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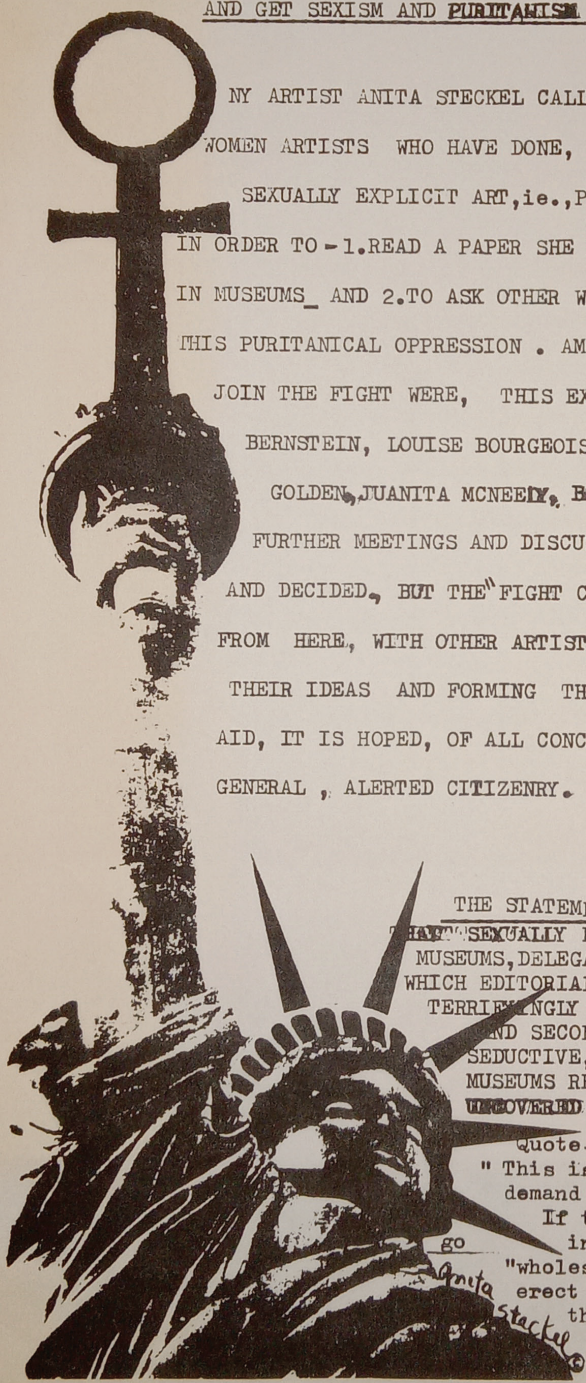
WOMEN ARTISTS JOIN TO FIGHT TO PUT SEX INTO MUSEUMS
AND GET SEXISM AND PURITANISM OUT



NY ARTIST ANITA STECKEL CALLED A MEETING, AT HER STUDIO, OF WOMEN ARTISTS WHO HAVE DONE, WILL DO , OR DO_ SOME FORM OF SEXUALLY EXPLICIT ART,ie.,POLITICAL, HUMOUROUS, EROTIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL, ETC IN ORDER TO - 1.READ A PAPER SHE HAD WRITTEN ON SEXUAL AND SEXIST CENSORSHIP IN MUSEUMS_ AND 2.TO ASK OTHER WOMEN ARTISTS TO JOIN WITH HER TO FIGHT THIS PURITANICAL OPPRESSION . AMONG THOSE ARTISTS PRESENT AND WISHING TO JOIN THE FIGHT WERE, THIS EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH STANDARD GROUP; JUDITH BERNSTEIN, LOUISE BOURGEOIS, MARTHA EDELHEIT, JOAN GLUCKMAN, EUNICE GOLDEN, JUANITA MCNEELY, BARBARA NESSIM, JOAN SEMMEL, & ANNE SHARP. FURTHER MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS WILL BE HELD AND ACTIONS DISCUSSED AND DECIDED, BUT THE "FIGHT CENSORSHIP" GROUP HAS BEGUN_AND WILL GO ON FROM HERE, WITH OTHER ARTISTS CONTRIBUTING TO AND HELPING WITH THEIR IDEAS AND FORMING THEIR ACTIONS_ AND GROUPS, ENLISTING THE AID, IT IS HOPED, OF ALL CONCERNED WRITERS AND TEACHERS, AND A GENERAL , ALERTED CITIZENRY.

THE STATEMENT BY MS STECKEL MADE 2 BASIC POINTS:
THAT SEXUALLY EXPLICIT SUBJECT MATTER IS KEPT OUT OF MUSEUMS, DELEGATED TO "SMUT" MAGAZINES AND FILMS ETC., WHICH EDITORIALIZES SOCIETIES ATTITUDES IN THE MOST TERRIFYINGLY PURITANICAL, ie. UNWHOLESOME, UNHEALTHY WAY. AND SECOND, THAT WHILE FEMALES ARE SHOWN IN A SEDUCTIVE, SEXUAL , AND NUDE MANNER THESE VERY SAME MUSEUMS REFUSE TO SHOW THE SEXUAL MALE NUDE, ie. UNCOVERED BY FIG LEAVES AND WITH ERECT PENIS, A TABOO.

Quote-, Ms Steckel's statement;
" This is blatent sexist discrimination- and we women demand equal sexual exposure of men in art in museum If the erect penis is not "wholesome" enough to go into museums- it should not be considered "wholesome" enough to go into women. And if the erect penis is "wholesome" enough to go into women then it is more than "wholesome" enough to go into the greatest museums."
(complete statement enclosed)

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ANITA STECKEL

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BOWIE SCRATCHES LATE CITY OVER THE COUNTER

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Artist Anita Wins a Battle Over Her Male Nude Show

By MILTON ADAMS

A feminist artist seems to have won a battle at a suburban college where her show became the focus of controversy when indignant college and community forces, reacting to the show's male nudity, tried unsuccessfully to have it closed.

The show, "The Feminist Art of Sexual Politics," which is still blowing minds at Rockland Community College in Suffern, is the work of artist Anita Steckel, the first of four women to be honored at the school with one-woman shows.

"I think we've scored a major breakthrough," Miss Steckel said today in a telephone interview. "The show challenged the sexist distinction that only the female nude is acceptable as art, and we won."

The show, which opened Feb. 2, featured some 50 paintings illustrating "male power against blacks, women, youth and other groups in weaker positions," said the New York artist. To make her point she employed such symbolism as a red, white and blue phallus, a phallus made of money, and a six- by five-foot canvas showing a New York skyline where nude females are impaled on the Chrysler Building.

But shortly after the show opened, Rockland County legislators interpreting the "outrage" of their suburban community and college trustees concerned with school's 'image" were pressuring the college president, Dr. Seymour Eskow, to close the show until all of the trustees could evaluate its merit.

On the other hand, Dr. Eskow received about 30 letters from art critics defending the exhibit. In New York, a group called Women in the Arts began circulating a petition in support of Miss Steckel, Ephraim London, an American Civil Liberties Union attorney who defended the late Lenny Bruce among others was standing by in case any legal action was initiated, and Gloria Steinem had been notified.

Some key art world figures also came to Miss Steckel's defense. They included Dr. Charles Frankel of Columbia University, a member of the Fleischmann Commission and a former Undersecretary of State for cultural affairs, John Baur, director of the Whitney Museum and Henry Raleigh, director of art at the State University at New Paltz.

The issue was apparently resolved when six of the nine trustees viewed the show, at the suggestion of Rockland County legislator John Komar—who opposed it—but could not decide whether it was art or pornography.

"They were split," Komar said. "There were strong feelings on both sides. One trustee made a resolution that the show be closed but he couldn't get a second."

So the exhibit went on. It's now in its third week, and will apparently end as scheduled a week from Friday.

"If the purpose of the show was to raise consciousness," said Eskow, "it succeeded."

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"the imposter"

"last paper"

"Magnolia Dreamin"

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"Desert"

"College Boy"

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+ 7

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"The company premise"

"man-fan"

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"fashion"

"manale"

"the librarian"

"fat man"

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"Das Vanderkind"

"Holding"

"Red Sweet"

x 1

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"returning the wet nurse"

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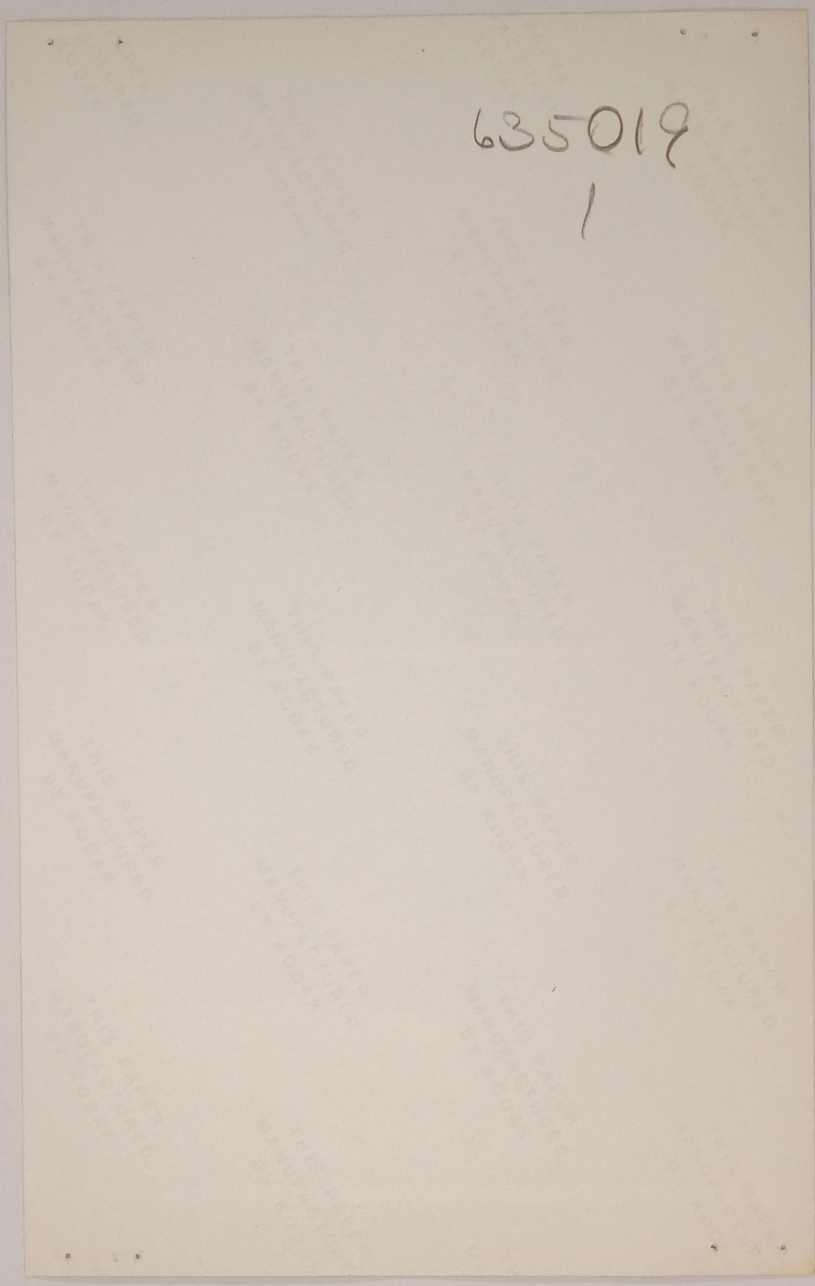

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"the beginner

"other alles"

"annual meeting of the lampshade manufacturers of Argentina"

"Your milk"

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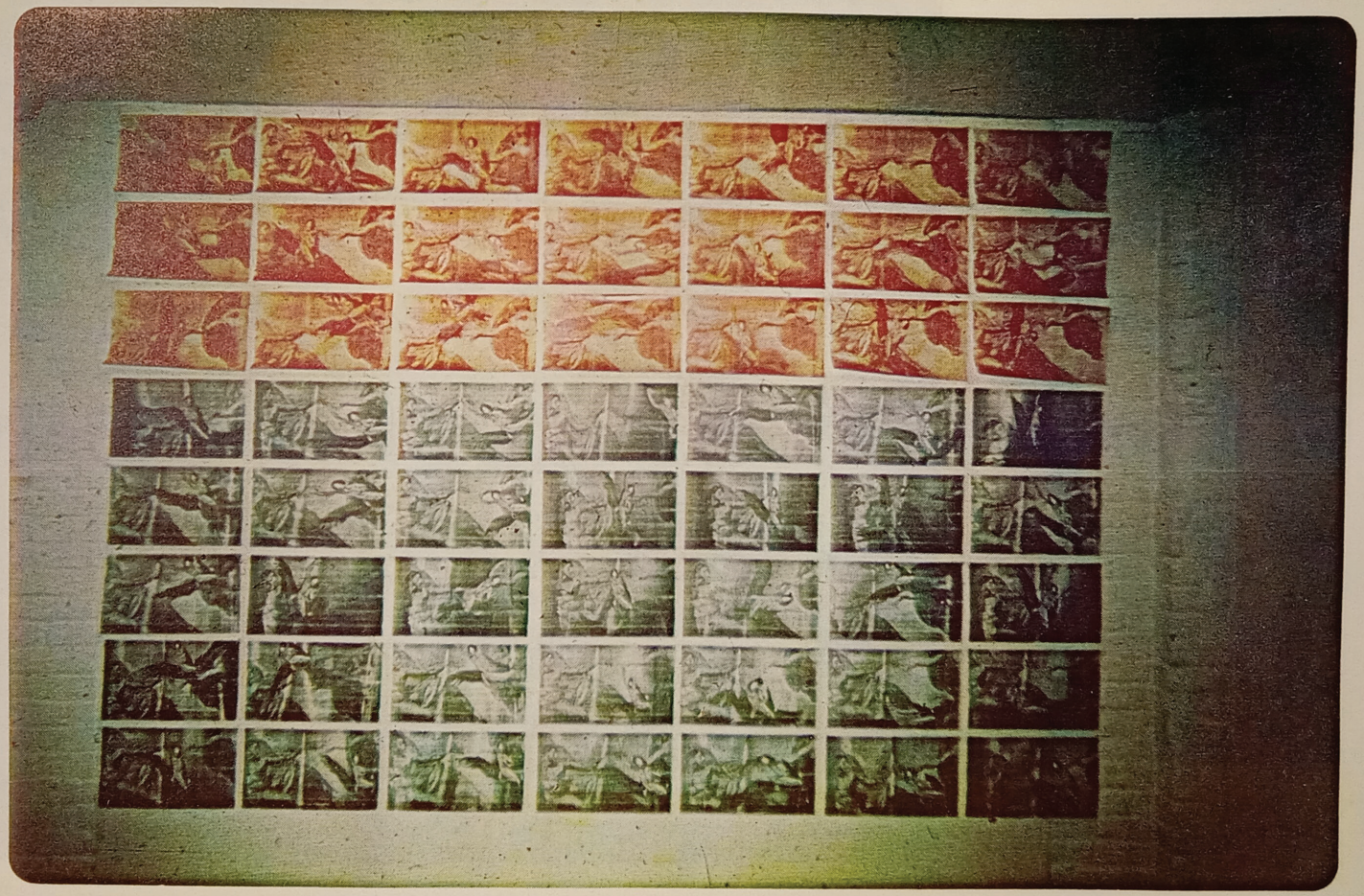

"Creation Revisited" 8X10 pct.
see following piece
for detail -

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4 pieces from a group of 25 pieces.

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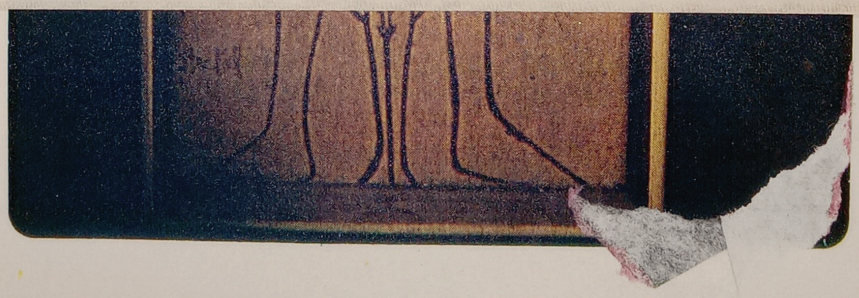

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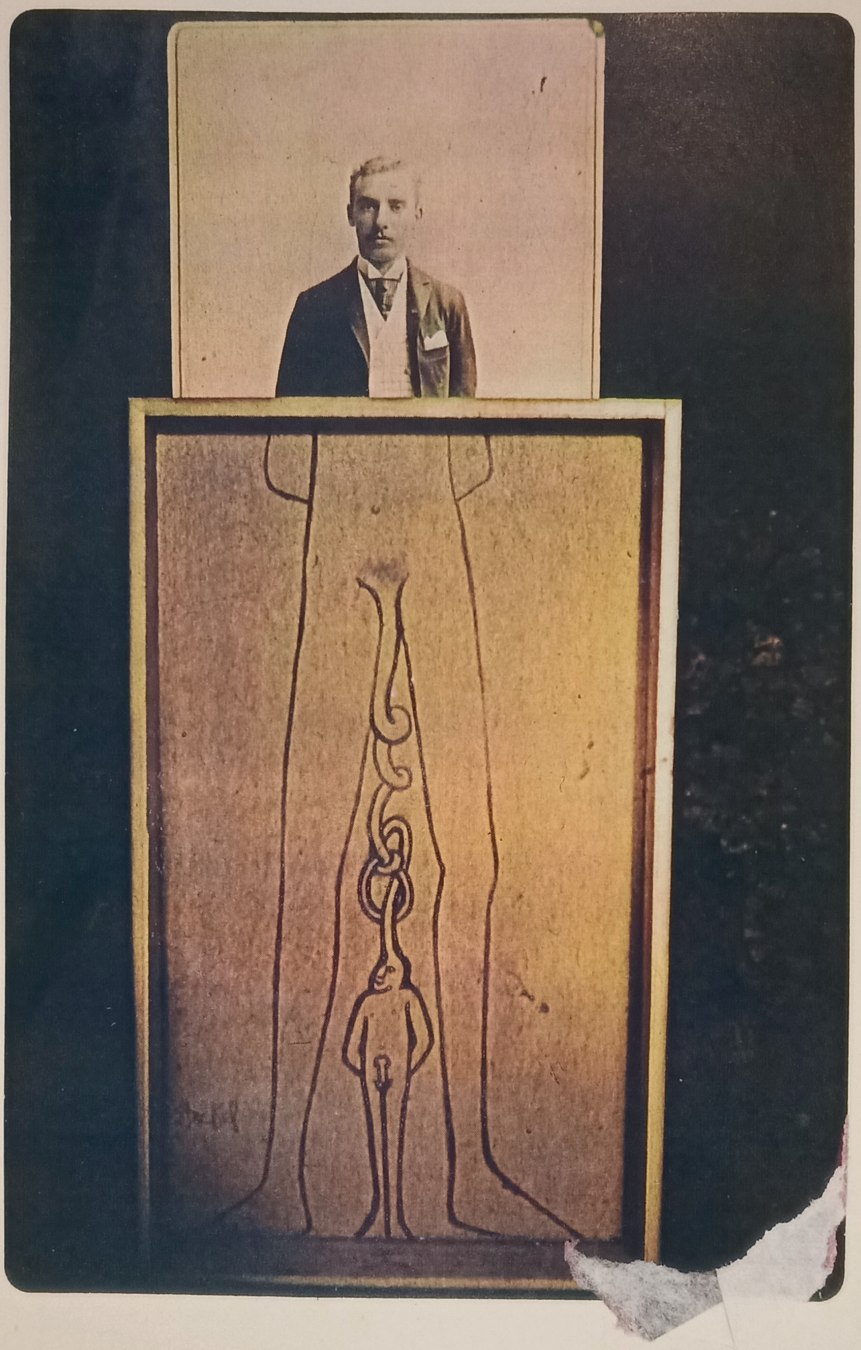

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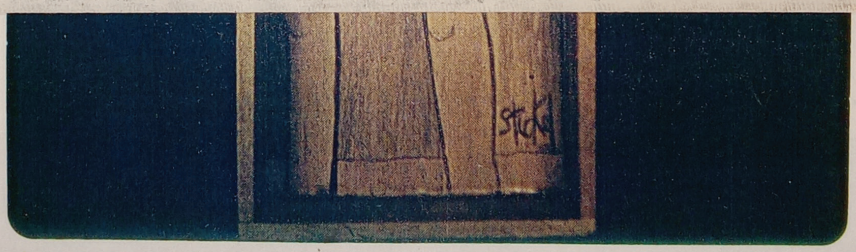

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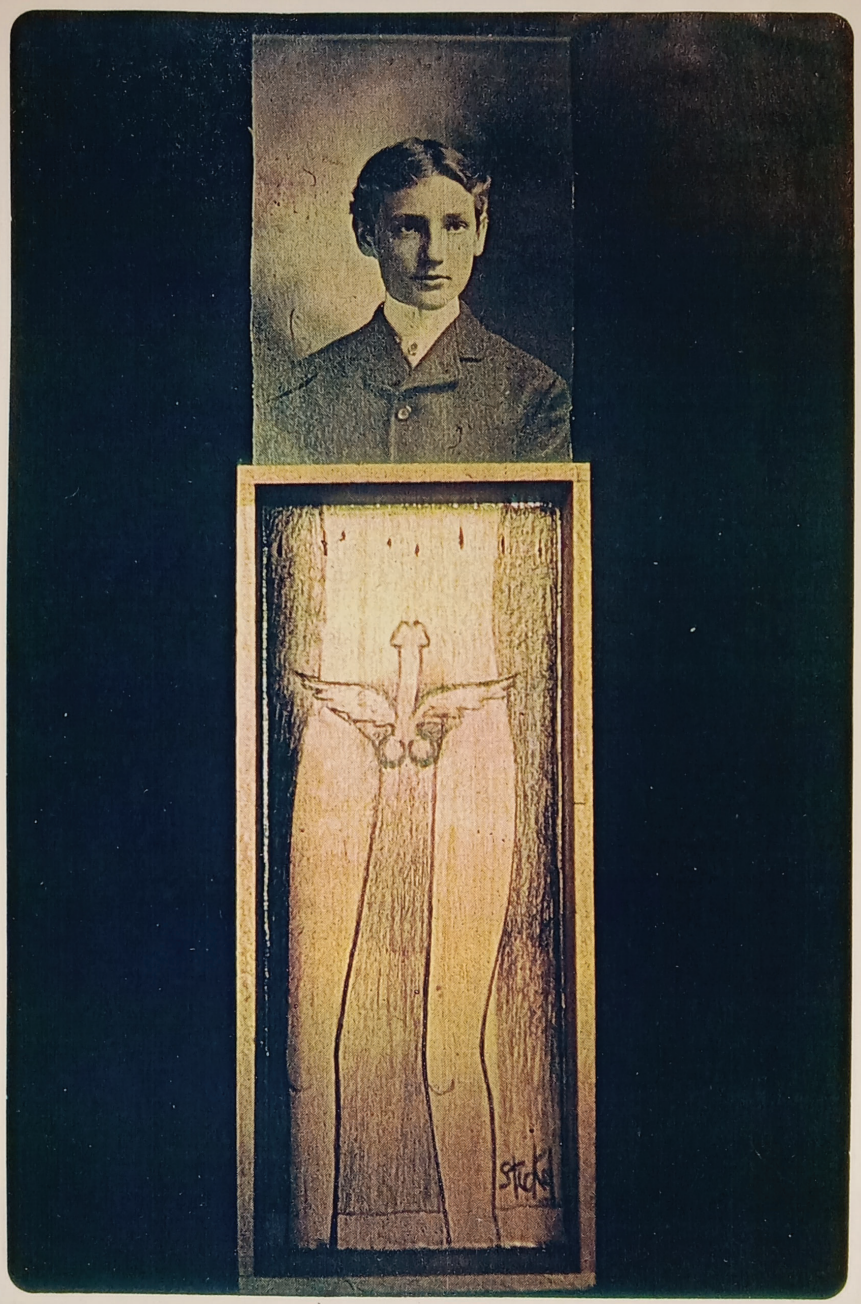

