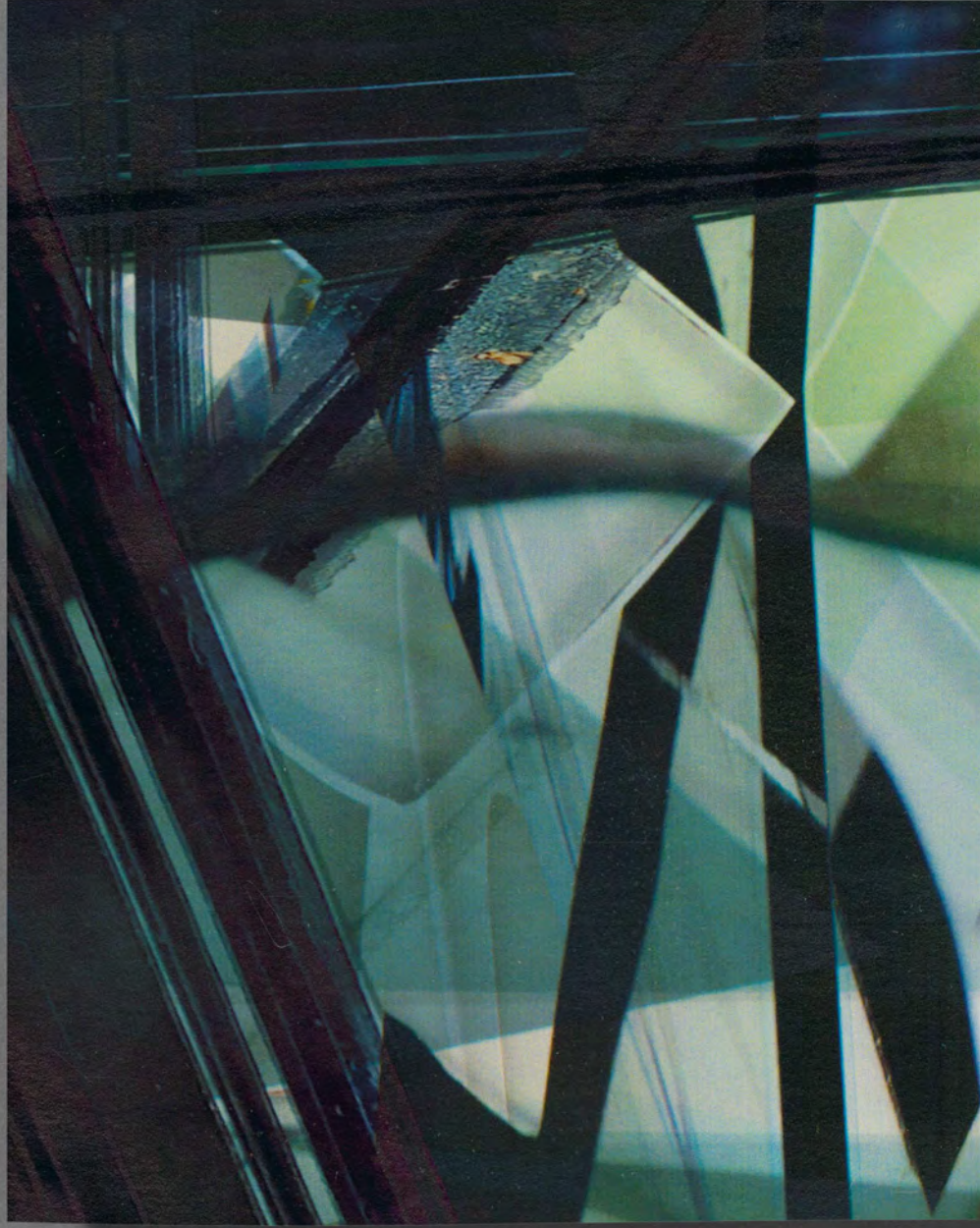






Miranda Lichtenstein

Recorder



From Copy to Original
A. L. Steiner

For every inconsistency on the surface,
there is a subterranean consistency.

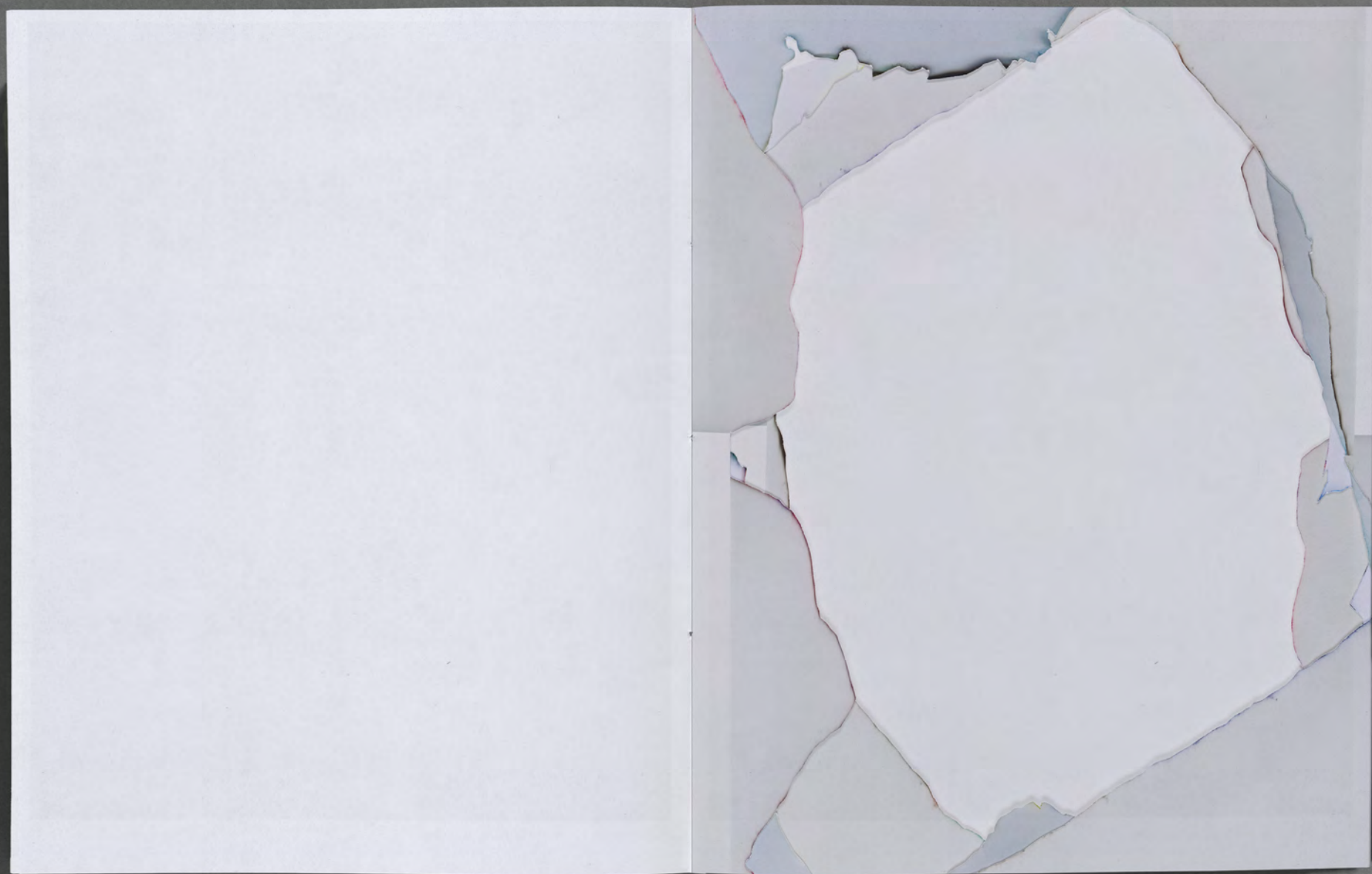
Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with
Anonymous Materials* (2008), p.53

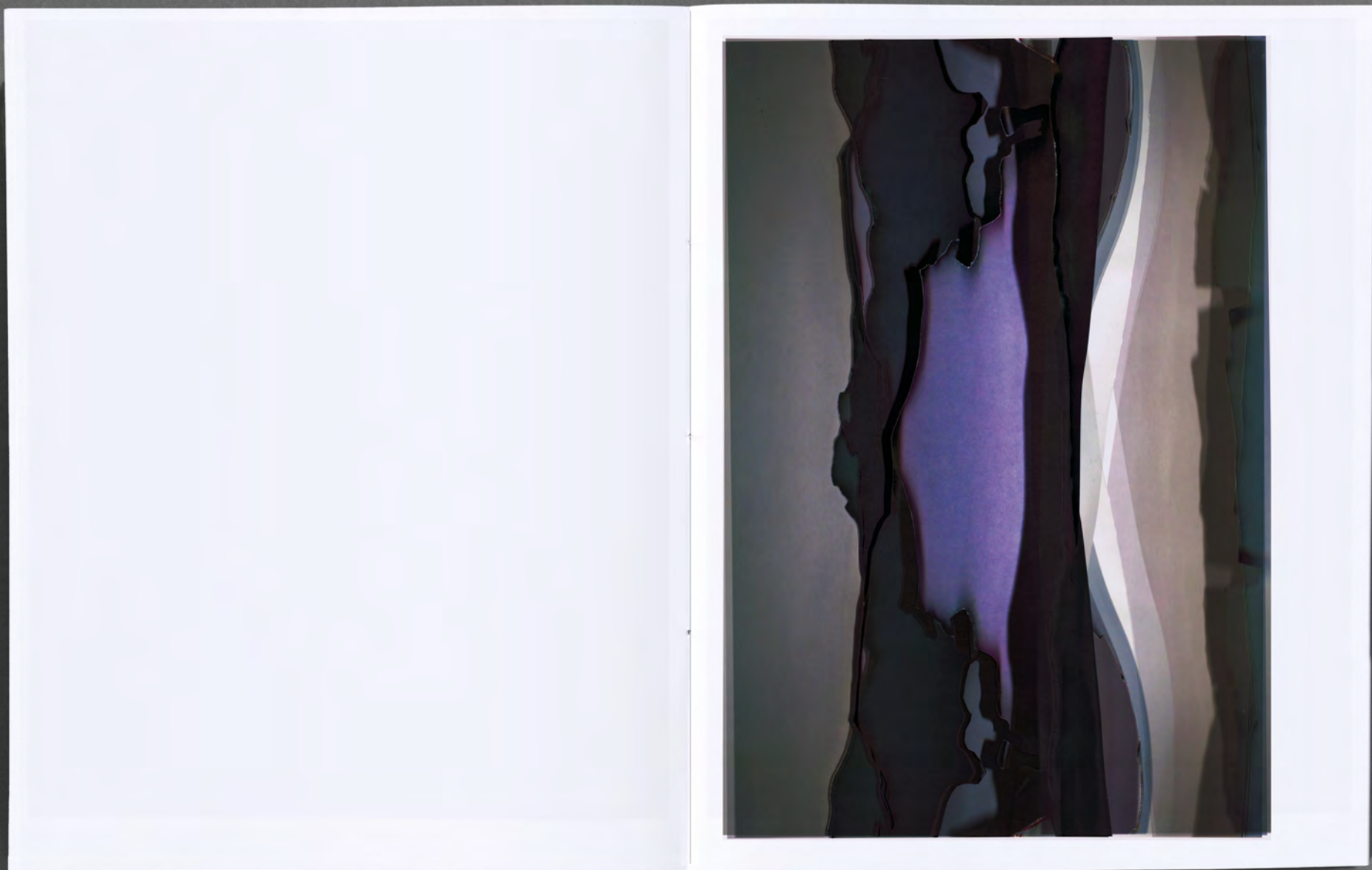
The studio represents one method of perceived and concentrated
isolation, a current reflection of life connected to the unraveling of
our species under the cudgel of a capitalocentric misanthropocene.

