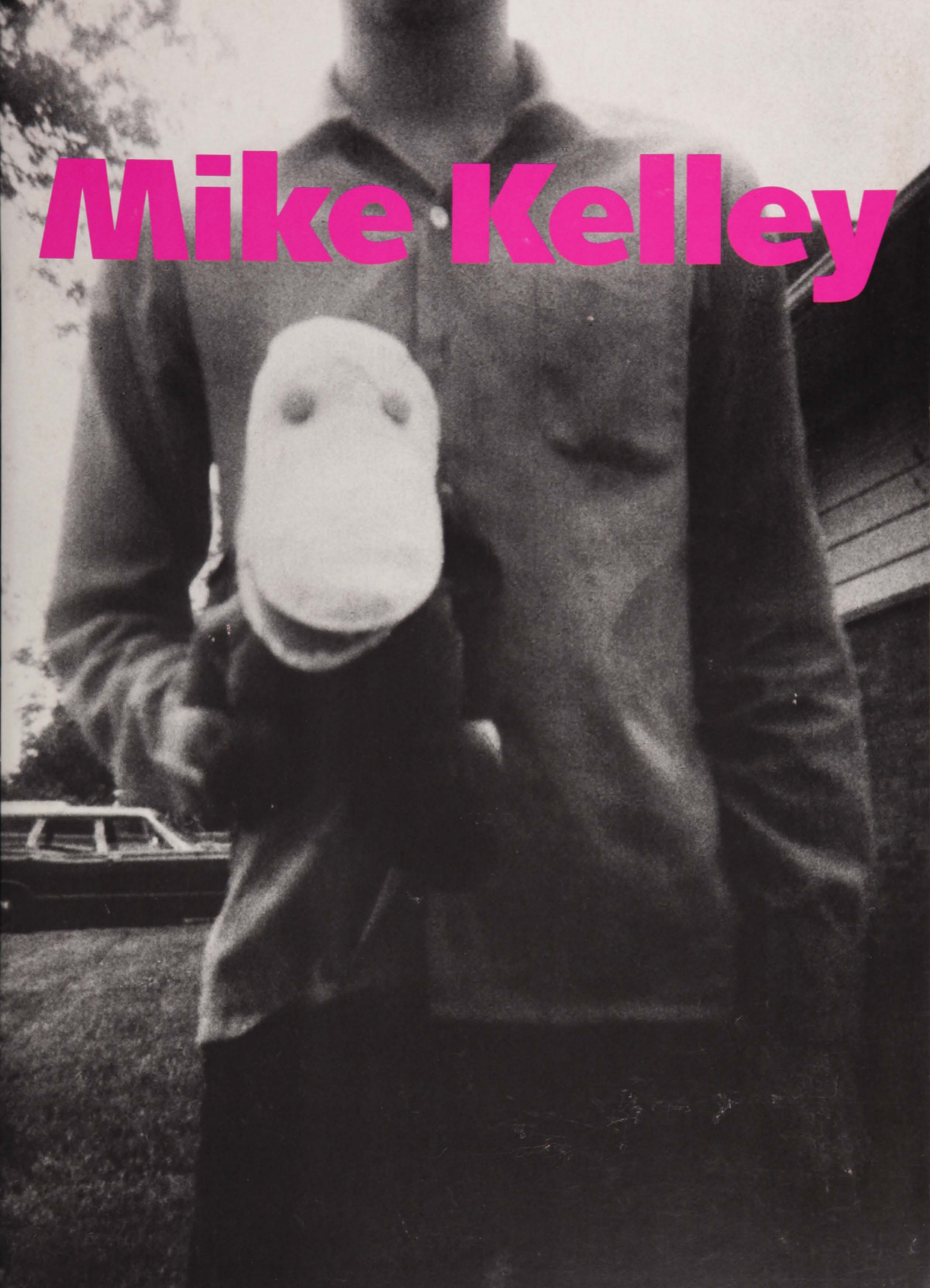


Mike Kelley



This catalogue has been published on the occasion of Mike Kelley's exhibition at The Renaissance Society at The University of Chicago

May 4 – June 30, 1988.

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Additional support has been granted by The National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency, The Illinois Arts Council, a State agency, and by our membership. Indirect support has been received from the Institute for Museum Services, a Federal agency offering general operating support to the nation's museums. Generous private support has been provided by Timothy and Suzette Flood and by Norman and Carol Nie.

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The University of Chicago

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Front cover: "The pink button eyes on this home-made doll mimic the male vestigial nipples hidden under this 15 year old's shirt."

Back cover: *Office Drawing*: 1988, photocopy on paper, 8½ x 11 inches.

Right: *Janitorial Transcendence*, 1980, glued felt, wood, 42 x 17 x 2 inches.



Mike Kelley

Three Projects:
Half A Man
From My Institution To Yours
Pay For Your Pleasure

The Renaissance Society at The University of Chicago
May 4 – June 30, 1988

Acknowledgements

Our deepest gratitude goes first to Mike, for so generously sharing his resources and information. The professionalism which he extended, throughout this project, not only made this exhibition possible but also particularly rewarding for all of us at the Society who had the pleasure to work with him.

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Throughout, Rosamund Felsen of Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Janelle Reiring and Helene Winer of Metro Pictures, New York City, have provided invaluable assistance and encouragement. I am most grateful for this support.

As always, my deep appreciation and gratitude for their continuing support and trust go to the Board of Directors of The Renaissance Society. I hope the reader will take time to look through the list of these outstanding individuals from the Chicago community who contribute so generously of their time, energy and resources.

The exhibition and accompanying catalogue was developed in part with major funding received from the Lannan Foundation, and our gratitude is extended to them.

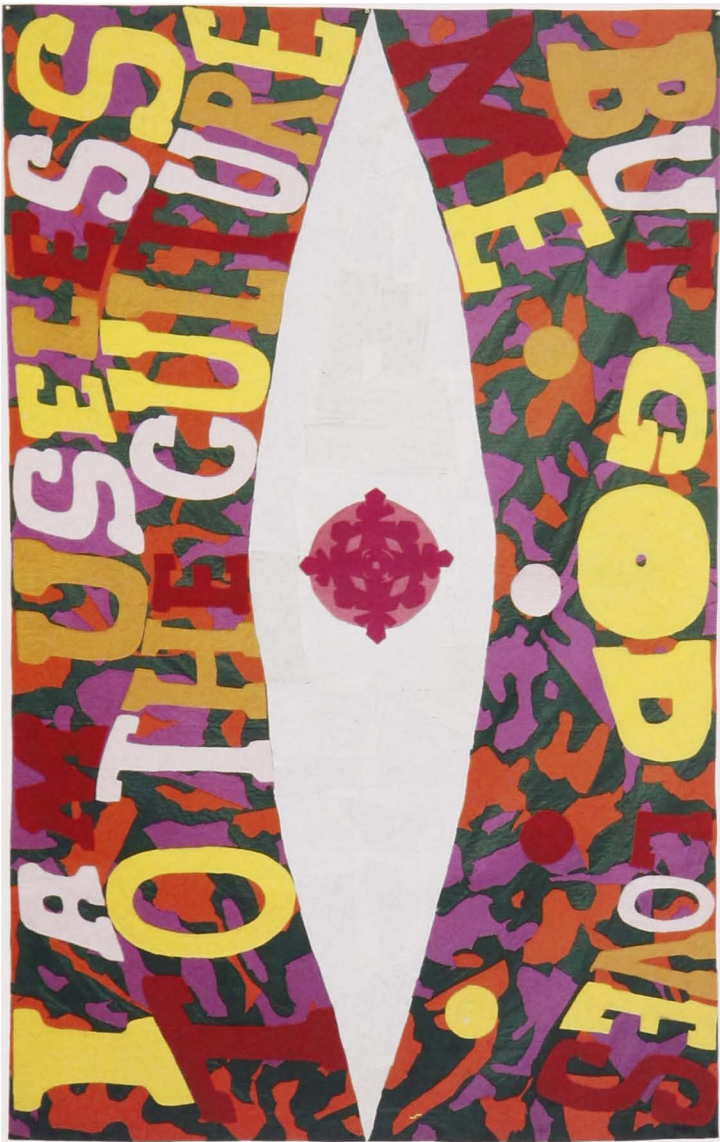
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It brings significant pleasure to the Society and to its membership to present this exhibition of the work of Mike Kelley. We are grateful to have this opportunity.

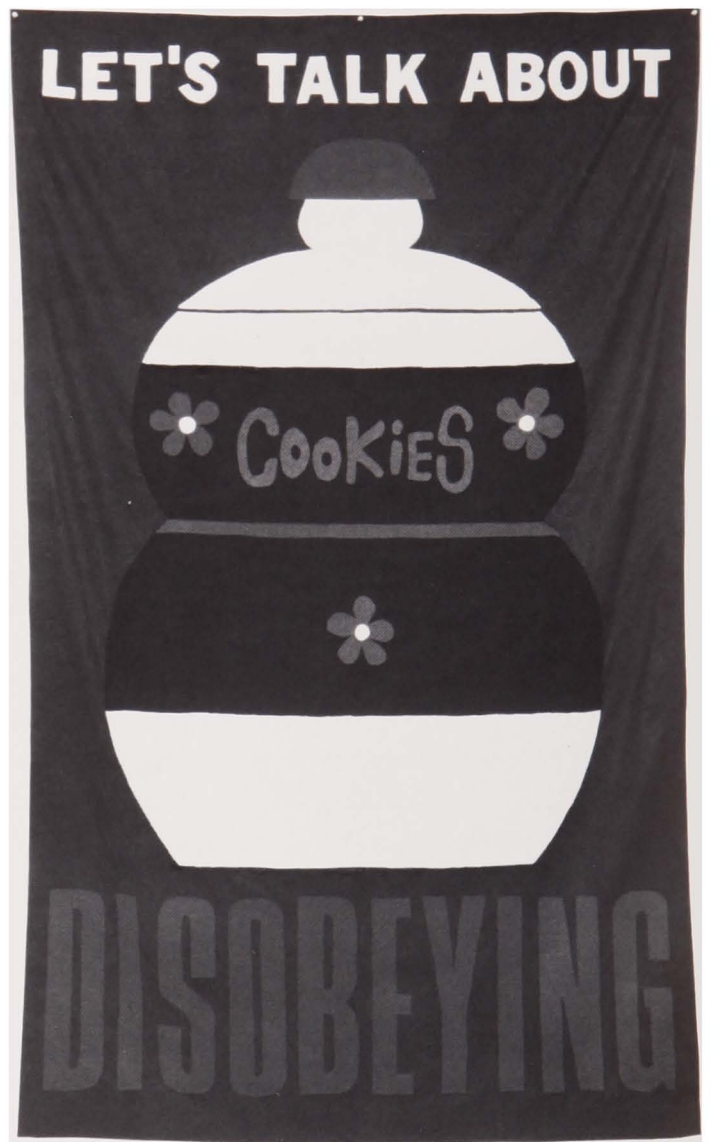
Susanne Ghez
Director



Plush Kundalini and Chakra Set, 1987, stuffed animals, 264 x 24 x 24 inches.



Trash Picker, 1987, glued felt, 94½ x 59 inches.



Let's Talk, 1987, glued felt, 94½ x 59 inches.

