

Appendixes

Notice

MEN AS BIRTHERS, NOT DESTROYERS: A PAINTING SERIES OF MEN

by Barbara Bickel

The history of life can be understood as the creation of ever more sensitive creatures in a Universe where there is always another dimension of beauty to be felt and savoured. Think of yourself that way, as a supreme power of sensitivity surrounded by magnificence"
— from *The Universe is a Green Dragon: a cosmic creation story* by Brian Swimme.

Recently I have begun a series of figure paintings that has evolved into a project of portraying men non-traditionally as beautiful, vulnerable birthers evoking emotions, rather than as stereotypical warriors and rulers evoking respect through fear and dominance.

The beauty of the human figure has always excited and intrigued me. In my present paintings I respond to a wood grained surface that is covered with dark glazes of oil paint. The human figure is then created by removing the glaze and exposing the differentially stained wood grain patterns. This approach parallels the principle of "the way" in Taoism which is based on the original Sanskrit meaning of 'Tao' as "the grain in wood." This creates a work of art that is a response to the forces of Life and not dominating the work completely with ego will.

This painting series is a personal endeavour in accepting masculine energy, in others and myself, as an important part of the healing journey. As long as I fear and reject the masculine in myself, I will be unable to be in this world as a liberated person. My unconscious view (image) of men as aggressive hurtful beings is, and will continue to be, contradicted in this painting series. My unconscious fears are being brought to the surface to be faced

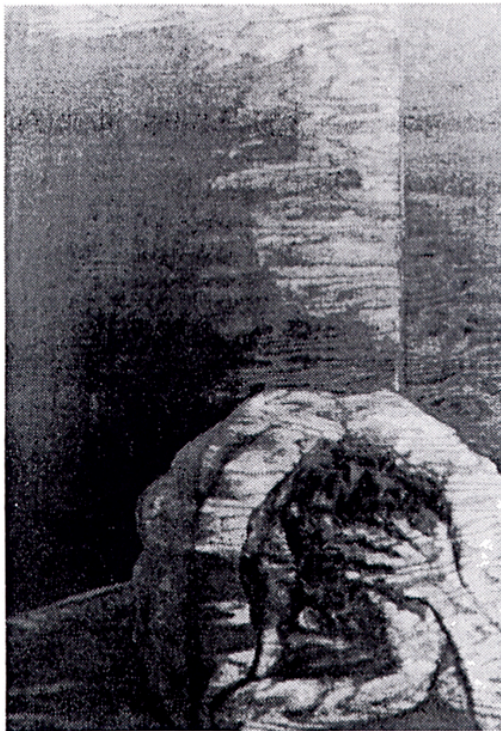
and truthed.

In bringing this project out to be seen by the public, I intend to raise the same question that is brought up in me: are we ready to accept men as nurturers, loving birthers, and creators of Life?

To fulfill this integrative healing journey, through the experience of painting, I am asking men to model in the nude and be co-creators of the way they will be portrayed, as it reflects their own journey in dealing with the male body in our society.

The process of working and responding to each other in this vulnerable endeavour is as important to share as the finished paintings. I will be documenting the experiences of myself and the men as this painting series is created. This article will be published as part of the final exhibition.

As an artist raising questions for others through visual images, I will challenge my own beliefs and those of others. Through challenging comes the opportunity for truthing our fear-based biases toward the masculine in ourselves and others. Only by overcoming these fear-based biases will we experience the deepening beauty of the reintegration of the masculine and feminine energies in both men and women.



Note: if you are a man and you are interested in modelling anonymously between Sept. '92 and Mar. '93, contact Barbara at 287-9528. Models will receive \$10/hr. This particular series is to be exhibited at the M.E.N.S. Network Annual Symposium, Apr. 30 - May 2.▲▼

She Knows Artist Statement

These places of possibility within ourselves are dark because they are ancient and hidden; they have survived and grown strong through that darkness. Within these deep places, each of us holds an incredible reserve of creativity and power, of unexamined and unrecorded emotion and feeling. The woman's place of power within each of us is neither white nor surface; it is dark, it is ancient, and it is deep. Audre Lorde

I believe that a feminist epistemology includes the dark along with the light. We have a wealth of knowledge waiting to be unearthed. Knowledge from the body and the unconscious has often been ignored as a valid site of knowledge in a modern era of scientific epistemology. My art practice for the past twelve years has been focused on the human body, working predominantly with women in a collaborative process. The underlying base that has flowed through all the work has been the honouring of the body as a sacred vessel and container of wisdom. This honouring contradicts the shaming of women's bodies and the invalidating of women's wisdom that has gone on for hundreds of years in our society. Internalized judgements keep women divided from themselves and others. The feminist art that has evolved in my own practice attempts to reunite this divide, it encourages the reconnection and reintegration of woman's knowing. My decision to study Arts-based Inquiry at UBC is a development in my art to integrate the intellect of the mind, through the study of theory and the written word, with the knowledge of the body.