How we use life – manifested by our relationship to the notion of
work – and make things surely falls into question. Especially now,
inside of the paradigm-shifting essential / non-essential divide,
housed neatly in the accelerated, crumbling, fractured facade of
capitalist realism. What we do or see in it, this or them is a form of
theoretical ontological inquiry. But it's also the beginnings of the
integral inquiry into what we've considered and framed as art making.

Without much fanfare, large-brained humyn hominids spiral in a
flameout, a post-primordial sludge of newly-used-with-nowhere
to-go detritus, the evil of our extractive deeds foreseen. Through
small windows, the omniscient spiral in which they reside and
recoil against in togetherness will continue to parlay into
flowery terms about their selves.

Oh consciousness, intelligence, beauty enlightenment
(chorally). Collectively, simultaneously—allegedly, brilliantly
—the hominids innovate their infinitely uncute selves in the
warm company of amosexuals and psychopaths. The forests
and soils successfully disappear as unevolved assholes are
wiped clean and oceans suffocated in order to fill needy
stomachs. Carbon-based life forms stamped out like political
enemies of no-one-in-particular.







Miranda Lichtenstein, *Grounds*, 2017?

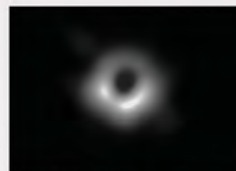


The images here are divided into three groups. In *Holes*, we've left behind any obvious referent to a plastic bag (though we are still looking at one of Blackwell's laser-cut and ironed deli bags). These seem to be samples of still-cooling igneous rock, slippery black. They are at once heavy and diaphanous—veils of stone. Her *Ground* series goes the farthest in its actual dimensionality: pieces of photographs are roughly torn, layered, and pinned together with little nails, framing a central void on the wall. The burnt edge effects on many of the gray strands are from light leaks as Lichtenstein was making the scans, but they introduce a certain violent beauty and sense of loss in their physical manipulation into an aggregate shape. (This is especially so, I think, because we've come to expect clever digital maneuvering and accumulation in Lichtenstein's work. The literal blankness is jarring.) The unique *Untitled* prints combine properties of *Holes* and *Grounds*. Many of the compositions retain the central vortex of the *Grounds*, without the actual hole, around which layers of curled paper and shadows accumulate, or deep blacks that cross over planes of light like caverns but never fully coalesce into a single shape. Prisms of color and smudged bands contribute to a sense of movement—and not just of light over the surface, but of something trying to emerge from a great depth.

One of Bontecou's aims in her early void sculptures was to create an uncertain gravitational pull to them. She, too, is an avid recycler; the thick canvas that she stretched over welded wire frames to make her wall reliefs in the late 1950s and '60s were discards from the steam laundry below her New York City studio. She would pick up old airplane parts, screws, and grommets on Canal Street to construct sculptures that were weighted in postwar American politics and, relatedly, the futurism of outer space and black holes (which were named by scientists during this period). Bontecou's own breakthrough came in Rome just before she moved to New York City in 1958, when she began making drawings on paper with her welding torch. Back in New York, these soot drawings, many of which resembled bleak moonscapes, extended to the protruding voids of her sculptures, which she lined in that welding soot and black velvet so that they might disappear or be as boundless as possible. The effect is impossible to fix—a singularity, as the mysterious, unknown interior space of a black hole is called.

Last year, the first image of a black hole was revealed to great fanfare, a coordinated effort between hundreds of scientists and nine observatory telescopes around the world. "We have seen what we thought was unseeable," one of the astronomers said of the glowing orange ring and pitch-black center. "If you stare at the picture too long, it seems to vibrate—the ultimate unstable image, working backwards to undo any form or light."

Though all three sets of Lichtenstein's photos in this book are distinct, all are destabilized compositions, whether within the picture itself (*Holes* and the unique *Untitleds*) or as the photograph's overall shape (*Grounds*). Their forms are still in formation. This is no small effect—and suggests a new development in Lichtenstein's unflagging exploration of photography's pull toward composing and confounding reality.

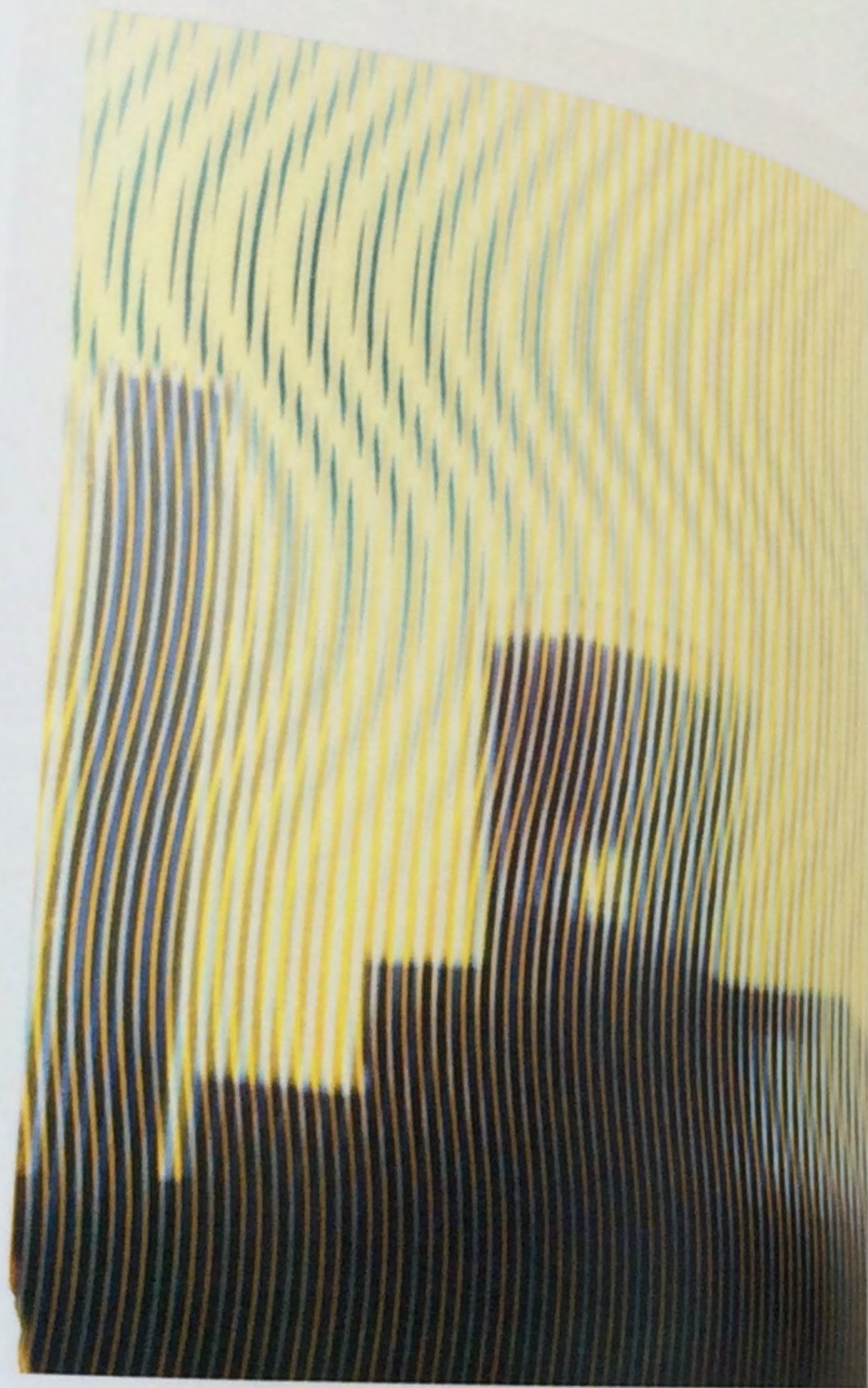


2. Nadia Drake, "First Ever Picture of a Black Hole Revealed," *National Geographic*, April 10, 2019.









ARTISTS' CHOICE
AN EXPANDED FIELD
OF PHOTOGRAPHY

MASS MoCA



ARTISTS' CHOICE AN EXPANDED FIELD OF PHOTOGRAPHY

In conjunction with her solo exhibition, Liz Deschenes has chosen six artists to participate in a group show that looks at photography as an increasingly diversified medium which intersects and informs other fields of art making. Deschenes identified the artists—Dana Hoey, Miranda Lichtenstein, Craig Kalpakjian, Josh Tonsfeldt, Sara VanDerBeek, and Randy West—for their individual contributions to the medium and invited each to choose the work he or she would like to present. The resulting constellation of works demonstrates the artists' wide-ranging approaches to their art and represents through both analog and digital formats the expanding field of photography in the current age.

Though the selection of works does not conform to a traditional curatorial thesis, commonalities and shared interests emerge. Each artist offers a new perspective on the properties and processes of photography itself—be they formal, mechanical, or conceptual. The roles of light, depth, and scale are examined and re-thought, as are support, frame, and format. The works also challenge the medium's historic associations with mimetic representation, the male gaze, and reproducibility. Several of the featured artists, like Deschenes herself, make work that is considered photographic but is made without a camera. For some, photography lays the groundwork for the moving image, while, for others, it functions as a jumping-off point for sculpture. Many of the artists also share an interest in architecture and site—variously documenting or creating images of built space, or by engaging directly with the physical conditions or history of the gallery space. All of the artists engage with a number of pictorial traditions, influenced by predecessors ranging from Josef Albers and Sol LeWitt to the Lumière brothers, Man Ray, and László Moholy-Nagy. These antecedents worked in multiple mediums and pushed the boundaries of photography through their embrace of experimentation and new technologies, which allowed them to envision the world anew. Similarly, the featured artists frequently question photography as a likeness of the real. They variously conceal, obscure, and confuse viewers' perceptions and expectations of image making, offering new ways of seeing and presenting new realities.