Mike Kelley's Line

Howard Singerman

Before slipping, at least metaphorically, inside the work; before becoming that third person who sets in motion the workings and then reports the contents of the art, I would like to pause a moment in the first person outside the works of Mike Kelley. As a literary conceit, I imagine this essay as a missive, a letter from afar to the people of Chicago; that is, I imagine this essay as intended for a specific audience, one that I have constructed around the idea of an unfamiliarity with Mike Kelley and his work. With this assumption, I can be useful, I can pretend that you have turned to this catalogue to have Kelley's work explained, even apologized for, to have it made alright. So then, as you have turned to me, I would like to address you directly – certainly Kelley does; his exhibition at The Renaissance Society is constructed of the forms of public speaking, of visual address to an interested audience: posters, banners, cartoons, greeting cards; these are open, made to be read, to be appealing and useful, and to define an audience in their reading. Less affectionately, Kelley's introduction of John Wayne Gacy makes it clear that he is addressing you specifically, that he is talking to Chicago.

Perhaps the most helpful thing I could do, the best introduction I could offer before lowering my voice, would be to tell you what Kelley's work looks like, to reiterate for you what you have seen. I want to agree with you on the work's bad taste, its material stupidity, its unreasonableness. (If I were to step immediately inside them, their outsides would become immediately healthy; they would seem mere form for some healthful, good content. They would have a reason.) To begin, there are the felt banners, those unfortunate descendents of the Treasures of the Vatican. Kelley has amplified both their aesthetic poverty and their post-Vatican II populism; crafted by an iconoclast even of these stupid, impoverished icons, by a willfully scatological mind, they would let anyone in: as one of the banners reads, "Pants shitter and proud" (cat. no. 27). There are stuffed animals, decoupage dressers, grandmotherly afghans – the stuff of living rooms and bedrooms and nurseries we would all like to forget, of obligatory visits and unappreciated mementos. And, in the same sensibility, there are the dumb animal pictures and cutely risqué cartoons that decorate secretaries' desks and office bulletin boards – maybe even at The University of Chicago, if not in academic offices, then in, say, personnel or housing or financial aid. Finally, there is garbage . . . lots of it. What from a distance takes on the speed and sweep of grand abstraction (albeit, in black and white, as though in reproduction) and pure surface is in fact the image of depth. More specifically, it is an image composed of myriad depictions of garbage and sewage taken from the panels of *Sad Sack* comics; there, their tale is one of the constant covering and the continual degradation of an army private. And here – like in the comics – garbage is imagined as the lack of differentiation (as, literally, de-gradation); it is the all-over, the spread, the refusal to discern.

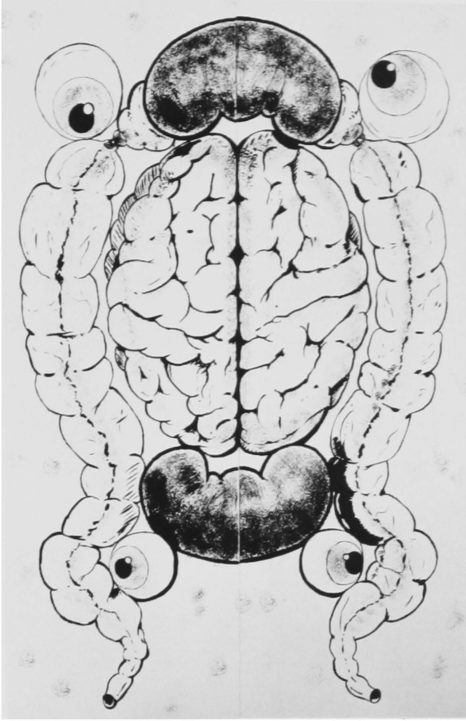
This is what all of Kelley's work, from the outside, has in common, and what makes it a little frightening. He refuses in the tone set by "Pants shitter and proud" to tell the difference. He refuses to acknowledge the line between high and low art, between felt banners and the tradition of easel painting grounded in the Church,

between a tradition of modernist painting based only on discernment (the ability of one painting to “compel conviction” rather than another) and the cartoonist’s shorthand, between the utterances of some of the most insightful philosophers of art and human action who have ever lived and the sad, stupid output of John Wayne Gacy, even between men and women. Between – and here we can, like parents, raise our voices – right and wrong.

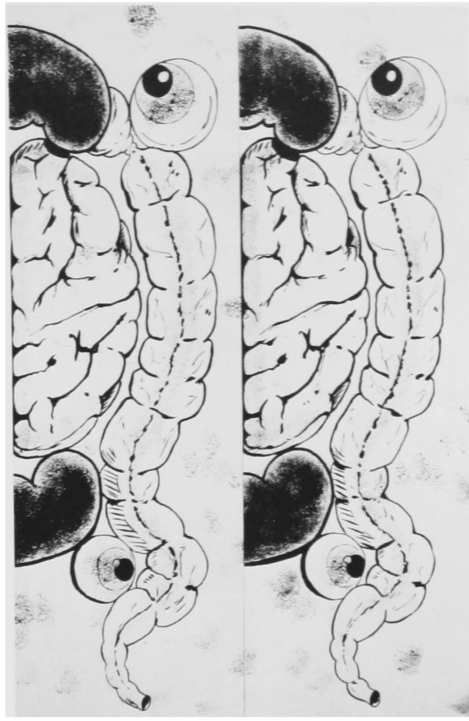
Ah, but he knows there is a line. In fact, there is a line that runs through all of Kelley’s work, from *Reflections on a Can of Vernors* of 1981 (“Why is he winking? It screws up the symmetry”) and *Monkey Island* of 1982-83 (“The content is bilateral division itself”). Kelley’s line is descended from a metaphysics centered in the body realized as an image, as an image of sovereignty, of “his own image.” In its wholeness, its singularity, and its verticality, that is, if I may continue this string of replacements, in its consciousness of itself as the One, it is the divisor, the delineator of the world, at once formed by and pronouncing its symmetry, the Two. Thus, in the words Kelley pronounced over his props in those earlier performances, he sought to constitute the world as one, as whole and unified, and to understand it through its division into dualities. (The original text for this fear of the unformed, and for making – building – sense through bilateral division is, of course, Genesis.) But Kelley, even then, kept getting the numbering wrong – his line kept multiplying when it should have been dividing. In *Reflections on a Can of Vernors*, he ended up with the figure of a cyclops, a one-eyed, three-legged king.

The line as it divides to give us the integral parts that would form a unity continues through the works at The Renaissance Society, certainly through one of the exhibition’s three titles, “Half A Man.” It defines the design of Kelley’s felt banners – as it did their church-bound prototypes. In both locations their symmetry reads as it does in Genesis, as both good design (“the key to a good design,” you can imagine the Assistant Pastor saying, “is balance, symmetry”) and the physical reiteration of symbolic divisions: success and failure, joy and sorrow, life and death, good and evil. Bilateral symmetry is the primary language, too, for Kelley’s “Incorrect Sexual Models.” Indeed, their lesson, like that of the banners, is that form, symmetry in particular, is inescapably symbolic, always legible as a value, an order that can be disordered. Attempts at unity, at good design – the body reorganized according to an eighteenth-century decorative cartouche – the “Incorrect Sexual Models” are odd attempts to depict the body without gender, without division or difference, to offer equality through the desexualization of representation. Thus the body’s symmetrical organs – the eyes, the kidneys, the bilobed brain – are assembled together, tied with a garland of intestine. If in *Utopia* the image is whole, the two become one; symmetry is also the differential equation through which all the other models measure their lack (*Envy*) or their excess (*Homosexual Couple* and *Hermaphrodite*). Lack and excess are given in the image of symmetry, in the line, and in the two in one.

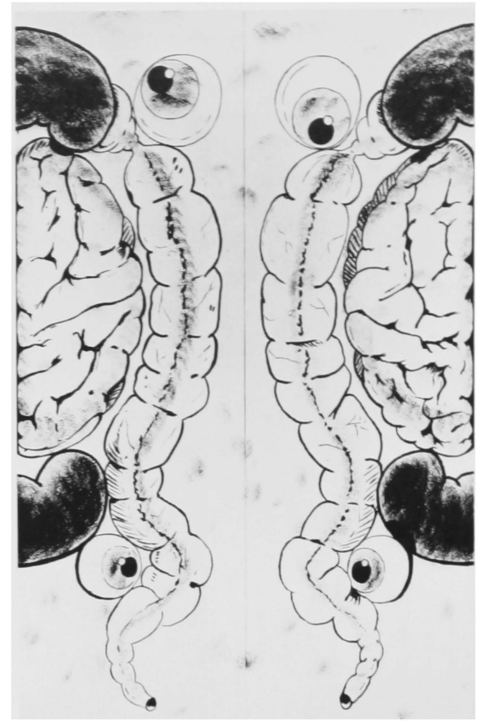
The line runs down the middle of the hallway of *Pay For Your Pleasure*, as well; but here the distinctions have become muddled. The line’s fate in *Monkey Island* suggests its spread, “Right down the bilateral division. This rut. Oooh, its rutting season in the river’s bed. A rut of wilderness.” The clearest division in *Pay For Your Pleasure* – although as I have suggested, the clarity is deceptive, part of its act – is between high art and Sunday painting, or – and already with this replacement things get fuzzy, even if for a while the alignment remains intact – between high



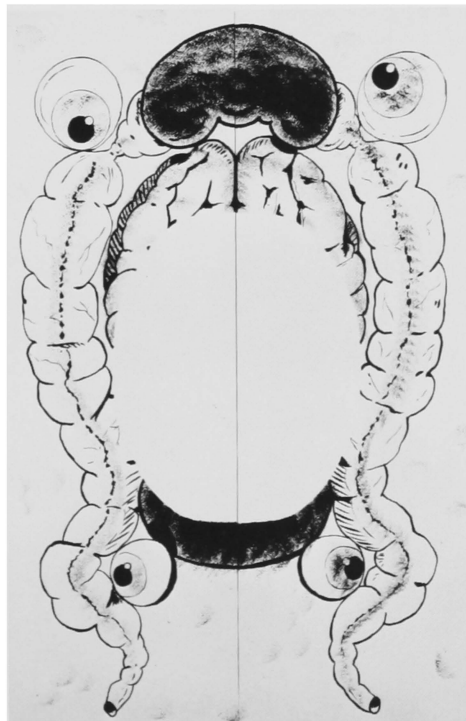
Incorrect Sexual Model. Utopia, 1987, acrylic on two panels, 72 x 24 inches each panel, 72 x 48 inches overall.



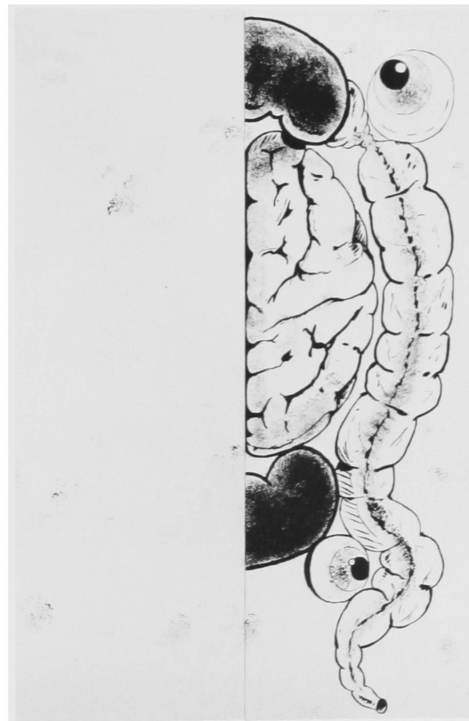
Incorrect Sexual Model. Homosexual Couple, 1987, acrylic on two panels, 72 x 24 inches each panel; 72 x 48 inches overall.



