger and became paintings, as her paintings moved from Theatre of the Absurd into dialogues with Velázquez and Cagnacci, I got the weird feeling that Marcel Proust had moved into her studio when she wasn't looking and filled it with time, every kind of time. Otherwise, why is it that no matter what kind of question I pose, Ruth answers first from art history and then from her personal ethic and esthetic? So persuasive is this sequence that often she causes me to change my mind, even when my views are antithetical to hers? Where does she get this authenticity?

Ruth and I both come from Chicago, perhaps another reason for our enduring friendship. We are not like New Yorkers or Californians. Nor are we like each other. I do not have her tolerance or optimism but I certainly

benefit from both. I recommend that you notice her smile when she has painted the heel of a foot just right, or when the elevation of a wing on a bird or a boy is exactly believable. At this artist's center is a gyroscope calibrated in hope for which I, and all the rest of us, owe her our thanks.



Ruth Weisberg, *The Blessing*, 2008
80 x 96", oil and mixed media on canvas

Biography

Ruth Weisberg wears many hats. Since 1995, she has been Dean of the University of Southern California's Gayle Garner Roski School of Fine Arts. She is a prize-winning teacher, fundraiser extraordinaire, writer, critic, curator and cultural connector. Commitment to her religious heritage and the world Jewish community has been paramount to her. She is the Founding Chair of the Jewish Artist's Initiative of Los Angeles.

As an artist, Ruth works primarily in painting, drawing and large-scale installations. Her work has been the subject of over 75 solo and 185 group exhibitions and has been included in 65 major collections. A documentary entitled *Ruth Weisberg: On the Journey* by Laura Vazquez was released in April, 2003 and won a Gold Medal at the Aurora Film and Video Festival. Her honors are many, including the College Art Association Distinguished Teaching of Art Award in 1999; Visiting Artist at the American Academy in Rome 1992, 1994 and 1995; a National Endowment for the Humanities Seminar in 1994; a Senior Research Fulbright for Italy in 1992, the School of Art, University of Michigan Distinguished Alumni/AE Award for 1992. Weisberg was also President of the College Art Association from 1990 to 1992.

She resides in Santa Monica, CA.



Ruth Weisberg, *The One and the Other*, 2003
58 x 75", oil and mixed media on canvas

The President's Award

Each year as a special part of the Women's Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Awards, the National Board President selects a recipient of the WCA President's Award. The 2009 award honors Catherine Opie and Susan Fisher Sterling.

The award identifies exemplary women in mid-career and highlights their contribution to the field of the visual arts. The award also anticipates a lifetime of achievement for its recipients. Recent recipients of the President's Award are Elizabeth A. Sackler, philanthropist; Tara Donovan, artist; Andrea Barnwell, Spelman College Museum of Fine Art Director; Connie Butler, Robert Lehman Foundation Chief Curator of Drawings at The Museum of Modern Art; and Tey Marianna Nunn, Director and Chief Curator of the Visual Arts Program at the National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Catherine Opie



Photo by Nicole Belle

Since photographer Catherine Opie first came to prominence with her penetrating, loving portraits of West Coast drag and S/M communities in the 1990s, her work has spanned arctic landscapes, lesbian families, high school football players, and suburban architecture. A diverse pool of subjects unify Opie's refined formalism and deep humanism.

Born in Sandusky, Ohio and educated at the San Francisco Art Institute and California Institute for the Arts, her work has been exhibited around the world. Most recently, her work was the subject of a mid-career retrospective *Catherine Opie: American Photographer* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City. She has also earned a reputation as a generous instructor and mentor to a generation of students at the University of California-Los Angeles, where she has taught since 2001.

As demonstrated in her Guggenheim retrospective, Opie's interests are far-reaching, as is her sensitivity to binding the broad range of her subjects through her recurrent explorations of community, identity, and equality. Her dedication to feminist and queer politics is arguably most clear in her heartbreakingly beautiful series of lesbian couples and their families, which put forth a succinct retort to the casual and pervasive bigotry—recently confirmed in the success of Proposition 8 in her own state—that refuses to recognize their legitimacy. But these politics are just as true of her sensitive portraits of S/M practitioners, wherein Opie directs her critique at the feminist community, which all too frequently passes judgments of (and against) its own where desire and pleasure are concerned. And, pleasure is another recurring theme in her work, whether represented in the disarmingly sweet relationships she captures between surfers or football players, or the peaceful solitude she captures in her photographs of icehouses and the stark Alaskan landscape.

With this award, the Women's Caucus for Art celebrates Catherine Opie's career of revealing, as the artist herself recently put it, the "diverging layers of what it means to be human in these different contexts."

Written by Maria Elena Buszek

Susan Fisher Sterling



Courtesy of NMWA

Susan Fisher Sterling is Director of the National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) in Washington, D.C. She has played an important role in the development and presence of the museum for 20 years, culminating in her appointment to her current position in 2008. Responsible for many of the museum's modern and contemporary exhibitions over the years, Sterling has curated or organized exhibitions such as the first survey of Carrie Mae Weems in 1994, and *Virgin Territory: Gender and History in Contemporary Brazilian Art* in 2001. She also has overseen the creation of numerous traveling exhibitions for the museum, including *The Legacy of Generations: Pottery of Native American Women* and *Italian Women Artists from Renaissance to Baroque*. In 2007, she brought *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* to NMWA as part of the museum's 20th anniversary celebration.

In addition, she has significantly expanded the museum's holdings in contemporary photography and photo-based art, abstract painting and sculpture since 1960, and feminist art.

