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Lee Lozano
North South East West, 1969
oil on canvas, Four Panels: 42 x 96
inches ea. Phot credit: Eva Hved



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Lee Lozano
North South East West, 1969
oil on canvas, Four Panels: 42 x 96
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Lee Lozano
Untitled [Triple Hammer], 1963
Oil on canvas 65 x 80 inches
Photo credit: Eva Heyd



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Lee Lozano
Drawn from Life: 1961-1971
Installation view
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Installation view
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Drawn from Life: 1961-1971
Installation view
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5 Lee Lozano
Drawn from Life: 1961-1971
Installation view
Photo credit: Eva Heyd



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Lee Lozano
Untitled, 1964 oil on canvas
60 x 143 1/2 inches overall
Photo credit: Eva Heyd



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Lee Lozano
Drawn from Life: 1961-1971
Installation view
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Lee Lozano
Untitled, 1963 oil on canvas
94 x 100 inches overall, 94 x 50 ca.
panel Photo Credit: Eva Heyd



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Drawn from Life: 1961-1971
Installation view
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Lee Lozano
Punch, Peek and Feel, 1967-70
oil on canvas with perforations
x 42 inches Photo: Eva Heyd



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Lee Lozano
Untitled [Triple Hammer], 1963
Oil on canvas 65 x 80 inches
Photo credit: Eva Heyd



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2 Lee Lozano
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60 x 143 1/2 inches overall
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Triple Hammer, 1963
Oil on canvas 65 x 80 inches
Photo: Eva Heyd



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Lee Lozano

Untitled [Clamp Diptych], 1964
oil on canvas 108 x 132 inches overall
Photo credit: Eva Heyd



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Lee Lozano

Untitled [Clamp Diptych], 1964
oil on canvas 108 x 132 inches overall
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Lee Lozano

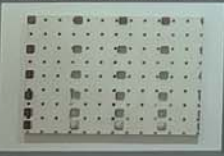
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Installation view
Photo Credit Eva Heyd



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Lee Lozano

Untitled, 1970, 42 x 62 inches
gesso with graphite on canvas with perforations Photo Credit: Eva Heyd



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Lee Lozano

Drawn from Life: 1961-1971
Installation view
Photo Credit Eva Heyd



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Lee Lozano

Slide, 1965, 72 x 168 inches
oil on canvas, three panels
Photo credit: Eva Heyd



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Lee Lozano

Drawn from Life: 1961-1971
Installation view
Photo credit: Eva Heyd



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Lee Lozano

"LEAN"
Punch, Peek and Feel, 1967-70
oil on canvas with perforations
96 x 42 inches Photo credit: Eva Heyd



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Lee Lozano

Untitled [Clamp Diptych], 1964
oil on canvas 108 x 132 inches overall
Photo credit: Eva Heyd



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Untitled, 1963 oil on canvas
94 x 100 inches overall, 94 x 50 ea.
panel Photo Credit: Eva Heyd



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from the art world, she decided to boycott all women, which seems to mean not speaking to or having any dealings with anyone of her own sex. We are not privy to what led to that extreme stance, but I cannot believe this pleased some of her biggest supporters -- for instance, feminist critic Lucy Lippard. To make matters worse, Lozano moved to Dallas, Texas.

But perhaps her biggest sin is that she was furious at the art world, not just at the usual suspects but at her fellow artists, too. Here are two 1969 pieces reproduced in the MATRIX pamphlet:

Art Piece (or Paranoia Piece):

Describe your current work to a famous but failing artist from the early 60s. Wait to see if he boosts (*hoist, cop, steal) any of your ideas.*

Real Money Piece:

Offer to guests coffee, Diet Pepsi, bourbon, glass of half and half, ice water, grass and money. Open jar of real money and offer to guests like candy. [The "guests" were all artists: Hannah Weiner, Steven Kaltenbach, Keith Sonnier, Dan Graham, etc. Some took money, some borrowed money, some did nothing.]

The questions raised by these and other "pieces" in her notebooks -- most self-assignments, some dealing with drugs, some with masturbation -- are worth thinking about. Can you make art only for yourself, or is art necessarily social? Can something be art even if it is not recognized as art? Can you make art outside the art system? And if so, to what

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instructions to herself alone (unlike Yoko Ono's earlier command pieces that can be performed by others), partake of what I have now come to call categorical risk.

* * *

The important thing about Lozano is not that she embraced wild erotic art, cool minimalism, and private performance art, but that in so doing she engaged in categorical risk. Serious art, because it must make the viewer -- and perhaps even the artist herself -- ask if what they are looking at is art at all, is art that engages in categorical risk. The same can be said for an unusual art career or an atypical, perhaps inconsistent, oeuvre. As Lozano wrote: "Seek the extremes, that's where all the action is."