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by Anita Steckel

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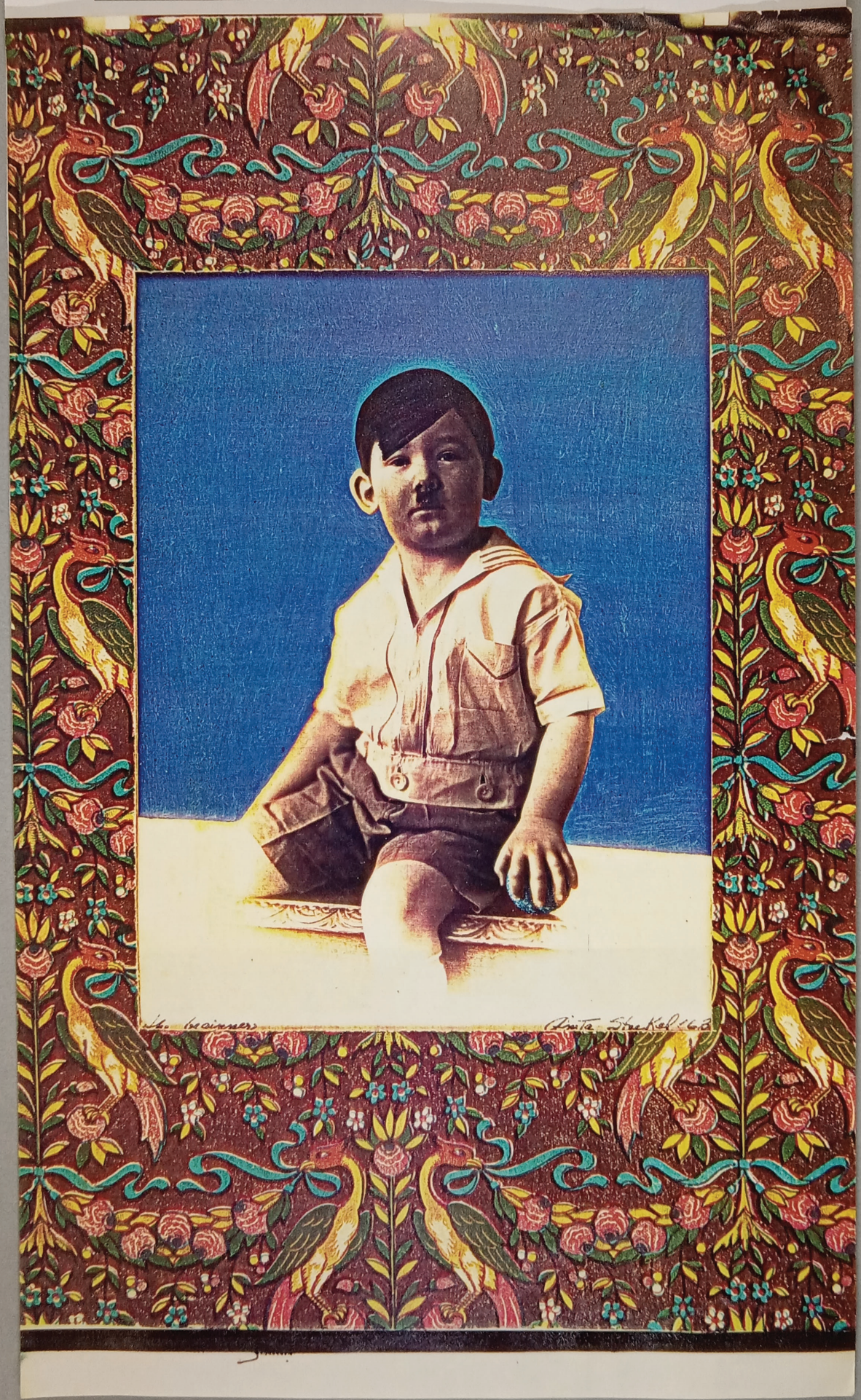

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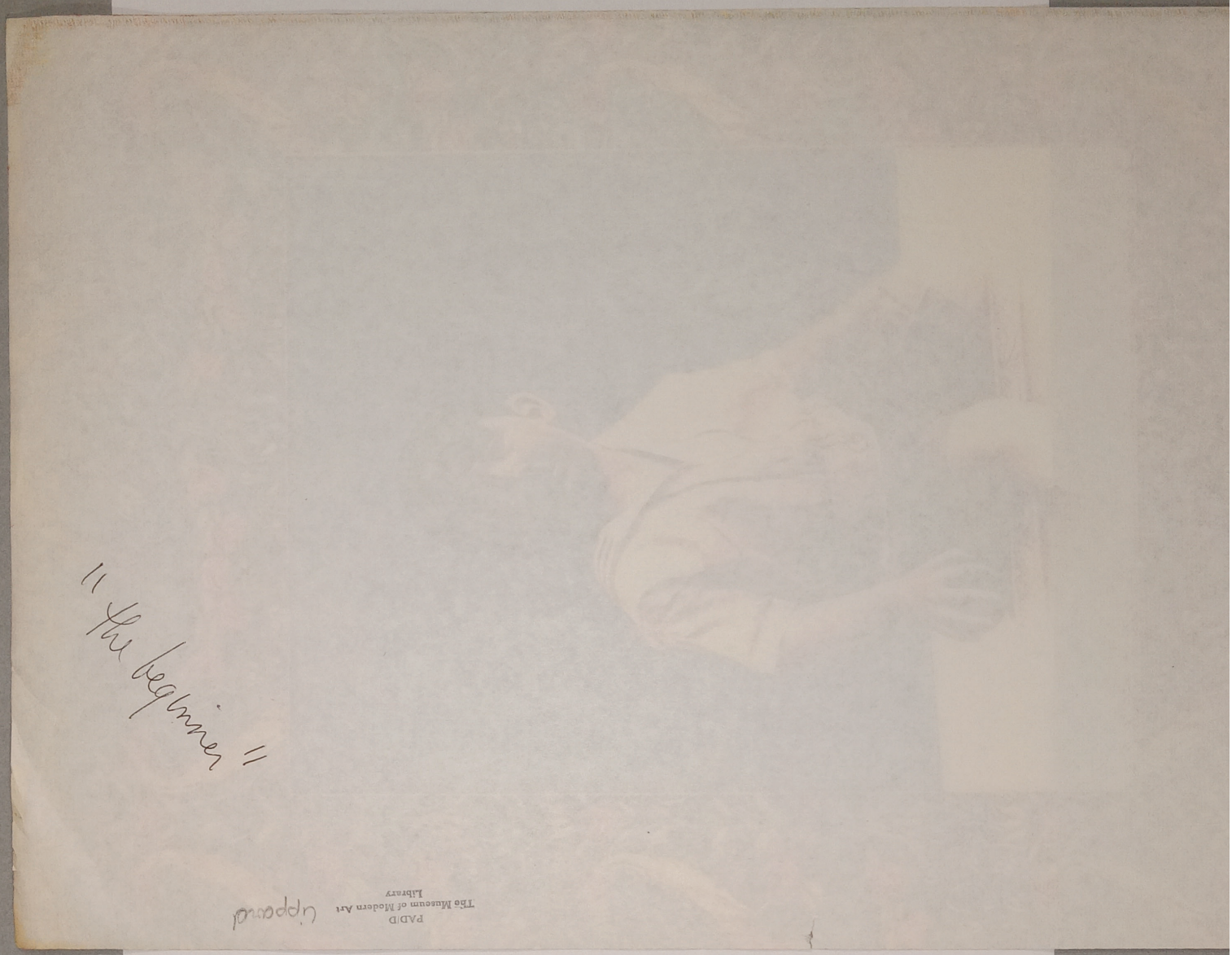

"the beginner"

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"Famous American Ball Game" – Anita Steckel
used as attica cover
by "East Village Other"

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"the
Company
Picnic"

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11 views of 11

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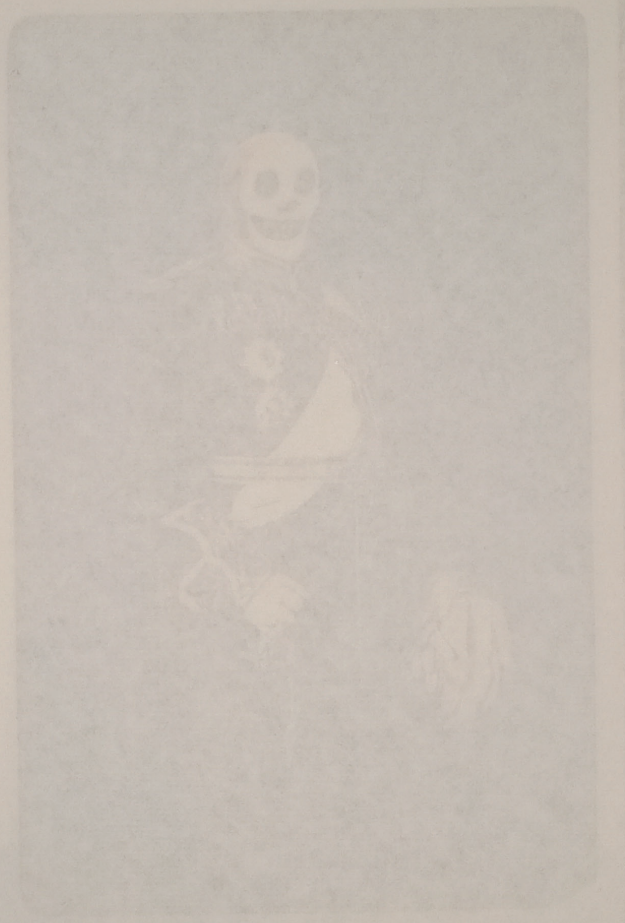

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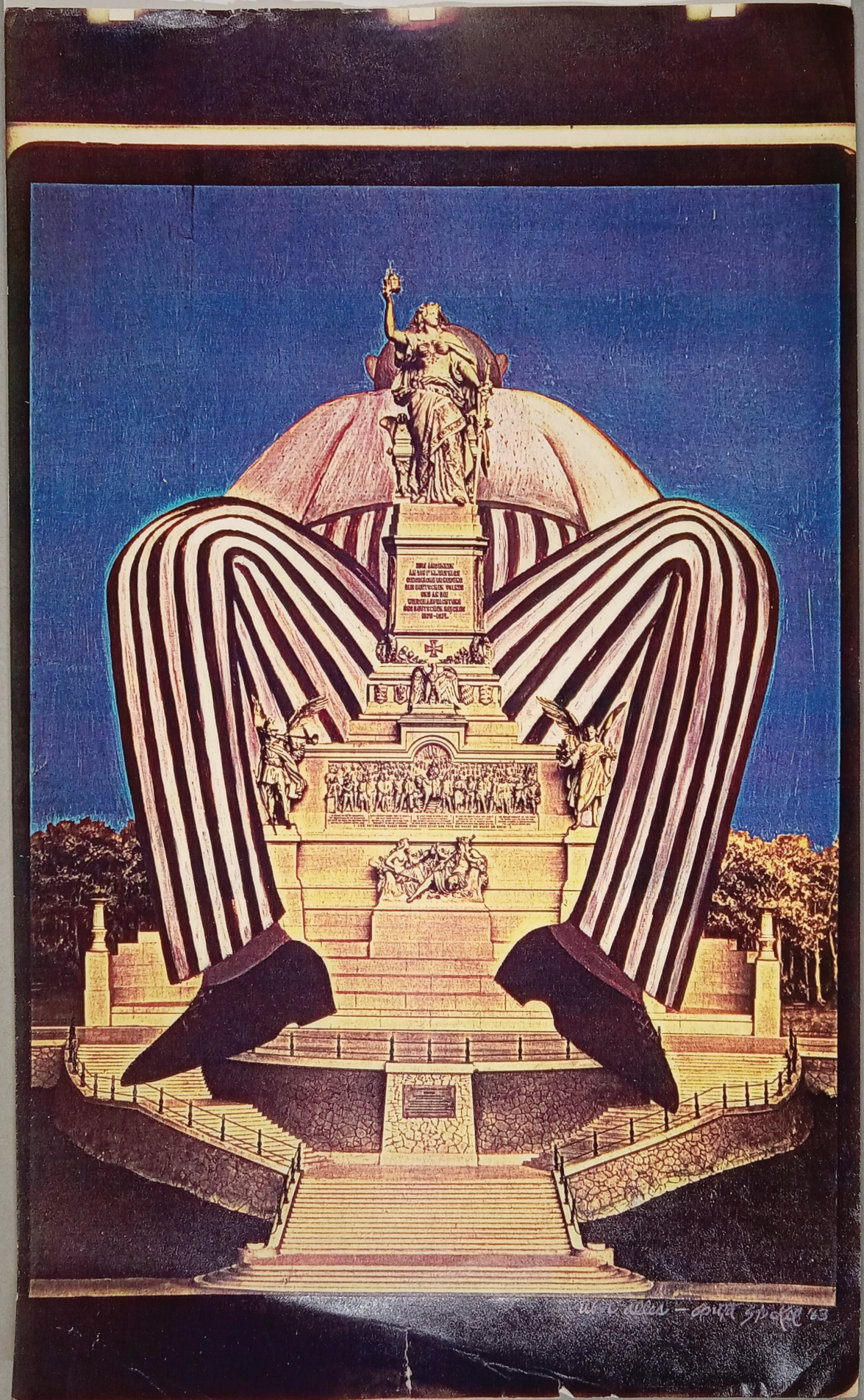

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Upward

"Über alles"



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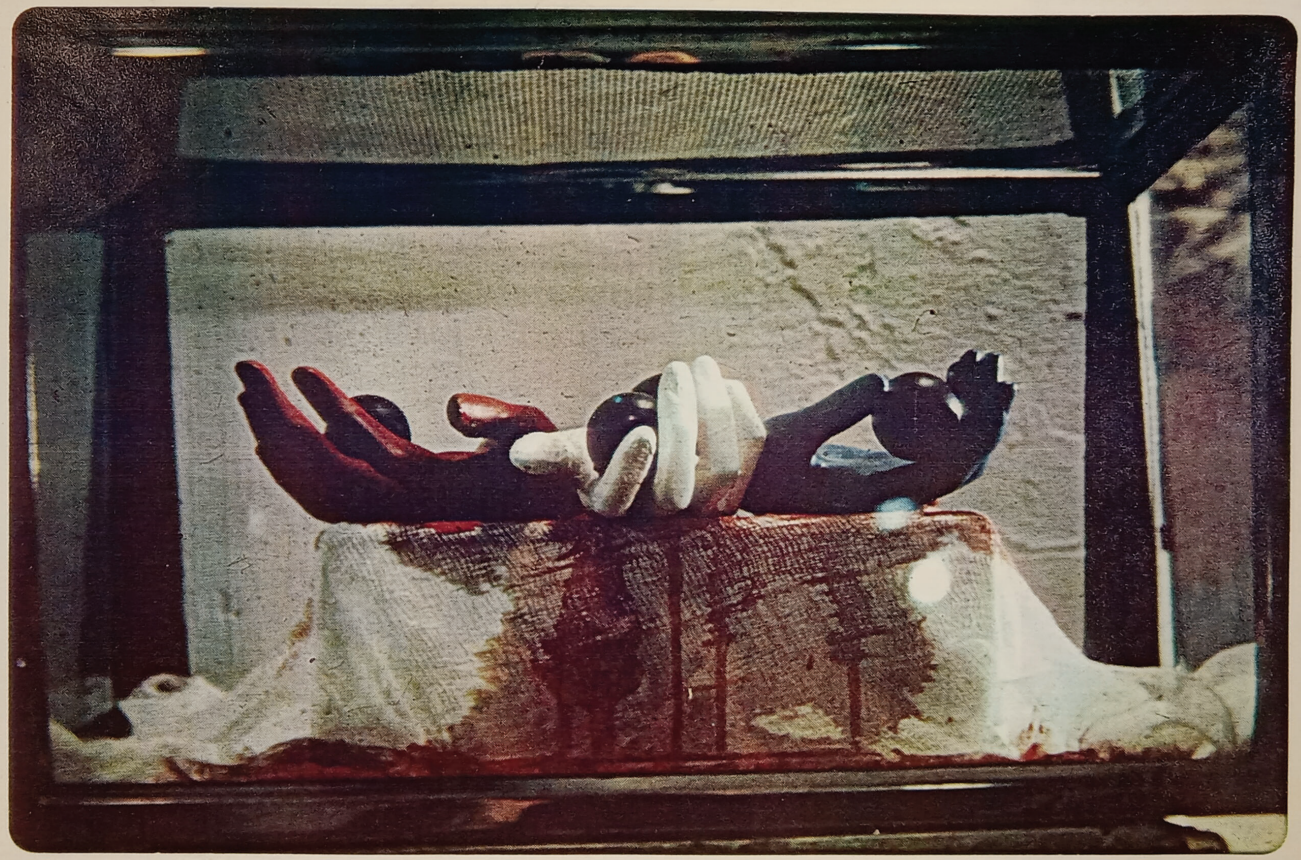

"famous American Ballgame" Anita Steckel

used as attica cover by "East Village Other"

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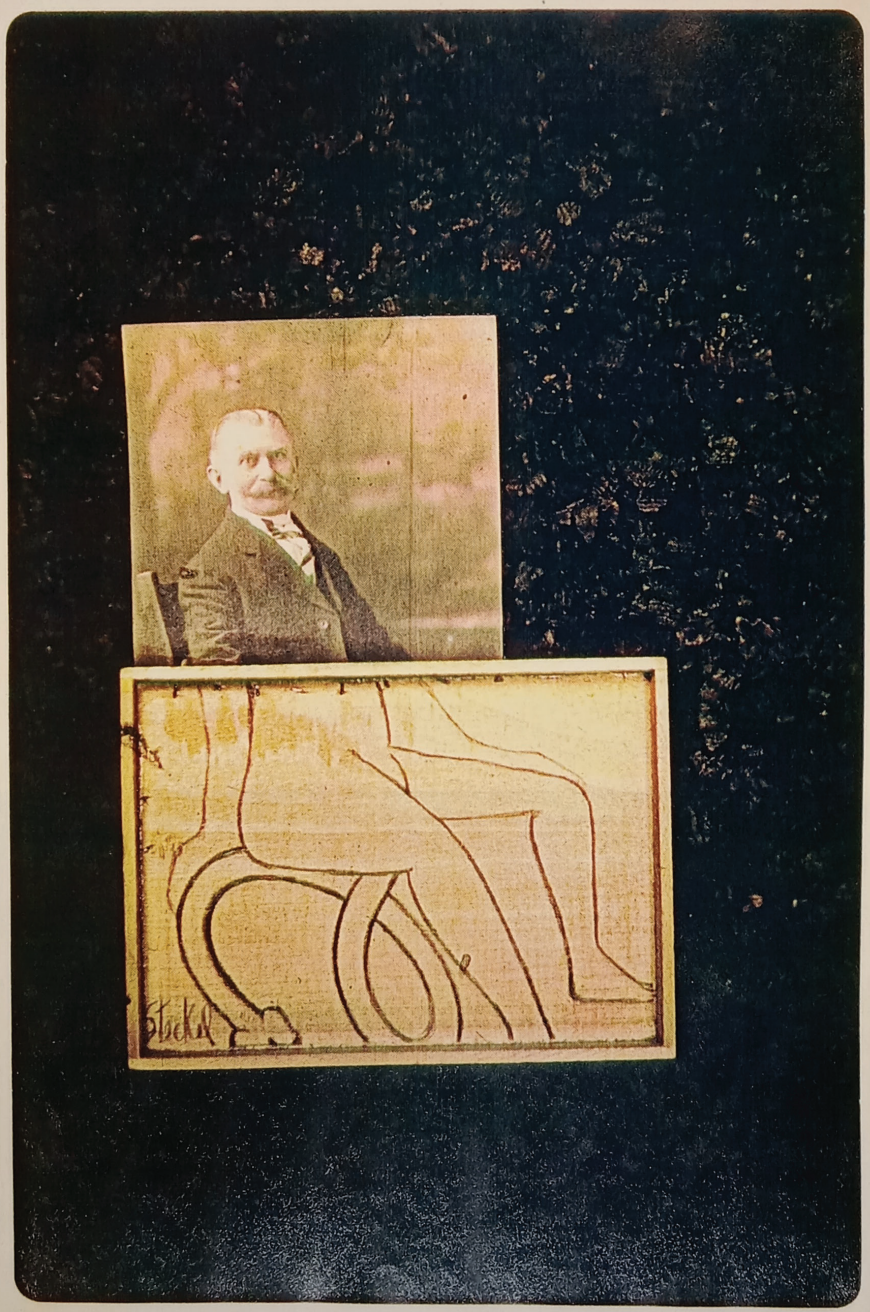

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of a liberated woman. Ms. Steckel is not the artist to suggest that any race is cheaply won.

Ms. Steckel associates patriotism and sex, sex and patriotism. Nothing is new in this, of course: in war and rumor

Best Wishes -
Anita Steckel

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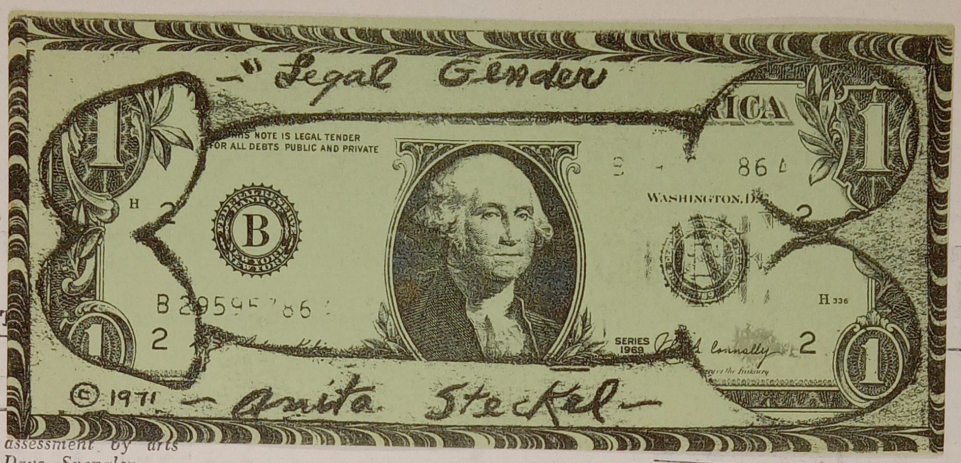

An assessment by arts critic Dave Spengler

Critic Takes a Look — and Likes

By DAVID SPENGLER
Staff Writer

"The Feminist Art of Sexual Politics," Anita Steckel's exhibit under fire at Rockland Community College, is forceful in three ways:

- Its premise is valid.
- Its argument is well spoken.
- Its craftsmanship is imaginative, knowledgeable, and germane.

This is not just good art; it is excellent art.

The exhibit's premise is, simply, that women should have the opportunity to enjoy life, seize liberty, and pursue happiness, as do men. The argument: They don't.

But Ms. Steckel doesn't merely deplore; she suggests routes to personal independence for those who care to take them. Thus, very little in her argument, other than a gentle touch of sensitivity training, is directed at men. The burden — heightened consciousness — is on women.

For Ms. Steckel presents the phallus not as a weapon men use like sabers but as a tower to which, through desire or inertia, some women cling. The art, by the way, deals with the stylized phallus; the most literally fashioned penis I recall appears in a montage as the flower with which Michelangelo undermanned his otherwise monumental statue of David.

Even in the New York City montages that depict women impaled on phallic buildings, the suggestion is that, by and large, the women have put themselves there. Certainly, many of them look as though they would rather not be disturbed; indeed, the Chrysler Building is worshipped by one bemused Gal Friday.

The exhibit includes an article from the journal "Crawdaddy" in which Ms. Steckel explains the metaphor of the giant woman who appears in some of her work. Desired by no man and sought by no child, unnoticed at beach and bus stop, hers is the huge loneliness in the long-distance run of a liberated woman. Ms. Steckel is not the artist to suggest that any race is cheaply won.

Ms. Steckel associates patriotism and sex, sex and patriotism. Nothing is new in this, of course: in war and rumor of war, sex claims nearly everyone's preoccupation. Ms. Steckel simply is perspicacious with paint — turning nipples into red, white, and blue bull's-eyes; semen into red, white, and blue germinal drops; and James Montgomery Flagg's Miss Liberty into a red, white, and blue tease.

In a notebook of comments at the door of the exhibit are frequent suggestions that (although, by golly, the artist has a right to say what she thinks, and the exhibit should continue) the artist's art makes her look sick. For "sick," I guess, read "homosexual." This suggestion misses the point.

Ms. Steckel's art no more accurately suggests illness in herself than would a physician's prescription suggest that the physician had a venereal disease. Her art diagnoses a general illness, and it does so efficiently.

In her diagnosis, she breaks news sometimes gently, sometimes abruptly, sometimes wittily. In the few direct blows she does aim at men, she is inclined to be gentle. The hardhats in her montage "Embarrassment" are as naive about the cruelty in a whistle as would be a baby about guilt when it smashes a moth with a hammer.

Details in Ms. Steckel's montages, paintings, drawings, and graphics prove her to be a fully qualified representative of the new superreal figure painters who are looking for ways to dominate the 1970s. Ms. Steckel poses both an urgent theme and her own way to go about visualizing it. Deliberately, she has reproduced subway art. Wittily and effectively, she has used considerable skill to fashion a style that reflects the limitations of her adversaries. Look — anyone who wants to dominate half the world is a boor, and anyone who wants to be dominated by half the world, is well, a boob.

In all this, where is Eros?

