

Kim Abeles

# Encyclopedia Persona



A-Z



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A-Z

Published in conjunction with

**Kim Abeles:  
Encyclopedia Persona,  
A Fifteen-Year Survey**

**Curator**

Karen Moss

**Organized by**

Santa Monica Museum of Art

**Initiated and Sponsored by the**

Fellows of Contemporary Art

Los Angeles, California

# Encyclopedia Persona

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Fellows of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

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*This catalogue is dedicated to the memory of*

**CONSILINE ANTOVILLE**

1938–1992

The Fellows of Contemporary Art and countless individual artists  
whom Consiline helped will long remember the intelligence,  
energy and enthusiasm with which she advanced their causes.

Her commitment to contemporary art and artists  
is a continuing inspiration.



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## SPONSOR'S FOREWORD

The Fellows of Contemporary Art finds it a great pleasure to sponsor *Kim Abeles: Encyclopedia Persona, A Fifteen-Year Survey*. This exhibition marks the first comprehensive survey of the work of this creative and innovative Southern California artist and offers an opportunity to see the broad scope of her concerns.

The exhibition furthers the aim of the Fellows to support contemporary art by initiating and sponsoring exhibitions featuring significant mid-career and emerging California artists and by publishing catalogues as permanent documentation of their work. Since the Fellows was established in 1975, the organization has produced twenty-two exhibitions in cooperation with museums throughout California. Many of these have traveled nationally.

This publication is dedicated to the memory of Consiline Antoville with deep appreciation for her commitment to and support of art and artists. A long-time member of the Fellows, Consiline was instrumental in initiating this exhibition, securing the location and curator, and, until her untimely death in March 1992, acting as Fellows liaison for the exhibition. We owe her a debt of gratitude for this and other successful endeavors made on our behalf.

Many Fellows have been involved in the exhibition. Our thanks to all of them and particularly to Audrey Greenberg, currently serving as exhibition

liaison; to Ginger Krueger, immediate past chairman of the Fellows; to Catherine Partridge and Kathleen Reges, past and present exhibition chairmen; to Kathryn Files and Barbara Cohn, development chairmen; to Fritz Geiser, special events chairman; to Gretel Stephens, catalogue assistance; and to administrative director Alice Momm, who has kept in touch with the many necessary details. The success of the exhibition is due in large part to all of them and, of course, to our membership whose support has made it possible.

We have welcomed the opportunity to work for a second time with the Santa Monica Museum of Art, executive director Thomas Rhoads, and curator of the exhibition, Karen Moss. We appreciate their ability and expertise. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc., the Peter Norton Family Foundation, and the J. Paul Getty Trust Fund for the Visual Arts, a fund of the California Community Foundation.

Above all, we express our thanks to Kim Abeles. It has been a pleasure to work with this talented, perceptive artist.

**ANNE S. LASELL**

*Chairman*

Fellows of Contemporary Art

## DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

The trustees and staff of the Santa Monica Museum of Art (SMMOA) are pleased to have organized *Kim Abeles: Encyclopedia Persona, A Fifteen-Year Survey*, an exhibition initiated and sponsored by the prestigious Fellows of Contemporary Art. This exhibition and the accompanying publication are the fruitful products of years of planning and the collaborative efforts of many talented individuals.

Three aspects of this survey exhibition attracted SMMOA to the project: it offers widespread exposure for an exceptional Southern California artist; it documents work that is difficult to categorize because of its content and unique format; and it fulfills SMMOA's mandate to organize one-person exhibitions, extending opportunities to accomplished, but under-recognized, mid-career artists. *Encyclopedia Persona* is a fitting tribute to Abeles, whose vision, powerful imagination, and keen aesthetic sense give her an unusual ability to communicate ideas about history and culture.

Producing this exhibition and catalogue involved the dedicated efforts of a great many individuals, organizations, and sponsors. I am particularly indebted to the curator, Karen Moss, formerly director of exhibitions and currently a consultant to SMMOA, for overseeing the myriad details attending to the exhibition and this publication. I also wish to thank art historian Lucinda Barnes, who has contributed an illuminating essay to this book, and graphic designer Susan Sifton, who has collaborated with Kim Abeles on its innovative design. Both in form and content, the publication embodies Abeles' unique sensibility and is a poetic complement to the exhibition.

In presenting this exhibition, the Santa Monica Museum of Art gratefully acknowledges the support and sponsorship of the Fellows of Contemporary Art.

I am indebted to Ginger Krueger and Anne Lasell, former and current chairmen, and Audrey Greenberg, who served as the Fellows liaison, for their cooperation and support. Kay Files and Barbara Cohn ably assisted with fundraising, and Fellows administrative director Alice Momm set the production schedule and facilitated the flow of information among the show's organizers. I appreciate the dedicated efforts of these key people.

At SMMOA, Scott Boberg, education director and an editor for the catalogue, Adam Reav Finkel, exhibition coordinator, and Antonette DeVito, SMMOA director of development, attended to publicity, editing, fundraising, and installation in their typically professional and creative manner. SMMOA staffers Mike Phillips, development associate, and Thu Pham, finance manager, assisted every step of the way, as did Francy Balcomb, who helped to coordinate public relations. This exhibition could not have occurred without the steadfast efforts and dedication of some outstanding individuals, most notably SMMOA's board of trustees, led by board president Michael Finney, and the Museum's energetic interns and volunteers.

Were it not for the remarkable achievements and talent of Kim Abeles, however, this exhibition and the many talented individuals mentioned above would not have come together. I reserve the highest compliment for Kim Abeles, an artist of singular achievement and of foremost integrity whose ideas, imagination, and ability mark every aspect of this outstanding exhibition.

**THOMAS RHODS**

*Executive Director*

Santa Monica Museum of Art



# P R E F A C E   A N D   G U I D E   T O

**Aims and Objectives.** *Encyclopedia Persona* is not an ordinary exhibition publication; it is a hybrid between an artist's book and a reference volume that serves as the catalogue for *Kim Abeles: Encyclopedia Persona, A Fifteen-Year Survey*. The primary aims of this book are to fully illustrate Kim Abeles' artistic production from 1979-1993; to provide an historical context for her work; and to chronicle her life as an artist, educator, and activist in California during the past fifteen years. A complete document of the exhibition *Encyclopedia Persona* indexes the artist's twelve series and includes her avid research on a broad range of subjects. Modeled directly after an early 1960s edition of the *World Book Encyclopedia*, the objective of the publication is to present Abeles' detailed investigations in a comprehensible format, using written text, photographs, line drawings, charts, maps, and archival materials.

**Format and Contents.** The concept for *Encyclopedia Persona* resulted from the collaborative efforts of Kim Abeles, artist/graphic designer Susan Silton, and exhibition curator Karen Moss. Silton designed the encyclopedia, while Abeles selected the photographs and made drawings for the book. The artist and the curator worked together to determine the overall content of the book. The curator's introduction discusses the general concept behind *Encyclopedia Persona* and provides a context for Abeles' work as both an artist and an activist. The alphabetical section written primarily by Abeles, begins with her biographical chronology, then documents her twelve series in textual and pictorial detail. The artist augments her own text with selected writings by other authors and a wide array of photographs and hand-drawn illustrations. The primary essay by art historian and curator Lucinda Barnes explores the theme of truth and fiction in Abeles' work. Included in the back of the publication are a checklist of the exhibition; a list of lenders; a selected bibliography; information about the Santa Monica Museum of Art and the Fellows of Contemporary Art; and an index of the illustrations, photographs and works of art in the book.

**Organization of Information.** *Encyclopedia Persona* is organized so that an abundance of information on art and non-art subjects alike becomes more accessible to its readers. This is achieved through a single alphabetical arrangement of the entries, including Abeles' twelve series titles and various genres, persons, and topics related to her work. For example, the book begins with the name of the artist, **Abeles**, and her biographical chronology. It is followed by **Aging**, a topic of one of the twelve series. Next, under **Barnes**,

one finds the essay about Abeles' work by Lucinda Barnes. This entry is followed by **Biographical Portraits**, a series title, and then by **Bookworks**, a specific genre of Abeles' work.

The written text of the individual entries in the alphabetical section consists of descriptive prose, didactic information, and other quoted material. These texts are interspersed with reproductions of Abeles' work, archival or documentary photographs, and hand-drawn illustrations.

The artist's line drawings and maps may directly illustrate something in an entry, or they may function as a more conceptual or whimsical "mappings" of ideas related to a particular work.

Each individual work in the exhibition appears in the text and is reproduced in a photograph under its series title in the **A-Z** section. Each work is also listed under its series in the exhibition checklist and by its individual title in the alphabetical index at the back of the book. All other illustrations, maps, and photographs are also listed in the index.

Cross-references at the end of entries guide the reader to other pages within the book where there is information related to those topics. Sources and Suggested Readings follow some entries to list specific reference materials for that subject, while the selected bibliography provides a wide range of articles, books, and exhibition catalogues published on Abeles' work.

**Guide words** appear at the top corner of each page. At the upper left corner is the title for the first entry that appears in the first column of the left page; at the upper right corner is the title of the last entry on the right page.

**Headings** are indented from the left-hand margin. Main headings, written in all capital letters, indicate the beginning of an entry. Subheadings, written in upper and lower case, are subjects or titles of artworks.

**Archival materials** appear in entries throughout the text when appropriate.

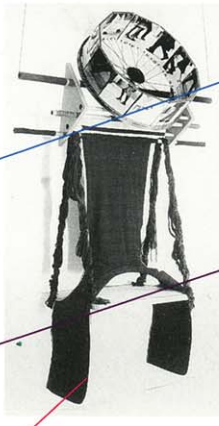
**Cross References**, at the end of a particular entry, direct the reader to related subjects or works in other locations of the book.

**Sources and Suggested Readings** appear at the end of appropriate entries to cite additional readings on those subjects.

**Illustrations, Maps, and Photographs**, appearing throughout the text, are captioned and listed alphabetically by title or subject in the *Index of Illustrations, Photographs, and Works of Art* at the end of the book.

## BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS

be taking a photo of a building (as to be inconspicuous). I set up my camera and glanced to see a group of people heading toward the camera-zone. I then peered through the view-finder and after a long delay, I curiously looked up to see where all the people had gone. They were all courteously waiting to my right and left, so I could take a picture. See also BOOKWORKS (*Our Position, Always, Reciprocal*).



**Bickety Tickety.** 1982. Bicycle wheel, photographs, thread, cement, wood, metal, acrylic. 77" x 50" x 20".



**Prominent Shaker Villages in the eastern U.S.**  
1. Mt. Lebanon, N.Y. 2. Enfield, Conn. 3. Hancock, Mass. 4. Harvard, Mass. 5. East Canterbury, N.H. 6. Sabbathday Lake, Maine.

ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map

**Locations of several prominent Shaker Villages in the eastern United States.**

**The Celibacy and Practicality of Mother Ann/ Speak in Tongues and Import Oysters.** Mother Ann Lee (1736-1784) founded the Shaker Community, a scattering of utopian villages which thrived during the 1800s. They are well-known for their furniture and general practicality in processes and objects. Their ideas were often ingenious, such as the creation of the round barn in which a person could stand at a central

*ann X lee mark*

Ann Lee's "X" mark as it appears on her marriage license.

pivot point to feed the animals. A wonderful following of artisans in Hancock Village, Massachusetts, maintains the traditional styles of the Shakers.

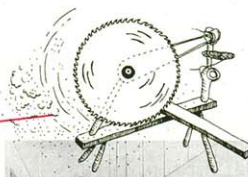
The Shakers were also notable for their observance of celibacy. (Ironically, they were fond of oysters and frequently imported this aphrodisiac.) Shakers were never born into the clan; instead, their practice of adoption became a model for state institutions. Women and men were separate but totally equal in terms of politics and responsibilities. In contrast to the composed logic with which they approach design, the Shakers approached religion with zeal. During their holy meetings, they would shake and speak in tongues. The fervor was so striking, in fact, that neighbors continued to complain to the police and tried to have them expelled from the districts.

### Sources and Suggested Reading:

Sprigg, June, and David Larkin. *Shaker Life, Work and Art*. New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1987.

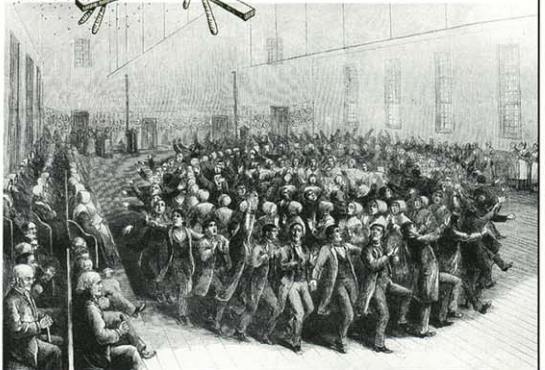
Andrews, Edward Deming. *The People Called Shakers - A Search for the Perfect Society*. New York: Dover Publications, 1963. (Reference source for marriage license containing Ann Lee's "signature").

ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA drawing



**A Shaker sister invented the circular saw** when she mounted a saw-blade on her spinning wheel. Below, Shaker meeting in New York, 1873.

Brown Brothers





# A N I N T R O D U C T I O N T O

*The end of an encyclopedia is to assemble the knowledge scattered over the earth, to expound it to contemporaries, and to transmit it to posterity...*

—Denis Diderot, "The Encyclopedia," Volume 5, *Encyclopédie*, 1755<sup>1</sup>

**Why Encyclopedia Persona?** For a better understanding of this book's title and its relationship to Kim Abeles' work, the introduction will begin with a discussion of the meaning of *encyclopedia* and *persona*.

**Encyclopedia, the Circle of Learning.** The word *encyclopedia*, a neologism fabricated from the Greek *en* (in), *kyklos* (circle), and *paideia* (learning) is defined as: "the circle of learning."<sup>2</sup> In classical antiquity, the word referred specifically to the "circle" of arts and sciences, a general course of instruction the Greeks considered essential for a liberal education. While encyclopedic publications existed in antiquity, in the Middle Ages, and in Asia, the word is first used in a 1531 treatise, *The Governour*, written by the English scholar, Sir Thomas Elyot.<sup>3</sup>

The modern published encyclopedia, an alphabetical index of information on all branches of knowledge, dates from the Age of Enlightenment. The French *Encyclopédie* (1751-1772), a 28-volume collaboration of philosophers, scientists, and artists known as the *Encyclopédistes*, was co-edited by Denis Diderot and Jean d'Alembert. In Diderot's prospectus he wrote that the 18th century's great accumulation of knowledge would be useless if not shared, and that the need for its dissemination was truly urgent.<sup>4</sup> Since Diderot's day, the founding of public institutions, the advent of computer technology, and even the ubiquitous cliché of the door-to-door salesman, have all contributed to greater dissemination of encyclopedic information to broader audiences.

Kim Abeles is an artist who shares the democratic spirit of Diderot's directive to disseminate knowledge. Since 1979 she has worked in series, accumulating information on diverse subjects that have become a structure for her artistic production. She chooses a subject, investigates it thoroughly, then assembles the data and source materials in notebooks. Inspired by her fruitful research on a particular topic, each work distills an aspect of her investigative process. Realizing that even an entire series cannot contain all her research, she often makes books that reveal ancillary information about each subject.

The *Encyclopedia Persona* format results directly from Abeles' own art-making and intellectual processes. More than just an alphabetical index of her twelve series, this book is both a repository for the plethora of accrued information and a chronicle of her life and work. The A-Z section, written in both

first and third person, consists of Abeles' own prose supported by text from other artists, scholars, and experts. The publication's design resembles early 1960s encyclopedias with colorful graphics, maps, and Kodachromes. *Encyclopedia Persona* is a nostalgic tribute to the illustrated books that one could browse through to indulge in the simple pleasure of reading and enhancing knowledge.

Encyclopedias can be authoritative and arcane indices of knowledge, but this book attempts a more personal, pluralistic presentation on a range of Abeles' interests. Her modesty and sense of irony prevent her from using an authoritarian voice on any of the subjects she investigates. Instead, she plays with the pre-conceived idea of an encyclopedia's absolute authority by creating entries that function as meta-histories of her subjects. Abeles freely embellishes each entry and compares this process to the art of storytelling. While she sincerely wants people to understand her ideas and her work, parts of the book mimic and mock the didacticism of an encyclopedia.

Abeles' fascination with authoritative texts surfaces in her individual works. *First Fork*, one of her *Fact Fiction Boxes* (1983-86), contains a "fork" painted on a spoon and a definition from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Juxtaposing this altered utensil with a false definition, she satirizes the notions of lexical description, the constructions of history, and the myth of originality. For her *Dead Sea Scrolls* (1984-85), she combined "scroll fragments," photographs, and legal texts to reveal the multi-layered story of the sacred scriptures' discovery. In one of her *Biographical Portraits* (1982-91), Abeles found conflicting encyclopedia entries about pioneer woman Calamity Jane, wrote the texts onto sticks, and placed them in glass bottles. Each text exists as a secret message in a bottle that either validates or refutes Jane's assertions about her life. Abeles used volumes of the children's reference series, the *Wonder Books*, as the frame and support for some of her *Smog Collectors* (1991-92), objects with images created through the accumulation of particulate matter on their surfaces. The image of a heart rendered in smog on the cover of *Great Engineers and Engineering* illustrates the dichotomy between technological innovation and the preservation of human life, contradicting the idealized narrative on progress found inside the book. In these works, Abeles questions the authority of the texts, emphasizing the failure of language or history to inform the reader. This issue of truth and fiction in Abeles' work is discussed at length in Lucinda Barnes' essay in the A-Z section of this book. (See BARNES, LUCINDA).



**Persona: Resounding Through the Mask.** *Persona*, a Latin word for the mask worn by actors in Greco-Roman theater, derives from *personare*, meaning to "sound through, or to resound."<sup>5</sup> It referred specifically to the way actors projected their voices to speak through a character in the arena, an important social function in ancient cultures. As time progressed, Roman law came to define *persona* as an individual, a citizen with rights and duties, and only later did it connote a "person."

These multiple connotations of *persona* are all visible in Abeles' work. Since her work is frequently narrative, she relies upon the use of different masks and characters to tell her stories. An avid reader of biographies since her childhood and a psychology minor in college, she is interested in human personality and the various personae we embrace. Abeles assumes the more public or social role of the ancient actor, speaking through specific personalities or an implied human presence. Her work usually revolves around the notion of a person and often focuses on human strengths and struggles.

Beginning in 1980, Abeles lived and worked in downtown Los Angeles on Broadway near the garment district and Skid Row. In her *Kimono*s (1979-82) and *Shrines* (1979-83), she used these forms to house personae and to comment on social issues. Her *kimono Sweatshop Down the Hall and Sometimes It's Me* refers to the poor labor conditions of garment workers in her own loft building, while *Imperial Shoeshine* is a shrine to her personal relationship with the owners of a Broadway shoeshine booth whose business closed as the result of urban gentrification.

Specific individuals inspired Abeles' *Biographical Portraits*, ranging from a homeless man she met on her street to people known for their impact on civil rights and political history, like Rosa Parks or Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. Initially, Abeles made a single work for each biographical portrait; later she devoted entire series to individuals such as her treatise on the celebrated young visionary from Lourdes, *The Image of St. Bernadette* (1987), and *Long Exposures: (An Artist in her Later Years)* (1991-92), a feminist portrait of her friend Florence Rosen. Whether deriving from personal acquaintance or copious research, Abeles creates uncannily perceptive portraits of people from every walk of life.

*Habeas Corpus* (1991-93), her most recent series, refers to the Roman notion of the person as citizen, focusing on the rights and representations of individuals in today's society. Abeles raises questions about how we are repeatedly required to prove our

personal identities; how individuals must fight to defend their liberties and supposedly inalienable rights; how the media represents our national character and constructs our collective identity; and how our government manipulates global politics.

Even when Abeles does not allude to a specific personality, her work rarely excludes the notion of a person or human presence. Her sensitivity towards individuals in the early work has broadened to a concern for specific issues of the human condition in her recent work. Ultimately, at the heart of her oeuvre are people, the cast of characters that she has encountered over the past fifteen years.

**Abeles' Interest in Other Artists and Writers.** Although Kim Abeles' interests include both modern and contemporary art and artists, she does not align herself with any one group, school, or label. Because she uses many materials and strategies to balance form with content, her artistic production is not easy to codify. A closer look at her specific interests in other artists and writers reveals much about the art she produces and how it has changed during the past two decades.

**Dada and Duchamp.** Abeles' strong interest in the conceptual and the ironic can be traced back to dada. Her work pays homage to the dada concept of the *objet trouvé*, the appropriated, mass-produced, quotidian object that is assigned high art status by the artist. Abeles favors Duchamp's "assisted readymade," something that is not just chosen, but altered or transformed by the artist, since she often fabricates her own found objects, preferring the hand-made and simulated to the manufactured and mass-produced.

Abeles' group of sculptures, which she calls "contraptions," recall the machine-age aesthetics and "mechanomorphic" works of Duchamp and fellow dadaists Man Ray and Francis Picabia.<sup>6</sup> Some of her contraptions have cranks, gears, or other mechanized parts that conflate the body and the machine. Sculptures such as *Experiment to Identify Change or Pentipede*, designed to measure Abeles' specific actions within a set system, are contraptions that consist of both the measuring device and the data they document.

Abeles refers more explicitly to Duchamp appropriating his formal structures to reveal concepts about the function and meaning of objects and art. His readymade *Bicycle Wheel* (1913), is a recurring motif in several of her works (See DUCHAMP'S BICYCLE). The *Box In A Valise*, his 1941 "portable museum" with miniature reproductions of his work symbolizes his relocation from Nazi-occupied Paris to New York, bears similarities to Abeles' *Traveling Sales*, a leather



## INTRODUCTION

suitcase filled with religious paraphernalia related to St. Bernadette. Both the *Box In A Valise* and *Traveling Sales* reveal issues of commodification, mass production, celebrated identity, and veneration, equally applicable to the worlds of art and religion.

### Assemblage and Sculpture.

Art historians often discuss Abeles' work within the context of West Coast assemblage, and she has shown in several assemblage survey exhibitions.<sup>7</sup>

Technically, her work is composed of found materials or hand-made objects assembled together. The synthetic, free-associative nature of assemblage allows her to combine myriad source materials to construct her narratives. Like other assemblagists, she creates a dialectic between artifice and reality; art and non-art; high and low; and she shares their sensibility for using multiple layers to create a form of visual poetry.

Abeles, however, is not seduced by the beauty of objects in favor of content, and she does not consider herself to be a formalist. She feels that her conceptual and systematic process, the socio-political nature of her work, and her age differentiate her art from that of many other assemblage artists. Her work is less related to Los Angeles' first generation of assemblagists than to a second generation of artists who favor more conceptual and narrative forms of assemblage.<sup>8</sup>

Edward Kienholz's *State Mental Hospital* (1964-66), however, did make a tremendous impact on Abeles when she discovered it as an undergraduate painting major.<sup>9</sup> This is not surprising, since Kienholz's critique of state mental institutions' use of drugs, lobotomies, and other inhumane practices to control patients, is far more political than the work of any other first generation Los Angeles assemblagists and is more akin to Abeles' own subjects.

More compelling for Abeles than the predominantly male Los Angeles assemblage artists were two New York sculptors, Louise Nevelson and Eva Hesse. Nevelson interested Abeles for her process of assembling castaway furniture parts in boxes stacked in tight grids to restore their beauty and to create new, unified wall environments. Eva Hesse provided even greater inspiration for Abeles with her meticulously drawn and sculpted compositions of circular forms



Marcel Duchamp, *The Box in a Valise* (*Boîte en Valise*), 1941. Collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

from 1966-68. Abeles saw these works as important meditations on systems art and minimalism, and as precursors to Hesse's later serial sculptures, in which she combined organic fabricated forms into sequences that began to function as installations.<sup>10</sup>

**Feminist Performance and Photography.** As the women's movement accelerated, Abeles became aware of feminist performance and intermedia work. She recalls Eleanor Antin's *100 Boots* (1971-73), a photographic postcard series documenting a long line of rubber boots placed in locations ranging from California to New York. She liked the repetition of simple objects that take on new meanings in each different site, as the disembodied boots imply the presence of absent marchers. While Antin's performances of historical women and female stereotypes are more theatrical than Abeles' visual evocations of different personae, the two artists share an ability to project the character and nuances of human personalities.

Performance artist Laurie Anderson first appealed to Abeles for her Duchampian attitude toward objects. She especially liked Anderson's early altered violins, simple objects outfitted with audio equipment to change their function and sound. In later performances, Anderson has used digital voice synthesizers to tell stories about language, media, gender, and other cultural issues that are close to Abeles' own concerns.

For artists like Antin and Anderson, the photographic or video documentation of their performances has become their art. Neither a performance artist nor a photographer per se, beginning in 1979 Abeles made an ongoing series of photographic self-portraits to document temporal actions that underscore the function of the camera. *Experiment for Myself As Other* documents Abeles using kiln tongs and other heavy implements to strike the shutter release. In *Our Position, Always Reciprocal* she strapped a camera to different parts of her body (over her face, around her waist, and around her ankle) to express the voyeuristic nature of the camera and to refer to the subject/object relations of spectatorship. In *Sisyphisto* Abeles wears a gas mask and hangs tools (drills, saws, a glue gun, etc.) on her body, reversing the concept of anthropomorphism by becoming a "live" contraption. In these feminist self-portraits, Abeles performs actions, uses objects, and assumes vantage points that are culturally inscribed as "masculine."

At the time she began these photographic self-portraits, Abeles read Susan Sontag's seminal book, *On Photography*.<sup>11</sup> Since her work is preoccupied with documentation and questioning the authority of text, she was interested in the way that Sontag dismissed the idea that the photograph is a reliable document or an agent of absolute verisimilitude. Moreover, she was intrigued by Sontag's insistence that only when



we begin to doubt the veracity of photography, can we truly consider it as an art form or as medium. This was an important idea for Abeles, since she uses photographs not just as documentation, but as a material that she alters, tears, fragments and presents out of context.

Sontag's book may have also influenced other works where Abeles makes specific references to the processes of photography. Her *Experiment to Identify Change* functions like a large photo-booth and print rack that displays the results of a specific daily photographic ritual. *Long Exposures (An Artist in Her Later Years)* (1991-92), uses a darkroom as a metaphor for self-image during the process of aging.<sup>12</sup>

**Language And Systems.** Abeles cites writer Gertrude Stein as a strong influence on her work since the early 1980s. She found inspiration in the writer's romantic, yet idiosyncratic, prose style of attenuated sentences built from cubist layers. Stein's amusing word repetitions provided impetus for some of Abeles' own rambling titles: *She Said I Found This Sparrow and Thought of You I Said* or *The Celibacy and Practicality of Mother Ann/Speak In Tongues and Import Oysters*. Abeles also admired Stein's imagination and her independence to write with her own set of rules. In spite of its grammatical incongruities, she liked the way Stein gives nonsensical language new meaning.

Stein provided a model for Abeles to strike a balance between the didactic and the poetic as she synthesizes visual and written text to create multiple layers and readings. In the syntax of her own language, every object or artifact functions like a word; each individual work becomes a complete sentence; and every series elucidates the full narrative on her subject. Abeles sees her small-scale objects as "footnotes" that enrich her series with encyclopedic detail.

Abeles has also tried to create her own specific written language with her *Horizonlines* drawings. These pen and ink outlines of topography and structures made while riding in trains, translate rural and urban landscape and skylines into hieroglyphic graphs or charts. Like concrete poems, the *Horizonlines* are the direct predecessors to the series of conceptual maps and illustrations found throughout this text.

As poetic as Abeles' process can be, it is thoroughly systematic, as she often applies specific grids, structures, or rules to a particular investigation. Counting, cataloging, and completing specific tasks abound in her work. For both *Index for the Pluperfect* and *Collective Diary*, Abeles sets up a grid of photographs to organize an inventory of specific kinds of objects and images. In some works she undertakes daily tasks or makes investigations to help her better understand nature and the environment. *Ritual for Instinctual Return* involved the odd daily task of washing, drying and separating carrier pigeon feet from their identifica-

tion bands. Displayed in neat rows on a drying rack, the severed feet and bands signified Abeles' own feelings of her separation from nature. In *Observatory/Territory*, she built a domed structure to examine and chart daily solar and lunar movements. Her *Pilgrimage to the Wedge*, a 16-1/2 mile trek from downtown to a "clear vista" at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains, was carefully measured by her *Pentipede* contraption and documented in *Instructions for Stride Forward*.

Given her propensity for specific structures and tasks, Abeles' work is related to systems-oriented and information-based art of the late 1960s and 1970s.<sup>13</sup> It is not as prosaic or didactic as some conceptual art, since it goes beyond text and pivots on human subjects. The conceptualists she finds most appealing are Adrian Piper and Yoko Ono, who engage in more philosophical and social documentations. Like these women, she has found a unique way to combine formal sensibility with conceptual rigor and to mediate between the personal and the political in her work.

**Abeles' Role As An Artist/Activist.** Never simply a maker of objects, Abeles' role has spanned the gamut from producer to activist. Since her youth she has been deeply involved in social and political issues affecting not only artists, but people from many communities. Long before the dubious label of "political correctness" entered our vocabulary, Abeles proved her personal commitment as an activist who applies her artistic abilities to specific social concerns. In her typically comprehensive manner, she rarely makes a cursory work, but delves into a subject for an extended length of time.

For ten years Abeles has tackled environmental issues, particularly air pollution. Motivated by her personal dilemma of living downtown next to a factory that produces toxic emissions, she often sets up systems to sample the smog and measure the air "quality" in Los Angeles. The 274 photographs included in *Mountain Wedge* document the obscured view of the mountains from her studio, while *Sixty Days of Los Angeles Sky Patch (View to the East)* compares daily samples of the sky's color, ranging from white to blue to brown, during a two-month period. Abeles' public art project for the California Bureau of Automotive Repair consists of large-scale *Smog Collector Sculptures* fabricated from recycled vehicle exhaust systems. Placed in Southern California locations, these sculptures gather smog to raise issues and pose solutions to the pollution problem. On each piece, bilingual panels with automobile driving and maintenance tips, smog facts, and Rideshare program information promote environmental awareness, helping the public combat the pollution that is a visible part of each sculpture.



## INTRODUCTION

For five years Abeles has focused attention on the world-wide AIDS pandemic. Her project *Collective Diary: Dedicated to People With AIDS*, first presented in 1989, incorporates the writings, memorabilia, and photographs of People With Aids (PWAs). A truly compassionate representation of AIDS, this project gave PWAs a chance to validate and dignify their lives as it showed the audience aspects of our common human existence. Originally part of the exhibition *Living in the Age of AIDS*, curated by Anne Ayres at the



Kim Abeles demonstrating her Smog Collector to Children at Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles. Courtesy of California Bureau of Automotive Repair.

Otis Parsons Gallery, Abeles subsequently helped to organize its national tour and public education program. Abeles' recent *HIV Tarot*, a bilingual educational brochure about AIDS, was funded by Los Angeles' Cultural Affairs Department and widely circulated through public venues and schools. With their hand-drawn graphics, vibrant colors and explanatory texts, the appealing tarot images on each card attract the attention of young people, reminding them not to tempt fate, but to become aware of safer sex practices and AIDS prevention.

In 1990 Abeles co-coordinated *World News*, an exhibition in which 60 artists and writers spontaneously responded to the outbreak of the Persian Gulf War. Far from the biased, hyperbolic broadcasting of CNN, this project empowered artists to respond to a catastrophic global issue. In 1992 also Abeles co-curated *Smog: A Matter of Life and Breath*, with the staff of the California Museum of Photography, continuing her efforts to inform the public about air pollution.

At the core of all her diverse activities is Abeles' goal to educate her audience and the public.<sup>14</sup> In each situation she sees herself and her work as a conduit for obtaining information that she feels should be public, rather than privileged. It is Abeles' indefatigable en-

ergy that forces her to pursue difficult issues, and to try to educate her community and the general public.

**Completing the Circle of Learning.** Abeles attempts to complete the classical "circle of learning" and fulfill Diderot's directive by disseminating and sharing information with others. Diderot's idealistic desire and rationalist pursuits may seem incongruous in today's postmodern world in which contemporary discourse and philosophies instruct us to mistrust the pursuit of authoritative knowledge, to doubt the meaning of the text, and to question the very notion of humanism.

Abeles tries to grapple with the overwhelming challenges facing our contemporary culture, wading through the inundation of information, profuse production, and sensory overload in our late capitalist society in order to glean the truth. She is committed to the arduous task of trying to make the incomprehensible comprehensible for as many people as possible. Like the *encyclopedia*, Abeles' work is didactic and instructive; it is however, aesthetic and poetic, always grounded in *persona*, in people and in humanity. She weaves many threads through her work, returning again and again to her subjects with an optimism and sense of humanism that is a rare quality in anyone living on the edge of the millennium.

<sup>1</sup> Will and Ariel Durant, *The Story of Civilization, The Age of Voltaire*, volume IX, 640.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Barzun and Ralph H. Bowen, *Rameau's Nephew and Other Works* Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1964, 277.

<sup>3</sup> *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1971, 861.

<sup>4</sup> Durant, 634.

<sup>5</sup> *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, P.G.W. Glare, editor, New York, Oxford University Press, 1982, 1356.

<sup>6</sup> In an interview with Michael McMillen in *Kim Abeles*, edited by Lucinda Barnes, Los Angeles, A.R.T. Press, 1989, 5, the artist refers to our post-industrial machines as "organic creatures."

<sup>7</sup> Abeles participated in two recent assemblage exhibitions: *Forty Years of California Assemblage*, Frederick S. Wight Art Gallery, Los Angeles, University of California, 1989 and *Lost and Found in California Four Decades of Assemblage Art* exhibition at James Corcoran, Shoshana Wayne, Pence Galleries Santa Monica, 1991.

<sup>8</sup> Sandra Leonard Starr, "Assemblage Art: A Pocket History," in *Lost and Found in California*, exhibition catalogue includes Abeles in the second generation of "narrative" assemblage artists.

<sup>9</sup> A.R.T. Press interview, 11, Abeles talks about how she carried the Kienholz reproduction from Janson's *History of Art* in her notebook for ten years or more.

<sup>10</sup> It is tragically ironic that Hesse's sculptures, filled with life, were fabricated from synthetic, toxic materials that probably contributed to her premature death from cancer.

<sup>11</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977.

<sup>12</sup> In other works Abeles refers to the camera itself: *Mountain Wedge* is constructed like a bellows, while *Camera Desires* is a 35mm camera made of bird feathers.

<sup>13</sup> It is interesting that the Library of Congress classification for this catalogue is "conceptual art."

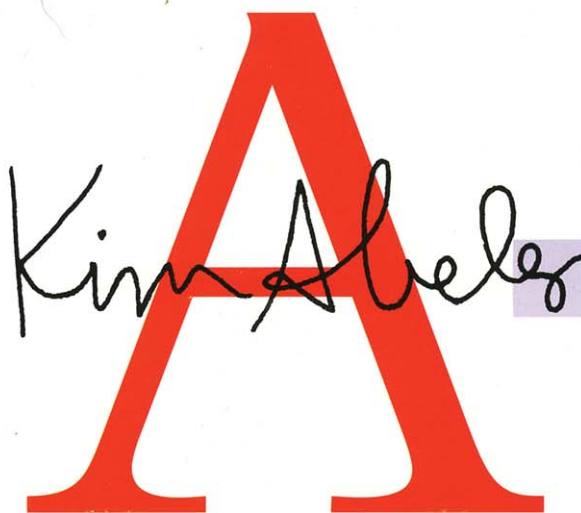
<sup>14</sup> See Abeles Chronology for a list of her activities.

**ABELES, A bel eez, KIM** (1952– ), born Kim Victoria Wright in Richmond Heights, Missouri to Frances Elizabeth (Sander) (Wright) (Schoemaker) Hoffman and Burton Noel Wright. Her mother, a singer in the St. Louis Municipal Opera, later becomes a visual artist. Her father (1919-1990) worked as a sales manager in the firebrick industry in St. Louis, Missouri. Her only sibling, Jill Wright, is an accomplished illustrator. Following her mother's second marriage in 1960, she is raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She expresses a strong sense of art-making early in life. In her early teens, she travels to conferences on civil issues as a representative for the local YWCA.

**Chronology. 1969.** Selected as American Field Service student to Utsunomiya, Japan. Abeles meets Buddhist priest, Kōsai Kobari, who introduces her to traditional Japanese arts: calligraphy, woodcut printing, ceramics, and kimono-making.

**1970.** Studies painting at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio and receives BFA in 1974. Her artwork is published for the first time in 1972 in *Seventeen* magazine.

**1973.** Lives in converted grain silo in rural southeastern Ohio with first husband, Ken Abeles. Writes and illustrates the book, *Crafts, Cookery and Country Living*, published by Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., New York in 1976. Begins exhibiting *trompe l'oeil* paintings with personal/psychological themes.



Nelson Grant



Map based on longitudes of the artist's travels.

ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map

**The Artist's Roots.** Clockwise from top: Abeles' mother, Frances Elizabeth Sander; sister, Jill Elizabeth Wright, with the young Kim Victoria (Wright) Abeles; father, Burton Noel Wright.



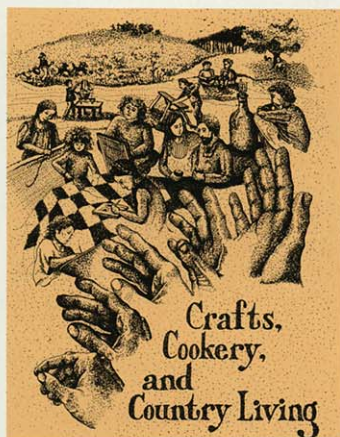
## ABELES, KIM

**1978.** Accepted into graduate program at California Institute for the Arts and sets up studio there for the summer. Receives numerous grants from UC Irvine and enrolls in MFA program. Manages living quarters for a revolving group of artists, including Alan Saret and writer Michael Krekorian. While at UC Irvine, receives critical support from writer and filmmaker Alan Sondheim and art historian Melinda Wortz.

**1979.** Coordinates, with artist Sandra Rowe, a three-day symposium at UC Irvine on *Symbolization* involving workshops, performances, lectures, and panels (including Jacki Apple, David Antin, Doni Silver and Suzanne Lacy). Selected as Honorary Program Recipient in Recognition of Outstanding Student Research and Creative Achievement at UC Irvine for *Impressions*, an installation composed of 1,046 handmade cobblestones and a limited edition book. Travels to Europe.



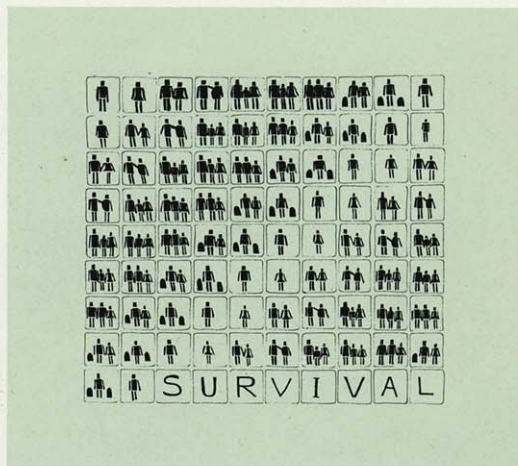
**The American Field Service Student in Japan.** Abeles with classmates at Utsunomiya Girls' High School, 1969.



© Van Nostrand Reinhold

**Abeles' handwritten and illustrated instructional book, 1976.**

**Detail of *Tabula Rasa*.** 1977. Acrylic on canvas, 34" x 28". Private Collection. During the mid-1970s, Abeles concentrated on *trompe l'oeil* paintings with personal/psychological themes.



***Survival***, a drawing published in *Seventeen*, was based on an animated film made by Abeles in 1970.





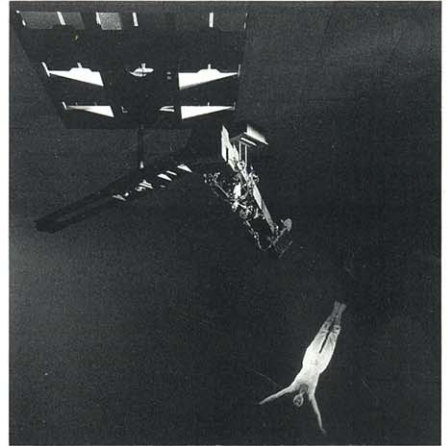


**Intraconnections.** 1979. Acrylic on canvas, dyed cheesecloth, wood, 50" x 46" x 48". Selection from Abeles' MFA exhibition at UC Irvine in 1980.

