

# **FF** **RANKLIN** **URNACE:**

**PERFORMANCE &  
POLITICS**

Co-curated by  
Martha Wilson & Oraison H. Larmon

Written & Edited by  
Oraison H. Larmon









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**Cassils *Hard Times* (2010)**

Digital photo courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

Photo: Luke Gilford



This catalog is a companion to *Franklin Furnace: Performance & Politics* (2018)—a collection of archival materials in the Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library that represents the historical, cultural, and political legacy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc. To access the collection, please visit [www.hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/hidvl](http://www.hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/hidvl). *Franklin Furnace: Performance & Politics* is a collaboration between the Hemispheric Institute of Performance & Politics and Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

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# FOREWORD

## FOREWORD

A trail of black boots along the sea's edge. The Goddess, the Housewife, the Working Girl, the Professional, the Earth-Mother, the Lesbian. Bricks that represent a longer arc of the artist's world making, built through fissures and gaps in the archive. The body that leaves traces as wall etchings. A dress that is gracefully carried, comprised of gloves to playfully invert standard beauty tropes. Immersed, a figure that swims in the Mississippi River to remind humanity of its toxic imprint.

At turn confrontational, playful, subtle, but always resonant the images, videos, and materials represent an archive of social and political experience. They extend our sight beyond the page into touch and sound. They also show how embodiment and materiality are central in such a performative world. We might note that at the center are edges and at a time when these were sharp enough to cut through the forcefield of accepted norms.

From the vantage point of our capitalized present, it can be difficult to imagine alternatives. Yet through *Franklin Furnace: Performance & Politics*, we observe an edge world archive of potentialities and of experimental living, a performance archive of the "what was" and "what could yet be." Indeed, the New York City art scene during the 1970s and 1980s cross-pollinated between disciplines and social classes, bringing together multiracial communities and multiply identified genders in ways that continue to influence how we perceive ourselves and others. As the sensorium of experimentation expands, however, beware! In such spaces there is more to be suspicious of and even more creative enactments to police and criminalize.

In Oraison H. Larmon's brilliant interview with Martha Wilson, we come to understand the meaning, context, and importance of artistic spaces, especially those not legitimated by the art establishment. As Wilson explains, Franklin Furnace became the scapegoat of the religious right who tried to censor and shut down political and social alternatives. Indeed, the US culture wars of the 1990s targeted queer artists that performed imaginaries outside of hetero-norms; they also tried to dismantle state funding for heterogeneous social expressions as represented by the attacks on the National Endowment for the Arts.

Artistic undercurrents and thoughtful edge play have often been under attack by the monoculture of the political right. Indeed, in the dominance of this harrowing moment let's not be confused. The collection that follows can guide us to seek bodily and representational language that reaches beyond a single node that is monoculture to an imaginative network of affiliations and investments. Such materials can also help us navigate beyond the moralizing and unidimensional thinking and undoing that is liberalism. We might ask this simple question: How can we look at this collection in historical context to decipher other kinds of being? These collected materials available to access online through the Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library reveal a powerful stream, offering a memoryscape of where we have been and where we might want to go.

*Macarena Gómez-Barris*

Professor & Chairperson, Social Science & Cultural Studies

Director, Global South Center

Pratt Institute



# CURATORIAL STATEMENT

## CURATORIAL STATEMENT

### ***Franklin Furnace: Performance & Politics (2018)***

*Franklin Furnace: Performance & Politics* (2018) is a collection of archival materials in the Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library that represents the historical, cultural, and political legacy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc. Spanning the last four decades the collection brings together forty-two works selected from the Franklin Furnace Event Archives that were produced, funded, or presented by the organization. It also features early solo performance artworks by Martha Wilson prior to her establishing Franklin Furnace in 1976. The materials in the collection include textual documents, slides, photographs, moving images, and other artifacts that document the organization as a contemporary avant-garde venue in New York City. Franklin Furnace is known for presenting artists who radically engage social agendas, making them vulnerable to institutional neglect, cultural bias, and mainstream censorship.