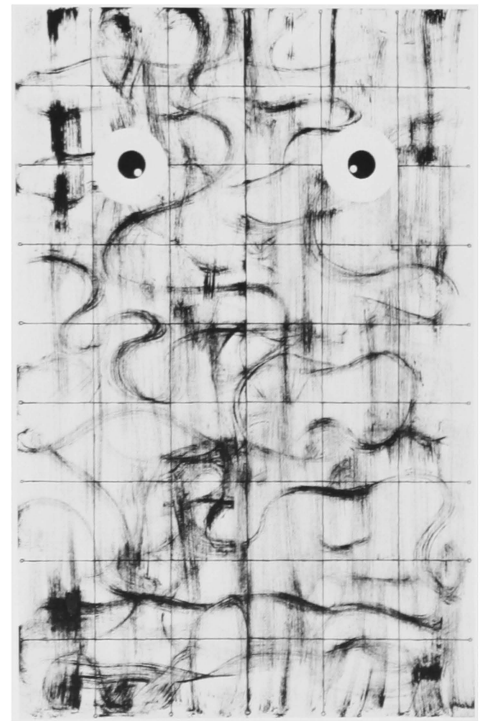
Incorrect Sexual Model. Hermaphrodite, 1987, acrylic on two panels, 72 x 24 inches each panel; 72 x 48 inches overall.



Incorrect Sexual Model. Mommy's Penis, 1987, acrylic on two panels, 72 x 24 inches each panel; 72 x 48 inches overall.



Incorrect Sexual Model. Envy, 1987, acrylic on two panels, 72 x 24 inches each panel; 72 x 48 inches overall.



Incorrect Sexual Model. Thalassa, 1987, acrylic on two panels, 72 x 24 inches each panel; 72 x 48 inches overall.



Pay For Your Pleasure (detail), 1988, "Pogo The clown," by John Wayne Gacy, oil on canvas board, 18 x 14 inches.

ideas and base actions. The high art and ideas belong to the likes of Aristotle, Sophocles, William Blake, and Tristan Tzara; the base actions to Chicago mass murderer John Wayne Gacy, arrested in 1978 for the murder of 33 teenage boys. (He is, to pause for a moment, a beast, a coward, a child molestor: he is "half a man." But then so were the boys he murdered. Their attraction was their youth, precisely that they were not yet men. Yet these two halves did not make a whole, and surely their roles were not equal. They were, to introduce another set of coordinates, victor and victim, a symmetrical yet incommensurate pair.) The great thinkers are represented by their images and their words; Gacy is represented by one of the paintings he has begun to make in his prison cell at the Menard Correctional Center. And here the tables begin to turn. Gacy, after all, is represented by a painting, the very image, the very object, of art. The aestheticians who assemble in chorus "against" him speak from placards patterned after the university bulletin board announcements of visiting speakers, painted for Kelley by a professional sign painter. They speak through the medium of popular art, or even less than that, through the thin, mass-produced products that are addressed to us to see, that speak to us visually – even if only marginally so – and in public. Moreover, if the quotes Kelley has selected are pointed specifically toward Gacy, they are pointed with envy.

"We painters claim the license that poets and madmen claim. . ."—Veronese

"Those who restrain desire do so because their's is weak enough to be constrained."—William Blake

"If rape or arson, poison or the knife, has wove no pleasing patterns in the stuff of this drab canvas we accept as life – it is because we are not bold enough."
—Charles Baudelaire

"A painting is a thing which requires as much cunning, rascality and viciousness as the perpetration of a crime."—Edgar Degas

"The fact of a man being a poisoner is nothing against his prose."—Oscar Wilde

Wilde's formalist laissez-faire, his placing of the value of art beyond moral judgement, is an attitude shared by a number of other speakers in the hallway, from Pope Paul III exempting Cellini to William Wackenroder and Francois Muriac. But Wilde's position is rhetorically double-dared in most of the quotes, in their insistence not only that art be ungoverned by society's rules, but that its position beyond the pale is necessary. Art and artist must live beyond the edge "where knowledge touches madness, and . . . erect no safety rail" (Balzac). Artists must push themselves and their work toward the unknown, they must risk violence and destruction. "Only the marshes are fecund" (Gide), or, more baldly, "Destruction in creation" (Bakunin). And above all what the artist must do is *act*: "The simplest surrealist act consists of dashing down into the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly . . . into the crowd" (Andre Breton). One might point out that these are not acts, but only calls to action. And there is about them the romance of the undoable, the sadness of the undone. Thus, with that petty thief Genet, they only sing the ultimate action, "I want to sing murder, for I love murderers."

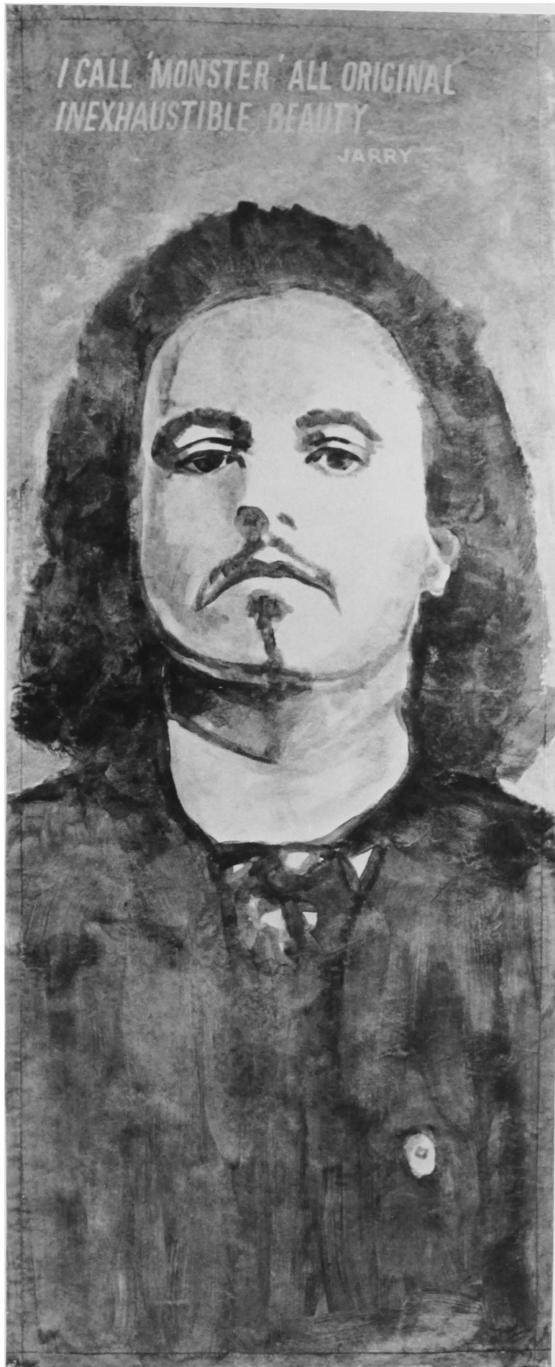
Kelley's reversal is clear; for Genet, Breton, even William Blake, Gacy is the man of action, the artist whose passions could not be restrained. But if Gacy is the true artist, it is, in Kelley's scenario, precisely not for his painting. For the faces that line the wall, that object is not the object of art but the image of restraint, of socializa-

tion, of sublimation. Again the terms of Kelley's juxtaposition are realigned; if Gacy's painting is not art for Kelley's pantheon, it is, of course, art for his jailers, for the public to which both inmate and jailer belong. For them, art is this form – painting – and it is also this function – therapy, allowed self-expression. Ironically – as though this all hasn't been ironic up to now – Gacy's painting is art as art is defined in public: it is good for you. But these guardians of high art on the wall would hold out against John Wayne Gacy for an art of evil.

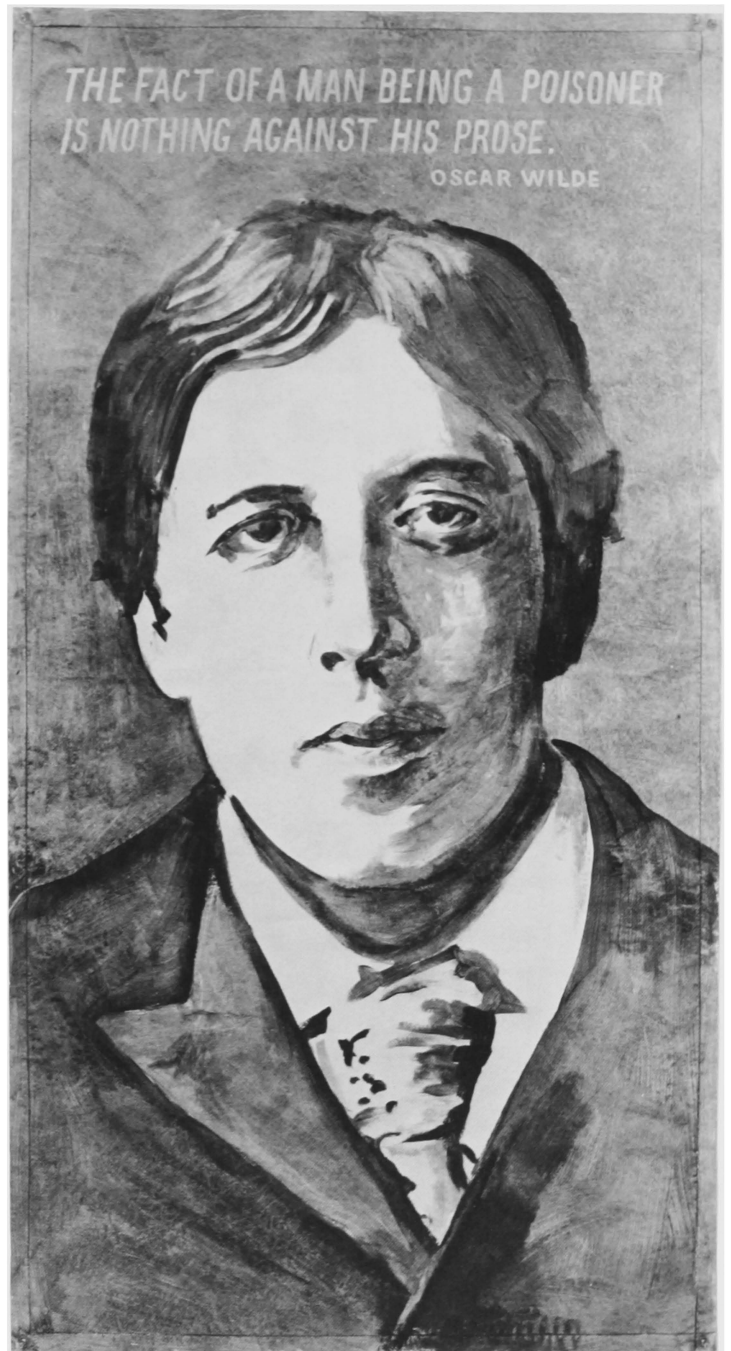
In the hallway along with *Pay For Your Pleasure*, Kelley has placed collection boxes for Illinois victim's rights organizations; his title refers not only to Gacy's crime and punishment, but to a charge exacted for your own viewing pleasure. And maybe he is trying to redefine yet again the poles of good and evil. If he has made a work on the edge of evil, and affronted the city of Chicago in his unearthing of John Wayne Gacy, perhaps he offers you an apology that would make his own work good for you again. Or perhaps he hopes finally to unify the wavering but never quite dissolvable poles of the work's duality, to unite the sides, to offer a common denominator, an exchange value. If they are necessarily, definitively divided in the realms of morality and of language – as good and evil or the statement and its opposite – perhaps they can have intercourse in the realm of economics, that arena in which everything has its price, can be traded and interchanged.