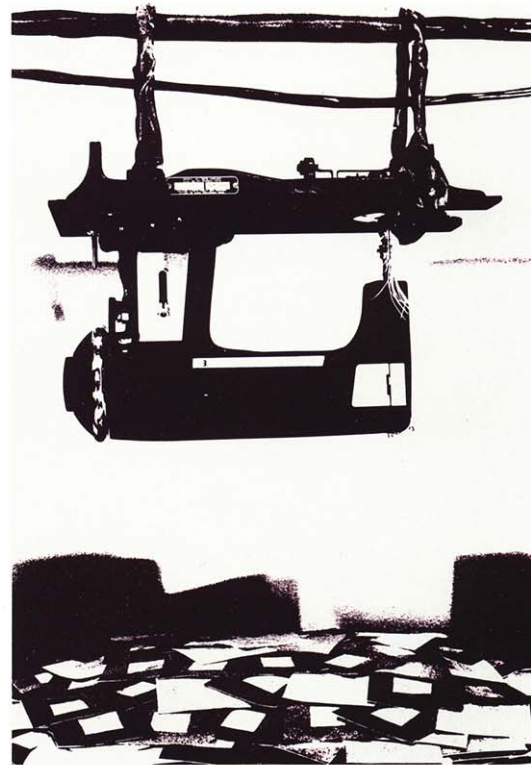
**1980.** Receives MFA from UC Irvine with her thesis on Shingon Buddhism and a series of kimonos related to its philosophy. Sets up a studio in downtown Los Angeles with artist Doni Silver. Adjacent sweatshops and the harsh streetlife provoke her to create artworks about "real" life rather than ethereal themes. Earns a living for three years answering "Miss Lonelyhearts" letters. Studio-mates during various years include sculptor George Stone, painters Mary Werbelow, Lauren Richardson, and Sylvia Tidwell, and writer Roberta Ostroff. Performs as flying figure in George Stone's filmic installation, *Capacitor*.



**Artist Lauren Richardson,** who shared the Broadway studio in downtown L.A. with Abeles in 1986, is seen working on her painting, *Giant*.



**George Stone, *Capacitor*.** 1980–81. Film-based installation, 35' x 35'. Installation view, Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles. Abeles performs as the flying figure.



Daniel Martinez

**Detail of *Inverted Ritual*.** 1982. Mixed media, 70" x 50" x 19". Abeles' move to downtown L.A. in 1980 influenced her to create artworks about sweatshops and labor.

## ABELES, KIM

**1981.** Primary introduction into Los Angeles art scene through the exhibition *Southern California Artists* at the Los Angeles Institute for Contemporary Art, curated by Barbara Haskell of the Whitney Museum.

**1982.** Creates shrine-like sculptures that focus on social issues. Solo exhibition of Abeles' sculpture at the Bridge Gallery, Los Angeles City Hall, sponsored in part by the Office of the Mayor and Departments of General Services and Cultural Affairs.

**1983.** Begins series of *Fact Fiction Boxes*, primarily installed in libraries, which challenges notions of knowledge and academic reality.

**1984.** Receives fellowship residency to the Hand Hollow Foundation at the George Rickey Workshop in upstate New York; develops the installation, *Observatory/Territory*, while in residence. Begins researching and creating sculpture as biographical portraits. Undertakes a two-year series of artworks that tell the story of the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Teaches Visual Fundamentals at UC Irvine until 1985 (also 1987-8).

**1985.** Begins extensive publication of limited edition artist's books for each installation as a way to reach a broader audience. Begins corresponding with scholars in fields of study related to her series. Portfolio of drawings published in *Fiction International*. Teaches at California State University at Fullerton until 1987.

**1986.** Travels to Germany and stays with artists Margarete Fidel and Achim Pahle, whom she met through George Rickey and begins *Horizonline* series

while there. Active member of Artists Resource Center (ARC), founded by Sheila Pinkel, which creates posters and banners for activities such as Big Mountain Support Group and U.S. Out of Central America rallies. Teaches at Claremont Graduate School (also in 1987, 90, 91).

**1987.** Travels to Europe with artist Deborah Small and historian Bill Weeks. Stays in Yugoslavia with gallery owner Anuska Smith. Travels to Lourdes and leaves *St. Bernadette Souvenir Cards* in telephone booths.

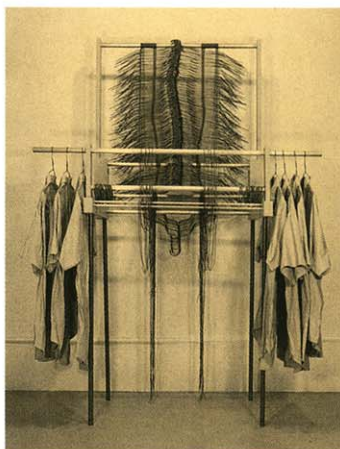


Zane Hoffman

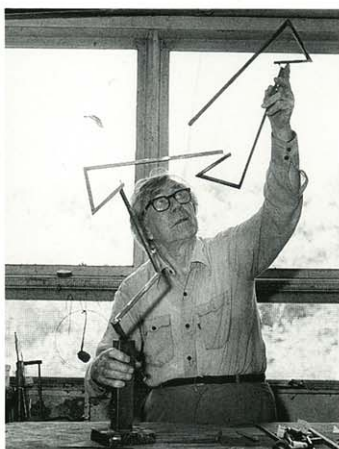
**Abeles with Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley at the City Hall Bridge Gallery in 1982.**

*A Mile a Minute (LA to Del Mar as Seen from a Moving Train)* purchased under the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the Hassam and Speicher Purchase Funds. Creates two installations, *The Image of St. Bernadette* and *Pilgrimage to the Wedge*. Creates first *Smog Collector*, even though she does not develop the series until 1990. Creates

*Horizon Block* for the traffic island at the intersection of Santa Monica Boulevard and La Cienega for the six-month exhibition *Art on the Island* sponsored by the City of West Hollywood and organized by Vicki Shipkowitz and Ian Tanza. Marries Russell Moore.

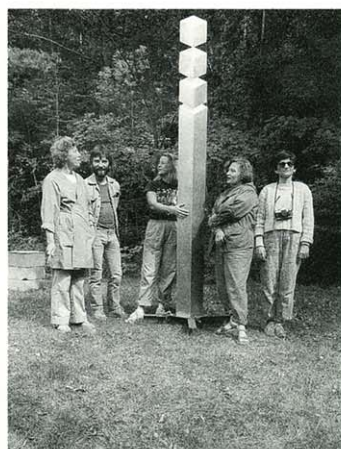


**Counting Time in the Seven Day Work Week/...The Hero is Conscious.** 1982. Woven garment hangers, acrylic on shirts, wood, metal, 72" x 50" x 42". Collection of the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, Los Angeles.



TGL Photoworks, Inc.

**Sculptor George Rickey** working in his upstate New York Workshop. He founded the Hand Hollow artist's retreat at the Workshop.



Achim Pahle

**Artists at Hand Hollow Foundation** in 1984 standing with a sculpture by Achim Pahle (left to right, Ruth Lerman, Pahle, Nancy Hammer, Loretta Dunkelmann, and Abeles).





**Deborah Small.** Detail of 1492. 1986. Mixed media, 15" x 19" x 2" (each panel). Abeles and Small have shared a close friendship since meeting at UC Irvine in 1978.

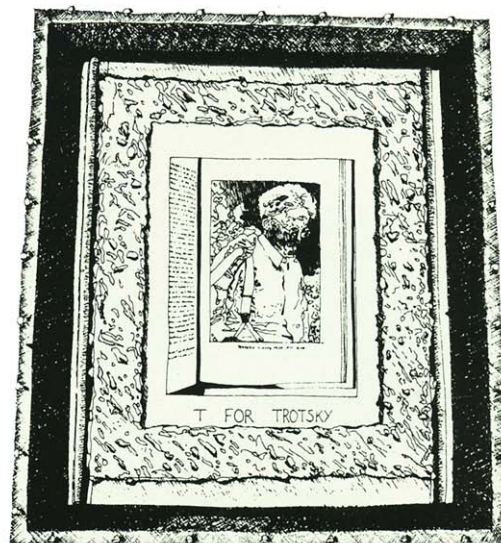


Achim Pahle

**Margarette Fidel and Abeles.** Abeles met Fidel at Hand Hollow Foundation, and they continued their friendship through visits in Berlin and Los Angeles.



**Abeles' daughter Zoë Noel Moore** at age 9 months.



First printed in *Fiction International*  
**T is for Trotsky.** 1984. Ink on paper, 13" x 11". Private collection.

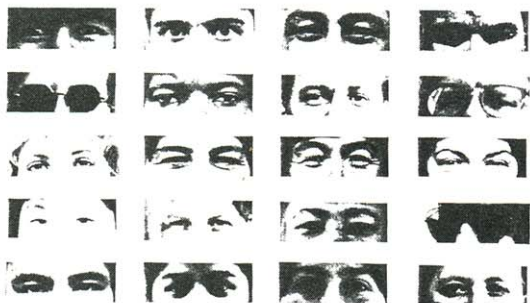
**1988.** Coordinates art and video component for an Amnesty International and Food First Benefit Concert at the John Ansen Ford Theater, produced by Russell Moore and Hari Scordo, owner of Bad Eye Gallery. Gives birth to her daughter, Zoë Noel Moore. Selected to be part of *Unknown Secrets – Art and the Rosenberg Era*, a three-year touring exhibition curated by Nina Felshin and coordinated by Rob Okun and later participates in related panel discussion at San Diego State University. The book, *Kim Abeles*, designed by Lausten/Cossutta Design, is published by Art Resources Transfer, Inc. (A.R.T. Press).

**1989.** Participates in *Living in the Age of AIDS* exhibition curated by Anne Ayres with performances and programs organized by Francy Balcomb at the Art Gallery of the Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design (now Otis School of Art and Design). Begins touring selections from the exhibition as part of a public outreach program with safer sex workshops, panel discussions, lectures, volunteers to field questions, and brochures. Begins a series of AIDS-related postcards. Exhibits in *Dialogue: Prague/LA Exchange*, curated by Barbara Benish and Zdenka Gabalová at the Galerie Mladych and Lidový Dům, Prague, and in the touring exhibition *Object/Concept: 40 Years of California Assemblage*, guest curated by Anne Ayres at the Wight Art Gallery, University of California, Los Angeles.



**ABELES, KIM**

## TOUCH A FRIEND



## TALK ABOUT AIDS

**Selection from the bilingual postcard series with HIV/AIDS information on reverse, created in 1990.**

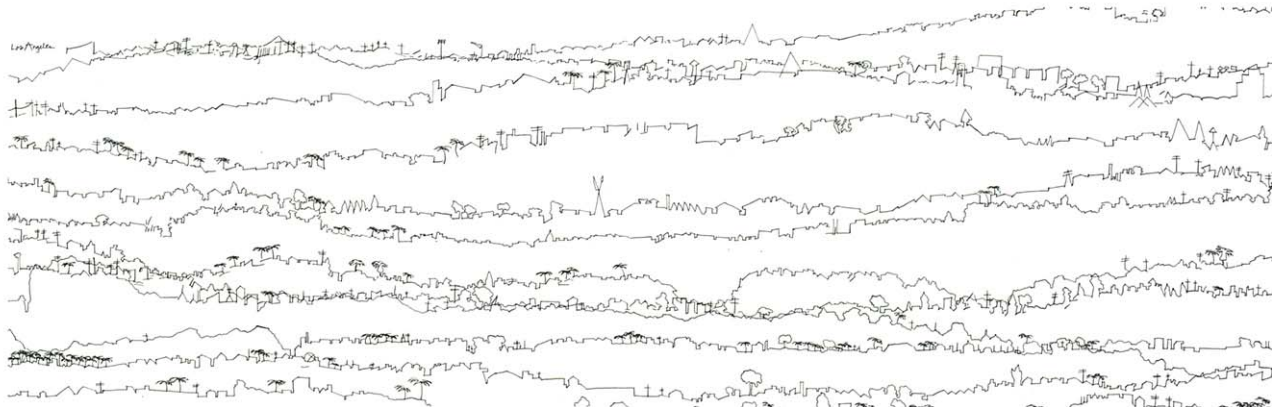
**1990.** Receives grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation. Team teaches at Venice High School with performance artist Elia Arce and with the guidance of Madre Program coordinator Suchi Branfman. Member of artist team commissioned through the California Arts Council to create design enhancements for the Secretary of State/State Archive Building, Sacramento. Selected for the *Photography Biennial* curated by Edward W. Earle and Deborah Klochko at the California Museum of Photography, Riverside. Participates in the Arts Advisory Committee for the *Citywide Cultural Masterplan*, headed by Adolfo Nodal, General Manager, Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department. Artist's page art published in *Art Papers* (and again in 1991). Creates artwork for *Windows on AIDS*, coordinated by Linda Brownridge for the Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, CA (also in 1992). Begins *The Smog Collector* series.

**1991.** Receives Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Grant to create the *HIV/AIDS Tarot*, which she distributes free to the public. Receives grant from Art Resources Transfer, Inc. Begins first variation of the installation, *Long Exposures (An Artist in Her Later Years)*, which includes interviews and documentation of artist Florence Rosen. Commissioned by the California Bureau of Automotive Repair and Department of Consumer Affairs to create on-site *Smog Collector* sculptures for a campaign to inform the public about smog checks, rideshare, and anti-smog solutions. The sculptures tour forty corporations and agencies in Southern California to promote rideshare programs. *The Smog Collector* projects receive extensive national and international attention through electronic media and print. Coordinates, with Barbara Benish and Deborah F. Lawrence, *World News*, a grassroots exhibition about the Gulf War involving 60 artists and writers. With Sheila Pinkel, organizes a series of monthly lectures held at Abeles' studio that



David Butow, © 1991 Los Angeles Times. Reprinted by permission

**Los Angeles Times photograph of *World News* coordinators: artists Abeles, Barbara Benish, Deborah F. Lawrence, and participating artist Karl Matson.**



***A Mile a Minute (LA to Del Mar as Seen from a Moving Train)*. 1986. Ink on paper, 2 panels, 20" x 53" each.**



presents speakers to educate artists and activists about issues of racism, the environment, and labor.

**1992.** Receives a Clean Air Award from the South Coast Air Quality Management District for her environmental artwork. Selected from the United States for the *Fotografie Biënnale Rotterdam*, The Netherlands curated by Bas Vroeghe and Frits Gierstberg. Panelist for *Contemporary Artist's Books: Creating New Access* at the International LA Art Fair. Panelist for *From Egocentric to Eco-Centric: Raising Our Own and Others'*



**Sheila Pinkel. Real Eyes.** 1987. Photograph, 70" x 48". Pinkel founded Artists Resource Center in 1986.

*Environmental Consciousness* for the Western Museums Conference. International Visitors Council of Los Angeles arranges studio visits with cultural representatives from Hungary and Korea. Guest Curator, with Senior Curator Edward W. Earle at the California Museum of Photography, Riverside, for *Smog: Views of Life and Breath*, an exhibition that brought together artists and

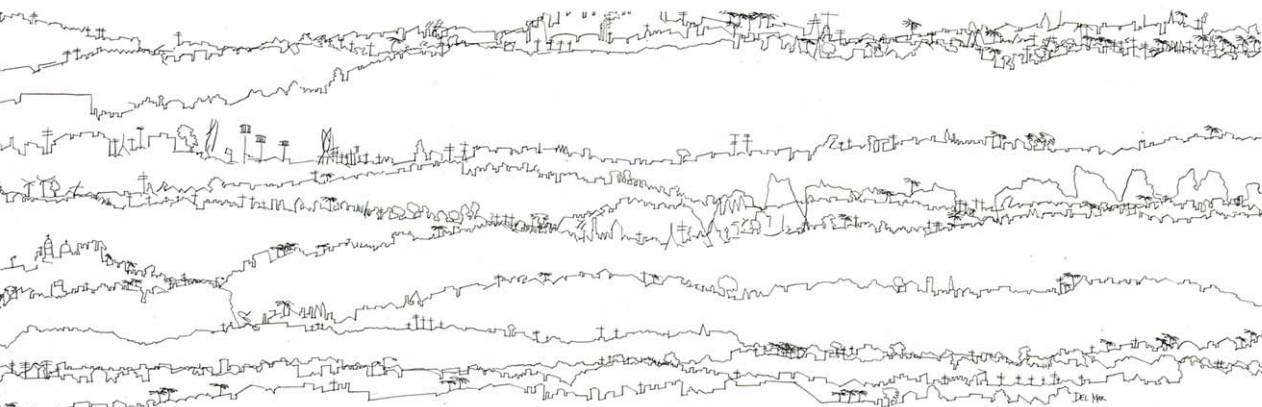
scientists from the Statewide Air Pollution Research Laboratory. Selected through the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department as artist on the design team for the Panorama City Library. Becomes member of the Board of Directors for Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions. Develops *The Smog Watch* for Exactly, Inc. for purposes of public access to art and activism.

**1993.** Receives Fellowship Award from the J. Paul Getty Trust Fund for the Visual Arts, administered by the California Community Foundation. Teaches

Activist Art/Public Access classes at Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA, focusing on unconventional methods for bringing art to the public. Becomes member of the Artists' Advisory Committee for the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery. Becomes member of the Advisory Board for Spirit World Children. Creates installation, *Sky Patch (Sixty Days of Los Angeles Sky – View to the East)*. Travels to Whitman College, Walla Walla, WA to present a week of lectures and presentations. Selected for the exhibition, *Paradise Lost*, curated by Mimi Debruyne as part of *Antwerp 93*, Belgium.



**Florence Rosen. Athena, Navigating Catalina Channel from Night Journey.** 1991. Mixed media, 4' x 3'. Rosen was Abeles' student at Cal State Fullerton in 1986 and later became the subject of the installation, *Long Exposures (An Artist in Her Later Years)*. (See LONG EXPOSURES).



PREVIOUS SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 1993 Linda Moore Gallery, San Diego, CA
- 1993 Turner-Krull Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 1992 Laurence Miller Gallery, New York, NY
- 1992 Turner-Krull Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 1991 Laguna Art Museum Satellite Gallery, Costa Mesa, CA
- 1990 Atlanta Pavilion, Atlanta Arts Festival, Atlanta, GA
- 1988 Institute for Design and Experimental Art (IDEA), Sacramento, CA
- 1987 Drudis-Biada Art Gallery, Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles, CA
- 1987 Karl Bornstein Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 1986 A.I.R. Gallery, New York, NY
- Guggenheim Gallery, Chapman College, Orange, CA
- 1985 Karl Bornstein Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 1985 University Art Gallery, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA
- 1983 Karl Bornstein Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 1983 Phyllis Kind Gallery, Chicago, IL
- 1982 Bridge Gallery, Los Angeles City Hall, Los Angeles, CA
- 1981 Karl Bornstein Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
- 1981 Municipal Art Gallery, Barnsdall Park, Los Angeles, CA
- 1980 Fine Arts Gallery, University of California, Irvine, CA
- 1979 Fine Arts Gallery, University of California, Irvine, CA



*The Smog Catcher (Thirty Days of Smog) II.* 1992. Particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass, 15" x 13". A self-portrait of Abeles from the *Smog Collector* series.



David Familian

*Sixty Days of Los Angeles Sky Patch (View to the East).* 1993. Acrylic on paper matching sky colors each day (distorted by smog), assemblage contraption for viewing sky section, ancillary artworks utilizing color data, 10' x 10'. Installation view at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles.



**AGING, CREATIVITY, AND THE EVOLUTION OF A WOMAN'S LIFE.** See LONG EXPOSURES (AN ARTIST IN HER LATER YEARS).

**BARNES, LUCINDA.** Art historian and curator of modern and contemporary art, Allen Memorial Art Museum. Barnes is the author of the following essay on a theme that runs throughout Abeles' work.

**The Truth Palace: Kim Abeles' Facts and Fictions.** If one were to build a truth palace, how would it look? What form would it take, outside and in? Would right angles or domes be appropriate? Can we, in fact, quantify truth? Can we localize it in a specific space? Can we examine the character and virtue of its essence? Can our senses experience and therefore know absolute reality?

Kim Abeles has devoted much of her artistic life to exploring and questioning the parameters of truth. In the mid-1970s, while still an art student, she painted in a *trompe l'oeil* manner. As the French term suggests, her skilled representations of personalized still lifes fronted a game of visual trickery, to fool the eye. Her objective resided not wholly in the pictorialization of commonplace objects. Rather, she toyed with the notion of veracity, of a true and absolute image. Abeles' witty dialogues evolved into tactile queries, revolving around a foundation of seemingly inconsequential fragments of daily life. Filtering her vision through the eyepiece of the commonplace, Abeles entered into, and continues to expand, an artistic discourse on human existence.

Abeles completed *Letters from Kōsai*, one of her earliest *Shrines*, in 1979. Kōsai, a Shingon Buddhist priest, was a mentor to Abeles when she was a foreign exchange student in Japan. After her return to America, his influence continued through their diligent correspondence. *Letters from Kōsai* initially appears to be a simple, beautifully hand-crafted white kimono. Yet sewn within the sheer fabric of its outer shell are dozens of transparent pockets that display Kōsai's letters in their envelopes. The kimono becomes a garment of remembrances, a kind of human envelope encapsulating Kōsai's spirit-image, his essence, which for Abeles resides in his words and learned thoughts. Abeles' constructed "image" portrays the subject in more palpable and intimate terms than the most fastidious rendering of his physical likeness could bring to light.

Abeles continued to frame her subjects within the kimono form into 1981. Reanimating countless prosaic objects, human-made and natural, she sought a quotidian intimacy as a truer, more lifelike representation of her subjects. The *Kimonos* grew increasingly sculptural with each investigation, gradually releasing the literalness of their relationship to clothing. Concurrently, the *Shrines* and *Biographical Portraits* series developed as direct outgrowths of the *Kimonos*.

**BARNES, LUCINDA**

*Experiment to Identify Change* (1983), from the *Shrine* series, originated in a friendly conversation. Abeles had been told that the lines of one palm change with time, while those of the other remain constant. If true, a dilemma arises: what or who generates change — a foretold text, that is, the lines of the palm, or the individual? The question so challenged Abeles' notions of identity and self-image that she decided to embark upon her own quasi-scientific investigation.

Abeles built a chamber of sorts, consisting of a pew-like booth, a stationary camera, and a plaster mold in which she placed her hands palm side up. Over a period of approximately five months she structured her daily routine around a ritualistic private performance of photographing her hands to document her life's progress. The contraption by which she enacted this ritual, and the resulting photographic evidence, came to embody the sculpture. In effect, its form grew out of the detritus of the artist's action. The now stationary sculpture — the pew and mounted camera, flanked by two tall racks from which rows of negatives are suspended, and the plaster mold upon the altarpiece that strangely resembles a book of scripture — retains a humanoid presence, a phantom-like remembrance of its former action.

Interestingly, Abeles never tallied the final statistics. She has remarked that her conscious and systematic search itself was sufficiently revealing. Perhaps an absolute analysis would have robbed the process of its force. *Experiment to Identify Change* guides the viewer's focus beyond the evidence, suggesting that truth resides in greater dimension in the documenting rather than in the document.

**Abeles Makes Relics and Invents Artifacts.** Paving a creative path, the artist concocts objects as if prefiguring future contemplation of our cultural present. The *Fact Fiction Boxes* propel decay and material deterioration into an indeterminate temporal realm, which incorporates both past and present. In a work from the series, *A Problem With Maintenance* (1983), a stained and aged ironing board cover is intricately suspended within a display case. According to its companion brass plaque, this is the *Bayeaux Tapestry*. Since its creation in the eleventh century, this cloth has traveled from the hands of veneration to nearly becoming refuse and back again. Yet the cloth, the actual fabric we see, is neither historical nor precious. It is nothing more than an ironing board cover beyond its time. Nevertheless, it also is a compelling material evocation in this context. Abeles weaves an aura of fact around a blatant fiction. She questions distinctions of value between what is commonplace and precious, between the throwaways of one culture and the veneration of another. Does our



## BARNES, LUCINDA

awareness of object and text, so beautifully enhanced by the artist's museum-like presentation, become less meaningful upon acknowledging the artist's fantasy? Does not the artist's rich imagining release both object and text to be contemplated free from prescribed values?

*Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth* (1984-85), focuses on assumptions regarding historical fact. This work belongs to the category of *Biographical Portraits*, while sharing the textual concerns of the *Fact Fiction Boxes*. Abeles' preliminary research into the life of the infamous pioneer woman unveiled more contradictory than substantiated information. The subject herself apparently passed on fluctuating fictions about her own life. Calamity's historical path even includes a variety of typographical errors that have risen to the status of fact.

The artist personifies Calamity Jane as a conjunction of fragments. Overlapping pieces of text and image coalesce in a melange of simultaneous perspectives of opinion, hearsay, and documentary evidence. Abeles proposes as her overall image a set of choices. The viewer may piece together any combination of informational fragments given and ultimately form a concrete picture of Calamity's identity. Or, if we conclude that values of truth and identity are absolute only in relation to specific time and place, we understand her as many images.

Mother Ann, the 18th century founder of the Shakers, Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, and Rosa Parks followed as subjects for *Biographical Portraits*. Abeles' choices suggest an empathy for figures who have demonstrated unrelenting strength of will and utter conviction of their own actions. With each unraveling of a character, Abeles has found herself in an ever-deepening process of self-discovery. As they come to fruition, these sculptural personages reanimate both subject and artist.

**Abeles' Material and Intellectual Investigations.** Increasingly, Abeles generated far more information than could be accommodated by a single work of art. Small limited-edition books, which Abeles produced as companions to the sculpture and as epilogues to the stories, provided a partial outlet for the excess. By the mid-1980s the sculptures had extended into room-sized installations. Multiple interrelated sculptural components allowed the artist to develop increasingly complex and subtle visual dialogues.



David Familian

**Detail of *The Truth Palace***  
(See also *HABEAS CORPUS*).

Through this spatial expansion Abeles could more thoroughly engage both her physical narratives and her audience.

Two early installations, *Dead Sea Scrolls* (1984-85) and *The Image of St. Bernadette* (1987), originated similarly to the *Biographical Portraits* as investigations of the factual and fictive parameters of historical personae. The *Dead Sea Scrolls* series centers on Kando, a shopkeeper in Bethlehem in the 1940s. Abeles considers Kando as the unwitting pivot point between the rather innocent discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and their nearly instantaneous transformation into vehicles of personal greed and political power. In *Greed Turns to Glue* (1985), Abeles invites us into an animated slice of history that leads the viewer to altogether unexpected realizations.

St. Bernadette has been the object of no less obsessive a cultural and commercial commodification. Through a maze of fastidiously made objects, from Abeles' large freestanding sculptural structures to her miniature paintings and ornate boxes of faux relics, the demarcation between miraculous actuality and the ensuing glut of event-related kitsch slips out of focus. Abeles discovers in both Kando and St. Bernadette a little-recognized face of history. Intentionality contributes actively and persistently to the shaping and reshaping of our cultural self-image.

Abeles' move to an installation format actually began to surface with *Observatory/Territory* (1984-85). During the summer of 1984 she was a recipient of a Hand Hollow Fellowship, an artists' residency program established by the internationally-renowned sculptor, George Rickey. The program was located in rural upstate New York, on the grounds of Rickey's home and studio. Always a keen observer of her immediate surroundings, this radical change in her environment, from urban Southern California to the Hudson River Valley, instantly found a place in Abeles' work. In a remote wooded site she constructed a one-person, cage-like contraption. Abeles made daily pilgrimages to her personal domed observatory where she then passed hours watching and charting the heavens.

*Observatory/Territory*, like *Experiment to Identify Change*, materialized as an outgrowth of a series of speculations and ideas generated by an activity. The sculpture consists of the domed cage and dozens of sheer fabric panels. Phases of the sun and moon, in the passage from New Moon to Full Moon, are



**Detail of *Experiment to Identify Change***  
(See also *SHRINES*).



painted on the fabric, effectively forming a massive three-dimensional illuminated manuscript. The suspended fabric panels reflect their kinship to the kimonos. They are draped around the observatory in a large sweeping curve, based on the celestial paths of the sun and moon, invoking the physical and creative territory where the artist charted the daily turn of the universe.

*Mountain Wedge* (1985-87) succeeded with a similar mission. Again, Abeles' creative scrutiny emerged from the province of conventional familiarity, which in this case was the view from her studio window. Since moving her work space to downtown Los Angeles in 1980, Abeles' immediate urban neighborhood and its inhabitants had figured variously and frequently in her work. *Mountain Wedge*, the central work in the series *Pilgrimage to the Wedge*, blossomed from a simple observation, that of a smogless vista of the nearby San Gabriel Mountains. It was a very rare sight since varying densities of smog would normally obscure the view. A year passed before the same vista was to reappear. To confirm her observations in the most physical and true manner possible, Abeles elected the task of walking in a direct line from her studio to the closest point from which she could clearly see and photograph the same mountain vista. Along the ten-hour, 16.5 mile walk, on the day of a first-stage smog alert, Abeles photographed everything in her path.

#### **Abeles' Pure Delight in Process and Discovery.**

*Mountain Wedge* and the ancillary objects which accompany the installation form a giant photographic/sculptural reflection and reexperience of the event. In this instance, however, one senses an increasing undercurrent of concern in the artist's voice. The investigation of aspects of smog and air quality initially surfaced in Abeles' work in the early 1980s. Understandably, the issue factored significantly in her daily environment. Rather than resolving the issue, however, the process of realizing *Mountain Wedge* more deeply embedded Abeles' concerns and queries. *Smog Collectors* (1991-92) followed. As in so many previous works, the project was set in motion by a casual observation — the accumulation of soot-like particles on the surface of her car.

After a bit of experimentation, Abeles discovered that she could gather smog, the actual particulate air matter that settles on most surfaces. Using a variety of common household items, plexiglass and adhesive paper as the "collectors," Abeles has assembled a vast body of evidence. A simple stencil process allows her to draw and paint with smog. Unlike historical fact or accepted fiction, the specific evidence of these works is utterly inescapable; it asserts conditions of everyday existence with undeniable reality and impact. And yet humor, whimsy, and the artist's abiding commitment to aesthetic concerns prevent the *Smog Collectors* from

slipping into a dogmatic mire.

Evidence, regardless of verity, does not guarantee accuracy, awareness, or appropriate action. Abeles confirms this paradox again in *Truth Palace* (1991). The sculpture is a container of evidences. A vertical cage of shelves displays information to be considered by the viewer — pictures, slides, phone bills, videotapes, cassette tapes. Slashes of red pigment, as if life-giving blood, streak across document surfaces, circulating through and connecting the body of the system. The entire structure is enveloped by a diaphanous scrim, a kind of skin both housing and obscuring the evidence. Abeles' *Truth Palace* queries whether evidence can substantiate a physical and spiritual being, and if a life can or should be pragmatized by evidence.

Abeles relies on actuality and the force of imagination to sharpen awareness, her own and that of her audience. Through a rich and infinitely inventive visual language she leads her viewer/participant to the possibility of realizing what we know holds the key to a much vaster realm of what is knowable. As compelling as verisimilitude and evidence might be, truth does not wholly, or even sometimes partially, reside in the attributes of fact. Yet Abeles never relinquishes belief that ultimately truth creates its own voice.

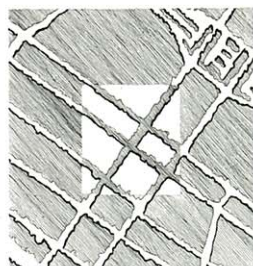
LUCINDA BARNES

**BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS**, a series from 1984-1991, exists on a pivot point between fact and fiction, taking into account the subjectivity of our perceptions and data. I look to the poetry in commonplace objects as a way to evoke in viewers their own information, stories, and recollections. I turn concepts into objects and call a rose a rose.

**Rickety Tickety** was created in 1982, before rising unemployment in the following decade forced a large population of families and individuals to live on the streets. The sculpture refers to an observation about a man who lived on Broadway and with whom I became friends.

Since he often sat or slept on the sidewalks, his viewpoint of the passing crowds was often from a level that revealed only their legs and feet, dangling handbags, or small children in strollers. Pedestrians either overlooked or ignored his presence.

When I went to take the photos for *Rickety Tickety*, I selected a spot on the curb where I would appear to

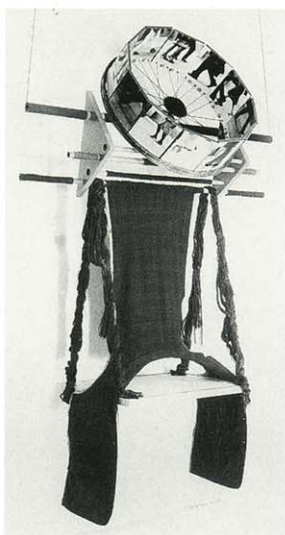


**Downtown Los Angeles at Second and Broadway.**



## BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS

be taking a photo of a building (as to be inconspicuous). I set up my camera and glanced to see a group of people heading toward the camera-zone. I then peered through the view-finder and after a long delay, I curiously looked up to see where all the people had gone. They were all courteously waiting to my right and left, so I could take a picture. See also **BOOKWORKS** (*Our Position, Always, Reciprocal*).



**Ricky Ticky.** 1982. Bicycle wheel, photographs, thread, cement, wood, metal, acrylic. 77" x 50" x 20".



*Prominent Shaker Villages in the eastern U.S.*  
 1 Mt. Lebanon, N.Y. 2 Enfield, Conn. 3 Hancock, Mass. 4 Harvard, Mass. 5 East Canterbury, N.H. 6 Sabbathday Lake, Maine

ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map

**Locations of several prominent Shaker Villages in the eastern United States.**

**The Celibacy and Practicality of Mother Ann/ Speak in Tongues and Import Oysters.** Mother Ann Lee (1736-1784) founded the Shaker Community, a scattering of utopian villages which thrived during the 1800s. They are well-known for their furniture and general practicality in processes and objects. Their ideas were often ingenious, such as the creation of the round barn in which a person could stand at a central

ann X Lee mark

**Ann Lee's "X" mark as it appears on her marriage license.**

pivot point to feed the animals. A wonderful following of artisans in Hancock Village, Massachusetts, maintains the traditional styles of the Shakers.

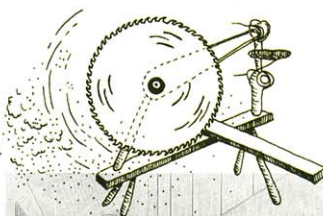
The Shakers were also notable for their observance of celibacy. (Ironically, they were fond of oysters and frequently imported this aphrodisiac.) Shakers were never born into the clan; instead, their practice of adoption became a model for state institutions. Women and men were separate but totally equal in terms of politics and responsibilities. In contrast to the composed logic with which they approach design, the Shakers approached religion with zeal. During their holy meetings, they would shake and speak in tongues. The fervor was so striking, in fact, that neighbors continued to complain to the police and tried to have them expelled from the districts.

### Sources and Suggested Reading:

Sprigg, June, and David Larkin. *Shaker Life, Work and Art*. New York: Stewart, Tabori and Chang, 1987.

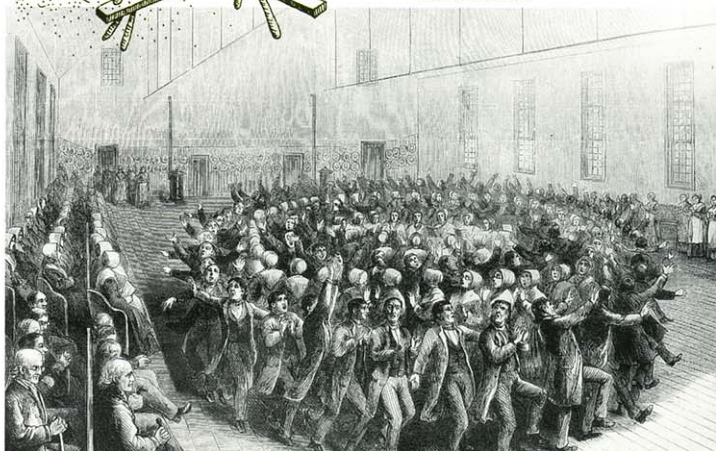
Andrews, Edward Deming. *The People Called Shakers - A Search for the Perfect Society*. New York: Dover Publications, 1963. (Reference source for marriage license containing Ann Lee's "signature").

ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA drawing



**A Shaker sister invented the circular saw when she mounted a saw-blade on her spinning wheel. Below, Shaker meeting in New York, 1873.**

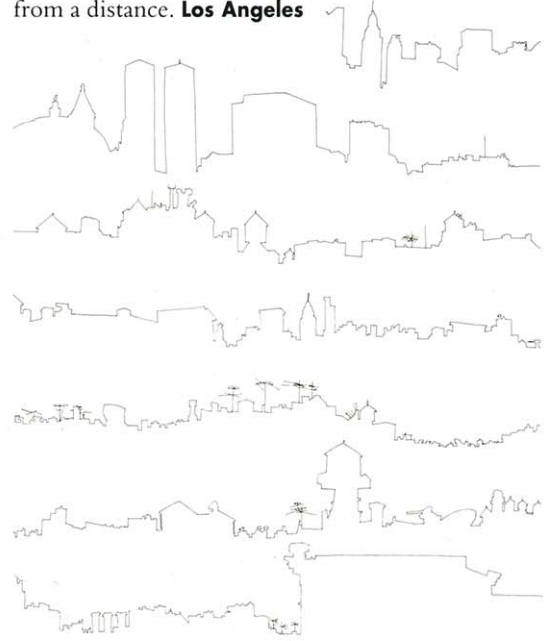
Brown Brothers



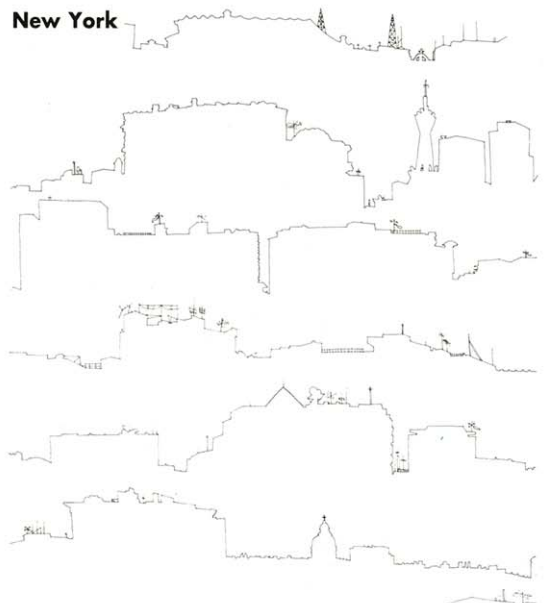


## BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS

**Letter to Phantom Lovers (Love as a Corset, Frou-Frou)** is a description of a long-distance love affair and its length of longing. City skylines are transcribed to communicate the lines of longing—their specificity and mutability – and the illusion of thinking one could keep such a line in a pocket. And, like the corset squeezed from a domestic mailbag, they give the impression there is comfort, when seen from a distance. **Los Angeles**



**New York**

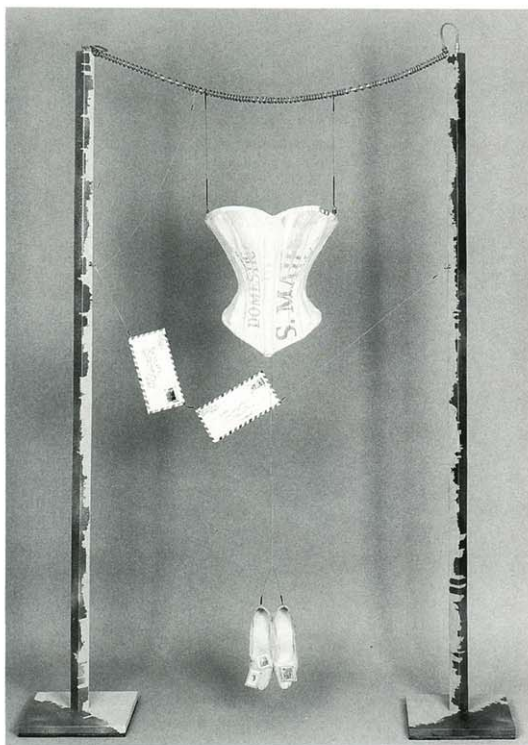


Janice Felgar

**The Celibacy and Practicality of Mother Ann/Speak in Tongues and Import Oysters.** 1984. Wooden "candles," authentic Shaker webbing, hanger & pegs, wood, metal, handwoven straw, wood, fabric hat, enamel on oyster shells, photographs of Hancock Shaker Village, fabric, 77" x 34" x 7".