Those involved in Streetworks were testing audience boundaries. An action or an object could be art even if the audience -- often accidental and uninformed -- does not know the action or object was intended as art. This "audience" might not even have art as a category of reference, never mind knowledge of arcane works by Kurt Schwitters or Marcel Duchamp. Lozano took an additional categorical risk: There did not have to be an audience or viewer other than herself.

Can we deal with that? Given the premise, one might never know if the person sitting across from you on the subway is or is not an artist. His little snooze may be his performance piece, or whatever he is or is not thinking about might be his conceptual art.

We already know from Outsider Art that a maker can create art without intending to and, in fact, may not even grasp the art category, but instead be proselytizing for

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end?

Did Lozano intend the scrawlings in her notebooks as art? I'd say yes. Some of them were exhibited in the Dwan Gallery. She was, as it were, on the scene. The participants referred to in her *Real Money Piece* prove this. She knew activist critic Lippard and Sol LeWitt and was friendly with many others in the art world.

And she most likely knew the work of Vito Acconci (who at this point did an artwork that consisted of walking around St. Patrick's Cathedral over and over again) and of Adrian Piper (who, intentionally reeking of garlic and other so-called bad odors, stood in movie lines as an artwork). Or of Scott Burton, who walked on Manhattan's 14th Street in full drag, totally undetected by friends and other artists. Hannah Weiner, whom we know Lozano knew, contacted and met with another Hannah Weiner listed in the phone book; she hired a hot-dog cart and renamed it Weiner's Weiners. And she leaned against a doorway on the Bowery pretending to be hooker during one of the time- and location-bound mass Streetworks yours truly helped to organize in -- you guessed it -- 1969. Lozano may have even known of my own ongoing Streetwork: Any time I am recognized in the street by someone I do not know is a Streetwork.

Many of the Street Workers and guerrilla performance artists and poets either documented their works themselves (some documents were, alas, destined for galleries) or participated in mass situations that made documentation likely, even if only in the pages of the Village Voice, the East Village Other or Vogue.

Lozano herself seems not to have had any consistent goal. This is why many of her performances, which were either private "dialogues" or, more important,

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some vision, praying or performing odd and grand magical techniques.

But artists embracing categorical risk are doing so consciously. Categorical risk is the key characteristic of important modern and postmodern art. Unlike normal art, which looks like and even smells like art, the art of categorical risk induces doubt (at least at first) that it even belongs in the art category.

The philosophically inclined should know that by "categorical" I do not mean absolute, as in Kant's categorical imperative, which is usually defined as a moral obligation that is unconditionally and universally binding. Although I do like to think of categorical risk as being the absolute and binding art definition of our time, I think we need a little leeway, since categorical risks are now often immediately absorbed. Some risks are riskier than others. And then again, just because something doesn't look like art or act like art doesn't automatically make it art.

Some historical examples of categorical risk will serve to clarify my term: the first cubist, futurist, constructivist paintings; Duchamp's signed urinal or his bicycle wheel; Pollock's drip paintings; Yves Klein's jump, but also Allan Kaprow's Happenings and Joseph Beuys' lectures. More recent examples might include Mike Bidlo's Picassos, Pollocks, and Warhols; Damien Hirst's preserved shark, Jeff Koons' glass porn.

The best art work in the P.S.1 show is Lozano's 1969 *General Strike Piece*:
GENERALLY BUT DETERMINEDLY
AVOID BEING PRESENT AT OFFICIAL
OR "UPTOWN" FUNCTIONS OR
GATHERINGS RELATED TO THE "ART
WORLD" IN ORDER TO PURSUE
INVESTIGATIONS OF TOTAL
PERSONAL AND PUBLIC

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REVOLUTION.

Lee Lozano was stepping off into the void
(in a bigger way than Klein's faked dive).
She left the art world!

posted by Perreault @ 5:27 pm | [Permanent link](#)

Sunday, March 14, 2004

WHITNEY BIENNIAL 2004



Yayoi Kusama, *Fireflies on the Water*

Part One: The Serious and Ambitious Catalogue

The three curators of the 2004 Whitney Biennial -- Chrissie Iles, Shamim Momin, and Debra Singer -- make an immodest claim in the jointly signed catalogue

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<http://www.thebrooklynrail.org/arts/march04/lozano.html>

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Lee Lozano
Drawn From Life: 1961-1971
by Nick Stillman
March 2004



Lee Lozano, "Untitled (Triple Hammer)" (1963), oil on canvas. Photo by Eva Heyd. Courtesy P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center. P.S. 1 Through May 1, 2004

P from print edition
W web exclusive

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Much of *Drawn From Life* is cold, mocking, and intentionally crude, revealing Lozano's methodology as a type of reverse elitism, flying in the face of Greenbergian dogma and offering scathing social critiques that pierced deeper than escapist abstraction could by the early 1960s. De Kooning could be considered a contemporary kindred spirit and a fellow provocateur, but Lozano's work is completely emptied of heroic gesture—it either burns with sloppy, obvious rage, or coolly repels with sarcastic smoke and mirrors. Lozano's not a total unknown. She had a solo show at the Whitney in 1971 and was "known" in the New York art scene from the mid-sixties until the early seventies when she gave up art. *Drawn From Life* shows Lozano working several very different aesthetic and material tactics, but the text-based pieces from the late sixties and early seventies offer insight on the earlier, rage-laced work, and also on why she would later leave New York and abandon art making altogether.