Susan Cross, Curator

Miranda Lichtenstein, *Drop (yellow)*, 2014
Archival pigment print
50 x 33 1/4 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Elizabeth Dee, New York

Miranda Lichtenstein

Miranda Lichtenstein's works bring a sense of wonder to the act of looking, transforming the familiar into something unexpected. Her practice probes the possibilities of photography and perception, experimenting with both analog and digital formats, from Polaroids to inkjet prints. The exhibition opens with a video by Lichtenstein that reflects her interest in how developments in technology shape new ways of seeing. ***Danse Serpentine (doubled and refracted)*** (2010/2015) manipulates an 1896 hand-tinted film featuring the modern dance and lighting pioneer Loie Fuller. Louis Lumière—credited with the creation of the first true motion picture in 1894—captured Fuller as she danced in rippling silk robes on a stage dramatically lit from below. Fuller's fluid, improvised movements are repeated by those of the fabric, and together they created a mesmerizing synthesis of multiple senses and disciplines and reflected both a modern aesthetic and the modern woman. Lichtenstein recorded on video a projection of the original (sourced from YouTube) layered on top of a second projection of the film reflected off a Mylar screen. She presents this composite image on black fabric, which references the theatrical curtain seen behind Fuller and further transforms the moving picture into an ambiguous reverie of light, color, and movement. Freestanding in the gallery and installed on Autopoles traditionally used to hold photo backdrops, the video asserts its objecthood as well as its relationship to photography.

Photographs from the artist's ongoing series "Screen Shadows" (begun in 2010) are also on view. These works picture everyday items—from vases to kitchen gadgets—silhouetted and obscured by an array of papers. The translucent papers act as filters between camera and object,



Still from *Danse Serpentine (doubled and refracted)*, 2010/2015
HD video (48 sec., looped), black cloth, Autopoles
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist and Elizabeth Dee, New York

and simultaneously have a flattening effect and introduce a patterned foreground. The resulting images play with the viewer's perception of surface, distance, and scale; when enlarged, the small table-top objects take on the uncanny appearance of architecture. These graphic images bring to mind the experimental photographs of László Moholy-Nagy and Man Ray, especially their photograms, which were created by laying objects directly on photosensitized paper and exposing them to light. Although related to early twentieth-century practices, Lichtenstein also sees her "Screen Shadows" as a reflection of the dominant visual condition of the back-lit image made ubiquitous by computer screens and cell phones.



Q&A



Miranda Lichtenstein on Evolution

EMH: What was your first memory of photography?

ML: My brother, who is also a photographer, built a darkroom in our bathroom when I was ten. So I was introduced to photography at a very early age.

EMH: What was the first series of images you created? Do you still have them?

ML: My closest friend in high school was a muse for me, and I photographed her constantly—well into my twenties. I came across a box of these prints when my mother sold her house this year and, although I would never show them, they are now in my studio. I also made a series of multi-media collages that I applied to graduate school with, called "Golden Ads of the '80s." It was very influenced by artists from the Pictures Generation. I might have two of these left. They looked much better in slides than in person.

EMH: How do you use photography now?

ML: I remain faithful to the heterogeneous nature of the

medium, but I've been primarily shooting in the studio for the past three or four years. I've been working on a series that feels endless in its iterations, which is very satisfying. I'm interested in calling attention to the construction of the photograph, with an emphasis on its surface.

EMH: You seem to be very project oriented, with your work morphing from one project to the next, aesthetically. What is the thread that binds it all?

ML: Light, and the mutable and myriad possibilities inherent to the medium.

EMH: You are both a photographer and a professor of photography, yet—in my experience speaking with you over the years—it seems you prefer to not over-intellectualize photography. How do you talk about photography to your students? How do you reconcile being a contemporary artist without dressing your work in "artspeak?"

ML: It's interesting that you say this because I think I have a





Miranda Lichtenstein. Ganzfeld, 2005. C-print.

very different reputation where I currently teach, at Rutgers University. I would say that I don't discriminate and I'm comfortable straddling different approaches and attitudes when it comes to teaching. When we worked together you were different from many of the students, in that you were working with fashion. I worked as a photo editor and researcher at magazines for many years before teaching, so I'm comfortable in this realm and take it on its own terms. I suspect I tailored our conversations in this way since it seemed natural, and I respected the work for not trying to be something it wasn't. It's a mistake to try to bend one's work in a way that's not true to itself. You need to own what you're doing and if that means you are allergic to what you call "art speak" then I think it's better to not go there and to be direct.

EMH: You currently have a show at the Gallery at Hermès of your four-by-five Polaroids from 2002 to 2013. Can you speak on your latest show? How did it come about, and what do you wish your viewers to take away from it?

ML: The exhibition was put together by Cory Jacobs, a photo editor and curator at Hermès, whom I've known and respected for years. She approached me about doing a show a year ago. She had seen some of my Polaroids at the Hammer Museum in 2006. I thought Cory's idea to look back at my Polaroid work over the past 11 years would be a great opportunity to bring together work

that I hadn't shown simultaneously and to unify the pictures through this specific format. I was also interested to show in a space that is dedicated to photography, a new context for me. We decided that I would go through my work from the very beginning, when I first started shooting with a four-by-five Polaroid, until the present. I liked the idea of doing a show that culminated in, what will most likely be, some of my last Polaroids, because the film is no longer manufactured. Since the project was coming to an end, it made sense to have it all put together as a group.

I hope that viewers will allow for a slow read. A lot of the ideas in the work circle around misrepresentation and failure, but because of the small scale the viewer might have to work a bit to see this.

EMH: Are you interested in beauty?

ML: No. Not as an idea, or ideal. I do think I'm attracted to things that have a certain amount of pleasure, but this is not across the board. My work is often called "beautiful" and this makes me a little uncomfortable, because I fear it can trump meaning. But I would never go out of my way to make something less "beautiful" for the sake of it. I hope if someone finds the work beautiful it will encourage them to keep looking.

EMH: What do you want from photography?

ML: I want it to continue to open up and be multifaceted, while



still being considered on its own terms as a medium. It is constantly being labeled as "documentary," "experimental," "amateur," etc., which I hope we can get past. László Moholy-Nagy famously said, "The enemy of photography is the convention, the fixed rules of 'how to do.' The salvation of photography comes from the experiment." ■

68

Miranda Lichtenstein is a photographer and professor. Her work has been featured in solo exhibitions at the UCLA Hammer Museum, Whitney Museum at Philip Morris and Gallery Min Min. She has also participated in group exhibitions at the Guggenheim Museum and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and has work in the permanent collections of a number of international museums, including the New Museum of Contemporary Art and the Neuberger Museum of Art. Lichtenstein has taught at Parsons The New School of Design and Rutgers University.



69

*Untitled #20 (Palucca), 2008.
Archival pigment print.*

OSMOS

MAGAZINE

ISSUE 04
SUMMER 2014



9 780988 340442



ISBN 978-0-9883404-4-2
\$25.00
525.00 >

Miranda Lichtenstein

SCREEN SHADOWS

The images reproduced on these pages were recently installed at the Gallery at Hermès in New York, where I exhibited a larger selection of the 4x5 inch Polaroids I have made over the past eleven years.

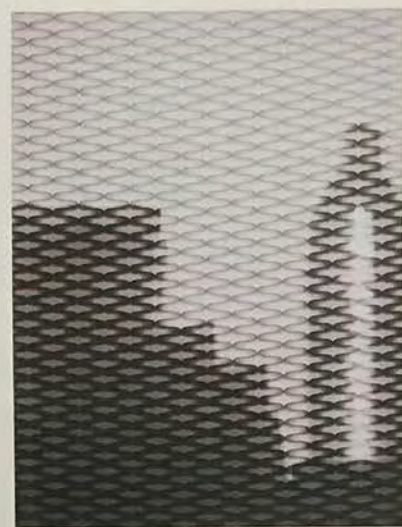
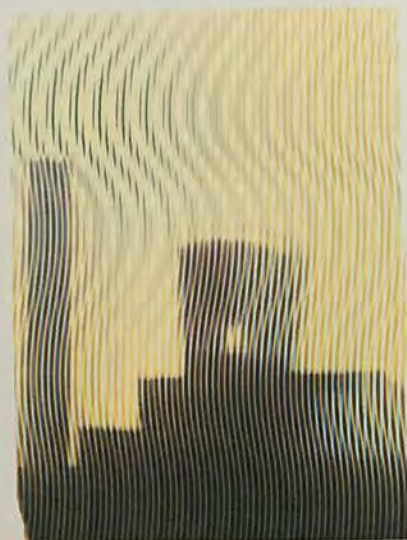
I am constantly re-photographing different arrangements of prints in my studio. The prints in this work come from an ongoing series called *Screen Shadows*, installed with backlighting, arranged found objects and paper screens. Since the shadow is absorbed into the pattern of the paper screen, it is difficult to perceive precisely how the image is produced—whether it has been projected, is coming from an object out of view, is the thing itself, or has been composed using the computer. Because the screen is actualized as both permeable filter and opaque surface, the visible distinction between the digital and the analog becomes collapsed.

These pictures are shot with a macro lens, so there is particular attention to detail in the surface of the screen paper, which also forces me to focus on fragments of a much larger composition—it's about zooming in and re-framing. By re-shooting the prints in my studio with a Polaroid I am reversing the typical chain of events of re-production, where the photographer digitally documents a unique work. Instead, I am making a unique work from a multiple.

Miranda Lichtenstein is an artist who works in photography and video. Her work has been widely exhibited at institutions including The Guggenheim Museum, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Renaissance Society, Chicago, Stadthaus Ulm, Germany, and the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York.

Solo exhibitions of her work have been held at venues such as the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, the Whitney Museum of American Art, Elizabeth Dee, New York, Gallery MinMin, Tokyo, Mary Goldman Gallery, Los Angeles, and most recently at the Gallery at Hermès, New York.











04/11 – 06/04, 2014

Miranda Lichtenstein: Polaroids

I enjoy the human trick of turning an object into an image.
— Walker Evans

From washed out family snapshots to work by artists such as Andy Warhol, Robert Mapplethorpe and even Walker Evans, Polaroids occupy specific places in our collective consciousness. Miranda Lichtenstein works primarily in photography and video, and Polaroids comprise one part of her artistic practice. This exhibition spans over a decade of work, highlighting multiple series and offering a glimpse into her creative process. The Gallery at Hermès is pleased to present 46 works produced between 2002 and 2013.

Just before leaving for a summer residency at Monet's garden in Giverny, France, a friend gave Lichtenstein a 4x5 Linhof camera with a Polaroid back. Photographing the flowers the gardeners cut the moment they began to wilt, Lichtenstein created complex compositions by arranging the cuttings against misaligned shadows that she painted by hand. Shadow play continued during her multiple visits to Japan, where she started using Japanese paper known as Washi as both background and screen. During a fellowship in Italy, Lichtenstein looked to classic still life subject matter (fruit, vases, flowers), but here she tried to confuse our expectations of space and proportion with distorting reflective surfaces. Lastly—in images made specifically for this exhibition—Lichtenstein worked in her Brooklyn studio pushing the distillation of form to the edge.