See also ABELES (Chronology: *A Mile A Minute*, p.20)

## BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS



Janice Felgar

**Letters to Phantom Lovers (Love as a Corset, Frou-Frou).** 1984. Corset made of mail sack with metal stays, enamel paintings of Los Angeles and New York City skylines on wood, envelopes made of sheer material, stamps made of photographs with locations of skyline drawing, paper high heels with stamps, telephone cord, 76" x 52-1/2" x 11-1/4".

"Ships at a distance have every man's wish on board. For some they come in with the tide. For others they sail forever on the horizon, never out of sight, never landing until the Watcher turns his eyes away in resignation, his dreams mocked to death by Time. That is the life of men.

"Now, women forget all those things they don't want to remember, and remember everything they don't want to forget. The dream is the truth. Then they act and do things accordingly."

—Zora Neale Hurston. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. New York: HarperCollins, 1978.

**Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth.** 1984-85. Encyclopedia information about Jane on sticks in bottles, excerpt from a letter to her daughter about her marriage to Wild Bill Hickok, photographs of lie detector and Jane, suitcase, lie detector readings on wood, acrylic on sheer fabric, metal, enamel, 85" x 33" x 19". Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc.

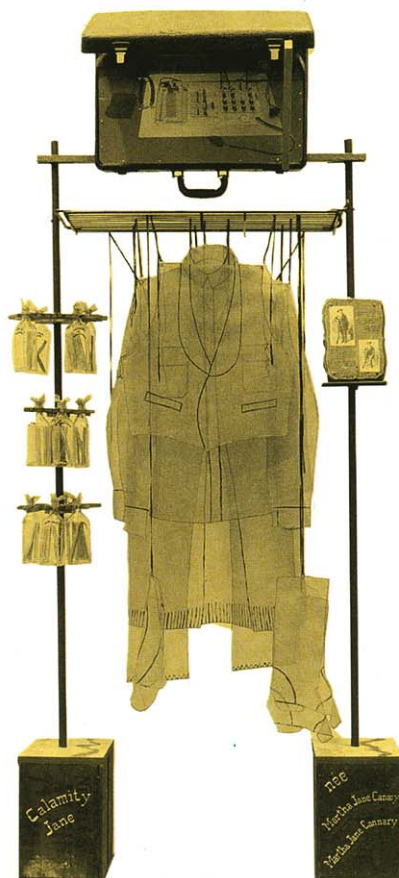
**Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth.** While making the Calamity Jane sculpture, I decided one day to check every encyclopedia for a nutshell description of her. It is not surprising because of her own tall tales that the descriptions of her activities differed, but typographical errors caused differing spellings of her name, Canary and Cannery, and her birthdate ranges over a two-year period. Thus, history is altered by a tired typist, a fed-up proofreader, or editorial embellishments.

Calamity Jane's relationship to Wild Bill Hickok is given particular contradiction in encyclopedic sources (see chart). Was she merely his *unattractive* friend and companion, or, as she states in a letter to her daughter, were they married? In the letter (reprinted in *Between Ourselves—Letters Between Mothers and Daughters 1750–1982*), Jane writes, "...and then while on the trip to Abeline, Bill and I met Rev. Sipes and Rev. Warren and we were married. There will be lots of fools doubt that but I will leave you plenty of proof that we were." See **BOOKWORKS** (*Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth*).

### Sources and Suggested Reading:

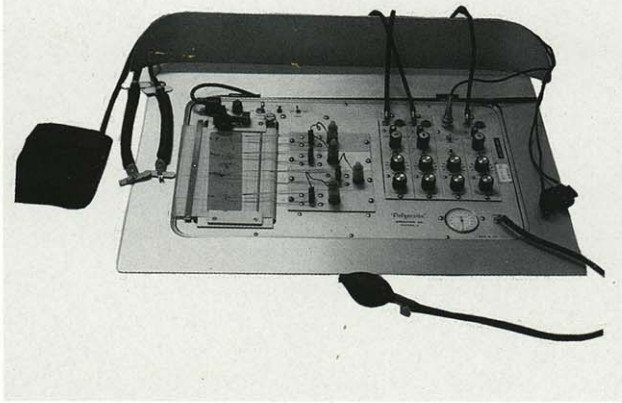
Hillerman, Tony. *The Best of the West – An Anthology of Classic Writing from the American West*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991. (Contains Calamity Jane's autobiographical pamphlet.)

McMurtry, Larry. *Buffalo Girls – A Novel*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990.





## BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS



**Lie detector.** Abeles photographed the instrument at the Los Angeles Police Department after some difficulty gaining entrance. An officer at the reception desk finally called upstairs for approval to let her in the polygraph room explaining, "It's Okay. She's just an artist."

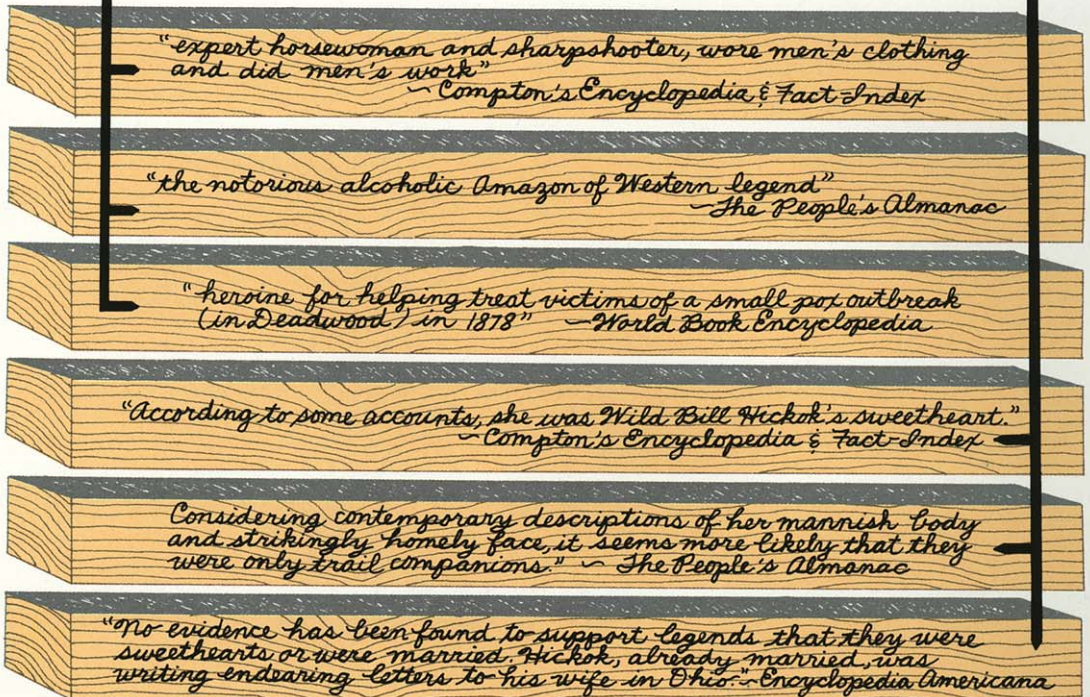


**Incorrect encyclopedia** information about Calamity Jane written on sticks in whisky (or medicinal) bottles as displayed in sculpture.



The Bettmann Archive

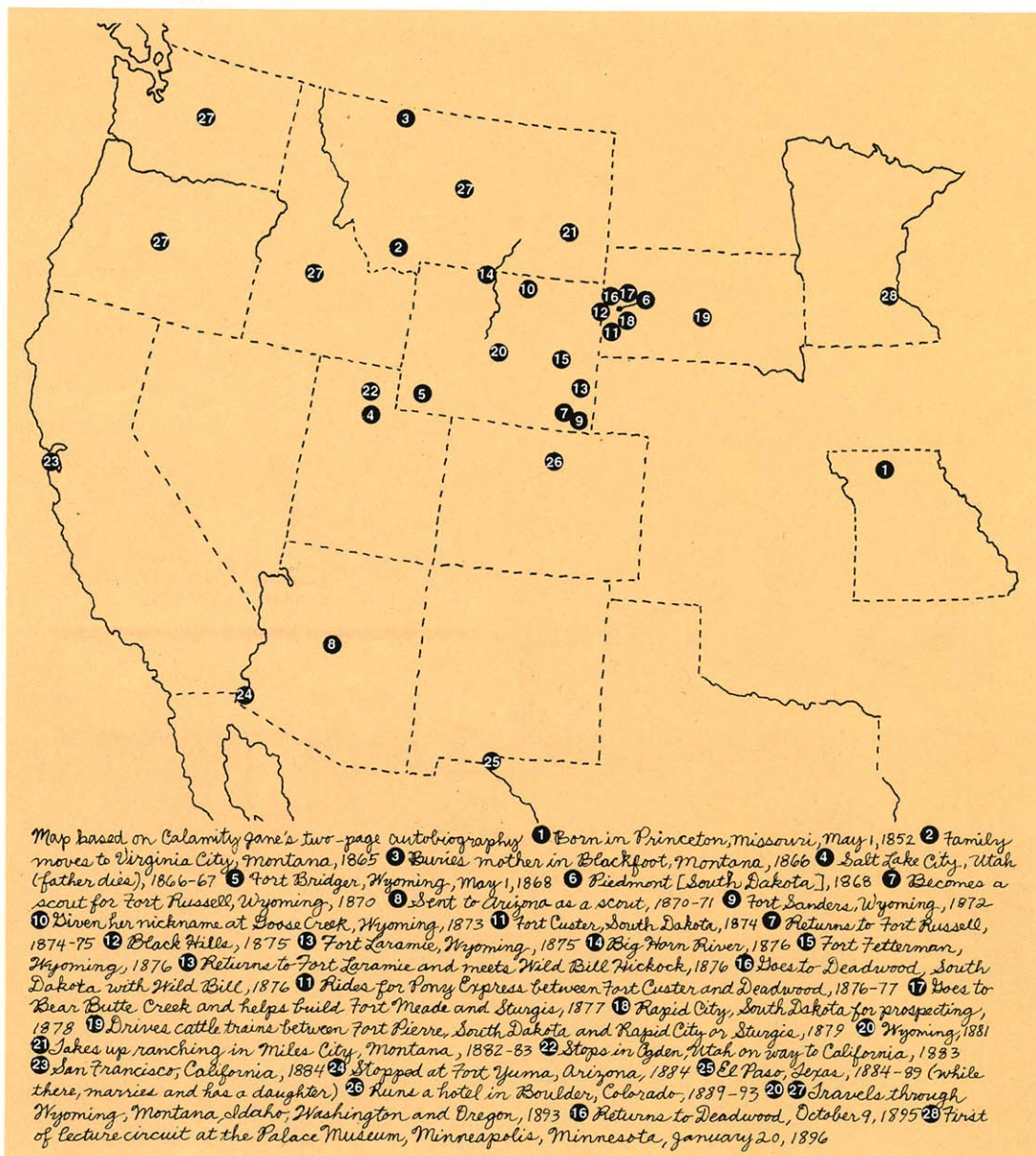
Martha "Calamity Jane" Cannery (1852-1903).



ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA chart



## BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS



ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map

Map showing travels of Calamity Jane extrapolated from her autobiographical pamphlet that she distributed at carnivals during the last years of her life. The text is said to be woven with fabrications about her adventures.



**OTHER (In Memory of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg).**

The United States vs. Rosenbergs and Sobell. The case of the United States vs. Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, and their co-defendant Morton Sobell, began on February 2, 1950, with the arrest for espionage of Klaus Fuchs, a British nuclear scientist. Nearly four months later, Harry Gold, a 39 year-old chemist, was arrested and charged with being his courier.

In June 1950, the FBI took into custody a former soldier at the Los Alamos Atomic Laboratory, David Greenglass, charged with passing the secret of the bomb to Gold.

Greenglass implicated his brother-in-law, Julius Rosenberg, who was arrested on July 17th. His wife, Ethel, was arrested three weeks later and Morton Sobell soon after. They were charged with "conspiracy to commit espionage." The Rosenbergs and

Sobell pled innocent. The motive was deemed ideological: communism.

The government charged - in the language of the prosecutor - that the Rosenbergs had stolen "through David Greenglass this one weapon, that might well hold the key to the survival of this nation and means the peace of the world, the atomic bomb."

David Greenglass, Ethel's younger brother, pleaded guilty and appeared as the principle prosecution witness. A machinist who had been stationed at Los Alamos as an enlisted man during World War II, Greenglass told the court how he divulged the secrets of the atom bomb at the request of his brother-in-law and sister.

For the defense, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg each took the stand, and each made a complete denial. Much of the cross-examination of the defendants had nothing to do with spying; it focused instead on their membership in Communist and anti-Fascist organizations.

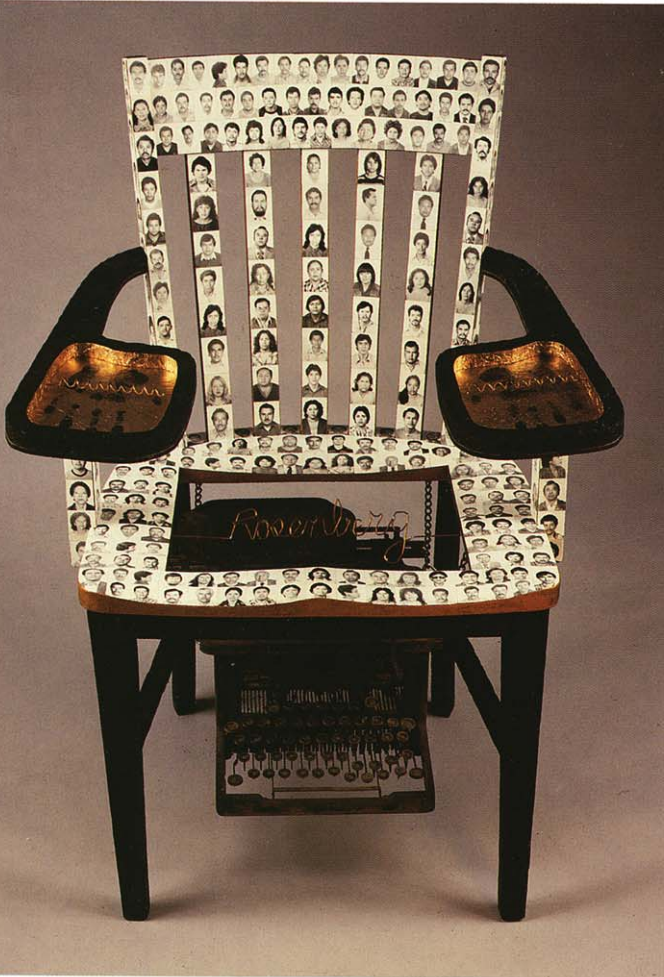
All of the defendants and their accusers were Jews. So was the judge, Irving Kaufman; the prosecutor, Irving Saypol; and his powerful assistant, Roy Cohn. There were, however, no Jews on the jury.

In their major book on the case, *Invitation to an Inquest*, Walter and Miriam Schneir wrote that, "In the United States, a small but persistent minority...was acutely troubled by the case. In part, this response was conditioned by the distrust some people felt for any trial with wide political implications conducted in an atmosphere of hostility and tension. The constant questioning of the Rosenbergs as to their political ideas, opinions, reading habits, and affiliations made the trial seem suspect.

"Students of history were well aware that, in times of stress, any judicial system may fail. Juries may be wrong and judges biased; the innocent may be convicted. Hearing the Rosenbergs' repeated assertions of innocence, some were reminded painfully of the injustices visited on Dreyfus, on Mooney and Billings, on Sacco and Vanzetti."

The trial lasted just 14 days. Found guilty, the Rosenbergs were sentenced to die at Sing Sing prison; Sobell was given 30 years. Despite massive, world-wide protests, the Rosenbergs were electrocuted just before sundown on June 19, 1953.

The release of tens of thousands of pages of FBI files, obtained through a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit filed by their sons, has revealed that Gold and Greenglass, with the assistance of the FBI and the Department of Justice, fabricated the key testimony that led to the Rosenbergs' conviction. It also uncovered the collusion among the judge, prosecution, Justice Department, and even the Supreme Court.



Daniel J. Martinez

**OTHER (In Memory of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg).** 1987. Burned typewriter, visa and passport photos, altered chair with burned legs and arms, copper foil and wire, 37" x 25" x 19". Collection of Doug Simay, San Diego, California.



## BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS

The Rosenbergs' struggle, their refusal to submit to government manipulation, continues to be a source of inspiration to this day, forty years after their official murder.

**ROB A. OKUN.** Reprinted from the journal, *Generation to Generation*, New York: North Star Fund; Rosenberg Fund for Children, June 18, 1993.

### Sources and Suggested Reading:

Meeropol, Robert and Michael. *We Are Your Sons*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986.

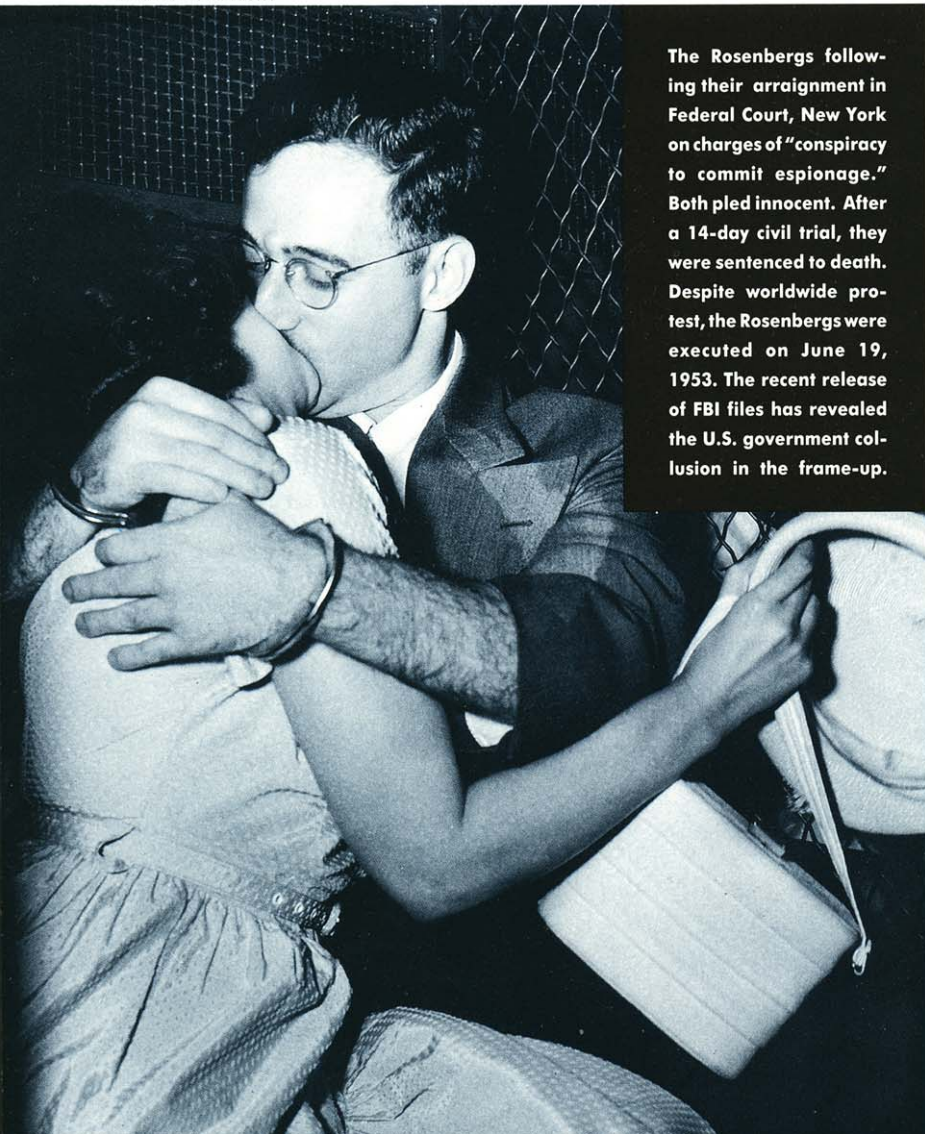
Okun, Rob A. *The Rosenbergs – Collected Visions of Artists and Writers*. New York: Universe Books, 1988. Montague: Cultural Forecast, 1993. (For information about the book, film and video write: Cultural Forecast, 213 Brickyard Hollow Road, Montague, MA 01351).

Schneir, Walter and Miriam. *Invitation to an Inquest*. New York: Doubleday, 1965; New York: Pantheon, 1983.

Wexley, John. *The Judgement of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg*. New York: Cameron and Kahn, 1955.

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1980.

AP/Wide World Photos



**The Rosenbergs following their arraignment in Federal Court, New York on charges of "conspiracy to commit espionage." Both pled innocent. After a 14-day civil trial, they were sentenced to death. Despite worldwide protest, the Rosenbergs were executed on June 19, 1953. The recent release of FBI files has revealed the U.S. government collusion in the frame-up.**

June 19, 1953

Dearest Sweethearts, my most precious children,

Only this morning it looked like we might be together again after all. Now that this cannot be, I want so much for you to know all that I have come to know. Unfortunately, I may write only a few simple words; the rest your own lives must teach you, even as mine taught me.

At first, of course, you will grieve bitterly for us, but you will not grieve alone. That is our consolation and it must eventually be yours.

Eventually, too you must come to believe that life is worth the living. Be comforted that even now, with the end of ours slowly approaching, that we know this with a conviction that defeats the executioner!

Your lives must teach you, too, that good cannot really flourish in the midst of evil; that freedom and all the things that go to make up a truly satisfying and worthwhile life, must sometimes be purchased very dearly. Be comforted then that we were serene and understood with the deepest

kind of understanding, that civilization had not as yet progressed to the point where life did not have to be lost for the sake of life; and that we were comforted in the sure knowledge that others would carry on after us.

We wish we might have had the tremendous joy and gratification of living our lives out with you. Your Daddy who is with me in the last momentous hours, sends his heart and all the love that is in it for his dearest boys. Always remember that we were innocent and could not wrong our conscience.

We press you close and kiss you with all our strength.

Lovingly,  
Daddy and Mommy,  
JULIUS AND ETHEL

**Ethel Rosenberg's final letter**, from *We Are Your Sons*, 2nd ed., Robert and Michael Meeropol, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986. Printed with permission of the authors.

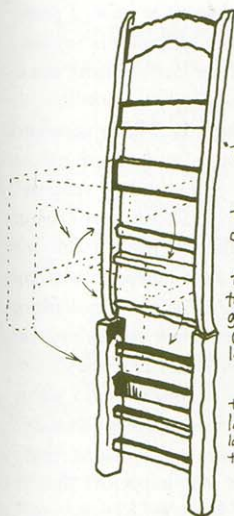


**To Sit As Ladder (In Honor of Rosa Parks)** describes the life of Mrs. Rosa Parks, the civil rights activist who is known as the "Mother of the Movement." She is well known for her courageous act of confrontation to the bus segregation laws. On December 1, 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama, Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white man. Her legal battle and the subsequent bus boycott gave rise to the Civil Rights Movement and its leaders. My sculpture offers a timeline of events that led up to that important day, tracing Rosa Parks' history of activism.



ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA

Rosa Parks.



"To Sit as Ladder (In Honor of Rosa Parks)"

take the chair, move its sections to change it from a seat to a ladder

tell the timeline of events leading to the day Mrs. Rosa L. Parks refused to give up her seat to a white man in confrontation to the bus segregation laws (Dec. 1, 1955)

through text and photographs on this ladder, tell her story. Pinned Rosa Parks last week to request her signature for the sculpture.

Kim Abello May 1991

**Original sketch for To Sit As Ladder (In Honor of Rosa Parks).** First printed in a catalogue designed by Susan Siltan, 27 chairs, for an exhibition to support Sunshine Mission – Casa de Rosas, the first shelter for homeless women in Los Angeles.

David Familian

**Detail of To Sit As Ladder (In Honor of Rosa Parks).** 1991.



David Familian

**To Sit As Ladder (In Honor of Rosa Parks).** 1991. Chronology and quotes describing the life of Rosa Parks, altered chair, photograph, radiator, enamel, acrylic on paper, 67" x 22" x 12". Collection of California Afro-American Museum, Los Angeles.



## BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS

**Chronology. February 4, 1913.** Born Rosa Louise McCauley in Tuskegee, Alabama. Shortly after, her father is cheated out of his land by a white man; family moves to grandparents' farm in Pine Level, near Montgomery, Alabama.

**1920-24.** Studies at the Country School in Pine Level. *"My desires were to be free as soon as I had learned that there had been slavery of human beings and that I was a descendant from them. If there was a proclamation setting those who were slaves free, I thought they should be indeed free and not have any type of slavery put upon us."*<sup>1</sup>

**1924-26.** Mother stresses importance of education. At thirteen, attends Montgomery Industrial School for Girls. *"My mother believed in freedom and equality even though we didn't know it for reality during our life in Alabama."*<sup>2</sup> *"There were white and colored elevators. I tried to use them as little as possible. There were white and colored water fountains, so you just didn't drink."*<sup>3</sup>

**1926-28.** Attends and graduates from Booker T. Washington Jr. High School.

**1931.** Meets Raymond Parks, and in December, 1932 they marry.

**1933-34.** Attends Alabama State College and receives high school diploma. *"Whites would accuse you of causing trouble when all you were doing was acting like a normal human being, instead of cringing. You didn't have to wait for a lynching. You died a little each time you found yourself face to face with this kind of discrimination."*<sup>4</sup>

**1943.** Refuses to use "blacks only" door of a Montgomery bus and is forced off by the driver. Becomes one of the first women to join NAACP and is an official for the organization in 1944. *"The most painful thing of all was to see little children get on the bus. To them, a seat was a seat, and when they saw an empty one, they sat down. Their mothers would have to snatch them and hurry them to the rear before there was trouble. It was painful to think how they would be taught."*<sup>5</sup>

**Late 1940s.** Works with Montgomery Voters' League which productively fights systematic schemes by white officials to prevent blacks from voting.

**1954.** Organizes NAACP Youth Group in Montgomery, teaching young people the history of racism and African-American activism in the U.S.

## ROSA L. PARKS



ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map  
Montgomery, Alabama. Site of Rosa Parks' confrontation to the bus segregation laws.

**1955.** The Freedom Train from Washington, D.C. arrives in Montgomery. Intended to teach about democracy, admittance is free, and all people are welcome. Rosa Parks and the Youth Group enter the Freedom Train as an act of desegregation in the racist South. Angered whites threaten her in the weeks following and her husband's business diminishes. *"Some have suffered much more than I did. Some have even lost their lives. I just escaped some of the physical - maybe not all - but some of the physical pain. And the pain still remains. From as far back as I can remember."*<sup>6</sup>

**1955.** Risks further danger by attending leadership workshop at Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee. *"At Highlander, I found out for the first time in my entire life that this could be a unified society, that there was such a thing as people of differing races and backgrounds meeting together in workshops and living together in peace and harmony. It was a place I was very reluctant to leave. I gained there strength to persevere in my work for freedom, not just for blacks, but all oppressed people."*<sup>7</sup>

**December 1, 1955.** Booked, fingerprinted, and jailed for refusing to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery bus. *"Well, in the first place, I had been working all day on the job. I was quite tired after spending a full day working. I handle and work on clothing that white people wear. That didn't come in my mind but this is what I wanted to know: when and how would we ever determine our rights as human beings?...It just happened that the driver made a demand and I just didn't feel like obeying his demand. He called a policeman and I was arrested and placed in jail."*<sup>8</sup>

**December 5, 1955.** The Women's Political Council immediately takes the opportunity presented by Rosa Parks' arrest to put a bus boycott into action. Within a week, the bus company already feels the financial pressures. *"People just stayed off the buses because I was arrested, not because I asked them. If everybody else had been happy and doing well, my arrest wouldn't have made any difference at all. The one thing I appreciated was the fact that when so many others, by the hundreds and by the thousands, joined in, there was a kind of lifting of a burden from me individually. I feel that whatever my individual desires were to be free, I was not alone. There were many others who felt the same way."*<sup>9</sup>

**January 1956.** Because of her court case, loses her job at Montgomery Fair Store, her husband's busi-



ness fails, and they continue to receive threatening calls. Her husband suffers a nervous breakdown because of stress.

**February 1, 1956.** Rosa Parks' lawyer, Fred Gray, files another suit in Federal Court representing African-Americans of Montgomery against the bus company and State of Alabama on the grounds that segregation is unconstitutional.

**June 4, 1956.** Federal judges rule that bus segregation is unconstitutional. City of Montgomery and the State of Alabama appeal the case, which takes it to the Supreme Court. On November 13, 1956, Supreme Court rules that segregation on public transportation is illegal. Montgomery officials file a petition asking the Court to revoke the judgement, thus delaying desegregation.

**December 20, 1956.** After 381 days, the Montgomery Bus Boycott is over when segregation laws for local bus lines officially end.

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*"When people made up their minds that they wanted to be free and took action, then there was change. But they couldn't rest on just that change. It has to continue. It just doesn't seem that an older person like I am should still have to be in the struggle, but if I have to be in it then I have no choice but to keep on."*<sup>10</sup>

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#### Sources for Quotes and Suggested Reading:

Lanker, Brian. *I Dream a World – Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America*. New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1989. (Quotes #1, 2, 6, 9, 10)

Friese, Kai. *Rosa Parks – The Movement Organizes*. Norristown, NJ: Silver Burdett Press, 1990. (Quotes #3, 4, 5, 7)

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States*. New York: HarperCollins, 1980. (Quote #8)

Davis, Marianna W., Editor. *Contributions of Black Women to America*. Columbia, SC: Kenday Press, 1981.

Wallace, Michelle. *Invisibility Blues – From Pop to Theory*. New York: Verso, 1990.

**BOOKWORKS.** This exhibition includes the installation, *Encyclopedia Persona Library*, containing Abeles' bookworks. The installation received partial support through an Individual Artist Fellowship from the J. Paul Getty Trust Fund for the Visual Arts, a fund of the California Community Foundation (1993). The library offers the viewer an opportunity to peruse Abeles' varied limited edition and one-of-a-kind books in a comfortable setting. See also ABELES (Chronology: *Crafts, Cookery and Country Living*, p.16).

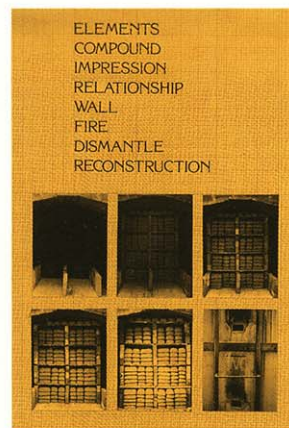
**Books as Sculpture.** See DEAD SEA SCROLLS (*Historic Sites, Buildings, Etc.*); SMOG COLLECTOR (*The Wonder Books*); COLLECTIVE DIARY: DEDICATED TO

#### PEOPLE WITH AIDS.

**Limited Edition Books.** The books become visual poetics for the hand. Like the sculpture and installations from which they emerge, they tell narratives through image, objects, textures, and anecdotes. They call to question and rearrange facts into a new pattern of logic and rely on repetition of varying processes and mediums for the same image to imply memory during the reading of the piece. Underrepresented facts along with the textbook view combine with the magic of poetic license.

Bookworks are a valuable means to expand audience, both in quantity and background. With my particular interest in three-dimensional artforms, books also present a valuable alternative to small, flat transparencies. Books are tactile and intimate. The limited edition books allow people who can't ordinarily afford to buy art to own a piece of art; I sometimes trade them or give them as a thank you for goods and services, or as a gift to scholars who devote their lives to these subjects. Books are a way to shower the world with good deeds and beauty.

**Impressions** is a book describing the installation composed of 1,046 handmade cobblestones of recycled clay. Impressions of a man and woman,



**Selection from the book Impressions.** 1979. Xerox and offset printed book, 11" x 8-1/2". Edition of 100.



**Impressions.** 1979. Ceramics and sand, 18' x 20'. Installation view at UC Irvine.





**Kiln Tongs**—Selection from *Experiment for Myself as Other*. 1979. Photographic book, 11" x 8-1/2". Edition of 25.

pressed into wet clay and frozen through fire, move throughout the walkable floorpiece. The book develops the metaphor between the 4-month process of creating the *bread/bricks* and the dynamics of labor, lives, and lovers.

#### **Experiment for Myself as Other**

*"I like to do things the hard way. My basic quest in life is to reinvent the wheel."*

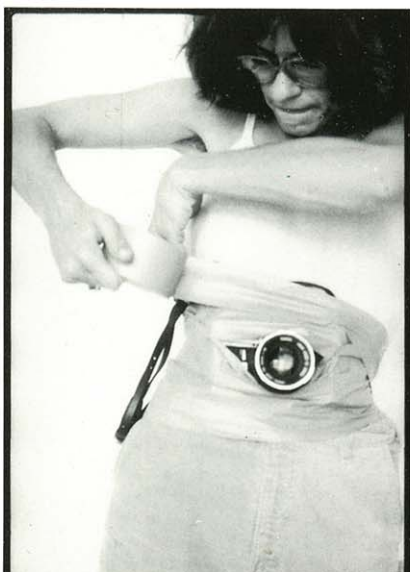
—Excerpt from *Experiment for Myself as Other*

Abeles photographed this self-portrait series by striking the camera shutter release with various implements.

**Our Position, Always, Reciprocal** is an autobiography-biography of Abeles' longterm friendship with a man who lived on the streets of Broadway. See BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS (*Rickety Tickety*).

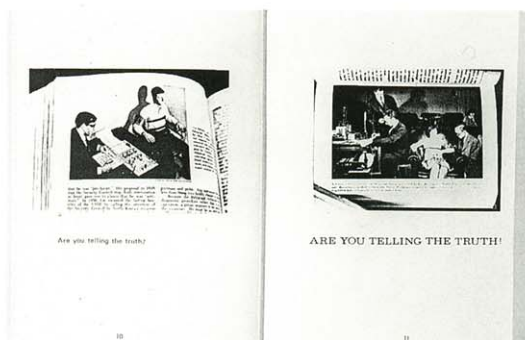
*"I sit by my window and the noise outside penetrates and misplaces. He is still down there. It is a safe view from here. I think to buy a telephoto lens so that I can stay here and capture him without him knowing at all that I am here, that I did, that I will then go into the darkroom and fearlessly see him again."*

—Excerpt from *Our Position, Always, Reciprocal*

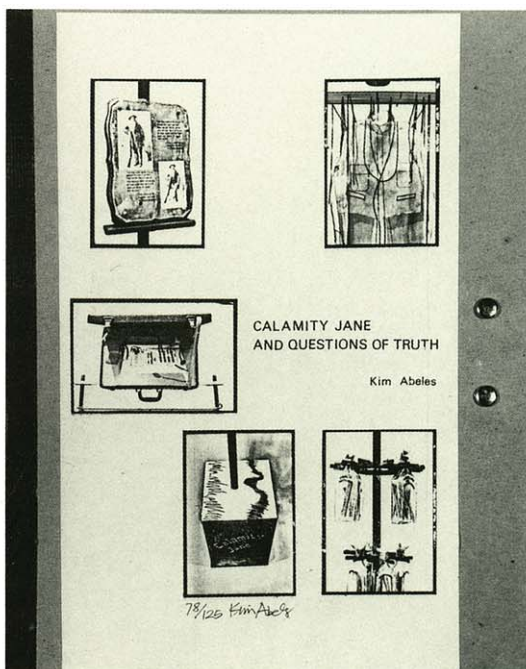


**Observatory/Territory** is a book and installation describing Abeles' contraption used to chart the path of the moon and the sun between New Moon and Full Moon. See OBSERVATORY/TERRITORY.

**Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth** was inspired by the two-page pamphlet that Jane produced which described her life in a series of lies. That's what *they* say in the encyclopedias. The book and its sculpture present comparisons of conflicting encyclopedia information about her life that arose due to poetic license, editorial decisions, and typographical errors. That's history. See BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS (*Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth*).



James Franklin. First published by A.R.T. Press



**Selections from Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth**. 1986. Mixed media book, 8-3/4" x 7". Edition of 125.

**Self-portrait** from *Our Position, Always, Reciprocal*. 1981. Photographic book, 8-1/2" x 10-1/4". Edition of 25.



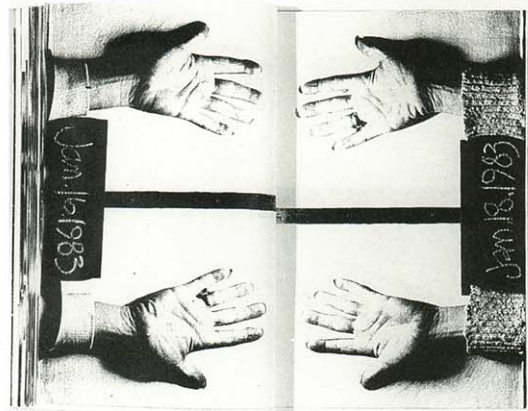
**Rara Avis** describes, through sculpture, maps, and graphics, a several-year long job that Abeles took as a survival measure answering "Miss Lonelyhearts" letters by computer program.

## BOOKWORKS

**Experiment to Identify Change** is a book and sculptural photo-contraption created to compare changes in palm-lines of the hands during a five-month span. See **SHRINES** (*Experiment to Identify Change*).

"They told me of their rotten relatives and the rotten education they'd been given. They wrote of deaths and heartbreaks and money. They sent me photos of their penises and long descriptions about how women reach orgasm. They confided their inventions. I heard their dreams, their passions, their fears. And, upon reopening my file of favorite correspondence from the job, I saw the singular person, the *rara avis*, sitting at her kitchen table, considering each word carefully, and licking the envelope with hope in her heart."

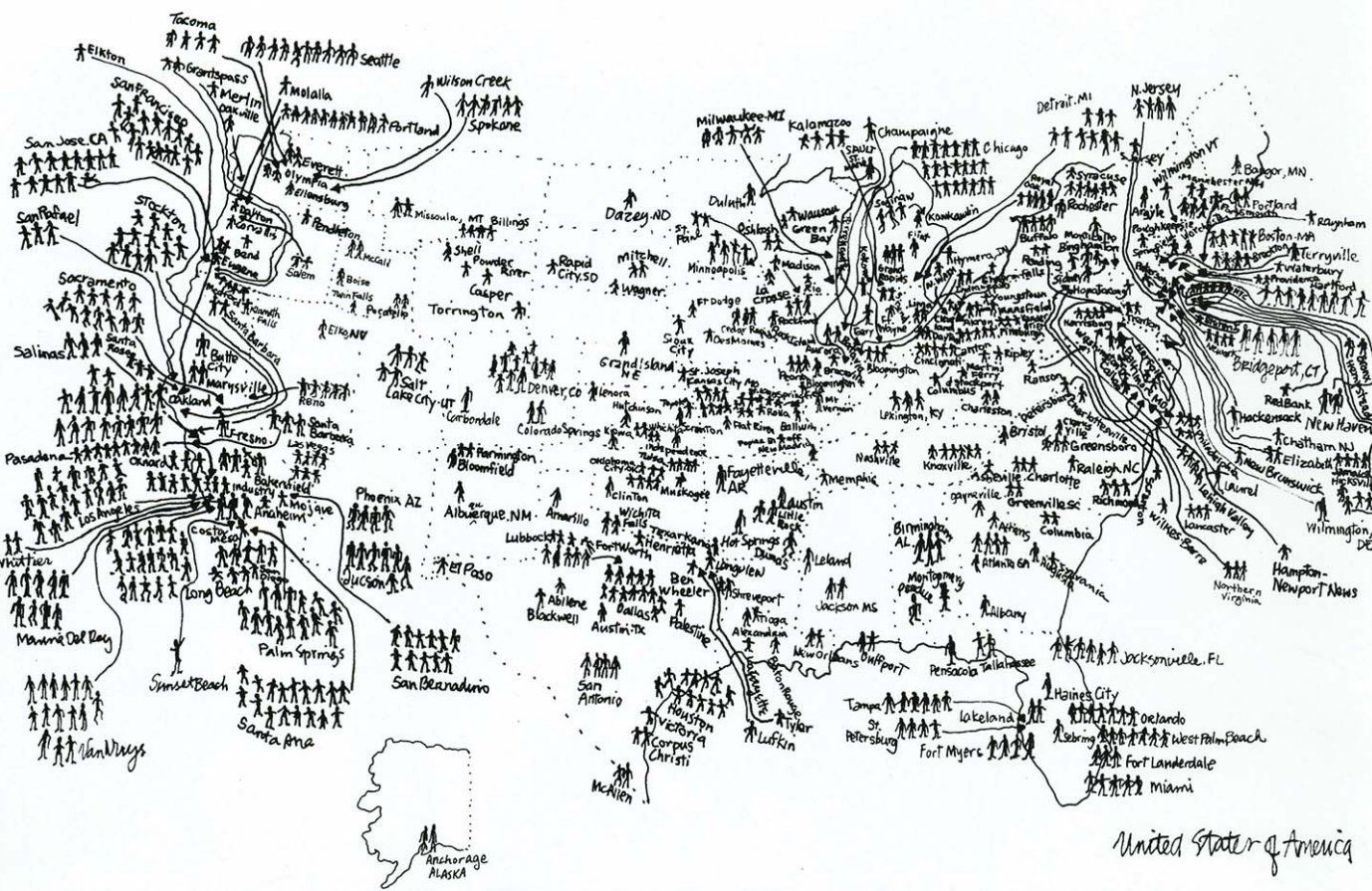
—Excerpt from *Rara Avis*



James Franklin. First published by A.R.T. Press

**Selection from Experiment to Identify Change.** 1986. Xerox book, 9" x 6-3/4". Edition of 25.

**Map based on the origins of correspondence from Rara Avis.** 1986. Mixed media book, 11" x 8-1/2". Edition of 100.

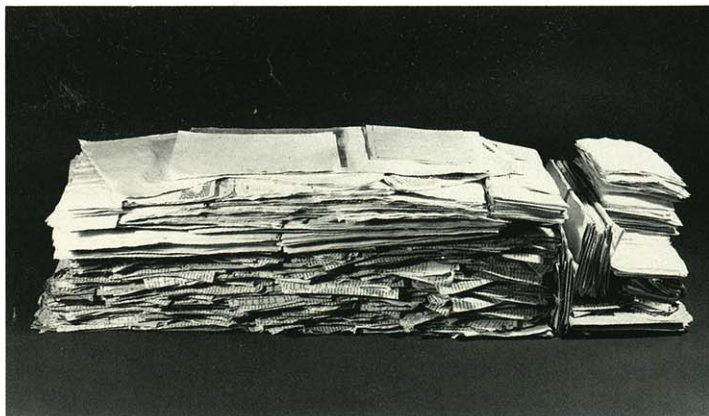




## BOOKWORKS

**tōō rāz ə bil'dɪŋ ɪz tōō tār ɪt daʊn** is a book and sculpture about the demolition of the historic Buder Building in St. Louis, Missouri in 1984. Abeles first learned of the proposed demolition through her family. Gustavus A. Buder, Jr., son of G.A. Buder who was responsible for the building, was her Uncle Oscar's brother. Gustavus died the same year that the Buder Building was razed and was born the year it was built, 1903.