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If Lozano's disgust with status quo America is ambiguous in the tool paintings, it crystallizes in her text pieces. An untitled 1970 piece is a cryptic self-portrait of sorts, offering essential factual information that composes her personhood: sex (1931, continuing), drugs (1959, continuing), art (1935, continuing), and rejects the traditional American middleclass female "role," crossed out and renamed "trip" (1944). Other pieces incite with Jenny Holzer-like truisms. "All Weapons Are Boomerangs" (date unknown) snaps, "Humans: Train your emotions away from hatred the way you train yourself to use the crapper," and "People: I can still smell on your breath the other people's rule you swallowed whole so long ago." Probably the most angrily elitist of the text pieces is "Thinking Offer" (date unknown), in which Lozano imperiously claims, "I offer to think about something for anyone," an idea bearing obvious similarity to a recent project by Brooklyn-based artist Emily Jacir, who offered to fulfill practical and fanciful requests in Palestine for natives there and abroad in her "Where We Come From" (2001-3). But while Jacir's gesture is poignant and sincere, Lozano's is cryptic and mean. Where Jacir uses her U.S. passport as a law-abiding means of carrying out a conceptual project, Lozano rejects codes, laws, and niceties, focusing on the rancid McDonald's breath of the people who may or may not have actually known what they were symbolically supporting when they swallowed their first burger.

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Independent Press
Association-New York
Ethnic and Community
Press Awards for 2003

Category C. Ethnic and
Community Magazines

1st Place—Best Public
Affairs Article: Williams
Cole, "City to
Immigrants—English
Only" (June-July, 2003)

2nd Place—Best Public
Affairs Article: Meghan
McDermott and Knox
Robinson, eds., "The
New Skool Goes to Bed
Stuy" (March-April, 2003)

2nd Place—Best Editorial
Commentary: Williams
Cole, "For the Dismissal
of Objectivity in News"
(Aug-Sept., 2003)

3rd Place—Best News
Story: David Vine,
"Billions for Brooklyn—No
Questions Asked: The
Borough's New Power
Brokers" (Winter, 2003)

3rd Place—Best Feature
Story: Marjory Garrison,
"The Truth in Brooklyn
Starts in Greensboro"
(Aug.-Sept., 2003)

3rd Place—Best Overall
Graphic Design—Amelia
Hennighausen.

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That's why it's initially difficult to reconcile this body of work with Lozano's seemingly apolitical, quasi-formalist paintings like "Slide" (1965). Curator Bob Nickas does a terrific job with the presentation of this piece, as well as "Punch, Peek & Feel" (1967-70) in the adjacent room, neither of which would make much sense without long tables of contextualizing documents and sketches. Both of these pieces hang on walls, but the pages of sketches are the clue to getting inside Lozano's head to figure out why she would want to make coldly minimalist, nearly Op-like pieces in between her rage-filled tools and text-based work. Lozano notes that the sketches for "Slide" are stolen from the book *Great Ideas and Theories of Modern Cosmology*— demystification number one. Then, on another sketch she writes, "Add to paint silvering, metal flakes, sparkles, etc. Surface could

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In one of her text pieces, Lozano writes, "There's no justification for form...unless it's used to expose content which has meaning." Lozano's late text pieces and abstract canvases abandon representation entirely, and when she uses form, she seems to be ridiculing the arbitrariness and inconsequentiality of formalism. "North South East West" (1967) is another confusing abstract work. The piece consists of four canvases, with the north and south ones hung vertically, and the east and west horizontal. Each canvas is spread out from a central point on the wall and the only representational mark on each is an arcing gesture that would appear to form a circle, seeming to connect the canvases despite their distance from each other. Like the other abstractions, "North South East West" is a tough sell without context, which comes in anecdotal fashion in a text piece further in the exhibition. A sketch of the same layout of shapes is accompanied by a Bucky Fuller quote: "As soon as I complete the drawing of a circle, I wish to be outside of it." Drawn From Life tells a story about confinement and isolation, and the depression and alienation that can result. In her early years, it's clear that the circle is U.S.A.-at-large, which is a country Lozano finds sickening and depressing. By 1967, and certainly by 1972, the circle had widened to include the art world, which continued to be heavily influenced by a hard-line, usually masculine, minimalist influence. Seen in this context, "North South East West" may be Drawn From Life's only image drained of rage and sarcasm, replaced by resignation and sadness.