The collection features artists from across the Americas who confront sociopolitical issues through various art practices—artists' books, concrete poetry, literary performance, temporary installation art, performance for the camera, cyberformance, and performance art. This archival body of materials focuses on the important artworks of women, queer/trans folks, and people of color, who are largely excluded from the historical record. These artists examine the politics of race, gender, and sexuality while forming new political imaginaries that challenge unjust social policies, violations of rights, and hegemonic power structures. Due to the transgressive nature of such works, many of the artists in the collection remain underrepresented in the art world. Artists at different stages in their careers are juxtaposed to produce new meanings, dialogues, and relationships across generations. By historically preserving the works of these artists, the Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library provides a space for such materials to live, perform, and engage political issues that are relevant today.

*Franklin Furnace: Performance & Politics* includes works by the following contributors: Eleanor Antin, Ron Athey, Horace Brockington, Cassils, Patty Chang, Peter Cramer & Jack Waters, Billy X. Curmano, DANCENOISE, DISBAND, Zackary Drucker & Flawless Sabrina, Bob Flanagan & Sheree Rose, Sherman

Fleming & Kristine Stiles, Lawrence Graham-Brown, Guerrilla Girls, Dynasty Handbag, Martha Hellion & Carla Stellweg, Essex Hemphill & Wayson Jones, Holly Hughes, M. Lamar, Ana Mendieta, Tim Miller, Estera Milman, Tracie Morris, Shirin Neshat, Rashaad Newsome, Lorraine O'Grady, Dread Scott, Pamela Sneed, Annie Sprinkle, Amber Hawk Swanson, Julie Tolentino, Diane Torr, Johanna Went, and Martha Wilson, among many others.

Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc. was founded in 1976 by Martha Wilson to champion ephemeral art forms neglected by mainstream cultural institutions. Franklin Furnace's mission is to preserve, document, and present works of avant-garde art by artists from around the world. The organization awards grants annually to emerging artists, enabling them to produce new artworks in New York City. Franklin Furnace remains committed to advocating on behalf of avant-garde art, establishing the organization as a formidable contributor to art discourse for forty-two years now.

*Franklin Furnace: Performance & Politics* is co-curated by Martha Wilson and Oraison H. Larmon. This catalog is a companion to the Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc. collection in the Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library. To access the entire archival body of materials, please visit the following web address: [www.hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/hidvl](http://www.hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/hidvl). The collection is a collaboration between the Hemispheric Institute of Performance & Politics and Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

*Oraison H. Larmon*





1972–  
1982

## MARTHA WILSON

### ***Solo Performance Compilation (1972 & 1974)***

### ***Posturing (1972–1973)***

### ***A Portfolio of Models (1974)***

Martha Wilson explores the effects of camera presence in *Solo Performance Compilation* (1972 & 1974), *Posturing* (1972–1973), and *A Portfolio of Models* (1974). In *Solo Performance Compilation*, Wilson uses film as a political medium to document her subjectivity as a woman artist. As both filmmaker and performer, she asserts feminist autonomy over her image and counters phallogentric representations of the female body. Wilson reverses the male gaze by becoming a subject of her own desire while challenging standards of beauty in art and culture. Furthermore, in *Posturing* and *A Portfolio of Models*, Wilson performs for the camera by embodying different personae that confront the politics of gender identity. By pairing text with each photograph, she creates a performative relationship between the mediums that enact her corporeal experience while performing as the Goddess, Housewife, Working Girl, Professional, Earth Mother, and Lesbian, among other characters. Wilson's subjective agency places her identity as a woman artist front and center, a radical position that challenged the aesthetic practices of male conceptual artists working in the 1970s.

#### **Martha Wilson *A Portfolio of Models* (1974)**

Texts and photographs courtesy of the artist and P·P·O·W Gallery, New York

Photo: Victor Hayes

## A PORTFOLIO OF MODELS

These are the models society holds out to me: Goddess, Housewife, Working Girl, Professional, Earth-Mother, Lesbian. At one time or another, I have tried them all on for size, and none has fit. All that's left to do is be an artist and point the finger at my own predicament. The artist operates out of the vacuum left when all other values are rejected.