**Index for the Pluperfect** is a book and sculpture that creates a portrait through the accumulation of things collected, carried, and feather-dusted. See KIMONOS (*Index for the Pluperfect*).

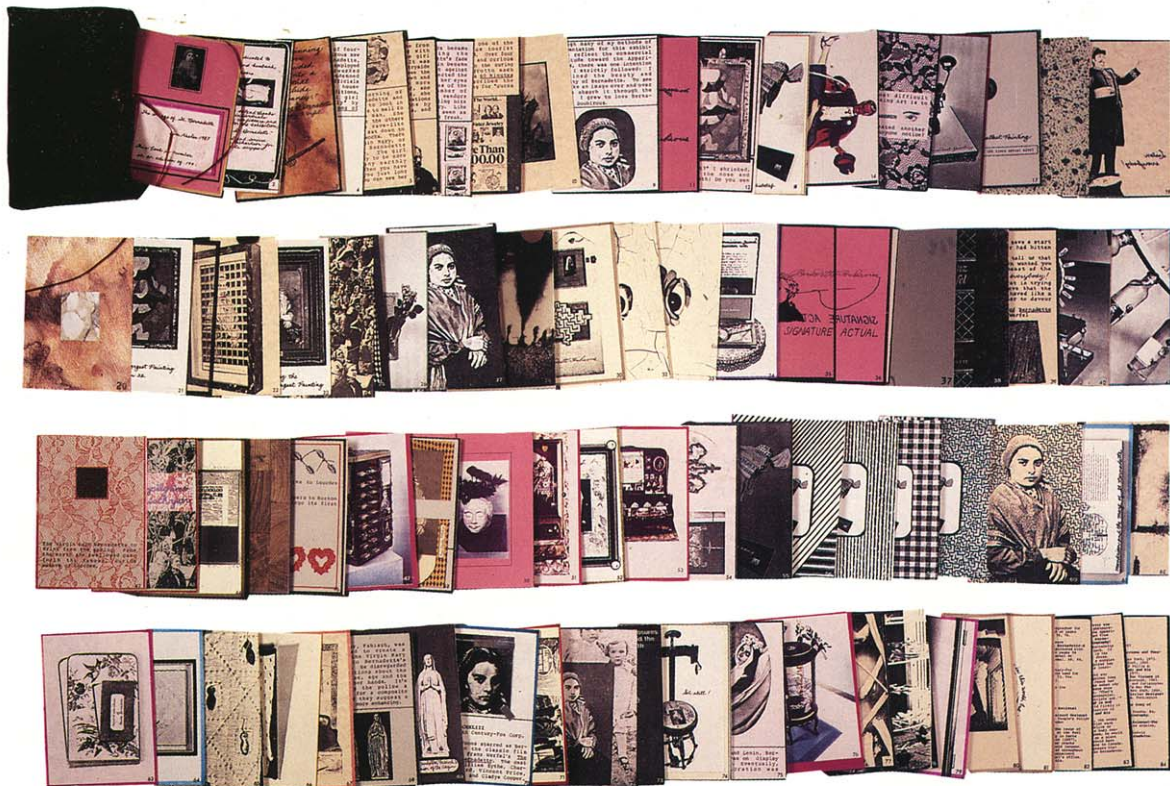


Selection from *tōō rāz ə bil'dɪŋ ɪz tōō tār ɪt daʊn*. 1986. Xerox book, 11" x 8-1/2". Edition of 10. The replication of Mr. Buder's stack of paperwork was cast in concrete and excavated for the sculpture.



*tōō rāz ə bil'dɪŋ ɪz tōō tār ɪt daʊn*. 1983. Concrete molds of "desk" and stack of paper (duplicating stack in newspaper article referencing the Buder Building), stenciled images on chiffon showing stages of a building demolition, acrylic on canvas and wood, 77" x 39" x 22".



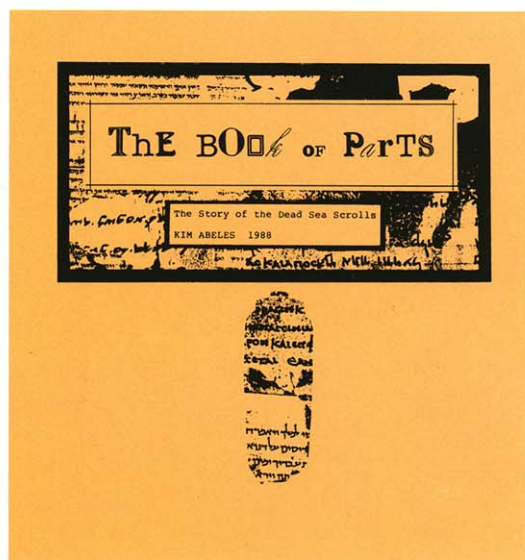


**The Image of St. Bernadette.** 1987-89. Mixed media book, 6" x 4" x 1-1/2". Edition of 100.

David Familian

**The Image of St. Bernadette** makes use of repetitive images of the young visionary from Lourdes. Reflecting on the way her image has been mass-produced since the 1850s on such souvenirs as snapshots taken without her approval, cigarette lighters, and can openers, the book uses her innocent, hands-in-lap image in a myriad of forms and sizes. In the same way that Marilyn Monroe or Lenin's icon become stamped in our minds, as familiar as the feel of coins' sizes to our fingers, Bernadette's sweet face extends beyond her self or her visitations with the Virgin Mary. The format of the book as holy cards, playing cards, or the tarot enables the reader to view these repetitions in their entirety. See **IMAGE OF SAINT BERNADETTE**.

**The Book of Parts - The Story of the Dead Sea Scrolls** uses a plethora of images from Abeles' sculptural installation on the Scrolls to combine humor and fact about the discovery of the documents in 1947. Through narrative art the historical characters emerge, from the Bedouin who chanced upon the Scrolls to the junk dealer who thought he could make shoes out of its leather to the academics whose earnest obsessions sent them into the chaos during the period of Palestine's division. See **DEAD SEA SCROLLS**.



**Selection from The Book of Parts - The Story of the Dead Sea Scrolls.** 1988. Xerox book, 9" x 8-1/2". Edition of 100.



## CALAMITY JANE

**CANNARY, MARTHA "CALAMITY JANE"** (1852–1903). Frontierswoman, pony express rider, and scout in the western United States. See BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS (*Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth*).

**CLOTHING (MADE BY HANDS).** I see the vestments as a confrontation to a "being," in conjunction with the sense that one could slip into this clothing. See KIMONOS.



Abeles cutting pieces for a garment made of carpet, 1985.

**Authentic Eyeglasses.** See FACT FICTION BOXES (*Leon Trotsky's Eyeglasses*).

**Labels.** See HABEAS CORPUS (*Made in America*).

**Replicated Ensembles.** See IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE (*Willing Suspension of Disbelief*); BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS (*Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth*; *The Celibacy and Practicality of Mother Ann/Speak in Tongues and Import Oysters*).

**Silk Hosiery.** See LONG EXPOSURES (AN ARTIST IN HER LATER YEARS).

**U.S. Domestic Mailbag Corset (and High Heels).** See BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS (*Letters to Phantom Lovers* [*Love as a Corset, Frou-Frou*]).

**Vest.** See OBSERVATORY/TERRITORY (*Diary*).

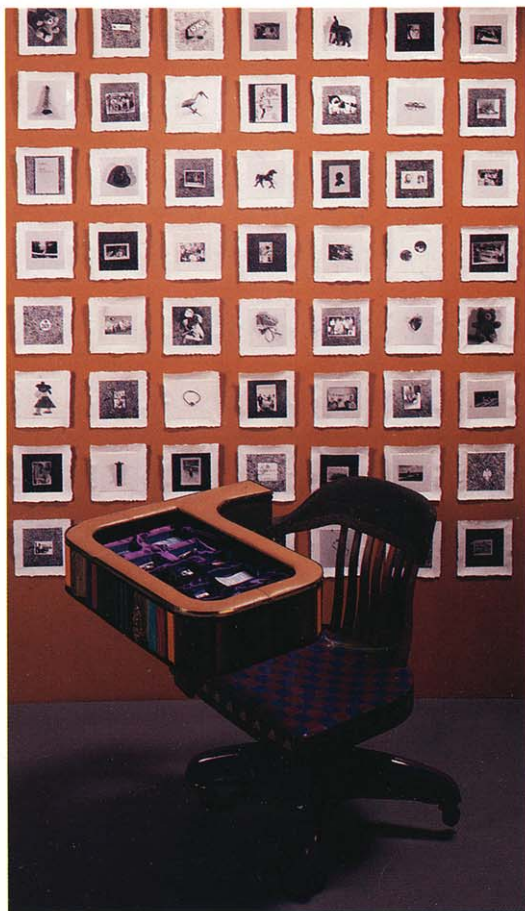
**Wingtips.** See DEAD SEA SCROLLS (*Kando Says* [*Near Miss/Close Call*]); SHRINES (*Imperial Shoeshine*).

**COLLECTIVE DIARY: DEDICATED TO PEOPLE WITH AIDS** (1989–1993) takes into account that people always have personal objects that have more meaning for them than may be obvious to anyone else. Objects are less important than people, but those monetarily valueless things that we save define the raw spirits of ourselves more than our professions or material worth. Our simple objects and albums trigger remembrances because they remind us of family and loved ones and friends. My grandfather used to always say: "You can't take it with you." Maybe as we touch these items we understand that he's right.

The AIDS work in general has a lot to do with the private in the public sphere. Reference to AIDS as a political, "public" issue often fails to consider the

private realities: medical bills, lost friendships and family in the cases of rejection and denial, and other forms of discrimination. In short, within the huge sphere of society, laws, and procedures the individual is alone, and maybe lonely.

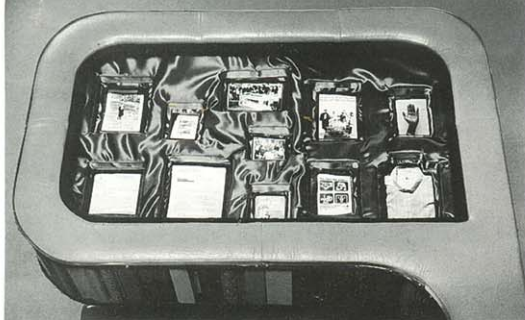
In general, I find the AIDS work the most difficult because it doesn't really help to "decorate timebombs" as writer Harry Gamboa so potentially described the dilemma of making art about devastating social issues. Thus, the *HIV/AIDS Tarot* is for me my most effective attempt. Most young adults have not had access to a straightforward AIDS brochure or discussion with a knowledgeable adult and have learned about transmission/prevention through bits and pieces of information from numerous sources. I still hear people speak of transmission with only parts of the story.



David Familian

**Collective Diary: Dedicated to People with AIDS.** 1989–93. An installation composed of photographs of objects and scrapbook photos belonging to people with AIDS (PWAs), altered chair, satin, naugahyde, felt, soil, acrylic, enamel, text made of hair, book, ink on paper, and editions of the *HIV/AIDS Tarot* offered free to the public, 10' x 15'. The *HIV/AIDS Tarot* was funded by a grant from the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department.





David Familian

**Detail of Collective Diary: Dedicated to People with AIDS.** 1989-93.

As an artist, I really need to work from the heart and the visions of artworks I receive from the Muse. In the case of the *Tarot*, I used my creative capacity in a similar way to how I have proceeded with all my work, in part as a way to provoke someone to see. What I learned through my experiences with the *Smog Collectors* and the AIDS work is that the follow-through of giving facts or toll-free information numbers to people is critical. We are at the point in society that merely posing the problems is not enough. Don't we know by now that we are oppressed? Don't we know we are mourning our dead? Don't we know that the corporations are in control? The best we can do is to offer personal stories, information, and support.

**HIV/AIDS Tarot.** In 1992, Abeles worked on a bilingual AIDS "brochure" through a grant from the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, headed by Adolfo Nodal. The goal for the *HIV/AIDS Tarot* was to create drawings and a format that would be provocative so that those who may not want to hear about AIDS would be compelled to read the material. The distribution effort is also focused on reaching audiences who may not have had access to the information. Small enough to slip into a back pocket, the *Tarot* set is packaged as an accordion of perforated cards.

The English text was originally compiled by Anne Ayres for the Otis Art Institute exhibition *Living in the Age of AIDS*, then up-dated and revised by Abeles with the assistance of Renée Edgington, Mark Niblock-Smith, and AIDS Project Los Angeles. Spanish translations were supplied by Edwin Rodriguez of Avance Human Services and Juan Nessi. Distribution sites include schools, AIDS agencies, art-related programs, events, and other public sites. Seven thousand card sets were printed, and Abeles is seeking a larger second printing.

#### Sources and Suggested Reading:

Crimp, Douglas, Editor. *AIDS: Cultural Analysis, Cultural Activism*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988.

Monette, Paul. *Borrowed Time - An AIDS Memoir*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988.

Grover, Jan Zita. *AIDS: The Artists' Response*. Exhibition catalogue. Columbus: Ohio State University Art Gallery, 1989.

Klusacek, Allan, and Tom Morrison, Editors. *A Leap in the Dark: AIDS, Art, and Contemporary Cultures*. Montréal: Véhicules, 1992.

## HIV / AIDS Tarot



#### YOU CANNOT GET AIDS FROM:

Shaking hands, hugging, social kissing, crying, sweating, sneezing, or coughing.

Swimming pools, hot tubs, toilet seats, doorknobs, insect bites, or transmission through the air.

Sharing drinking glasses or straws, silverware or dishes.

Donating blood.

A child with AIDS in school cannot give AIDS to another child, even if they touch, wrestle, or share lunches.

#### HIV+ (POSITIVE):

When a person is infected by the HIV, an antibody to the HIV develops, indicating that infection has occurred. After a person is infected with the HIV, a long period of time passes before illness, called AIDS, actually develops. This period of time, when the person is perfectly well, but infected, and capable of transmitting the virus to others, is called the *latent period*. The latent period usually lasts 7 to 10 years. During this period of time, it is very important to know that you are HIV positive, since **EARLY INTERVENTION** (including medical treatment, monitoring, joining support groups, and practicing common sense guidelines) may prevent or delay the eventual progression to AIDS. Everyone is at risk to AIDS regardless of gender, culture, sexual orientation, or economic level. Testing for the virus gives you the opportunity to get early intervention. It is typically recommended to be tested 3 months after potentially risky behavior. Anonymous testing is available.

#### YOU CAN GET AIDS BY:

Having unsafe sex with someone who is infected with the HIV. The virus is transmitted through blood, semen, and vaginal secretions.



## COLLECTIVE DIARY

By sharing intravenous (I.V.) needles, syringes, or injection supplies (including cotton, water, spoon, and "cooker") with someone who is infected with the HIV since small amounts of blood are also shared.

A baby can get AIDS by being born to a woman infected with the HIV, and through breast feeding with milk from an infected mother.

(Though transmission of the virus may have occurred from blood transfusions and blood products **prior to 1985**, vigorous blood testing is now in place, and the blood supply can be considered safe.)

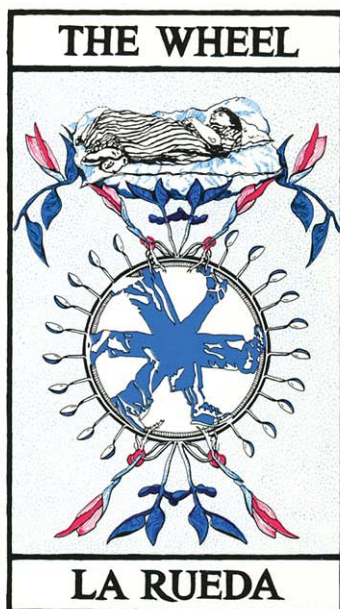
**What is the cost of AIDS?** The value of human life itself is priceless. Statistics list 242,146 reported cases of AIDS in the U.S. from 1981 to 1992 (2 million worldwide). Although the cost of medical care for AIDS is high, telephone hotlines can refer you to agencies where you can obtain assistance for these costs. Statistics vary on the number of people now infected; it is estimated that 1 to 2 million people in the U.S. are currently infected with the HIV (10 to 12 million worldwide). Education and prevention are the key to stopping this disease.

**AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).** People with AIDS (PWAs) are susceptible to a wide range of unusual and life threatening cancers and **OPPORTUNISTIC INFECTIONS** because the body's ability to fight disease is impaired. The opportunistic infections or cancers which occur

in AIDS cannot be readily spread to those with healthy immune systems. What can be contracted is the **HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS (HIV)**, which causes AIDS itself. HIV infection should be clearly distinguished from the multiple clinical conditions that call for a diagnosis of AIDS.

### SAFER SEX:

By inspiring the creative within each of us, Safer Sex guidelines can heighten sensuality and are used by people to reduce high risk behavior without having to give up sexual activity. Proper use of latex condoms for vaginal, oral, or anal sex will definitely decrease the risk of spreading the HIV infection. The HIV virus, transmitted through semen, vaginal secretions, or blood, cannot pass through a **latex** condom, if it is used properly (without breaking or slipping and throughout the entire sexual activity). Use it with a **water-base** lubricant to help avoid condom breakage—lubricate inside and out. (*Do not* use oil-base lubricants like baby oil, petroleum jelly, or hand lotion because these will deteriorate the condom!) The spermicide, nonoxynol 9 (an ingredient found in contraceptive foams, jellies, and creams) may kill the HIV on contact, but still must be used with a latex condom. Some people are allergic to nonoxynol 9, making it necessary to use a water-base lubricant that doesn't contain it. A call to an AIDS hotline is the



**HIV/Tarot.** 1992. Offset printing with color separations by hand, bilingual transmission/prevention information on reverse, (expanded length) 5-1/2" x 23". Edition of 7,000. The HIV/AIDS Tarot was funded by a grant from the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department.



easiest way to answer specific questions.

#### HOW TO PREVENT GETTING OR SPREADING AIDS:

If you choose to have sex, *always* use a **latex** condom with a **water-base** lubricant. Learn proper condom use and safer sex guidelines.

If you are an injection drug user, never share intravenous (I.V.) needles, syringes, or injection supplies (including cotton, water, spoon, and "cooker"). Learn the proper method to sterilize works. Flush needles and syringes with undiluted fresh bleach, then clean water (2 or 3 times each). Needle exchange programs are available in many cities throughout the country.

Follow common sense guidelines. Get enough sleep. Eat a balanced diet. Exercise. Take steps to reduce stress. Limit or eliminate alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. Each of these has been shown to suppress the immune system.

Consultants: **ANNE AYRES, RENÉE EDGINGTON, MARK NIBLOCK-SMITH, EDWIN RODRIGUEZ** and **AVANCE HUMAN SERVICES**, and **AIDS PROJECT LOS ANGELES**.

The HIV/AIDS Tarot is a project funded by a grant from the City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department.

#### TOUCH A FRIEND...

AIDS is not spread through casual contact. If you know a person with AIDS, be a supportive friend. If you're living with HIV and AIDS, there are many sources of support.

#### TALK ABOUT AIDS...

Take the time to talk and learn about AIDS.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

##### Call toll-free...

Southern California HIV/AIDS Hotline:

**1-800-922-2437**

Bilingual AIDS Hotline of Southern

California (*Spanish & English*):

**1-800-400-7432**

National AIDS Hotline:

**1-800-342-AIDS**

*in Spanish:* **1-800-344-SIDA**

*for hearing-impaired persons:*

**1-800-AIDSTTY**





## DEAD SEA SCROLLS

**DEAD SEA SCROLLS** (1984 – 1985). The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 offers a view of the individual and describes many aspects of human experience and behavior. See **BOOKWORKS** (*The Book of Parts*). This symbol (§) after a phrase refers to corrections made by Dr. John Trever.

**The Discovery.** In 1947, a young Bedouin nomad, Muhammad, § watched over his herd in the Qumran region of the Middle East. The land was rocky and the air hot, the cliffsides dotted with thousands of small openings leading to the caves. Muhammad wandered

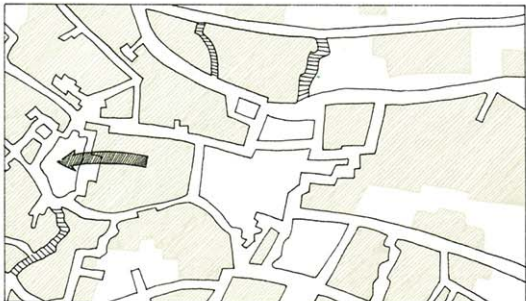
from his herd to look for a lost goat. When the search proved unsuccessful, he sat upon the rocky terrain and began throwing stones § into the cliffside holes. Suddenly, he was startled by a change of sound. Rather than hearing the rock striking rock, he heard the distinct sound of pottery. The boy climbed up to the hole and peered in while clutching the cliffside with all his might. Through the thick atmosphere, he thought he saw a row of jars along the cave wall. Frightened and superstitious, he feared that the spirits of the cave had been unsettled. Hours later, Muhammad whispered the story to an older friend who was instantly intrigued. The next day, they returned once again to the cave and



Dr. W. L. Reed

**Muhammad.** The young Bedouin who discovered the first cave containing the Dead Sea Scrolls.

climbed through the small portal into the ancient air. There they saw the remains of a hiding place. Two thousand years before, the Essenes had carefully placed their holy and secular documents in the protection of



ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map

**Location of Kando's shop in Bethlehem.**

ceramic jars, away from the imminent danger of the approaching Roman army.

**The value.** After emptying the cave of its Scrolls, Muhammad and his friends journeyed across the desert to Bethlehem to find a buyer for the parchments. They had dealt before with Khalil Eskander Shahin, who was known as "Kando" among the traders. As the owner of a general store and a cobblers shop, he was known for his shady dealings, legal and illegal. The Bedouins felt confident he would purchase the antiquities. Kando expressed misgivings about the Scrolls, but said he could always use them for leather in his cobbler's shop if they proved valueless. In time, inquiries by scholars convinced Kando and his cohort, George,



John M. Allegro

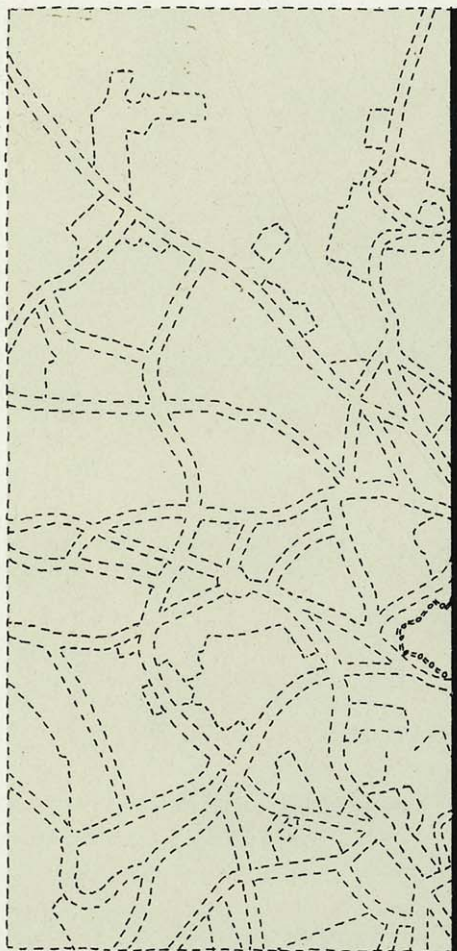
**Kando and his friend, George.**



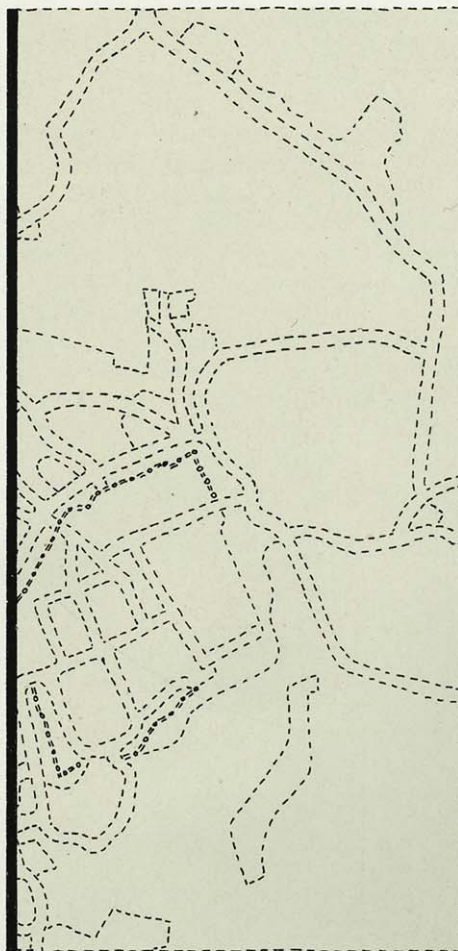
ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map

**Dead Sea region of the Middle East.**





Jerusalem, 1947.



ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map



Scroll of Isaiah.

Dr. John C. Trever



One of the jars housing the Scrolls.



## DEAD SEA SCROLLS

that the Scrolls were not only valuable but worth hoarding. He decided to hide some of them from the authorities and await their increased worth, so he stashed them in a hole in his garden. Upon digging them up later, he found they had turned into glue, irreparably bound together by their own substance. §

**The passion.** Muhammad found the Scrolls, Kando bought them, and it did not take long for local scholars in Jerusalem to hear the news. Three primary participants included Dr. E.L. Sukenik, an archaeologist at Hebrew University, and Drs. John Trever § and W.H. Brownlee, two students at the American School of Oriental Research at the time. Certain aspects of the story would have created intrigue regardless of the political explosion that occurred within the area in 1947. Dealings with Kando were bound to

Daniel Martinez



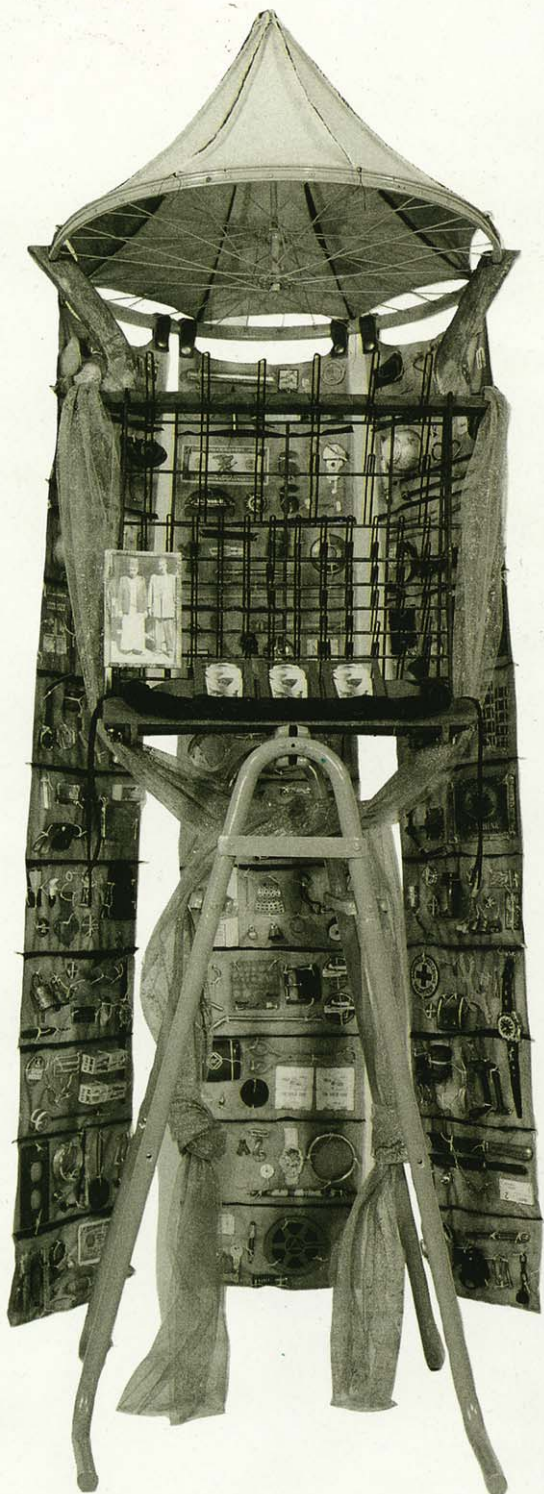
**Kando Says (Near Miss/Close Call).** 1985. Shoes covered with photocopies of Dead Sea Scroll fragments, text, 13" x 4-1/2" x 10". Collection of Andrew and Janet Schwartz, Los Angeles, CA.

§ "Had you noted Chapter 12 of my Dead Sea Scrolls: A Personal Account book carefully, I think you might have treated the story differently, for actually it was Juma' Muhammad, an older cousin, who threw the stone (only one) into the lower of the two holes leading to cave 1. Of course, the artist, like the novelist, feels free to tell the story in her own way. But I must say that you were pretty hard on Kando, who is a good friend of mine. One piece of information you need to know has not been published: He hid some scrolls, because the Israeli army descended on his home in Bethlehem, captured him and put him in jail! He later sued the State and received a compensation of \$100,000! It was the Temple Scroll they were seeking. The perpetrator of that has published that scroll and does not say a word about the true story of its "capture" naturally."

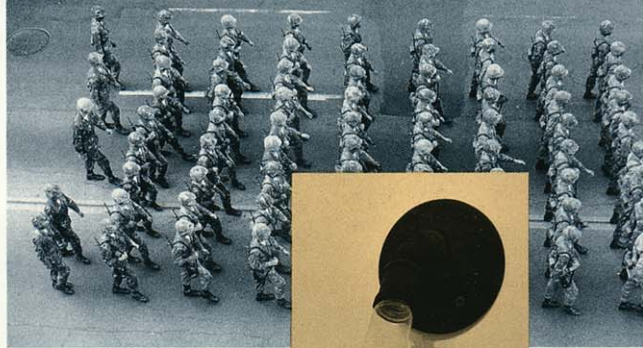
—Letter to Abeles from Dr. John C. Trever, December 2, 1988.

**Greed Turns to Glue.** 1985. Assembled photographs of artist's body and Kando's head, horses made of glue, copper bucket with photocopies of Dead Sea Scroll fragments, glue, acrylic, copper, carved branches, wood with measuring delineations, soil, enamel on bicycle wheel, 82" x 24" x 24". Collection of Jeanne Meyers, Los Angeles, CA.

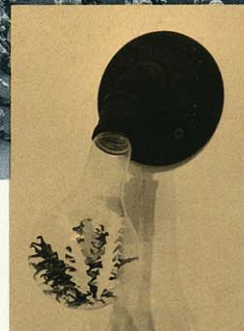




**Kando: Conjurer of the Dead Sea Scrolls.** 1984. International junk, photographs of excavated Scroll jar, glass, fabric, bicycle wheel, metal, wood, photograph of Kando and George, demonetized notes, 78" x 28" x 25". Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc.



**Blackout.** 1985. Cut photographs of soldiers, lightbulb, socket, 11" x 4-1/2" x 8-1/2". Private collection.

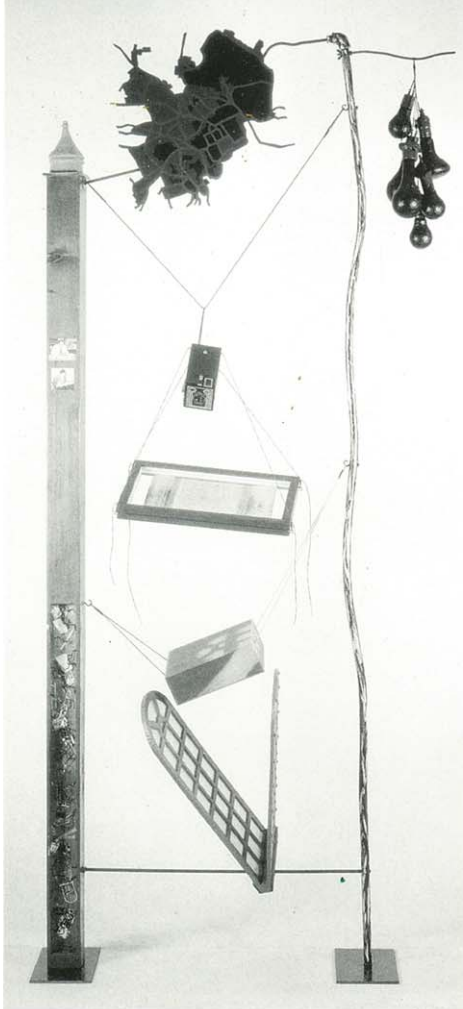


**Detail of Here It Is.** Archaeologist pointing to the entrance of Muhammad's cave.



**Here It Is.** 1984. Plaster casts from a mold taken from a mountain surface, Father Grollenberg's photograph of archaeologist pointing to Muhammad's cave, wood, modified ladders, enamels, 69" x 44" x 36".





**Even Simple Deeds Heroic.** 1985. Acrylic paintings of scholars on carved wood, enamel on wood and metal with map of 1947 Jerusalem, paper-covered lightbulbs, photograph of Dead Sea Scroll, camera, handmade windows, sand, 92" x 40" x 12".



**Historic Sites, Buildings, Etc.** 1985. Law book embedded with Dead Sea Scroll jar impression in soil, photograph of "the hole" that Kando dug for the Scrolls, 3" x 12-1/2" x 11". Collection of Lauren Richardson and James Doolin, Los Angeles, CA.

be filled with questionable facts and bargains spoken softly in dark, musty, carpet-filled dens, and controversy among the characters over whether photographs of the Scrolls would increase or decrease their value could still be a subject of disagreement today. The dialogue over the future of the Scrolls, however, was complicated additionally by the concurrent U.N. decision to split Palestine. The repercussions of the decision continue to resonate in the Middle East, and on the day of the United Nation's announcement the discordant mix of cheers and anger could be heard throughout Jerusalem. Each day the street borders designating the various ethnic and religious sectors shifted so that the boundaries never offered safety. The availability of electricity and supplies (including film to photograph the Scrolls) was also volatile. Explosions, confusion, suspicion, and sniperfire became backdrops for daily life. In this setting and through these streets, the scholars made their investigations about the Scrolls and prepared to photograph them, if need be, by the light of day.

#### Sources and Suggested Reading:

Trever, John C. *The Dead Sea Scrolls – A Personal Account*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977.

Burrows, Millar. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. New York: The Viking Press, 1956.

Allegro, John Marco. *The People of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1958.



David Familian

**Nature Gets the Last Laugh (Really).** 1985. Acrylic painting of Kando, shovel, glue, Dead Sea Scroll fragments, 53-1/2" x 8-1/2" x 6-1/2".





**DUCHAMP'S BICYCLE.** In honor of artist Marcel Duchamp, Abeles frequently incorporates bicycle wheels as a component of her sculpture. See BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS (*Rickety Ticket*); DEAD SEA SCROLLS (*Greed Turns to Glue*); IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE (*Eau de Lourdes*; *Willing Suspension of Disbelief*).

**ENVIRONMENT.** Recent French investigations have demonstrated that the image people have of their own environment is more in agreement with the situation that existed many decades ago than with the reality today. The many additions and disruptions of recent years, in the form of high-tension poles, parking places, thoroughways, industrial areas, garbage dumps and such, apparently have no place in our impressions. The modern, completely artificial landscape simply appears to have no qualities for people to represent mentally. The effect of this schizophrenic situation is that to a great extent we have become indifferent to what happens in and to our environment.

The fact that our ways of perception are learned, and are still to a great extent determined by traditional, romantic conceptions of the landscape, are an important reason for this. Ever more artists and photographers, however, are seeking forms and techniques to visualize the landscape of the present and future. In many cases this means a break with past impressions, which is necessary to develop new values with respect to the environment.

**BAS VROEGE and FRITS GIERSTBERG.** Director and Curator of Rotterdam's Perspektief Center for Photography (Reprinted from the statement for the 1992 *Fotografie Biennale Rotterdam III* exhibition, *Wasteland*. Catalogue available).

**Celestial Bodies.** See OBSERVATORY/TERRITORY.

**Smog.** See PILGRIMAGE TO THE WEDGE; SMOG COLLECTOR. See also SHRINES (*The Great Periodic Migration*).

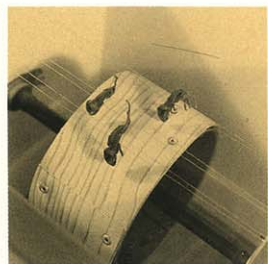
**Duchamp's Bicycle Wheel.** 1993 replica of the 1913 original readymade, 50-1/2" x 23-3/4".



**Boy, Herd, Hole, Threw, Sound.** 1984. Acrylic on fabric showing actual hole where Muhammad located the Scrolls, oil paint on wood, metal, coins, painted toy goats and sheep, carved slingshot with coin, ceramic replicas of a Dead Sea Scroll jar, photograph of Muhammad by Dr. W. L. Reed, 82" x 27" x 22".

## FACT FICTION BOXES

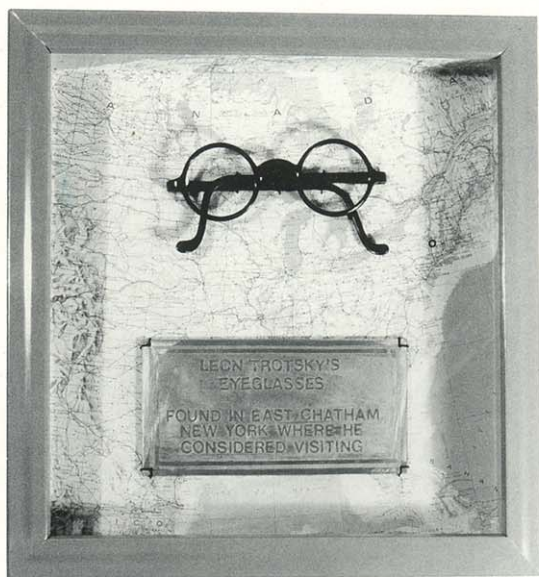
**FACT FICTION BOXES** (1983 – 1986). History is frequently presented to us as a display removed from its original context. I refer to the methods of such displays in the sculpture:



**Diorama.** 1984. Dried mice, wheel with crank, wood with laminated map, acrylic on canvas, etched brass plaque, 10-1/2" x 10-1/4" x 10-1/2". Private collection.