Best Wishes —
Anita Steckel

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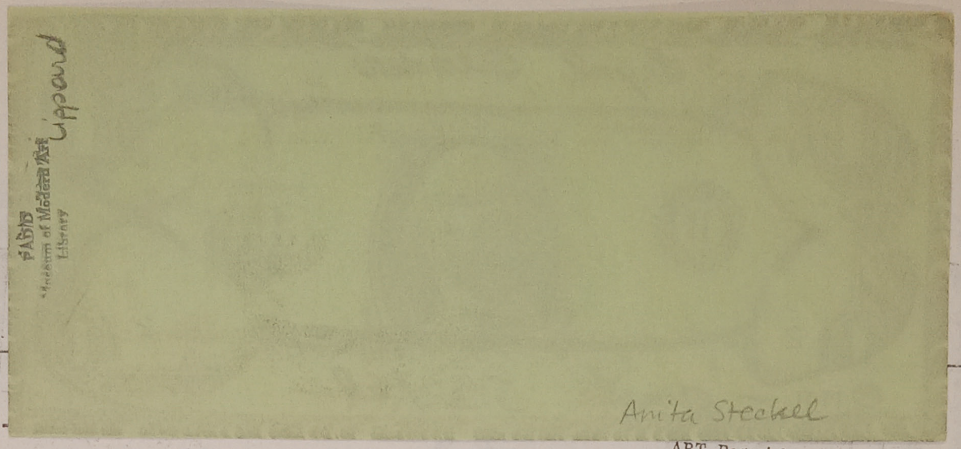

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An assessment by arts critic Dave Spengler

ART, Page A-2

Critic Takes a Look — and Likes

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But Ms. Steckel doesn't merely deplore; she suggests routes to personal independence for those who care to take them. Thus, very little in her argument, other than a gentle touch of sensitivity training, is directed at men. The burden — heightened consciousness — is on women.

For Ms. Steckel presents the phallus not as a weapon men use like sabers but as a tower to which, through desire or inertia, some women cling. The art, by the way, deals with the stylized phallus; the most literally fashioned penis I recall appears in a montage as the flower with which Michelangelo undermanned his otherwise monumental statue of David.

Even in the New York City montages that depict women impaled on phallic buildings, the suggestion is that, by and large, the women have put themselves there. Certainly, many of them look as though they would rather not be disturbed; indeed, the Chrysler Building is worshipped by one bemused Gal Friday.

The exhibit includes an article from the journal "Crawdaddy" in which Ms. Steckel explains the metaphor of the giant woman who appears in some of her work. Desired by no man and sought by no child, unnoticed at beach and bus stop, hers is the huge loneliness in the long-distance run of a liberated woman. Ms. Steckel is not the artist to suggest that any race is cheaply won.

Ms. Steckel associates patriotism and sex, sex and patriotism. Nothing is new in this, of course: in war and rumor of war, sex claims nearly everyone's preoccupation. Ms. Steckel simply is perspicacious with paint — turning nipples into red, white, and blue bull's-eyes; semen into red, white, and blue germinal drops; and James Montgomery Flagg's Miss Liberty into a red, white, and blue tease.

In a notebook of comments at the door of the exhibit are frequent suggestions that (although, by golly, the artist has a right to say what she thinks, and the exhibit should continue) the artist's art makes her look sick. For "sick," I guess, read "homosexual." This suggestion misses the point.

Ms. Steckel's art no more accurately suggests illness in herself than would a physician's prescription suggest that the physician had a venereal disease. Her art diagnoses a general illness, and it does so efficiently.

In her diagnosis, she breaks news sometimes gently, sometimes abruptly, sometimes wittily. In the few direct blows she does aim at men, she is inclined to be gentle. The hardhats in her montage "Embarrassment" are as naive about the cruelty in a whistle as would be a baby about guilt when it smashes a moth with a hammer.

Details in Ms. Steckel's montages, paintings, drawings, and graphics prove her to be a fully qualified representative of the new super-real figure painters who are looking for ways to dominate the 1970s. Ms. Steckel poses both an urgent theme and her own way to go about visualizing it. Deliberately, she has reproduced subway art. Wittily and effectively, she has used considerable skill to fashion a style that reflects the limitations of her adversaries. Look — anyone who wants to dominate half the world is a boor, and anyone who wants to be dominated by half the world, is well, a boob.

In all this, where is Eros?

Best Wishes –
Anita Steckel

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THE RECORD, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1972

An assessment by arts critic Dave Spengler

ART, Page A-2

Critic Takes a Look — and Likes

By DAVID SPENGLER
Staff Writer

"The Feminist Art of Sexual Politics," Anita Steckel's exhibit under fire at Rockland Community College, is forceful in three ways:

- Its premise is valid.
- Its argument is well spoken.
- Its craftsmanship is imaginative, knowledgeable, and germane.

This is not just good art; it is excellent art.

The exhibit's premise is, simply, that women should have the opportunity to enjoy life, seize liberty, and pursue happiness, as do men. The argument: They don't.

But Ms. Steckel doesn't merely deplore; she suggests routes to personal independence for those who care to take them. Thus, very little in her argument, other than a gentle touch of sensitivity training, is directed at men. The burden — heightened consciousness — is on women.

For Ms. Steckel presents the phallus not as a weapon men use like sabers but as a tower to which, through desire or inertia, some women cling. The art, by the way, deals with the stylized phallus; the most literally fashioned penis I recall appears in a montage as the flower with which Michelangelo undermanned his otherwise monumental statue of David.

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In her diagnosis, she breaks news sometimes gently, sometimes abruptly, sometimes wittily. In the few direct blows she does aim at men, she is inclined to be gentle. The hardhats in her montage "Embarrassment" are as naive about the cruelty in a whistle as would be a baby about guilt when it smashes a moth with a hammer.

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In all this, where is Eros?

Best Wishes –
Anita Steckel

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The Journal-News

NYACK, N.Y., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1972

Educators, critics back RCC show

By DIANA L. HURLEY
Staff Writer

Telegrams of support for the controversial art exhibit at Rockland Community College have begun to come in from noted art critics and educators.

John Murphy, chairman of the college art department, said all the telegrams urged the college to "stand firm" and not to close the exhibit.

County Legislator John J. Komar (R-Orangetown), after viewing the exhibit last week, said it was "pornographic, by some standards" and should be closed.

Since then, the college trustees have been meeting daily to try to decide on a course of action.

Murphy said telegrams in support of the exhibit have come from Dr. Charles Frankel, a Columbia University philosophy professor who is a member of the Fleischmann Committee and a former U.S. Undersecretary of State for Cultural Affairs.

Others came from John Baurr, Whitney Museum director; Henry Raleigh, division director of arts at State University of New York (SUNY), New Paltz; Dr. Jacques Guilman, chairman of the art department at SUNY, Stony Brook, and Lawrence Allowau, director of Stony Brook's art gallery.

Robert P. Kassel, co-chairman of the county chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, said Tuesday that to deny an artistic expression is just as much a violation of the right to free speech as the denial of a written or oral expression.

"While controversy is both necessary and desirable in a democratic society, care must be taken to see that it does not interfere with our rights of free speech and academic freedom," he said.

"When a community college serves a function of presenting ideas to its students and the community, it deserves our full support, not threats," Kassel said. "The constitutional guarantees are to be enjoyed by all citizens, not just those with whom we agree."

[redacted] the name of patriotism. Whoever it is who wants the show closed wants it to be closed to people of draft age."

Of certain works on display which show enormous penises, Ms. Steckel says:

"It [genital size] is not a woman's issue, it's a man's issue.

"Men feel they have to 'measure up'. It is men who are embarrassed by depictions of the penis. It's not a woman's issue at all."

Best Wishes -
Anita Steckel

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THE RECORD, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 1972

Calls Work Political

"It's political sex, especially about the dehumanizing of men and women. . . .

"Many women see the city as sterile, cold, and forbidding.

Speaking is artist Anita Steckel of New York, whose controversial exhibit at Rockland Community College has prompted college trustees and other elected officials to pressure the school administration to close it.

In a phone interview yesterday, Ms. Steckel said her sculpture, much of which represents the penis as a weapon of male oppression and domination and as a dehumanized extension of towering New York City buildings, are essentially political commentaries on the current scene.

One work, she says, represents white America's castration of blacks, another a woman's view of the city in which tall buildings become impersonal penises, and another the power of money.

"Even men react to that," she said of one work. It shows a Middle Eastern sultan displaying a large penis made of money and a smaller, flesh-like penis. "Men respond to it. They've all known some person who has had power over them because he has had money."

Of the reaction to her show, Ms. Steckel speculated:

"It is important to note that those reacting to my show, who want it to close, are not of draft age.

"Those reacting think it's wholesome to go to war and mutilate and be mutilated in the name of patriotism. Whoever it is who wants the show closed wants it to be closed to people of draft age."

Of certain works on display which show enormous penises, Ms. Steckel says:

"It [genital size] is not a woman's issue, it's a man's issue.

"Men feel they have to 'measure up'. It is men who are embarrassed by depictions of the penis. It's not a woman's issue at all."

Best Wishes -
Anita Steckel

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ARTIST'S VIEWS ON CENSORSHIP

The uncensored, bold, subject matter of this exhibition strikes a powerful blow against provincialism and censorship—and I wish to congratulate the Art Department of this university for its urbane , unintimidated stance--in the face of the usual inanities of "petit bourgeois" pressures.

I am not unaware, however, of those who would and do indeed apply economic sanctions of the most reprehensible sort, such as "teaching job" denials, upon artists--in an attempt to impose their personal timidity--as "morality"--or, even worse—as "esthetic judgment"--on art.

No matter how severe the threat--
No matter how fearful the artist is of economic censure--
An artist must be free.
An artist must not be censored in any way.

Free to grow in absolutely any direction--for absolutely any reason.
Nothing should be tolerated that attempts to interfere with the total freedom of expression of the fine artist.
This is exactly what distinguishes the fine artist from others--total freedom of choice and subject matter, unintimidated by threats of social or even economic censure.
From Rembrandt's cadavers and hanging raw beef—to the open-legged whores of Toulouse-Lautrec--to "Guernica".

Although nude women are traditional--even "wholesome" subjects for art--this is not the case with male nudity--and most especially with any male depicted in the "potent" state.

Also—women are traditionally excepted from even knowing that genitals exist--and certainly not to admit it 'in company' or in their art.
Portraits--flowers--patterns and other "inoffensive" subjects—were always considered more "lady-like".

Let it now be known that this woman artist does not accept these rules.
Women see and know and experience their bodies and men's bodies--and there is no shame in this. The only shame is in the hypocrisy and in the lie we tell our children and our students—by censorship. There is no longer any decent one of us willing to put up with 'white-gloved' hypocrisy--which pretends we don't even know what is meant by a "dirty joke".
Don't know--hell--we're the entire subject matter of all those "jokes" we're not supposed to know the meaning of.

Let's have it clear that there are a lot of good jokes to be told by women too—And I intend to tell a few.

Women, rip off your 'white gloves'--rip off the fig leaf--and then perhaps we'll all have a chance to get together and tell some jokes.

Anita Steckel
1972--February

Distributed at Rockland State Community College at the opening of a one-woman show of art works by Anita Steckel.

Best Wishes—
Anita Steckel

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Dear Lucy,

Bravo! At last a critic has taken an interest in political work. People like me are very grateful.

I'm running through my own personal art history. I discover that I have done almost nothing but political works for the last 15 years.

(which is why I panicked about documenting all of it. What I've done is send some & hope that is enough for now.)

I have enclosed slides & xeroxes of the Attica piece - "famous American ballgame" - Please check this piece out -> I am very proud of it! This is the piece that I mentioned to you that was used as the attica cover for the East Village Other & I have enclosed a xerox copy of the paper itself.

Keep up the great work!

Best Wishes -
Anita Steckel

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by maryse holder

Female Sexuality in Art

Let us record an amazing phenomenon before some old gent in Boise puts on the clamps: these days, as if by some spontaneous combustion, women all over the country and in all media are describing unprecedentedly explicit sexual content.

Whereas male sexuality is a cliche - Lawrence's dated pedagogy, Mailer's posturings, and Roth's broad, predictable joke - female sexuality is uncharted and a matter of the freshest curiosity. A recent round of visits to shows and studios, convinced me that female sexuality is especially visible in the fine arts.

This article began, I suppose, in April, 1972, when I heard Judy Chicago speak at Cornell's "Festival of Women in the Arts." A page turned in my mind. Using numerous slides of her own work and that of Georgia O'Keeffe, Louise Bourgeoi and Miriam Shapiro, among others.

Not the least valuable gift I took with me that night was exposure to women artists I'd never known or barely heard of before but it wasn't until a year and a book in O'Keeffe later that I had a chance to pursue my curiosity. Several things happened in rapid succession for someone over thirty: the Gallery of Modern Art was successfully pressured into presenting the "Women Choose Women" exhibition; the Women's Interart Center had a show called "The Erotic Garden" and "off our backs" was asked to review a mostly women's show at the Erotic Art Gallery. Anne Sharp, who works at the E.A.G., put me in touch with some of the artists and in that process I came to interview, in their studios, women who belonged to the "Fight Censorship Group."

The "Fight Censorship Group" comprises an epic dozen women artists banded together to accomplish roughly two goals: to remove sexual subject matter from the "closet of the fine arts," as Anita Stechel, who founded the group, states in a press release, and also to "uncover the male" as much as the woman traditionally has been. My compulsiveness somewhat tempered by other commitments, I visited about half of the group. These women are united by a common content but their approaches are vastly different. Thus Chicago and New York met: the unique sensibility, it surprised me to discover, in women was their bold treatment of sex. Even more satisfying was the representation of sexuality from a woman's perspective.

The sexualist work I saw (and some related "organic" work) struck me as being art that women as a group, were for the first time not copying from men. A record of female experience, it offered a completely different view of reality. And it was imaginative, often brilliant work about an area of human experience that had not been dealt with before, or even now, by men. "Sexualism," then, to use a more accurate term than "Eroticism," is exciting. It is new and it is a movement. Women can crash into the art world, into the general consciousness, with this work. It could be

at last, a mainstream female art movement



their work one would be seeing, and reading about, for the next ten or twenty years, without having it referred to as "women's art," as Impressionism was not alluded to as "French" art. Women are ushering out pop; women have the new energy, imagination and coherence. What it will take to launch the movement is an enormous expenditure of pressure and publicity; ultimately, enough confidence on the part of women to establish a separate cultural institution. This work inspires that confidence.

Up to now, these artists have been receiving Red Cross work rather than the red carpets they merit. Students in art history must begin writing theses, monographs, books, on *each* of these women, who must be viewed as having general significance, while male art must be taken as sex-limited. Certainly the male establishment has proven its steadfast resistance to genuine female talent. It has traditionally recognized only a few mediocre women whom it mock venerates as if to say: see, this is all women are capable of. Too, men's sexist quotas will continually establish women as a limited instance of the total "human" experience.

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(Printed in total in Voice, at Sarah Lawrence, & parts in Viva)

Statement on Censorship by Anita Steckel (woman artist)
We women artists ---
We believe - sexual subject matter should be removed from the "closet" of the fine arts where it resides in small portfolios, small works, off the walls, in private collections, etc. We believe sexual subject matter includes many things: political statements, humour, erotica, socialogical & psychological statements - as well as purely sensual or esthetic "art" concerns - and of course - the primitive, mysterious reasons none of us know.

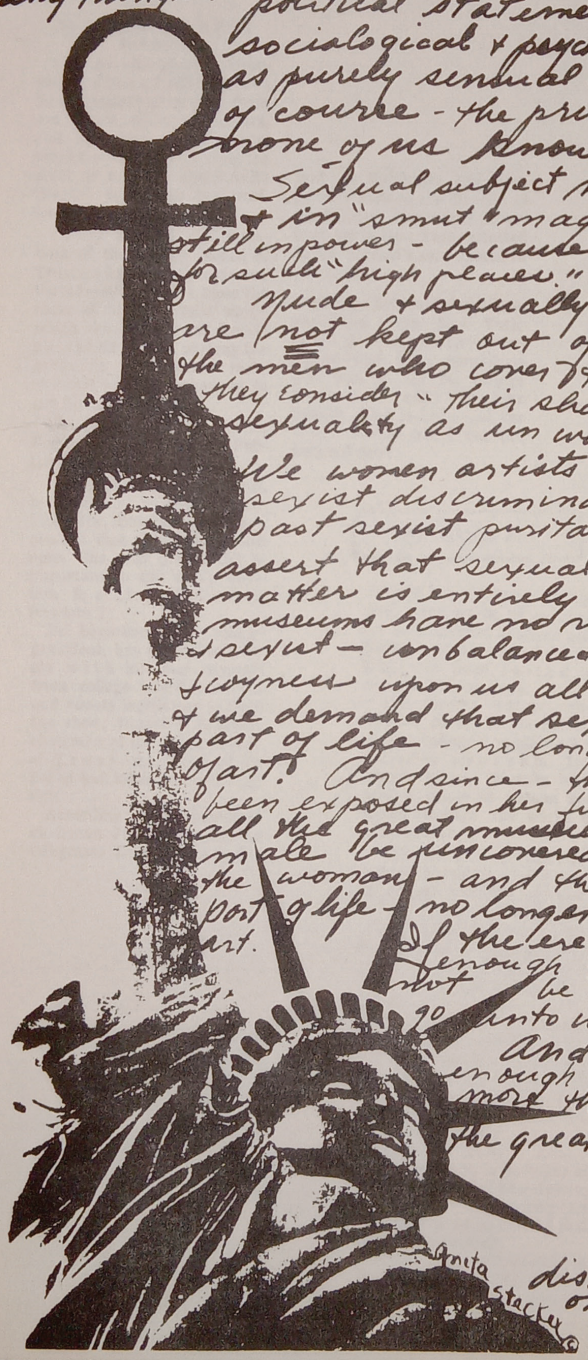
Sexual subject matter is kept out of museums & in "smut" magazines, films, etc. - by men still in power - because it is considered too unwholesome for such "high places."

Nude & sexually portrayed women, however, are not kept out of museums. It is always the men who cover their sex - who hide what they consider "their shame" - who think of their sexuality as unwholesome - the "fig leaf tradition".

We women artists object to this unhealthy & sexist discrimination & we demand an end to past sexist puritanisms in museums. We assert that sexual as well as any other subject matter is entirely the artists concern & the museums have no right to impose their puritanical & sexist - unbalanced - therefore unhealthy timidity & shyness upon us all & upon future generations - & we demand that sexual subject matter - as it is part of life - no longer be prevented from being part of art. And since - the woman has traditionally been exposed in her full nakedness & sexuality in all the great museums of the world - so should the male be uncovered - as sexually on display as the woman - and the erect penis, therefore, as it is part of life - no longer be prevented from being part of art.

If the erect penis is not wholesome enough to go into museums - it should not be considered wholesome enough to go into women.

And if the erect penis is wholesome enough to go into women - then it is more than wholesome enough to go into the greatest art museums.



distributed to other women artists - on March 8, 1973 in N.Y.C.

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Art World Backs Feminist's Exhibit

By R. CLINTON TAPLIN
Staff Writer

VIOLA — Rockland Community College officials have been getting telegrams from art critics, gallery managers, and art scholars throughout the country supporting the right of feminist artist Anita Steckel to display her work free of censorship.

County officials and members of the college Board of Trustees have been pressuring the administration to close the show of Ms. Steckel's works which depict male and female genitalia and portray the penis as a weapon of male domination. The show is to run through Feb. 25.

The exhibit is entitled "The Feminist Art of Sexual Politics."

[Reached at her New York home in New York this morning, Mrs. Steckel said she's pleased that the show is still open. She said the exhibit is important to the whole question fo academic and artistic freedom.]

Dr. Seymour Eskow, college president, has refused to comply with informal requests from college board members and county legislators to close the show. Daniel T. Brucker, chairman of the college Board of Trustees, has said the board had taken no formal action.

According to art department chairman James Murphy, the telegrams from places as distant as California and from persons such as the director of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, attested to Ms. Steckel's seriousness as an artist.

Murphy also said that representatives from New York-based national television networks and news magazines are waiting for the college board to order the show closed; then, he indicated, the entire matter would become national news.

From Page A-1

Artist Alan Gussow of Congers says works of political art are supposed to offend and create controversy, otherwise they will have failed to achieve their purpose.

The display was provided without charge by Ms. Steckel to the college's regular artist exhibition program. This year's theme, Murphy said, was a salute to women and would feature the works of nine women.

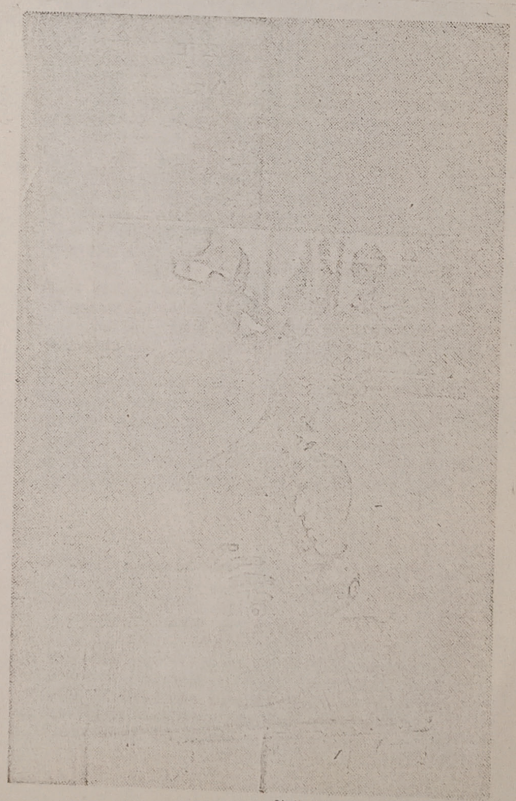
"It's not pornographic; it's not even erotic; it's the work of a very sensitive and committed person," Murphy said.

The chairman also said that Ms. Steckel's works had been exhibited in major galleries in New York and on the West Coast.

The director of the Whitney, John Baurr, sent this wire: "Miss Steckel is a serious artist whose work we have exhibited. Hope you will support her right to artistic expression without censorship . . ."

Supervisor John J. Komar of Orangetown, a member of the Rockland Legislature, triggered the controversy last week when he suggested that the show be closed.

Since then, attendance at the exhibit has increased dramatically, college officials say.



Staff Photo by R. Clinton Taplin

PART OF THE CONTROVERSY—One of the milder works in the latest visitor's display at Rockland Community College.

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art

september 1973/off our backs

anita slavin arkin steckel

Anita Slavin Arkin Steckel is a breakthrough genius who fuses various elements of popular "culture" and contemporary concern in an original and revolutionary manner. Her form, as well as her content, is new.

She recently had a one-woman show at a gallery in Westbeth, an artists' residence, where she showed two series of works.

The "New York Skyline" series is a group of six-foot by nine-foot photo-montages of a photographic view of New York, one she considers archetypal, a "stamp" or icon (one sees the East River in the foreground and the U.N. and Chrysler building, among others, in the background). This photograph is transferred onto canvas and Steckel paints and draws on it with oil, acrylic and pencil. She paints giant nude bodies mostly women, who loll among skyscrapers they dwarf, amidst graffiti doodles and ethnic references. In "Skyline No. 6," her most recent, and a masterpiece, the giant figures, indolently splayed out against the sky, take their ease. A penis which extends the Chrysler building spire spurts semen which a relatively tiny Jewish mother spoon feeds to her mammoth olympian son; underneath, the slogan: "Eat your power honey, before it gets cold." He sports a "Lenny Bruce lives" tatoo. The sky is tatooed with other graffiti: "Coney Island lives," "Genet lives 382."

The cityscape is overlaid with a swampy greenish-brown wash, the water and air a sombre atmosphere which corresponds somehow to the depth of unconscious experience; pollution as dream-inducing murky memory. Brilliant yellow-pink clouds, heavily painted, break through the figures here and there, filling them with sunsets of sudden illumination.

A sitting woman, as tall as five Chryslers if she stood, holds up a platter, waitress-like, on which a small female figure rebounds from a somersault. Flower scribbles take off from and arm-hinting that doodles are both cause and effect of an absolutely unfettered, democratic imagination. Jewish star doodles dot the sky, while below, in the river, gefilte fish, mere ovals, swim in magic pools of three, each pool labelled, with "smile button" faces, heading perhaps south to spawn in Miami-land.

This description by no means exhausts the painting; her name on the bottom: Anita Slavin Arkin Steckel- first, mother's maiden, her maiden and her married name- makes clear the intention: a complete mythic and psychological history of Steckel's life, which is also ours.

Steckel's work is irresistible. The form, combining as it does photography and painting (in a kind of plastic equivalent of Mailer's autobiographical journalism), and combining personal, ethnic and urban motifs- graffitti, doodles, references to the artist's religion, etc.- into an epic mode touches the contemporary nerve and synthesizes more elements of daily experience into a transcendant imagery than one could have imagined possible. Steckel's is the new art, more than anything I've seen since pop (call it "mom" art?).

Her series "Giant Women in New York" is part of a group of works representing nude women painted onto photographs of New York and bearing Steckel's own photographic face. Steckel started out with a photograph, then came to grafting in a fantasy image, and then decided to super-impose her real self on the fantasy image. These montages are "medium," about four by three.

In "Rodeo" a woman straddles the Empire State Building, holding on with one hand and wielding a lasso that resembles a whip with the other. She is in command of the bronco that is the city and the phallus. Her expression is one of manifest contentment as she rides alone in the city, large, beautiful, elemental, free. The montage speaks to women's fantasies of power and mastery. In "Coney Island" a lush odalisk Steckel reclines on the beach on the other side of a boardwalk where *balabustas* sit on benches. Another, liberated, female asnect, in somewhat discordant union with the kerchiefed women, Steckel stares at the viewer quasi-defiantly.