8/74

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Maudie", followed by a long horizontal flourish.



### The Goddess

Her presence is felt by both men and women, and every member of society past the age of five is aware of her. She is the fashion-model archetype, an implicit image of reference. She always looks perfect. She also smells wonderful at all times. She has "sex-appeal." However, she is asexual. We look but don't imagine. Whether she is intelligent is irrelevant.



### The Housewife

This woman aspires to goddessdom, but she is compromised by some everyday realities: she can't spend all day on her face because she has to feed the kids. She can't starve herself bed-slat thin because she has to keep her strength up. Sex is a routine part of her life, whether it be an exciting one or an unpleasant one. If she wants to be kinky, she might swap. She is intelligent, but has convinced herself that she is fulfilled.





### The Working Girl

She can only approach goddessdom insofar as her budget permits. She works very hard, and is given no credit for any brains she may or may not have. She relieves the drudgery of life by having a riproaring time in bed.



### The Professional

She plays down her competence to get along  
Perhaps she is not beautiful, but she is  
extremely well-groomed, approaching goddessdom  
at least by the cost of her outfit. Her sexuality  
is a point of debate: does her job fulfill her  
and make her a self-loving person, or does she  
succeed in her job because she is frigid?





### The Earth-Mother

She claims she doesn't give a shit about the goddess. Actually, to be such a perfect mirror-reversal of her, in her workboots and braless peasant blouses, she is just as conscious of the goddess as the suburban queen. She flaunts her sexuality, not out of boredom, but because it is a natural function, god-given for us to enjoy. She has shelved her intellect for the time being, deriving fulfillment from working the land with her hands.





### The Lesbian

She hates the goddess, because actually the goddess was invented by the men on Madison Avenue. She alone sees through goddessdom, but unluckily, her sexuality is so misplaced that the rest of society ignores her. Her intelligence is a flyweight issue in light of her emotional problems.

## DISBAND

### ***DISBAND at Franklin Furnace (1979)***

DISBAND performs a set of politically charged feminist anthems in *DISBAND at Franklin Furnace* (1979). Comprised of Donna Henes, Barbara Kruger, Diane Torr, and Martha Wilson, the band addresses political issues affecting women through song and movement. Utilizing gestures seen in social protest, the members of DISBAND yell, clap, stomp, walk, and jump to combat patriarchy. Their collective body becomes a political instrument used to fight sexism in art, politics, and society. Together these acts conjure an agenda that calls for the evolution of feminist consciousness.

#### **DISBAND *DISBAND at Franklin Furnace (1979)***

DISBAND *Girls' Bill of Rights*

Text courtesy of the artists

Everyone has a spot she calls home  
Every girl has the right to her own raw space  
And these girls are staying up nights  
Drafting the first Girl's Bill of Rights:

#### THE GIRLS BILL OF RIGHTS

Every girl has the right to an orgasm  
Every girl has the right to a clone  
Every girl has the right to a solo show  
Every girl has the right to be frozen

a band  
xerox  
an audience  
~~xxxxxxxxxx~~  
to march  
to dance in the street  
travel to the moon  
to dress up  
refuse motherhood  
be an animal  
choose a name  
not dress up  
change her mind  
mother someone  
be a witch  
to be too much  
to be her own child  
to protection  
to mutate  
free psychoanalysis  
play games  
flirt  
not to smile

## ELEANOR ANTIN

### ***100 Boots: The Transmission and Reception (1979)***

Eleanor Antin's *100 Boots: The Transmission and Reception* (1979) is a conceptual series of postcards depicting black rubber boots displayed across the American landscape. Antin arranged the fifty pairs of boots as different scenes in each postcard to collectively form a picaresque novel. In the spirit of Fluxus, she mailed the postcards to artists, curators, dancers, critics, and writers from 1971–1973. Antin's use of the postal system to disseminate her art served as a critique of the art world, the distribution of artworks, and the economy of the art market. The postcards, boots, and photographs were first exhibited in 1973 at the Museum of Modern Art. While the exhibition primarily functioned as an institutional critique, it also sought to challenge historical definitions of the art object. Subsequently, Franklin Furnace curated the exhibition *100 Boots: The Transmission and Reception* (1979), which included a postmarked set of the series and unpublished notes Antin received from postcard recipients.