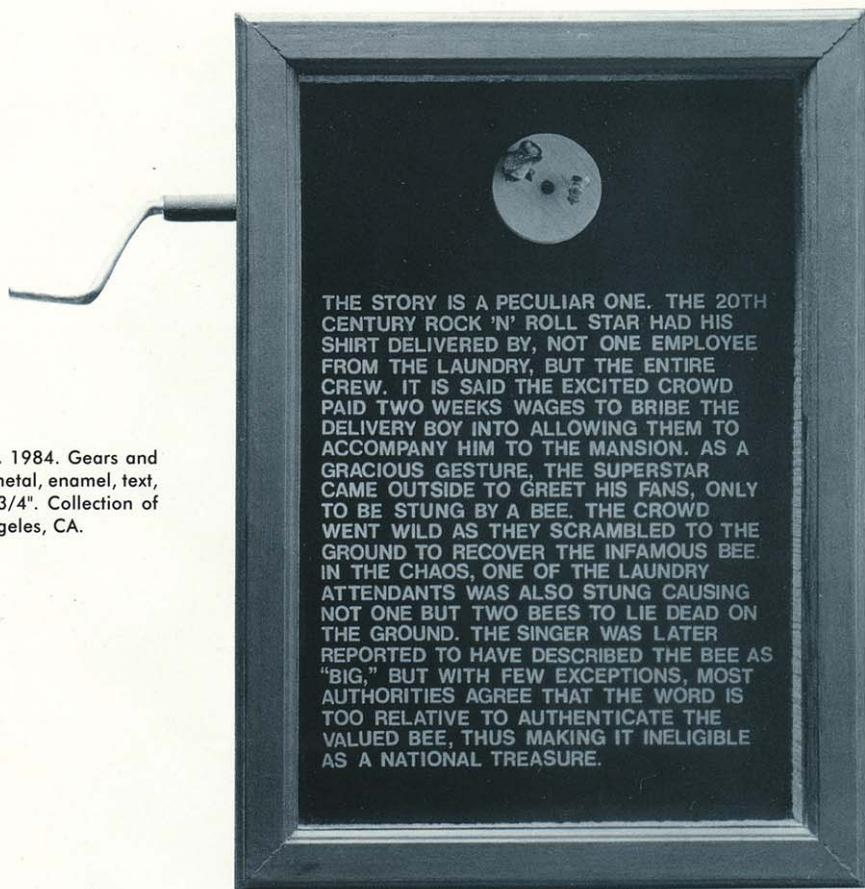
presentation cases and boxes, the titles of objects and structures, plaques, and photographic documents. It is a way of juxtaposing the artificial with the real, the "artificial" becoming its own surmised reality. The display of the *Fact Fiction* boxes in exhibition venues in libraries accentuated their humor and disruption.

**Leon Trotsky's Eyeglasses.** Text on artwork reads: "Leon Trotsky's Eyeglasses. Found in East Chatham, New York where he considered visiting."



**Leon Trotsky's Eyeglasses.** 1984. Eyeglasses, map, wood, enamel, acrylic on canvas, etched brass plaque, 12-1/4" x 11-1/2" x 2-1/4". Collection of Andrew and Janet Schwartz, Los Angeles, CA.

**National Treasure.** 1984. Gears and crank, bee, wood, metal, enamel, text, 15-1/4" x 11" x 8-3/4". Collection of Jeri Coates, Los Angeles, CA.





**A Deduction.** Text on artwork reads: "Although previously considered to be a numerical symbol from North America, archaeologists have recently excavated a camel skeleton in the Sahara that had been implanted with a similar device. The evidence suggests the probability of an isthmus once connecting North America with Africa."

**National Treasure.** Text on artwork reads: "The story is a peculiar one. The 20th century rock 'n' roll star had his shirt delivered by, not one employee from the laundry, but the entire crew. It is said the excited crowd paid two weeks wages to bribe the delivery boy into allowing them to accompany him to the mansion. As a gracious gesture, the superstar came outside

to greet his fans, only to be stung by a bee. The crowd went wild as they scrambled to the ground to recover the infamous bee. In the chaos, one of the laundry attendants was also stung causing not one but two bees to lie dead on the ground. The singer was later reported to have described the bee as "big," but with few exceptions, most authorities agree that the word is too relative to authenticate the valued bee, thus making it ineligible as a national treasure."

**The Find.** Text on artwork reads: "Workmen at Cathedral of St. John the Divine discover 17th Century Flemish tapestries wrapped in paper tucked away



David Familian

**A Deduction.** 1984. IUD (Copper 7), altered map, wood, brass, acrylic, text, 3" x 11-1/4" x 13".

## FACT FICTION BOXES

over water pipes in maintenance storeroom; Museum director Ms. Bonner Socarides comments; Appraiser at Phillips Son & Neal says worth is between \$12,000 and \$15,000 – *Readers' Guide to Periodicals*.”

**Stolen Remnant.** Text on artwork reads: “Remnant stolen by American tourist. Recovered 3 years later in Maui.”

**First Fork.** Text on artwork reads: “According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the First Fork was used in 1463 by a friend of Davn John Kertelynge.”



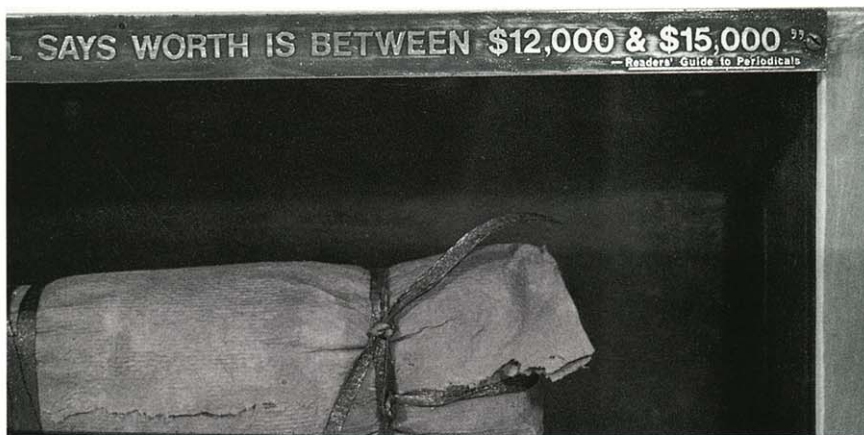
Detail of *A Problem with Maintenance*.

James Franklin



David Familian

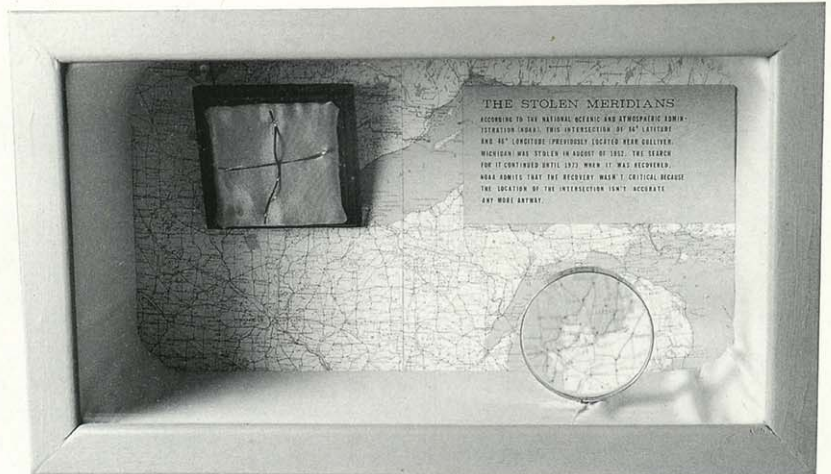
**A Problem with Maintenance.** 1983. Ironing board cover, “Temperature Control” box (photographs and metal), etched brass plaque with history of Bayeux Tapestry, metallic thread, wood, plexiglass, (dimensions of display case) 74" x 24" x 17", (dimensions of stand) 40" x 24" x 15". Collection of Judy and Stuart Spence, South Pasadena, CA.



**The Find.** 1984. Handmade paper, painted cord, wood, etched brass plaque, 7-3/4" x 61-3/4" x 3-1/2". Private collection.



**The Stolen Meridians.** 1986. Magnifying glass, dirt, enamel, wood, text, 6-1/2" x 8-1/2" x 14-1/2". Collection of Judy and Stuart Spence, South Pasadena, CA.

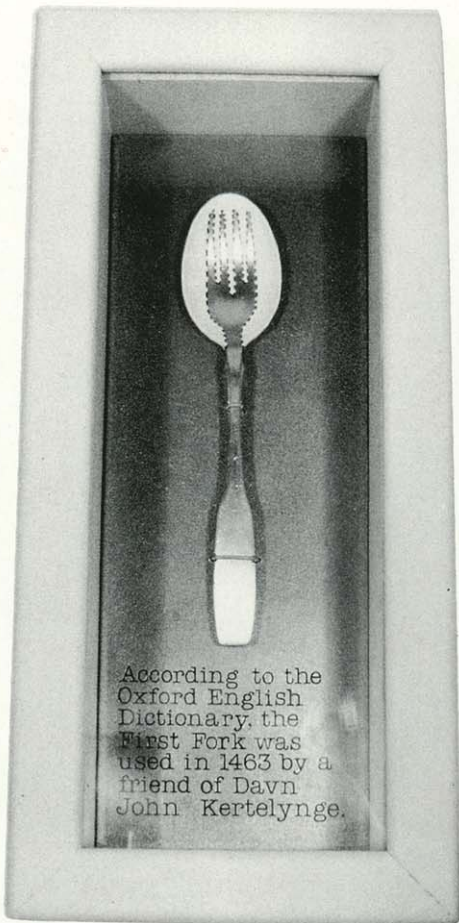


David Familian

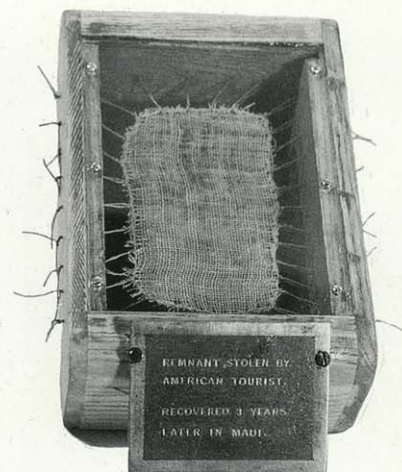
**The Stolen Meridians.** Text on artwork reads: "According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), this intersection of 86° latitude and 46° longitude (previously located near Gulliver, Michigan) was stolen in August of 1952. The search for it continued until 1973 when it was recovered. NOAA admits that the recovery wasn't critical because the location of the intersection isn't accurate any more anyway."

**Sources and Suggested Reading:**

Dillard, Annie. *Living by Fiction*. New York: Harper & Row, 1983.  
Barnes, Julian. *Flaubert's Parrot*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.



**First Fork.** 1985. Enamel on spoon, wood, text, 3 1/2" x 6" x 13". Collection of Deborah Small, La Jolla, CA.



**Stolen Remnant.** 1984. Tea-stained cotton, thread, wood, etched brass plaque, 2" x 4" x 7". Stolen from the collection of Bill and Priscilla Panzer, Los Angeles, CA.

## THE FELLOWS OF CONTEMPORARY ART

**FELLOWS OF CONTEMPORARY ART, THE.** Established 1975 in Los Angeles, California. The Fellows of Contemporary Art is the initiator and sponsor of the exhibition, *Kim Abeles: Encyclopedia Persona, A Fifteen-Year Survey*. The concept of the Fellows as developed by its founding members is unique. Monies received from dues are used to underwrite its exhibitions, catalogues, and videos at tax-exempt contemporary museums and galleries. It does not give grants, sponsor fundraising events, maintain a permanent facility or collection. In addition to the exhibition schedule, the Fellows has an active membership education program. See SPONSOR'S FOREWORD, (p.6, also pp. 102-105).

**HABEAS CORPUS** (1991 - 1993). To have a body; a legal term referring to the need to present a person for judgement; purported to protect the innocent.

**Overview.** All of my work begins—like most artists—from a personal occurrence which becomes a

broader theme upon development of the work and interaction with viewers.

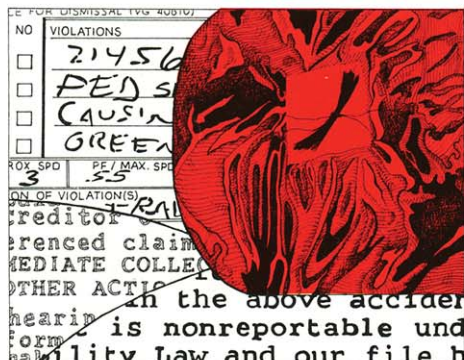
For example, though I know the origination point of *The Truth Palace*, in the final assessment it is about the identity of the individual in contemporary society defined by external proofs of existence. The sheer overlay is really skin; the red refers to blood; and in a sense the crossed-out data at once removes its validity yet maintains its burden. Society forces us into these rules and definitions (in medieval times it was strictly family lineage that defined our futures—we more or less maintain this today of course), but we are allowed our souls, even if that same society can nearly strip it bare.

In other words, we live in a society where even if I can touch you, your flesh, you don't exist if you don't have your paperwork. This could apply to people needing visas or medical insurance or people in legal cases where paperwork is needed for proof. In the latter case, or perhaps in all the examples, the paper confirmation may not even hold value since

Robert Wedemeyer

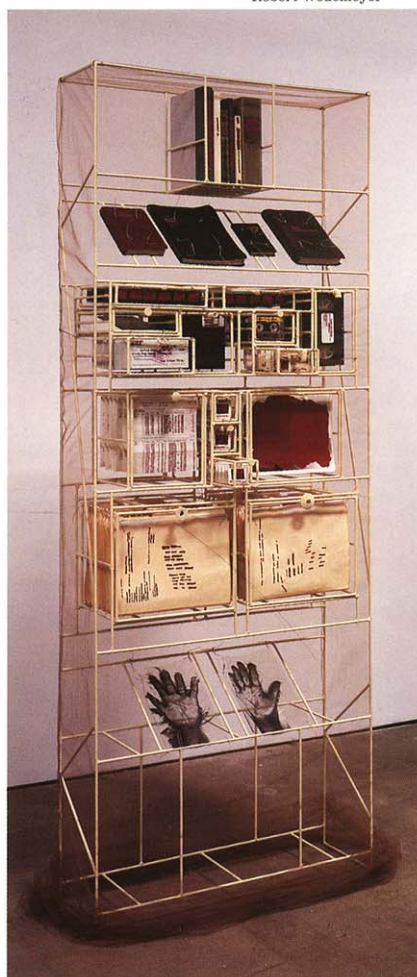


**Medieval Currents.** 1991. Dinnerware made of bones, international currency, reproduction of Limbourg Brothers' October, glass plate, felt, wood, 18" x 34" x 18". Collection of Peter and Eileen Norton, Santa Monica, CA.

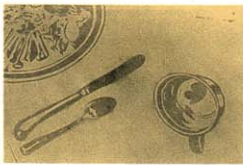


**Contents of Personal Effects,** work in progress. 1952-93. Personal objects, excerpts from legal correspondence transferred onto fabric, satin, wood, metal, plexiglass, 36" x 36" x 31".

**The Truth Palace.** 1991. Welded steel, netting, identification documents marked with red acrylic, 78" x 35" x 12". Collection of Barbara Cohn, Los Angeles, CA.







**Give Us This Day** (Twenty Days of Smog), 1992-93. Acid air effect and smog on silk, 70" x 54" (open).

around the work. See PUBLIC PROJECTS AND COLLABORATIONS (*War Stories [Peace in Progress]*); Detail of the *Truth Palace* (p. 24).

**HIV/AIDS TAROT.** See COLLECTIVE DIARY: DEDICATED TO PEOPLE WITH AIDS.

**HOUSEHOLD AFFAIRS.** The description is used to refer to needs and ironies of the home and survival rather than extramarital affairs. The term "domestic" is typically applied, though its definition also includes "domesticated animals," which implies that we are tamed beasts.

**Made in America.** 1992. Manufacturing labels from the clothing of four people, neckties, hardware, 14" x 21". Courtesy of Max Protetch Gallery, New York, NY.

information is still up for interpretation or acceptance, under the weight of pre-existing laws, etc. Ironically, it was a legal mediator who purchased *The Truth Palace*, so perhaps my personal needs for making pieces creates a languageless aura

## IDENTITY AND PROOF OF IDENTIFICATION

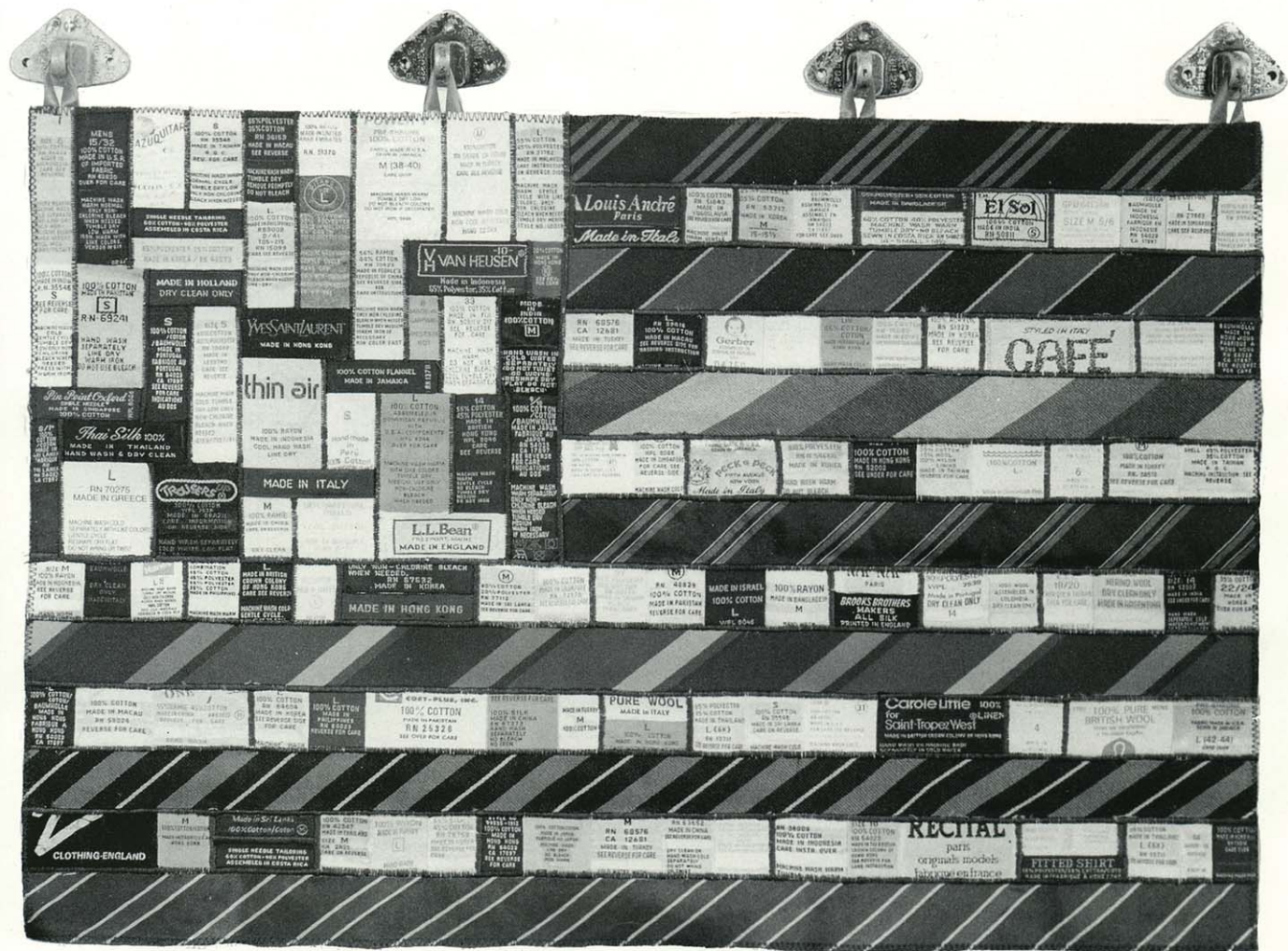
**Historical Dinnerware.** See FACT FICTION BOXES (*The First Fork*).

**Metaphoric Dinnerware.** See LONG EXPOSURES (*AN ARTIST IN HER LATER YEARS*); HABEAS CORPUS (*Medieval Currents*).

**Dirty Dining.** See SMOG COLLECTOR (*Forty Days and Forty Nights [Forty Days of Smog]*).

**Launder/Labor.** See ABELES (Chronology); *Counting Time in the Seven Day Work Week/... The Hero is Conscious* (p.18); KIMONOS (*Slide... Gather; Sweatshop Down the Hall and Sometimes It's Me*); SHRINES (*Imperial Shoe-shine*); FACT FICTION BOXES (*A Problem with Maintenance*); HABEAS CORPUS (*Made in America*).

**IDENTITY AND PROOF OF IDENTIFICATION.** See HABEAS CORPUS; BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS (*Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth; Other [In Memory of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg]*); KIMONOS (*Ritual for Instinctual Return*); SHRINES (*Experiment to Identify Change*).





## THE IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE

**IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE, THE** (1987). In 1858, at the age of fourteen, Bernadette Soubirous (1844-1879) saw the Virgin Mary. Bernadette, the daughter of an unemployed miller and an overworked mother,



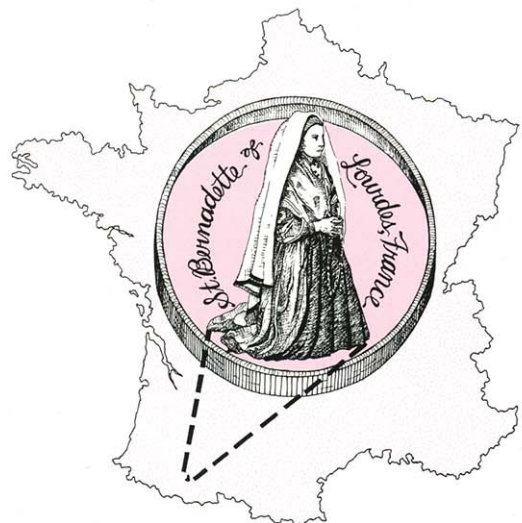
**Bernadette** Soubirous at age fourteen, the year she saw the Virgin Mary.

lived in a condemned jailhouse. The city officials of Lourdes refused to house prisoners in those conditions. She was a beautiful girl, described as "womanly" by Franz Werfel in his book *The Song of Bernadette*.

On the chilly morning of February 11, Bernadette and her friends went to look in the woods for bones to sell to the rag-and-bone man. She wandered away from the others and came upon a cave-like recess where she sat down to take off her wet socks. There she saw the Virgin Mary, or the "lady" as Bernadette referred to her. The girl thought this Lady to be more elegant than any earthly possibility. "When you have seen her once, you just long to die so that you can see her again."



**The Basilica** that stands over the grotto where four million visitors each year continue to drink and bathe in the holy waters looking for cures to illnesses and misfortunes.



ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA drawing

**Lourdes, France.** Site of the visions and holy grotto.

*Bernadette*

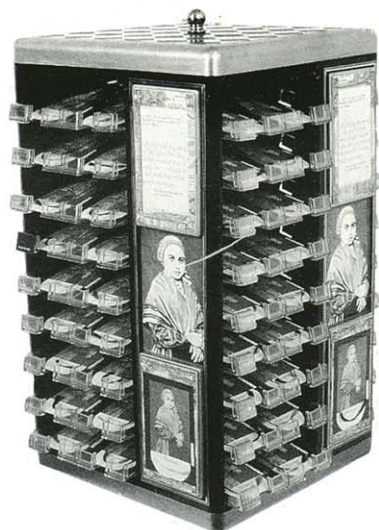


**Willing Suspension of Disbelief.** 1987. Acrylic on canvas replicating patterns on St. Bernadette's clothing, photograph of St. Bernadette, acrylic on canvas rose, metal, wood, bicycle wheel, 68" x 54-1/2" x 22". Collection of Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA.

Daniel Martinez



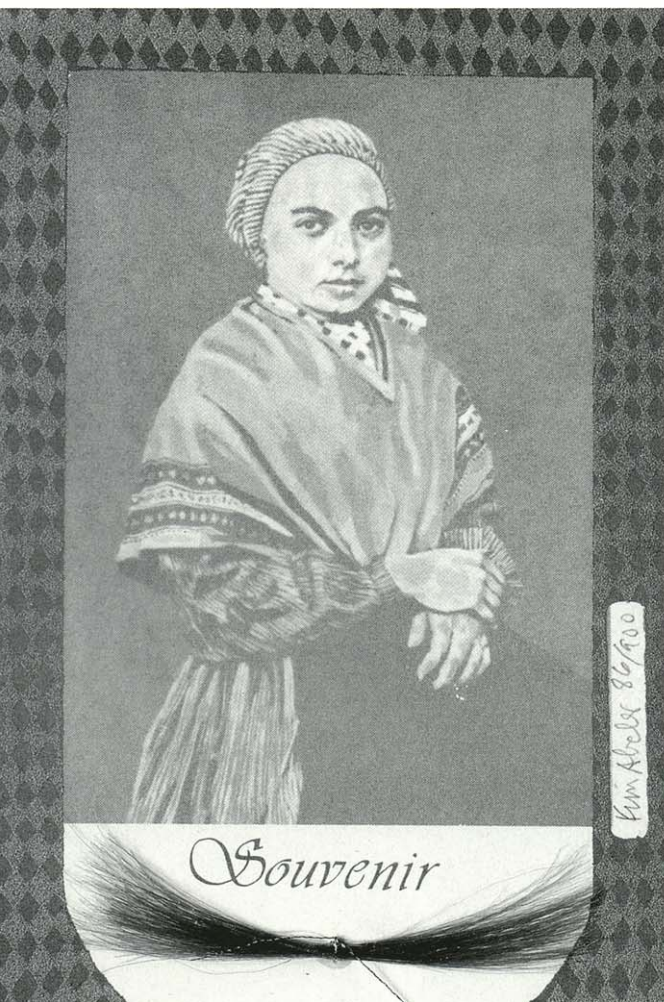
## THE IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE



Daniel Martinez

**Souvenir Dispensary.** 1987. Souvenir holy cards of St. Bernadette, altered cosmetic dispenser, photographs of Abeles' painting of St. Bernadette bald, locks of hair, currency, enamel, 21-1/2" x 12" x 13". Collection of Greg and Kristen Escalante, Naples, CA.

*T. Lubirous*



Daniel Martinez

**Children! Sit Still!** 1987. Acrylic painting of St. Bernadette on photo-sensitized fabric, enamel, metal, altered piano stool, violin rests, mirror of base that correctly shows the signature of St. Bernadette (her name is written backwards underneath the stool), lace, satin, 44" x 18-1/2" x 18-1/2".

**Souvenir.** 1987. Hair, silkscreen and offset print on cardstock, 4-3/4" x 3". Edition of 900. Abeles placed the souvenir holy cards in telephone booths at Lourdes in 1987.

## THE IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE

Pilgrims came steadily from all around, stopping with their chores to see the girl with the maze-patterned dress. It was well known in the countryside that Bernadette would see the Lady with the white gown and blue sash on fifteen more occasions. And indeed, she did. At the same time, she was subjected to examinations and cross-examinations by doctors, city officials, and the Church.

Ultimately, skeptics became believers. During the apparitions, Bernadette's face transformed, her skin became tight and translucent against her skull. She reflected the sight she saw, and in her eyes one could see the eyes of the Virgin. As the number of believers increased, vendors became merchants selling bits and pieces of the story. Like the artist, she was seen as both visionary and freak.

Lourdes today is one of the largest religious tourist sites in the world. Over four million pilgrims and curious spectators come to the curing waters of the grotto each year. Though many of the methods of presentation for this series reflect the commercial

**Eau De Lourdes.** 1987. Marbleized bicycle wheel, glass bottles filled with water, altered piano bench, satin, pearls, gold leaf, enamel, soil, mirror-lined box, movie still from *The Song of Bernadette*, backwards text placed under bench and correctly reflected in mirror, currency, 56" x 31-1/2" x 20-1/2". Art Bank Collection, City of Santa Monica, CA.



**Traveling Sales.** 1987. Leather suitcase rubbed with gold oil paint, satin, St. Bernadette souvenirs, velvet, marbleized wood, currency, 28-1/2" x 19" x 19". Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc.

Daniel Martinez





## Bernadette Is Declared a Saint

On August 20, 1908, an ecclesiastical court was set up to study the case for her beatification. One of the first tasks of the court was to examine Bernadette's body. After being buried for thirty years, it was found to be incorrupt.

Her head inclined slightly to the left. Her hands crossed over her chest, still clasped her rosary. Both were tarnished and discolored.

Her flesh was white and intact, and her lips were smiling.

On May 13, 1913, Pope Pius X signed the decree introducing the cause of Bernadette's canonization. She was beatified on June 14th, 1925. Eight years later, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, 1933 she was canonized by Pope Pius XI.

During the process of the canonization Pope Pius XI wrote: "We are pleased to say, for the greater glory of God, this life can be summed



up in three words. Bernadette was *faithful* to her mission, she was *humble* in glory, and she was *valiant* in her sufferings."

Now her incorrupt body can be seen as she lies in death in the side chapel of the mother-house of the Sisters of Charity at Nevers, where she lived and died as Sister Marie-Bernard.

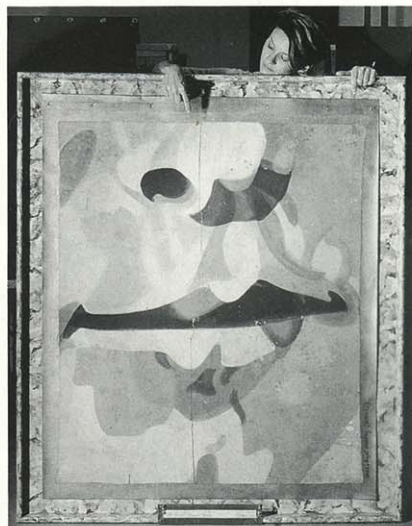




## THE IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE



**Diagrammatic Cross Section of the World's Largest Painting.** 1987. Gridded photograph of Abeles' painting of St. Bernadette with Section 32 extended three-dimensionally, 15" x 9". Collection of Anuska and Adrian Smith, San Diego, CA.



**The World's Largest Painting (Section 32).** 1987. Acrylic on canvas dropcloth showing St. Bernadette's nose and mouth, marbled wood, brass plaque with title, 59" x 51".



Daniel Martinez

**Pachinko (It's a Beautiful Day!).** 1987. Marbled acrylic on rewire Pachinko game, image of St. Bernadette stencilled on plexiglass, dried rosebud, photograph of Abeles' painting of St. Bernadette, 31-1/2" x 20-1/4" x 3-1/2". Collection of Debra and Larry Poteet, Glendale, CA.



## THE IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE

attitude toward the apparitions, there was one intention that Abeles strictly followed: to retain the beauty and dignity of Bernadette. To see or make an image over and over is to absorb it through the skin. See BOOKWORKS (*The Image of St. Bernadette*).

### Sources and Suggested Reading:

Werfel, Franz. *The Song of Bernadette*. New York: The Viking Press, 1942. (The film adaptation of the book was first made in 1943 by Twentieth Century-Fox and starred Jennifer Jones as Bernadette).

Warnes, Jennifer. *Famous Blue Raincoat—The Songs of Leonard Cohen*. Los Angeles: Cypress Records, 1986. (Audiotape and CD containing Cohen's *Song of Bernadette*).



David Familian

**The World's Smallest Painting.** 1987 Microscope, enamel, lace, glass slide plate with transparency of painting of St. Bernadette, wood, satin, rose beads, 22" x 9-1/2" x 12"



**Viewers Observing the World's Largest Painting.** 1987 Photograph of Abeles' painting of St. Bernadette, photographs of movie extras from *The Song of Bernadette*, satin, pearls, enamel, wood, plaque, rose made from money, 32" x 27" Collection of Judy and Marvin Zeidler, Los Angeles, CA.



**Detail of The Amazing Rosebud.** 1987 Acrylic portrait of St. Bernadette on dried rosebud, embroidered satin, 21" x 9"

## KIMONOS

**KIMONOS** (1979 – 1982). The garment form alludes to human form: by its scale, presentation (suspended and away from the wall), and its traditional use as a body covering. I approach this format as a personification and structural container of the Self. They are kimonos and derivatives of its composition; they are vestments as shrines of the investigation of the Self.

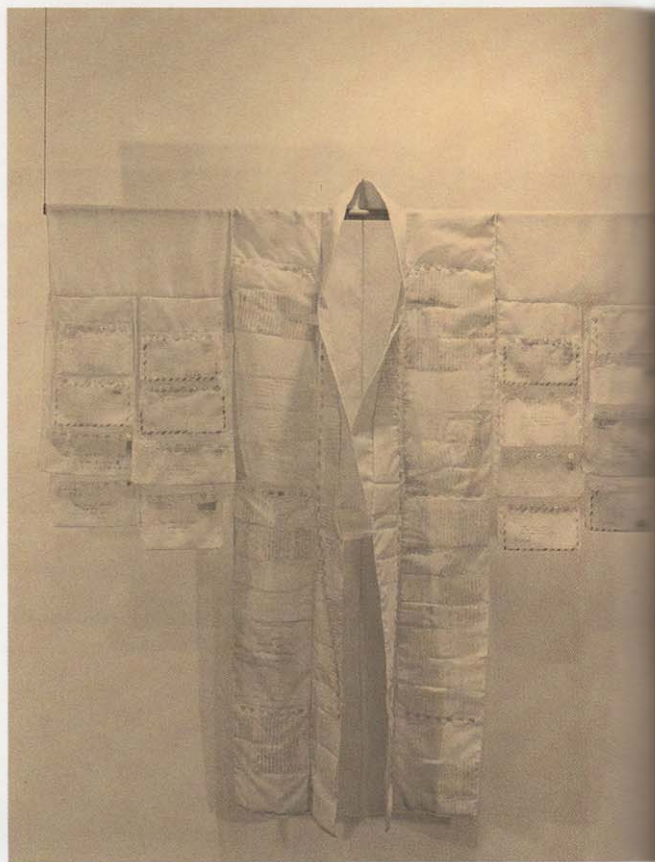
The ideas for this series developed from conversations, correspondence, and experiences. They are aspects of human behavior and activity which are prevalent in myself and individuals I observe. Layering is used, in terms of repetitive patterns, accumulations, contrasts, and veils which hide and reveal, as a means to transcend personal or autobiographical content so that it may embrace a broader audience.

I see the vestments as a confrontation with a “being,” in conjunction with the sense that one could slip into this clothing.

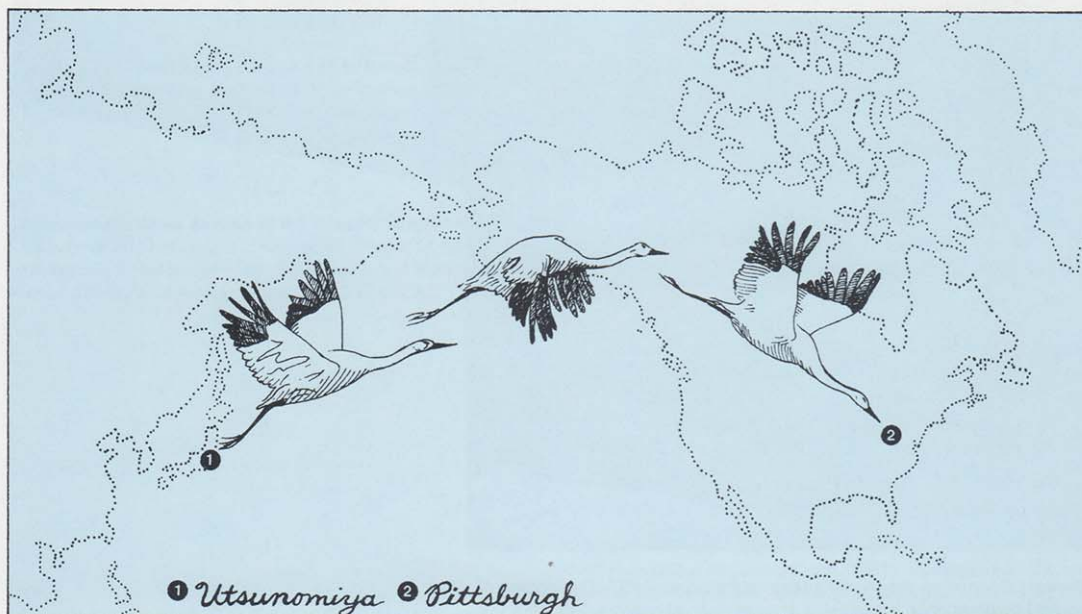
**Letters from Kōsai.** My interest in Shingon Buddhism and the subsequent kimono forms stems from a ten-year (now, twenty-five-year) correspondence with Kōsai Kobari, whom I met in Utsunomiya, Japan. In 1979, I arranged all of his letters in chronological order and reread them, over and over, searching for cohesive indications of his philosophy and unexpectedly confronting the changes in my life, with a sober



**Kōsai Kobari.**



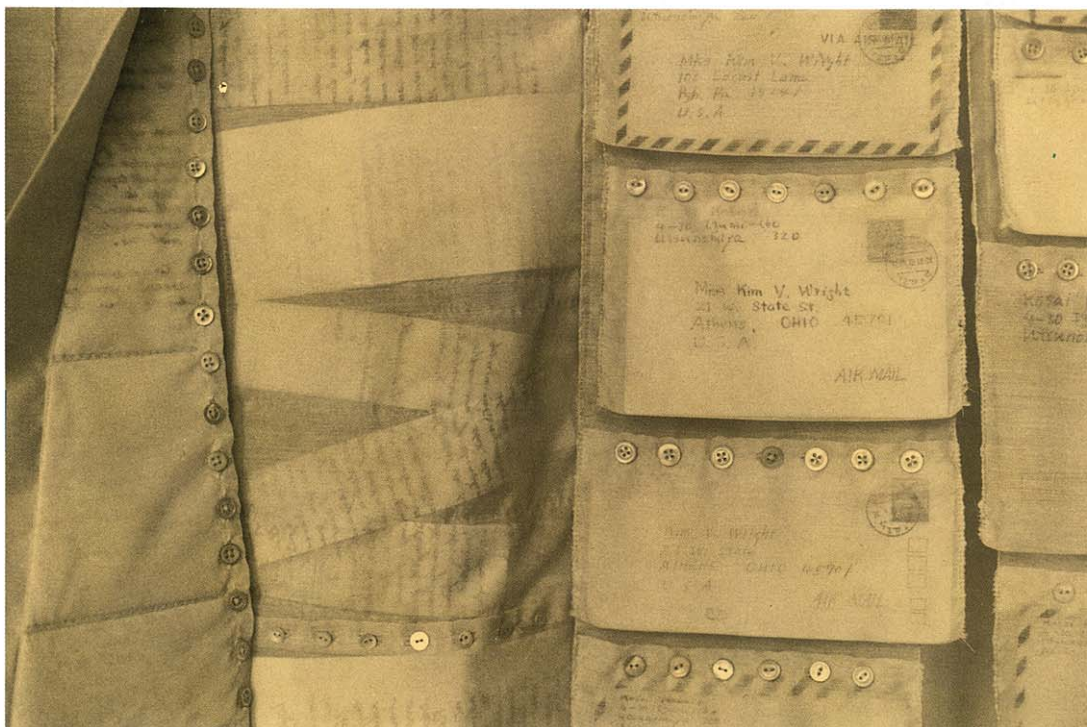
**Letters from Kōsai.** 1979. 10 years of correspondence from Kōsai Kobari, sheer fabric, abalone buttons, 54" x 48" Collection of Edith L. Rickey (Mrs. George Rickey), East Chatham, NY



**Route of Kōsai's first correspondence with Abeles.**

ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map





**Detail of Letters from Kōsai.**

reflection that may accompany revived memories. Kōsai displays with his responses a woven, experiential pattern of art, nature, and faith that I now see in conjunction with his observance of Shingon concepts. My pursuit of its philosophy, through reading and working through the kimonos, was originally motivated by a desire to expand my understanding of Kōsai and his peaceful viewing space. My search revealed an attitude based on the unity of diversity, continual re-evaluation, and charity of soul. A cogent similarity developed between the kimonos and the reading: the action of the endeavor was the important factor. There was nothing to be captured in a frozen trap.