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art

Lee Lozano Drawn From Life: 1961-1971

by Nick Stillman

PS. 1
Through May 1, 2004

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Lee Lozano, "Untitled (Triple Hammer)" (1963), oil on canvas. Photo by Eva Heyd. Courtesy PS. 1 Contemporary Art Center.

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PS1

Lee Lozano

Drawn From Life: 1961-1971

by Nick Stillman

S. 1
through May 1, 2004

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Lee Lozano, "Untitled (Triple Hammer)" (1963), oil on canvas. Photo by Eva Heyd. Courtesy P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center.

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Lee Lozano

Drawn From Life: 1961-1971

by Nick Stillman

PS. 1
Through May 1, 2004

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Much of *Drawn From Life* is cold, mocking, and intentionally crude, revealing Lozano's methodology as a type of reverse elitism, lying in the face of Greenbergian dogma and offering scathing social critiques that pierced deeper than escapist abstraction could by the early 1960s. De Kooning could be considered a contemporary kindred spirit and a fellow provocateur, but Lozano's work is completely emptied of heroic gesture—either burns with sloppy, obvious rage, or coolly repels with sarcastic smoke and mirrors. Lozano's not a total unknown. She had a solo show at the Whitney in 1971 and was "known" in the New York art scene from the mid-sixties until the early seventies when she gave up art. *Drawn From Life* shows Lozano working several very different aesthetic and material tactics, but the text-based pieces from the late sixties and early seventies offer insight on the earlier, rage-laced work, and also on why she would later leave New York and abandon art making altogether.

Her obvious fury towards American sexual politics is hinted at indirectly in a series of paintings and drawings depicting tools from the early-mid sixties. The semi-abstract paintings feel especially caustic. They are all banal close-ups of smooth, shiny tools—decidedly masculine objects—painted in a brushy style that could be considered elegantly (femininely?) rendered abstraction. The care devoted to the surfaces of the shiny tools is precious and loving. The slippery smooth steel gleams like the chrome on a big Ford, like the aluminum curve of a can of Bud, like the glossy pages of Playboy. Look no further than John Waters for similar critiques of a macho attention span—his 1974 film *Female Trouble* features a particularly disturbing scene where Gator passes the time during another banal fuck with his wife by flipping through a tool catalogue.

If Lozano's disgust with status quo America is ambiguous in the tool paintings, it crystallizes in her text pieces. An untitled 1970 piece is a cryptic self-portrait of sorts, offering essential factual information that composes her personhood: sex (1931, continuing), drugs (1959, continuing), art (1935, continuing), and rejects the traditional American middleclass female "role," crossed out and renamed "trip" (1944). Other pieces invite with Jenny Holzer-like truisms. "All Weapons Are Boomerangs" (late unknown) snaps, "Humans: Train your emotions away from hatred the way you train yourself to use the crapper," and "People: I can

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by Nick Stillman

P.S. 1

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Her obvious fury towards American sexual politics is hinted at indirectly in a series of paintings and drawings depicting tools from the early-mid sixties. The semi-abstract paintings feel especially caustic. They are all banal close-ups of smooth, shiny tools—decidedly masculine objects—painted in a brash style that could be considered elegantly (femininely?) rendered abstraction. The care devoted to the surfaces of the shiny tools is precious and loving. The slippery smooth steel gleams like the chrome on a big Ford, like the aluminum curve of a can of Bud, like the glossy pages of Playboy. Look no further than John Waters for similar critiques of a macho attention span—his 1974 film *Female Trouble* features a particularly disturbing scene where Cator passes the time during another brutal fuck with his wife by flipping through a tool catalogue.

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Brooklyn Rail



Lee Lozano, "Stoned (Single Hammer)" (1963), oil on canvas. Photo by Eve Neyd. Courtesy P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center.

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MARCH 2004

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the people who may or may not have actually known what they were symbolically supporting when they swallowed their first burger.

The frank admission of drug use is another common theme in the text pieces, both subtly ("I paint stoned. I put acid into these paintings, metaphorically" is written within a dense field of text) and obviously, like in "Grass Piece" (1969), in which she plainly describes her plan to "Stay high every day. See what happens." She lists "smoke get high" as one of three things she likes to do more than make art. Lozano seems to seek escape from a mass culture and an art culture she clearly felt stark alienation from in drugs, and obviously she harbored no moral qualms about a concept of art that was merely stoned life. The text pieces culminate in the ultimate anti-art, 1969's "General Strike," in which she vows to "Gradually but determinedly avoid being present at official or public 'uptown' functions or gatherings related to the 'art world' in order to pursue investigation of total personal and public revolution." She succeeded, if not entirely in 1969, then certainly in 1971 with "Dropout Piece," in which she withdrew from the art world entirely and relocated to Texas.