In this exhibition more than in any previous one the line Kelley scribes (which, despite this last burst of optimism, has not yet disappeared) is an economic line, a line between haves and have nots. In this recast division, the sides are opposed and at least structurally symmetrical, yet their relationship is not the struggle of such grand and indelible equals as good and evil. Rather it is the mutable, spreading relationship of unequals, of, again, victor and victim, jailer and inmate, debtor and claimant. Kelley's definition of the economic extends from the specific currency of the collection boxes to include an exchange that is symbolic rather than monetary. That there is an economy of symbols, that they, too, speak the terms of profit and loss, of excess and dearth, is suggested in the title of Kelley's color-field-painting-manqué *More Love Hours Than Can Ever Be Repaid*. Recorded on the large canvas in layers of worn-out handmade dolls, stuffed animals, crocheted afghans and knitted shawls – in the once lovingly begifted tokens he has found orphaned on thrift-shop shelves – Kelley's unit of exchange is wasted time and excess labor. In the face of their normalcy and their ready replaceability (on the level of use, a scratchy hand-crocheted afghan is no different from a storebought one), their peculiar, excessive investment exact a specific price. What is asked for in exchange for this excessive value is appreciation, devotion, love.

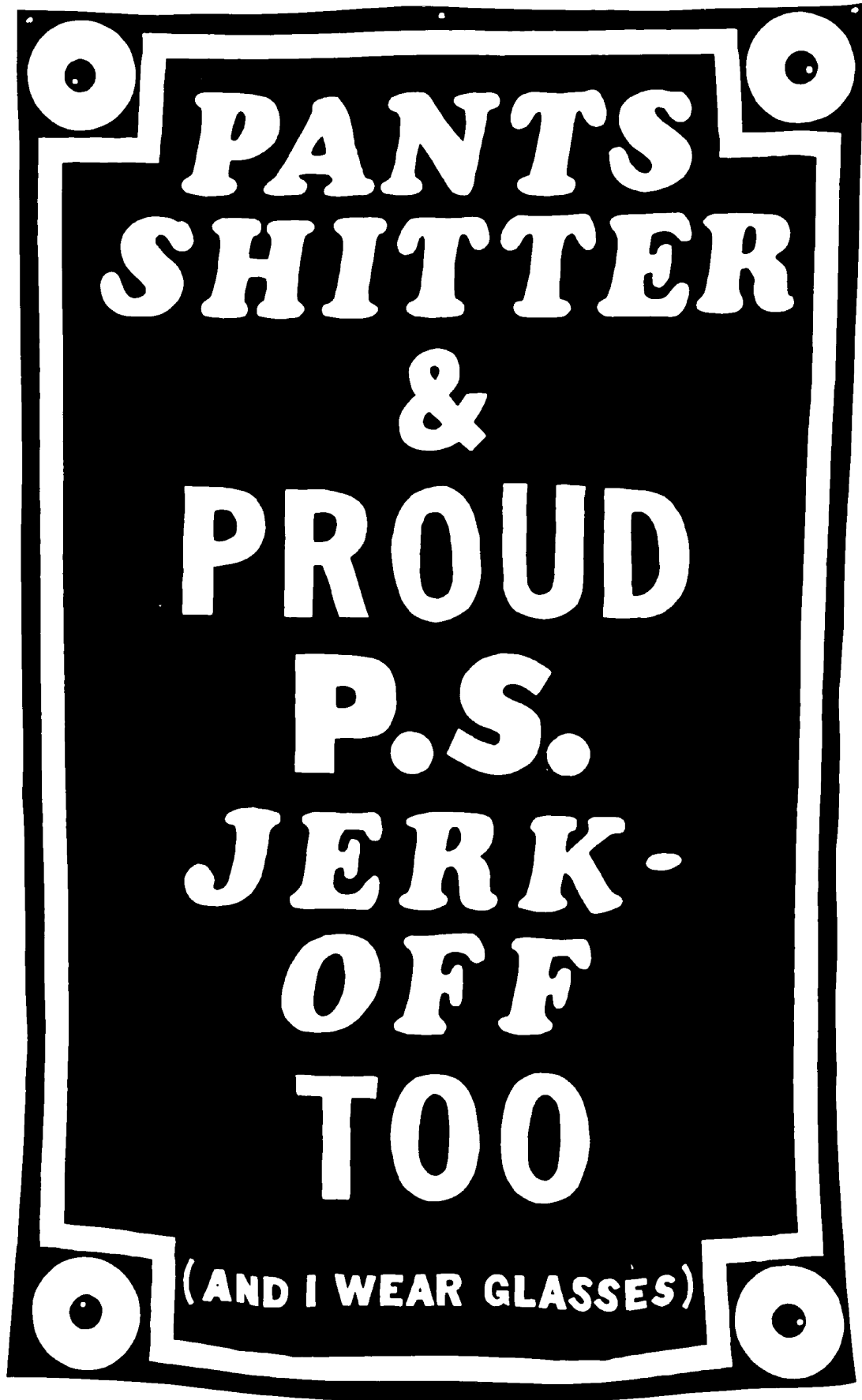
These same compensations are expected from a particular constituency in exchange for the storebought stuffed animals that make up *Plush Kundalini and Chakra Set*. (It is that constituency which Kelley designates in the title, both in its Toys-R-Us sales pitch, and its reference to the first, most bodily and least enlightened, of yoga's developmental stages.) Once cute and cuddly, the animals that now twist toward the ceiling in Kelley's sculpture were given originally as tokens of affection; they formed a contract, opened an account, established a debt. Now used, chewed and mauled back to a barely discernable pulp of covering and stuffing, they have (or, at least, had before Kelley got to them) finally acquired for their young owners a certain use value, one gained precisely as they were no longer cute and diminutive, that is, as they no longer pictured children for adults.



Pay For Your Pleasure (detail), 1988, quotation banner, oil paint on Tyvek, 101 x 40 inches.



Pay For Your Pleasure (detail), 1988, quotation banner, oil paint on Tyvek, 87 x 46 inches.



Three Point Program/Four Eyes, 1987, glued felt, 94 x 59½ inches

The unequal pair is the most powerful relationship in the exhibition, and it is repeated as the relationship between children and adults, between church members and the mother church, between folks and culture. Throughout the currency is much the same; born owing, already in debt to the long hours clocked by parents and history, what is expected is payment in kind, in gratitude, devotion, and obedience. In each case that Kelley outlines, this relationship of haves and have nots is defined by who can speak. Here power consists of the right to establish the arena and the terms of the discourse. Certainly the banners record an unequal relationship between speaker and audience. The banners' history is one of small democracy; introduced into the church to modernize Catholicism (as well as a number of Protestant denominations), to make it relevant in the 1960s, they were used by the church to reach out with the church's message. One most important feature was that they were to be made by the congregants, by the people – if only according to a suggested pattern and always in the same material. They were offers of expression, of a place to speak, but they offered only a speech already written, and one whose text was, again, obligatory, devotional. Much the same description could be offered for the dolls, shawls, and afghans. The parent, the church, the giver of the loaded gift retains control of the conversation, and of the spread of its symbols, despite the giving, despite the gift. It is in this context that one can understand the defiance of "Pants shitter and proud" or "Useless to the culture" (cat. no. 28); these are the belligerent statements of the other half a man: the child, the adolescent, the outcast, even, to point to Kelley's romanticism, the artist – if he or she is being difficult enough.

Like the Sad Sack drawings, from a distance Kelley's *More Love Hours* becomes a painting, an arrangement of colored shapes and their activity across a rectangular field. And it is like a painting in other ways as well: in the incommensurability of its material form and its symbolic value, in the excessive labor – of genius or of love – that it records. Painting, particularly the gestural abstraction to which *More Love Hours* most closely (if only from a distance) refers, is, like the afghan, the reified investment of labor in an unnecessary object. High art is often a target in Kelley's work; he mistrusts particularly abstraction's claim to (at once) universal speech and pregnant silence. He understands, instead, painting as a conventional, historical language, one that carries, at least by now, the narratives of specific intentions and desires, of nameable authors and recountable discourses.

Much of what contrasts art in Kelley's work, which insists that it read itself out as the intentions of a period style, is the junk of popular culture, the low forms. But in that confrontation, Kelley does not valorize the popular, he does not give it credit for being more real or solid or actual. The popular images that form the frieze of *From My Institution To Yours* – the clenched fist and bulletin board cartoons – are not offered as images of use, of art in action or of the people. For rather than being, as the clenched fist would picture "the people" to be, solid, compact, "performative" rather than "metaphoric" (to use Barthes' odd distinction between proletariat and bourgeois language), the images of popular culture Kelley offers are as displacing and as totalizing as any the parochial discourse of high art has to offer. Here then is their final, not quite utopian unity: both sides of the division between high art and popular culture Kelley has scribed in each of the works in this exhibition lie in the same symbolic economy, in the same mushy, richly metaphoric, swamp of never quite whole exchanges and replacements.



The Mortification of the Sign: Mike Kelley's Felt Banners

John Miller

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. – John 1.1

...and my life will be a cry made into a banner. – Anonymous poet of the Nicaraguan Revolution¹

For a *grown man* to proffer a handicraft item like felt banners as an example of his life's work will strike some viewers as irrepressibly *coy*, but this coyness belies a moral acuity which refuses to bend under the Regime of Critique. A state of grace? In and of itself, nothing lasts, even the Academy's most mendacious deconstructivist will tell you that (just as he should). *Liberty! Equality! Fraternity!* Legislated freedom produces taste, that is, a recursively cosmopolitan elite ready to render instant judgment on anyone or -thing not only before the dust has settled, but even before it's been kicked up properly.