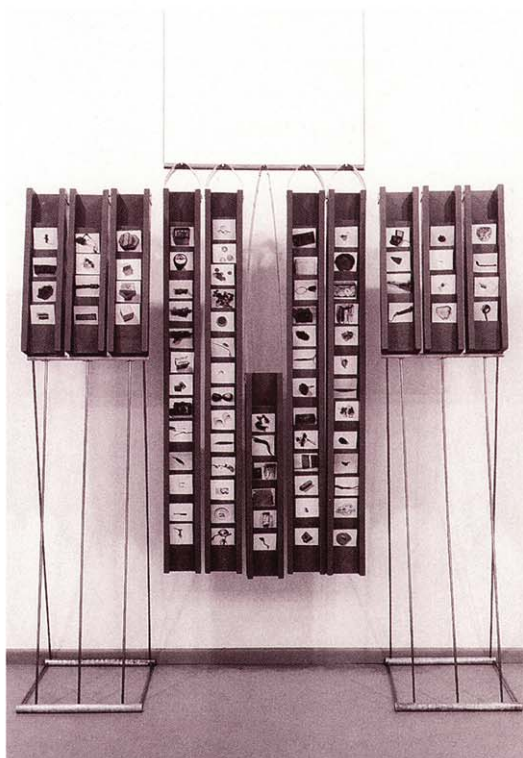
#### **Sources and Suggested Reading:**

Kiyota, Minora. *Shingon Buddhism: Theory and Practice*. Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1978.

Watts, Alan. *This is IT and Other Essays on Zen and Spiritual Experience*. New York: Random House, 1973.

**Index for the Pluperfect.** These are non-functional or broken objects given to Abeles or found by her. They are from the past. Information from this

**Index for the Pluperfect.** 1981. Photographs of non-functional objects, wood, metal, 72" x 63" x 24-1/2". Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc.



## KIMONOS

past is notated on each card, hidden from the viewer unless it is removed from the time-slot. These are objects from the past, photographed to place them in the past once more: past perfect. They are pluperfect by their orientation to the present through the action of this photographic presence. They are documentation, a diary. There is no "I." The portrait is created by those things collected, carried, and feather dusted. See BOOKWORKS (Index for the Pluperfect).

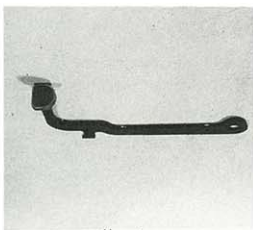
**Princess and the Pea.** Marriage is a commitment, it's binding, a conflict, a goal, an aspiration, a

*"It is exquisitely trivial, a delicate bubble of fancy, and it has its philosophy...that we should treat all the trivial things of life seriously, and all the serious things in life with sincere and studied triviality."*

—Oscar Wilde's quote about his play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.



Tape, CRIME SCENE  
A gift from a drunk stranger  
Santa Monica, California  
Winter of 1980  
from a fire scene



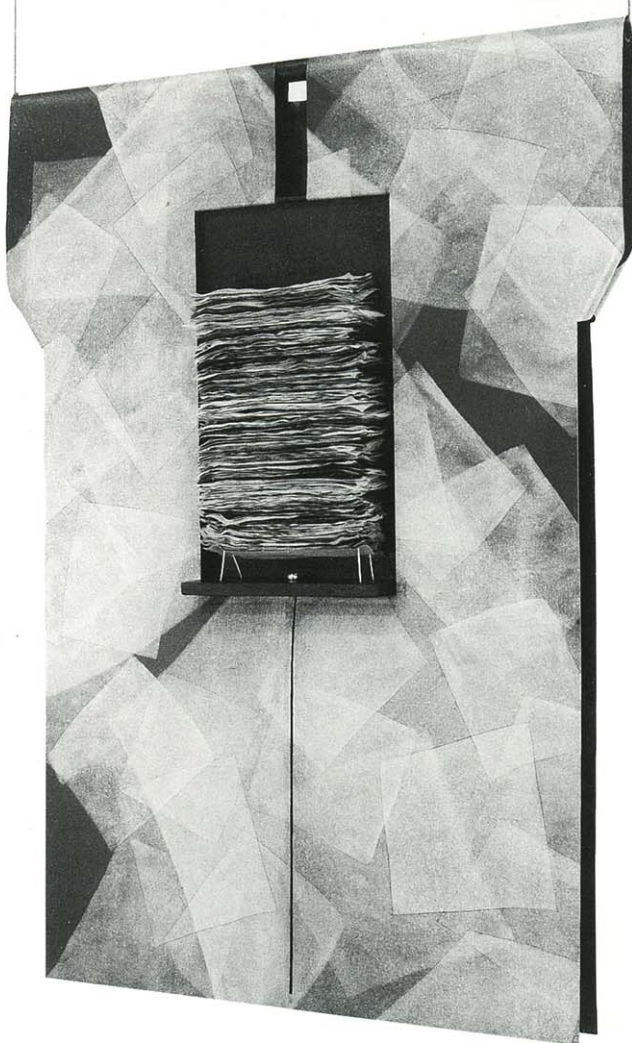
Typewriter key  
Royal Typewriter - a  
gift from Ann  
Tucson, Arizona  
1973  
It broke while fixing it  
with a hammer



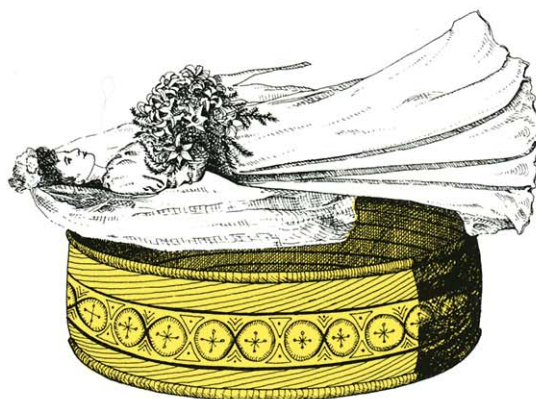
Fortune  
Found in Granny's basement  
St. Louis, Missouri  
1938  
You are well-balanced and  
reasonable and not  
easily swayed by passing  
fancies.



Rock (with a gaseous  
entrapment)  
Found it  
Athens, Ohio  
Fall of 1976  
It was a fossil until  
a biologist explained  
otherwise



**Princess and the Pea.** 1981. Wedding ring, acrylic on canvas, wood, chiffon, metal toothpicks, 52-1/2" x 38". Collection of Palm Springs Desert Museum, Palm Springs, CA.



ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA drawing

**The Pea.**

Removeable cards from Index for the Pluperfect.



pain in the neck, the only joy like it, the desire for it, the escape from it, a freedom, a hope, a prison sentence, a fear that you'll be asked, and a fear that you won't. And here it is as *The Princess and the Pea*.

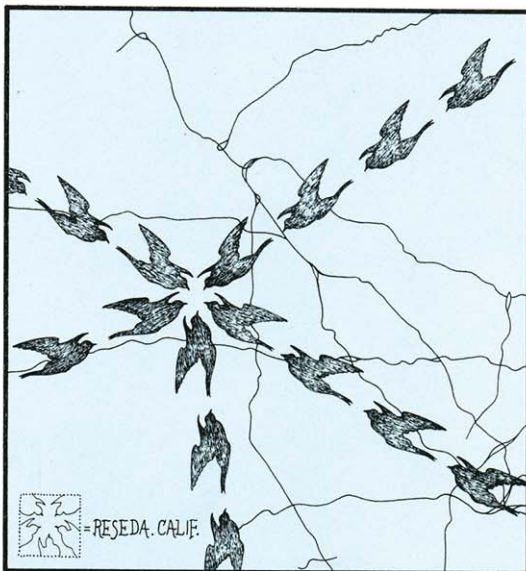
**Ritual for Instinctual Return.** I had been spending so much time on the freeway and in and out of concrete buildings that I was feeling disassociated from anything resembling Nature: I wanted to participate in a process that would be very basic and natural.

The entire process of going to the poultry shop in Chinatown—where the owner gave me a bag of fresh pigeon feet each Wednesday, where birds squawked in cages, sprawled half-dead, or hung limply from hooks (and the occasional bird escaped and frantically raced around that same room)—and the process or ritual of preparing and drying the pigeon feet, were jolts to the senses, a confrontation between life and death.

My grandfather, Richard Sander, has raised and raced pigeons since the 30s and I became fascinated by the homing instinct. When I told him that I wanted to do a piece about the pigeons, he gave me a bag full of identification bands from his dead birds. When a pigeon dies, he explained, the only way to remove the bands intact is to remove the feet of the bird.

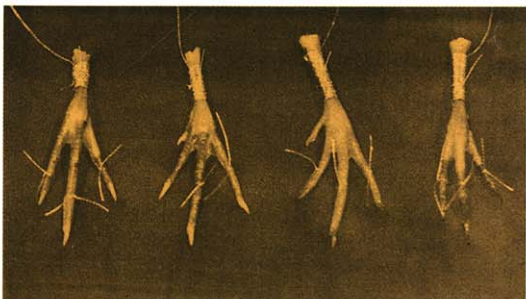


**Grampa Sander** holding one of his racing pigeons in Reseda, California, 1950.



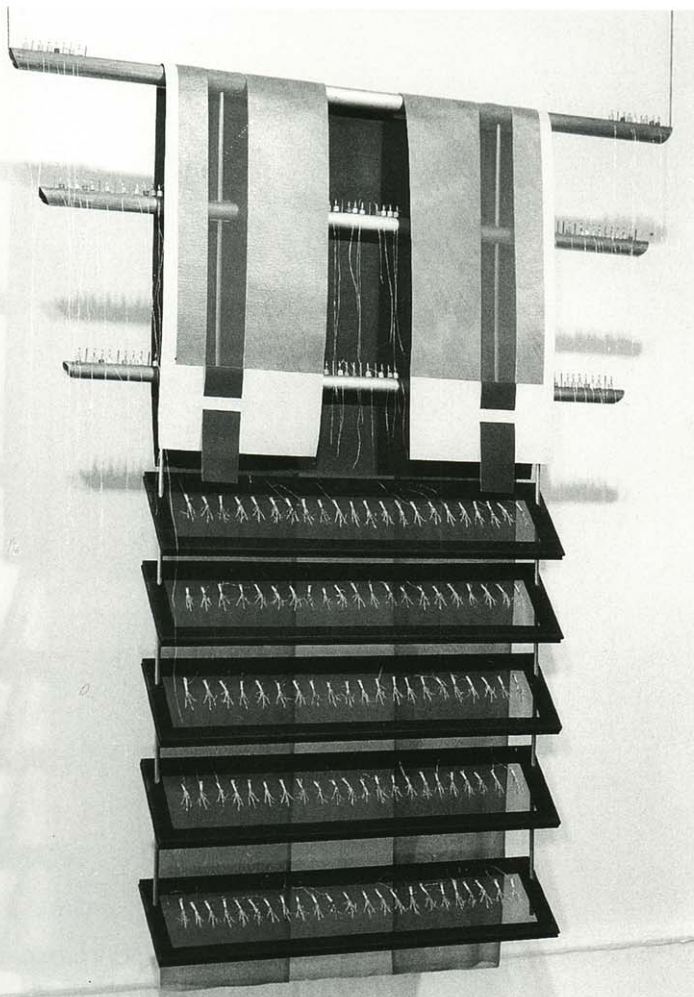
ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map

**Reseda, California.** Site of Grampa Sander's first pigeon coop. The homing instinct enables the birds to return to their birth sites from distances as great as 1000 miles.



**Detail of dried pigeon feet** in *Ritual for Instinctual Return*.

***Ritual for Instinctual Return*.** 1981. Dried pigeon feet, racing pigeon identification bands, acrylic on canvas, chiffon, silver thread, metal, wood, 60" x 48" x 6". Collection of Sue E. Berryman, Alexandria, VA.





## KIMONOS

In the final sculpture, the bands are placed on the small pegs of the metal structure. Each has a silver thread which is severed from the portion of thread wrapped around each foot below. The dried pigeon feet are delicately stitched to the sheer fabric drying racks, similar to the one I used to dry the feet outside my studio window.

### Suggested Reading:

Ardrey, Robert. *The Territorial Imperative—A Personal Inquiry into Animal Origins of Property and Nations*. New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1966.

**Slide...Gather.** I asked friends for old clothes they were going to discard. I wanted clothes, regardless of the style, the material, the stain, the holes. Any clothing. My car was loaded to the hilt. At one point, I couldn't see behind me. I pushed the mountain around and down as I could.

*"You don't care if they have stains under the armpits?"*

*"Oh, my daughter throws away so many clothes that you won't believe the pile since the last time you were over to my house."*

*"I have an old linen dress that my mother made. It has stains on it and I know you'll love it."*

*"I have gowns...remember the kind with the open slit that went down like this?"*

I am dealing with the taste of others. These are recycled remnants of others' decisions. I can't stand the color, prints, or types of fabric of some of them. Here is the sensitivity of others, altered by my reconstruction. They are standard. They are unique.

Lines. Lines. The line is a promenade, a dry cleaner's, a funeral march, a procession of uniforms. Points of waiting and moving, moving in circles, a line at the bank, in the grocery store, on the freeway. Points of contemplation – deep thought and trivia. The line without individual distinction, with individual remarks.

The rack is filled with a simple garb, the predecessor of the kimono, now called a kanto-i. My friend Kōsai describes it as "only a big cloth with a hole at the center for the head, made of hemp or bark." It was worn two thousand years ago. It was a simple style that was improved in time; it is a timeless style because of its simplicity.

The rack moves into dark tunnels at one end; the circular pattern of its movement continues. What happens in that tunnel? Are tickets on clothing exchanged? Does someone stand in the darkness and try on clothing in front of a broken piece of mirror? Do they merely revolve through the tunnel transformed by experience?

The sweatshop makes the dry cleaner's. The hot, steamy water that burns the hand when the iron is overturned, held in the left hand, the hand with the

**Slide...Gather.** 1981. Recycled clothing, satin/linen fabric, metal pipe, 32' x 10', (garments) 52" x 31".

Daniel Martinez





watch, that turns the steam to the right as the hand shifts to see the time.

**Sweatshop Down the Hall and Sometimes It's Me.** There used to be a sweatshop down the hall from my studio. We shared the same bathroom, and I had to go through their lunchroom to get to it. One day, feeling the accumulation of steady weeks of work in the studio, I crossed their lunchroom, and felt a strong camaraderie with the women in the sweatshop: we were making garments, we were tired, dirty from the day's work, intermingling moments of grief and those times when I saw their joy in their close relationships with one another. The racks on the sculpture depict the final product: the racks of clothes in quantities of arranged colors wheeled out of the sweatshop. The fabric strips on the sculpture are their remnants, and harnessed to the garment by leather straps is their old timeclock. It is encrusted with lint which now stops time, right before quitting time.

#### Suggested Reading:

Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States*. New York: HarperCollins, 1980.

**LASELL, ANNE.** Current Chairman of the Fellows of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. See SPONSOR'S FOREWORD (p. 6).

**LEE, MOTHER ANN.** Founder of the Shaker Community. See BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS (*The Celibacy and Practicality of Mother Ann/Speak in Tongues and Import Oysters*).

**LONG EXPOSURES (AN ARTIST IN HER LATER YEARS)** (1991 – 1992) is a multi-media installation

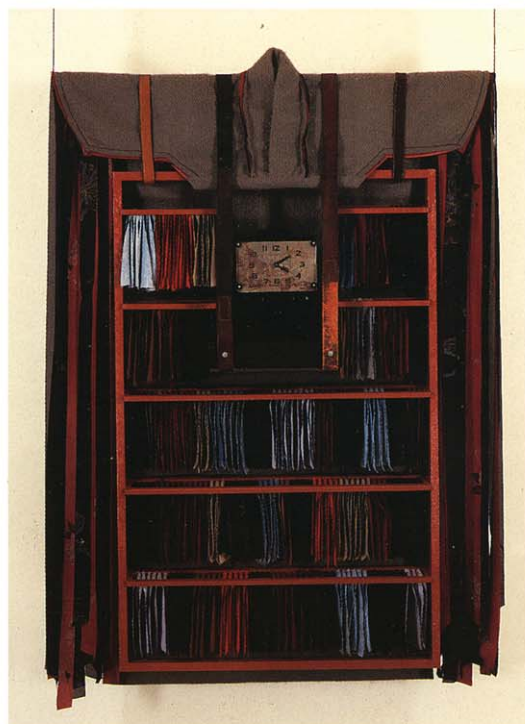
using the photography darkroom as its basic format to discuss aging, creativity, and the evolution of a woman's life. To be inside a darkroom is to experience timelessness emphasized by its increments of minutes, the solid quiet of the dark, the pinpoints of light and the everflow of water. The alchemy of the darkroom combines human technical accomplishment with the desire to capture the elusive.



**Florence Rosen.** One of the photographs selected by Florence, which she believed best represented her chronological self-image.

the image we hold of ourselves retains from a younger chronological age. Photo albums and snapshots mount upon dusty shelves in our homes in order to hold the past for the future. But beyond the cultural pressures to capture each special event, a few photos emerge as key resemblances of one's life.

We live in a culture that idolizes youth and



Daniel Martinez

**Sweatshop Down the Hall and Sometimes It's Me.** 1981. Metal time clock, felt, wood, fabric, leather, 56" x 40-1/2" x 5".



ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map

**Second and Broadway** in Los Angeles.



David Familian

**Long Exposures (An Artist in Her Later Years).** 1991-1992. Installation of phosphorescent paint activated by light on a relay system, welded steel, enamel, audiotape interview, water system, mixed media objects and photographs which combine darkroom and domestic images, 20' x 20'.

airbrushed perfection, yet the visage of ourselves from a younger time is not a desperate response to this. Rather, it provides the Self with the tangible corroboration that the essence of Self remains

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*I'm looking now in the mirror and saying, "Now, look at yourself. Now, just look at yourself and see who you are," because I don't see myself and I keep looking through the mirror image, trying to see what is the image that I am projecting onto my image that's in the mirror. It becomes...it's like going underground. It's like diving underground. It's a very significant experience and I can't sustain it for more than a half a minute. It's a real encounter with my mortality.*

—Florence Rosen, from the soundtrack for *Long Exposures (An Artist in Her Later Years)*.

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youthful and continuous with the spirit of the life force. The distaste for aging is presented by the same culture bombarding us with material desires, face-lifts, and the idolatry of "beauty."

To create *Long Exposures*, Abeles interviewed a friend and fellow artist, Florence Rosen, also requesting her to select one photo that best describes the way she thinks of herself. They used the premise of agelessness set forth by research anthropologist Sharon Kaufman to steer the direction for the chosen photo. Like slipping back through a calendar of years, the selection moved beyond Florence's return to art school in later years, before her grandchild and children, before her marriage, the timeless photo reflecting past, present, and future. See also ABELES (Chronology: photo, p. 21).

#### Sources and Suggested Reading:

Kaufman, Sharon. *The Ageless Self: Sources of Meaning In Late Life*. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986.

**MARRIAGE.** See BIOLOGICAL PORTRAITS (*Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth*); KIMONOS (*Princess and the Pea*); LONG EXPOSURES (AN ARTIST IN HER LATER YEARS).



- 1 Lens (cameras) 2 Currency 3 Lace 4 Smog (ashes, smoke) 5 Marble (faux finishes) 6 Wasp Nest  
7 Copper (etched metals) 8 Bone 9 Photo transfers 10 Soil 11 Intransparencies 12 Mirror  
13 Ceramics (concrete, plaster) 14 Pigeon feet 15 Hair 16 Satin (fabrics) 17 Text 18 Photographs  
19 Money colors 20 Chiffon, brass 21 artificial & actual wood 22 feathers 23 Spiritual incense  
24 Embroidery (appliqué) 25 Handmade paper, roses 26 Maps 27 Watch (clocks) 28 Sand 29 Letters

*Frankenstein's Heart*



**Frankenstein's Heart.** 1993. Abeles' use of materials is defined by the subjects of her artwork. Literal and symbolic messages given by raw materials, objects, photographs, and graphic patterns become a substantial element in her form of visual vocabulary.



## MEMORY

**MEMORY.** See *KIMONOS (Index for the Pluperfect)*; *LONG EXPOSURES (AN ARTIST IN HER LATER YEARS)*; *PILGRIMAGE TO THE WEDGE*; *SHRINES (Smoke Box)*.

**MOSS, KAREN.** Curator of the exhibition and curatorial consultant, Santa Monica Museum of Art. See *INTRODUCTION TO ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA* (p. 10).

**NATURE.** Abeles' work frequently deals with the search for Nature. Working from the assumption that Nature is so frequently presented as an organized, artificial display, it is a lost memory that we seek to relocate. See also *ENVIRONMENT*.

**Animals.** See *DEAD SEA SCROLLS (Boy, Herd, Hole, Threw, Sound)*; *FACT FICTION BOXES (Diorama)*; *KIMONOS (Index for the Pluperfect)*.

**As supreme force.** See *DEAD SEA SCROLLS (Greed Turns to Glue; Historic Sites, Buildings, Etc.; Nature Gets the Last Laugh [Really])*.

**Birds.** See *KIMONOS (Ritual for Instinctual Return)*; *SHRINES (She Said I Found This Sparrow and Thought of You I Said)*.

**Celestial bodies.** See *OBSERVATORY/TERRITORY*.

**Insects.** See *FACT FICTION BOXES (National Treasure)*; *KIMONOS (Index for the Pluperfect)*; *SHRINES (The Great Periodic Migration)*.

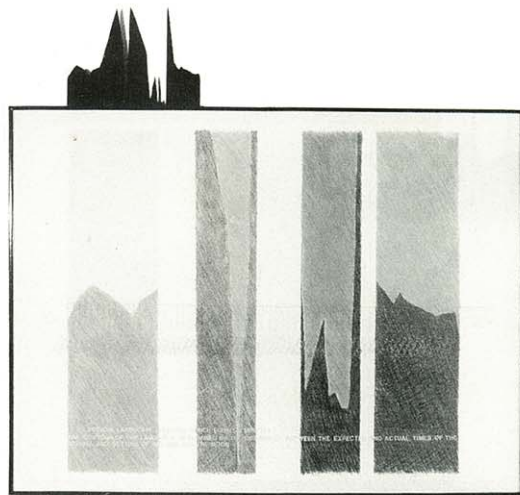
**Geologic Masses.** See *DEAD SEA SCROLLS (Boy, Herd, Hole, Threw, Sound; Here It Is)*; *PILGRIMAGE TO THE WEDGE*.

**OBSERVATORY/TERRITORY.** The installation *Observatory/Territory* was created and "performed" during Abeles' fellowship residency at Hand Hollow Foundation, George Rickey Workshop in upstate New York in 1984. She built and physically entered the sculptural contraption for a period of time between New Moon and Full Moon to chart the paths of the sun and the moon. The title also refers to the territory created by the continual "pilgrimages" to the

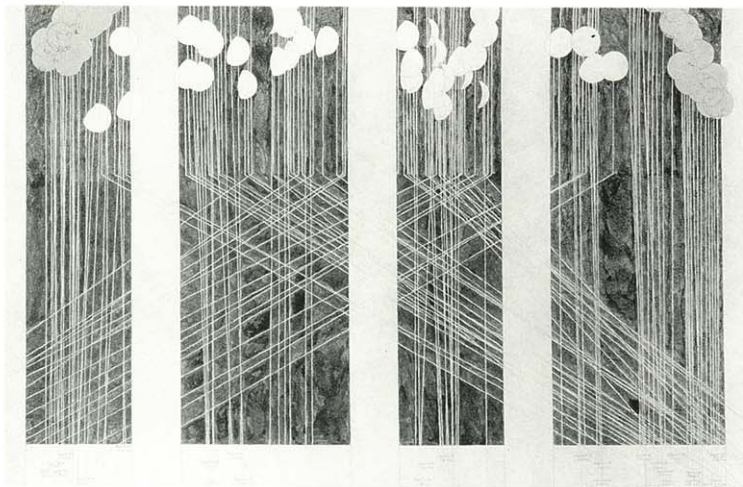
sculpture throughout the days and nights in order to maintain the charting. The contraption and the accumulated experience become the sculpture.

Five sheer fabric panels were placed on the sculpture each day, resulting in a total of eighty panels. The date, time, and position of the moon and sun were recorded on the panels. After each setting of the moon and sun, the fabric was taken back to the studio where the information was duplicated using acrylics for the sun images and cutout shapes for the moon.

The observatory was painted to duplicate the colors of the surrounding landscape as an integral part of the forest. Leaves were brought into the studio as color samples for mixing the values of the paint. See also *ABELES (Chronology: 1984)*; *BARNES, LUCINDA*.



**Logical Landscape.** 1984. Color pencil on paper showing contour of landscape determined by difference between expected and actual times of arrival and setting of sun and moon, enamel on metal, 30-1/2" x 32". Collection of Jack and Bonnie Wilke, Los Angeles, CA.



**Diary.** 1984. Newspaper clippings of celestial schedules, fabric, 23" x 29".

**Detail of Illuminated Manuscript.** 1984. Ink, acrylic, and pencil on paper showing celestial paths composite, 51" x 79". Collection of Judy and Stuart Spence, South Pasadena.



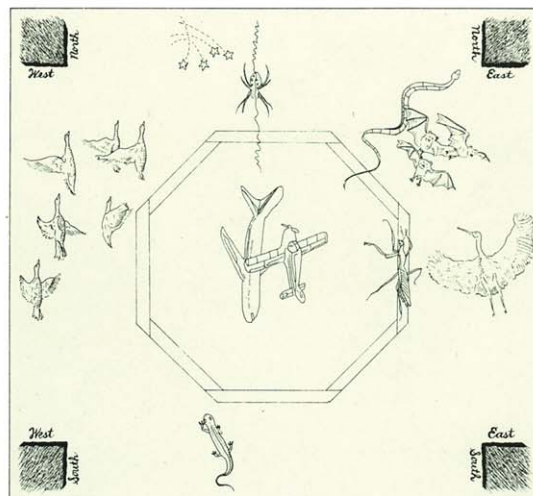


**Abeles inside her sculptural contraption** used to chart the path of the moon and sun.

## OBSERVATORY/TERRITORY



**Sumoon, Moosun, New Moon, No Moon.** 1984. Color photograph of moon or sun, clocks which periodically move in alignment, wood, enamel, 11" x 13" x 4-1/4". Collection of Judy and Stuart Spence, South Pasadena, CA.



ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map

**Map based on incidents** while charting the celestial paths with the observatory sculpture.



Janice Felgar

**Observatory/Territory.** 1984-85. Acrylic on sheer fabric used for charting the path of moon and sun, oil paint on wood, metal (dome installation) 86" x 29" x 29".

## ROSA PARKS

**PARKS, ROSA.** Civil rights activist and leader. See BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS (*To Sit as Ladder [In Honor of Rosa Parks]*).

**PERSONAL OFFERINGS.** Through the years, Abeles' projects have frequently involved members of the community by requesting objects to be included in the artwork.

**Clothing and Remnants.** See KIMONOS (*Slide... Gather; Sweatshop Down the Hall and Sometimes It's Me*); HABEAS CORPUS (*Made in America*).

**Hair.** See IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE (*Souvenir; Souvenir Dispensary*).

**Shoewax tins.** See SHRINES (*Imperial Shoeshine*).

**Personal items (photographed).** See COLLECTIVE DIARY: DEDICATED TO PEOPLE WITH AIDS.

**PHOTOGRAPHY.** Since 1974, photography has been a central focus of my work, with a concentration on "portraiture" as biographical and thematic statements. I've made use of traditional format presentations as well as the photograph used as a critical component of sculpture and installations, with processes ranging from altered composites to three-dimensionalization of photos to gray-scale painting. I was deeply influenced while in graduate school by Susan Sontag's discussion of the conceptual impact and literal potency of photographs as so eloquently presented in her book *On Photography*.

**As commodity.** See IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE.

**As identity.** See COLLECTIVE DIARY: DEDICATED TO PEOPLE WITH AIDS; LONG EXPOSURES (AN ARTIST IN HER LATER YEARS); HABEAS CORPUS (*The Truth Palace; Personal Effects*).

**As illusion.** OBSERVATORY/TERRITORY (*Sumoon, Moosun, New Moon, No Moon*).

**As object.** See BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS (*Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth*); DEAD SEA SCROLLS (*Black-out; Even Simple Deeds Heroic; Kando: Conjuror of the Dead Sea Scrolls; Greed Turns to Glue*); FACT FICTION BOXES (*A Problem with Maintenance*).

**As painting.** See DEAD SEA SCROLLS (*Even Simple Deeds Heroic; Greed Turns to Glue; Nature Gets the Last Laugh [Really]*); IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE (*The World's Largest Painting [Section 32]; The World's Smallest Painting*).

**As pornography.** See SHRINES (*Imperial Shoeshine*).

**As portrait and historical document.** See BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS; DEAD SEA SCROLLS; COLLECTIVE DIARY: DEDICATED TO PEOPLE WITH AIDS; IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE.

**As process.** See BOOKWORKS (*Experiment for Myself as Other; Our Position, Always, Reciprocal*); BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS (*Rickety Ticket*); DEAD SEA SCROLLS (*Even Simple Deeds Heroic*); SHRINES (*Experiment to Identify Change; She Said I Found This Sparrow and*

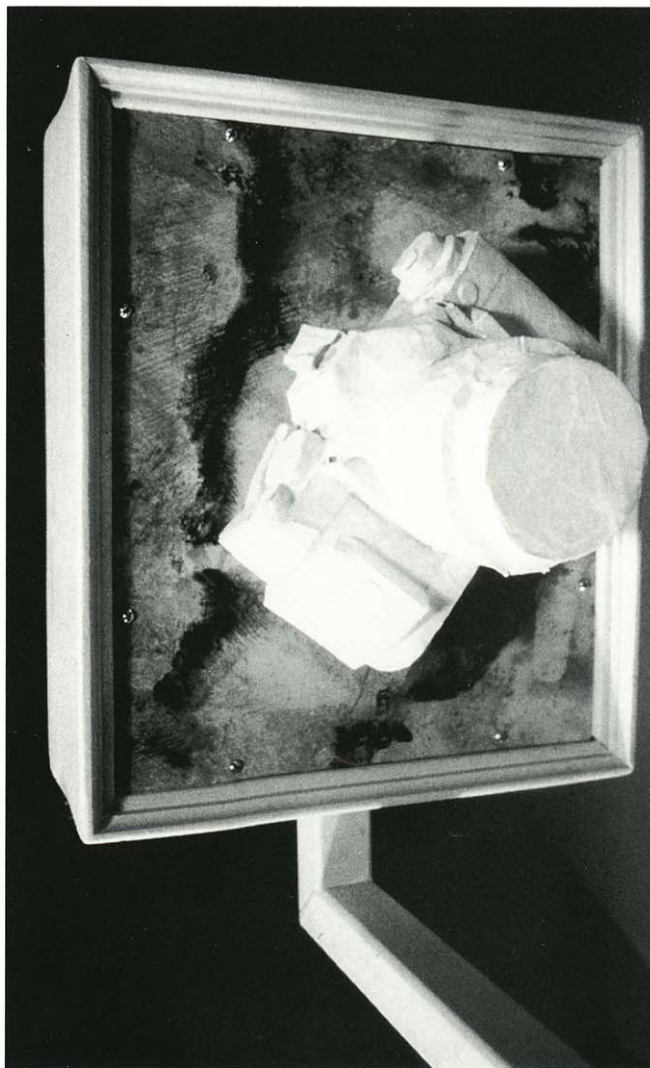
*Thought of You I Said*); PILGRIMAGE TO THE WEDGE.

**As proof.** See BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS (*Other [In Memory of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg]*); DEAD SEA SCROLLS (*Here It Is*); SHRINES (*Index for the Pluperfect*); HABEAS CORPUS.

**As smog.** See SMOG COLLECTOR.

**Into three-dimensional form.** See IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE (*Willing Suspension of Disbelief*); BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS (*Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth*).

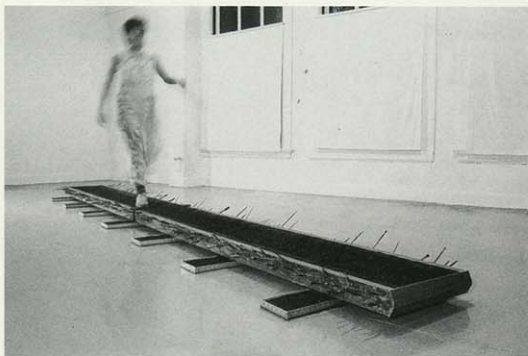
**Photographic Equipment.** LONG EXPOSURES (AN ARTIST IN HER LATER YEARS); PILGRIMAGE TO THE WEDGE; SHRINES (*Experiment to Identify Change*); DEAD SEA SCROLLS (*Even Simple Deeds Heroic*); IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE (*Children! Sit Still!*).



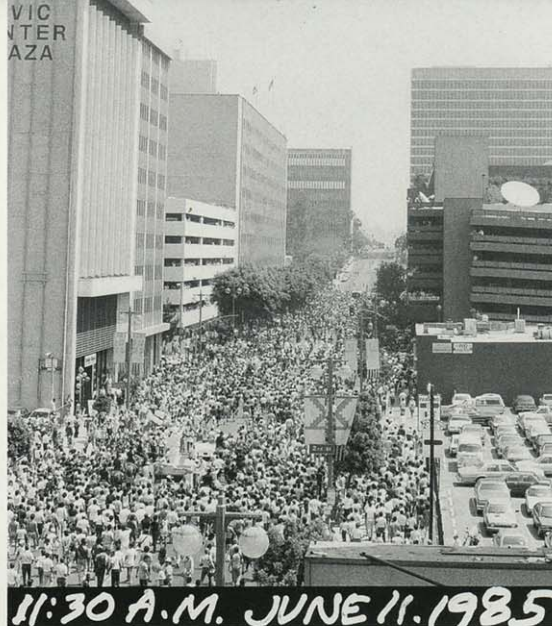
Camera made of paper created in 1987 for the sculpture *That Which Can't Be Caught*.



**PILGRIMAGE TO THE WEDGE.** From February 26, 1985 to March 17, 1986, I took 274 photographs looking north on Broadway in Los Angeles as seen from my fire escape. My ultimate purpose was to photograph a "wedge" of mountain (part of the San Gabriel Mountains).



**Abeles using her sculptural contraption, *Pentipede*, to measure her stride in order to adjust the pedometer she used during the pilgrimage to the San Gabriel Mountains.**



**View looking north toward a wedge of the San Gabriel Mountains (obscured by smog) as seen from Abeles' fire escape on Second and Broadway, Los Angeles. This example of the 274 photographic attempts to get a clear view of the Mountain Wedge was taken the morning of a parade for the Los Angeles Lakers.**



Daniel Martinez

**Mountain Wedge.** 1985-7. Acrylic on paper and wood "camera bellows", canvas, 274 photographs looking north on Broadway in Los Angeles at the San Gabriel Mountains obscured by smog, lens, oil painting on canvas, (bellows) 94" x 78" x 184".

## PILGRIMAGE TO THE WEDGE

On a clear day, the Mountain Wedge miraculously interacts with the buildings at the horizon. Though it may seem to be a simple decisive task, it was not. The mountain was not clearly visible for over a year.

I have had my studio in downtown Los Angeles for thirteen years and have only seen the Mountain Wedge a few times. When it appears, it is breathtaking. See also *SMOG COLLECTOR*; ABELES, (Chronology: *Sixty Days of Los Angeles Sky Patch [View to the East]* p. 22); BARNES, LUCINDA.

### Suggested Reading:

McKibben, Bill. *The End of Nature*. New York: Random House, 1989.

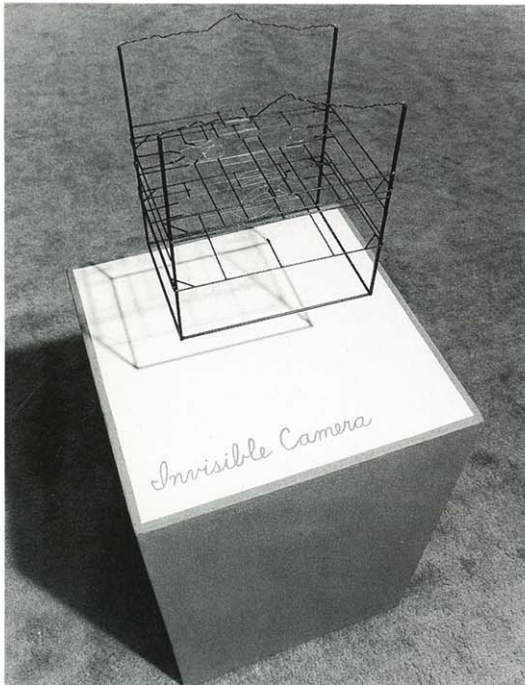
Palmer, Tim, Ed. *California's Threatened Environment: Restoring the Dream*. Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1993.

**The Pilgrimage.** On September 10, 1987, I walked from my Broadway studio to the Mountain Wedge to try to capture a clear image of the mountain. I selected a day with a first stage episode for air quality: air unhealthful for everyone.

*Departure time: 7:49 A.M. (2nd and Broadway)*

*Arrival time: 5:37 P.M. (Mountain Wedge)*

*Distance: 16-1/2 miles*



**Invisible Camera.** 1987. Invisible nylon thread, enamel on brass structure defining shape of 35 mm camera, 10-3/4" x 9" x 6-1/2". Collection of Jeanne Meyers, Los Angeles, CA.



**Wedge Watch.** 1987. Altered gas mask, color photographs of the Mountain Wedge, cat hair, text, 23" x 10" x 8". Collection of Marguerite Freilich, Santa Monica, CA.



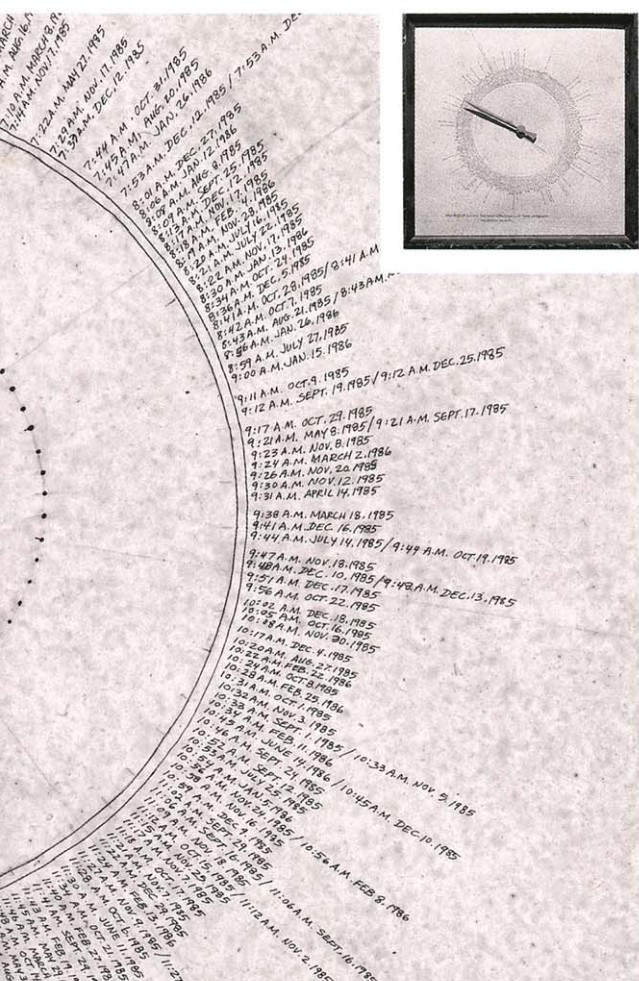
**Camera Desiros.** 1987. Bird feathers, enamel on brass framework, mosquito netting, 3-3/4" x 5-1/2" x 4-1/4". Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc.







## PILGRIMAGE TO THE WEDGE



**New Kind of Clock (Time Based on the Frequency of Taking Photographs).** 1986. Acrylic and ink on paper recording the times and dates of the 274 photos taken in an attempt to capture a clear shot of the San Gabriel Mountains unobscured by smog, clock, marbled wood. 17" x 17" x 3". Collection of the Department of Art History and the Visual Arts, Occidental College, Los Angeles.

I wanted to see how close I'd have to be to get a clear photo of the Wedge. As it turned out, I had to be at the foot of the mountain. I walked as the crow flies, sixteen and a half miles in a direct northeasterly route. And so, if I had to cut through yards and houses, I sometimes knocked on the door to ask permission. I climbed barb wire fences, fell down dusty cliffs, under freeways, and past dogs barking and grabbing my pants. Kids followed after me as if I were the Piper, and in other neighborhoods they told me I wasn't safe walking alone. I saw a couple having sex reflected in a mirror and a friend's painting hanging on a wall. By the time I was finished, I had walked for



ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map

**The north(easterly) route of Abeles' pilgrimage from downtown Los Angeles to the San Gabriel Mountains.**

about ten hours. I wasn't in good shape. I didn't do this after an athletic fitness program, plus I was a chain smoker at the time. By the time I got to the mountain, I looked like I'd been trashed. My glasses were broken, my hair was full of brambles and thistles. I had been bitten by red ants at one point when I sat on an ant hill. I was literally a mess, pants torn and dirty, cuts and blood everywhere. I never took a photo of myself in that condition. That wasn't the point, though the tale is worth telling.