I use the words trance, journey and visualization interchangeably. They all speak about going inside and accessing awareness from an altered place; a location that is removed from the mundane world. It is a space for dreaming while awake. I have experienced this state as a rich source for my creative exploration into the wisdom/knowing of the body. Trance work combined with art-making has allowed me to access a depth of knowledge that is often hidden and ignored.

Through working with trance the inner "double", who acts as an ally, guide and/or teacher, emerged as a vehicle for communicating with the Self. The uncovered inner knowledge from the trance has been transformed into art and performance ritual. In the creation of ***She Knows***, I collaborated with six women who entered the trance process to access inner knowledge. I facilitated, witnessed and participated in these journeys. I listened to the taped trance to create the three small collages, which are a visual narrative of each woman's journey. I made the large drawings last with the intention of integrating each woman with her "double". A sound installation, using the women's voices recorded in trance, along with a performance ritual that was collaboratively created through a group trance with all of the women, accompanies the visual art. The transformation of hidden knowledge, drawn from the female body into visual language, voice and understanding is the essence of this collaborative exploration.

Barbara Bickel December 1, 2002.

Barbara Bickel

WHO WILL READ THIS BODY?

A multi-media art installation



video still

*Still the body breathes
and remembers
Chooses once again
to listen for echoes of flesh
formed in words*

Exhibition Dates: April 18 – 24, 2004

Artist Talk: Thursday April 22 at 2pm

Performance Ritual (followed by a reception): Friday April 23 at 7pm

Gallery Hours: 10 – 4pm artist in attendance

Barbara Bickel is a Vancouver-based visual and performance ritual artist. Her art has been exhibited across Canada for the past 13 years. This Masters thesis exhibition exposes the challenging dynamics of the artist, researcher and educator working to integrate the Western philosophical and physical rupture of the mind and the body.

AMS Gallery

Student's Union Bldg. East Mall

University of British Columbia

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Performance Ritual – I have come to recognize performance ritual as a form of pedagogy. It is a ritual enacted within the gallery setting that has the intention of embodying and integrating the art making experience. It offers the audience/witness/learner an in the moment, felt experience that can inform and expand their understanding of the a/r/tographic process. This performance ritual is drawn from private ritual and the art making process. You are invited to participate as witness/learner. This performance ritual is a component of my Masters thesis in Education.

Acknowledgements

This performance ritual has been fed by all of my past collaborator/co-creators. I would like to particularly acknowledge the creative guidance and support of my life-partner **Michael Fisher** whose spirit connection has kept my heart and mind and body open to the depth and breadth of life long learning. Along with Michael, **Tannis Hugill** graciously offered her performance expertise to the creation of this performance ritual. My UBC thesis supervisor **Shauna Butterwick** and committee members **Rita Irwin** and **Susan Stewart** (ECIAD) have encouraged and thoughtfully challenged me as I have made my way through the often murky terrain of my masters thesis.

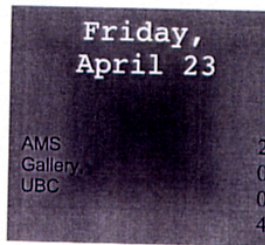
Barbara Bickel

Who
will
read
this body?



Performance Ritual

Barbara Bickel



Program

The performance ritual will be videotaped
7:00 performance ritual begins
7:25 post performance ritual dialogue with audience
7:45 reception

Performance Ritual Music

O ignis spiritus
from the CD *Materia Mystica: homage to Hildegard von Bingen*
by Estampie

Qui Sunthi, O Antique Sancti, Aer Enim Volat, Kyrie
from the CD *Materia Mystica: homage to Hildegard von Bingen*
by Estampie

Pilentze Pee
from the CD *Le Mystere des Voix Bulgares* by the Bulgarian State Radio & TV female vocal choir under the direction of Philip Koutev & Krasimir Kyurkchyski

el-Hadra: the Mystik Dance
Musicians – Ted de Jong, Klaus Weirs & Mathias Grassow
Composer: Klaus Weirs

Poems

Listening for Echoes
Conception

Conceived & Performed by
Barbara Bickel

Performance Technician

R. Michael Fisher

Artistic Direction

Tannis Hugill

Video Technicians

Chris Koppitz

Stacy Friedman

Graces

Jenny Peterson

Leah Fisher