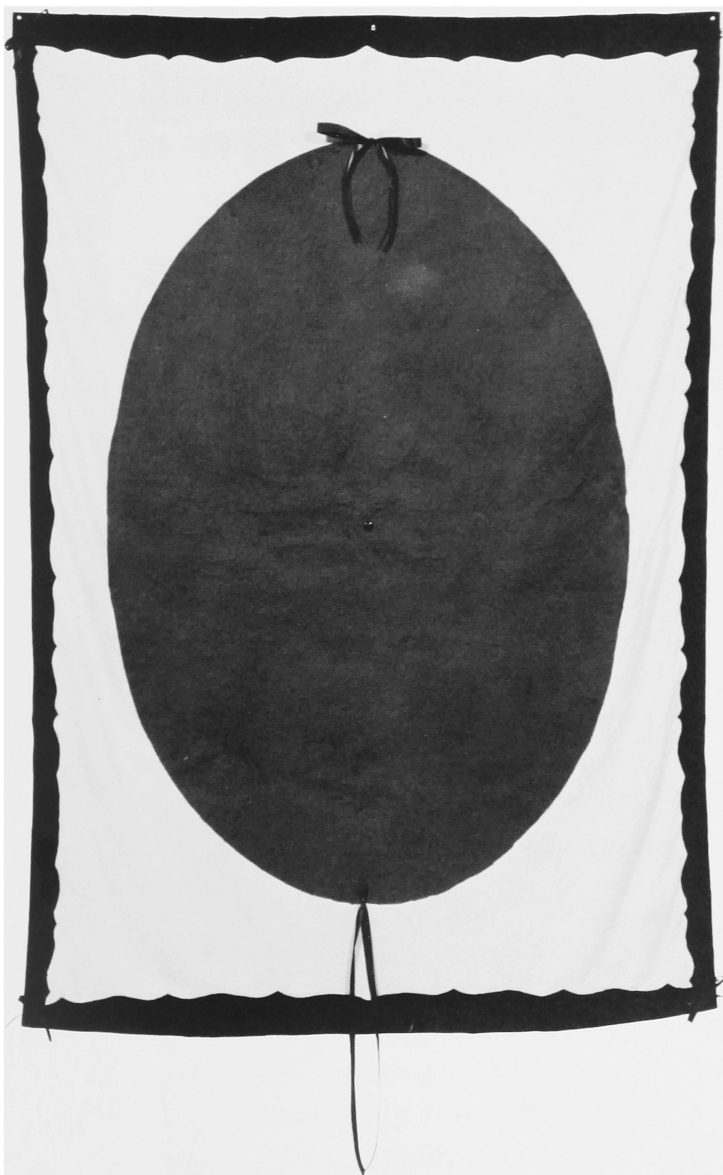
Every image necessarily implies a history, especially when "attitude" is apparent. Of these, the most capricious and degraded are the most decidedly embedded in politics. To backtrack:

Early in the 1960s Sister Mary Corita began to capture the popular imagination with upbeat posters championing the stand of the Catholic Church on certain controversial – or at least novel – issues. In so doing she sought to infuse the forms of advertising and modernist art with a new religiosity; her early, prescient pop very nearly coinciding with Warhol's. While Sister Mary Corita's works were even included in the Vatican Pavilion at the 1964 World's Fair, her complete dedication to visual art eventually prompted her to leave her order and become simply Corita Kent.

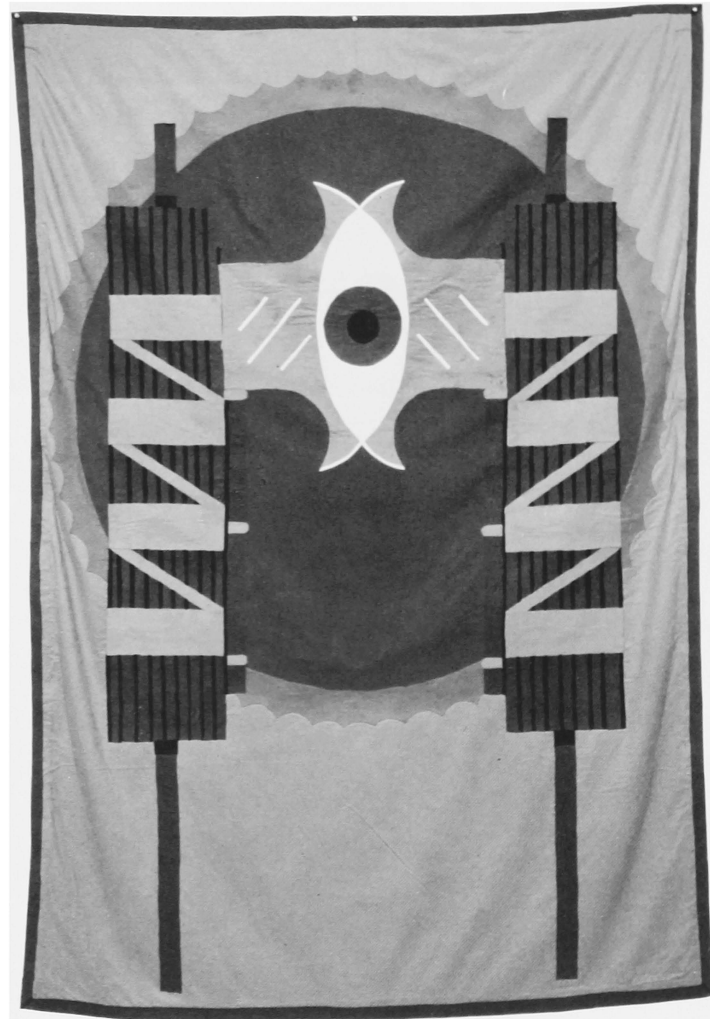
Later, a woman best known as The Singing Nun recorded "Dominique." The song quickly went to number one. Not long after Debbie Reynolds starred in a Hollywood version of the story. A lifestyle was imminent. When mini-skirt habits appeared, there could no longer be any doubt: Nuns were irrevocably "in." Liberalization had rocked the Catholic establishment. To consummate, i.e., "cute-ify," the trend, prime-time television even featured Sally Fields in a short-lived sit-com nonchalantly called "The Flying Nun."

When reports of Che Guevara's death hit the media in the U.S., they invariably ran with a prominent photo of his lifeless body laid upon a litter and surrounded by soldiers – as if proof of the State's invincibility. But deep in martyrology's libidinal underpinnings the corpse provides an ideal screen for utopian longings, because in the unconscious it becomes a turd and a phallus as well. By running that picture the media had unwittingly helped to transmogrify Che, the man, into Che, revolutionary emblem. While Soviet-style Communism had long since buckled under the calcification of everyday life, Che's *foco* theory, like the early Maoist theory of revolution, projected a vision of total liberation including, notably, the liberation of women. After failure in Bolivia, Columbia and Venezuela, prolonged, rural, *foco*-styled guerilla warfare worked once more in Nicaragua. And for the first time in history women served on the front-line. But how does Che's passing into legend qualify these strides? Do we need another hero? Or, rather, what is the price?

Cosmic Egg/Brown Baby, 1987, glued felt, ribbons, button, 94½ x 67½ inches.

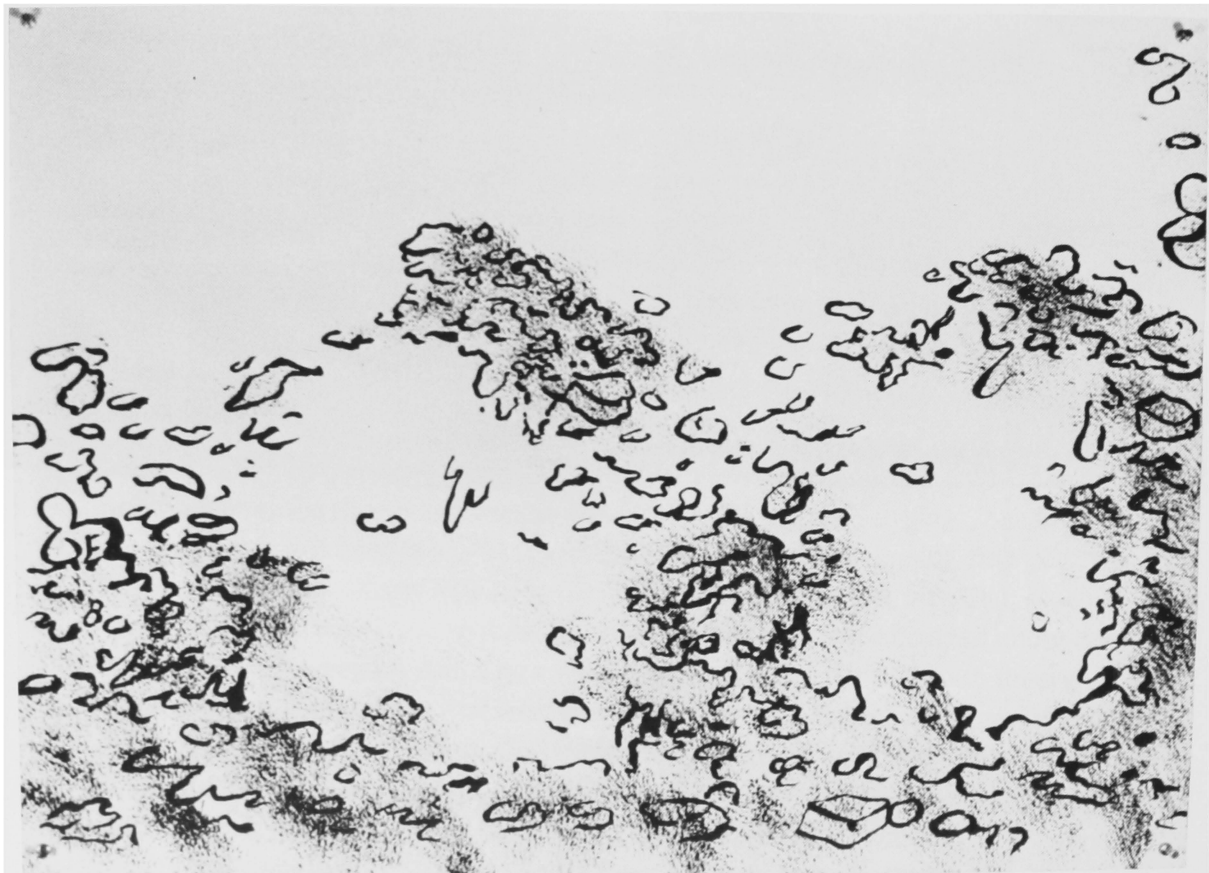


Daddy, 1987, glued felt, 94½ x 68¼ inches.





cartoon panel from *Sad Sack* comic book.



Garbage Drawing #21, 1988, acrylic on paper, 24 x 32 inches.

Politics does indeed make strange bedfellows. By the mid-1960s the Catholic Church found itself caught in the middle of bitter struggles in Northern Ireland, Quebec and Latin America. With nuns on the cutting edge, involvement in liberation movements led to a radical bifurcation within the institution from the grassroots level all the way on up to the Vatican. That progressive politics (broadly, de-centralization of power and equitable distribution of wealth) is inherently matriarchal suggests a gradual dilution of Church authority, both in terms of its *realpolitik* and its psychological basis. Today more than ever, any humane response to the low-intensity warfare waged in Central and South America (forms of resistance like liberation theology and the sanctuary movement) demands that the legitimacy of the Church's patriarchal foundations be challenged as well. The Maryknoll Nuns will not be forgotten.