**THE MOUNTAIN WEDGE WAS NOT CLEARLY VISIBLE UNTIL I STOOD AT ITS BASE.**



**PRESIDENTS, UNITED STATES.** See SMOG COLLECTOR (*Presidential Commemorative Smog Plates*).

**PUBLIC PROJECTS AND COLLABORATIONS.** See also COLLECTIVE DIARY: DEDICATED TO PEOPLE WITH AIDS (*HIV/AIDS Tarot*); SMOG COLLECTOR (*On Site Smog Collector Sculpture Project*).

### Public Commissions

**Secretary of State/State Archives Building—The Constitution Wall.** In 1990, artist team members Abeles, Paul Kos, Mike Mandel, Lisa Scheer, and Larry Sultan were selected through the California Arts Council to collaborate with the architecture firm Esherick, Homsey, Dodge and Davis (San Francisco) to create design enhancements for the new Secretary of State/State Archive Building in Sacramento, CA. Art plan consultants Suzanne Hellmuth and Jock Reynolds laid the preparatory groundwork for the art team's involvement with the institutions.

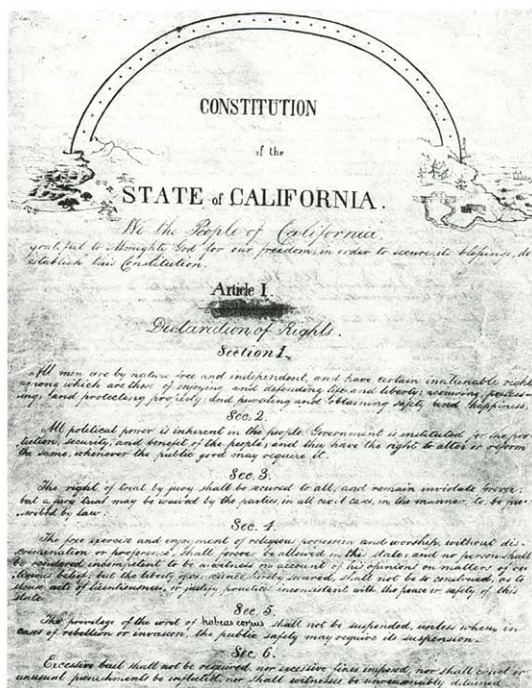
The team chose to work with text from the California Constitution, specifically the first four sections addressing individual rights. This text is appropriate because of the broad relevance of its meaning and because it is significant to both the State Archives and the Offices of the Secretary of State as a political and historical document. Particular words and phrases were selected and, while the body of the text was removed, the selected words remain in their original position and relationship to each other. This selected text will be located on the six-story Archives stack wall scaled to extend over its entire height and length.

The lettering will be done in such a way to create an integrated effect with the mass of the wall. This will give the appearance that, rather than being attached later to the wall surface, the text will be perceived as part of the mass of the Archives itself.

## PUBLIC PROJECTS AND COLLABORATIONS

The multivalent quality of meanings of these phrases would result from the changing visibility of certain areas due to light source shifts and viewer location. The complete texts of these Constitutional sections will be located throughout the courtyard and at other vantage points.

**MIKE MANDEL and LARRY SULTAN**, artist team members for *The Constitution Wall*, Secretary of State/State Archives Building, Sacramento, CA.



First page of the California Constitution, Declaration of Rights. Adopted by the people on May 7, 1879.

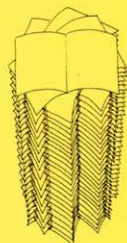
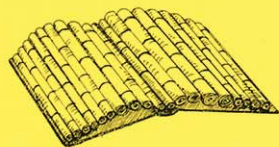
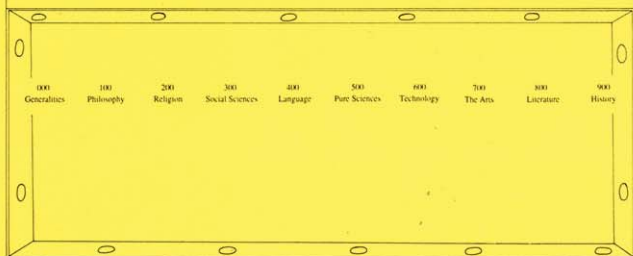


Artist team members Abeles, Paul Kos, Mike Mandel, Lisa Scheer, and Larry Sultan. Preliminary study for *The Constitution Wall* developed for the Secretary of State/State Archives Building, Sacramento. Development funding was provided through the California Arts Council.



# KNOWLEDGE

REASON IMAGINATION MEMORY



**Preliminary drawings for Books Based on the Divisions of the Dewey Decimal System**, to be placed in the Panorama City Library. The mixed media books will be housed in the *Entry Wall of Knowledge* with the ten categories etched in glass on both sides of the case. The words "Reason, Imagination, and Memory" and "Knowledge" are incised in cast concrete, with the latter cutting entirely through the wall surface to the opposite side. This project is funded by the Los Angeles Library Department and administered by the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department.

**Panorama City Library.** Abeles was selected through the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department as artist on the design team for the Panorama City Library designed by architect Bing Yeh and the firm Reibsam, Nickels & Rex Architects. Abeles' contribution is based on the function of the Dewey Decimal System's organization of library books. Working closely with Yeh's concept for the building itself, Abeles' integrated artworks were inspired by the ten divisions of the system in addition to the original three divisions of Knowledge: Reason, Imagination, and Memory.

The primary artworks for the library will include the *Entry Wall of Knowledge* (see illustration), and *Literary Lanterns* placed within the center columns of the main reading area. The *Lantern* doors will be created from laser-cut metal with illuminated images and text depicting international writers selected by the community.

**Artwork by World News artists** (left to right) Joyce Dallal, Stephanie Sydney, and Nancy Buchanan was exhibited at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center, Fullerton, CA. Buchanan's interactive computer art in hypercard enabled the viewer to move into levels of information and images pertaining to the Gulf War and the politics and realities behind it. The exhibition included sixty-six artists and writers, with first venues beginning in February 1991 at the Onyx Cafe, Los Angeles, and Beyond Baroque, Venice, CA.

Michael Quinn, M.O. Photography

## Exhibitions

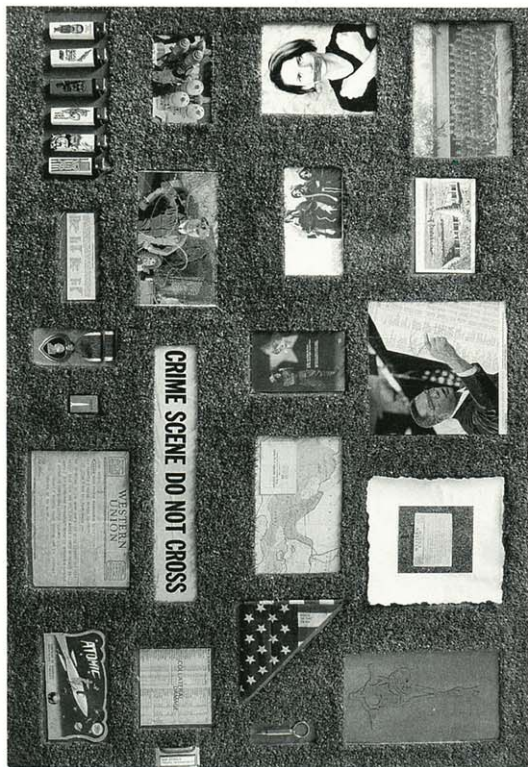
**World News: Artists Respond to International Events** was organized by Abeles, Barbara Benish, and Deborah F. Lawrence within weeks after the United States invasion of the Persian Gulf. The first venue for the exhibition, in February 1991 at the Onyx Cafe in Los Angeles, developed from a need to make private voices public amid a media fixation on yellow ribbons and patriotism. Adding to the original twenty artists and writers, other artists brought paintings rolled up under their arms or called by phone to get involved. Numerous viewpoints could be seen, encouraging the viewer to avoid generalized assumptions about art events.





Artists from a range of backgrounds participated in the exhibition: an anonymous Gulf War soldier, a Kurdish refugee who lives in Los Angeles, children of Inner-City Arts, and Vietnam veterans. Aesthetic approaches toward the subject ranged from figurative paintings by Suzanne Unrein and José Lozano to computer-generated art by Connie Samaras and Karen Atkinson. The extensive number of artists and writers participating in *World News* enabled an opportunity to present many of the numerous issues related to and emphasized by the advent of war.

*World News* had an extended venue at Beyond Baroque in Venice, CA where the organizers rotated



David Familian

**Detail of War Stories (Peace in Progress).** 1991-93. Altered folding table, soundtrack of telephone responses to the question: "What comes to your mind most when you think about the Gulf War?" asked of random people from the upper left- and right-hand corners of the Los Angeles telephone directory, mementos of war, excerpts from the Constitution, astroturf, fabric, 56" x 72" x 70.

the artwork on the walls several times in order to include the growing number of individuals. Readings by poets, such as Will Alexander and Charles Cameron, became a vehicle to enable discussion. By the time the exhibit traveled to the Muckenthaler Cultural Center in Fullerton, CA, sixty-six creative people participated. At this site, the first catalogue, which had been a low-budget, heart-in-hand effort, was supplemented by a publication funded by the Muckenthaler and

## PUBLIC PROJECTS AND COLLABORATIONS

created in a fifty-hour computer and fastfood marathon at Chaffey College by Randy Gavazzo and Abeles. The catalogue includes an essay by Paul Von Blum and a commentary on the history of the Gulf War by Zuhdi Sardar, along with artwork or writing by each participant. See also ABELES (Chronology: 1991).

### Suggested Reading:

Sardar, Zuhdi and Paul Von Blum, essayists. *World News—Artists Respond to World Events*. Exhibition Catalogue. Fullerton, CA: Muckenthaler Cultural Center, 1992.

**Smog: A Matter of Life and Breath.** Working with Senior Curator Edward W. Earle and the staff of the California Museum of Photography, University of California Riverside, Abeles was Guest Curator for the exhibition *Smog: A Matter of Life and Breath* in 1992. The exhibition brought together scientists from the Statewide Air Pollution Research Laboratory with artists to create works about smog. The multi-media exhibition included artworks by Abeles, Jerry Burchfield, Cheri Gaulke, Susan Joseph, Sant Subagh K. Khalsa, Victor Landweber, Michael Barton Miller, Sheila Pinkel, and Susan Silton, with exhibition design by Kevin John Boyle. The Solar Electric Company of Santa Rosa and the American Hydrogen Association in conjunction with the American Lung Association displayed alternative automobiles. Viewers offered their own information and comments on a bulletin board within the exhibition. On-site *Smog Collectors*, suspended in front of the



Michael Miller

**Dr. Brian Mudd**, Director of the Statewide Air Pollution Research Laboratory, during a television interview in conjunction with the exhibition *Smog: A Matter of Life and Breath* at the California Museum of Photography. Also seen is Michael Miller's odorous installation, *Vintage American Effluents*, including bottles of exhaust-infused gauze that viewers can "sample," and photographs of vintage automobiles named after Native American people, for example, Apache, Cherokee, and Comanche.



## PUBLIC PROJECTS AND COLLABORATIONS

a bulletin board within the exhibition. On-site *Smog Collectors*, suspended in front of the museum and collecting smog's particulate matter, encouraged pedestrians to visit the exhibition.

Director Dr. Brian Mudd of the Statewide Air Pollution Research Laboratory and his staff were involved with the interdisciplinary approach to the exhibit. At the exhibition, ozone detection equipment became kinetic sculpture measuring ozone levels and gathering experimental data for comparison of ozone levels inside and outside of the museum. On the Mezzanine balcony, UCR research scientists Patrick McCool and George Riechers conducted an active experiment showing the effects of polluted air on plant-life. Two greenhouse chambers created differing environments, one with the existing air, the other with clean, filtered air. See *SMOG*.



Jay Racz for The Press-Enterprise

**UCR research scientist Patrick McCool** standing among greenhouse chambers as recreated at the California Museum of Photography to show the effects of polluted air on plantlife.

Two greenhouse chambers created differing environments, one with the existing air, the other with clean, filtered air. See *SMOG*.

**RHODS, THOMAS.** Executive Director of the Santa Monica Museum of Art. See *DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD* (p. 7).

**RITUALS AND "PERFORMED" ART.** See *BOOKWORKS* (*Experiment for Myself as Other*); *KIMONOS* (*Ritual for Instinctual Return*); *SHRINES* (*She Said I Thought of You I Said*; *Experiment to Identify Change*; *The Great Periodic Migration*); *PILGRIMAGE TO THE WEDGE*; *OBSERVATORY/TERRITORY*.

**ROSEN, FLORENCE.** Artist. See *LONG EXPOSURES* (*AN ARTIST IN HER LATER YEARS*).

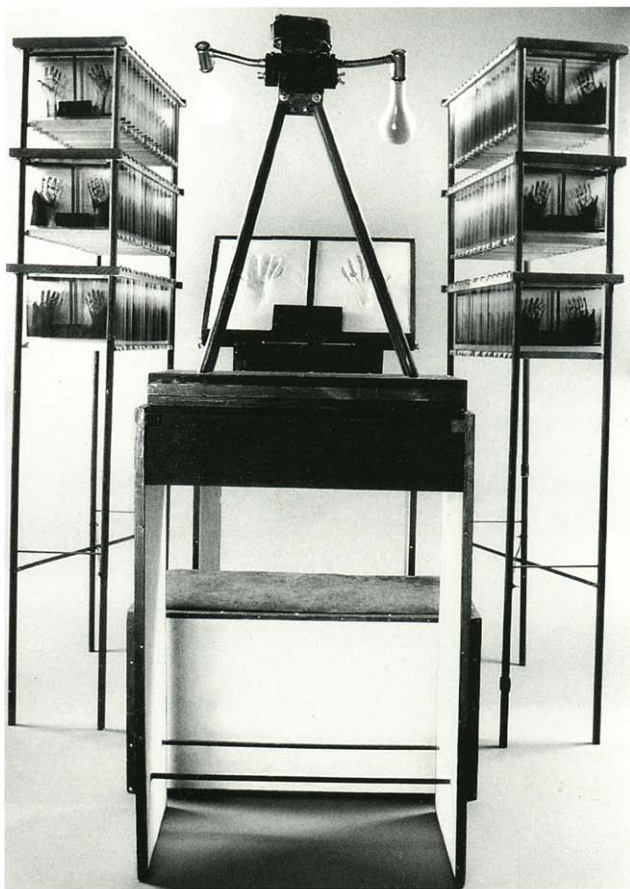
**ROSENBERG, ETHEL AND JULIUS.** American couple who were executed by the U.S. government during McCarthyism's scapegoating and blacklisting in the 1950s. See *BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS* (*OTHER* [*In Memory of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg*]).

**SANTA MONICA MUSEUM OF ART.** Incorporated in 1985 in Santa Monica, California. Organizers of the exhibition, *Kim Abeles: Encyclopedia Persona, A Fifteen-Year Survey*. The Santa Monica Museum of Art organizes and presents exhibitions of contemporary art to a regional and national audience. Committed to fostering appreciation for contemporary art and ideas, the Museum's program consists of exhibitions and installations, educational outreach pro-

grams, and ongoing lecture series. Since the inception of programming in 1988, the work of 400 artists has been shown. The program, both multidisciplinary and international in scope, is presented in a landmark building on the site of the Edgemar complex.

**SHRINES (1982-83).** Aspects of human behavior which I observe or investigate are developed in a series of shrines as a unification of painting and sculpture in which surrounding structures become an integral part of the personification or describe its spirit. In its most literal sense, these are structures I build to physically enter and use for a period of time. Thus the contraption and accumulated experience become the sculpture.

Much of my sculpture is developed through reading, both fiction and non-fiction; I view my work as an opportunity to investigate ideas outside of art, translating facts and heresay into a visual dialogue. I deal with the principles and implications of daily work and life, especially repetitive tasks: rituals that are self-created or inherited through culture and the



David Familian

**Experiment to Identify Change.** 1983. Camera, plaster mold of hands, photographic transparencies, wood, metal, stucco, canvas, 73" x 63" x 52". Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc.





The original photographs taken for *Experiment to Identify Change* lined the jail cell floor for an installation at Social and Public Arts Resource Center (SPARC) in 1985.

relationship of the individual to the social mechanism. These are principles incorporated in the processes of the media that I select as well as the issues with which I am concerned.

My work and creative processes are an accumulation of visual layering and details which unravel through inspection and reweven by the further stories of viewers. This time element which I strive to create is the "continuous present," as Gertrude Stein called it.

**Experiment to Identify Change** is a sculptural photo-contraption created to compare changes in palm-lines of the hands during a five-month span. See BARNES, LUCINDA; BOOKWORKS (*Experiment to Identify Change*).

**Smoke Box** responds to the extensive razing of historical architecture in urban areas throughout the U.S. The common practice of replacing heritage with pre-fab buildings and shopping malls severs our nec-

essary connections with the past. This memory loss is similar to the destruction and censorship of books and other artforms or the current collapse of educational institutions.

*Smoke Box* contains photographic transfers on fabric of the goddess-faced, marble sphinxes located at the top of the stairs of the Los Angeles Central Library, guarding the books that filled its mahogany shelves. The extraordinary downtown library, which first opened to the public in 1926, served as the primary home for my research. Architect Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue's philosophical understanding of art integrated with architecture inspired a building of great pleasure and beauty. It was a place of natural linkage for past and present because of its historical murals, classical sculpture, elegant fixtures, the grand-



One of sculptor Lee Lawrie's goddess-faced sphinxes located at the Los Angeles Central Library. Her book is inscribed with Plutarch's quotation in greek stating, "I am all that was, and is, and is to be, and no man hath lifted my veil."

ness of its architecture, and the extensive contents which it housed. *Smoke Box* (1983), with its images of a building's demolition created with smoke on the glass surfaces, its pile of ashes, and its succinct quotation by Milan Kundera referencing disconnections with the past, ultimately became a morose omen of the arson fire that destroyed and maimed much of the Central Library in 1987. The Los Angeles Central Library is scheduled to reopen in the Fall of 1993 after extensive reconstruction and both architectural and artistic development.



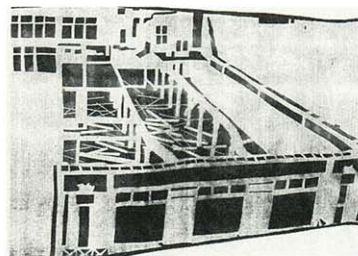


Daniel Martinez

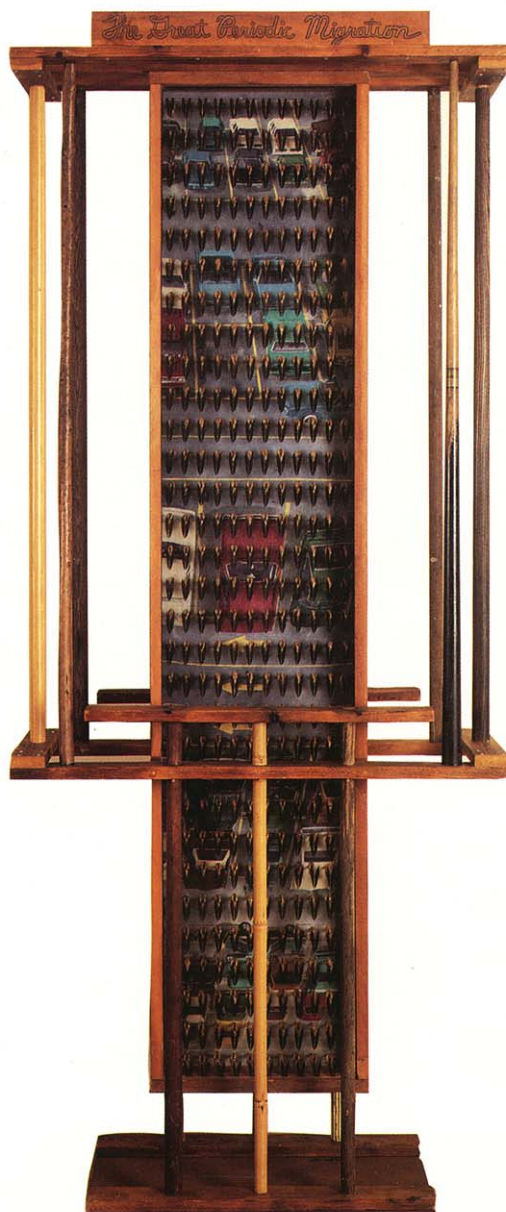
**Smoke Box.** 1983. Smoke drawings on plexiglass, ashes, photo transfers of Los Angeles Library on fabric, photographic transparencies of newspaper articles showing buildings to be torn down, Milan Kundera quote from *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, wood, metal, 74" x 30" x 15". Collection of Greg and Kristen Escalante, Naples, CA.

*"Time in Kafka's novel is the time of a humanity that has lost all continuity with humanity, of a humanity that no longer knows anything nor remembers anything, that lives in nameless cities with nameless streets or streets with names different from the ones they had yesterday, because a name means continuity with the past and people without a past are people without a name."*

—Milan Kundera. *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980.



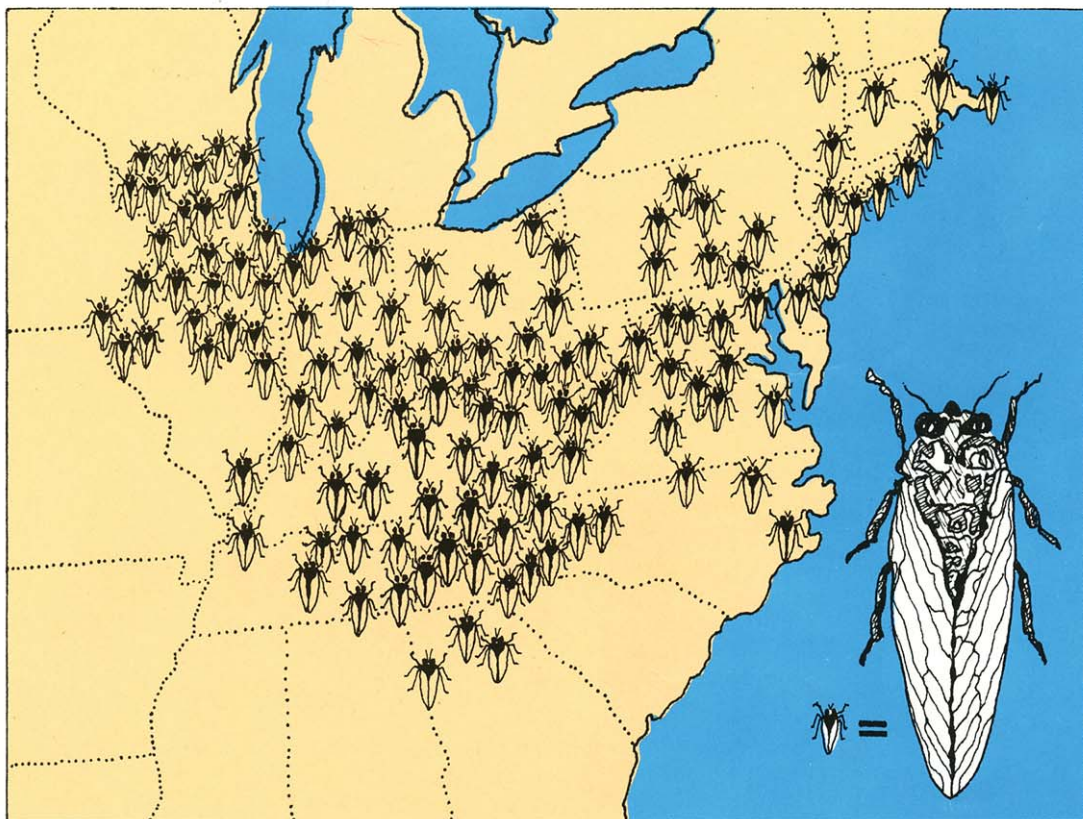
One of the stencils used to create the smoke images on plexiglass for Smoke Box.



David Familian

**The Great Periodic Migration.** 1983. Cicadas, smoke "wings" on plexiglass, acrylic on canvas, wood, 72" x 30" x 11". Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Steve Simons, Santa Monica, CA.





ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map

Map showing locations of broods of cicadas that emerge every 13 or 17 years in the Midwest.



David Familian

**Detail of *The Great Periodic Migration*.** The "wings" for the cicada shells that hover above the painting are made of smoke stencilled onto plexiglass.

**The Great Periodic Migration.** In 1982, a brood of the 17-year cicada emerged from the roots of trees, showering in multitudes upon the Midwest.

Cicadas come forth every 13 or 17 years, and when they are ready to appear, they do so with gusto. They are not locusts, but fly in similar masses. Yet amid the visual chaos, the cicadas sing in absolute unison. Like Houdini's box, something appears from nothing.

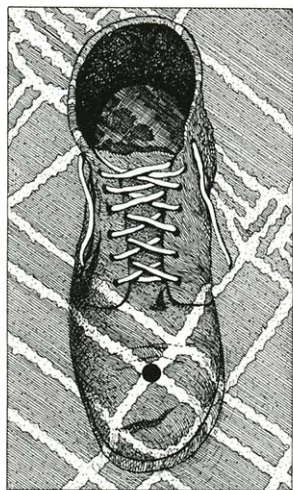
Los Angeles is like that emergence, that great migration from the root. At 2 A.M., the only sound in the city is that of the street cleaner's massive brushes. As steadily as the light, the sound mounts: by 9 A.M. no one could think it has been any other way. The parking lot rests vacantly. In a whoosh, the tiny cars below pile into position.

**Imperial Shoeshine.** For three years I have passed by the shoeshine stand between Second and Broadway, a portable structure housing the business of two men. It is the one man who particularly intrigues me, because the other one wouldn't acknowledge me, and he only spoke with me when I asked them to save the



## SHRINES

empty, shoe wax tins for a sculpture about their stand. The first man thought that the tins would look real nice, yea, that'll look real nice. And it was the other man, the quiet one, who ultimately saved the cans for me. I've heard wonderful and uncensored stories there, and I've grown so attached to the site that on a



ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map

**Location of the shoeshine stand** (razed in 1986) at Second and Broadway in downtown Los Angeles.

"bad" day I avoid it by walking through a back lot. When they are busy with a customer, we have an understood pact to ignore each other. The customer sits on the throne, usually with a newspaper. Once I heard a woman insist that, rather than leaving her spare shoes, she wanted to sit up there. She seemed proud and delighted. On one occasion, I spoke very closely to the first man so that I could peek into the interior. The pin-ups glowed toward me from the inner walls. As I selected the photographs of women for the sculpture, I scrutinized them with care. They covered the studio and I was seduced, but primarily I was the Madam. They were "my girls" and I chose them as the best. The man who plated the shoes said that shoeshine stands used to be on the seedy sides of town, and now, farther down on Broadway, women with large bosoms are shining shoes with great success. My stepfather used to shine his shoes every day, opening a mysterious box containing brushes made of hair. The best shine is a bronze shine (the shoe-shine man agreed); baby shoes, jogging shoes, cowboy boots, high heels, or wing-tips bronzed as trophies and capturing spans of time.

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**Imperial Shoeshine.** 1982. Bronze-plated wingtips, brushes, shoe wax tins, "girlie" magazine photo transfers, wood, metal, acrylic, enamel, canvas, plexiglass, chiffon, 73" x 52" x 34". Collection of Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA; Gift of Art Resources Transfer, Inc.

Chris Bliss

**She Said I Found This Sparrow and Thought of You I Said.** On Sunday, Doni called to tell me that she found a dead sparrow in her backyard. She thought of me. She said she would leave it on the outside shelf by the front door so I could pick it up later.

I waited until the next day, and for a week I drove around with the dead bird on the backseat of the car. A fisherman in England once told me how to raise maggots for bait, so I knew that by Nature, my days were numbered. If a sparrow must die, it is a lucky find. But to preserve the sparrow is another matter.

I called two taxidermists. The first said that he didn't have anyone working for him who could stuff something so small—the smallest he could stuff was a quail—and he was a busy man—he didn't have time for all these questions. The second taxidermist said that singing birds are protected. You need a special license to preserve such birds. Who knows how a sparrow was REALLY killed, after all? As an alternative, he suggested rubbing alcohol or formaldehyde. You can look at it through the glass jar, he said.

I gingerly picked up the sparrow and returned it to







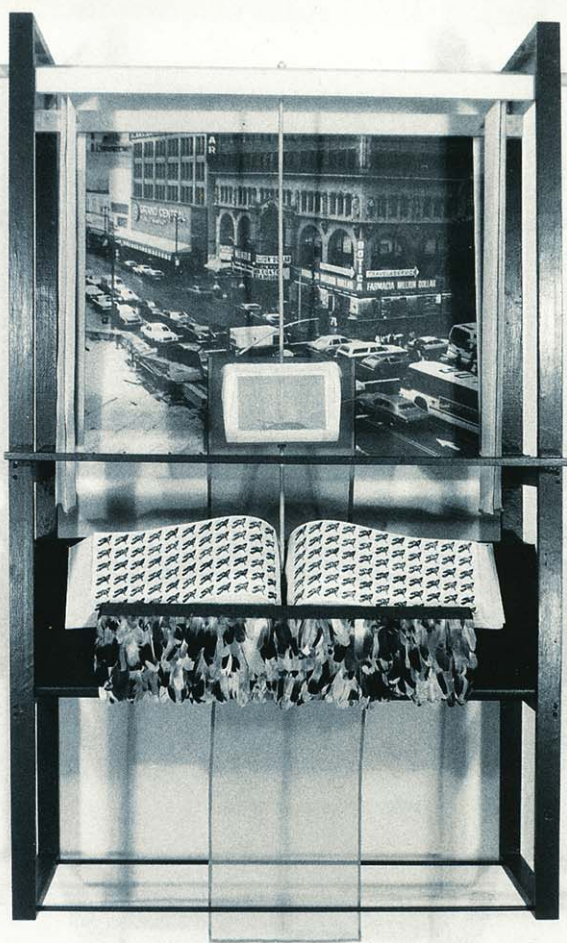
**The sparrow drying** in its chamber overlooking Broadway in downtown Los Angeles.

the tabletop. I thought to cremate the bird in a solemn ritual, but I imagined it roasting on the hibachi, wrapped in foil, looking like a small baked chicken and finally cleaning off the bones. I thought to simply bury the bird and forget this use of life (in death) for the sake of art and experience. I would have liked to merely save the bird as it was.

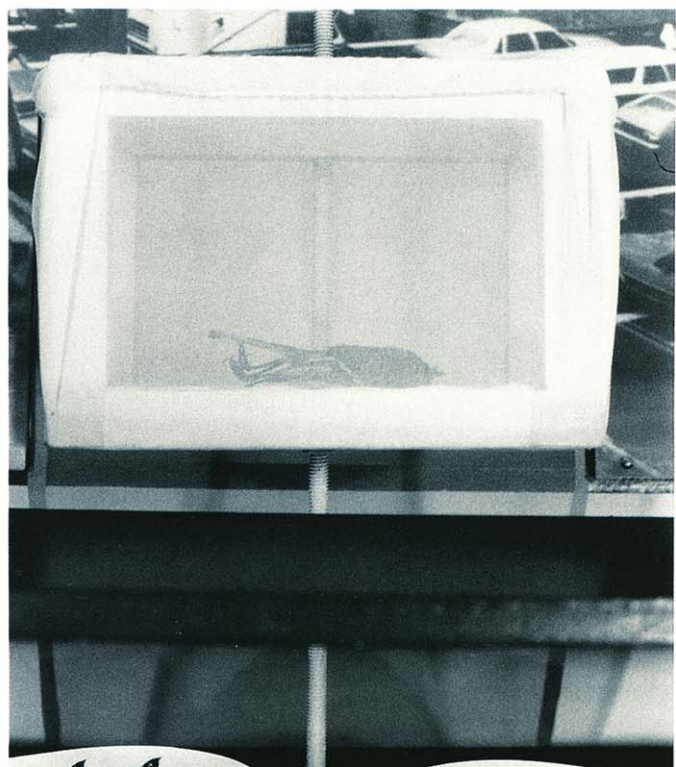
I built a small framework out of wood which was slightly larger than the bird. At the center, I stretched a sheer piece of fabric like a taut hammock. The framework was surrounded by more fabric causing it to look like a ceremonial bed. I placed the sparrow inside, resting upon the hammock. The sheer box extended out of the studio window as the city sprawled immensely below. From the street corner below, you could look up and see it as a small, magical box. There is sorrow in that box, and Nature will take its task.

And through this span of time, I considered the significance of the sparrow. I thought about its meaning. Upon looking out the window, it became apparent that the sparrow was so much like ourselves; the significance and simultaneous insignificance of each of us, the importance of the part and the importance of the whole. Even the perspective from my studio to the streets below caused the people to become the size of the sparrow and this created an odd comparison. One day I went to the library to look in Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*; under "sparrow" was a long list of quotations which I wrote down. The ancient Greeks spoke of the "fall of the sparrow," and I believe that the metaphor I felt was also reflected in the many passages I read.

**Detail of *She Said I Found This Sparrow and Thought of You I Said*.**



***She Said I Found This Sparrow and Thought of You I Said*.** 1982. Dried sparrow, book of repeated bird image, photograph, feathers, wood, metal, fabric, 56" x 34" x 18". Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc.





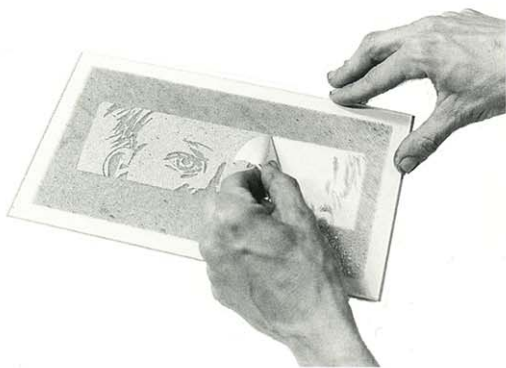
## SMOG

**SMOG.** See PILGRIMAGE TO THE WEDGE; THE SMOG COLLECTOR; PUBLIC PROJECTS AND COLLABORATIONS (Exhibitions [*Smog: A Matter of Life and Breath*]); ABELES (Chronology: *Sixty Days of Los Angeles Sky Patch [View to the East]*, p. 22). See also SHRINES (*The Great Periodic Migration*).

**SMOG COLLECTOR, THE.** The London Globe printed a new word, "Smog," coined in a speech at the 1905 Public Health Congress. They considered it a public service to describe this phenomenon. Eighty-eight years later we possess, yet avoid using, the technology to correct 95% of the pollution legacy.

The *Smog Collectors* materialize the reality of the air we breathe. They achieve their potency most effectively when the image contradicts their substance. Thus, my process is a private retaliation brought to public attention.

I place stencil images on transparent or opaque materials, then leave these on the roof of my studio and let the particulate matter in the heavy air fall upon them. When the stencil is removed, the images reveal themselves. To quote a stranger, they are "footprints of the sky". Since the worst in our air can't be seen, *Smog Collectors* are both literal and metaphoric depictions of the current conditions of our life source. They are reminders of our industrial decisions: the road we took that seemed so modern. See also SMOG.



**Smog Collectors** are created by cutting stencil images on transparent or opaque materials, then exposing them to the particulate matter (smog) in the polluted environment for time periods ranging from four to sixty days. When the stencils are removed, the images made of smog are revealed. Abeles created the first *Smog Collector* in 1987, though she did not develop the series until 1990.



Ben Blackwell

**Forty Days and Forty Nights of Smog (Forty Days of Smog).** 1991. Particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass, auto mufflers, detritus, chiffon, wood, 31-1/2" x 30" x 56". Installation view at the California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, CA.





## Smog Facts

Cars and other combustion vehicles cause about 70% of today's air pollution.

Industrial, residential, and mobile sources pour tons of pollutants into the atmosphere each day. These include oxides of nitrogen and sulfur, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, and reactive organic gases.

Since the Smog Check Program began in 1984, it has reduced harmful auto emissions by more than 18% and is continuing to work toward a 25% emissions reduction goal.

A well-tuned and properly operated car engine can reduce smoke and soot by 20 to 40%.

Public transportation and ridesharing can help limit both smog and freeway "headaches".

## Environmental Tips for Your Car

Maintain your car's emission-control equipment. This includes keeping your air filters clean and cooperating with the State's Smog Check Program.

Drive lightly (extra weight reduces fuel economy).

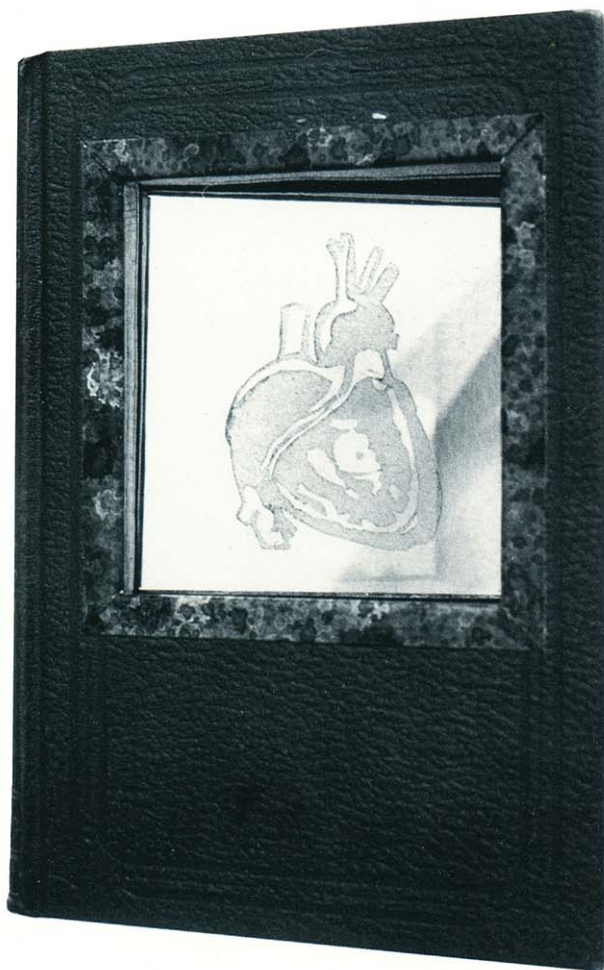
Avoid full throttle driving and abrupt acceleration.

Don't let your car idle for more than two minutes (it takes less gas to restart your car).

Never top off your tank! Don't force additional amounts of gas into your tank when filling up, as this can cause gas spillage. Gasoline itself is another source of smog, containing pollutants like benzene.

Watch your mileage. If there's a sudden drop in mileage, that's a red flag to get your car checked!

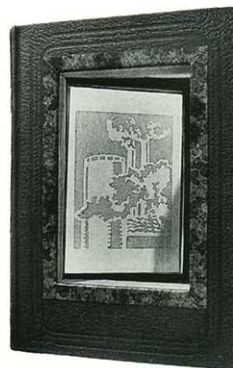
Minimize air conditioner use, which can lower gas efficiency by as much as 3 miles per gallon in the city.



**The Wonder Books (Forty Days of Smog), "Great Engineers and Engineering".** 1991. Particulate matter (smog) on altered book, 9" x 1" x 6-1/2". Collection of Stuart and Niraj Katz, Laguna Beach, CA.



**The Wonder Books (Forty Days of Smog), "The Outline of Modern History".** 1991. Particulate matter (smog) on altered book, 9" x 1" x 6-1/2". Collection of Kristen Paulson, San Francisco, CA.



**The Wonder Books (Forty Days of Smog), "Great Achievements in Industry".** 1991. Particulate matter (smog) on altered book, 9" x 1" x 6-1/2". Collection of Greg and Kristen Escalante, Naples, CA.



## THE SMOG COLLECTOR

Use radial tires and keep your tires inflated to the top of the pressure range stamped on the tire for maximum fuel efficiency. (Radial tires can improve gas mileage from 3 to 7% over conventional bias-ply tires).

Recycle your car's oil. Have your oil changed at a service station that recycles used motor oil or recycle it yourself by taking it to a recycling center.

Look for leaks. Each day check your driveway for spots; any drippings are a visual red flag.

Don't burn oil. If your car is burning oil, it will emit a blue or white/blue color from the tail pipe.