Lichtenstein explains, "I'm interested in instilling a sense of wonder in the viewer in an age when very little surprises." As an artist exploring the still life genre, Lichtenstein has turned objects into images, but given their singularity, these works are also objects unto themselves. They are small, tactile and imperfect. They urge you to look more closely while providing a view into the evolving eye of an artist over 11 years of making art, never staying still.

Miranda Lichtenstein graduated with an MFA from California Institute of the Arts. Solo exhibitions of her work have been held at venues such as the UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, New York; Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York and Gallery Min Min, Tokyo. She has been included in group exhibitions at the Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC and the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York. Her work is also in their permanent collections, among others. Lichtenstein is Assistant Professor in Photography at Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Curated by Cory Jacobs

The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès supports people and organisations seeking to learn, perfect, transmit and celebrate the skills and savoir-faire that shape and inspire our lives today, and into the future. Guided by our central focus on artisan expertise and creative artistry in the context of society's changing needs, the Foundation's activities explore two complementary avenues: know-how and creativity, know-how and the transmission of skills.

The Fondation supports partner organisations across the globe. At the same time, we develop and administer our own projects in the contemporary visual arts (exhibitions and artists' residencies), the performing arts (the New Seasons programme), design (the Prix Émile Hermès international design award), craftsmanship (the Skills Academy), and biodiversity. The Foundation's programmes and support is rooted in a single, underlying belief: *Our genres define us.*

www.fondationdentreprisehermes.org

THE POLAROID YEARS

Instant Photography
and Experimentation



Miranda Lichtenstein

In the summer of 2002, I was invited to be an artist-in-residence at Monet's garden in Giverny. In advance of the trip, I was happy to inherit Roe Ethridge's 4 x 5 camera—a Linhof Kardan Super Color—that he, in turn, had inherited from a mutual friend, the photographer Jason Schmidt. As I had never used a 4 x 5 camera before, I developed an expensive habit of using a Polaroid back in order to experiment, and

to learn how to get the results I was looking for with the still-life series I was working on. I was using Polaroid film primarily to gauge exposure for shooting 4 x 5 negatives, but it was not long before I realized that I actually preferred the Polaroids themselves. Everything about the process lent itself to the series: the etched quality on the surface created more of a division between the object pictured and its painted shadow; the specific Polaroid Type 79 color had a perfect green cast that pushed tungsten-lit blacks to resemble the palette of the Chardin paintings I was looking at; and the scale forced you to look at the Polaroids

closely. What's more, a unique print of a painted object made sense to me conceptually, as I liked the contradiction of making an instantaneous image of something so labored.

Funny enough, even before I started using the 4 x 5 Polaroid back, I would go to the garden in the evening and shoot studies of different trees with an old Polaroid OneStep. I liked the washed-out quality in the highlights, and I was using these studies to paint the shadowed backdrops for my still lifes. I didn't own a digital camera at the time, so it was my way of having an instant record. It was also part of an effort to transform the



above: *Untitled #1 (Plant)*, 2002-5
opposite: *Untitled #8 (Flower)*, 2002-5





opposite: *Untitled #6 (Flower)*, 2002-5;
Untitled #25 (Flower), 2002-5

above: *Untitled #10 (Plant)*, 2002-5



grandiosity of the garden into a snapshot of light and lines. Perhaps these initial studies influenced my fondness for the small scale, though the quality of the Polaroid 600 film is vastly different from the 4 x 5 Polaroid. The focus is soft, and the pictures have a warm, almost orange-ish palette. It's the same film my parents shot in the seventies, with the large white border that begs for a caption, and it was used by people like Maripol, whose documents of the downtown scene lured me to Manhattan in the 1980s.

The Polaroids I have been most drawn to are those Walker Evans took toward the end of his life, when he shot constantly. His detached images of signs, streets, and architecture take on an artificial quality that is enhanced by the saturation and imperfections of the film. I've also been fascinated by Tarkovsky's Polaroids, which resemble stills from his films, and Robert Mapplethorpe's, for their combination of beauty and roughness (they are much more appealing to me than his prints). Andy Warhol's Polaroid portraits are also striking because the background is either black or cream colored, but never studio white. Some of the first Polaroids I ever encountered were those of Lucas Samaras, which took the theatrics of the studio and the surface of the print to new levels; they gave me a sense of the wide range of possibilities within this otherwise simple medium.

BLIND SPOT

42

S22



CRITICAL
ARTS
MILITARY
CIVILIAN

Miranda Lichtenstein
Cameron Martin



Skull, 1964. Photographed by Miranda Lichtenstein, courtesy of Cameron Martin. Skull, 1964. Photographed by Miranda Lichtenstein, courtesy of Cameron Martin. Skull, 1964. Photographed by Miranda Lichtenstein, courtesy of Cameron Martin.







MIRANDA LICHTENSTEIN

LIVES AND WORKS IN NEW YORK

CURATOR: JAMES ELAINE
ESSAY BY MALIK GAZNES

Vault Gallery
January 28–April 30, 2006

Through her evolving practice, Miranda Lichtenstein has consistently found ways to mystify the certainties of photography by aligning them with more ambiguous painting traditions. The artist is a photographer first and a conceptual one at that: she moves ideas through her modern medium with its chemical processes and verisimilitudes, managing its materials like practical instruments of science. But still, Lichtenstein's romantic sensibility alters the nature of the camera's authority over the real by turning its lens toward the imagination. Just as her early series *Lovers Lane* (2000) treated wild, isolated environments with the eerie dramatics of the nineteenth-century sublime, so does her latest project blend typological photography with European painting movements contemporaneous with the camera's invention, employing both the heavy presences of eighteenth-century still lifes and the squinty-eyed mistiness of French impressionism. Although Lichtenstein avoids corny anachronism with a synthesis of content and form that's distinctly contemporary, her projects have the power to evoke an older-days moment when photographs and paintings began to emphasize their distinctions. Rather than posing this union as a crisis of seeing or some other emergency of today's subjectivity, she allows the borders to slowly bleed, letting a little magic seep into what's real, and vice versa.

Lichtenstein's new series of Polaroids reminds us that beauty and understanding can indeed coexist and, in fact, often produce each other. In her work—as in the early

photographic experiments of William Henry Fox Talbot, who thought that capturing a landscape's imprint on paper would be a charming alternative to sketching it; or in Eadweard Muybridge's famous animal locomotion photos, which unraveled age-old mysteries of life's form; or even in the elegantly specific illustrations of John James Audubon, which captured particulars of native species in intricate detail—the replication of nature, and the desire to do so, is not simply a tool to further humankind's progress or to achieve artistic realism, but is a thing of transcendence. Take, for instance, Lichtenstein's *Untitled #8 (flower)* (2005). A single pink flower atop a bent green stalk, an ordinary sort of thing, stands before a shadowy backdrop of flowers past and future. In itself, this little being epitomizes the futility and grace of life, the dendritic patterns of its leaves representing all of us and, captured here in a glint of light, keeping forever safe the delicate thing's impermanence. Behind the flower, black figures loom against watery greens and blues, a backdrop that resembles a pond reflecting the evening sky. The dark silhouettes suggest infinite floweriness. Their distinctions are an obvious product of Darwinian speciation, and yet the looming quality they share conveys something otherworldly. Between the unimposing pink blossom that one might have picked up on the side of the road and the more universal gestures of flowers behind it is a space where the flower and the idea of the flower merge. Here is where knowledge and imagination grow into each other in an indistinguishable thicket and the viewer, experienced as



272

HAMMER PROJECTS 2006



Polaroids, 2002–5. Polaroids: 5 1/4 x 4 1/4 in. (13.2 x 10.4 cm) each

MIRANDA LICHTENSTEIN

273



Shadows, 2006. C-prints. 30 1/4 x 19 1/4 in. (76.5 x 48.8) each

Lichtenstein has again brought photography to painting's edge, specifically conflating ideas that emerge from her own art historical interests, including the turn-of-the-century botanical photographs of Karl Blossfeldt and the eighteenth-century still-life paintings of French artist Jean-Siméon Chardin.

she is in separating fact from fiction, is encouraged to let such differences drift away into a dusky mist.

In the terms of today's photography, this loss of objectivity could be described as a failure. Works that visualize concrete typologies, such as the industrial photography of German conceptualists Bernd and Hilla Becher, have influenced Lichtenstein's sense of what the medium is for and prevail in the discourse that surrounds photography as art. But Lichtenstein has consistently turned this documentary instinct toward systems that don't work as they are meant to, especially systems that fail at taming nature. The artist uses a camera as one might use paint and canvas: as a tool for re-creating something real through the prism of one's flawed senses, executed with subjective technique. In painting, this has been done with the understanding that the representation will never be real, despite helpful interpretive tricks like the camera obscura, a tool painters have used since the Renaissance to flatten what they saw into two dimensions. This artifice of painting is in opposition to the "gimmicks" of photography, as Roland Barthes put it, which is presumed to have always really captured a little of what it displays. For this series, Lichtenstein has again brought photography to painting's edge, specifically conflating ideas that emerge from her own art historical interests, including the turn-of-the-century botanical photographs of Karl Blossfeldt and the eighteenth-century still-life paintings of French artist Jean-Siméon Chardin.

Although these photographs suggest a critical consciousness of the histories they employ, the primary source for this work, as with many of the photographer's series, was a particular, vivid experience. While an artist-in-residence at

Giverny, the site of Monet's historic gardens, which are still carefully manicured to create the lovely flow of gentle disarray, Lichtenstein spied a toadstool in which the outlines of various garden implements were painted on the wall, indicating an organizational master plan. But the tools themselves were in all the wrong places. This displaced typology can be seen in the drawings Lichtenstein made to place behind her photographic subjects. The various fruits and flowers the documents don't quite match up with their backdrops, and the artist's hand is evident in creating this arrangement. Further heightening this expressive mark making is the fact that these are Polaroid images, photographs that possess the direct imprint of the light that created them. Process is a key element in this work, but not process for its own sake. Like those of science and poetry, this process is important because of its results. While each of these images proves only itself, the entire project shows that Lichtenstein is an artist who can skillfully manage history and presence, criticality and gesture, and above all, the slightly sinister beauty of a natural world in which we and the flowers are real, living participants. ■



