

**Projects 69 : Julia Jacquette : the
Museum of Modern Art, New York,
November 12, 1999-winter 2000
[extended to April 29, 2001]
[Judith B. Hecker]**

Author

Jacquette, Julia

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1999

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from our founding in 1929 to the present—is
available online. It includes exhibition catalogues,
primary documents, installation views, and an
index of participating artists.

69

julia jacquette

projects

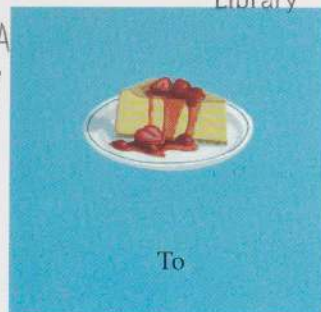


The Museum of Modern Art, New York

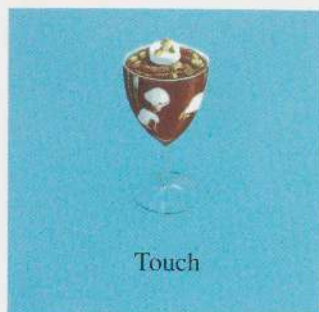
November 12, 1999–Winter 2000



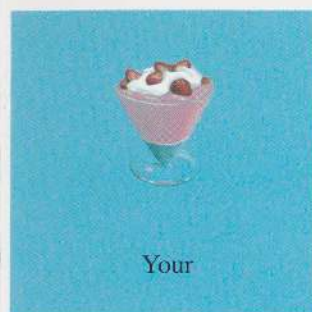
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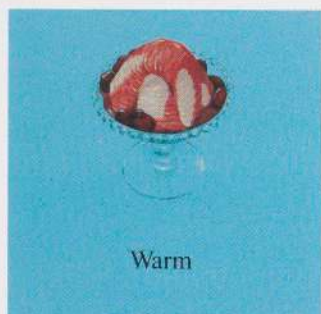
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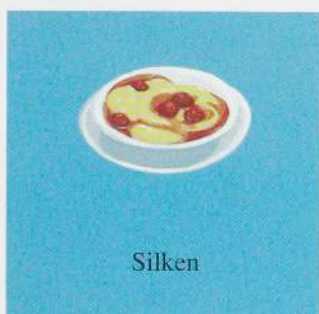
Touch



Your



Warm



Silken



Skin

Silken Skin. 1996. Enamel on wood, each panel:
14 x 14" (35.6 x 35.6 cm). Collection Jacqueline
and Marc Leland

Jacquette's images float on backgrounds of bright, unmodulated color. There is no real context for her food—rarely do we see a shadow; never does she depict a table or an eater. Her work is about imagined acts of consumption, and harks back to Pop art's fascination with consumer culture and commodity fetish. Jacquette's media-based subjects—many drawn from magazine advertisements—as well as her often repetitive image sequences, slick surfaces, streamline aesthetic, and sexual undertones also link her

The Iconology of Food, Glorious Food

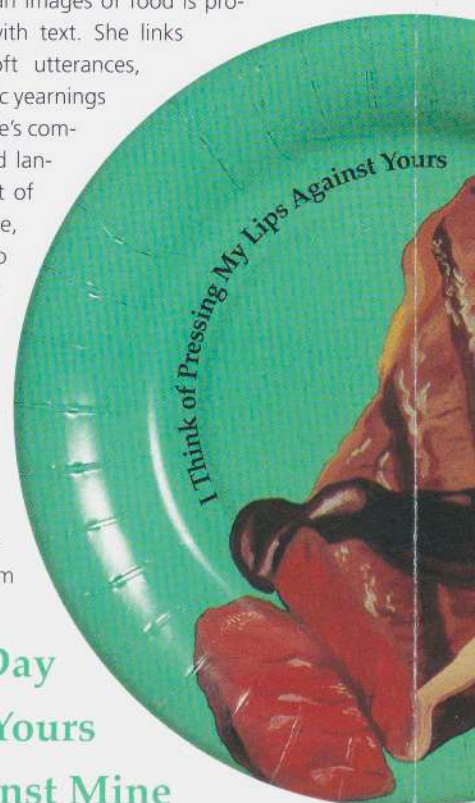
Julia Jacquette's art is about human desire. The desire for things sweet, smooth, and a little forbidden, or perhaps things tender, warm, and good for you. What do you crave? The words themselves have double meaning. Eating and sex. It's hard to speak of one without invoking the other. Both are essential to our sustenance and both are intimate acts, calling upon our personal sense of taste, touch, smell, sight, and sound. Jacquette's art exists in this middle ground, that is, a place where meaning is layered and multiple types of longings collide.