In "Last Supper," Steckel is spread out on a long table at a male banquet in an abstract landscape of dark, bleak land and sky and in "Embarassment" Steckel is torn up the middle with a deep fissure in the presence of oblivious construction workers. Her imnassive face lets fall unnoticed stylized tears; she is a building being wrecked. Perhaps because the face is never enraged, that is, because the pain is not *signalized* but *symbolized*, Steckel's description of it is impossible to dismiss.

Her haunting "Women Impaled on New York" represents foggy skyscraper tops on which a tribe of women, infinitely extending- Steckel one- have taken up stalwart residence. The building spires impale the women- the truth about the city- but the truth is also their spectral presence. Luminous vampires, they have come out when the city is silent to reclaim possession.

The Steckel persona that emerges from this series is wry, beautiful, ironic, taking pleasure in shedding her inhibitions, like her clothes, in a city which is a dark river she secretly goes skinny-dipping in, at night, alone.

Similar to "Giant Women" are a group of montages where Steckel draws herself to scale. In "On the Subway," the Steckel character, her breasts and crotch exposed, sits between a young and an old man on a train. One hand is under the old man's, while another lies loosely between her legs. (It is important that the protagonist is always Steckel- it says that *every* woman has the entire range of experiences Steckel describes.)

Steckel renders female experience in a way which makes pain undeniable, but also presence, fantasy, power, sexuality. Most significant, her tone is *epic*: nothing but the largest arena, the most far-reaching resonances for women.

by maryse holder

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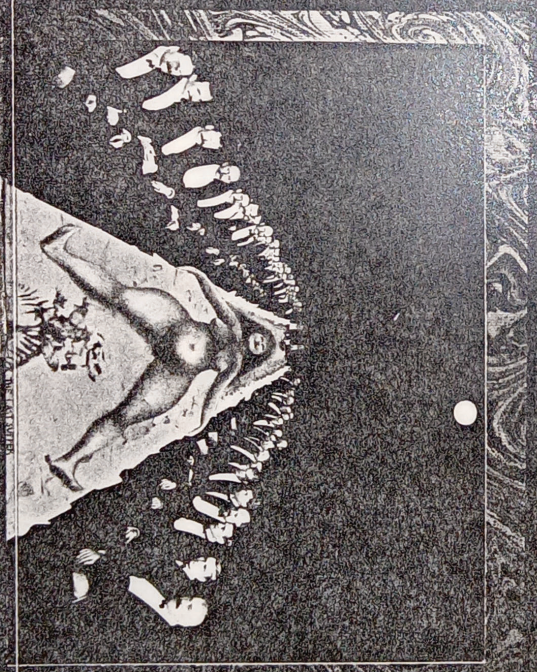

"THE LAST SUPPER"



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Telegram

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DR SEYMOUR ESKOL PRESIDENT ROCKALND COLLEGE

SUFFERN NY

I HAVSREVIEWED ANITA STECKELS SHOW FOR THE MARCH ISSUE OF ARTS MAGAZINES SHE DEALS MAINLY WITH POLITCAL AND SOCIAL THEMW BLACK VERUS WHITE MEN VERUS WOMEN SHE USES SEXUAL ORANS AS SYMBOLS OF SOCIAL REALITY THIS IS IF ANYTING TO OBVIOUS HER WORK DOES NOT EVEN IN THE MILDLY EROTIC PIECES INTEND TO OR SUCCED IN AROUSING PRURINET INTEREST LABELING HER WORK PRONOGRAPHIC IS AN INSULT TO HER ARTISTIC SERIOUSNESS OF PURPOSE

SUZANNE FRANK STAFF REVIEWER ARTS MAGAZINES 23 EAST 26 ST NYK.

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CALL: woman artist
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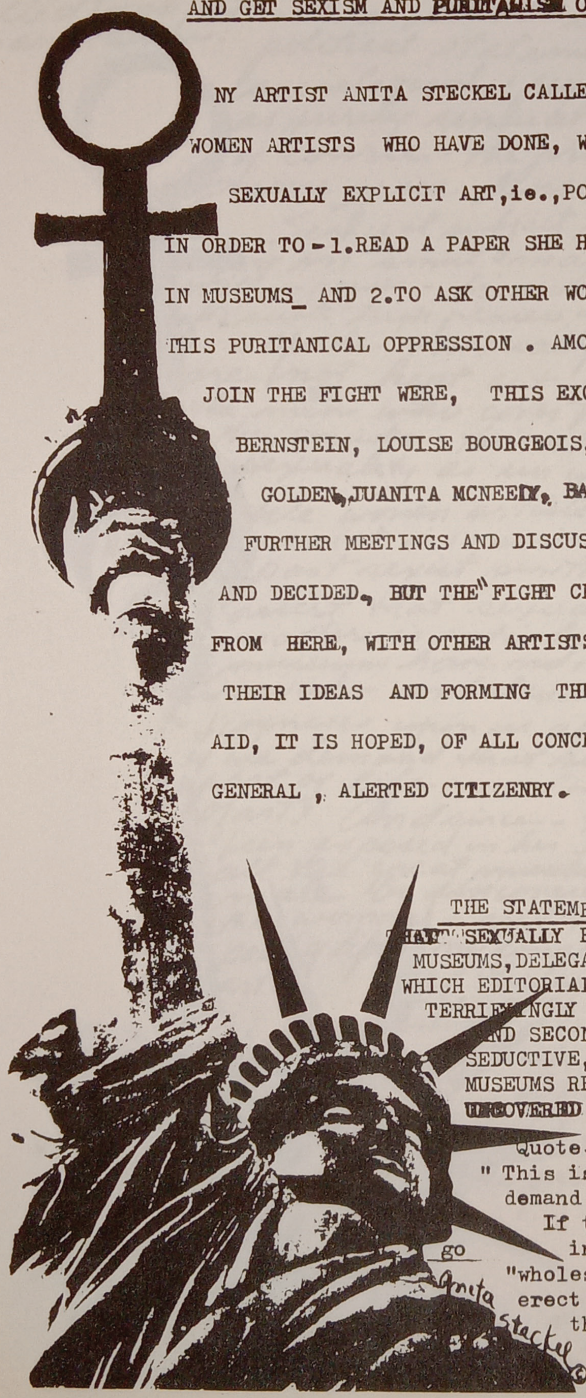
WOMEN ARTISTS JOIN TO FIGHT TO PUT SEX INTO MUSEUMS
AND GET SEXISM AND PURITANISM OUT



NY ARTIST ANITA STECKEL CALLED A MEETING, AT HER STUDIO, OF WOMEN ARTISTS WHO HAVE DONE, WILL DO , OR DO_ SOME FORM OF SEXUALLY EXPLICIT ART, ie., POLITICAL, HUMOUROUS, EROTIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL, ETC IN ORDER TO - 1. READ A PAPER SHE HAD WRITTEN ON SEXUAL AND SEXIST CENSORSHIP IN MUSEUMS_ AND 2. TO ASK OTHER WOMEN ARTISTS TO JOIN WITH HER TO FIGHT THIS PURITANICAL OPPRESSION . AMONG THOSE ARTISTS PRESENT AND WISHING TO JOIN THE FIGHT WERE, THIS EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH STANDARD GROUP; JUDITH BERNSTEIN, LOUISE BOURGEOIS, MARTHA EDELHEIT, JOAN GLUCKMAN, EUNICE GOLDEN, JUANITA MCNEELY, BARBARA NESSIM, JOAN SEMMEL, & ANNE SHARP. FURTHER MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS WILL BE HELD AND ACTIONS DISCUSSED AND DECIDED, BUT THE "FIGHT CENSORSHIP" GROUP HAS BEGUN_ AND WILL GO ON FROM HERE, WITH OTHER ARTISTS CONTRIBUTING TO AND HELPING WITH THEIR IDEAS AND FORMING THEIR ACTIONS_ AND GROUPS, ENLISTING THE AID, IT IS HOPED, OF ALL CONCERNED WRITERS AND TEACHERS, AND A GENERAL , ALERTED CITIZENRY.

THE STATEMENT BY MS STECKEL MADE 2 BASIC POINTS:
THAT SEXUALLY EXPLICIT SUBJECT MATTER IS KEPT OUT OF MUSEUMS, DELEGATED TO "SMUT" MAGAZINES AND FILMS ETC., WHICH EDITORIALIZES SOCIETIES ATTITUDES IN THE MOST TERRIFYINGLY PURITANICAL, ie. UNWHOLESOME, UNHEALTHY WAY. AND SECOND, THAT WHILE FEMALES ARE SHOWN IN A SEDUCTIVE, SEXUAL , AND NUDE MANNER_ THESE VERY SAME MUSEUMS REFUSE TO SHOW THE SEXUAL MALE NUDE, ie. UNCOVERED BY FIG LEAVES AND WITH ERECT PENIS, A TABOO.

Quote-, Ms Steckel's statement;
" This is blatent sexist discrimination- and we women demand equal sexual exposure of men in art in museum If the erect penis is not "wholesome" enough to go into museums- it should not be considered "wholesome" enough to go into women. And if the erect penis is "wholesome" enough to go into women then it is more than "wholesome" enough to go into the greatest museums."

Anita Steckel ©

(complete statement enclosed)

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Statement on Censorship by Anita Steckel (woman artist)

We women artists —

We believe — sexual subject matter should be removed from the "closet" of the fine arts where it resides in small portfolios, small works, off the walls, in private collections, etc. We believe sexual subject matter includes many things: political statements, humour, erotica, socialogical & psychological statements — as well as purely sensual or esthetic "art" concerns — and of course — the primitive, mysterious reasons none of us know.

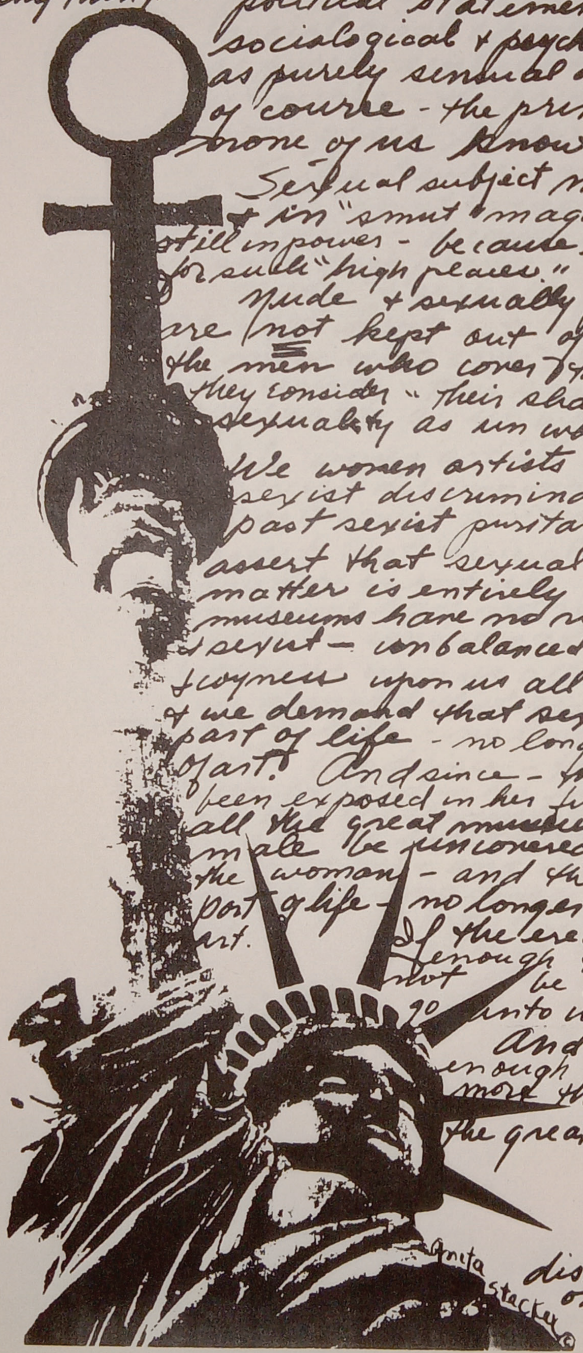
Sexual subject matter is kept out of museums & in "smut" magazines, films, etc. — by men still in power — because it is considered too unwholesome for such "high places."

Nude & sexually portrayed women, however, are not kept out of museums. It is always the men who cover their sex — who hide what they consider "their shame" — who think of their sexuality as unwholesome — the "fig leaf tradition".

We women artists object to this unhealthy & sexist discrimination & we demand an end to past sexist puritanisms in museums. We assert that sexual as well as any other subject matter is entirely the artists concern & the museums have no right to impose their puritanical & sexist — unbalanced — therefore unhealthy timidity & shyness upon us all & upon future generations — & we demand that sexual subject matter — as it is part of life — no longer be prevented from being part of art! And since — the woman has traditionally been exposed in her full nakedness & sexuality in all the great museums of the world — so should the male be discovered — as sexually on display as the woman — and the erect penis, therefore, as it is part of life — no longer be prevented from being part of art.

If the erect penis is not wholesome enough to go into museums — it should not be considered wholesome enough to go into women.

And if the erect penis is wholesome enough to go into women — then it is more than wholesome enough to go into the greatest art museums.



distributed to other women artists — on March 8, 1973 in N.Y.C.

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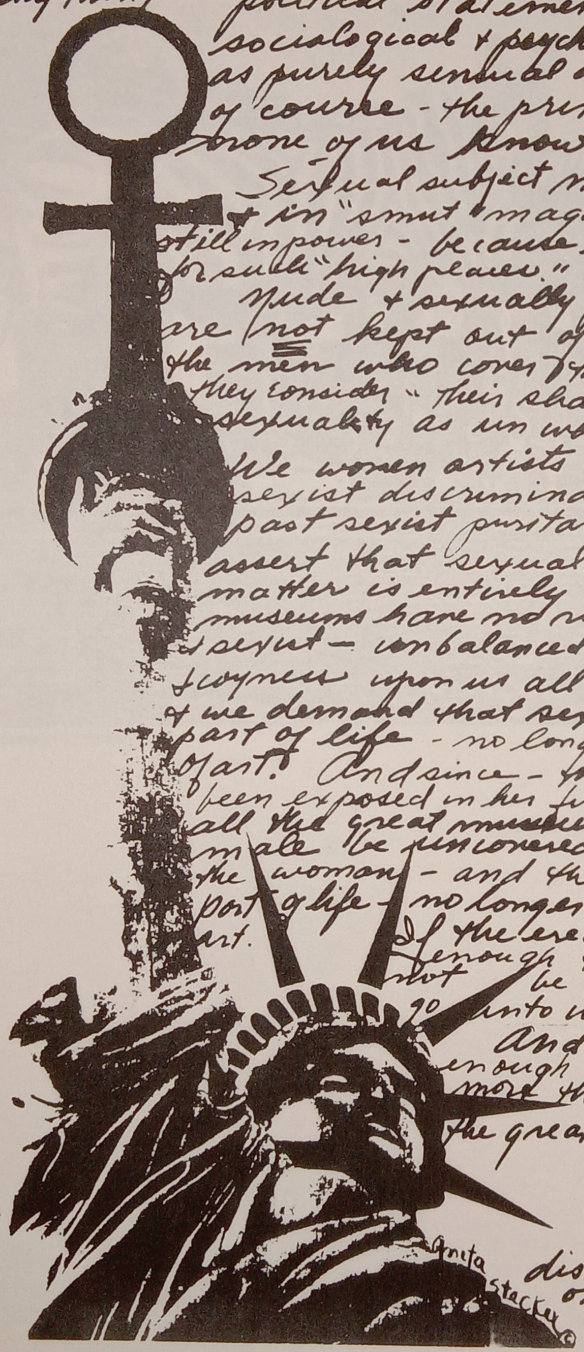

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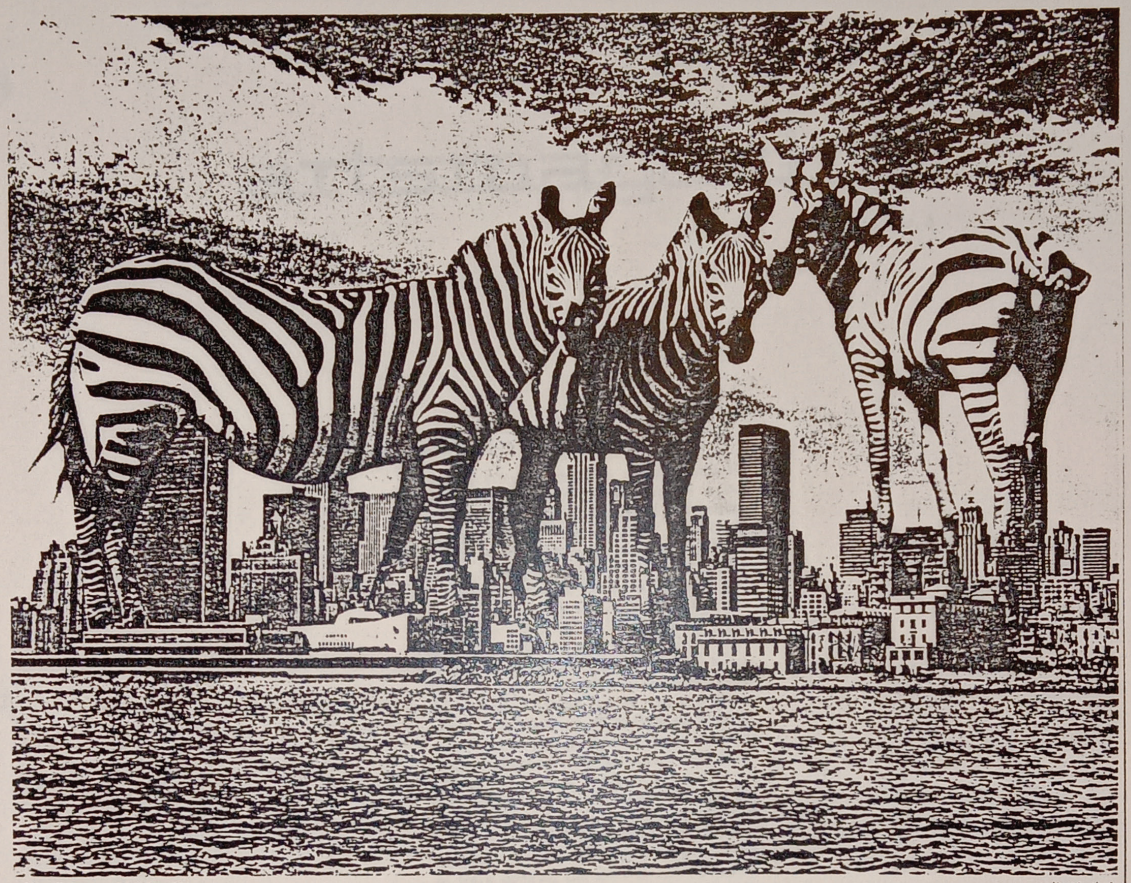

"Giant Zebras on NY" 5' x 6'

anita steckel

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artsmagazine

March 1969 Volume 43, No. 5

1969

ANITA STECKEL

Light-heartedly, wistfully, sarcastically, always wittily, Anita Steckel creates a refreshingly odd new world of no-fooling photos tied in with collages, pencillings, additions in oil, liberating us from any fixed ideas of what art is, let alone what life is.

Four of her larger fantasies to be on sale are reproduced full size in limited editions —perhaps a first of its kind? One of these seems superficially another of those vast photos of a banquet with dozens of tableloads of dressed-up folk yearning to get in the picture. Looking closely you find those around one table are all Hitlers, another all nuns, one a group of men with ominous shades, others all with the same waxed mustachios. Two huge pictures are scenes of New York skyscrapers dominated by female giants. Turning sentimental, Anita Steckel takes a photo of Billie Holliday, from a magazine, benday and all, adding a crown of tears, opening the sides of her wonderful voice so her mouth is a "never healing wound."

The artist is proud that *Esquire* compared her with Ingmar Bergman's film. *The Magician*. (*Kozmopolitan*, 168 W. 86th St., Mar. 1-29)—W.D.A.

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rockland community college cultural activities 1971-1972

catalogue
(one person
show)

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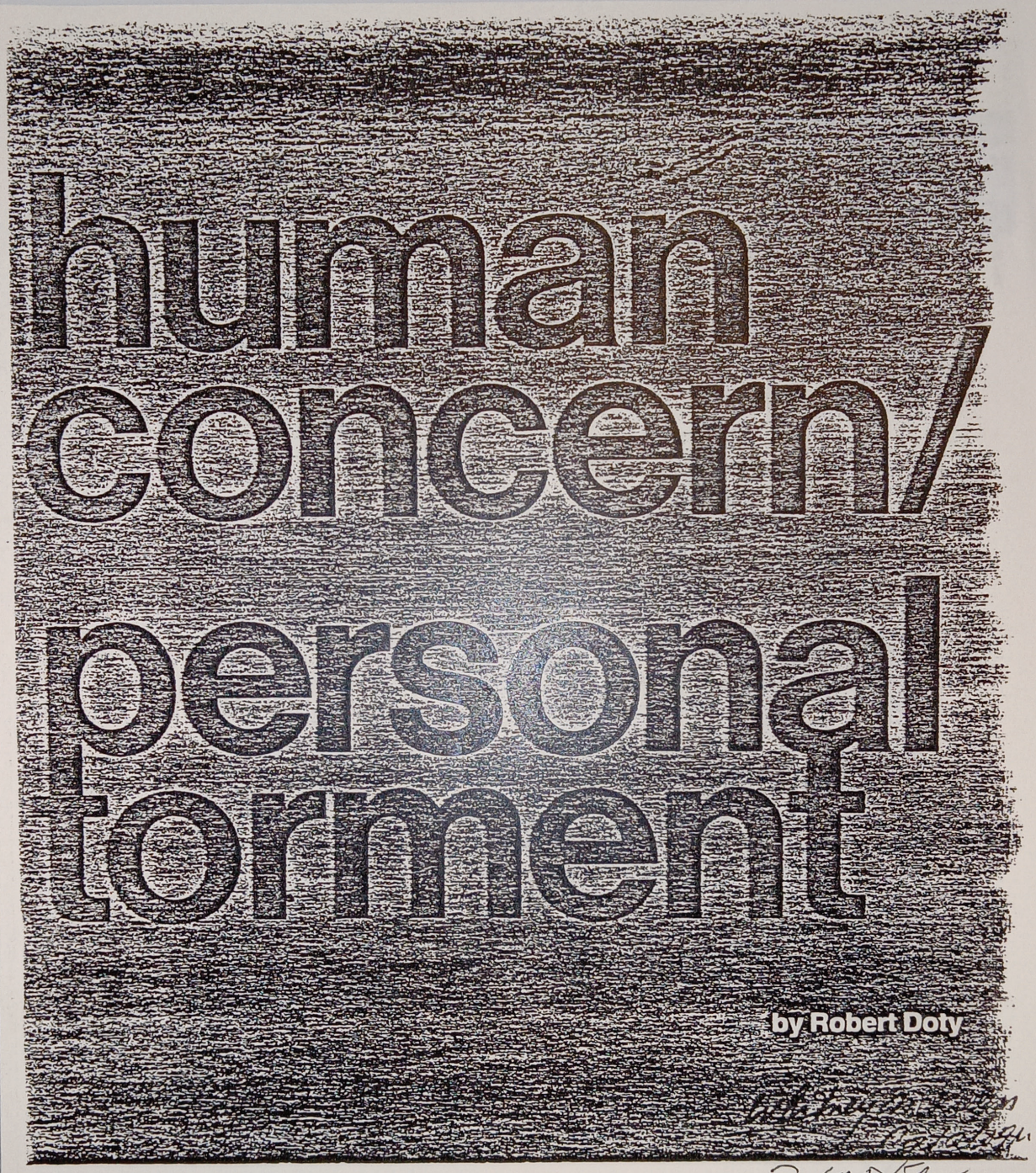

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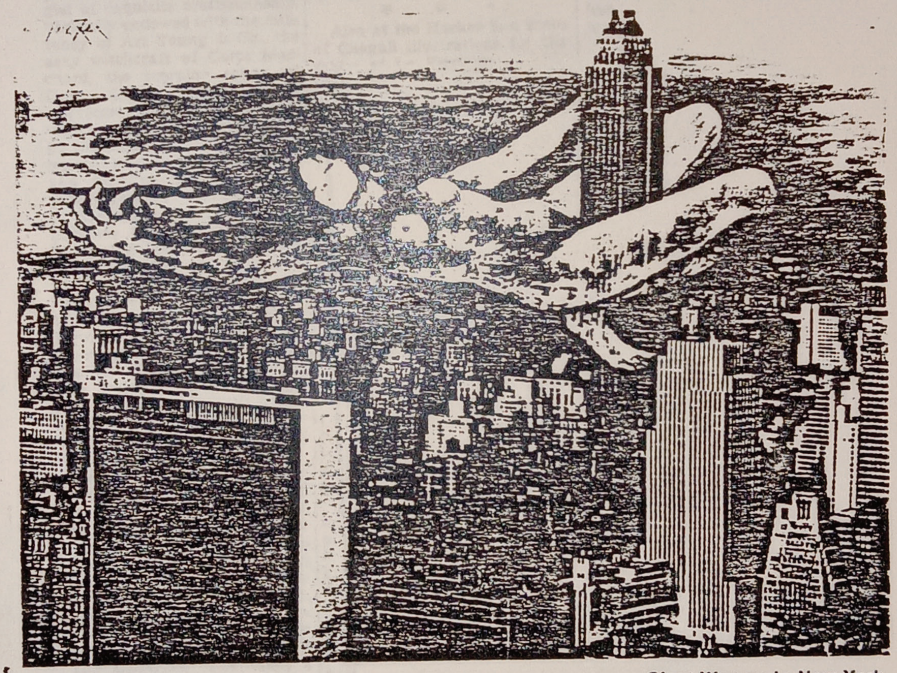
THE

HOUGHTON HOUSE GALLERY
HOBART & WILLIAM SMITH COLLEGES,
GENEVA, N.Y.