BLIND SPOT

37



S15





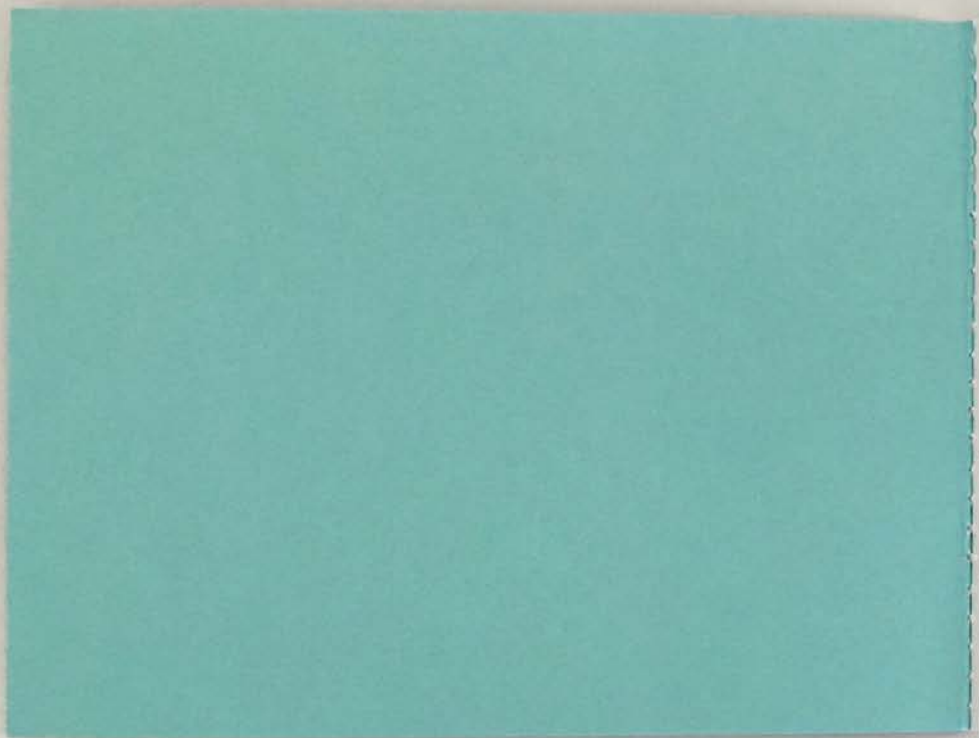
#66 opposite #62 All images courtesy of the artist, Mary Goldman Gallery, Los Angeles and Elizabeth Dee, New York

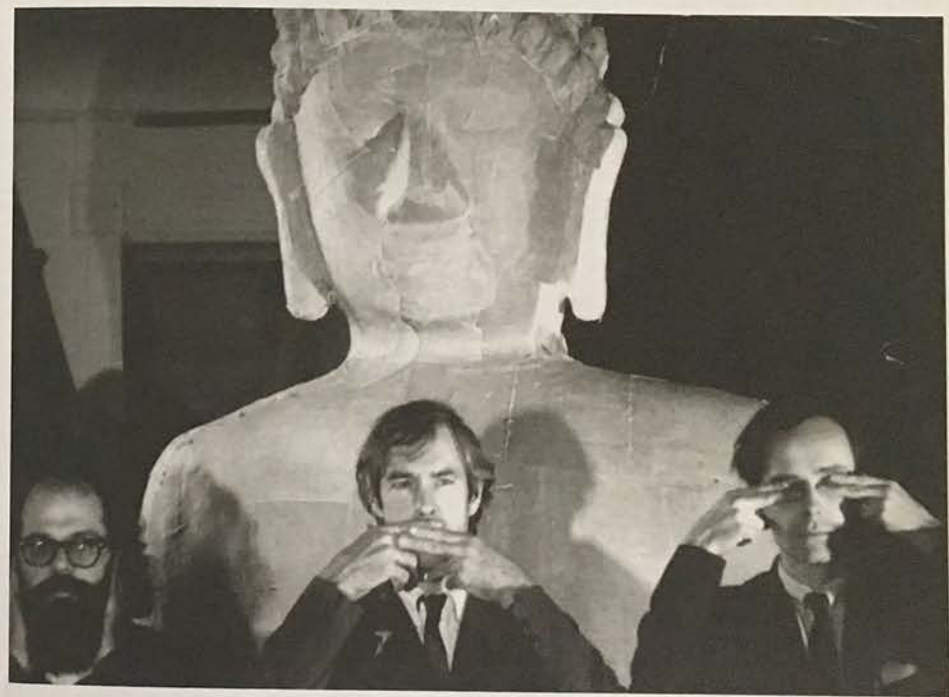
Miranda Lichtenstein

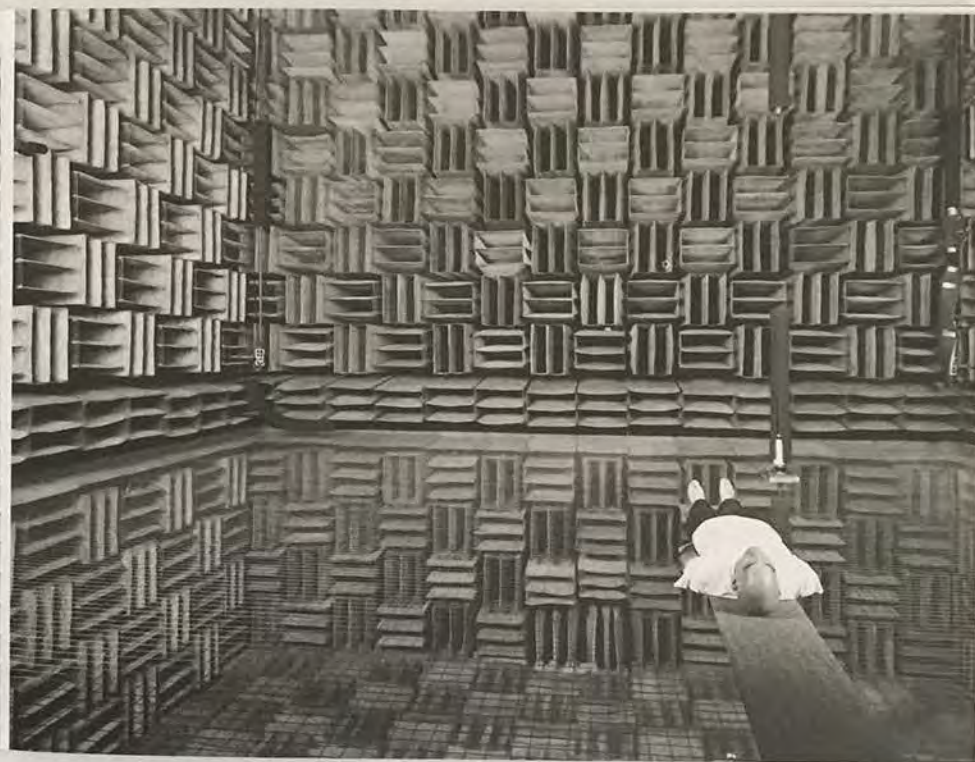
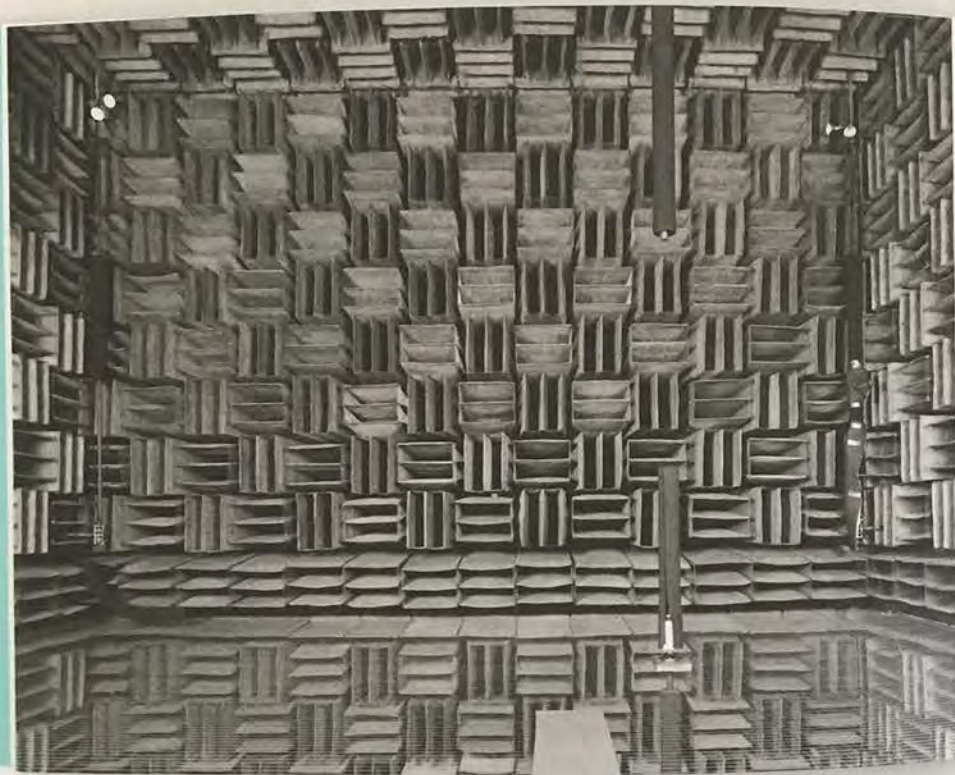