Lozano's crude drawings from the early sixties were not nearly as "cool" as these smartass conceptual text-actions—they burn with alienation and anger, revealing just a hint of optimism in their naked rage, which has all but disappeared by the time of "Dropout Piece." P.S. 1's press release calls the drawings "explicitly humorous." They're definitely explicit, but there is little that is humorous about these grotesque gems that challenge Guston in their radical and graphic political immediacy—all done ten years before Guston's crassly critical *Poor Richard* drawings, which satirize Richard Nixon's foreign and domestic policies. Lozano's drawings invite easy reading as aggressively stupid, and they completely are. It looks as if they were drawn left-handed (assuming Lozano was right-handed), and most are executed in bold crayon. Details are abstracted as scribbles. But it's a little too easy to chalk them up (disclaimed as potentially inappropriate for younger viewers) to juvenile immaturity. Yes, there are tools, including a particularly harsh drawing reading "CANAL STREET" (with the "C" crossed out) coupled with a screwdriver and hammer. There are also plenty of other symbols of power, like the drawing of three hands, one holding a cross, another an ice cream cone, the other a cock. Conspicuously disembodied

dicks drift ambiguously through other pictures as well, sometimes poking out of holes where they shouldn't be. Gigantic tits poke out of the Atlantic Ocean. Men are occasionally represented as cocks, nothing else. Women have tits for heads, visibly erect nipples, and shaved genitals. In a particularly brutal drawing called "9 Out of 10" (1961) from this series, a faceless woman with big red lips, sticking her ass out, drops doughnut into a city trash can. "9 OUT OF 10. EAT CUNT FOR MENTAL HEALTH" screams Lozano's caption. Once again, the masculine dream—the sexy babe needs no face—just red lips, a short skirt, and some nice tits scores her 9 out of 10. More frat boy fantasies? Sure, most hilariously with the 1962 crayon drawing of a typewriter and a big grin wearing a bow tie with the evil caption, "I got my blow job thru the n.y. times." This approaches and exceeds sordid back-of-the-*Village Voice* territory that the venerable Leon Golub has begun to explore in paintings recently shown at Ronald Feldman Gallery. While Golub's images focused largely on sex advertisements geared toward fetishists, both artists seem interested in the body as dictated by capitalism—an object of power and money. And everyone knows power and money isn't held by the fairer sex. More than just a job at the stuffy male gaze, Lozano's early drawings represent a dialectical rejection of a set of values that blatantly projects



Lee Lozano, "Untitled (Triple Hammer)" (1963), oil on canvas. Photo by Eva Heyd. Courtesy P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center.

women into the realm of fantasy and fetish.

That's why it's initially difficult to reconcile this body of work with Lozano's seemingly apolitical, quasi-formalist paintings like "Slide" (1965). Curator Bob Nickas does a terrific job with the presentation of this piece, as well as "Punch, Peek & Feel" (1967-70) in the adjacent room, neither of which would make much sense without long tables of contextualizing documents and sketches. Both of these pieces hang on walls, but the pages of sketches are the clue to getting inside Lozano's head to figure out why she would want to make coldly minimalist, nearly Op-like pieces in between her rage-filled tools and text-based work. Lozano notes that the sketches for "Slide" are stolen from the book *Great Ideas and Theories of Modern Cosmology*—demystification number one. Then, on another sketch she writes, "Add to paint silvery, metal flakes, sparkles, etc. Surface could look 'crusty' And 'expensive, elegant, showy.'" The resulting painting is totally showy in all its gaudy, glorious crustiness. Three tones each of gold and silver "elegantly" reflect the light, producing a spectacular optical experience. Only "expensive" paintings could be this "showy."

In one of her text pieces, Lozano writes, "There's no justification for form... unless it's used to expose content which has meaning." Lozano's late text pieces and abstract canvases abandon representation entirely, and when she uses form, she seems to be ridiculing the arbitrariness and inconsequentiality of formalism. "North South East West" (1967) is another confusing abstract work. The piece consists of four canvases, with the north and south ones hung vertically, and the east and west horizontal. Each canvas is spread out from a central point on the wall and the only representational mark on each is an arcing gesture that would appear to form a circle, seeming to connect the canvases despite their distance from each other. Like the other abstractions, "North South East West" is a tough sell without context, which comes in anecdotal fashion in a text piece further in the exhibition. A sketch of the same layout of shapes is accompanied by a Bucky Fuller quote: "As soon as I complete the drawing of a circle, I wish to be outside of it." *Drawn From Life* tells a story about confinement and isolation, and the depression and alienation that can result. In her early years, it's clear that the circle is U.S.A.-at-large, which is a country Lozano finds sickening and depressing. By 1967, and certainly by 1972, the circle had widened to include the art world, which continued to be heavily influenced by a hard-line, usually masculine, minimalist influence. Seen in this context, "North South East West" may be *Drawn From Life's* only image drained of rage and sarcasm, replaced by resignation and sadness. ■