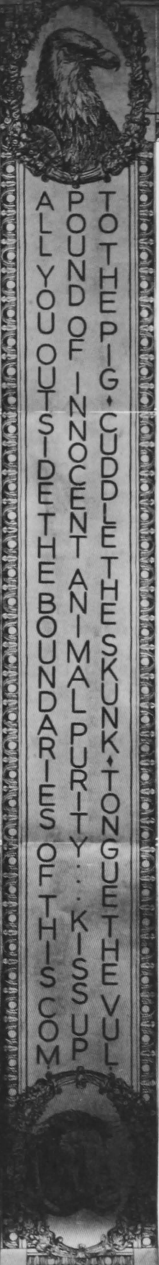
But to return to the matter at hand: banners made from bits of felt, an embarrassingly humble, even effeminate, craft material (if not cunningly valorized as in the work of Beuys and Morris) whose very name even puns on the idea of sensation and sensitivity, a pathetically (bathetically?) compassionate substance to be dyed with colors naive and bright. In the place of a taut plane suggesting the formal rigor of "the edge," here we find a perversely flaccid skin. In the place of evanescence, a surface perhaps soiled and frayed. A vulnerable texture both fuzzy and lacerated. The tissue of saints, kittens and baby blankets. Kelley's work has always evinced an unalloyed potential for capitulation, from his unframed, tacked-to-the-wall drawings, to his billowy, stained "Rothko" sheets, right up to the present banners where pride so obviously goes before a fall.

Blasphemy counts as the most egregious sin in Catholicism because therein faith, as it is so construed, necessarily imbues material with metaphor. The host is Christ's body. The Word is synonymous with the Father. The Law is the legacy of the Father. Never do you find the complacency toward iconography so regularly evinced by the broadcast presence of the televangelist. Never are words and images reduced to the humdrum dross of the secular world.

The Catholic tradition informs Kelley's pronounced indifference to minimalist-derived literalism or immanence running throughout his entire oeuvre. It also helps to explain his inordinate fondness for the underdog as leavened with a deep suspicion of political orthodoxy of any stripe. But most importantly, it clarifies Kelley's close ties to the decadent impulse of romantic painting and literature.

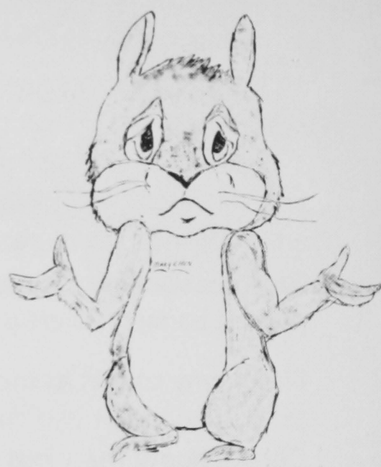
For Kelley the sublime, in lockstep with the erotic, promises the highest degree of individual consciousness on the brink of complete annihilation; erotic de-individuation always threatens to collapse into an abyss of inorganic matter – matter which is diametrically opposed to the nominal world of stable "objecthood." (Lautremont's violent swings between elation and despair come to mind.) This dynamic explicitly inspired Kelley's first banner, *Janitorial Transcendence* – which begins, not surprisingly, as a mop. Kelley explained it informally:

Janitorial Transcendence was done in 1980 but sat around for years unshown. It was such an oddity that I didn't know what to do with it. I finally used it in my performance *The Sublime* in 1984. . . . It has to do with the transcendence of work and stems from my experience as a janitor in the early 70s. I



LIE WITH THE LION & LAMB, EAGLE & OX. FROM MY INSTITUTION TO
ER THE RAMPART — BATTER DOWN THE DOOR — STEP ACROSS THE
TER. THIS IS THE SIMPLE SHRNE OF TRUTH IN THE TEMPLE OF LIES.

WORK!



SHALL I RUSH YOUR RUSH
JOB BEFORE I START THE
RUSH JOB I WAS RUSHING
WHEN YOU RUSHED IN?

From My Institution To Yours, 1987, acrylic on paper, 192 x 420 inches (16 x 35 feet) overall

LOVE I AM IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE WORKERS. CLIMB OVER THE LINE — THAT SEPARATES BROTHER & SISTER FROM BROTHER & SISTER. LOOK AROUND YOU AND SEE YOUR ENEMIES — FALSE IMAGES!!!



WANNA
FOOL AROUND



I WUV
YOU

WHO LEFT THE
LIGHT BULB ON?



POOR T-R-E-D-R-A-T . . . POOR POOR T-R-E-D-R-A-T !
B-O-W-T-O-T-H-E-C-H-I-P-M-U-N-K-Y-O-U-W-H-O-A-R-E-T-H-E-R-A-T . . .
T-U-R-K-G-O-O-M-T-H-E-L-I-O-N-S-E-R-V-I-C-E-T-H-E-M-O-U-S-E



worked alone on the midnight shift and I found that the boredom of cleaning floors made me very conscious of small details – something like a small pebble on the floor – something that normally wouldn't be noticed. Later, when I thought about this I made a connection that this sort of boredom could be involved in the process of deification. . . .

[In the performance, the banner] was rolled up like a push mop, and I used it to clean up a pile of dirt. Then I fixated on one particular clump of dirt. Next I talked about this clump in a descriptive manner. It became more and more beautiful, at which point I personified it, started talking to it. Then, its personality improved to the point where it was better than me and this continued until the clump was deified – it became God. The mop then unfurled into a banner where the clump was pictured as a smiling diamond – King of the Stones.

Romanticism, as a distinct form of desire-production, most importantly performs the *detournement* of sexual drives. Opposing the inorganic are the sublimated accretions of culture – what is most enduring as Value, not the accumulation of pure, unrefined wealth. Romanticism realizes its own possibilities against an ever-present substratum of base matter. In this sense the miner or the spelunker might serve as the most fully realized figure of the poet. As ethereal as the romantic dreamer might seem, his dreams pave the way for the materialism of Freud's psychoanalytic theory via their rootedness in sexuality. Freud in turn offers a more concrete account of the real-world subject.

Of all romantic writing, D.A.F. Sade's comprehensive cataloging of non-genital sexuality most profoundly casts overdeterminations of "the normal" into high relief.² Despite Sade's obsession with Nature as the objective referent without equal, his work initiated the erosion of the natural order as an immutable, God-given fact. While Sade's Juliette appears as a strikingly proto-feminist figure, it was Sacher-Masoch who later polemicized most explicitly against the oppression of women within the rarified verve of romantic literature:

. . . woman, as nature has created her and as man is at present educating her, is [man's] enemy. She can only be his slave or his despot, but *never his companion*. This she can become only when she has the same rights as he, and is his equal in education and work.³

In *Totem and Taboo* Freud made his well-known speculative hypothesis concerning the tyrannical "primal father" who is slain by his sons only to be resurrected in totem form as a first primitive god. This instance, Freud suggested, is coterminous with the inauguration of religion, morality and law – in sum, the repressive patriarchy. Post-structural feminists have extended this idea to include the very process of representation as an intrinsically phallic elaboration. From this standpoint, it becomes apparent how the postmodern recapitulation of various representational modes (including modernist abstraction) is driven by feminist inquiry.

Thus the fully self-conscious graphic stylizations of Corita Kent, derived as they are from the by-then-dated work of Calder, Matisse and others (and in turn from

which Kelley partly derives *his* banners), must count as a curiously naive precursor to the practice of postmodern pastiche. Corita Kent strove to reinvest modernist formalism with a sense of religiosity – but in her case a religiosity which included a generous dose of self-liberal sentiment. That self-cancellation of liberation and repression becomes glaringly obvious in her work. Kelley's imagination is inflamed by the nested iconographic debasements which Kent's modish amalgam inadvertently sets in motion. Kelley, seeking the lowest levels of degradation, is even more powerfully drawn to the home-spun derivations of Kent's work that have become the mainstay of Sunday school classes. If religion is fundamentally repressive, wouldn't an innocuously "with-it" belief in turn be liberating? If modernist art functions as a sort of objective, secular faith, wouldn't formal adulteration undercut its imperious atavism? Within ideology, true freedom occurs only in the negative instance – here, almost by accident, as if against one's will.

1. "Madre," trans. Julia Carranza and Dan Walworth. See "Death of a Guerrilla Poet," LAICA Journal, vol. 5, no. 41, pp. 35-39.

2. In his exhaustive treatise, *The Romantic Agony*, Mario Praz reluctantly cites Sade as the fountainhead of the romantic movement.

3. Leopold von Sacher-Masoch von Lemberg, *Venus in Furs* (Sylvan Press: New York, 1947), p. 140.



Sister Mary Corita (Corita Kent) in front of her posters at the Vatican Pavilion, New York World's Fair, 1964.

Biography

1954

Born, Detroit, Michigan

1976

BFA, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

1978

MFA, California Institute of the Arts, Valencia

Lives in Los Angeles

One-Artist Exhibitions

1981

Mizuno Gallery, Los Angeles

1982

"Monkey Island" and "Confusion," Metro Pictures, New York

1983

Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles

Hall Walls, Buffalo, New York

1984

Metro Pictures, New York

"The Sublime," Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles

1985

"Plato's Cave, Rothko's Chapel, Lincoln's Profile," Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles

1986

"Plato's Cave, Rothko's Chapel, Lincoln's Profile," Metro Pictures, New York

1987

"Vintage Works: 1979-1986," Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles

"Half A Man," Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles

1988

Metro Pictures, New York

Group Exhibitions

1979

"Manifesto Show," 5 Bleeker Street, New York

"The Poltergeist," collaboration with David Askevold, Foundation for Art Resources, Los Angeles (also performance: "The Monitor and the Merrimac")

"Sound," Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, and Institute for Art and Urban Resources, P.S.1, NY, (catalogue)

1980

"By-Products," L.A.C.E., Los Angeles

Anina Nosei Gallery, New York

1981

"Contemporary Drawings," University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara (catalogue)

"Beware of the Dog," The Mudd Club, New York White Columns, New York

Newspace, Los Angeles

"Exhibition," California Institute of the Arts (catalogue)

Mizuno Gallery, Los Angeles

1982

"5 From L.A.," University of California, San Diego Minneapolis College of Art & Design, Minneapolis

1983

"Summer Show," Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles

Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, California

"The First Show," The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, (catalogue)

"Head Hunters," L.A.C.E., Los Angeles (catalogue)

"Wordworks," Minneapolis College of Art and Design and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

1984

"The Fifth Biennale of Sydney, Private Symbol: Social Metaphor," The Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia (catalogue)

"Contemporary Eccentrics," Edge Gallery, Fullerton, California

Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles

Metro Pictures, New York

"The First Biennial 1984: Los Angeles Today," Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, California (catalogue)

"Performance on/and Video," Hall Walls, Buffalo, NY Video Pool, Winnipeg, Canada

1985

Metro Pictures, New York

"1985 Biennial Exhibition," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (catalogue)

"Art in the Anchorage," The Brooklyn Bridge Anchorage, New York, sponsored by Creative Time

"Best of the West," Zero One Gallery, Los Angeles

"B&W," Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art

"Funny Art," Concord Gallery, New York

"Currents-7: Words in Action," Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin

"Auto/Genetic/Photopsia," Christminster Gallery, New York

"Signal Approach," The Funnel, Toronto, Canada (catalogue)

1986

"Natural Settings," Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

"Baaa Baaa Ba'bel," The Alexandria Hotel, Los Angeles

"Poetic Resemblance," Hall Walls, Buffalo, NY; and Loughelton Gallery, New York (catalogue)