Miranda Lichtenstein
THE SEARCHERS



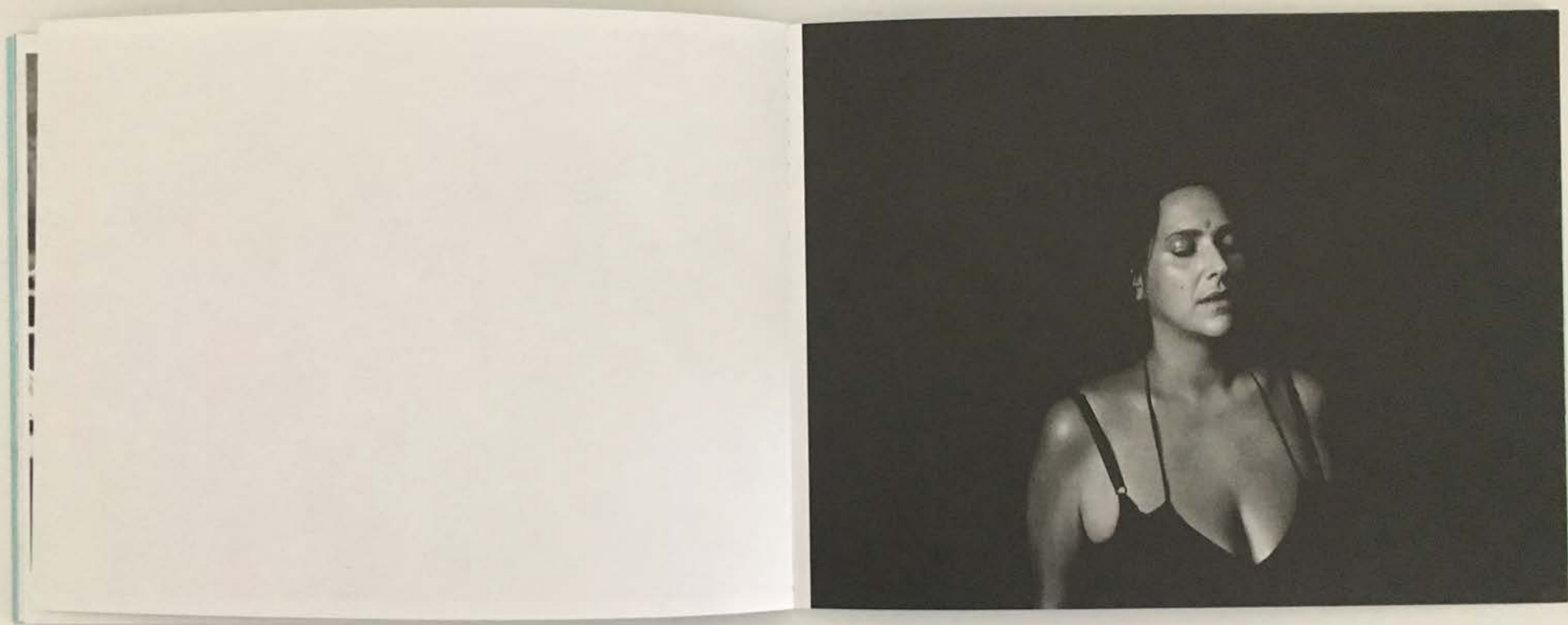














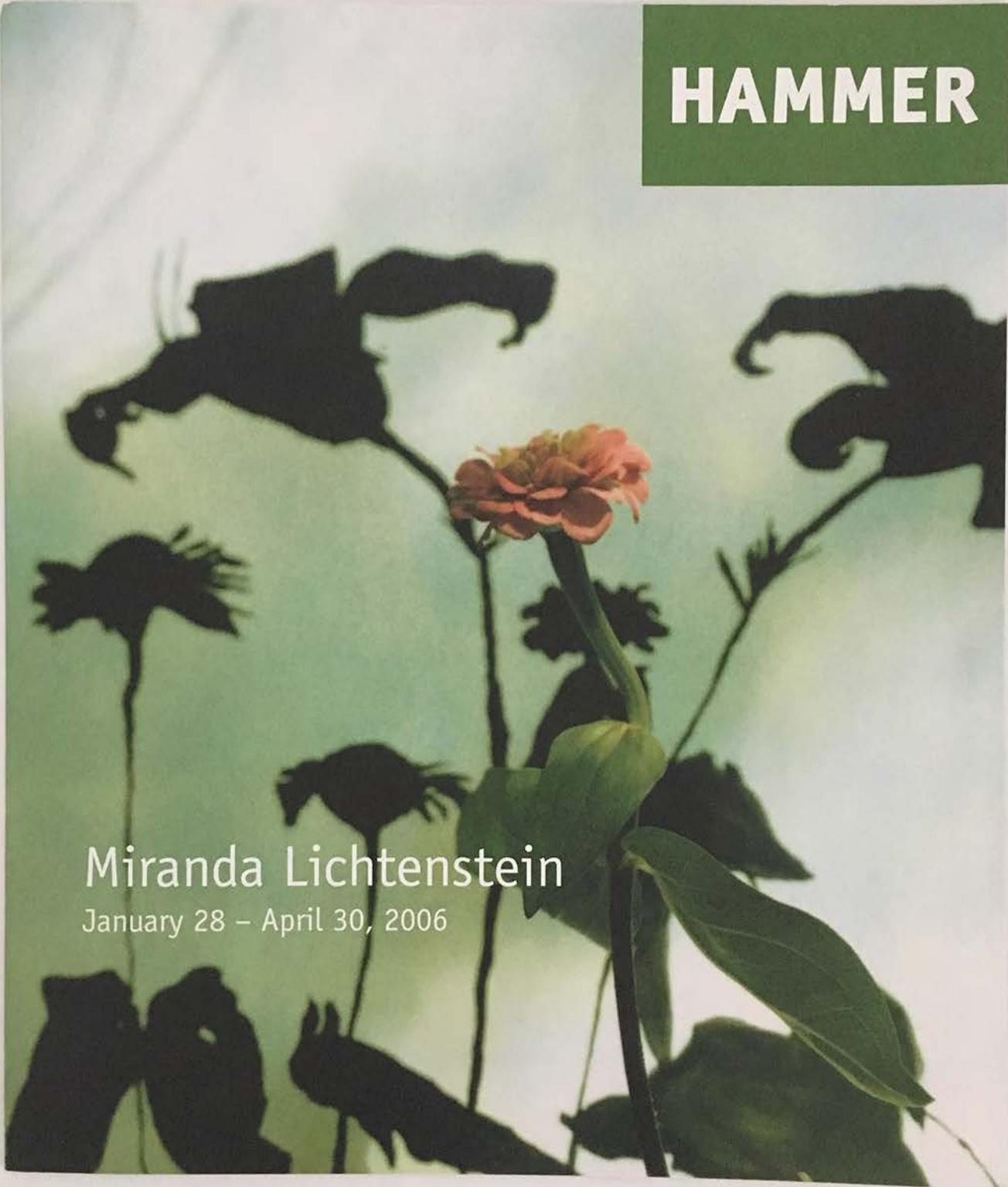


Miranda Lichtenstein
The Searchers
ISBN 0-9749037-5-2

Photographic Credits:
AP photo: 3; AP photo/HO: 7;
Nino Mascardi/Condé Nast Archive: 10, 11;
AP photo/Silvia Izquierdo: 17

Regency Arts Press
P.O. Box 20403
New York NY 10011
Telephone: 212-243-7104
www.regencyartspress.com
info@regencyartspress.com

Design: Omnivore, Inc.



HAMMER

Miranda Lichtenstein

January 28 – April 30, 2006

HAMMER PROJECTS

Miranda Lichtenstein

January 28 – April 30, 2006

Malik Gaines

Through her evolving practice, Miranda Lichtenstein has consistently found ways to mystify the certainties of photography by aligning them with more ambiguous painting traditions. The artist is a photographer first and a conceptual one at that: she moves ideas through her modern medium with its chemical processes and verisimilitudes, managing its materials like practical instruments of science. But still, Lichtenstein's romantic sensibility alters the nature of the camera's authority over the real by turning its lens toward the imagination. Just as her early series *Lovers Lane* (2000) treated wild, isolated environments with the eerie dramatics of the nineteenth-century sublime, so does her latest project blend typological photography with European painting movements contemporaneous with the camera's invention, employing both the heavy presences of eighteenth-century still lifes and the squinty-eyed mistiness of French impressionism. Although Lichtenstein avoids corny anachronism with a synthesis of content and form that's distinctly contemporary, her projects have the power to evoke an olden-days moment when photographs and paintings began to emphasize their distinctions. Rather than posing this schism as a crisis of seeing or some other emergency of today's subjectivity, she allows the borders to slowly bleed, letting a little magic seep into what's real, and vice versa.

Lichtenstein's new series of Polaroids reminds us that beauty and understanding can indeed coexist and, in fact, often produce each other. In her work—as in the early photographic experiments of William Henry Fox Talbot, who thought that capturing a landscape's imprint on paper would be a charming alternative to sketching it; or in Eadweard Muybridge's famous animal locomotion photos, which unraveled age-old mysteries of life's form; or even in the elegantly specific illustrations of John James Audubon, which captured particulars of native species in intricate detail—the replication of nature, and the desire to do so, is not simply a tool to further humankind's progress or to achieve artistic realism, but is a thing of transcendence. Take, for instance, Lichtenstein's *Untitled #8 (flower)* (2005). A single pink flower atop a bent green stalk, an ordinary sort of thing, stands before a shadowy backdrop of flowers past and future. In itself, this little being epitomizes the futility and grace of life, the dendritic patterns of its leaves representing all of us and, captured here in a glint of light, keeping forever safe the delicate thing's impermanence. Behind the flower, black figures loom against watery greens and blues, a back-



Hammer Projects are a series of exhibitions focusing primarily on the work of emerging artists.

Hammer Projects are made possible with support from The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Annenberg Foundation, Fox Entertainment Group's Arts Development Fee, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, and members of the Hammer Circle.

Organized by James Elaine, curator, Hammer Projects.

Above: *Poth*, 2003. C-print. 37 x 30 inches.

All images courtesy Mary Goldman Gallery.





drop that resembles a pond reflecting the evening sky. The dark silhouettes suggest infinite floweriness. Their distinctions are an obvious product of Darwinian speciation, and yet the looming quality they share conveys something otherworldly. Between the unimposing pink blossom that one might have picked up on the side of the road and the more universal gestures of flowers behind it is a space where the flower and the idea of the flower merge. Here is where knowledge and imagination grow into each other in an indistinguishable thicket and the viewer, experienced as she is in separating fact from fiction, is encouraged to let such differences drift away into a dusky mist.

In the terms of today's photography, this loss of objectivity could be described as a failure. Works that visualize concrete typologies, such as the industrial photography of German conceptualist photographers Bernd and Hilla Becher, have influenced Lichtenstein's sense of what the medium is for and prevail in the discourse that surrounds photography as art. But Lichtenstein has

consistently turned this documentary instinct toward systems that don't work as they are meant to, especially systems that fail at taming nature. The artist uses a camera as one might use paint and canvas; as a tool for re-creating something real through the prism of one's flawed senses, executed with subjective technique. In painting, this has been done with the understanding that the representation will never be real, despite helpful interpretive tricks like the camera obscura, a tool painters have used since the Renaissance to flatten what they saw into two dimensions. This artifice of painting is in opposition to the "genius" of photography, as Roland Barthes put it, which is presumed to have always really captured a little of what it displays. For this series, Lichtenstein has again brought photography to painting's edge, specifically conflating ideas that emerge from her own art historical interests, including the turn-of-the-century botanical photographs of Karl Blossfeldt and the eighteenth-century still-life paintings of French artist Jean-Siméon Chardin.

Although these photographs suggest a critical consciousness of the histories they employ, the primary source for this work, as with many of the photographer's series, was a particular, vivid experience. While an artist-in-residence at Giverny, the site of Monet's historic gardens, which are still carefully manicured to create the lovely flow of gentle disarray, Lichtenstein spied a toolshed in which the outlines of various garden implements were painted on the wall, indicating an organizational master plan. But the tools themselves were in all the wrong places. This displaced typology can be seen in the drawings Lichtenstein made to place behind her photographic subjects. The various fruits and flowers she documents don't quite match up with their backdrops, and the artist's hand is evident in creating this arrangement. Further heightening this expressive mark making is the fact that these are Polaroid images, photographs that possess the direct imprint of the light that created them. Process is a key element in this work, but not process for its own sake. Like those of science and poetry, this process is important because of its results. While each of these images proves only itself, the entire project shows that Lichtenstein is an artist who can skillfully manage history and presence, criticality and gesture, and above all, the slightly sinister beauty of a natural world in which we and the flowers are real, living participants.

Malik Gaines is a writer and performer based in Los Angeles.