In the early 1990s Jacquette began making paintings of food overlaid with text. In her first pictures of packaged foods, like a tin of cookies or a bag of flour, she replaced the name brands on product labels with phrases like "Your lips" or "Your tongue." She labeled boxes of cake mix with the words "The feel of," "The warmth of," and "The sound of." She depicted cream being poured over pies and cakes, and then listed parts of the body. By the mid-1990s Jacquette began inserting longer statements into her work and expanded her image bank to include elaborately presented desserts, hors d'oeuvres, and main courses. Her choice of particular food types is deliberate: all-American dishes and food products, many popular in the 1950s. Jacquette has called her food "overdetermined": overly sweet, overly savory, and overly presented. Her platters are obsessively arranged; her desserts are excessive. Even her more hearty dishes are self-consciously displayed. She selects highly charged images of food that, in the context of her work, transcend their primary identification as something merely edible. They become metaphors for bodily presence, emotional sentiment, and cultural attitudes toward women.

work to a Pop sensibility. But less mechanical than Warhol's cool, screenprinted renderings of Campbell's Soup cans, and more like Wayne Thiebaud's sumptuous bakeshop displays or Claes Oldenburg's yummy cakes, cones, and burgers, Jacquette's work is homespun. She thoroughly researches her subjects in issues of *Look*, *Life*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, and *The Saturday Evening Post* from the 1950s and early 60s, as well as old Hershey's, Jello-brand, and Betty Crocker cookbooks (the latter given to the artist by her mother, who had received it from her mother). Jacquette's carefully painted, high-gloss surfaces simulate the look of enamel and create a sensuous commercialism—one steeped in nostalgia, like a picture on the side of an ice cream truck.

Context for Jacquette's deadpan images of food is provided by their juxtaposition with text. She links words together to create soft utterances, secret confessions, and romantic yearnings that sound like poetry. Jacquette's commingling of painted image and language relates her work to that of the Surrealists. René Magritte, whose influence she cites, also delighted in playing with the ambiguities of language and pictorial reality. Jacquette's work exploits the gap between seeing and comprehending; we recognize one thing but perceive another, as in a series of six soupy and drizzled-on desserts accompanied by the words, "To Touch Your Warm Silken Skin."

Every Moment of My Day
I Think of Pressing My Lips Against Yours
While I Hold Your Body Against Mine



Project for Café/Etc.

Jacquette's innovative project for MoMA was conceived for the inauguration of Café/Etc., a new space on the lower level of the Museum that combines a café, a bookstore, and numerous multimedia installations. Food and drink in the café are served on paper plates, in cups, and with napkins printed with artwork specially created by Jacquette for this format. The project takes Jacquette's inquiries into a more literal realm, that of the functional artwork. Faced with the challenge of working with new and varied formats, and the task of creating objects that function individually and as part of a series, Jacquette made five different images. She cropped the images to fit the particular dimensions of the objects and overlaid each with a segment of the statement, "Every Moment of My Day I Think of Pressing My Lips Against Yours While I Hold Your Body Against Mine." The textual segments work in any sequence as well as alone. A cup pictures hot fudge being drizzled on vanilla cake and ice cream. A beverage napkin pictures a brownie topped with ice cream and streams of hot fudge, and a lunch napkin two robust raspberry cream puffs. A dessert plate depicts a banana split punctuated with two tufts of whipped cream and maraschino cherries, and a sandwich plate a generous T-bone steak sliced open and prepared rare.

Jacquette's project stems from the tradition of the multiple: small three-dimensional objects made, like prints, in editions. Often functional, humorous, and mass-produced, such artworks flourished with the onset of Pop in

the 1960s, as artists blurred the boundary between their work and everyday objects. Food and its packaging, display, and consumption were particularly fertile subjects. Warhol screenprinted wood boxes based on supermarket cartons, and Oldenburg created plaster cake slices and baked potatoes in editions. Lichtenstein designed commercially fabricated ceramic dishes with his signature style, as well as a mass-produced paper version. Today, contemporary artists continue to engage the concept of the multiple in order to work in different formats, experiment with new materials, and reach a broader audience. Making her art accessible in a new way, Jacquette's project for MoMA takes the audience beyond the act of looking and asks them to partake in the work, providing a literal encounter with the issues explored.

T-Bone Steak. 1999. Paper sandwich plate, photomechanically printed in relief, diameter: 8" (20.3 cm). Photo: David Allison



Radiant. 1999. Oil on canvas, 72 x 60" (182.9 x 152.4 cm). Dain Rauscher Collection

The Politics of Desire: The Inedible

Although Jacquette's work can be linked with Pop and Surrealism—two movements not known for their sympathetic renderings of women—it is perhaps best captured under the broad rubric of postmodernism. Understood this way, Jacquette's metaphorical images address the politics of gender identity. Her stylized presentations of food represent a time when a woman's domain was, first and foremost, the kitchen—or the pantry where she secretly indulged alone. A reading of Jacquette's images of food as commodity also extends to a reading of woman as commodity.