SMOG FACTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL TIPS FOR YOUR CAR are reprinted courtesy California Bureau of Automotive Repair, Department of Consumer Affairs.

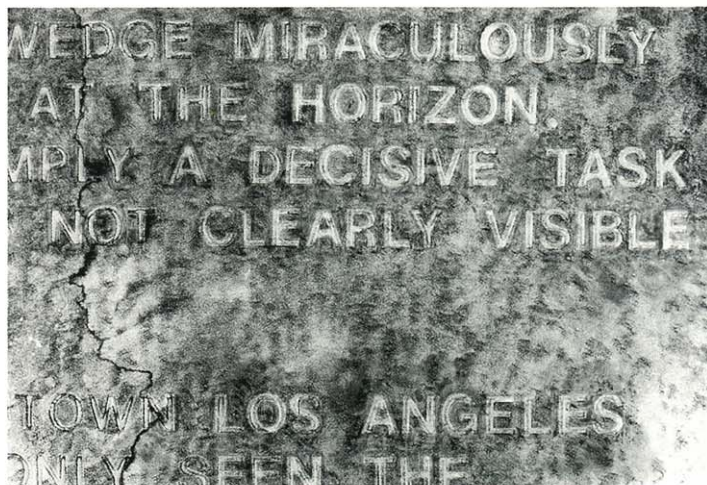
### Suggested Reading:

Palmer, Tim, Ed. *California's Threatened Environment: Restoring the Dream*. Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1993.

TreePeople with Andy and Katie Lipkis. *The Simple Act of Planting a Tree - A Citizen Forester's Guide to Healing Your Neighborhood, Your City, and Your World*. Los Angeles: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1990.



**Zoë's Highchair (Forty Days of Smog).** 1991. Particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass, acrylic on altered chair, 45" x 15" x 19".



### Detail of *Pilgrimage to the Wedge (One Month of Smog)*.

1990. Particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass, text describing Abeles' 16-1/2 mile journey from downtown Los Angeles to the San Gabriel Mountains on the day of a first-stage smog alert, 75" x 48" x 2". Collection of Lisa Coscino Nickerson and Scott Nickerson, Woodland Hills, CA.



### **Smog Clock (Thirty Days of Smog).**

1992. Particulate matter (smog) on glass face of clock, currency, acrylic, 10" diameter. David Familian

The following toll-free telephone numbers for the Los Angeles area can supply you with details about environmental problems and solutions. For similar information in other areas, contact your Air Pollution Control District office under Government Pages in your telephone directory.

If you see a smoking vehicle or need to make a complaint about factory emissions, call: **1-800-CUT-SMOG**

Smog Check Information:

**1-800-952-5210**

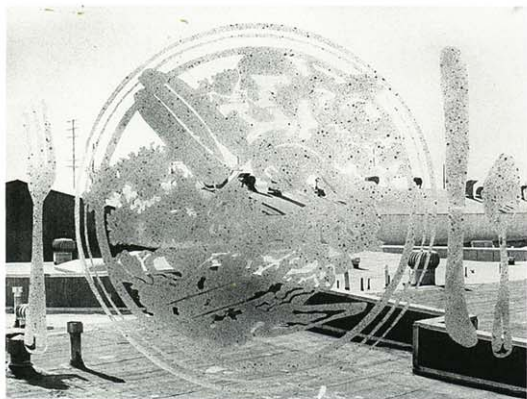
Public Transportation:

**1-800-252-7433**

Carpool & Vanpool:

**213-380-RIDE**





**Forty Days and Forty Nights (Forty Days of Smog).** 1991. Particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass with black and white photograph of factory located behind artist's studio, 17" x 21". Collection of Robert Zingg, Huntington Beach, CA.

### Presidential Commemorative Smog Plates

are portraits of U.S. Presidents from McKinley to Bush created from particulate matter in the polluted air. The dinnerplates, covered with stencils, were placed on a rooftop for varying lengths of time depending on the extent of a President's violation or apathy toward the distressed environment. Upon removal of the stencil, the Presidents' visages in smog are revealed, accompanied by their historical quotes about the environment and business.

McKinley became the appropriate starting point because his presidency occurred when two automotive factories were running full production in Detroit, thus marking a lifestyle and transportation mode which currently causes 70% of our air pollution. Also appropriate for the format of commemorative plates, McKinley was the first president to be packaged and sold to the American public.

Apathy and ignorance mark Reagan, Bush, and

Taft as the darkest smog collections. Ronald Reagan was notorious for his erroneous comments about the environment and apparently couldn't decide if problems existed. George Bush viewed himself as "The Environmental President," yet held a contradictory record of effort and global cooperation. William Taft vowed to follow in the relatively pro-environmental footsteps of Theodore Roosevelt, but nestled in the hands of big business shortly after his election. Herbert Hoover's campaign promised "A chicken in every pot and a car in every garage." (Thanks a lot).

The United States has never had a President combining strength with the insight to lead an energetic movement to restore our natural resources. James Carter and both of the Roosevelts, however, made efforts toward a better environment. Consequently,

though portrayed in smog, they appear with the palest pollution. The remaining

Presidents in the series range in a relative scale of gray particulate.

Their golden quotes reveal their attitudes toward competitive business and their blinders hiding the realities of the skies. Dwight Eisenhower reflects the 50s enthusiasm for industrial progress, that era when factory emissions were idealized as pink puffy cumulous clouds from smokestacks. Conversely,

Woodrow Wilson's 1913 Inaugural Address haunts as a dark sermon warning of our industrial path and its effects. In January 1970, Richard

Nixon's dramatic speech about restoring the environment was designed as a distraction from unrest on college campuses. Lyndon Johnson's attitude, indicative of many of our leaders, heralds "baring the secrets of nature," but fails to grip the meaning of his gesture that "the next [wo]man to stand here will look out on a scene that is different from our own."



**Selections from Presidential Commemorative Smog Plates.** 1992. 17 portraits of United States Presidents from McKinley to Bush made of particulate matter (smog) on porcelain plates with environment and business quotes in gold enamel, 10-1/4" diameter each.



## THE SMOG COLLECTOR



**Detail of Smog Collector Sculpture (Sixty Days of Smog)** gathering smog at California State University, Fullerton.



**Smog Collectors Sculpture (Sixty Days of Smog), 1991-92.** Welded vehicle exhaust systems, bilingual text, images made of particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass gathered at California State University, Fullerton. Funded by the California Bureau of Automotive Repair, Department of Consumer Affairs.



**Informative "table"** accompanying each Smog Collector Sculpture (Sixty Days of Smog) while it was on-site gathering smog, and during the extensive tour of the completed works to businesses and organizations throughout southern California.

**On-site Smog Collector Sculpture Project.** In 1991, the California Bureau of Automotive Repair, Department of Consumer Affairs sponsored on-site *Smog Collector Sculptures* by Abeles as a unique campaign to inform citizens about the Smog Check Program and facts about smog. Midway through the project, February 1992, the media's support for the campaign was said to be unprecedented, reaching 30 million people and a total dollar equivalent media value of close to \$3 million. The completed sculptures toured to forty corporations and agencies during 1992, primarily to encourage participation in rideshare programs and use of mass transit. In 1992, Abeles received a Clean Air Award from the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD) for this project.

The *Smog Collector Sculptures* were created from recycled automobile mufflers and catalytic converters, each holding a cut stencil image on plexiglass. Placed in the environment, visitors to the sites saw the accumulation of particulate matter deposited by the polluted air onto the stencils. For each sculpture, Abeles created an accompanying informative "table" using visuals and text in English and Spanish to describe solutions for cleaner air. The table displays were an effort to empower the audience with facts and phone numbers for further information. After eight weeks, the stencils were removed from each sculpture, revealing the images made of smog: lungs, heart, cityscape, artery system, tree, automobile engine, and a wheel of walking legs.

Polls show that 70% of the public thinks that air pollution is a serious problem, yet few are willing to make a change in their lifestyles. Public education





ENCYCLOPEDIA PERSONA map

**Sites for the Smog Collectors Sculptures (Sixty Days of Smog).** Particulate matter (smog) was gathered on stenciled images at the following seven locations in Southern California:

1. California Museum of Science and Industry, Los Angeles.
2. Olvera Street, Los Angeles.
3. California Museum of Photography, Riverside.
4. California State University, Fullerton.
5. Norman Feldeheim Library, San Bernardino.
6. Cabrillo Marine Museum, San Pedro.
7. Los Angeles Arboretum, Arcadia.

The educational project was funded by the California Bureau of Automotive Repair, Department of Consumer Affairs. Completed sculptures then toured to forty businesses and organizations as part of the overall outreach program of the California Bureau of Automotive Repair.

experts have pondered ways to motivate people to take action on an individual basis to reduce air pollution. Brochures, newspaper ads, radio and TV commercials (in competition against the billions of dollars spent on consumption oriented advertising) have been tried but rarely rouse people to action. Kim Abeles' *smog art* is an extraordinary form of community education. By being so simple, yet carrying a strong message, it cuts over ethnic, education, and monetary divides. This useful mix of environment and art gives public education practitioners a benchmark to work from in the effort to get the public to do more to fight smog. Only by spurring people to action can we hope to clean up the air and stop the catastrophe of global warming.

**PAUL VAN DYKE, PS ENTERPRISES**, an environmental public relations firm that assisted in the promotion of the educational project *Smog Collector Sculptures*.

**SOUBIROUS, ST. BERNADETTE.** Visionary. See IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE.

**SYSTEMS, REORDERED.** See OBSERVATORY/TERRITORY (*Logical Landscape; New Kind of Clock*); FACT FICTION BOXES (*A Deduction*).

**TIME. Clocks.** See KIMONOS (*Sweatshop Down the Hall and Sometimes It's Me*); OBSERVATORY/TERRITORY (*New Kind of Clock; Sumoon, Moosun, New Moon, No Moon*); LONG EXPOSURES (*AN ARTIST IN HER LATER YEARS*); SMOG COLLECTOR (*Smog Clock [Thirty Days of Smog]*).

**Charting time.** See KIMONOS (*Index for the Pluperfect; Letters from Kōsai*); OBSERVATORY/TERRITORY; SHRINES (*Experiment to Identify Change*).

**WOMEN.** See all.

**ZOË.** Wise and lovely daughter. See ABELES (*Chronology: 1988*).



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## LENDERS TO THE EXHIBITION

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Art Bank Collection  
City of Santa Monica  
Santa Monica, CA

Art Resources Transfer, Inc.  
Los Angeles

Sue E. Berryman  
Alexandria, VA

California Afro-American Museum  
Los Angeles

Jeri Coates  
Los Angeles

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Department of Art History and the Visual Arts  
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Andrew and Janet Schwartz  
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Santa Monica, CA

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La Jolla, CA

Anuska and Adrian Smith  
San Diego, CA

Judy and Stuart Spence  
South Pasadena, CA

Jack and Bonnie Wilke  
Los Angeles

Judy and Marvin Zeidler  
Los Angeles

Robert Zingg  
Huntington Beach, CA

Private Collection  
Collection of the Artist



## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

### KIMONOS, 1979-82

#### Letters from Kōsai, 1979

10 years of correspondence from Kōsai Kobari, sheer fabric, abalone buttons

54" x 48"

Collection of Edith L. Rickey (Mrs. George Rickey), East Chatham, NY

#### Slide . . . Gather, 1981

Recycled clothing, satin/linen fabric, metal pipe

32' x 10' Garments: 52" x 31"

Collection of the artist

#### Sweatshop Down the Hall and

#### Sometimes It's Me, 1981

Metal time clock encrusted with lint, felt, wood, fabric, leather

56" x 40-1/2" x 5"

Collection of the artist

#### Princess and the Pea, 1981

Wedding ring, acrylic on canvas, wood, chiffon, metal toothpicks

52-1/2" x 38"

Collection of Palm Springs Desert Museum, Palm Springs, CA

#### Ritual for Instinctual Return, 1981

Dried pigeon feet, racing pigeon identification bands, acrylic on canvas, chiffon, silver thread, metal, wood

60" x 48" x 6"

Collection of Sue E. Berryman, Alexandria, VA

#### Index for the Pluperfect, 1981

Photographs of nonfunctional objects, wood, metal

72" x 63" x 24-1/2"

Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc., Los Angeles

### SHRINES, 1982-83

#### Imperial Shoeshine, 1982

Bronze-plated wing tips, brushes, shoe wax tins, "girlie" magazine photo transfers, wood, metal, acrylic, enamel, canvas, plexiglass, chiffon

73" x 52" x 34"

Collection of Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA; Gift of Art Resources Transfer, Inc., Los Angeles

#### She Said I Found This Sparrow and Thought

#### of You I Said, 1982

Dried sparrow, book of repeated bird image, photograph, feathers, wood, metal, fabric

56" x 34" x 18"

Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc., Los Angeles

#### Experiment to Identify Change, 1983

Camera, plaster mold of hands, photographic transparencies, wood, metal, stucco, canvas

73" x 63" x 52"

Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc., Los Angeles

#### The Great Periodic Migration, 1983

Cicadas, smoke "wings", on plexiglass, acrylic on canvas, wood

72" x 30" x 11"

Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Simons, Santa Monica, CA

#### Smoke Box, 1983

Smoke drawings on plexiglass, ashes, photo transfers of Los Angeles Library on fabric, photographic transparencies of newspaper articles showing buildings to be torn down, Milan Kundera quote from *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, wood, metal

74" x 30" x 15"

Collection of Greg and Kristen Escalante, Naples, CA

### FACT FICTION BOXES, 1983-86

#### A Problem with Maintenance, 1983

Ironing board cover, "temperature control" box made of photographs and metal, etched brass plaque with history of *Bayeux Tapestry*, metallic thread, wood, plexiglass

Dimensions of stand: 40" x 24" x 15"

Dimensions of display case: 74" x 24" x 17"

Collection of Judy and Stuart Spence, South Pasadena, CA

#### Leon Trotsky's Eyeglasses, 1984

Eyeglasses, map, wood, enamel, acrylic on canvas, etched brass plaque

2-1/4" x 11-1/2" x 12-1/4"

Collection of Andrew and Janet Schwartz, Los Angeles

#### A Deduction, 1984

IUD (Copper 7), altered map, wood, brass, acrylic, text

3" x 11-1/4" x 13"

Collection of the artist

#### National Treasure, 1984

Gears and crank, bee, wood, metal, enamel, text

15-1/4" x 11" x 8-3/4"

Collection of Jeri Coates, Los Angeles

#### The Find, 1984

Handmade paper, painted cord, wood, etched brass plaque

7-3/4" x 61-3/4" x 3-1/2"

Private collection

#### Stolen Remnant, 1984

Tea-stained cotton, thread, wood, etched brass plaque

2" x 4" x 7"

Collection of Bill and Priscilla Panzer, Los Angeles

#### Diorama, 1984

Dried mice, wheel with crank, wood with laminated map, acrylic on canvas, etched brass plaque

10-1/2" x 10-1/4" x 10-1/2"

Private collection



## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

### **First Fork, 1985**

Enamel on spoon, metal, wood, text  
3-1/2" x 6" x 13"  
Collection of Deborah Small, La Jolla, CA

### **The Stolen Meridians, 1986**

Magnifying glass, dirt, enamel, wood, text  
6-1/2" x 14-1/2" x 8-1/2"  
Collection of Judy and Stuart Spence,  
South Pasadena, CA

### **OBSERVATORY/TERRITORY, 1984-85**

#### **Observatory/Territory, 1984-85**

Acrylic on sheer fabric used for charting the path of  
moon and sun, oil paint on wood, metal  
86" x 29" x 29" (dome installation)  
Collection of the artist

#### **Diary, 1984**

Newspaper clippings of celestial schedules, fabric  
23" x 29"  
Collection of the artist

#### **Sumoon, Moosun, New Moon, No Moon, 1984**

Color photograph of moon or sun, clocks which  
periodically move in alignment, wood, enamel  
11" x 13" x 4-1/4"  
Collection of Judy and Stuart Spence,  
South Pasadena, CA

#### **Logical Landscape, 1984**

Color pencil on paper showing contour of landscape  
determined by difference between expected and actual  
times of arrival and setting of sun and moon, enamel  
on metal  
30-1/2" x 32"  
Collection of Jack and Bonnie Wilke, Los Angeles

#### **Illuminated Manuscript, 1984**

Ink, acrylic, and pencil on paper showing composite view  
charting path of moon and sun  
51" x 79" x 3"  
Collection of Judy and Stuart Spence,  
South Pasadena, CA

### **DEAD SEA SCROLLS, 1984-85**

#### **Boy, Herd, Hole, Threw, Sound, 1984**

Acrylic on fabric showing actual hole where Muhammad  
located the scrolls, oil paint on wood, metal, coins,  
painted toy goats and sheep, carved slingshot with coin,  
ceramic replicas of a Dead Sea Scroll jar, photo of  
Muhammad  
82" x 27" x 22"  
Collection of the artist

#### **Here It Is, 1984**

Plaster casts from a mold taken from a mountain surface,  
photograph of archaeologist pointing to Muhammad's  
cave, wood, modified ladders, enamels  
69" x 44" x 36"  
Collection of the artist

#### **Kando: Conjuror of the Dead Sea Scrolls, 1984**

International junk, photographs of excavated Dead Sea  
Scroll jar, glass, fabric, bicycle wheel, metal, wood,  
photograph of Kando and George, demonetized notes  
78" x 28" x 25"  
Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc., Los Angeles

#### **Kando Says (Near Miss/Close Call), 1985**

Shoes covered with photocopies of Dead Sea Scroll  
fragments, text  
13" x 4-1/2" x 10"  
Collection of Andrew and Janet Schwartz, Los Angeles

#### **Greed Turns to Glue, 1985**

Assembled photographs of artist's body and Kando's  
head, horses made of glue, copper bucket with photo-  
copies of Dead Sea Scroll fragments, glue, acrylic,  
copper, carved branches, wood with measuring  
delineations, soil, enamel on bicycle wheel  
82" x 24" x 24"  
Collection of Jeanne Meyers, Los Angeles

#### **Nature Gets the Last Laugh (Really), 1985**

Acrylic painting of Kando, shovel, glue, Dead Sea  
Scroll fragments  
53-1/2" x 8-1/2" x 6-1/2"  
Collection of the artist

#### **Historic Sites, Buildings, Etc., 1985**

Law book embedded with Dead Sea Scroll jar impression  
in soil, photograph of "the hole" that Kando dug for  
the Scrolls  
3" x 12-1/2" x 11"  
Collection of Lauren Richardson and James Doolin,  
Los Angeles

#### **Even Simple Deeds Heroic, 1985**

Acrylic paintings of scholars on carved wood, enamel on  
wood and metal with map of 1947 Jerusalem, paper-  
covered light bulbs, photograph of *Scroll of Isaiah*, camera,  
handmade windows, sand  
92" x 40" x 12"  
Collection of the artist

#### **Blackout, 1985**

Cut photographs of soldiers, light bulb, socket  
11" x 4-1/2" x 8-1/2"  
Private collection

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

### BIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAITS, 1982-91

#### **Rickety Tickety, 1982**

Bicycle wheel, photographs, thread, cement, wood, metal, acrylic  
77" x 50" x 20"  
Collection of the artist

#### **The Celibacy and Practicality of Mother Ann/Speak in Tongues and Import Oysters, 1984**

Wooden "candles," authentic Shaker webbing, hanger & pegs, wood, metal, handwoven straw, wood, and fabric hat, enamel on oyster shells, photographs of Hancock Village  
77" x 34" x 7"  
Collection of the artist

#### **Letters to Phantom Lovers (Love as Corset, Frou-Frou), 1984**

Corset made of mail sack with metal stays, enamel paintings of Los Angeles and New York City skylines on wood, envelopes made of sheer material, stamps made of photographs with locations of skyline drawing, paper high heels with stamps, telephone cord  
76" x 52-1/2" x 11-1/4"  
Collection of the artist

#### **Calamity Jane and Questions of Truth, 1984-85**

Encyclopedia information about Jane on sticks in bottles, excerpt from a letter to her daughter about her marriage to Wild Bill Hickok, photographs of lie detector and Jane, suitcase, lie detector readings on wood, acrylic on sheer fabric, metal, enamel  
85" x 33" x 19"  
Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc., Los Angeles

#### **OTHER (In Memory of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg), 1987**

Burned typewriter, visa and passport photos, altered chair with burned legs and arms, copper foil and wire  
37" x 25" x 19"  
Collection of Doug Simay, San Diego, CA

#### **To Sit As Ladder (In Honor of Rosa Parks), 1991**

Chronology and quotes describing the life of Rosa Parks, altered chair, photograph, radiator, enamel, acrylic on paper  
67" x 22" x 12"  
Collection of California Afro-American Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Gift of Jack X Fields

### THE IMAGE OF ST. BERNADETTE, 1987

#### **Willing Suspension of Disbelief, 1987**

Acrylic on canvas replicating patterns on St. Bernadette's clothing, photograph of St. Bernadette, acrylic on canvas rose, metal, wood, bicycle wheel  
68" x 54-1/2" x 22"  
Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA

#### **Pachinko (It's a Beautiful Day!), 1987**

Marbleized acrylic on rewired Pachinko game, image of St. Bernadette stenciled on plexiglass, dried rosebud, photograph of Abeles' painting of St. Bernadette  
31-1/2" x 20-1/4" x 3-1/2"  
Collection of Debra and Larry Poteet, Glendale, CA

#### **Souvenir Dispensary, 1987**

Souvenir holy cards of St. Bernadette, altered cosmetic dispenser, photographs of Abeles' painting of St. Bernadette bald, locks of hair, currency, enamel  
21-1/2" x 12" x 13"  
Collection of Greg and Kristen Escalante, Naples, CA

#### **The Amazing Rosebud, 1987**

Acrylic portrait of St. Bernadette on dried rosebud, embroidered satin  
21" x 9"  
Collection of the artist

#### **Traveling Sales, 1987**

Leather suitcase rubbed with gold oil paint, satin, St. Bernadette souvenirs, velvet, marbleized wood, currency  
28-1/2" x 19" x 19"  
Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc., Los Angeles

#### **Children! Sit Still!, 1987**

Acrylic painting of St. Bernadette on photo-sensitized fabric, enamel, metal, altered piano stool, violin rests, mirror of base which correctly shows the signature of St. Bernadette (written backwards underneath stool), lace, satin  
44" x 18-1/2" x 18-1/2"  
Collection of the artist

#### **The World's Smallest Painting, 1987**

Microscope, enamel, lace, glass slide plate with transparency of painting of St. Bernadette, wood, satin, rose beads  
22" x 9-1/2" x 12"  
Collection of the artist

#### **The World's Largest Painting (Section 32), 1987**

Acrylic on canvas drop cloth showing St. Bernadette's nose and mouth, marbleized wood, brass plaque with title  
59" x 51"  
Collection of the artist

#### **Diagrammatic Cross Section of the World's Largest Painting, 1987**

Gridded photograph of Abeles' painting of St. Bernadette with Section 32 extended three-dimensionally  
15" x 9"  
Collection of Anuska and Adrian Smith, San Diego, CA



## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

### **Viewers Observing the World's Largest Painting, 1987**

Photograph of Abeles' painting of St. Bernadette, photographs of movie extras from *The Song of Bernadette*, satin, pearls, enamel, wood, plaque, rose made from money

32" x 27"

Collection of Judy and Marvin Zeidler, Los Angeles

### **Eau De Lourdes, 1987**

Marbleized bicycle wheel, glass bottles filled with water, altered piano bench, satin, pearls, gold leaf, enamel, soil, mirror-lined box, movie still from *The Song of Bernadette*, backwards text placed under bench and correctly reflected in mirror, currency

56" x 31-1/2" x 20-1/2"

Art Bank Collection, City of Santa Monica, Santa Monica, CA

### **PILGRIMAGE TO THE WEDGE, 1981-87**

#### **Fashioning a Smog Mask, 1981**

Photographs

4-1/2" x 6-3/4" each

Collection of Maggie Freilich, Santa Monica, CA

#### **New Kind of Clock (Time Based on the Frequency of Taking Photographs), 1986**

Acrylic and ink on paper recording the times and dates of the 274 photos taken in an attempt to capture a clear shot of the San Gabriel Mountains unobscured by smog, clock, marbleized wood

17" x 17" x 3"

Collection of the Department of Art History and the Visual Arts, Occidental College, Los Angeles

#### **Mountain Wedge, 1985-7**

Acrylic on paper and wood, camera bellows, canvas, 274 photographs looking north on Broadway in Los Angeles at the San Gabriel Mountains obscured by smog, lens, oil painting on canvas

94" x 78" x 184" (bellows)

Collection of the artist

#### **Camera Desiros, 1987**

Bird feathers, enamel on brass framework, mosquito netting

3-3/4" x 5-1/2" x 4-1/4"

Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc., Los Angeles

#### **Invisible Camera, 1987**

Invisible nylon thread, enamel on brass structure defining shape of the 35 mm camera

10-3/4" x 9" x 6-1/2"

Collection of Jeanne Meyers, Los Angeles

#### **Wedge Watch, 1987**

Altered gas mask, color photographs of the Mountain Wedge, cat hair, text

23" x 10" x 8"

Collection of Maggie Freilich, Santa Monica, CA

### **Instructions for Stride Forward, 1987**

Color photograph of Abeles walking along her sculpture, *Pentipede*, pedometer with instructions (which Abeles used during her 16-1/2 mile pilgrimage to the Mountain Wedge), air quality report for the day of the walk, instructions, text

10-1/2" x 18-1/2" x 1-3/4"

Collection of Art Resources Transfer, Inc., Los Angeles

### **COLLECTIVE DIARY: DEDICATED TO PEOPLE WITH AIDS, 1989-93**

#### **Collective Diary: Dedicated to People with AIDS, 1989-93**

An installation composed of photographs of objects and scrapbook photos belonging to people with AIDS (PWAs), altered chair, satin, naugahyde, felt, soil, acrylic, enamel, text made of hair, book, ink on paper, and editions of the *HIV/AIDS Tarot* offered free to the public 10' x 15'

*HIV/AIDS Tarot* funded by a grant from the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

### **LONG EXPOSURES (AN ARTIST IN HER LATER YEARS), 1991-92**

#### **Long Exposures (An Artist in Her Later Years), 1991-1992**

Installation of phosphorescent paint activated by light on a relay system, welded steel, enamel, audiotape interview, water system, mixed media objects and photographs which combine darkroom and domestic images

20' x 20'

Collection of the artist

### **THE SMOG COLLECTOR, 1991-92**

#### **Zoë's Highchair (Forty Days of Smog), 1991**

Particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass, acrylic on altered chair

45" x 15" x 19"

Collection of the artist

#### **The Wonder Books (Forty Days of Smog)**

##### **The Outline of Modern History, 1991**

Particulate matter (smog) on altered book

9" x 6-1/2" x 1"

Collection of Kristen Paulson, San Francisco

##### **The Wonder Books (Forty Days of Smog)**

##### **Great Engineers and Engineering, 1991**

Particulate matter (smog) on altered book

9" x 6-1/2" x 1"

Collection of Stuart and Niraj Katz, Laguna Beach, CA

##### **The Wonder Books (Forty Days of Smog)**

##### **Great Achievements in Industry, 1991**

Particulate matter (smog) on altered book

9" x 6-1/2" x 1"

Collection of Greg and Kristen Escalante, Naples, CA

## CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

### **The Wonder Books (Forty Days of Smog)**

#### **Great Inventors and Their Inventions, 1991**

Particulate matter (smog) on altered book

9" x 6-1/2" x 1"

Collection of the artist

#### **Smog Clock (Thirty Days of Smog), 1992**

Particulate matter (smog) on glass face of clock, currency, acrylic

10" in diameter

Collection of the artist

#### **Pilgrimage to the Wedge (One Month of Smog), 1990**

Particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass, text describing Abeles' 16-1/2 mile journey from downtown Los Angeles to the San Gabriel Mountains on the day of a first-stage smog alert

75" x 48" x 2"

Collection of Lisa Coscino Nickerson and Scott Nickerson, Woodland Hills, CA

#### **Forty Days and Forty Nights (Forty Days of Smog), 1991**

Particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass, auto mufflers, detritus, chiffon, wood

31-1/2" x 30" x 56"

Collection of the artist

#### **Forty Days and Forty Nights (Forty Days of Smog), 1991**

Particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass with black and white photograph of factory located behind artist's studio

17" x 21"

Collection of Robert Zingg, Huntington Beach, CA

#### **Presidential Commemorative Smog Plates, 1992**

Seventeen portraits of United States Presidents from McKinley to Bush made of particulate matter (smog) on porcelain plates with environmental and business quotes in gold enamel

10-1/4" diameter each

Collection of the artist

#### **Smog Collector Sculpture (Sixty Days of Smog), 1991-92**

Welded vehicle exhaust systems, bilingual text, images made of particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass gathered at California Museum of Science and Industry, Los Angeles

116" x 31" x 31"

Funded by the California Bureau of Automotive Repair, Department of Consumer Affairs

#### **Smog Collector Sculpture (Sixty Days of Smog), 1991-92**

Welded vehicle exhaust systems, bilingual text, images made of particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass gathered at Olvera Street, Los Angeles

122" x 27" x 27"

Funded by the California Bureau of Automotive Repair, Department of Consumer Affairs

#### **Smog Collector Sculpture (Sixty Days of Smog), 1991-92**

Welded vehicle exhaust systems, bilingual text, images made of particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass gathered at California State University, Fullerton, CA

62" x 34" x 34"

Funded by the California Bureau of Automotive Repair, Department of Consumer Affairs

#### **Smog Collector Sculpture (Sixty Days of Smog), 1991-92**

Welded vehicle exhaust systems, bilingual text, images made of particulate matter (smog) on plexiglass, gathered at California Museum of Photography, Riverside, CA

41" x 34" x 34"

Funded by the California Bureau of Automotive Repair, Department of Consumer Affairs

### **HABEAS CORPUS, 1991-93**

#### **The Truth Palace, 1991**

Welded steel netting, identification documents marked with red acrylic

78" x 35" x 12"

Collection of Barbara Cohn, Los Angeles

#### **Made in America, 1992**

Manufacturing labels from the clothing of four people, neckties, hardware

14" x 21"

Collection of Max Protetch, New York

#### **War Stories (Peace in Progress), 1991-93**

Altered fold-up table, soundtrack of telephone responses to the question: "What comes to your mind most when you think about the Gulf War?" asked of people selected randomly from the upper left and right hand corners of the LA telephone directory, mementos of war, excerpts from the Constitution, astroturf, fabric

56" x 72" x 70"

Collection of the artist

#### **Medieval Currents, 1991**

Dinnerware made of bones, international currency, reproduction of Limbourg Brothers' *October*, glass plate, felt, wood

18" x 34" x 18"

Collection of Peter and Eileen Norton, Santa Monica, CA

#### **Personal Effects, 1952-93**

Personal objects, excerpts from legal correspondence transferred onto fabric, satin, wood, metal, plexiglass

36" x 36" x 31"

Collection of the artist



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EXHIBITIONS

**1976 Ed Moses Drawings 1958-1976**

Frederick S. Wight Art Gallery  
University of California, Los Angeles  
Los Angeles  
July 13 - August 15, 1976  
Catalogue with essay by Joseph Masheck.

**1977 Unstretched Surfaces/Surfaces Libres**

Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art  
Los Angeles  
November 5 - December 16, 1977  
Catalogue with essays by Jean-Luc Bordeaux, Alfred Pacquement, and Pontus Hulten. *Artists:* Bernadette Bour, Jerrold Burchman, Thierry Delaroyere, Daniel Dezeuze, Charles Christopher Hill, Christian Jaccard, Allan McCollum, Jean-Michel Meurice, Jean-Pierre Pincemin, Peter Plagens, Tom Wudl, Richard Yokomi.

**1978-80 Wallace Berman Retrospective**

Otis Art Institute Gallery  
Los Angeles  
October 24 - November 25, 1978  
Catalogue with essays by Robert Duncan and David Meltzer. Supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C., a federal agency. *Exhibition traveled to:* Fort Worth Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX; University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, CA; Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA.

**1979-80 Vija Celmins, A Survey Exhibition**

Newport Harbor Art Museum  
Newport Beach, CA  
December 15, 1979 - February 3, 1980  
Catalogue with essay by Susan C. Larsen. Supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C., a federal agency. *Exhibition traveled to:* The Arts Club of Chicago, Chicago; The Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, NY; The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

**1980 Variations: Five Los Angeles Painters**

University Art Galleries  
University of Southern California  
Los Angeles  
October 20 - November 23, 1980  
Catalogue with essay by Susan C. Larsen. *Artists:* Robert Ackerman, Ed Gilliam, George Rodart, Don Suggs, Norton Wisdom.

**1981-82 Craig Kauffman Comprehensive Survey 1957-1980**

La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art  
La Jolla, CA  
March 14 - May 3, 1981  
Catalogue with essay by Robert McDonald. Supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C., a federal agency. *Exhibition traveled to:* Elvehjem Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI; Anderson Gallery, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA; The Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA.

**1981-82 Paul Wonner: Abstract Realist**

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art  
San Francisco  
October 1 - November 22, 1981  
Catalogue with essay by George W. Neubert. *Exhibition traveled to:* Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, San Antonio, TX; Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles.

**1982-83 Changing Trends: Content and Style**

**Twelve Southern California Painters**  
Laguna Beach Museum of Art  
Laguna Beach, CA  
November 18, 1982 - January 3, 1983  
Catalogue with essays by Francis Colpitt, Christopher Knight, Peter Plagens, and Robert Smith. *Exhibition traveled to:* Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. *Artists:* Robert Ackerman, Caron Colvin, Scott Grieger, Marvin Harden, James Hayward, Ron Linden, John Miller, Pierre Picot, George Rodart, Don Suggs, David Trowbridge, Tom Wudl.

**1983 Variations II: Seven Los Angeles Painters**

Gallery at the Plaza  
Security Pacific National Bank  
Los Angeles  
May 8 - June 30, 1983  
Catalogue with essay by Constance Mallinson. *Artists:* Roy Dowell, Kim Hubbard, David Lawson, William Mahan, Janet McCloud, Richard Sedivy, Hye Sook.

**1984 Martha Alf Retrospective**

Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery  
Los Angeles  
March 6 - April 1, 1984  
Catalogue with essay by Suzanne Muchnic. *Exhibition traveled to:* San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco.

**1985 Sunshine and Shadow: Recent Painting in Southern California**

Fisher Gallery  
University of Southern California  
Los Angeles  
January 15 - February 23, 1985  
Catalogue with essay by Susan C. Larsen. *Artists:* Robert Ackerman, Richard Baker, William Brice, Karen Carson, Lois Colette, Ronald Davis, Richard Diebenkorn, John Eden, Llyn Foulkes, Charles Garabedian, Candice Gawn, Joe Goode, James Hayward, Roger Herman, Charles Christopher Hill, Craig Kauffman, Gary Lang, Dan McCleary, Arnold Mesches, John M. Miller, Ed Moses, Margit Omar, Marc Pally, Pierre Picot, Peter Plagens, Luis Serrano, Reese Shaw, Ernest Silva, Tom Wudl.

**1985-86 James Turrell**

Museum of Contemporary Art  
Los Angeles  
November 13, 1985 - February 9, 1986  
A book, *Occluded Front James Turrell*, was published in conjunction with the exhibition.



**1986 William Brice**

Museum of Contemporary Art  
Los Angeles

September 1 - October 19, 1986

Full color catalogue with essay by Richard Armstrong.  
*Exhibition traveled to:* Grey Art Gallery and Study Center,  
New York University, New York.

**1987 Variations III: Emerging Artists in Southern California**

Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions  
Los Angeles

April 22 - May 31, 1987

Catalogue with essay by Melinda Wortz. *Exhibition traveled to:* Fine Arts Gallery, University of California, Irvine, CA; Art Gallery, California State University, Northridge, CA. *Artists:* Alvaro Asturias/John Castagna, Hildegard Duane/David Lamelas, Tom Knechtel, Joyce Lightbody, Julie Medwedeff, Ihnsoon Nam, Ed Nunnery, Patti Podesta, Deborah Small, Rena Small, Linda Ann Stark.

**1987-88 Perpetual Motion**

Santa Barbara Museum of Art  
Santa Barbara, CA

November 17, 1987 - January 24, 1988

Catalogue with essay by Betty Turnbull. *Artists:* Karen Carson, Margaret Nielsen, John Rogers, Tom Wudl.

**1988 Jud Fine**

La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art  
La Jolla, CA

August 19 - October 2, 1988

Catalogue with essays by Ronald J. Onorato and Madeleine Grynstejn. *Exhibition traveled to:* de Saisset Museum, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA.

**1989-90 The Pasadena Armory Show 1989**

The Armory Center for the Arts  
Pasadena, CA

November 2, 1989 - January 31, 1990

Catalogue with essay by Dave Hickey and curatorial statement by Noel Korten. *Artists:* Carole Caroompas, Karen Carson, Michael Davis, James Doolin, Scott Grieger, Raul Guerrero, William Leavitt, Jerry McMillan, Michael C. McMillen, Margit Omar, John Outterbridge, Ann Page, John Valadez.

**1990 Lita Albuquerque: Reflections**

Santa Monica Museum of Art  
Santa Monica, CA

January 19 - April 1, 1990

Catalogue with essay by Jan Butterfield and interview with Lita Albuquerque by curator Henry Hopkins.

**1991 Facing the Finish: Some Recent California Art**

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art  
San Francisco

September 20 - December 1, 1991

Catalogue with essays by John Caldwell and Bob Riley. *Exhibition traveled to:* Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, Santa Barbara, CA; Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, CA. *Artists:* Nayland Blake, Jerome Caja, Jim Campbell, David Kremers, Rachel Lachowicz, James Luna, Jorge Pardo, Sarah Seager, Christopher Williams, Millie Wilson.

**1991-93 Roland Reiss: A Seventeen Year Survey**

Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery  
Los Angeles

November 19, 1991 - January 19, 1992

Catalogue with essays by Betty Ann Brown, Merle Schipper, Buzz Spector, Richard Smith, and Robert Dawidoff. *Exhibition traveled to:* University of Arizona Museum of Art, Tucson, AZ; The Neuberger Museum of Art, State University of New York at Purchase, Purchase, NY; Palm Springs Desert Museum, Palm Springs, CA.

**1992-94 Proof: Los Angeles Art and the Photograph, 1960-1980**

Laguna Art Museum  
Laguna Beach, CA

October 31, 1992 - January 17, 1993

Catalogue with essays by Charles Desmarais. *Exhibition traveled to:* De Cordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA; The Friends of Photography, Ansel Adams Center, San Francisco; Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, Montgomery, AL; Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, FL; Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA. *Artists:* Terry Allen, Eleanor Antin, John Baldessari, Wallace Berman, George Blakely, Ellen Brooks, Gillian Brown, Robert E. Brown, Gary Burns, Jack Butler, Carl Cheng, Eileen Cowin, Robert Cumming, Darryl Curran, Lou Brown DiGiulio, John Divola, Robert Fichter, Robbert Flick, Llyn Foulkes, Vida Freeman, Judith Golden, Susan Haller, Robert Heineken, George Herms, Dennis Hopper, Suda House, Douglas Huebler, Steve Kahn, Barbara Kasten, Edward Kienholz, Ellen Land-Weber, Victor Landweber, Jerry McMillan, Virgil Mirano, Stanley Mock, Susan Rankaitis, Allen Ruppersberg, Edward Ruscha, Ilene Segalove, Allan Sekula, Kenneth Shorr, Alexis Smith, Michael Stone, Todd Walker, William Wegman.

**Video Series:** Videos are produced and directed by Joe Leonardi, Long Beach Museum of Art Video Annex, for the Fellows of Contemporary Art.

**1988 Red is Green: Jud Fine**

**1989 Horace Bristol: Photojournalist**

**1989 Altering Discourse: The Works of Helen and Newton Harrison**

**1989 Frame and Context: Richard Ross**

**1989 Experience: Perception, Interpretation, Illusion**  
(The Pasadena Armory Show 1989)

**1990 Secrets, Dialogs, Revelations: The Art of Betye and Alison Saar**

**1990 Lita Albuquerque: Reflections**

**1990 Los Angeles Murals**

**1990 Waterworks**

**1990 Stretching the Canvas**

Compilation tape narrated by Peter Sellars

**1990 Michael Todd: Jazz**

**1991 Roland Reiss: A Seventeen Year Survey**

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**Works of art by Kim Abeles** in bold italics are listed alphabetically by each title.

**Works of art by artists other than Abeles** are listed alphabetically by the artist's last name.

**Photographs of Kim Abeles** are listed under the heading "Abeles, Kim."

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**Drawings, charts, and archival photographs** are listed by subject or the series they illustrate.

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