Biography

Miranda Lichtenstein was born in 1969 in New York, where she currently lives. She completed her undergraduate studies at Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York, in 1990 and received her MFA in 1993 from the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia. She has had recent solo exhibitions at Elizabeth Dee Gallery, New York; Gallery Min Min, Tokyo; and Mary Goldman Gallery, Los Angeles. In 2001, Lichtenstein's Polaroid photographs were the focus of an exhibition at the Whitney Museum at Phillip Morris, New York. Her work has also been included in group exhibitions at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; the Renaissance Society, University of Chicago; and the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York. Reviews of her work have appeared in numerous publications, including *Artforum*, *Art in America*, and the *New Yorker*.

Hammer Museum

10899 Wilshire Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90024
Information: 310-443-7000 www.hammer.ucla.edu

The Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center is operated by the University of California, Los Angeles. Occidental Petroleum Corporation has partially endowed the Museum and constructed the Occidental Petroleum Cultural Center Building, which houses the Museum.

Copyright ©2006 by the Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved.

Left: *Untitled #7 (flower)*, 2002-2005. Polaroid, 4 1/8 x 5 1/8 inches.
Below, top: *Untitled #4 (shadow)*, 2005. C-print, 30 x 20 inches.
Below, bottom: *Untitled #17 (plant)*, 2002-2005. Polaroid, 5 1/8 x 4 1/8 inches.
Front cover: *Untitled #8 (flower)*, 2002-2005. Polaroid, 5 1/8 x 4 1/8 inches.
Back cover: *Untitled #14 (plant)*, 2002-2005. Polaroid, 5 1/8 x 4 1/8 inches.
Flap: *Untitled #1 (forest)*, 2002-2005. Polaroid, 5 1/8 x 4 1/8 inches.



The Renaissance Society

at The University of Chicago

Detourism

November 11–December 23, 2001



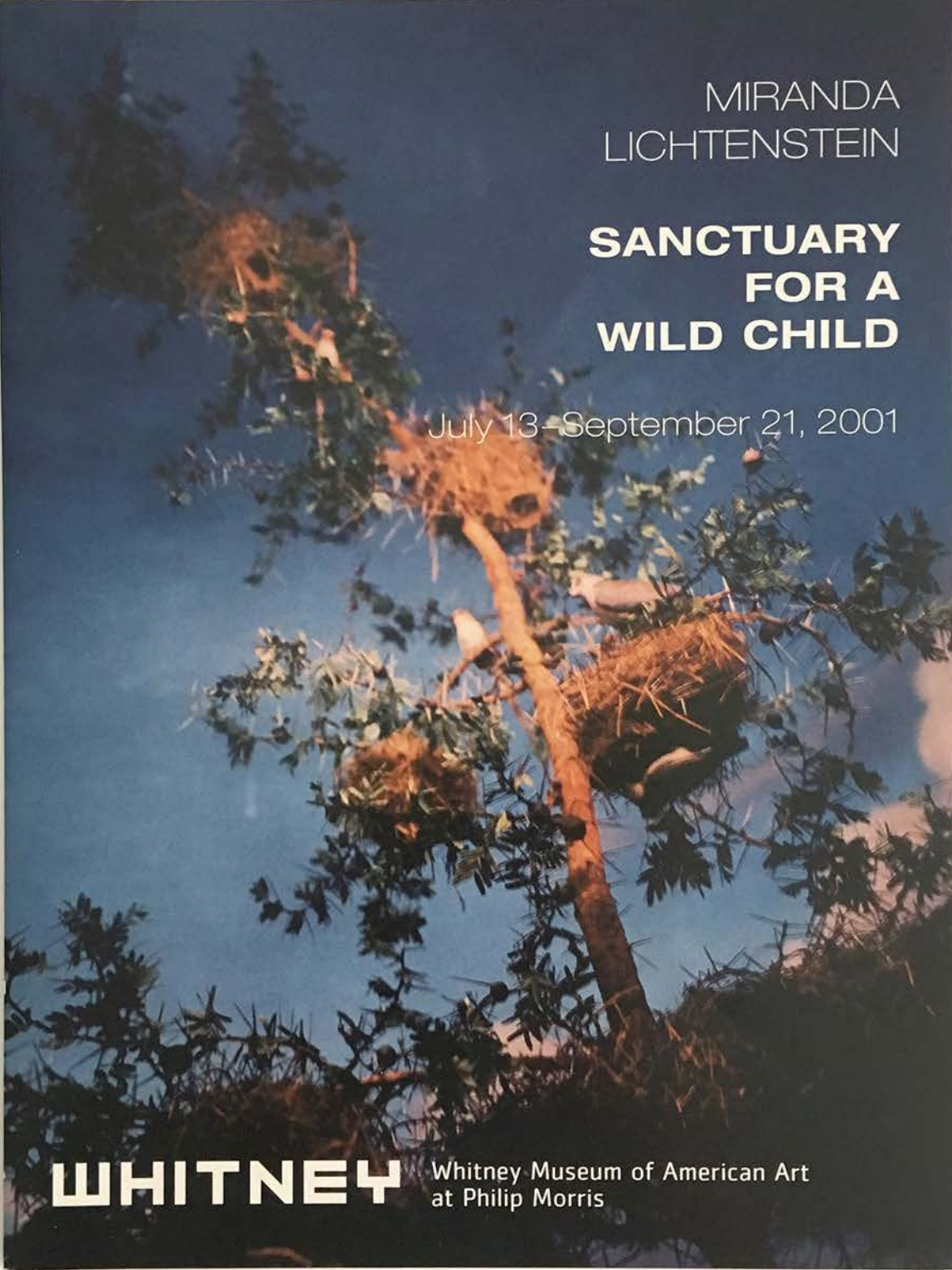


Asian immigrant population—as well as an historical overview of the last years of Nixon's presidency, the rise of Pol Pot and the residual, not receding, trauma of the Vietnam War. *ok bye bye*, however, eludes a genre. Structured as a series of one-way correspondences to a personal acquaintance whose writing assignments have taken him to Vietnam, *ok bye bye* is an amalgam of historical research, personal reflection and critical meditations that could hardly be called a documentary. Its true subject is neither Vietnam nor Southern California but how two distant and seemingly distinct geographic points are linked through fact as well as fiction with the result being a flawed palimpsest we call history.

Above:
Miranda Lichtenstein
Putrajaya Housing
Complex-Linkhouse, Precinct 8
2001
Type C print
30" x 40"

"We have no history, only a geography." That line is delivered by the handsome Uncle Nazar, one of the characters in Alnoor Dewshi's charming black and white film, *Latifah and Himli's Nomadic Uncle* (1992). In tag-along fashion, the camera follows Latifah and Himli, a pair of playfully antagonistic cousins of Indian descent, through the polyglot streets of London. With matching hair-styles, and identically clad in combat boots, saris and bomber jackets, the two would almost be indistinguishable were it not for the contrast in character. The film is structured around a dialogue between Latifah, the pretentious theorist and Himli, forever the gruff and grouchy pragmatist. The conversation, always sparkling with wit, addresses their fate as members of a cosmopolitan, Subaltern Diaspora. At the center of the film is a lesson in cultural and geographic relativism delivered by Uncle Nazar over a game of three-way ping pong. Formally, Dewshi's work is a surrealist jewel, lending a much needed lyricism to the strained politics of diversity. As if in response to the theoretical quagmire known as post-colonial studies, Himli delivers perhaps the film's most memorable line. "Where I come from, we don't worry about where we come from."

The rhetoric of authenticity is just as central to the discourse of contemporary photography as it is to say anthropology. *Detourism's* photo-based work challenges photographic conventions associated with tourism, journalism and photo-documentary. Miranda Lichtenstein's photo series *Cyberjaya* (2001) documents a model community being constructed on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital. Like the factory towns of the 19th century, Cyberjaya is built around a new class of internet workers. Housing ads boast of using the latest internet technologies to provide the owner full surveillance and temperature control capabilities. Whereas the genre of architectural photography celebrated the built environment, presenting it as an icon of optimism, Lichtenstein's *Cyberjaya* is suffused with skepticism. She lifts New Objectivity's prohibition on mood, often photographing her subject at twilight. If Lichtenstein's construction sites are any indication, then the future, as it is being shaped in rapidly industrializing countries, is over determined. Her photos contain subtle and not-so subtle traces of a tropical agrarian past giving way to a cultivated amnesia. The unfinished monorail, non-descript lodge, and bland housing complex are an anonymous suburban sprawl forgettable well before completion.



MIRANDA
LICHTENSTEIN

**SANCTUARY
FOR A
WILD CHILD**

July 13–September 21, 2001

WHITNEY

Whitney Museum of American Art
at Philip Morris



"I GREW UP IN THE CITY, AND ANYTHING NATUREY FEELS TERRIFYING.
IN A WAY, MY WORK IS AN INVESTIGATION OF MY OWN FEAR."¹
—MIRANDA LICHTENSTEIN

SANC-TU-AR-Y, n.

1. A. A SACRED PLACE, SUCH AS A CHURCH, TEMPLE, OR MOSQUE.
2. A. A SACRED PLACE...IN WHICH FUGITIVES FORMERLY WERE IMMUNE TO ARREST.
3. A PLACE OF REFUGE OR ASYLUM.
4. A RESERVED AREA IN WHICH BIRDS AND OTHER ANIMALS, ESPECIALLY WILD ANIMALS, ARE PROTECTED FROM HUNTING OR MOLESTATION.

—THE AMERICAN HERITAGE
DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE, 3RD ED., 1992

Defining distinct areas of sanctuary and, by inference, places of fear, is a basic instinct of human and animal society. The desire to create areas of inclusion and exclusion in human society also extends to more abstract arenas, such as defining "normal" behavior or acceptable emotions. Twentieth-century anthropologists have studied the ways in which this effort to delineate safety and threat has produced fundamental beliefs and practices, manifest in religious narratives, rites of passage, social mores, and even racism and sexism.

Miranda Lichtenstein's work explores the ambiguous arenas of sanctuary and fear through subjects ranging from male exhibitionists to suburban houses and byways in Connecticut. Though photography is her primary medium, her new installation at the Whitney Museum at Philip Morris, entitled *Sanctuary for a Wild Child*, consists of a series of draw-

ings and related DVD projections. Inspired by cross-cultural legends of children brought up in the wild, the works are displayed as an installation set within an architectural configuration designed to create a dynamic process of exploration for the viewer.