"Meanwhile, Back at the Ranch. . .," Kuhlenschmiot/Simon Gallery, Los Angeles

"Individuals: A Selected History of Contemporary Art, 1945-1986," The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (catalogue)

"A New Abstraction," New City, Venice, California Baskerville & Watson Gallery, New York (collaboration with Bruce and Norman Yonemoto)

"The Fairy Tale: Politics, Desire, and Everyday Life," Artists Space, New York (collaboration with Bruce and Norman Yonemoto)

1987

"Schema," Baskerville & Watson Gallery, New York

"Avant-Garde in the Eighties," Los Angeles County Museum of Art (catalogue)

"Toyama Now '87," The Museum of Modern Art, Toyama, Japan (catalogue)

"Cal Arts: Skeptical Belief(s)," The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago; Newport Harbor Art Museum (catalogue)

"1987 Phoenix Biennial," Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, Arizona

"Contemporary Diptychs: Divided Visions," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

"Head Sex," Feature, Chicago, Illinois

"Nothing Sacred," Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles

"LA: Hot and Cool," MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Saxon-Lee Gallery, Los Angeles (collaboration with Bruce and Norman Yanamoto)

"1987 Biennial Exhibition," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (catalogue) (collaboration with Bruce and Norman Yanamoto)

1988

"Striking Distance," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles

"Recent Drawings," Whitney Museum of American Art, New York

"AVA7," Los Angeles County Museum of Art (catalogue)

Performances

1978

"Poetry in Motion," L.A.C.E., Los Angeles

C.L.O.S.E. Arts Series, KPFF, Pacifica Radio, Los Angeles "Dream Lover," audio tape: The Poetics (Mike Kelley, Tony Oursler, Don Krieger)

"Indianana," L.A.C.E., Los Angeles

"My Space," La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, La Jolla, California

"A Big Question," California State University, Los Angeles

1979

"The Monitor and the Merrimac," Foundation for Art Resources, Los Angeles, in conjunction with collaborative exhibition with David Askevold, "The Poltergeist"

Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, in conjunction with exhibition, "Sound," (catalogue)

1980

"Three Valleys," Foundation for Art Resources, Los Angeles

"The Parasite Lily," performed at: Public Spirit: Live Art L.A., Performance Festival, Los Angeles; California Institute of the Arts, Valencia; University of California, San Diego; The Kitchen, Center for Video, Music, and Dance, New York; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

1981

"The Monitor and the Merrimac," Hall Walls, Buffalo, New York

"Meditation On A Can of Vernors," L.A.C.E., Los Angeles

1982

"Confusion," University of California, San Diego, in conjunction with exhibition, "5 from L.A.," Film in the Cities, Minneapolis, Minnesota

"The Artist in Television," Telesatellite Conference, live interactive collaborative performance with Michael Smith, Los Angeles/New York

1983

"Confusion," Pilot 1 Theater, Los Angeles

"Monkey Island," Beyond Baroque Literary/Arts Center, Venice, California

"X-C," collaboration with Tony Oursler, Beyond Baroque Literary/Arts Center, Venice, California

Reading, Hall Walls, Buffalo, New York

1984

"The Sublime," The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, part of the Explorations 1983-84 series, sponsored by Museum of Contemporary Art and California Institute of the Arts

"Godzilla on the Beach," collaboration with Bruce and Norman Yonemoto, Beyond Baroque Literary/Arts Center, Venice, California

Reading, Anti Club, Los Angeles

1985

Reading, The Permanent Contemporary Gallery, Los Angeles

Reading, Artists Space, New York

"Monkey Island Part Two," Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery Theatre, part of 'Artificial Intelligence in the Arts, #1 - Brainworks,' a symposium in conjunction with the exhibition 'Los Angeles Summer/Styrian Autumn,' Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery and Steirischer Herbst, Graz, Austria (catalogue)

1986

"The Peristaltic Airwaves," live radio performance, KPFF, Los Angeles, co-produced by High Performance Magazine & KPFF

"Plato's Cave, Rothko's Chapel, Lincoln's Profile," Artists Space, New York

Bibliography

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Ballatore, Sandy. "High Points, Low Points, No Points," *Images and Issues*, February, 1981.

Bankowsky, Jack. "Summer Show at Metro Pictures," *East Village Eye*, September 1984.

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Beal, Suzy. "Mike Kelley's Trip," *Pro-Fun Magazine* (Los Angeles), April, 1980.

Burkhart, Kathe. "Nuclear Cheesecake," *High Performance* #28, 1984.

Cameron, Dan. "A Whitney Wonderland," *Arts Magazine*, June/Summer 1985.

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Cotter, Holland. "Eight Artists Interviewed," *Art in America*, May, 1987.

Drohojowska, Hunter. "Mike Kelley at the Rosamund Felsen Gallery," *L.A. Weekly*, April 20-26, 1984.

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Eisenman, Stephan F. Review, *Arts Magazine*, November, 1982.

Gardner, Colin. "Out of the Frog," *Art Week*, March 12, 1983.

_____. "From the Ridiculous to The Sublime," *Los Angeles Reader*, March 23, 1984.

_____. "Newport Harbor Biennial - The Today Show," *Los Angeles Reader*, Nov. 16, 1984.

_____. Review, *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 13, 1985.

_____. "Exorcising Philosophical Demons," *Art Week*, Sept. 28, 1985.

Gordon, Kim, "American Dreams," *Artforum*, April 1985.

Handy, Ellen. Review, *Arts Magazine*, April 1984.

Hawler, David. "Stage Series Off to Confusing Start," *St. Paul Dispatch*, April 15, 1982.

Hertz, Richard. "L.A.'s Flesh Art," *High Performance*, February, 1981.

Howell, John. Review, *New York Beat*, Feb.-March 1984.

_____. "Mike Kelley, Plato's Cave, Rothko's Chapel, Lincoln's Profile," *Artforum*, May, 1987.

Jones, Ronald. Review, *Flash Art*, February/March, 1987.

Knight, Christopher. "A Meeting of Media," *Los Angeles Herald Examiner, California Living Magazine*, November 22, 1981.

_____. "Mike Kelley Turns Confusion Into Art," *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, Sunday, March 27, 1983.

_____. "Artist Mike Kelley Redefines 'Sublime,'" *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, April 8, 1984.

_____. "LAICA 'B/W' is a Superb Exhibition of Drawings," *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, July 7, 1985.

_____. "Season-Opening Shows May Presage Great Art Year," *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, Oct. 6, 1985.

_____. Review, *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, Feb. 15, 1987.

_____. "'Half a Man' is Wholly Compelling," *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, Dec. 13, 1987.

Lasarow, Bill. "Michael Kelley," *Artscene* (Los Angeles), April, 1984.

Lawson, Thomas. "Reheating the Avant-Garde," *L.A. Weekly*, May 15-21, 1987.

Levin, Kim. "Cryptanalysis," *Village Voice*, June 18, 1985.

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- Norklun, Kathi. "Pick of the Week," *L.A. Weekly*, March 25-31, 1983.
- _____. "Performance Archeology," *Art Week*, April 14, 1984.
- _____. "The Flow of Belief: Can Art Replace Wrong-Headed Thinking," *High Performance* #26, 1984.
- O'Dell, Kathy. "Mike Kelley at Artists Space," *Art in America*, May, 1987.
- Owens, Craig. "Back to the Studio," *Art in America*, January, 1982.
- Pate, Pattie. "Eight Idiosyncrasies," *Art Week*, March 3, 1984.
- Pincus, Robert L. Review, *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 1981.
- _____. "The Art, Analysis of 'Monkey Island'," *Los Angeles Times*, March 4, 1983.
- _____. "Michael Kelley at Beyond Baroque and Rosamund Felsen," *Art in America*, September 1983.
- _____. "Sublime Antics Create a Deflating Experience," *Los Angeles Times*, March 17, 1984.
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- Relyea, Lane. "Pick of the Week," *L.A. Weekly*, Sept. 20-26, 1985.
- Rickey, Carrie. "Art Attack," *Art in America*, May 1981.
- Rugoff, Ralph. "High Art Meets Low Culture," *L.A. Style*, Oct. 1985.
- _____. "Freudian Prankster," *L.A. Weekly*, Feb. 20-26, 1987.
- _____. "Pick of the Week," *L.A. Weekly*, Dec. 11-17, 1987.
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- _____. Review, *Artforum*, December 1981.
- _____. *Monkey Island*, catalogue essay, "The Fifth Biennale of Sydney, Private Symbol: Social Metaphor," The Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, 1984.
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- Wortz, Melinda. "Time, Space and the Freeway," *Art News*, September 1981.
- _____. Review, *Artforum*, December, 1985.
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-
- Publications by the Artist**
- Kelley, Mike. "The Runaway Wheel," *L.A.I.C.A. Journal*, March 1979
- _____. "The Parasite Lily," *High Performance*, Artist's Chronicle, Fall/Winter 1980
- _____. "The Poltergeist," *L.A.I.C.A. Journal*, Sept. 1980
- _____. "Monkey Island," *Lightworks*, February, 1981
- _____. "The Monitor and the Merrimac," *High Performance* #14, Artist's Chronicle, Summer 1981
- _____. "Conserve Energy," *Los Angeles Herald Examiner, California Living Magazine*, in conjunction with "A Meeting of Media," by Christopher Knight, Nov. 22, 1981
- _____. "Meditation on a Can of Vernors," *High Performance* #17/18, Artist's Chronicle, Spring/Summer 1982
- _____. "Monkey Island," *Cave Canem* (New York), artist's anthology, Sept. 1982
- _____. "The Spot Syndrome," (with Ericka Beckman), *New Observations* (New York), 1984
- _____. "Slow Boat to Lesbos," *Barney Magazine*, 1984
- _____. "Ajax," *L.A.I.C.A. Journal*, Spring 1984
- _____. cover drawing, *Magazine* (Beyond Baroque Foundation, Los Angeles), Spring 1984
- _____. drawing, *Spectacle* #1, 1984
- _____. "Urban Gothic," *Spectacle* #3, 1985
- _____. "Excerpts From: Plato's Cave, Rothko's Chapel, Lincoln's Profile," *L.A.I.C.A. Journal*, Fall 1985
- _____. drawing, *The Paris Review*, Fall 1985
- _____. "Mike Talks to Mike about 'Mike'," an interview with Michael Smith, *High Performance* #33, 1986
- _____. cover design and drawing, *Slave Sonnets*, a book of poetry by Bob Flanagan, Cold Calm Press, Los Angeles, 1986
- _____. statement and drawing, *White Walls* #13, Spring 1986
- _____. *Plato's Cave, Rothko's Chapel, Lincoln's Profile*, New City Editions in association with Artists Space, 1986
- _____. "Plato's Cave, Rothko's Chapel, Lincoln's Profile," *File* #27, Spring 1987
- _____. "The Peristaltic Airwaves & Plato's Cave, Rothko's Chapel, Lincoln's Profile," audio cassette, High Performance Audio, Los Angeles, 1987
- _____. "Plato's Cave, Rothko's Chapel, Lincoln's Profile," *Tellus* #18 (audio cassette magazine), 1988