In her "inedible" work, Jacquette focuses more explicitly on constructs of femininity and the idea of perfection by depicting symbols of elegance and romance. As with her food imagery, Jacquette creates tension between what is desirable and what is genuine or attainable. She began exploring these concerns earlier in the 1990s with paintings of wedding bands and other jewelry floating on solid backgrounds; cropped waistlines, busts, and necks of women in bridal gowns; flawless arrangements of roses in full bloom; and women's hands, cut off at the wrist, perfectly manicured, some with rings and some with gloves.

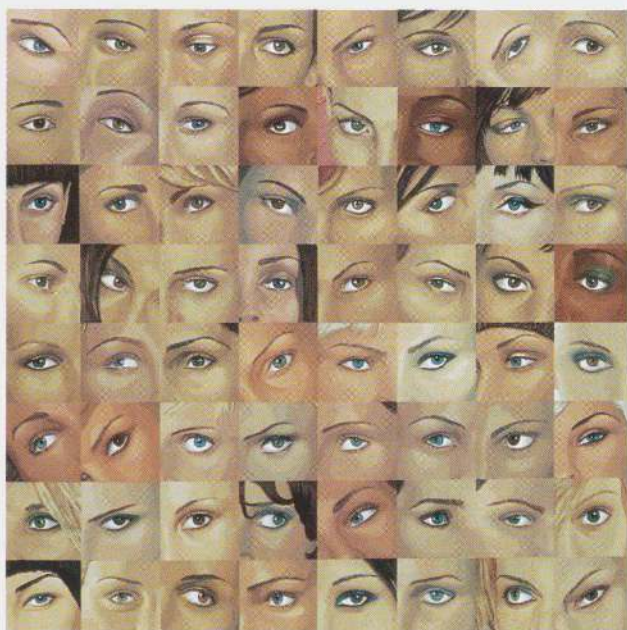


More recently Jacquette has shown hands interacting with objects and the body, as in *Radiant*: a woman touches her face, speaks on the phone, holds a kitchen knife, or smokes a cigarette. In a similar painting she explores male hand gestures: a hand pointing, shaving, holding a pencil, or also smoking. Still other paintings are grids of different facial expressions, fuller pictures of male and female body language, and close-ups of couples embracing, touching, and kissing. Together these works show how society perceives certain activities, gestures, and expressions as either "masculine" or "feminine." Women appear elegant and passive; men appear handsome and powerful. Rooted in glamorous, Hollywood-inspired images found—like her food subjects—in old magazines, these works reveal a cultural fixation with the aesthetics of perfection, and one mainly based on the visual pleasure of the male gaze. Jacquette's segmented figures and dismembered body parts, in particular, hone our attention on the locus of desire and gender. It is perhaps in her painting *Sixty-Four Ladies' Eyes (One with Glitter Cap)* that Jacquette offers the greatest challenge to this gaze, inviting the viewer to stare and then repeatedly staring right back.

Judith B. Hecker

Curatorial Assistant

Department of Prints and Illustrated Books



Sixty-Four Ladies' Eyes (One with Glitter Cap). 1996. Enamel on wood, 32 x 32" (81.3 x 81.3 cm). Collection the artist

biography

Born 1964 in New York

Lives and works in New York

education

M.F.A. Hunter College, New York

B.F.A. Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York

selected solo exhibitions

- 1999 Holly Solomon Gallery, New York
- 1998 Galerie Oliver Schweden, Munich, Germany
- 1997 Cohen Berkowitz Gallery for Contemporary Art,
Kansas City, Missouri
- 1996 Holly Solomon Gallery, New York
- 1995 *Open Spaces Series*, Holly Solomon Gallery,
New York
- 1994 *Every Boy I Ever Dreamed About*, David Klein Gallery,
Birmingham, Michigan

selected group exhibitions

- 1999 *Food For Thought*, New Jersey Center for Visual Arts,
Summit
- 1998 *Eat!*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney,
Australia
- The Next Word*, Neuberger Museum of Art,
State University of New York at Purchase
- 1996 *The Strange Power of Cheap Sentiment*
(or à bientôt to irony), White Columns, New York
- 1992 *Douglas Anderson and Julia Jacquette*,
P.S. 122 Gallery, New York

selected bibliography

Arning, Bill. *Julia Jacquette*. New York: Holly Solomon Gallery, 1996.

Cohen, Nancy, and Perijane Zarembok. *Food For Thought*. Summit:
New Jersey Center for Visual Arts, 1999.