Anita Steckel — Giant Woman in New York

c. catalogue
cover

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NEW YORK POST, SUNDAY

In the Art Galleries

The shock of recognition has its counterpart, one bean in a jar of thousands: the shock of originality. A young lady of just such voltage is Anita Steckel of Horatio St., a number of whose works may be seen through October at the Hacker Gallery, 54 W. 57th.

She is . . . it is hard to explain. An artist and photo-collagist of exquisite craftsmanship, variously endowed with the militancy of Art Young & Co., the sexy witchcraft of Carol Blanchard, the scorpion spleen of George Grosz, the monumental irreverence of Marcel Duchamp, who once painted a moustache on the Mona Lisa. Miss Steckel paints toothbrush moustaches and dangling forelocks on a photograph of three dozen stuffed shirts sitting around a horsehoe table and entitles it: "Annual Banquet of the Lampshade Manufacturers of Argentina." That will give you the idea (part of the idea). I am told that a couple of visiting bigwig Argentinians were very upset by the "Banquet" at the Hacker. That's good. Maybe they preferred "The Beginner," a miniature of a fat little boy in middy blouse and similar toothbrush, beautifully matted and mounted by the artist.

Yet Miss Steckel has other rows to hoe. She takes Eakins' oarsmen in their scull and balances atop their pates a lunatic nude of a muse, breasted into the upstream breeze. Title: "Girl Scout." She takes a really ugly face, a face from a Szondi test, puts a torso beneath it, a bra on the torso, a cross on a chain around the neck, and calls it "The Librarian." She takes a baby in swaddling clothes, gives it French-postcard legs in high heels, calls it "Das Wunderkind."

And with some particular magic that is hers alone, she puts together pieces of photographs of two sad-faced children in a cart pulled by a yellowing goat and makes it absolutely terrifying

A talent. A comer. Watch and see.

* * *

Also at the Hacker is a room of Chagall illustrations for the fabl[illegible] of La Fontaine

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MAY, 1965

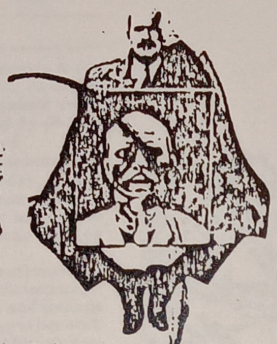
Seventeen contemporary artists experiment with self portraits and explanations



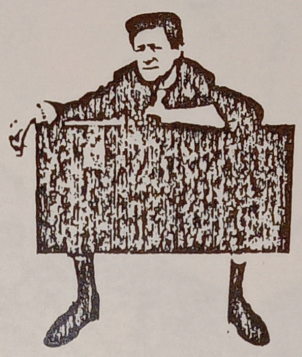
...le: I don't like paint ...rnails and turpen... ...dermatitis. My ...ait is printed by ... canvas in England. ...tered me.



Anita Steckel: This self-portrait is not true any longer for before the paint is dry the very act of having made the picture has already altered me.



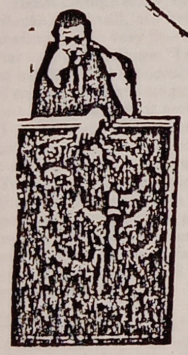
Stanley Landsman: My intention was to crystallize basic plastic organic unity.



Milos Forst: Pictures need be as "real" as possible, whatever their subject, or why waste precious time on them? And expect people to use (theirs looking at them?



Audrey Flack: I was through a magazine a picture of teeth— teeth—all perfect, Melina Mercouri's f



...t Stone: I am slowly disregarding ...ject matter as I know it, paint... ...I an abstract world but my world. ...t that was never born and will ...ve



Shirley Glaser: My intention was to crystallize basic plastic organic unity.



Herbert Katzman: The reason for self-portraiture is not fascination with the subject—but that it is always available to the painter.



Jim Dine: I made about forty self-portraits in the form of a bathrobe because I felt it was a receptive landscape for some observations (both obscure and obvious) about myself.



Allan D'Arcangelo: I haven't paint myself for ten years. Then I got letter asking me to contribute a paint ing for this show

Whether the motive has been vanity or convenience, the self-portrait has had a long and honorable history. The subject, as one painter has observed, "is always available. It's never late; it takes the right pose; it turns its head the right way, it's very understanding of the painter's problems, and it keeps its mouth shut, and what patience and empathy!" And yet the art seems lately to have fallen on hard times: other subjects, after all, are as easily available — soup cans, Superman and hamburgers among them. It occurred to Shirley Glaser, director of the Visual Arts Gallery in New York, that contemporary artists, not known for their reverence of traditional modes, might nevertheless be interested in—or cajoled into—an attempt at self-portraiture. No cajoling, as it turned out, was needed. Of the seventy artists represented in the exhibition (it opened last January 8) more than half had paintings or constructions ready to go. Vanitas, perhaps, vanitatum. Seventeen examples are assembled here with brief excerpts from the comments of the artists on their work, comments as cheerful, interesting and inscrutable as art itself.

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Images of a Winged Woman

By Leanne Domash

Anita Steckel's inspirational art, which so speaks to our minds as well as our emotions, represents the collective female unit. With daring, humor and exquisite craft, Steckel bares her passions and hopes, and by finding what is universal in herself gives courage to all.

Anita Steckel has been referred to as one of the best, most well-known "non-famous" artists today. But today, it is not enough for a woman of this stature to succeed as an underground artist. Women artists must now move on to document the fact that major art work is being done by women. Steckel needs recognition.

If you don't know Steckel's work, it is as one art critic put it...it is hard to explain. Steckel uses complex photo-collage, finding this is the best medium to convey ideas and feelings which will change your way of seeing. A history of her work has not appeared in print and let me begin that history here by highlighting pieces from several pivotal shows, spanning fifteen years, culminating with the most recent, her eighth one-woman show in New York.

Her first collage show, in 1963, was hauntingly original. Steckel used small, old brown photographs and changed their reality with very fine brush work and oil. She explains her use of photo-collage: "I was very interested in the magic of art. It was the closest thing I found to it. For example, if one saw a painted image, no matter how powerful it was, one could shrug it off it seemed to me because it was paint. You could walk away from it but if you took paint and painted on an already existing reality such as a photo of a room or building you set up a tension of quite another sort. You're forced into a conviction. I was interested in lifting the painted image from its traditional home which was the painted environment and placing it in an "environment of reality" which was represented by the photograph. What is or isn't real become magically intertwined and create a new reality. That magic, that convincing new reality is my major interest in art."

In the 1977 show a kind of liberation took place. Having almost come to peace with both internal and external demons, Steckel bursts out into joyous, riotous, full range of

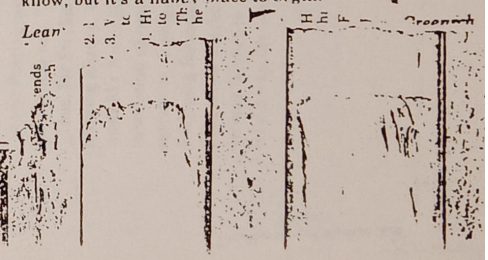


"Creation Revisited": 1977 collage by Anita Steckel

color and her winged mythic image goes on a fantastic journey. This winged image is one of the giant women over the Empire State Building which has been cut out and placed on a bird. In a complex series of color Xerox and collage combined, this figure takes a journey back through history, creating a new mythology. The mythic woman flies through the graffiti of the city, then high above the city in freedom, out of her natural environment. She flies into Picasso's studio, then back to a medieval garden in which a medieval woman sits with her handmaidens, into the painting of the *Last Supper*, the Sistine Chapel and then remarkably into Michelangelo's *Creation* itself. This latter is a large wallpiece called *Creation Revisited*, comprised of multiple color Xerox images of the winged woman flying amidst Michelangelo's *Creation*. The images are caught in rapid, almost orgastic motion, boldly portraying woman where she was formerly not to have been. Steckel comments, "It's really important for women to remake history and see themselves as acceptably part of history since they have been excluded or diminished by male written records. The Bible being the most treacherous of these male records, such as the horror of the condemnation of Eve, who is after all supposed to be the first woman, and excluding women from the act of 'Creation' itself. The female was even excluded here from an act, which her body alone is capable of by making it the act of a singular male power. Forcing us totally out of the picture. So this puts woman back on the scene at the time of the act of 'Creation' itself and the feeling I've gotten, and other women have told me they've gotten from this piece is sheer ecstasy."

The visual impact of Steckel's kaleidoscopic spirit stayed with me long after the show. I was struck by the increasing richness in use of color, the passionate exuberance, the freedom to explore and write as well as rewrite history. This is no longer woman struggling for her power, battling the domination around her. This is woman free, expansive, embracing all people, including the experience of love. Steckel sums it up by indicating that her recent exhibition reflects "spiritual and political freedom meshed with art freedom." She concludes, "What will evolve from this I don't know, but it's a happy place to begin."

Lean



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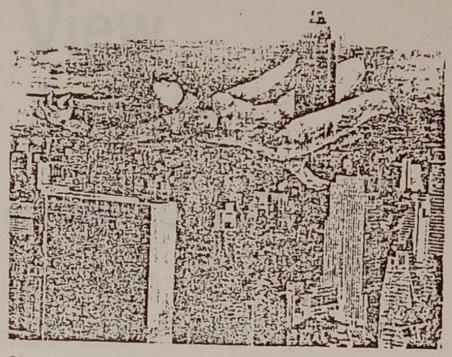
Anita Steckel's recent use of collage reminds one of an act of magic. Her *Giant Woman on N.Y.* seems to fly on the invisible magic carpet provided by the use of collage. Grasping her giant brush with ease and grace, the artist floats above New York's skyscrapers, undaunted by earth's gravity and the man-made phallic power which dominates the city. This is indeed a delicious fantasy – woman flying unhampered by patriarchal reality. What this magic gesture leaves out is the reality of the struggle – economic, political, artistic – which Steckel as artist, female, feminist has to face. Rather than portray this reality, she projects the fantasy of a light, flowing, seductive and sexually provocative relationship to the city. She shows herself dominating New York with ease and grace; its phallic towers become objects for her pleasure.

Fantasies are important – they are part of one's ideological makeup. Thus we can argue that to create feminist-based fantasies is no less important than to develop our ideology in serious theoretical treatises.

In another collage, *New Mona Takes the Brush,* Leonardo's famed Mona Lisa is holding a large brush. With dignity, grace, and natural rulership, she presides over the New York cityscape. Originally a symbol for charming feminine enigma, Leonardo's Mona Lisa later became a symbol for Dada – a new art – with Duchamp's addition of a moustache to her delicate features. Here the Mona Lisa becomes once again a symbol for a new art movement, the movement of women artists of the 1970's.

In her most recent *Creation Revisited,* Steckel superimposes the giant woman over New York onto Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel image of God creating Adam. Revising the Biblical story of the creation of human life, in which woman figures in a secondary role, Steckel implies that woman (unlike Adam, who needed God to create him) is self-created. Riding on a bird, she exhibits the kind of breadth, comfort, and self-sufficiency that is self-generated. Like the artist whose face the female figure bears, she is herself a source of creation. The bird on which she rides lends her wings, tools of her freedom – wings of power. Steckel said about this work (in a conversation with the author): "Re making history: Putting woman where the male-written Bible said she was not."

Thus, for Steckel collage becomes a means for rewriting history. By using collage in this way, visual artists like Anita Steckel are participating in the formulation of our dreams, fantasies, and political aspirations. Giving visual form to these abstract ideas, developing fantasies of a new feminist ideology, collages like Steckel's have a potential to bring us one step further in the remaking of culture, ideology, and the way the world is shaped.



Giant Woman on N.Y.,
3' x 4' collage



Creation Revisited,
6' x 8',
Xerox and collage

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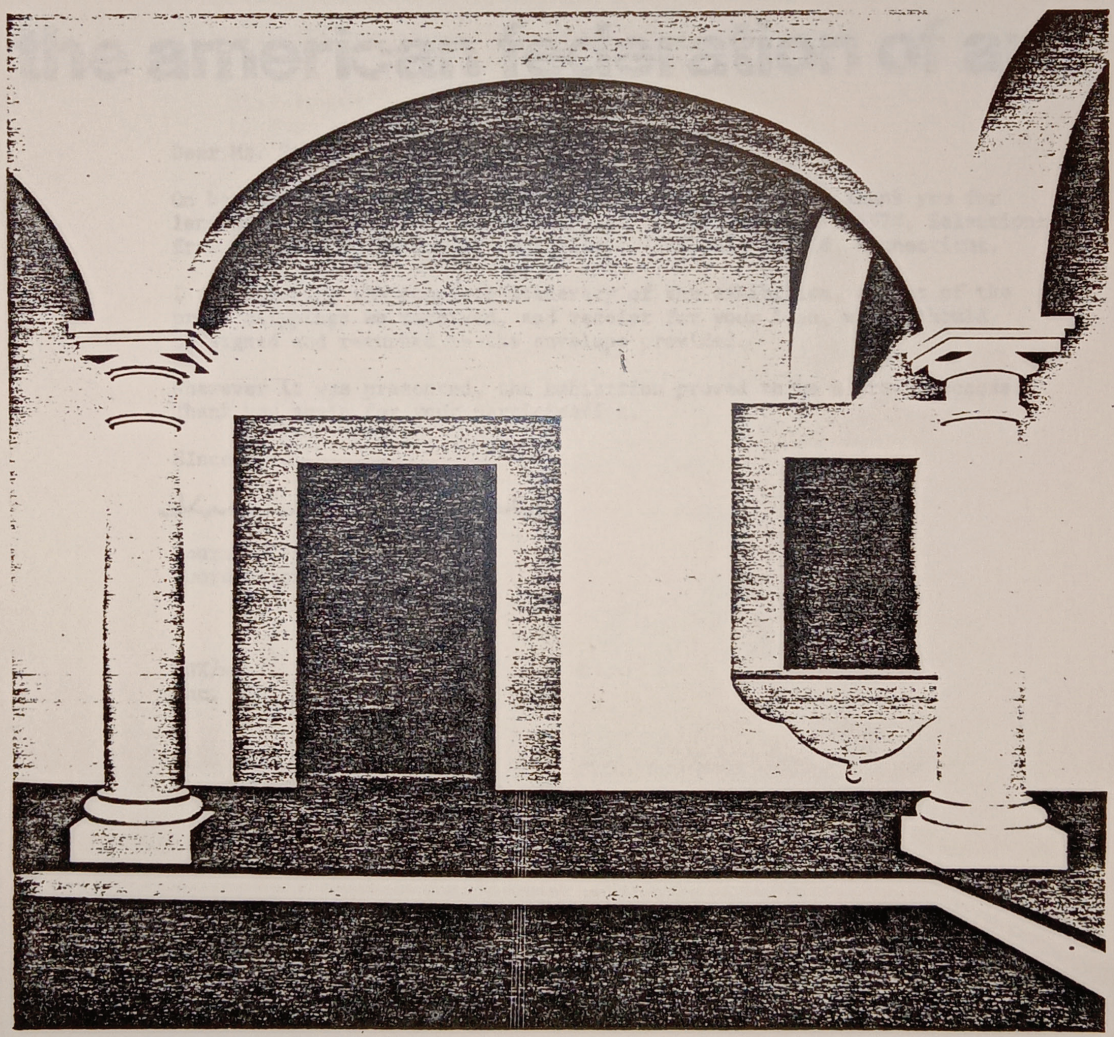
Point Of View
19 Women Artists

September 13 - November 10, 1974

Portland Museum of Art
Sponsored by A. H. Benoit and Company



Elena Borstein OAXACA, 1973

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August 16, 1977

Ms. Anita Arkin Steckel
463 West Street, Studio 1009 A
New York, New York 10014

the american federation of arts

Dear Ms. Steckel:

On behalf of The American Federation of Arts, I wish to thank you for lending to our exhibition, CONTEMPORARY REFLECTIONS 1971-1974, Selections from The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut.

I am enclosing the complete itinerary of the exhibition, copies of the press clippings we received, and receipt for your loan, which should be signed and returned in the envelope provided.

Wherever it was presented, the exhibition proved to be a great success. Thank you again for your participation.

SIncerely,

Konrad G. Kuchel

Konrad G. Kuchel
Coordinator of Loans

KGK/mp
enc.

41 East 65th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021 (212) 988-7700

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WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

945 Madison Avenue at Seventy-Fifth Street New York, New York 10021 (212) 249-4100

January 21, 1970

Miss Anita Steckel
45 Perry Street
New York, N.Y.

Dear Miss Steckel:

Now that the exhibition Human Concern/Personal Torment has closed, I want to tell you how very grateful we are for your generous loan.

The show generated considerable comment in the press and we have received a number of letters from viewers who found it to be a significant experience. We are most grateful to you for assisting in presenting what we all feel was a very successful exhibition.

Very sincerely yours,

John I. H. Baur
Director

jihb:akg

Gertrude V. Whitney, Founder

Flora Whitney Miller, Chairman David M. Solinger, President John I. H. Baur, Director Lloyd Goodrich, Advisory Director

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CETA Paintings. Thru Jan. 12.

CORDIER & EKSTROM, 980 Madison Av., YU8-8857. Varujan Boghosian, collages. Thru Feb. 3.

80 WASHINGTON SQUARE EAST GALLERIES, 80 Washington Sq. E., Tue.-Fri. 11-6, Sat. 11-5. Paintings by Marcelle Nelson, sculptures by Joe LaChapelle and prints by ten printmakers. Thru Jan. 19.

AMOS ENO GALLERY, 101 Wooster St., 226-5342. Membership Group Show. Thru Jan. 11.

ERLICH GALLERY, 28 E. 74 St., Mon.-Sat. 11-6. Group Show: Alexander Calder, Giorgio de Chirico, Alen D'Arcangelo, Richard Fishman, Lucio Fontana, Sol Lewitt, Richard Pettibone, Picasso. Thru Jan. 28.

THE EXHIBITIONISTS, 92-20 Union Hall St., Jamaica, Queens, 658-4926, Tue.-Thur., Sat.-Sun., 12-5. Q 112, a documentary about the route, its environment and human drama. Thru Jan. 13.

RONALD FELDMAN FINE ARTS, 33 E. 74 St., 249-4050, Mon.-Sat., 10-5:30. David Smyth: Reflections, sculpture and drawings. Thru Feb. 10.

Rothko, 1903-1970: A Retrospective, the largest and most comprehensive exhibition of Rothko's work ever mounted. Thru Jan. 14.

HAMILTON GALLERY, 20 W. 57 St., 765-5915. Day and Night: works on paper by Janet Sleyton and John Willenbecher. Thru Feb. 3.

HAMMER GALLERIES, 51 E. 57 St., 644-4400. Group Show of sculptures and paintings from the contemporary collection. Thru Jan. 31.

LILLIAN HEIDENBERG GALLERY, 50 W. 57 St., 586-3808. Tue.-Fri., 10-5:30, Sat. 11-5:30. A 57th Street Christmas, group show. Thru Jan. 21.

HEINER FRIEDRICH, 393 West Broadway, 925-9380, Tues.-Sun. 12-6. Cy Twombly: "50 Days at Iliium," a painting in 10 parts. Thru Jan. 20.

NANCY HOFFMAN GALLERY, 429 West Broadway, 966-6676, Tue.-Sat. 10-6. Works on Paper, by 8 artists. Thru Feb. 8.

HUDSON GUILD GALLERY, 441 W. 26 St., 760-9800, Mon.-Fri., 5-7 p.m. The Family in Art: Helm Mendelson, paintings; Larry Racioppo, photographs. Thru Feb. 2.

current paintings. Thru Jan. 25.

KATHRYN MARKEL FINE ARTS, 50 W. 57 St., 581-1909, Tue.-Sat., 10-5:30. Ellen Stavitsky, recent work. Thru Jan. 27.

LOUIS K. MEISEL GALLERY, 141 Prince St. Ernest Ruckle: "The Cosmogenitor" and other paintings. Thru Jan. 27.

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, Fifth Av. & 82 St., 879-5500. Wed.-Sat., 10-4:45; Tue., 10-8:45; Sun., 11-4:45. The Temple of Dendur, 1st Century B.C., Permanent. The Splendor of Dresden: Five Centuries of Art Collecting. More than 700 objects from the collections of the State museums of Dresden, including Old Master paintings and drawings, Meissen and oriental porcelains, armor, 19th and 20th century German art. Thru Jan. 13. Fifteenth & Sixteenth Century Northern drawings from the Robert Lehman Collection. 50 works by Flemish, German and French masters. Thru Jan. 28. Tribute to a Curator: Robert Beverly Hale. 50 paintings and sculpture acquired under Hale, 1946-66. Thru Mar. 4. Alfred Stieglitz, photographs, all of Georgia

PHOENIX GALLERY, 30 W. 57 St., 245-5095, Tue.-Sat., 11-5:30. Documentation of the Cultural Council Foundation Artists Project 1978, by three photographers. Thru Jan. 11.

PLEIADES GALLERY, 152 Wooster St., Tue.-Sun., 11-6, Morry Bittiger, sculpture. Thru Jan. 14.

PRAKAPAS GALLERY, 19 E. 71 St., 737-6066. Egypt Discovered: Nineteenth Century Photographic Explorations. Thru Jan. 20.

PRINCE STREET GALLERY, 106 Prince St., Tue.-Sat. 12-5. Rosemary Hamilton, paintings and watercolors. Thru Jan. 24.

PROFILE GALLERY, 113 Jane St. (entrance on West St.), Tue. 4-10, Wed.-Sun. 12-6. Religion in Contemporary Art, group show. Thru Jan. 31.

MAX PROTETCH GALLERY, 37 W. 57 St., 838-7436, Tue.-Sat. 11-6. Denise Green, paintings and works on paper. Thru Jan. 15.

QUEENS MUSEUM, New York City Building, Flushing Meadow, Corona Park, Queens, 592-2405, Tue.-Sat., 10-5; Sun., 12-4. Annual Juried Exhibition. Thru Feb. 15.

Wed.-Sat., 1-6. Harry Spitz, Gerrard Houselmyer, Chiara Smith, John Shaw. Thru Feb. 1.

SOHO CENTER FOR VISUAL ARTISTS, 114 Prince St., 226-1995. Tue.-Fri., 12-5, Sat. 11-5. Lenore Malen and Richard Mathews. Thru Feb. 3.

SOHO 20, 99 Prince St., 226-4167, Tue.-Sat., 12-6. Rachel Rolon de Clet, new works. Thru Jan. 24.

SPERONE WESTWATER FISCHER, 142 Greene St., 431-3685. Tue.-Sat., 10-6. Wolfgang Laib. Thru Jan. 27.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LUBIN HOUSE, 11 E. 61 St., 925-0113, Mon.-Fri., 9-5. Drawings by Sculptors, on loan from the Robert Freidus Gallery. Thru Jan. 19.

TANGLEWOOD GALLERY DOWNTOWN, 165 Duane St. (at Hudson), 233-0130. Edward Hoppe, wood constructions. Thru Feb. 2.

TOUCHSTONE GALLERY, 118 E. 64 St., 826-6111, Tue.-Sat., 10:30-5:00. Sculptor's Drawings, group show. Thru Jan. 31.

22 WOOSTER GALLERY, 22 Wooster St., 431-6445, Tues.-Sun., 12-6. Group Show, drawings and photographs. Thru Jan. 13.

U.S. COURTHOUSE, 40 Foley Square. Joe Barnes, Steve Corey, George Di Sabato, Frances Featherington, Gloria Klein, Janey Washburn. Thru Feb. 16.

VASARELY CENTER, 1015 Madison

Riverdale, Bronx, 549-2055. The Landscape: Different Points of View, group show. Thru Jan. 20.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, 945 Madison Av., 794-0606. Tue., 11-9, Wed.-Sat. 11-6. Highlights of American Art from Permanent Collection, approximately 75 of the most important paintings, sculptures and drawings from the Museum's Permanent Collection of 1500 pieces. Thru Sept. 23, 1979. New Image Painting, Nicolas Africano, Jennifer Bartlett, Denise Green, Michael Hurson, Neil Jenney, Lois Lane, Robert Moskowitz, Susan Rothenberg, David True, Joe Zucker. Thru Jan. 28. Lorser Feitelson, a memorial exhibition. Thru Feb. 11.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, DOWNTOWN BRANCH, 55 Water St. The Presence of Nature. Thru Jan. 17.

WILLARD GALLERY, 29 E. 72 St., 744-2925. Frederick Wardy, paintings. Thru Jan. 25.

WOMEN IN THE ARTS, 435 Broome St., 966-5894. Tue.-Sat., 2-5. Ann Kronenberg, Alice Phillips, Joyce Weinstein. Thru Jan. 27.