Catalogue

1. *Loading Dock Drawing #1*, 1984
Acrylic on paper
42 x 17 inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
2. *Loading Dock Drawing #2*, 1984
Acrylic on paper
42 x 17 inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
3. *Loading Dock Drawing #3*, 1984
Acrylic on paper
42 x 17 inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
4. *Loading Dock Drawing #4*, 1984
Acrylic on paper
42 x 17 inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
5. *Animal Self and Friend of the Animals*, 1987
Glued felt
96 x 72 inches and 94¾ x 67¾ inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
6. *Antiqued (Prematurely aged)*, 1987
Painted wood dresser, mirror, magazine clippings under glass, objects, mirror on plywood
75½ x 357⁄8 x 22⅛ inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
7. *Black-Eyed Susan*, 1987
Glued felt
95½ x 59¾ inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
8. *Cosmic Egg/Brown Baby*, 1987
Glued felt, ribbons, button
94½ x 67½ inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
9. *Daddy*, 1987
Glued felt
94½ x 68¼ inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
10. *The Escaped Bird*, 1987
Glued felt
92½ x 59¾ inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
11. *From My Institution To Yours*, 1987
Acrylic on paper, ribbon with carrot
192 x 420 inches (16 x 35 feet)
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
12. *Incorrect Sexual Model. Corrected Symmetry: Left*, 1987
Acrylic on two panels
72 x 24 inches each panel; 72 x 48 inches overall
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
13. *Incorrect Sexual Model. Corrected Symmetry: Right*, 1987
Acrylic on two panels
72 x 24 inches each panel; 72 x 48 inches overall
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
14. *Incorrect Sexual Model. Envy*, 1987
Acrylic on two panels
72 x 24 inches each panel; 72 x 48 inches overall
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
15. *Incorrect Sexual Model. Hermaphrodite*, 1987
Acrylic on two panels
72 x 24 inches each panel; 72 x 48 inches overall
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
16. *Incorrect Sexual Model. Homosexual Couple*, 1987
Acrylic on two panels
72 x 24 inches each panel; 72 x 48 inches overall
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
17. *Incorrect Sexual Model. Mommy's Penis*, 1987
Acrylic on two panels
72 x 24 inches each panel; 72 x 48 inches overall
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
18. *Incorrect Sexual Model. Thalassa*, 1987
Acrylic on two panels
72 x 24 inches each panel; 72 x 48 inches overall
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
19. *Incorrect Sexual Model. Utopia*, 1987
Acrylic on two panels
72 x 24 inches each panel; 72 x 48 inches overall
Collection of Robert A. Rowan, Pasadena, California
20. *Let's Talk*, 1987
Glued felt
94½ x 59 inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York
21. *Memories*, 1987
Wood keepsake chest, press clippings, and announcements
21 x 25½ x 30½ inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York

22. *More Love Hours Than Can Ever Be Repaid*, 1987

Various handmade stuffed animals and afghans sewn on canvas
96 x 125 x 6 inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York

23. *Nature and Culture*, 1987

Collaged chest of drawers and wood panel, knobs, mirror on plywood
Chest: 42½ x 28 x 16½ inches
Panel: 36 x 29¼ x 2½ inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York

24. *No Exit*, 1987

Painted wood dressing stand, metal, dirt in acrylic medium, painted wood panel with metal, mirror on plywood
Stand: 35 x 39 x 19¾ inches
Panel: 26 x 38 x 2 inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York

25. *Plush Kundalini and Chakra Set*, 1987

Various stuffed animals
264 x 24 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York

26. *Tears of a Clown*, 1987

Acrylic on cotton with tassels
98 x 41 inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York

27. *3-Point Program/4 Eyes*, 1987

Glued felt, ribbon
94 x 59½ inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York

28. *Trash Picker*, 1987

Glued felt
94½ x 59 inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York

29. *The Wages of Sin*, 1987

Wax candles on base
26 x 24 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York

30. *Winner*, 1987

Glued felt
97¼ x 70¼ inches
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York

31. *Seventy-four Garbage Drawings and One Bush*, 1988

Acrylic on paper
75 drawings of various dimensions
Courtesy of the artist, Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles, and Metro Pictures, New York

32. *Pay For Your Pleasure*, 1988

Lent by Timothy and Suzette Flood, Chicago
One oil painting on canvas board by John Wayne Gacy; 43 banners, oil paint on Tyvek, of various dimensions, each bearing one of the following quotations:

"... everything bad that happens happens because of a conscious, intelligent concerted ill-will!" (Artaud)

"Destruction is creation." (Bakunin)

"I erect myself at the exact point where knowledge touches madness, and I can erect no safety rail." (Balzac)

"The commitment to supreme evil is indeed connected with the commitment of supreme good. . ." (Bataille)

"If rape or arson, poison or the knife, has wove no pleasing patterns in the stuff of this drab canvas we accept as life – it is because we are not bold enough." (Baudelaire)

"Those who restrain desire do so because their's is weak enough to be constrained." (Blake)

"My only recourse is the expedient of placing at the service of truth what has been given me by the father of lies." (Leon Bloy)

"The simplest surrealist act consists of dashing down into the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly . . . into the crowd." (Andre Breton)

"Too high for common selfishness, he could at times resign his own for other's good, but not in pity, not because he ought, but in some strange perversity of thought, that sway'd him onward with a secret pride to do what few or none would do beside; and this same impulse would, in tempting time, mislead his spirit equally to crime." (Byron)

"We shelter in ourselves an angel whom we constantly shock." (Cocteau)

"In our oh-so-civilized society it is necessary for me to lead the life of a savage." (Courbet)

"A painting is a thing which requires as much cunning, rascality and viciousness as the perpetration of a crime." (Degas)

"If you say that everything – chaos, darkness, anathema – can be reduced to mathematical formulae – then man will go insane on purpose to have no judgement – and to behave as he likes." (Dostoyevsky)

"Life too near paralyses art." (Emerson)

"The madness of desire, insane murders, the most unreasonable passions – all are wisdom and reason, since they are part of the order of nature." (Foucault)

"I like things and people in inverse proportion to the services they render." (Theophile Gautier)

"I want to sing murder, for I love murderers." (Genet)

"Only the marshes are fecund." (Gide)

"If you encounter charlatans, reason with them . . . if they resist, be bold enough to drown them." (Giotto)

"Imagination lies in wait as the most powerful enemy. Naturally raw, and enamoured of absurdity, it breaks out against all civilizing restraints like a savage who takes delight in grimacing idols." (Goethe)

"I have a mad impulse to smash something . . . to commit outrages." (Hermann Hesse)

"I call 'monster' all original inexhaustible beauty." (Jarry)

"What shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the chameleon poet." (Keats)

"The life of insects demonstrates that everything comes down to reproduction at any cost and to purposeless destruction." (Marinetti)

"The artist need no longer think of the souls of his fellow men. He can forget them, forget men and everything. He can do as he pleases, he is sure his work will lead nobody astray." (François Mauriac)

"I think the destructive element is too much neglected in art." (Mondrian)

"I love the unfrocked priest
the freed convict
they are without past
and without future
and so live in the present" (Picabia)

"Great evil springs out of a fullness of nature . . . weak natures are scarcely capable of very great good or evil." (Plato)

"We admire the work, but despise the workmen." (Plutarch)

"Men like Benvenuto Cellini (artists) . . . ought not to be bound by law." (Pope Paul III)

"They (artists) are more often the auxiliaries of corruption than of regeneration." (P. J. Proudhon)

"I do not understand laws. I have no moral sense. I am a brute." (Rimbaud)

"... crime in itself has such an attraction that, independently of lust, it alone can inflame the passions." (Sade)

"... evil action . . . should contain within itself – and should resolve – so many contradictions that it would require invention, inspiration, in a word genius. It would thus be akin . . . to a great work of art." (Sartre)

"Their errors have been weighed and found to have been dust in the balance; if their sins were as scarlet, they are now white as snow; they have been washed in the blood of the mediator and redeemer, time." (Shelley)

The Renaissance Society at The University of Chicago

"There is something agreeable in the misfortunes of others." (Thackeray)

"We are a furious wind . . . preparing the great spectacle of disaster, fire, decomposition." (Tzara)

"We painters claim the license that poets and mad-man claim. . . ." (Veronese)

"Art is a seducing, forbidden fruit. Whoever has once tasted its innermost, sweetest juice, is irretrievably lost for the active, living, world. He creeps more and more into his own little corner of pleasure." (Wilhelm Wackenroder)

"The old red blood and stainless gentility of great poets will be proved by their unconstraint." (Whitman)

"The fact of a man being a poisoner is nothing against his prose." (Oscar Wilde)

"The imagination will not down . . . if it is not art it becomes a crime." (W. C. Williams)

". . . after our own verse, after all our subtle colour and nervous rhythm . . . what more is possible? After us the savage god." (Yeats)

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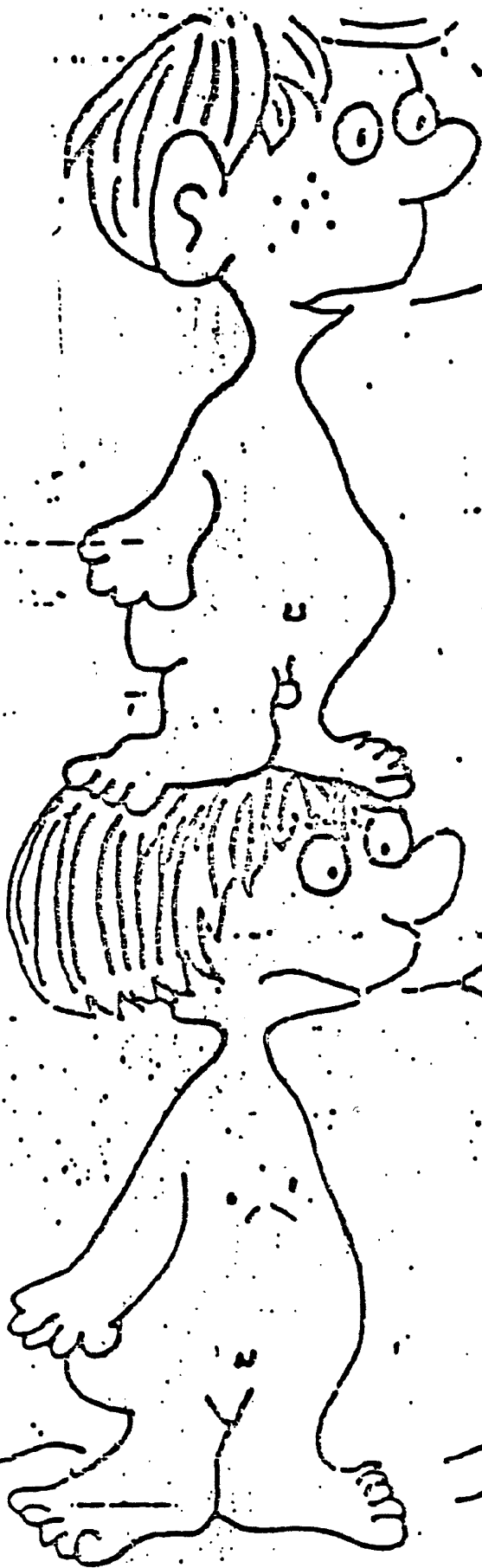
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O.K., WE took off our clothes... I got on top of you... How soon before it starts to feel good?

I don't know.. But I've already got a headache!