The term "Wild Child" refers to a child who grew up without any contact with civilization. Such children are described in apocryphal and historical accounts as troubling the line between nature and culture. Lichtenstein first began using the Wild Child in her work in 1997, intrigued by her discovery of the story



the Karpfen bear-girl

of Genie, who was found in 1970 imprisoned in a tiny room, where she had spent eleven of her thirteen years. The book and film chronicling the acculturation of Genie led Lichtenstein to other well-documented case studies of Wild Children—Kaspar Hauser, for example, who appeared as a young man in Nuremberg, Germany, in 1828 exhibiting no signs of having ever interacted with society; Victor, the eighteenth-century "Wild Boy of Aveyron," discovered living in the woods in France (the subject of François Truffaut's 1969 film, *L'Enfant Sauvage*); and Wild Peter, discovered in Germany in 1724 as a young boy of about twelve years. J.A.L. Singh and Robert M. Zingg's 1942 publication *Wolf-Children and Feral Man* presented an anthropological collection of more than forty such case histories, mostly from Europe and Asia and dating from the fourteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Singh and Zingg included cases involving extreme isolation from society, as well as those involving children who were thought to have been raised by animals, such as the Wolf Children of Midnapore, discovered in India in the 1920s. Each account led Lichtenstein to others, from the legendary child-founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus, and Edgar Rice Burroughs' fictitious Tarzan, to academic studies of "feral children" by recent social scientists.

Less interested in the accuracy of these accounts than in their persistent recurrence across time and culture, Lichtenstein sought to explore the common elements of the Wild Child narratives. Shepherded by their "civilized" discoverers, these children were thought to present a picture of humanity in its natural state, undefiled by culture. As such, they provided the perfect experimental subjects for early social scientists. In the more thorough case studies, the child is carefully scrutinized for its purity as well as for its savagery. A meticulous documentation of the process of civilization then follows, narrating the child's difficult (and sometimes unsuccessful) acquisition of speech and of cultural values such as morality or social responsibility. The popularity of these accounts, whether presented as case studies or through fictionalized narrations and oral mythology, seems rooted in a universal need to express the idea of an Other, who exists outside the boundaries of society and symbolizes the repressed, taboo, and threatening emotions and actions excluded from daily existence.

Sanctuary for a Wild Child presents a series of drawings Lichtenstein made of these children, inspired by her historical research. In the drawings, she willfully alters aspects of the characters, changing their features and period dress and using fairly generic representations of young children and babies. This approach calls attention to the interchangeability of the narrative accounts, though drawn from times and locales as disparate as twelfth-century Europe and twentieth-century India. Lichtenstein retains the typically colorful names by which each child was known, as if labeling each image for categorization (i.e., the Karpfen bear-girl, Tomko of Zips, the Champagne feral-girl, and the first, second, and third Lithuanian bear-child). With the name written along the bottom of each drawing under the child's image, they recall poster children—usually the sick or disabled, runaways, or victims of kidnapping—which adds an element of vulnerability to the works. The result is a kind of systematic cataloguing, in which the artist builds a typology of the Wild Children and evokes the narrative of their socialization.

In the Whitney exhibition, Lichtenstein has configured the drawings within an installation designed to draw on the viewer's physical experience of the space. Entering the darkened gallery, we are confronted with a blank, curved white wall, behind which vividly hued wall projections are partially visible. The curve

of the wall guides our movement around what is revealed to be a round, roofed enclosure. We then enter the low-ceilinged room to find the series of Wild Child drawings ringing the interior wall. The intimately scaled Wild Child images float on expanses of white paper and require us to move around the perimeter of the small space to see them fully, an action which underscores the sense of enclosure. The room itself is reminiscent of a burrow, a wild thing's sanctuary space that is at once reverent and protective as well as confining.

The second element of the installation is based on the photographic series that grew out of the drawings and explores the broader ideas of environment and protection. About twenty photographs are included in the Whitney installation, displayed as large-scale DVD projections on the far wall of the gallery. Each projection fades silently into the next, creating a hushed, dreamlike atmosphere. The photographs are of environments Lichtenstein built in her studio—burrows, model houses, and homemade dwellings constructed out of toothpicks and paper—that are meant to reflect the inner fantasies of the Wild Child. They are fragments of imagination and memory culled from incidental scenes and occurrences in each Wild Child account, such as the plantlike shape of the iron fence that kept Kaspar Hauser shut in from the outside world, an oddly cropped view of a tree branch seen as if from an enclosure below, or the familiar shadow of one child's maternal gazelle. Most prominent among these avatars is the artist's conception of the children's desire for shelter and sense of place, further established by the poetic titles of each projected photograph: *In some un-heard of country*, *Somewhere between here and there*, *Elsewhere*, and *Lost beyond telling*. In the projections, Lichtenstein often uses bright colors as backdrops to heighten the fictional content of the photographs and establish them in an imagined world. The



FROM FAR LEFT TO RIGHT: *Somewhere between here and there*, 2000–01; *the Karpfen bear-girl*, 1997–98; *Legend*, 2000–01; *Lost beyond telling*, 2000–01

children's lack of language, once thought to be one of the four criteria that distinguish animals from humans, prompted the artist to explore how a visual referent to a speechless child's memory could be made manifest in a landscape. For this reason, the photographs, unlike the strictly representational drawings, range from mysteriously suggestive to completely abstract.

Though the sequencing of images suggests the linear, temporal development of a film, the images, even when recognizable, do not resolve into a coherent story line. What connects these photographs to a concept of narrative is their relationship to the drawings. The names of the Wild Children on the drawings anchor the viewer by proposing a story that is concrete, but can never really be articulated, because their stories are to some extent *about* the absence of language. Likewise, the photographic images of a Wild Child's thoughts are semi-abstract and evocative rather than descriptive. Like other contemporary photographers, such as James Casebere and Gregory Crewdson, Lichtenstein constructs a physical world that exists only for the photograph and treats the photographic process like a traditional painting—as a window onto illusionistic space. The scale of the projection (10 by 15 feet) reinforces the perception of the image as a view or entryway into an alternate reality. However, the space that is created is less a specific landscape—the subject of many of Lichtenstein's photographic images—than a dreamscape, one that expands the element of fantasy persistent throughout all of her work.

The play of light and saturated hues in the photographs recall Lichtenstein's previous work, notably the *Danbury Road* and *Lovers' Lane* series of nocturnal "found environments" in the Connecticut suburbs. *Lovers' Lane* exposes the sites of escape, illicit romance, and transgressions of suburban teenagers, who likely occupy houses similar to the ones Lichtenstein photographs in *Danbury Road*. The lurid, otherworldly colors and harsh, cold light transform the familiar into the fearsome and surreal. Yet many of the images are ambivalent; the sharp, romantic beauty of the landscapes also conveys a sense of desire, the outsider's view of the inside. Lichtenstein casts herself in the role of the voyeur, the predatory Other whose intentions are unclear and outside the realm of socially acceptable conduct. In *Sanctuary*, however, she reverses the roles of subject and viewer. The viewer becomes the intruder into the Other's safe space—both the physical space of the burrow and the psychological space of the projections. The chilly, formal restraint of the earlier series is softened in the *Sanctuary* images, allowing for a sense of intimacy. Lichtenstein captures and reinterprets two societal extremes: suburban families, often presented as the paradigm of socialized acceptability, and the Wild Child, as far outside that world as



The color of distance, 2000-01

can be imagined, assumed to desire the former's questionable normality and safety. Throughout her work, Lichtenstein consistently questions the social context of things hidden and unknown, uncovering and illuminating cultural fear that is normally pushed into the shadows.

Lichtenstein's photographs have been linked both formally and conceptually to nineteenth-century Romanticism, whose practitioners took a stand against the Enlightenment exultation of reason in favor of subjective, emotional experience. Though Enlightenment rationalists saw nature as the ultimate source of Reason, the Romantics believed in a "return to nature" for its wild, unrestricted, and capricious qualities, which they perceived as transcendent. Surrounded by this natural atmosphere, a person could achieve a psychological state that broke free of the overly rigid, rule-driven consciousness of the "civilized" to underlying universal truths. The vast landscapes characteristic of Romantic painting underscored these qualities, for they typically included a lone human presence as a heroic individual, forging into the wild unknown in search of the sublime. The references to Romanticism in Lichtenstein's photographic series—in which she herself occupies the explorer's role—are highly self-conscious, even bordering on the ironic.

Sanctuary, in turn, questions the idea of humans embodying that natural, sublime state, evoked by the more earnest, intimate projections. Lichtenstein avoids the simplistic trope of the "noble savage," however, by suggesting a critique of the Enlightenment rationalist approach to nature. The attempt to categorize and typify the Wild Child in her drawings plays off the belief in reason and science as a means to eliminate fear, to render the unknown impotent through fact. Whether this very contemporary belief in scientific knowledge may itself be a kind of subjective sublime is left to the viewer to decide.

Lichtenstein proposes no absolute conclusions in the *Sanctuary* series; rather, she encourages the viewer to look beyond the rigid divisions and assumptions so common to human existence. The projections become a screen onto which viewers project their interpretations of the Wild Child's desires as they navigate the space, literal and metaphorical, between the two sets of images. The Wild Child can be seen to occupy a realm between nature and culture, mythology and science, instinct and language. Lichtenstein affirms the position of the Wild Child in this liminal space as a personification of the gray area that complicates clear, simple dichotomies.

—Shamim M. Momin

Note

1. Quoted in Kara Jesella, "American Gothic," *Nylon* (September 2000), p. 62.

A solid black five-pointed star is located on the left side of the page, partially overlapping the red vertical bar.

MIRANDA LICHTENSTEIN



Inspired by a nineteenth-century photograph titled *Lover's Lane*, Miranda Lichtenstein set out to find contemporary versions of this bucolic theme. Lichtenstein returned to Ridgefield, Connecticut, a once rural town that has become increasingly suburban. She had previously photographed architecture and landscape there in an investigation of modernity's influence on the environment. The zone in which the man-made butts up against the natural is an apt site for an updated view of "lover's lane," where lusty human incursions collide with the allegorical innocence of a pastoral setting. The idyll of aesthetic and emotional experiences connected to nature gives way to the reality of the banal regularity of suburban development.

Lichtenstein's work blends aspects of documentary photography, cinematic vision and painterly sublime. Following directions given to her by local teenagers, the artist discovered secluded properties and historical monuments that are sites for adolescent romance and illicit behavior. The photographs portray the abandoned, trespassed and vandalized locations as stage sets for pending narratives, uncannily suggestive of horror movies or love stories. Utilizing available light along with her car

headlights, Lichtenstein builds a dramatic tension that implies the presence of characters just outside the frame. The spare lighting also evokes the supernatural and dangerous as well as the secrets and fantasies of suburban American teenage life. The ambiguous mood fluctuates between violent and romantic tones and recalls nineteenth-century

Romanticism that bound sex, death and spiritual release to the ominous beauty of the natural landscape.

Lichtenstein was born in New York City, where she lives and works. She received a Master of Fine Arts degree from California Institute of the Arts, Valencia in 1993. Her photography has been included in numerous group exhibitions at The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art in Ridgefield, Connecticut; Thread Waxing Space in New York, New

York; and the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami, Florida. In 2001, her work was featured in the solo exhibition *Sanctuary for a Wild Child* at the Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris; a solo exhibition at Goldman Tevis in Los Angeles; and the group exhibition *Detourism* at The Renaissance Society, University of Chicago.



Untitled #9 (Football Field), 1999
C-print, 30 x 40, courtesy of the artist and Goldman Tevis, Los Angeles