WORK OF ART GALLERY, 87 Atlantic Av., Brooklyn Heights, 834-9677, Tue.-Fri., 2-6, Sat.-Sun., 12-6. 4th Annual Invitational. Thru Jan. 21.

ANDRE ZARRE GALLERY, 41 E. 57 St., 752-0498. Joy Walker, recent pattern painting. Thru Jan. 13.



Steckel, *Antelope over New York* (see Art Picks)

SoHo Weekly News

WEEKLY

ART PICKS

William Zimmer

Anita Steckel

Razor Gallery
464 W. Broadway
(through Jan. 27)

New York, they say, is a jungle. For Anita Steckel it is a grassland where animals like antelope and zebra can roam. Her outsize collages are a bit frightening. What if the animals start nibbling? But in a way similar to, but more benign than, King Kong and Godzilla, Steckel's overreaching creatures remind us that there is a form of life outside this rat race.

Robert Ryman

Sidney Janis
6 W. 57 St.
(through Jan. 27)

Those many names for snow that the Eskimo language is said to possess just might be applicable to Ryman's all-white paintings. There are nine of them now on view. Close viewing, if not sunglasses, is a must.

SoHo Weekly News Jan. 11, 1979

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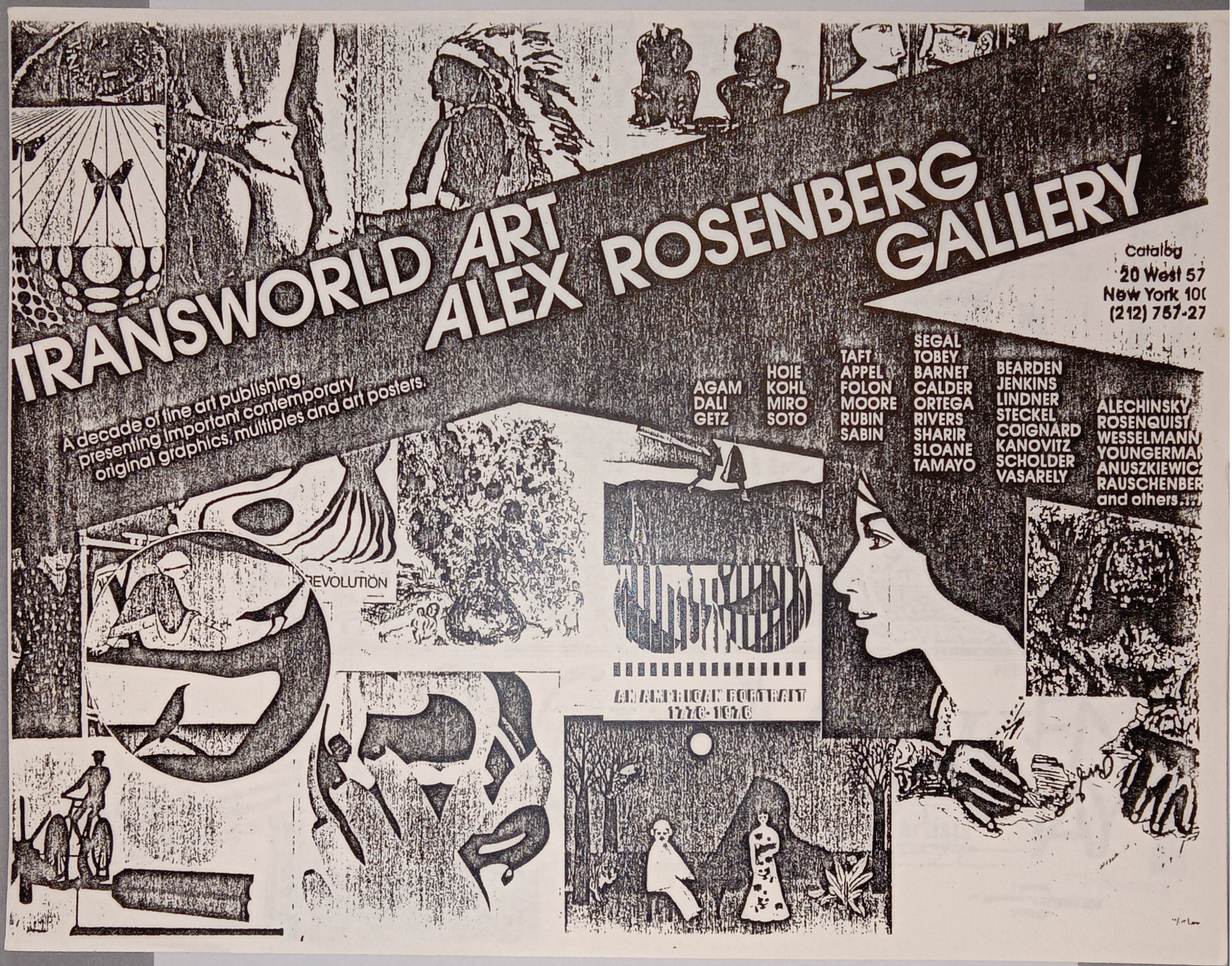

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Anita Steckel's photo-collage of a cellist drawing his bow across a female nude translates into plain language the submerged message of the cozy musicale in seventeenth-

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WE ♥ NY

ORIGINAL GRAPHICS BY 23 NEW YORK ARTISTS

Anuszkiewicz
Barnet
Bearden
Calder
Grossman
Hoie
Indiana
Jenkins
Kanovitz
Katz
Krasner
Krushenick
Lindner
Marisol
Mazonowicz
Rauschenberg
Rivers
Rosenquist
Sabin
Segal
Steckel
Taft
Wesselmann

179
20 West 57th St -
[illegible] Gallery

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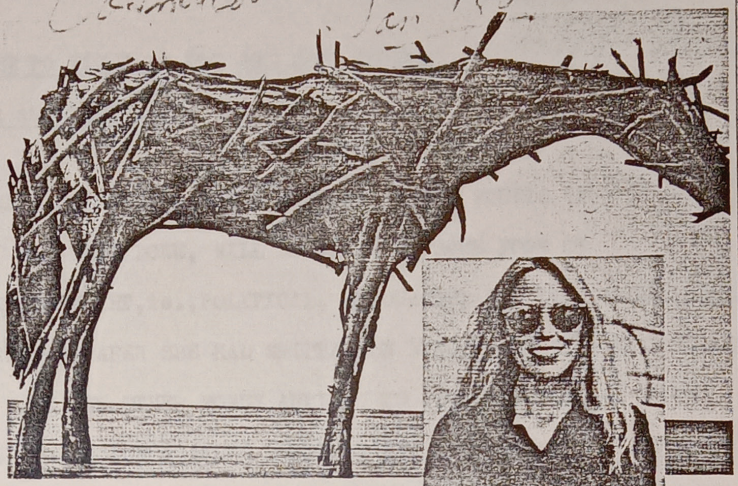
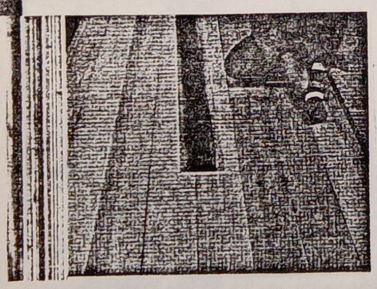


Clockwise from left: Winifred Lutz uses nature *itself* as the stuff of her inventive "site pieces"; abstract sculptor Lynda Benglis delivered a reality-*shock* when she posed nude on *Art Forum*'s staid pages; Audrey Flack's super-realistic canvasses sell for prices of five figures; the mud-and-twig horse created by Deborah Butterfield seems yieldingly *alive*; Anita Steckel says giant animals *tame* the "wild" Manhattan skyline.







WOMEN ARTISTS TODAY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE_ TO THE PRESS:

CALL: or write

omen in New York" is
representing nude
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a photograph, then
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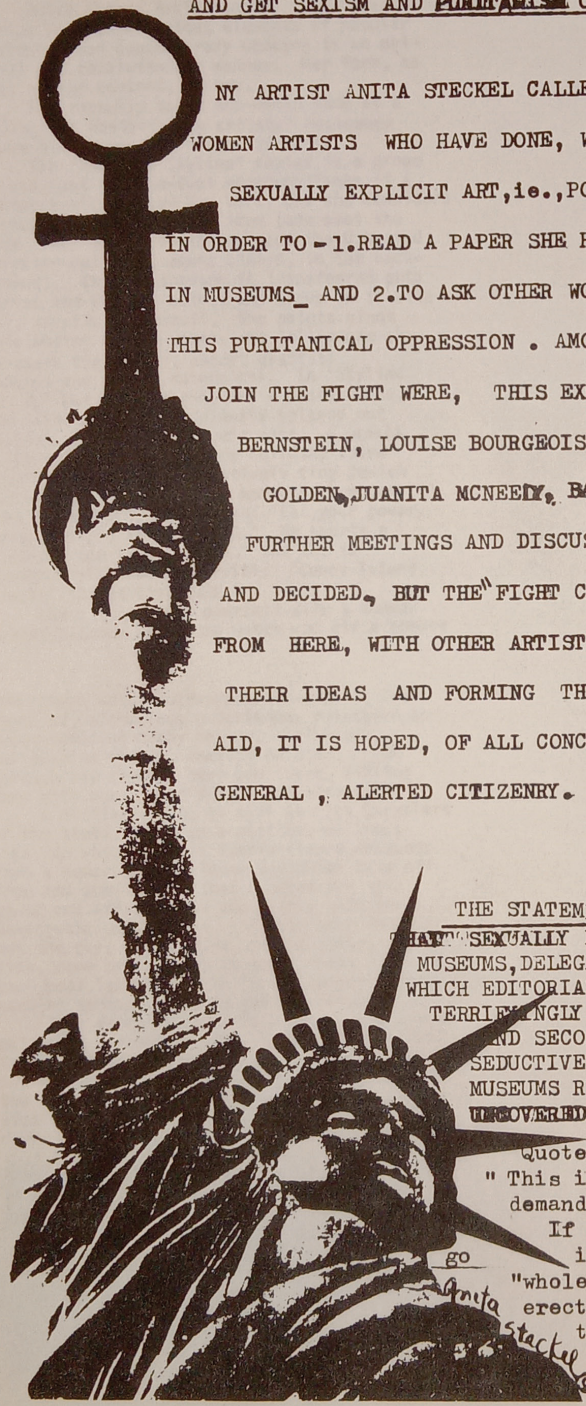
NY NY 10014

WOMEN ARTISTS JOIN TO FIGHT TO PUT SEX INTO MUSEUMS

AND GET SEXISM AND PURITANISM OUT



NY ARTIST ANITA STECKEL CALLED A MEETING, AT HER STUDIO, OF WOMEN ARTISTS WHO HAVE DONE, WILL DO , OR DO_ SOME FORM OF SEXUALLY EXPLICIT ART,ie.,POLITICAL, HUMOUROUS, EROTIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL,ETC IN ORDER TO - 1.READ A PAPER SHE HAD WRITTEN ON SEXUAL AND SEXIST CENSORSHIP IN MUSEUMS_ AND 2.TO ASK OTHER WOMEN ARTISTS TO JOIN WITH HER TO FIGHT THIS PURITANICAL OPPRESSION . AMONG THOSE ARTISTS PRESENT AND WISHING TO JOIN THE FIGHT WERE, THIS EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH STANDARD GROUP; JUDITH BERNSTEIN, LOUISE BOURGEOIS, MARTHA EDELHEIT, JOAN GLUCKMAN, EUNICE GOLDEN, JUANITA MCNEELY, BARBARA NESSIM, JOAN SEMMEL, & ANNE SHARP. FURTHER MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS WILL BE HELD AND ACTIONS DISCUSSED AND DECIDED, BUT THE "FIGHT CENSORSHIP" GROUP HAS BEGUN_AND WILL GO ON FROM HERE, WITH OTHER ARTISTS CONTRIBUTING TO AND HELPING WITH THEIR IDEAS AND FORMING THEIR ACTIONS_ AND GROUPS, ENLISTING THE AID, IT IS HOPED, OF ALL CONCERNED WRITERS AND TEACHERS, AND A GENERAL , ALERTED CITIZENRY.

THE STATEMENT BY MS STECKEL MADE 2 BASIC POINTS:
THAT SEXUALLY EXPLICIT SUBJECT MATTER IS KEPT OUT OF MUSEUMS, DELEGATED TO "SMUT" MAGAZINES AND FILMS ETC., WHICH EDITORIALIZES SOCIETIES ATTITUDES IN THE MOST TERRIFYINGLY PURITANICAL, ie. UNWHOLESOME, UNHEALTHY WAY. AND SECOND, THAT WHILE FEMALES ARE SHOWN IN A SEDUCTIVE, SEXUAL , AND NUDE MANNER_THESE VERY SAME MUSEUMS REFUSE TO SHOW THE SEXUAL MALE NUDE, ie. UNCOVERED BY FIG LEAVES AND WITH ERECT PENIS, A TABOO.

Quote-, Ms Steckel's statement;
" This is blatent sexist discrimination- and we women demand equal sexual exposure of men in art in museum If the erect penis is not "wholesome" enough to go into museums- it should not be considered "wholesome" enough to go into women. And if the erect penis is "wholesome" enough to go into women then it is more than "wholesome" enough to go into the greatest museums."

Anita Steckel ©

(complete statement enclosed)

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art

september 1973/off our backs

anita slavin arkin steckel

Anita Slavin Arkin Steckel is a breakthroug genius who fuses various elements of popular "culture" and contemporary concern in an original and revolutionary manner. Her form, as well as her content, is new.

She recently had a one-woman show at a gallery in Westbeth, an artists' residence, where she showed two series of works.

The "New York Skyline" series is a group of six-foot by nine-foot photo-montages of a photographic view of New York, one she considers archetypal, a "stamp" or icon (one sees the East River in the foreground and the U.N. and Chrysler building, among others, in the background). This photograph is transferred onto canvas and Steckel paints and draws on it with oil, acrylic and pencil. She paints giant nude bodies mostly women, who loll among skyscrapers they dwarf, amidst graffiti doodles and ethnic references. In "Skyline No. 5," her most recent, and a masterpiece, the giant figures, indolently splayed out against the sky, take their ease. A penis which extends the Chrysler building spire spurts semen which a relatively tiny Jewish mother spoon feeds to her mammoth olympian son; underneath, the slogan: "Eat your power honey, before it gets cold." He sports a "Lenny Bruce lives" tatoo. The sky is tatooed with other graffiti: "Coney Island lives." "Genet lives 302."

The cityscape is overlaid with a swampy greenish-brown wash, the water and air a sombre atmosphere which corresponds somehow to the depth of unconscious experience; pollution as dream-inducing murky memory. Brilliant yellow-pink clouds, heavily painted, break through the figures here and there, filling them with sunsets of sudden illumination.

A sitting woman, as tall as five Chryslers if she stood, holds up a platter, waitress-like, on which a small female figure rebounds from a somersault. Flower scribbles take off from and arm-hinting that doodles are both cause and effect of an absolutely unfettered, democratic imagination. Jewish star doodles dot the sky, while below, in the river, gefilte fish, mere ovals, swim in magic pools of three, each pool labelled, with "smile button" faces, heading perhaps south to spawn in Miami-land.

This description by no means exhausts the painting; her name on the bottom: Anita Slavin Arkin Steckel- first, mother's maiden, her maiden and her married name- makes clear the intention: a complete mythic and psychological history of Steckel's life, which is also ours.

Steckel's work is irresistible. The form, combining as it does photography and painting (in a kind of plastic equivalent of Mailer's autobiographical journalism), and combining personal, ethnic and urban motifs- grafitti, doodles, references to the artist's religion, etc.- into an epic mode touches the contemporary nerve and synthesizes more elements of daily experience into a transcendant imagery than one could have imagined possible. Steckel's is the new art, more than anything I've seen since pop (call it "mom" art?).

Her series "Giant Women in New York" is part of a group of works representing nude women painted onto photographs of New York and bearing Steckel's own photographic face. Steckel started out with a photograph, then came to grafting in a fantasy image, and then decided to super-impose her real self on the fantasy image. These montages are "medium," about four by three.

In "Rodeo" a woman straddles the Empire State Building, holding on with one hand and wielding a lasso that resembles a whip with the other. She is in command of the bronco that is the city and the phallus. Her expression is one of manifest contentment as she rides alone in the city, large, beautiful, elemental, free. The montage speaks to women's fantasies of power and mastery. In "Coney Island" a lush odalisk Steckel reclines on the beach on the other side of a boardwalk where *balabustas* sit on benches. Another, liberated, female aspect, in somewhat discordant union with the kerchiefed women, Steckel stares at the viewer quasi-defiantly.

In "Last Supper," Steckel is spread out on a long table at a male banquet in an abstract landscape of dark, bleak land and sky and in "Embarassment" Steckel is torn up the middle with a deep fissure in the presence of oblivious construction workers. Her immassive face lets fall unnoticed stylized tears; she is a building being wrecked. Perhaps because the face is never enraged, that is, because the pain is not *signalized* but *symbolized*, Steckel's description of it is impossible to dismiss.

Her haunting "Women Impaled on New York" represents foggy skyscraper tops on which a tribe of women, infinitely extending- Steckel one- have taken up stalwart residence. The building spires impale the women- the truth about the city- but the truth is also their spectral presence. Luminous vampires, they have come out when the city is silent to reclaim possession.

The Steckel persona that emerges from this series is wry, beautiful, ironic, taking pleasure in shedding her inhibitions, like her clothes, in a city which is a dark river she secretly goes skinny-dipping in, at night, alone.

Similar to "Giant Women" are a group of montages where Steckel draws herself to scale. In "On the Subway," the Steckel character, her breasts and crotch exposed, sits between a young and an old man on a train. One hand is under the old man's, while another lies loosely between her legs. (It is important that the protagonist is always Steckel- it says that *every* woman has the entire range of experiences Steckel describes.)

Steckel renders female experience in a way which makes pain undeniable, but also presence, fantasy, power, sexuality. Most significant, her tone is *epic*: nothing but the largest arena, the most far-reaching resonances for women.

by maryse holder

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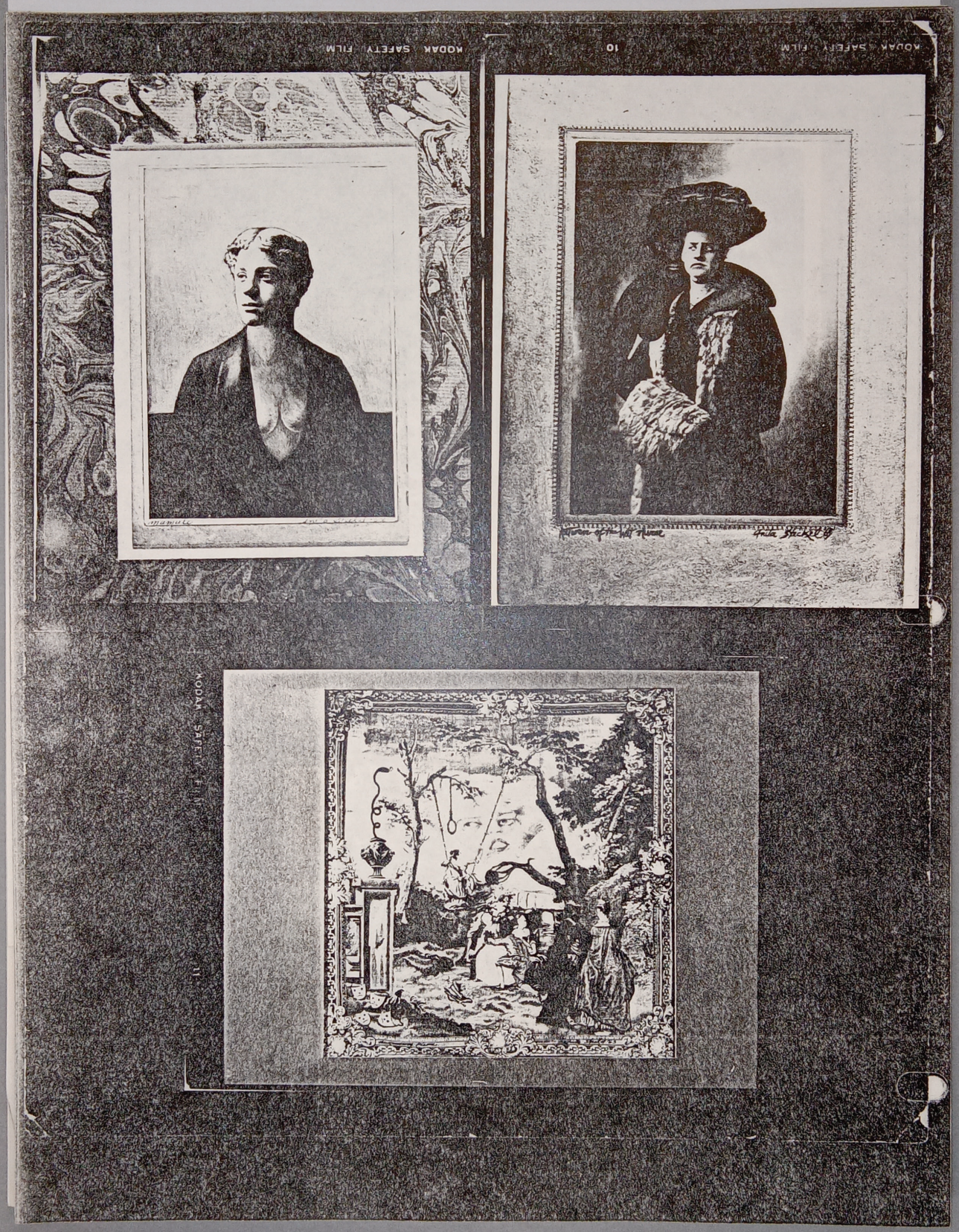

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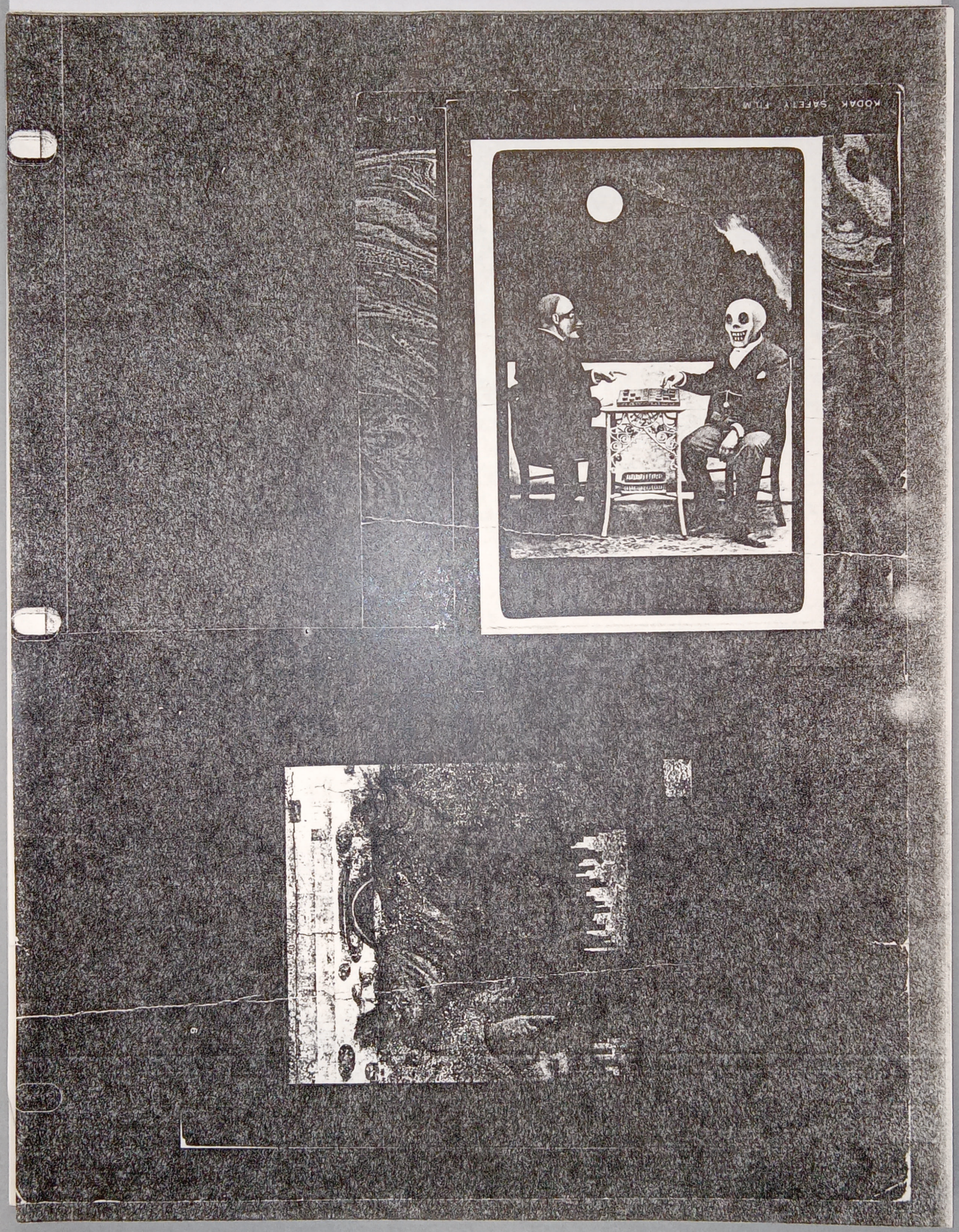