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THE NEW YORK SUN

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2004

ARTS & LETTERS

MUSEUMS

A Determined Anti-Decorousness

By DANIEL KUNITZ

"Good taste is the enemy of creativity," Pablo Picasso once said, though I doubt he would say it today. He lived in a more decorous age, when an over-fastidious concern for taste actually hindered some artists. Our contemporary art scene long ago traded in decorousness for grunge. Especially among younger artists, a determined anti-decorousness holds sway, generally in the form of deliberate bad taste.

Two shows currently on view at P.S. 1, both organized by independent curator and P.S. 1 curatorial advisor Bob Nickas, shed light on the origins and current status of this major shift in artistic aims. For "Collection (or, How I Spent a Year)," Mr. Nickas set himself the worthy goal of buying a piece by a different artist each month for a year. The only restriction was that he could not have written about or worked with any of the artists prior to 2003. In other words, he set out to buy as much new work as he could afford.

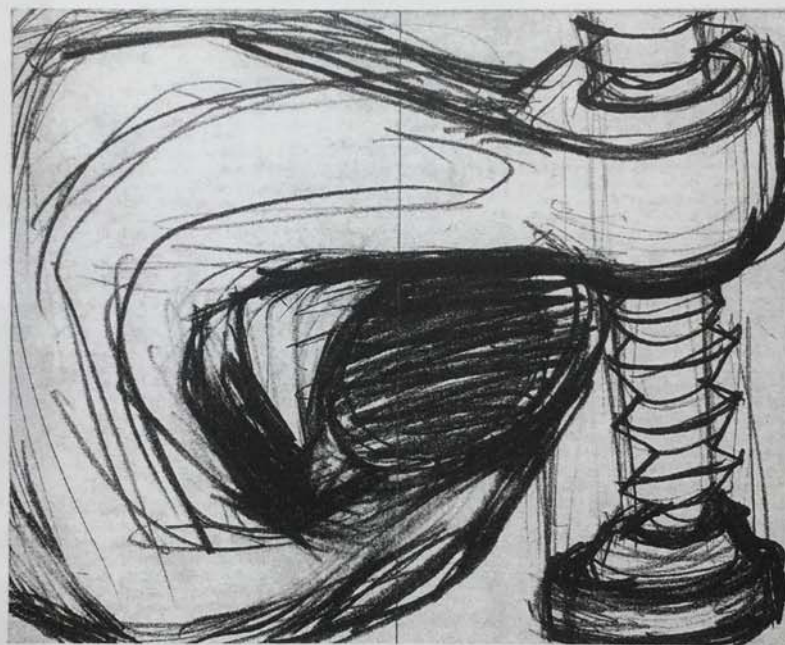
Of this yearlong buying spree Mr. Nickas wrote in the catalog:

It has effected [sic] the way I look at art, and, I suspect, not only for the duration of this project. On the one hand, if I am unwilling to part with my hard-earned money, how worthy can the art really be? On the other, there are certainly works far above my humble means. Like any collector, I can dream.

The show, which includes some 30 examples by 13 artists, suggests that humble means buys humble art.

Mr. Nickas's "Collection" amounts, essentially, to a cluster of ephemera. Virtually all the pieces arise from a thrift-shop, kitsch, or punk aesthetic — the three main streams that make up our river of anti-decorous art. Not surprisingly, a fixation on childhood predominates.

Jules de Balincourt's "U.S. World Studies #1" (2003), a work in oil and spray paint on panel, mimics "outsider" art. The artist has inserted what seem to be arbitrary country names — Egypt, Thailand, Sri Lanka — into a crude and colorful map of the United States. Josh Smith contributes a series of drawings and scribbles, consisting of his name written, as if by a 4-year-old, on images of the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith. There are also David Muller's two acrylic and pencil renditions of posters, one for the musician Sun Ra, another for the cartoon heroine She-Ra. In "Mouse on a Tightrope" (2002), Louise Lawler's amusing black-and-white photograph, a mouse hangs by its forepaws from a stretched piece of string.



Lee Lozano, "Untitled (tool)" (1963-64).

COURTESY OF THE ESTATE OF LEE LOZANO

You can also find in this Salvation Army store trove an untitled and childlike drawing by Lee Lozano in crayon and graphite. It features a blue hand about to insert a coin into a woman's genitals. Lozano is the subject of Mr. Nickas's show at PS1, "Drawn from Life: 1961-1971."