Drucker, Johanna. *The Next Word: Text and/as Image and/as Design
and/as Meaning*. Purchase: Neuberger Museum of Art, State University
of New York, 1998.

Moody, Rick. "Art is Dead, Long Live Art!" *Modern Painters*, New York
Issue, spring 1998: 80–81.

Skobie, Ilka. "Domestic Desire: Julia Jacquette Serves Up a Feast of
Imagery." *Cover*, December 1996: 40–41.

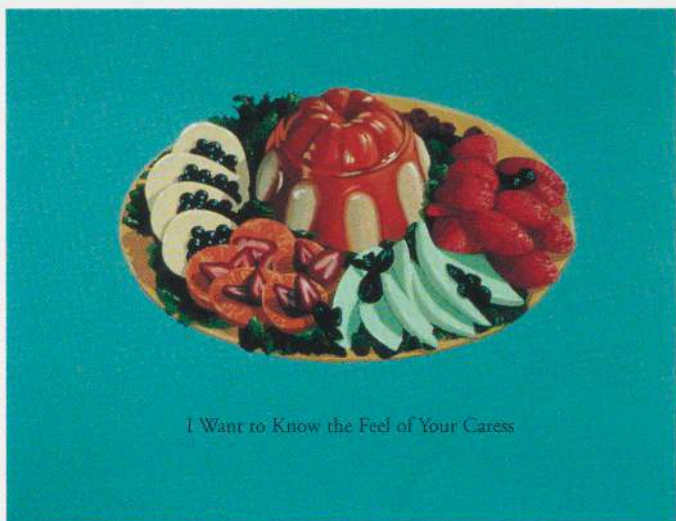
Smith, Roberta. "Palettes Full of Ideas About What Painting Should Be."
The New York Times, November 1, 1996, p. 27.

Vine, Richard. "Julia Jacquette at Holly Solomon." *Art in America* 85,
no. 1 (January 1997): 94–95.

writings by the artist

"Julia Jacquette." *New Observations*, ed. Susan Bee and Mira Schor,
no. 113 (winter 1996): 14–15.

"Working Conditions: A Forum on Art and Everyday Life by Younger
Artists: Julia Jacquette." *M/E/A/N/I/N/G*, ed. Susan Bee and Mira Schor,
no. 16 (November 1994): 15–16.



Fruit and Jello Platter. 1997. Enamel on wood, 22 x 28" (55.9 x 71.1 cm). Courtesy the artist and Holly Solomon Gallery, New York

acknowledgments

Grateful acknowledgment is due Stacey Heim in the Department of Sales and Marketing who, with the assistance of Chay Costello, coordinated numerous practical aspects associated with the production of the paper products. Special thanks to Jonathan Newman of Boston International and his affiliate companies for manufacturing quality products under great time constraints. I wish also to thank Mary Lea Bandy, Ethel Shein, and Gianfranco Sorrentino at MoMA for their support and cooperation; and Steven Sergio-vanni and Sara Jo Romero at Holly Solomon Gallery for their assistance. Finally, thanks to Julia Jacquette for her thoughtful, hard, and innovative work on this unconventional project.

series of paper products created by julia jacquette for projects 69

Vanilla Cake with Ice Cream and Hot Fudge. 1999. Paper cup, photomechanically printed in relief, 9 ounces

Brownie Sundae with Ice Cream and Hot Fudge. 1999. Paper beverage napkin, photomechanically printed in relief, unfolded: 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ " (24.5 x 24.5 cm)

Raspberry Cream Puffs. 1999. Paper lunch napkin, photomechanically printed in relief, unfolded: 13 x 13" (33.0 x 33.0 cm)

Banana Split. 1999. Paper dessert plate, photomechanically printed in relief, diameter: 7" (17.8 cm)

T-Bone Steak. 1999. Paper sandwich plate, photomechanically printed in relief, diameter: 8" (20.3 cm)

Manufacturer: Ideal Home Range, Essen, Germany. Edition: unlimited. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. © 1999 Julia Jacquette

This series of paper products will be used in Café/Etc. from November 12, 1999, through Winter 2000. Café/Etc. is open 12:00–5:45 p.m. daily, 12:00–8:15 p.m. Friday, and closed Wednesday. Packaged paper products are available for purchase in The Café/Etc. Book Store and in The MoMA Design Store.

The **projects** series is sponsored by Peter Norton.

Cover: Maquettes for *Vanilla Cake with Ice Cream and Hot Fudge*. 1999. Paper cup, photomechanically printed in relief, 9 ounces. Photo: David Allison

Unless otherwise noted photos: Courtesy the artist and Holly Solomon Gallery, New York