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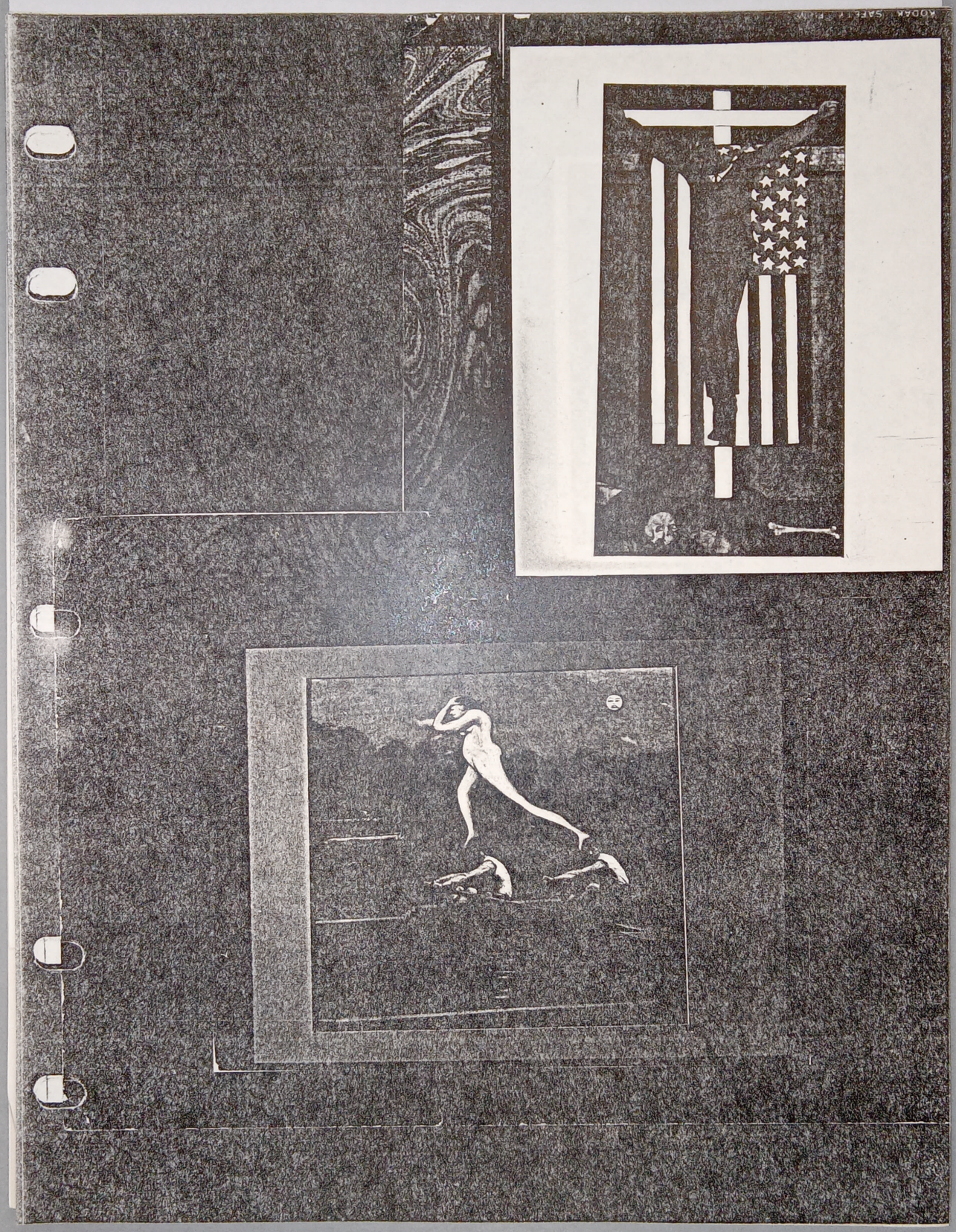

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DR SEYMOU EXKOW PRESIDENT ROCKALAND COMMUNITY COLLEE
145 COLLEGE ROAD.SUFFERNNY 10901
ANITA STECKEL SEROUS ARTIST WHOSE WORK ATTACKS REPRESEIVE SOCIAL SITUATION WHICH CONCERNS HER DEEPLY WORK DEFINITLY NOT PORNOGRAPHIC IN MY OPINION
JAMES BISHOP ART NEWS EITIORIAL ASSOCIATE.

914 356-4650

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179

The Board of Governors and the Director of

The Brooklyn Museum

request the pleasure of your company

at the preview of the exhibition

WOMEN ARTISTS



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OBRA GRAFICA DEL **TALLER WESTBETH** DE NUEVA YORK

DEL 9 AL 29 DE FEBRERO DE 1972
SALA INTERNACIONAL
INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE BELLAS ARTES
DEPARTAMENTO DE ARTES PLASTICAS
MEXICO
1972

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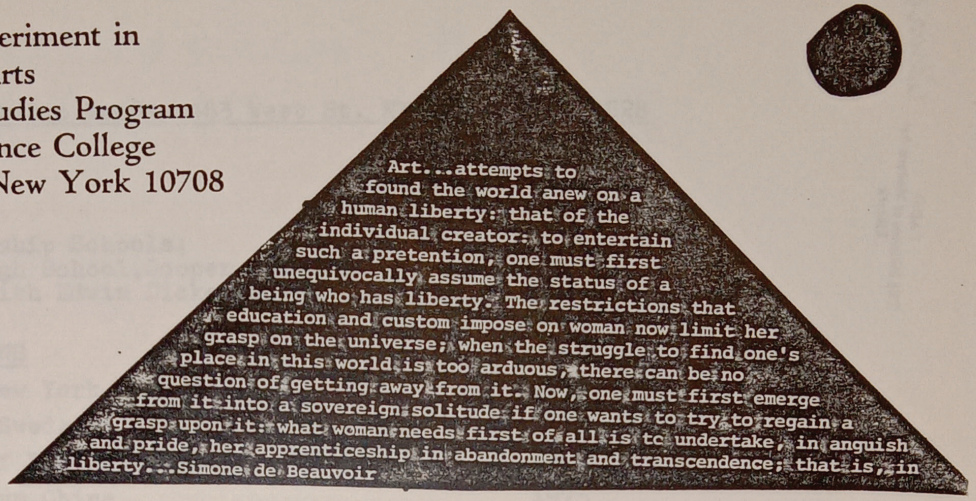
Women Experiment in
the Living Arts
Women's Studies Program
Sarah Lawrence College
Bronxville, New York 10708



Women Experiment in
the Living Arts

Gallery House
April 10-May 11
10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
7:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.

Sarah Lawrence College
Bronxville, New York 10708

Women Experiment In the Living Arts:

The first show will officially open Tuesday night at 8:00 p.m. Anita Steckel, a foremost artist and a leader among the women artists, will speak and show some of her work on Wednesday, April 11 at 10:00 p.m. This is a special event to begin our season.

Each show will open with a program that will be performed in the gallery by women involved with fine arts, performing arts, and writing. BATES STUDIO ONE, a new space provided for the exhibitions is located on the lowermost floor of Bates.

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ANITA STECKEL -Studio 1009A- 463 West St. NYC,10014-243 4828

Art Studies

New York Scholarship Schools;
Music and Art High School,Cooper Union
Advanced study with Edwin Dickenson-painting, drawing 2 yrs

MUSEUM EXHIBITIONS

Whitney Museum,New York	1969
Lunds Konsthall,Sweden	1970
Mexican Palace Of Fine Arts,Mexico	1972
Chung-Hsing Museum,China	1973
Aldrich Museum,Conn.	1974
Portland Museum,Maine	1974
Aldrich Museum,Soho Center (2 person,7 works)N.Y.	1975
Montgomery Alabama Museum Of Fine Arts	1975
Bowers Museum,California	1975
Kipp Museum, Pennsylvania	1975
Michigan Museum Of Art,Michigan	1976
The Bronx Museum,New York	1976
Krannert Museum,Illinois	1977
Elehjem Museum,Madison Wisconsin	1977
Rochester Memorial Museum,New York	1977
The Brooklyn Museum,New York	1977

ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS

Hacker,57th St. New York	1961
Hacker Gallery "	1963
Kozmopolitan ,86th St.N.Y	1969
Rockland C.College,N.Y.	1971
10th St.Gallery,N.Y.	1972
Westbeth Gallery,N.Y.	1972
Westbeth Gallery,N.Y.	1973
Hansen Gallery,New York	1977
RaBOR GALLERY "	1979

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COLLEGE & GROUP EXHIBITIONS

School Of Visual Arts	1965
School Of Visual Arts	1967
Tibor De Nagy, selected by John Cage	1967
CAPS traveling Colleges NY State	1971/72
Sarah Lawrence College	1973
NYU	1973
The New School	1973
Hobart & William Smith	1974
SUNY	1974
Alfred.	1974
St. Thomas Aquinas	1974
Sparkill	1975
U Of Pennsylvania	1975
U Of Michigan	1975
U Of Illinois	1975
St. Peters College	1976
Prince St. Invitational.	1976
AIR Invitational.	1976
Buecker 40 Yrs Of American Collage.	1976
Lincoln Center.	1977
Mcgraw Hill.	1978
World Trade Center	1978

Womens Interart Center, The Womans Building, Etc..

ALEX ROSENBERG - 57th St. 1978, '79

COLLEGE LECTURES

Sarah Lawrence, The New School, City College, NYU, Hobart & William Smith, Rutgers, New Rochelle, U Of Rhode Island, Queens College, Etc.

Current Teaching

The School Of Visual Arts, Fine Arts Dept.

ARTICLES, REVIEWS

New York Magazine, Arts, Art News:., Ms, Evergreen, Esquire, Woman Art, Village Voice, Soho News, New York Times, New York Post, Viva, Bollafi Arte, Majority Report, Chrysallis, Heresies, Off Our Backs, Changes, Crawdaddy, EVO, Daily News, Gallery, WWDaily, Whos Who in American Art, Etc. ENGLAND - SPARE RIB - COSMOPOLITAN

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Art Reviews, selections

Absolutely original..magically transforms..Her pure message is always art
Lawrence Campbell, Art News

Powerful Image..Heroine..Found Woman
Ms Magazine

Exquisite craftsmanship..the shock of originality..scorpion spleen of George Grosz..The monumental irreverance of Marcel Duchamp, a talent, a comer, wait and see .. New York Post

These are my favorites, of 65 works(named 5 artists including - - Anita Steckel)
Grace Glueck New York Times

Of 50 works by Dali, Cocteau, Nivola Tchelitchew, Marisol, Beacchamp, two are worth a second visit, (one of these is)Anita Steckel
Art News

Beautifully drawn additions to Ingres..like long lost pentimenti
Art News

Breakthrough genius..revolutionary ,masterpiece..the new art more than anything else I've seen, combines photo and painting in visual equivalent of Mailers autobiographical journalism, nothing but the most far reaching arenas for women, irrisistible, Epic.
Maryse Holder, OOBacks Magazin & Changes Magaz

First all male nude show by a woman artist in recorded history
Village Voice

Very special, bestknown 'non famous' artist today ..wonderful reputation..
Village Voice

One of the most promising artists in America today
Richard Lindner

Liberating us from any fixed idea of what art is, let alone what life is- Esquire compares her with ingmar Bergmans, "The Magician"
Arts Magazine

Steckels Art has the appeal of a fine fairy tale in which the wonderment coincides with something fundamental to ones own life. Her special quality is that she puts her enchantment to good political use
Bill Zimmer Soho News

Anita Steckels photo collage of a cellist drawing his bow across a female nude translates into plain language the submerged message of the cozy musicale in 17th century Dutch Art..The real news today is being made by women, telling the art story that hasn't been told...their own.
Dorothy Seiberling, New York Magazine

"Magic"..Chrysalis
"Magic"..Womanart
"Magic"..New York Post

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THE UNDERGROUND GALLERY 419 East 9th Street (Bet. 1st & Avenue A)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANITA STECKEL Paintings and Montages April 29 - May 15

SEXUAL IMAGERY - A FEMALE PERSPECTIVE

The Underground Gallery proudly announces the opening of a vernisage exhibition by Anita Steckel. The exhibit will include a four-piece large painting series, a HITLER montage series, and several smaller montage and drawing series.

The four large paintings are brightly-colored and "celebrational". The Hitler series is composed of black and white montage "rage pieces". The other montage and drawing series span a broad range. The high level of the work in combination with her courage to deal with subject matter that is often taboo is extraordinary. Simone de Beauvoir said, "Art attempts to found the world anew on a human liberty: that of the individual creator: to entertain such a pretention, one must first unequivocally assume the status of a being who has liberty." Anita Steckel has that "no holds-barred" freedom -- that liberty!

Anita Steckel was awarded the National Endowment for painting in 1983. She has exhibited in 17 museums nationally and internationally, including the Whitney and the Brooklyn Museums. Her work is in collections of the J. Patrick Lanan Museum and of William DeKooning, among others. Of her work DeKooning said, "It never matters what material she uses, it's what she does with it. Her work is among the best I have ever seen. This is the "cat's meow!""

Jerry Talmer of the N.Y. Post said, "The shock of originality, the monumental irreverance of Marcel Duchamp." Maryse Holder of Changes said, "Breakthrough genius, revolutionary masterpieces --- the new art more than anything else I've seen. Irresistible, epic. Combines painting and photo in visual equivalent of Mailer's autobiographical journalism." Richard Lindner said, "This is the best artist in America today!"

Gallery Hours: Fri. through Sun. 1-6

Contact: Gae Zimmermann, Director 243-4828

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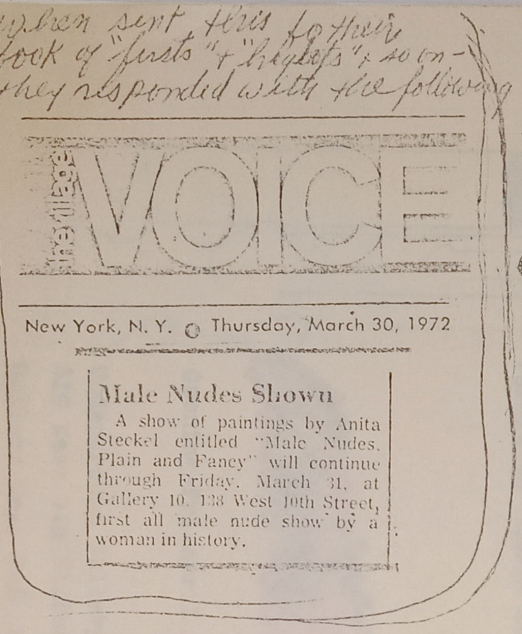
When sent this to their book of "firsts" + "lasts", + so on - they responded with the following: ↓



VOICE

New York, N. Y. ◎ Thursday, March 30, 1972

Male Nudes Shown

A show of paintings by Anita Steckel entitled "Male Nudes, Plain and Fancy" will continue through Friday, March 31, at Gallery 10, 128 West 10th Street, first all male nude show by a woman in history.

2 Cecil Court, London Road
Enfield, Middlesex
Telephone: 01 366 4551
Telegrams and cables: MOSTEST ENFIELD

Guinness Superlatives Limited

DIRECTORS
A. J. R. Purssell, Chairman
N. D. McWhirter, Managing
C. A. Wood (E. Beedell, alternate)
S. E. Darmon
J. S. Anthony

31 May 1972

Dear Miss Steckel,

Thank you for your letter received on 28 May.

In a general reference book such as ours I think that a "first", if it is such, of this kind is something better left to a more specialist publication or periodical. There is the added difficulty that such a "first" has little international significance insofar as in many countries it would be precluded as being prosecutible in common law.

Yours sincerely,

Norris D McWhirter
Editor
Guinness Book of World Records

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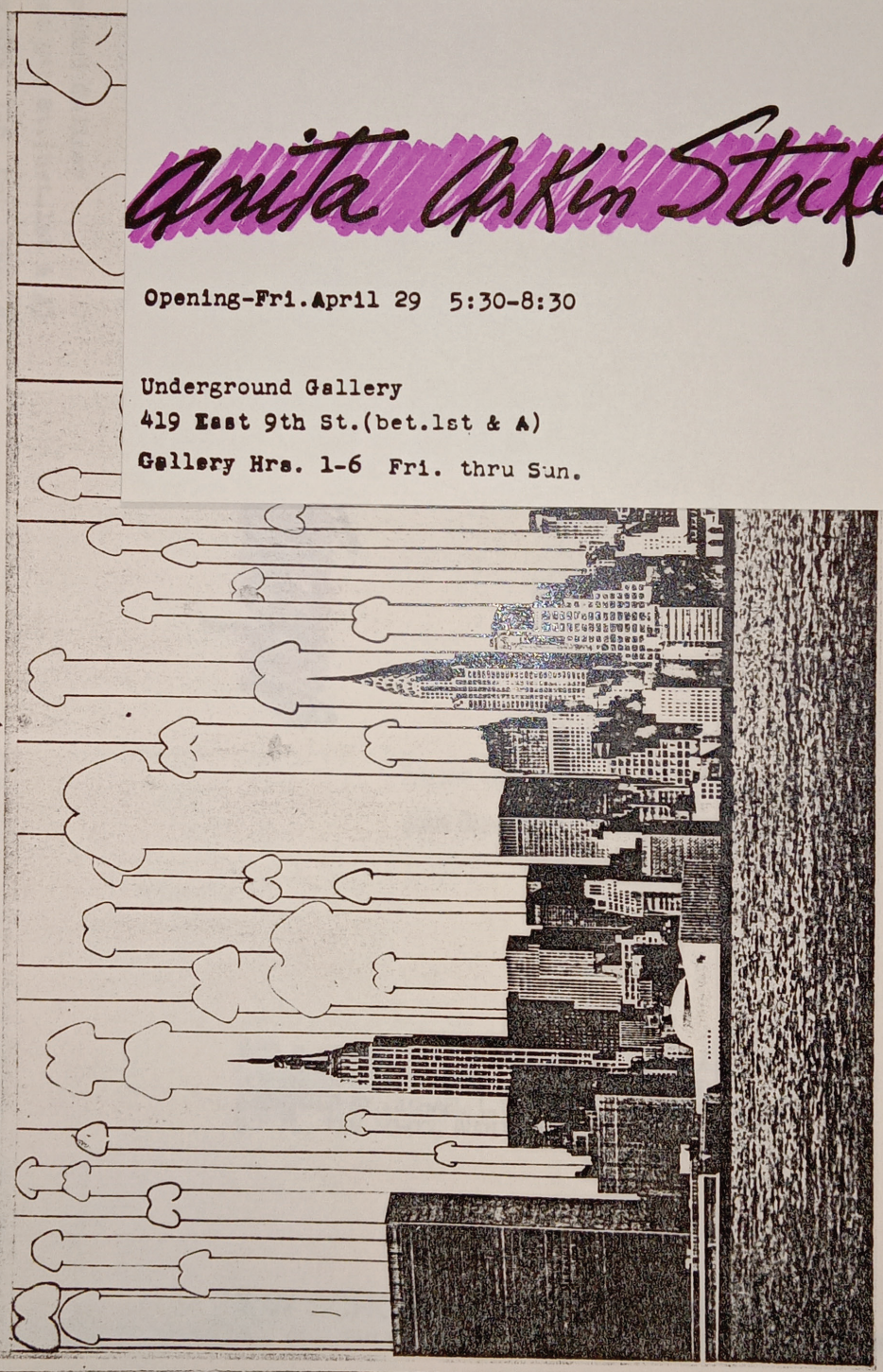
Sexual Imagery-a Female Perspective
Vernisage April 29- May 15

Anita Askin Steckel

Opening-Fri.April 29 5:30-8:30

Underground Gallery
419 East 9th St.(bet.1st & A)
Gallery Hrs. 1-6 Fri. thru Sun.



4x9 foot canvas - anita Steckel -

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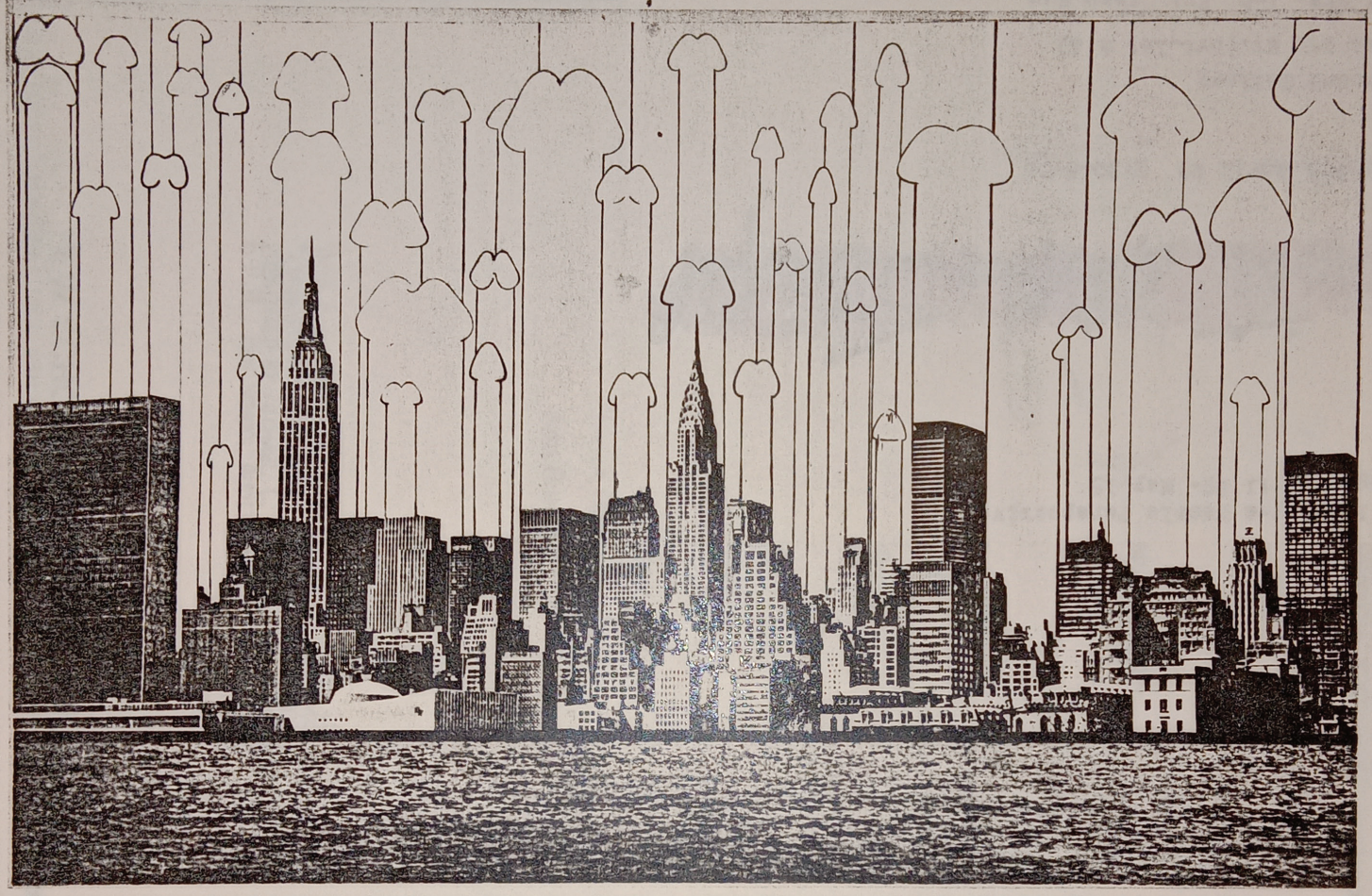

6 X 9 foot canvas - anita Steckel -

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announcement

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JUDITH BERNSTEIN
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JUANITA MC NEELY
EUNICE GOLDEN
JOAN GLUCKMAN

THIS PANEL DISCUSSION IS PART OF COURSE #25,
"PORNOGRAPHY UNCOVERED, EROTICISM EXPOSED,"
PRESENTED BY MICHAEL C. LUCKMAN, WED, OCT. 17,
6 P.M., NEW SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH
66 WEST 12TH STREET, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10011 / (212) OR 5-2700

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announcement

THE NEW FEMALE SEXUALITY IN ART

FIGHT CENSORSHIP GROUP

ANITA STECKEL

LOUISE BOURGEOIS

JOAN SEMMEL

MARTHA EDELHEIT

JUDITH BERNSTEIN

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From The Book AN ANTHOLOGY OF FEMINIST ART CRITICISM -Fall,'88
Published By UMI Press,The Critics Series,Edited By Donald Kuspit
By - Cassandra Langer, Arlene Raven,& Joanna Frueh

Anita Slavin Arkin Steckel is a breakthrough genius who fuses various elements of popular "culture" and contemporary concern in an original and revolutionary manner. Her form, as well as her content, is new.