Lozano (1930-99) remains a mysterious figure. She worked as an artist in New York for only 10 years, after which she completely withdrew from the art world and moved to Dallas, where she died in 1999. But those 10 years were quite productive, and the work she made can be seen as keenly anticipating much of what we find in contemporary galleries today.

Early on, Lozano made drawings in the untutored style so prevalent in Mr. Nickas's yearlong collection. Later she produced both representational and abstract paintings, as well as conceptual performance pieces, such as "Throwing Up Piece" (1969), for which she tossed a stack of recent Artforum magazines into the air.

A politically engaged woman, Lozano seems the very type of the 1960s artist, so it is instructive to see how easily her 40-year-old efforts fit

today's context. In one of the show's rooms, rather uninteresting documents — a joke questionnaire for purchasers of her art, notes for conceptual projects, stoned jottings — are hung. But it is the paintings that hold the eye.

Lozano created two types of canvases: "tool" paintings and hard-edged abstractions. Both types employ drab oils — browns, ochres, grays, blacks — what she termed "non-color."

One of the "tool" paintings, "Untitled" (1963), depicts, in large, brushy strokes, a magnified claw hammer. The claws themselves seem bent in an exaggerated way, so that they press out against the edges of the support. Like many of her oils, it joins multiple canvases into one large painting. Although her style in this work owes something to Abstract Expressionism, it is not ultimately expressive. It suggests, instead, a somber and restrained sexuality.

The abstractions admit more variety. In one untitled work from 1970, she cut holes in a grid pattern out of a canvas primed with gesso. A sort of curving tube form stretches across three joined

canvases in "Slide" (1965).

On the whole, Lozano's mute palette deadens many of the abstractions, though she wields her colors masterfully in the best of them, "North South East West" (1969). Here arcs traverse four canvases, hung equidistant from each other, to suggest a circle. On one of the canvases, for instance, a faint brown arc zips across a light, gray-blue field.

We will probably never know exactly why Lozano turned her back on art, just as we can only speculate on why the raggedy, kitschy aesthetic of homeliness continues to fascinate so many artists. I would point out, however, that this aesthetic has been with us for almost half a century. During this time, whatever once passed for "good taste" has been for forgotten, but tastes, like people — like Lozano — change. Only sometimes not fast enough.

"Lee Lozano, Drawn from Life: 1961-1971" at P.S. 1 until May 1 and "Collection (or, How I Spent a Year)" until April 22-25 Jackson Avenue, at 46th Avenue, Long Island City, 718-784-2084.)

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Roth Time: A Dieter Roth Retrospective
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NEW YORK, FRIDAY, JULY 16, 2004

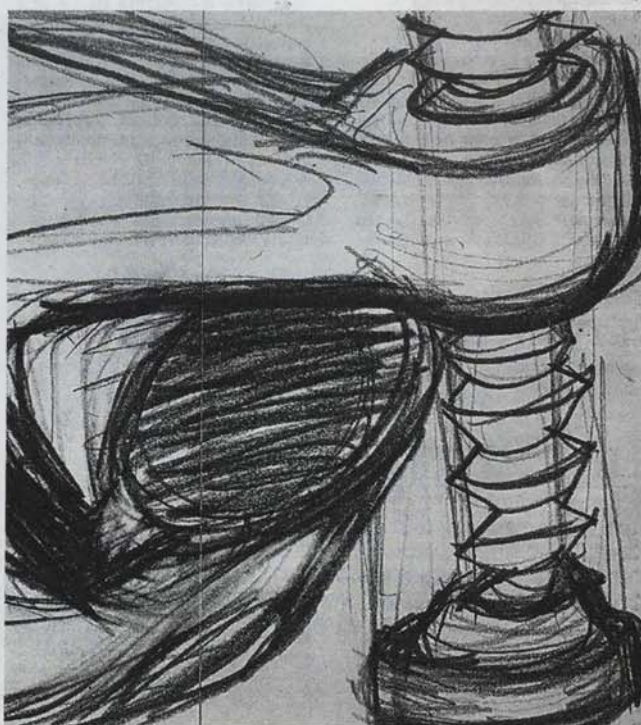
Weekend FINE ARTS LEISURE

Lee Lozano

The first retrospective devoted to the New York artist Lee Lozano, who died in 1999 at 68, is an angry, often engaging affair. Lozano certainly had her weaknesses as an artist, but when economically expressed, satiric rage can have its own kind of cartoonish force, and this force runs through just about everything she did. The show, "Drawn From Life, 1961-71," begins with acerbic paintings and drawings of enormous battling tools that both borrow from and parody the masculine swagger of Abstract Expressionism.

