

UN-FIGURING THE BODY

A group exhibition organized by the CSULB Museum Studies Program

November 13 – December 14, 2008

LONG BEACH — The University Art Museum presents Un-figuring the Body, an exhibition of work of three Los Angeles-based performance artists, Skip Arnold, Dawn Kasper, and Johanna Went, whose practices challenge not only cultural boundaries but also the limits of the body itself. This exhibition focuses on the return to the body as a tool in order to question the demarcation between experience and representation, the gap between feeling and knowing. No longer the privileged site of authentic meaning, the body is seen as an element of a complex cultural matrix – one that is in part, defined by the circulation of language and images in society. The artworks in this exhibition serve to examine the blurring of the boundaries that delineate the “authentic” experience of the body from the “mediated” representations of its image.

Although these artists practices, they are continually challenge never defining it. Skip between experience appropriating public and recording his Images of his body in



use divergent aesthetic united by the way they and un-figure the body, Arnold creates tension and representation by spaces, and presenting body as a specimen. these sites reflect both

the authentic experience of his body by the viewer and the activity's representation through the captured image. Dawn Kasper's autobiographical actions analyze the experience of emotions through devices of representation. Whether binding, burning or marking her body, she literally writes on the surface of her skin. Johanna Went, informed by popular culture referents such as punk music, B-grade horror films and the surf, car and graffiti cultures, uses costumes to re-figure the human form in order to represent the chaos of fragmented dream imagery. In their indeterminate exchange of form and image, these artists collapse the distinction between experience and our understanding of experience through representation. They shatter the tenuous boundary between what is perceived and what is known by continually addressing the body as a site of both representation and experience.

-more-

EVENTS:

- Oct 11 Performance at Anna Helwing Gallery in conjunction with *Un-figuring the Body*, at 7pm
All things add up to the sum of all their parts (5 being one of the numbers to work in this case) the logical equation, to date, is truth + loss = confusion
Location: Anna Helwing Gallery, 2766 S. La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90034-2642
- Nov 13 Public Reception 6-8 PM
The Need for Self, performance by Dawn Kasper
- Nov 18 UAM@noon, 12:15-1 PM, Gallery talk @ UAM with curators Megan Hoetger, Stacie Martinez, and Nicole Urquidi; followed by *Things to do when you can't Sleep*, performance by Dawn Kasper
- Dec 10 Visiting Artist Lecture Series, 5-6 PM, University Theater, CSULB
clues to the meaning of life part 6: for David, performance by Dawn Kasper

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES:

Skip Arnold (lives and works in Los Angeles, CA and Paris, France)

Skip Arnold is an artist whose work falls within the tradition of Body Art and Actionism. Arnold received his M.F.A. from UCLA. He has been the recipient of numerous awards including an ARC grant from the Durfee Foundation, a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, and a National Endowment for the Arts, Visual Arts Fellowship Grant. He is Visiting Faculty at the ECOLE Nationale Supérieure D'ARTS Paris – Cergy and Adjunct Faculty at Art Center College of Design. Arnold's work has been widely exhibited in the U.S. and internationally at venues including ACE Gallery; Spencer Brownstone Gallery (NY); LACE (LA); Shoshana Wayne Gallery (Santa Monica); Galerie Frederic Giroux (Paris); Art1331Basel (Basel); and most recently in the seminal *California Video* at the Getty Museum (LA).

Dawn Kasper (lives and works in Los Angeles, CA)

Kasper received her M.F.A. in New Genres from UCLA in 2003. Since then she has exhibited at the Migros Museum Für Genenwartskunst in Zurich, Switzerland; the J. Paul Getty Museum (LA); Art Basel Art Positions (Miami Beach); Art in General (NY); Copy Gallery (Philadelphia); Newman Popiashvili Gallery (NY); Cirrus Gallery (LA); Anna Helwing Gallery (LA); Circus Gallery (LA). Her work has been featured in *Beautiful Decay* and *Contemporary 21* magazine, *L.A. Weekly*, and the *LA Times*.

Johanna Went (lives and works in Los Angeles, CA)

Johanna Went's pioneering performance work combines elements of street theater and punk rock music. Went has performed at John's Place, Hong Kong Café, Beyond Baroque, the Whiskey, Club Lingerie, and the Music Machine, LACE (LA), New Image Art (West Hollywood), COCA (Seattle), UCLA Schoenberg Hall (LA), The Shaffy Theater (Amsterdam), The Magic Theater (San Francisco), The Contemporary Arts Forum (Santa Barbara), Franklin Furnace (NY), Track 16 (LA), and The Kitchen (NY). Her work has been reviewed in *Slash* magazine, *LA Times*, *Village Voice*, *L.A. Weekly*, and was featured in *ReSearch* magazine. Her work was also included in a survey of the LA performance scene, *The Other Los Angeleses*, by Meiling Cheng. She has appeared in *The Living End*, directed by Greg Araki, and *Grief*, directed by Richard Glatzer. Other film projects include two video collaborations with filmmaker Shirley Clark; and *Clam Lynch: A Shame Based Existence* (2000). With musical director Mark Wheaton, she released *Slave Beyond the Grave* (1980) and *Hyena* (1983).

Un-figuring the Body was organized for the University Art Museum by participants in the Graduate Program in Museum Studies and is funded by the Department of Art and the College of the Arts.

Image Credits: Skip Arnold, *On Display*, Offens Kulturhaus, Linz, Austria; December 1-18, 1993, photographic still of Arnold enclosed in the vitrine, live performance, 1993, 20mm-thick acrylic, steel stand, skip 28 ¼ x 22 5/8 x 18 ½ inches, courtesy of Spencer Brownstone Gallery, NY, photo courtesy of the artist and Spencer Brownstone Gallery, NY. Dawn Kasper, *Body as Object: A Performance in 4 Parts (scotch tape, costumes, tattoo, glue)*, 2004, photographic still from 'part 1: scotch tape,' live performance, Art Positions Art Basel Miami Beach, Anna Helwing Gallery, Miami Beach, FL, courtesy of the artist and Circus Gallery, photo courtesy of Calvin Phelps. Johanna Went, *Geisha Forest*, 2007, found kimono, found embroidery, doll hands, fabric, 75 x 30 x 20", courtesy of the artist, photo courtesy of Albert Sanchez.

MEDIA CONTACT: Sarah G. Vinci, Public Relations Director
562.985.4299 svinci@csulb.edu

Press images of UAM exhibitions are available on our FTP site - please send an email requesting directive on how to access. Thank you.

-end-