The "New York Skyline" series is a group of six-foot by nine-foot photo-montages of a photographic view of New York, one she considers archetypal, a "stamp" or icon (one sees the East River in the foreground and the U.N. and Chrysler building, among others, in the background). This photograph is transferred onto canvas and Steckel paints and draws on it with oil, acrylic and pencil. She paints giant nude bodies mostly women, who loll among skyscrapers they dwarf, amidst graffiti doodles and ethnic references. In "Skyline No. 6," her most recent, and a masterpiece, the giant figures, indolently splayed out against the sky, take their ease. A penis which extends the Chrysler building spire spurts semen which a relatively tiny Jewish mother spoon feeds to her mammoth olympian son; underneath, the slogan: "Eat your power honey, before it gets cold." He sports a "Lenny Bruce lives" tatoo. The sky is tatooed with other graffiti: "Coney Island lives." "Genet lives 302."

The cityscape is overlaid with a swampy greenish-brown wash, the water and air a sombre atmosphere which corresponds somehow to the depth of unconscious experience: pollution as dream-inducing murky memory. Brilliant yellow-pink clouds, heavily painted, break through the figures here and there, filling them with sunsets of sudden illumination.

A sitting woman, as tall as five Chryslers if she stood, holds up a platter, waitress-like, on which a small female figure rebounds from a somersault. Flower scribbles take off from and arm-hinting that doodles are both cause and effect of an absolutely unfettered, democratic imagination. Jewish star doodles dot the sky, while below, in the river, gefilte fish, mere ovals, swim in magic pools of three, each pool labelled, with "smile button" faces, heading perhaps south to spawn in Miami-land.

This description by no means exhausts the painting; her name on the bottom: Anita Slavin Arkin Steckel- first, mother's maiden, her maiden and her married name- makes clear the intention: a complete mythic and psychological history of Steckel's life, which is also ours.

Steckel's work is irresistible. The form, combining as it does photography and painting (in a kind of plastic equivalent of Mailer's autobiographical journalism), and combining personal, ethnic and urban motifs- graffitti, doodles, references to the artist's religion, etc.- into an epic mode touches the contemporary nerve and synthesizes more elements of daily experience into a transcendant imagery than one could have imagined possible. Steckel's is the new art, more than anything I've seen since pop (call it "mom" art?).

Her series "Giant Women in New York" is part of a group of works representing nude women painted onto photographs of New York and bearing Steckel's own photographic face. Steckel started out with a photograph, then came to grafting in a fantasy image, and then decided to super-impose her real self on the fantasy image. These montages are "medium," about four by three.

In "Rodeo" a woman straddles the Empire State Building, holding on with one hand and wielding a lasso that resembles a whip with the other. She is in command of the bronco that is the city and the phallus. Her expression is one of manifest contentment as she rides alone in the city, large, beautiful, elemental, free. The montage speaks to women's fantasies of power and mastery. In "Coney Island" a lush odalisk Steckel reclines on the beach on the other side of a boardwalk where *balabustas* sit on benches. Another, liberated, female aspect, in somewhat discordant union with the kerchiefed women, Steckel stares at the viewer quasi-defiantly.

In "Last Supper," Steckel is spread out on a long table at a male banquet in an abstract landscape of dark, bleak land and sky and in "Embarassment" Steckel is torn up the middle with a deep fissure in the presence of oblivious construction workers. Her immassive face lets fall unnoticed stylized tears; she is a building being wrecked. Perhaps because the face is never enraged, that is, because the pain is not *signalized* but *symbolized*, Steckel's description of it is impossible to dismiss.

Her haunting "Women Impaled on New York" represents foggy skyscraper tops on which a tribe of women, infinitely extending- Steckel one- have taken up stalwart residence. The building spires impale the women- the truth about the city- but the truth is also their spectral presence. Luminous vampires, they have come out when the city is silent to reclaim possession.

The Steckel persona that emerges from this series is wry, beautiful, ironic, taking pleasure in shedding her inhibitions, like her clothes, in a city which is a dark river she secretly goes skinny-dipping in, at night, alone.

Similar to "Giant Women" are a group of montages where Steckel draws herself to scale. In "On the Subway," the Steckel character, her breasts and crotch exposed, sits between a young and an old man on a train. One hand is under the old man's, while another lies loosely between her legs. (It is important that the protagonist is always Steckel- it says that *every* woman has the entire range of experiences Steckel describes.)

Steckel renders female experience in a way which makes pain undeniable, but also presence, fantasy, power, sexuality. Most significant, her tone is *epic*: nothing but the largest arena, the most far-reaching resonances for women.

by maryse holder

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'New Mona Takes the Brush" / *Anita Steckel*

Bicentennial Exhibition

40 YEARS OF AMERICAN COLLAGE

March 4 — April 2

List of Artists

Virginia Admiral
Eric Appel
R.P.C. Armstrong
Eliss Asher
Dorothea Baer
Banerjee
Arlyne Bayer
Bob Benson
Camille Billops
Uli Boege
Jim Bohn
Ilya Bolotowsky
Maude Boltz
George Brecht
Lilly Brody
James Brooks
Fritz Bultman
Donna Byars
Sylvia Carewe
Colette
Bruce Conner
Michael Cooper
Fletcher Copp
Paul Covington
Vincent D'Aquila
Nöel De Gaetano
Royce Dendler
Sari Dienes
Tanya Duane

Mark Dunham
Wendy Ward Ehlers
Ronnie Elliott
Lily Ente
Betty Esman
Solomon Ethe
Bea Evan
John Evans
Suzy Frelinghuysen
Albert M. Fine
Perle Fine
Ruth Ann Fredenthal
Ruth Friedman
Saul Fuerstein
Suzi Gablik
Lester Glassner
Sam Goodman
Robert Goodnough
David Gordon
Marty Greenbaum
John Grillo
Nancy Grossman
Sophia Gutherz
Ira Joel Haber
Richard Hanwi
Mike Hart
Ted Haseltine
Addie Herder
Dick Higgins

John Iozia
Ward Jackson
Cletus Johnson
Ray Johnson
Alex Katz
Paul Katz
Tom Kendall
Kiki Kogelnik
Alison Knowles
Lee Krasner
Stanton Kreider
S. Brody Lederman
Diane Levin
Golda Lewis
Henry Lewis
John Little
Patrick Lowery
Boria Lurie
Robert Mapplethorpe
Carolyn Mazzello
Elizabeth McFadden
Jeanne Miles
Fred Mitchell
Claire Moore
George L.K. Morris
Robert Motherwell
Jim Nichols
Gyora Novak
Valery Oisteanu

John Opper
Charlotte Park
Lil Picard
Ed Plunkett
Brenda Price
Leo Rabkin
Joseph Raffael
Jeanne Reynal
Ce Roser
Erika Rothenberg
Mark Rutkoski
Anne Ryan
Lenny Salem
Jonathan Santlofer
Ray Saunders
Edith Schloss
Carolee Schneemann
Charles Schwartz
Thomas Shannon
Dee Shapiro
Anne Sharp
Karen Shaw
Mel Shultz
Anita Siegel
Thomas Sills
Leon Polk Smith
Stella Snead
Harry Soviak
Anita Steckel

Knute Stil
Philip Sult
Richard S
Tania
Lenore Ta
George Te
Yvonne Tl
Matthew '
Mary Tress
Richard O
Toshiko U
Johanna V
Stan Vand
Charmion
Carol Wald
Sylvia Wal
Anna Wali
James Wari
Florence W
Ralph Whi
Robert Wh
John Wille
Ann Wilso
May Wilso
Rochelle W
David Zack
Kathleen Z
Jim Zver

catalogue cover

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Art: The Way Museums Work

By GRACE GLUECK

THERE are collectors who acquire art with passion, knowledge, deeply developed tastes. And then there are—well, buyers of art who simply put themselves in the hands of dealers.

Judging by her holdings, now on view at the Guggenheim Museum, Evelyn Sharp belongs to the second category. A businesswoman who, with her late husband, Jesse, owned a chain of imposing hotels, Mrs. Sharp didn't even [illegible] period of years (a mechanism with effect as write-offs): The four comprise two by Léger, "Starfish" (1942) and



leaving uninvaded only the bottom edge and an upper corner of the picture plane.

The forms, suggesting primitive architectural shapes, are drawn first in charcoal, then painted over. The color, though essentially without texture, is full of incident, applied thinly enough for underpainting to show through. The overall impact is exhilarating, suggesting a deep and happy commitment to paint and canvas.

"Animal Shaw" by the Organization of Independent Artists (United States Customs Service, 6 World Trade Center): Can any true artgoer still be unaware of an octopoid group called the Organization of Independent Artists? Now involving nearly 1,000 members, it's had the chutzpah to take advantage of a little-known Federal law that encourages community use of public buildings for cultural and other activities.

Since last June, when it infiltrated the United States Court House on Foley Square with an exhibition, the group has spread into public spaces all over New York, from the Bronx Academy of Science down to Battery Park. And now its latest caper, the "Animal Show," has put into the halls of the United States Customs Service a menagerie of creatures of every stripe and medium; ranging from a five-hump dromedary made largely of cretonne curtains by the costume designer Ralph Lee to a school of tiny fish—run up on the Xerox machine by Christy Rupp—that swim up the wall of an entrance lobby.

Though the show, ringmastered by Joseph Strand, an artist from California who has contributed some of his own works, has a number of duds, its theme is foolproof enough to override them. Its 65 works present a beast for every taste and some that are not quite beasts, but evocations of them. These are my favorites, particularly a creature that never was by Gillian Bradshaw-Smith. Made of gray canvas stuffed with kapok, its faceless head becomes a trunk that wraps around the body to end in a feelerlike tail.

What else? Well, there are Anita Steckel's blown-up New York skylines, whose buildings are dwarfed by mountain goats and zebras; Sharon Wybrandt's drawing "Queen Kong," a female gorilla that clutches in its palm a tiny male nude; Jim Richmond's cozy barnyard painting, a sort of photorealist "Peaceable Kingdom"; Jane Culbertson's brilliant grisaille drawing of an aggressive rabbit, and—oh, well, go see for yourself. Visiting hours are 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. weekdays only. Take peanuts.

The Sharp collection at the Guggenheim —what's good, what's bad and why it's there.

"Builders With Rope" (1950), and two by Miró, "The Flight of a Bird Over the Plain III" (1939) and "Woman in the Night" (1945).

Add to these a sprightly Calder mobile and one or two pleasant enough contributions each from Vlaminck, Dufy and Soutine. And the rest? Insipidity, with few of the works representing the artists at their prime. A tepid, late Braque still life, four cute Calder paintings, a couple of starry-eyed Chagalls, a classically bad Utrillo, and so forth. A collection of real museum quality? No. In fact, the Sharp collection is of far less interest in itself than as a case study in how museums add to their own holdings.

The Guggenheim, mind you, does not want all the Sharp pictures, according to a spokesman for the museum. It simply desired the plums—the four works that it has solicited. But to capture them, it got up an elaborate, full-color catalogue of all the works, researched by the museum's top curator, Louise Averill Svendsen. And in a polite preface Thomas Messer, the museum's director, tells us that the works have been "taken into custody" by the museum for the next few years and will be placed on view periodically. Presumably they will then—minus the four fractional gifts—revert to Mrs. Sharp.

Thus, by virtue of the exhibition and the catalogue, the Guggenheim has conferred on the Sharp collection as a whole the imprimatur of a major museum, which will boost its sales or donation value elsewhere.

Is this fair? Well, it seems to be the way museums work. And, argues the Guggenheim spokesman, maybe it's fairer than [illegible] museum might

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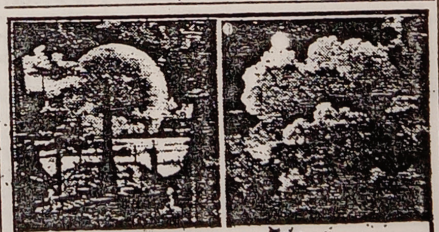

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Anita Steckel — The Floating Gallery McGraw-Hill Bldg. (closed)

Chernick's one piece is about insubstantiality that is paradoxically tough. How about a whole floating gallery that is tough? The Floating Gallery is 11 women artists who show their work in various unpredictable spaces. I went to the latest temporary incarnation of this gallery to see the xerox art of Anita Steckel, about whose work I've been looking for an opportunity to write for several months.

A large part of Steckel's appeal is that her means are transparent. She has a master cut-out of herself, in the raised-arm attitude of a rodeo cowboy, on an eagle. She imposes this cut-out on various scenic photographs and reproductions of paintings to give us, in symbolic form, the journey of a consciousness on the way to a raising. She begins over New York City and once across the ocean swoops over Picasso's garden. But the Zenith of her trip is when she interposes her upraised arm between those of God and Adam on the Sistine ceiling. Steckel's art has the appeal of a fine fairy tale in which the wonderment coincides with something fundamental to one's own life. Her special quality is that she puts her enchantment to good non-abrasive political use. •

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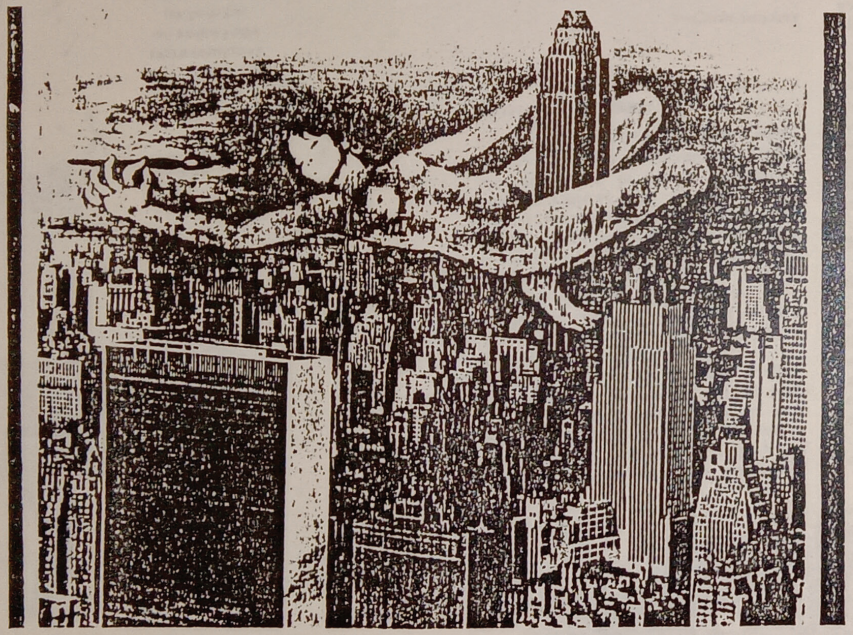

Anita Steckel
Giant Woman on N.Y., 1975
Paint and Pencil on
"found art" photo. 3' x 4'.

catalogue - frontispiece.

THE YEAR OF THE WOMAN: REPRISE

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[illegible] inchored by a crisp bead of gesso drawn through the smoky edges of the canvas. In the "Jumping Doily" series, an outgrowth [illegible] hanner fix," the [illegible] within [illegible] borders are almost [illegible] with [illegible] elements tightly reined in.

Though I have repeatedly emphasized [illegible] in this review, that is not the major impression of the show. Rather, the rapturous color, the obvious delight in the unerring laws of liquids, and the play of textures and lines infect the viewer with Seigel's own irrepressible enthusiasm.

—Carla Sanders

Donna Byars

(*A.I.R., April 30-May 25*) Byars works with found objects of different sensibilities that are joined to portray a personal esthetic. Objects such as metal wings, animal horns, shells, ironing boards, curved sticks and old wooden boxes; stitched, nailed, stuffed, enclosed, leaned and half-hidden sometimes by a drape of cloth or bandage are assembled in a sculpture format working off the wall and floor. The integrity of a particular component is never violated.

An old ironing board presented vertically on the wall supporting animal tusks reminds me of the phrase by the poet Lautremont, "as beautiful as...the fortuitous encounter upon an operating table of a sewing machine and an umbrella." [illegible] again is for instance a reminder of her mother and the love she poured into the [illegible] of the family [illegible] well, [illegible], and process [illegible] her mind as an act of her mother's caring hands. Animal horns, another [illegible] frequently employed by the artist, is combined with the ironing board [illegible]. Her interpretation of the horns [illegible] any primitivist allusion and insists that her attraction to them was more their shape, symmetry, texture and in this case their color, a pale yellow which worked with the old cover of the board.

It is natural that the dream stimulates much of Byars' creative powers and particularly for the *Oracle Stone's Grove*. All the components for this work sit on the floor and do not occupy any wall space; two stones perpendicular to each other sitting like the lap and torso of some ancient temple ruin on an old paint scratched rocker in a grove of four weeping fig trees. For Donna, the grove becomes the shrine of the oracle of her dream.

The sense of mystery and spirituality that pervades her work is further evidenced in her other works. The feeling evoked, especially in the wrapped works, is that of a sense of trespass of a private world. The images must be seen as they are. There is no supremacy of the invisible over the visible. The fact that they both exist simultaneously in Byars' work is a tribute to this sensibility and a test of our own.

—Carolee Thea

[illegible] these, sometimes smoke and fire. Her "backgrounds" are more indistinct, utilizing blurred edges, while the "foreground" activity is in more intense color, in markings and small areas that fit very naturally and easily into the spaces and rhythms of the backgrounds (which could be striated, mottled, or just smoothly mixed). Those paintings utilizing earthy palettes look like natural skins, or rock.

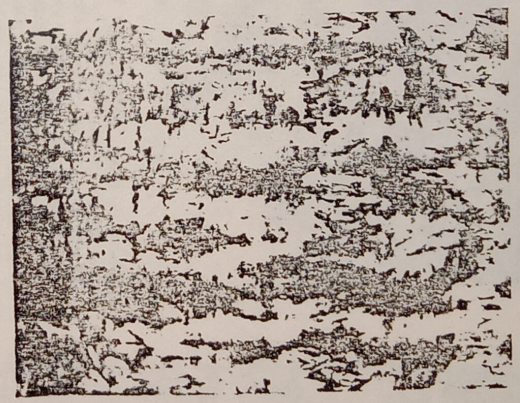
Shown with the paintings was a four-minute film, "Smoke Project Painting Film," which she made at Artpark in 1976. Using smoke flares from different sources implanted in cracks and on ledges of a cliff in Lewiston, New York, she produced smoke in wondrous colors—turquoise, apricot, brick red, filmy blue, pink—that gushed and/or lazily hazed. The rhythm of the film was that of the smoke, and of the eerie voice that was the soundtrack, which sounded like an odd reed instrument.

—Ellen Lubell

Anita Steckel

(*Hansen Galleries, April 5-May 1*) For a number of years Anita Steckel has related to women through her own experiences and fantasies. Both the *Giant Women* and *New York Skyline* series, done in the early '70s, use photomontages of actual places combined with the artist's rendering of herself and others in imaginative situa-





[illegible] 1976-77 Acrylic pigment, glue, water.

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tions. The resulting images are powerful, painful and defiant, relating to the viewer on many levels. These series of large canvases, executed in blacks, whites and grays was Steckel's means of directly presenting her message (such as Picasso presented *Guernica* and Rivera his murals) devoid of what she termed 'seductive' elements.

Among Steckel's new work is a large collage and series of xerox pieces and mixed media which continue to draw upon her fantasies and their materialization. the new work focuses on a spiritual journey represented in the form of Steckel's likeness mounted on a bird. Steckel/Bird flies from the confines of New York to visit women in a medieval garden, invades the Sistine Chapel, Da Vinci's *Last Supper*, and Picasso's garden. Magically, Steckel's spiritual release allows her to transcend boundaries of time and events. Woman, in the presence of Steckel, is introduced into male dominated events (such as *The Creation*) and assumes an active role. The concept of a journey is further reinforced through the xerox technique. Each series utilizes the same background (e.g. Sistine Chapel) while in each version the image of Steckel/Bird is shifted while being copied. The distortion creates a sense of movement and energy. Each version in a series is a one-shot image and yet a series could continue indefinitely. The further it is expanded the more unrestrained Steckel's journey. Another series, *Erotica*, combines sterile photo copies of couples in various love-making positions with drawn fantasy images triggered off by these pictures. Reality and fantasy are combined in these, the show's most beautiful pieces.

A new addition to this show is Steckel's use of color. Many of the xerox series are hand colored, *Picasso in his studio* being a striking example. Color relationships and rhythms are lovingly presented in the figures of Lenny Bruce, Genet, Billie Holiday and Picasso (to name a few), individuals whose lives have deeply affected Steckel. A large collage utilizes many of these personages plus pictures of back alleys, subways, the city. The piece begins to take on connotations of a forest. It is an appropriate feeling, for Steckel's works is lush and optimistic. In paying homage to Picasso, she visits his garden not only as a pilgrimage but as an invitation to women to rove in what has been the male garden.

—Lorraine Gilligan

Lois Polansky/ Barbara Press

(*The Graphic Eye, June 15-July 3*) The works of both Lois Polansky and Barbara Press developed out of their previous printmaking experience. Although they work very differently, both artists are interested in exploring feminine identity.

Inspired by old family photographs, Polansky combines intaglio printing with drawing to produce a series of nostalgic prints. Viewing her show is reminiscent of leafing through the pages of a family album because she repeatedly uses images of her grandparents, parents, husband and children. The significant and varied placement of the family members gives us insight into each of their roles and the relationships between them. The works give a photographic impression because of the studied poses and use of cropping technique; however, the artist chose to etch the likeness rather than utilize the actual photograph. The artist's foremost interest in printing is demonstrated by the presence of written references to the stages in the printing process which are inscribed all over the meticulously graphed ground. In addition, smaller, more intimate reflections on art and life are penciled in other areas of the works.

Barbara Press' prints emphasize de space and the contrast between soft orga ic forms and hard bone-like struct Her three-dimensional works are abstra reliefs made by combining molded hand-made paper and small bags (made from nylon stockings) which are filled with lenti beans. She also includes copper and brass plumbing parts, hair like rope fibers, stee wool, springs and nails. By placing the nails in long rows, they serve a supportive function and correspond to the vertebral columns found in some of s' prints. The effect is an erotic cont between overt and hidden form as well as a contras between organic and mach made ele-ments. One work, inspired by the way truckloads are held in place with tarpaulins and cleats, uses handmade paper and ropes to secure the bean sacks. In this work, the organic forms are mainly hidden, but can be perceived straining against the paper while being resisted by the strings. The stockings, cooking beans, and obvious hand-sewing imply traditional feminine roles, but there is a tensio between those materials and the testicle-like forms they create. Press' work conve not merely an interplay, but more of a struggle for balance betwe textures planes, organic and artificial materia and, perhaps most importantly, betwe male and female symbols.

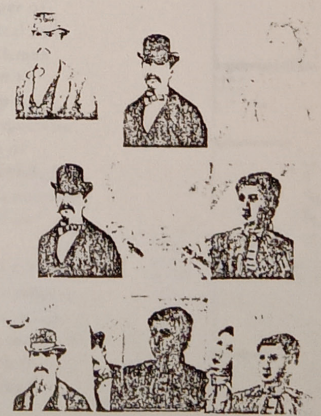
—Barbara Col

Tamar Laks

(*The Sixth Estate, May 31-June 19*) Laks paints figurative abstractions, using arbitrary, sharply delineated chromatic divisions to suggest a form broken by colored light. In her most successful works, the figure becomes an object of identificatio for the viewer; its position works in conjunction with close tonal variations t



Anita Steckel. Creation Revisited. *1977. Collage-xerox wall, 10x10'.*



Lois Polansky. Template Series: Double Intag io #1. *Intaglio and drawing, 30x22".*

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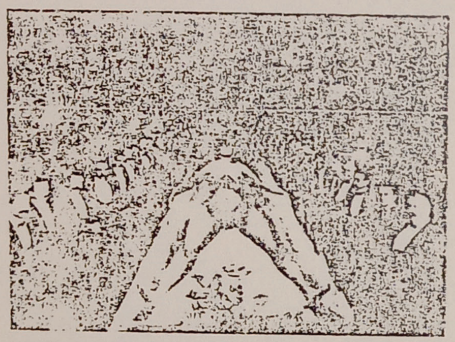
art history

Anita Steckel's Feminist Fantasy: The Making of a New Ideology



Last Supper, 1962,
6' x 8'
Xerox collage

In recent years an increasing number of artists have turned to the use of collage as a means for making strong feminist statements in their work. New York artist Anita Steckel preceded many of them, as she has been working primarily in the collage mode for the last 14 years. Like Mary Beth Edelson (see *Chrysalis* issue no. 1), Steckel utilizes collage for its political potential. In addition, collage provides Steckel with a means of addressing and using available (male) traditions of culture while giving them a feminist twist – allowing her to introduce her own point of view of those traditions while using them.

Collage is akin to science fiction – it takes elements from the present and recasts them so that we can glimpse the future from the vantage point of the present. Collage can be used to bring into reality a dream, a vision, a political goal, a fantasy.

In her earlier work, such as the *Last Supper* of 1962, Steckel used collage to make a political and personal point. Well-dressed Victorian gentlemen who are attending a businessman's luncheon sit around a long table. What is being served up is a giant female nude; her body confronts the spectator, her victim's position draws on the tradition of images of the dead Christ. Woman here is revealed to be the substance on which patriarchy has nourished itself for its survival and the maintenance of its inflated glory.

Steckel likens her use of collage to that of taking cuttings from plants. For her it is an organic process. She not only creates new pieces with older cuttings, she also goes back to earlier works, infusing them with new cuttings, updating the earlier pieces with fruits of her more recent consciousness. Her art thus becomes literally an ever-changing process.