Sterling is known for her strong commitment to creating a place where cultural discourse by and about women's art is recognized and supported. She has shared WCA's goals and been a proponent of our programs over the years, and serves on the National Committee of The Feminist Art Project. Sterling has received the Royal Order of Merit from the Government of Norway and the Order de Rio Branco from the Republic of Brazil for her cultural diplomacy.

Sterling, who holds a Ph.D. in Art History from Princeton University, began her career at the museum 20 years ago as an Associate Curator. She has served in a variety of capacities, including Chief Curator and Deputy Director. As a result she is uniquely qualified to understand the museum's operations. Managing a budget of over \$8 million, she oversees planning and fundraising as well as collections initiatives. With all of these responsibilities, she continues to be a curator, most recently with the 2008 exhibition, *Role Models: Feminine Identity in Contemporary American Photography*.

Written by Barbara Wolanin & Marilyn J. Hayes

Past WCA Lifetime Achievement Award Awardees

Dallas, 2008

Ida Applebroog, Joanna Frueh
Nancy Grossman, Leslie King-
Hammond, Yolanda Lopez
Lowery Stokes Sims

New York, 2007

Awards for Women in the Arts

Judith Brodsky, Ferris Olin
Barbara Chase-Riboud, Wanda Corn
Buffie Johnson, Lucy Lippard
Elizabeth Murray

Boston, 2006

Eleanor Antin, Marisol Escobar
Elinor Gadon, Yayoi Kusama

Atlanta, 2005

Betty Blayton-Taylor, Rosalynn Carter
Mary Garrard, Agnes Martin
Yoko Ono, Ann Sutherland Harris

Seattle 2004

Emma Amos, Jo Baer, Michi Itami
Helen Levitt, Yvonne Rainer

New York 2003

Eleanor Dickinson, Suzi Gablik
Grace Glueck, Ronne Hartfield
Eleanor Munro, Nancy Spero

Philadelphia 2002

Camille Billops, Judith Brodsky
Muriel Magenta, Linda Nochlin
Marilyn J. Stokstad

Chicago 2001

Joyce Aiken, Dorothy Gillespie
Marie Johnson Calloway
Thalia Gouma-Peterson
Wilhemina Holladay
Ellen Llanyon, Ruth Waddy

Los Angeles 1999

Judy Baca, Judy Chicago
Linda Frye Burnham
Evangeline K. Montgomery
Arlene Raven, Barbara T. Smith

Philadelphia 1997

Jo Hanson, Sadie Krauss Kriebel
Jaune Quick-To-See Smith
Moira Roth, Kay Sekimachi

Boston 1996

Bernice Bing, Alicia Craig Faxon
Elsa Honig Fine, Howardena Pindell
Marianna Pineda, Kay WalkingStick

San Antonio 1995

Irene Clark, Jacqueline Clipsham
Alessandra Comini, Jean Lacy
Amalia Mesa Bains, Celia Muñoz

New York City 1994

Mary Adams
Maria Enriquez de Allen
Beverly Pepper, Faith Ringgold
Rachel Rosenthal
Charlotte Streifer Rubenstein

Seattle 1993

Ruth Asawa, Shifra M. Goldman
Nancy Graves, Gwen Knight
Agueda Salazar Martinez
Emily Waheneka

Chicago 1992

Vera Berdich, Paula Gerard
Lucy Lewis, Louise Noun
Margaret Tafoya, Anna Tate

Washington DC 1991

Theresa Bernstein, Delilah Pierce
Mildred Constantine
Otellie Loloma, Mine Okubo

New York City 1990

Ilse Bing, Elizabeth Layton
Helen Serger, May Stevens
Pablita Velarde

San Francisco 1989

Bernarda Bryson Shah
Margret Craver, Clare Leighton
Samella Sanders Lewis
Betye Saar

Houston 1988

Margaret Burroughs, Jane Teller
Dorothy Hood, Miriam Schapiro
Edith Standen

Boston 1987

Grace Hartigan, Agnes Mongan
Maud Morgan, Honoré Sharrer
Elizabeth Talford Scott
Beatrice Wood

New York City 1986

Nell Blaine, Leonora Carrington
Sue Fuller, Lois Mailou Jones
Dorothy Miller

Los Angeles 1985/Toronto 1984

Minna Citron, Clyde Connell
Eleanor Raymond
Joyce Treiman, June Wayne
Rachel Wischnitzer

Philadelphia 1983

Edna Andrade, Dorothy Dehner
Lotte Jacobi, Ellen Johnson
Stella Kramrisch, Pecolia Warner
Lenore Tawney

New York City 1982

Bernice Abbott, Elsie Driggs
Elizabeth Gilmore Holt
Katharine Kuh, Claire Zeisler
Charmion von Wiegand

San Francisco 1981

Ruth Bernhard, Adelyn Breeskin
Elizabeth Catlett, Sari Dienes
Claire Falkenstein
Helen Lundeberg

Washington DC

1980 Alternate Awards

Bella Abzug, Sonia Johnson
Sister Theresa Kane, Rosa Parks
Gloria Steinem, Grace Paley

New Orleans 1980

Anni Albers, Louise Bourgeois
Carolyn Durieux, Ida Kohlmeyer
Lee Krasner

Washington D.C. 1979

Isabel Bishop, Selma Burke
Alice Neel, Louise Nevelson
Georgia O'Keeffe

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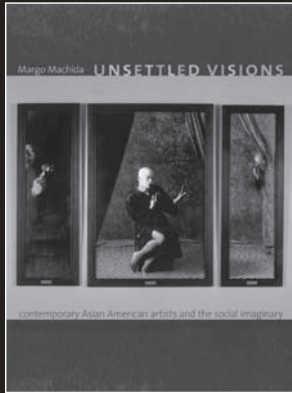
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