In one work a wrench and a claw hammer go at it; in another, drill bits and razor blades clash. In a series of graphite and crayon drawings, these tools become increasingly vocal and obscene and gradually mutate into body parts and orifices. Then, in the late 1960's, the work suddenly succumbs to Minimalism and goes relatively mute. The first works are monochromatic canvases that are perforated with circles or, in one case, a grid of round-cornered squares. These are followed by a series of beautifully crafted if rather generic works involving shaded monochromatic forms, shafts and orbs that still have some of the sexual force of the drawings.

At the show's end, Lozano's savage wit lies in ambush, this time in a series of drawings and written notes documenting private performance pieces, including "Masturbation Piece," "Grass Piece" and the "No Grass Piece." One work states: "I offer to think about something for anyone." Regardless of what you think of the actual art objects, Lozano's slightly unhinged raucous anger will ring in your ears.



P.S. 1/Contemporary Art Center

A large detail from an untitled tool drawing by Lee Lozano from 1963-64. It is part of a retrospective covering the decade 1961 to 1971.

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Matthew Higgs is the director and chief curator at White Columns, New York, and a regular contributor to *Artforum*.

Matthew Higgs

5 "Lee Lozano, Drawn from Life: 1961-1971" (P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, New York) P.S. 1 was, hands down, my space of the year: Everything I saw there looked great. None more so than director Alanna Heiss and curatorial advisor Bob Nickas's revealing survey of the eclectic (and eccentric) work of Lee Lozano (1930-1999). The epithet "maverick" was custom-made for Lozano, whose sometimes bad-tempered and often caustically funny art left this viewer wishing he'd had the opportunity to meet her.

1. Roger Ballen, *Head Inside Shirt*, 2001, black-and-white photograph, 14 x 14 1/2".
2. View of "Andy Warhol's Time Capsules," Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, 2004. © 2004 Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts/ARS, New York.
3. Bruce Nauman, *One Hundred Live and Die*, 1985, (work from which text was borrowed for *Raw Materials*) neon tubing with clear glass tubing on metal monolith, 9' 10" x 11' x 21". © ARS, NY/DACS, London, 2003.
4. View of "Power, Corruption, and Lies," Roth Horowitz, New York, 2004.
5. Lee Lozano, *Untitled (Tool)*, 1964, graphite on paper, 8 1/2 x 10 1/2".
6. View of "Indigestible Correctness I," Participant Inc., New York, 2004. Photo: John Berens.
7. View of "Thrown: Influences and Intentions of West Coast Ceramics," Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 2004. Photo: Howard Ursuliak.
8. Sean Landers and Jason Meadows, *Football Duck*, 2004, bronze and Plexiglas, 57 x 20 x 20".
9. Mel Bochner, *Test piece for Continuous/Dis/Continuous, 1971-72*.
10. Mark Leckey, *Made in Heaven*, 2004, still from a color film in 16 mm, 20-minute loop.



4 Lee Lozano (P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, New York) Nasty, lewd, and brilliant, Lozano threw up so much of what the art world force-fed. Curators Bob Nickas and Alanna Heiss, P.S. 1's director, gave the woman *time* (which is space) so that the ferocity of her work could be paid heed. As with Sturtevant, the history books get rewritten from here.

BEST OF 2004



Los Angeles-based *Artforum* contributing editor Bruce Hainley teaches in the masters of art criticism and theory program at Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA. *Art—A Sex Book*, his collaboration with John Waters, was published by Thames & Hudson late last year.

1. View of "Sturtevant: The Brutal Truth," Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, 2004.
2. Vincent Fecteau, *Untitled*, 2003, papier-mâché, and acrylic, 10 1/2 x 13 x 14".
3. Still from the HBO series *Entourage*. Turtle (Jerry Ferrara), Drama (Kevin Dillon), Vince (Adrian Grenier), and Eric (Kevin Connolly).
4. Lee Lozano, *Slide*, 1965, oil on canvas, 6 x 14".
6. Michael Airlington in *A Night with Paul Lynde*, Ultra Suede, Los Angeles, 2004.
7. Frank Stella, *The Quadrant*, 1987-88, mixed media on etched magnesium, 92 1/2 x 82 1/2 x 49 1/2". © Frank Stella/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.
8. Douglas Crase, *Both: A Portrait in Two Parts*, (Pantheon, 2004).
9. Giorgio Morandi, *Natura Morta (Still Life)*, 1960, watercolor and pencil on paper, 9 1/2 x 13".
10. Patrick Hill, *Ann Arbor Is a Mother*, 2003-2004, wood, canvas, wallpaper, dye, glue, and glass, 37 1/2 x 37 x 33".

Bruce Hainley ARTFORUM

DECEMBER 2004

I N T E R N A T I O N A L