#### **Eleanor Antin *100 Boots: The Transmission and Reception* (1979)**

Eleanor Antin *100 BOOTS Facing the Sea*

Del Mar, California, February 9, 1971, 2:00 pm

Mailed: March 15, 1971

Courtesy of the artist and Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York



## HORACE BROCKINGTON

### ***Dialects: Diverse Bookworks by Black and Hispanic Artists (1980)***

*Dialects: Diverse Bookworks by Black and Hispanic Artists* (1980) explored the politics of race, gender, and identity through bookmaking practices. This exhibition brought together artists of color working outside of book art to create new experimental works. While these book works vary in style, they reflect the artists' primary mediums—performance, sculpture, photography, music, and collage. The artists used a range of materials to create printed, handmade, painted, audio, handwritten, silk-screened, photo-folio, hole-punched, and sculptural books. Many of these artists' books visually and textually speak to the politics of resistance and subversion, especially during the 1980s when artists of color had limited opportunities in the art world. This exhibition also included an evening of John Dowell's visual music—abstract works inspired by jazz and avant-garde compositions. *Dialects: Diverse Bookworks by Black and Hispanic Artists* was curated by Horace Brockington.

**Horace Brockington *Dialects: Diverse Bookworks by Black and Hispanic Artists* (1980)**

Press release courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The month of January, 1980, the Franklin Furnace Guest Curator series will present DIALECTS: Diverse Bookworks by Black and Hispanic Artists, curated by HORACE BROCKINGTON.

Throughout the history of art the book has been used to document and illustrate works of art. In the present art environment, the artists' book has become an art object independent of other works by the artist. It is with this thinking that the exhibition Dialects was originated, combined with the express interest of exploring minority artists' involvement with the book format. Dialects attempts to explore the changes in artistic vocabulary on the part of the artist as the transference in medium occurs from their primary medium to the book format. These works then become experimental objects for many of the artists selected. A major concern in coordinating this exhibition was in creating a juxtaposition between stylistic concern and a common sensibility among the artists selected. The diversity of languages involved and the common sensibility becomes one of the crucial elements of this exhibition.

Dialects consists of approximately fifty works by Hispanic and Black artists and includes printed books, photo-folios, handmade books, painted books, audio books, handwritten books, silk-screen books, hole-punched, brunt-imprints, and sculptural books. The majority of the works are borrowed from the collections of the artists, with the exception of works from Hispanic artists abroad borrowed from private collections.

Artists included in Dialects are Mahler Ryder, Willie Birch, Jorge Rodriguez, Stan Whitney, Sam Gilliam, Rafael Agenli, Jackie Holmes, Marvin Harden, Rafael Feerer, John Dowell, David Hammons, Ana Mendieta, Howardena Pindell, Randy Williams, Wilfredo Chieso, Tom Feelings, Tony Bechara, Noah Jemison, Adal Mondonaldo, Bettye Saar, Gylbert Coker, Gale Hansbery, Coreen Simpson, Camille Billops, Sandra Payne, Lilliana Porter, and Patricia Long.

In conjunction with this exhibition, the Franklin Furnace Performance Series will present Visual Music from the Art Work of John Dowell, Thursday evening, January 10th, at 8:30 p.m.

HORACE BROCKINGTON is an art historian with a degree from Columbia University. He was the recipient of a Helena Rubinstein Fellowship from the Whitney Museum of American Art.

For further information, contact Jacki Apple, Curator; Beverly Naidus, Publicity

**112 Franklin Street, New York, N.Y. 10013 (212) 925-4671**

Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc. is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the cataloging, exhibition and preservation of book-like works by artists.

## MARTHA HELLION & CARLA STELLWEG

### ***Artists' Books from Mexico (1982)***

*Artists' Books from Mexico* (1982) showcased the diverse bookmaking practices of Mexican visual and performance artists. This exhibition was the first presentation of artists' books from Mexico that were exhibited in New York City. According to the curators Martha Hellion and Carla Stellweg, such materials resulted from "the sociopolitical contexts that impacted 1970s conceptual art and visual culture worldwide." The artists' books in this exhibition challenged standard forms of publishing at the time, especially in Latin America where political subject matter is censored by the media and suppressed by the government. These experimental book works embodied visual, textual, and sculptural forms that conveyed narratives about the political climate in Mexico. *Artists' Books from Mexico* was co-curated by Martha Hellion and Carla Stellweg.

#### **Martha Hellion & Carla Stellweg *Artists' Books from Mexico* (1982)**

No Grupo *Libros de artista I, II, III (Libros Ladrillos)* (1982)

Photograph courtesy of Carla Stellweg

Photo: Tessa Morefield



Maris Bustamante-Melquiades Herrera Becerra-Alfredo Núñez-Ruben Valencia-all Mexican. In a time in which the mobile plasticity of the printing types help to immobilize what could circulate widely, in a time of mass-media, the artists are asked to return not to the early printing days but further back: to the middle ages of curved monks that copied speech into writing and thus move into the Modern Museum Monastery with their so-called artists books. If we define Marcel Duchamp's "bag book" as a measuring stick of today's value systems, we distinguish it from other "bad books"

# NO GRUPO

AVASTYDO POSTAL - M-10820 MEX. 1971



MARIS BUSTAMANTE - MELQUIADES HERRERA - ALFREDO NUÑEZ - RUBEN VALENCIA

## ANA MENDIETA

### ***Body Tracks (1982)***

Ana Mendieta explores feminist body politics in *Body Tracks* (1982). Drawing from the Afro-Cuban religion Santería, Mendieta uses animal blood and tempera paint to create imprints of her hands on white paper. She repeats this ritualistic gesture in silence forming variations of her silhouette over the course of the performance. Afterwards, Mendieta exits the gallery space leaving behind her body prints for the audience to witness in her absence. Mendieta's performance symbolizes her political stance against violence inflicted upon women.

#### **Ana Mendieta *Body Tracks* (1982)**

Slide courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc. and Galerie Lelong, New York

© The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC







1983–  
1993

## LORRAINE O'GRADY

### *Fly By Night (1983)*

*"Fly By Night was a one-night-only performance I did at Franklin Furnace in early 1983 in a state of physical and psychological exhaustion. In the two-and-a-half previous years—beginning mid-1980, I'd produced three significant performances: Mlle Bourgeoise Noire, Nefertiti/Devonia Evangeline, and Rivers, First Draft. But in the character of Mlle Bourgeoise Noire (MBN), I had created a stronger, more competent persona than I was. MBN would herself produce two demanding events later that year, The Black and White Show and Art Is.... She was doing swimmingly, and I? Falling in love hither and yon, relapsing into clichés of conditioning, I hadn't yet found my way to combine being artist and female, the feminine woman I still was and the new feminist I claimed to be.*

*"I'd taken an 'MFA in performance' at Franklin Furnace, 1978–80, sitting by myself in the back row two nights a week, not knowing anyone with whom to speak. Performing there in 1983, it seemed a safe space to explore my feelings (always a risky move). Fly By Night was a chaotic pantomime performance in blackface without sound. Andrew Nahem, the Ringmaster, had shot rolls successively degrading Mlle Bourgeoise Noire. On screen, MBN faded to white. Off-screen, Lorraine wore black leotards from an eternal quest to stay fit but ended snared in three clotheslines—hung with white gloves, chrysanthemums, and stainless cutlery. Fly By Night's incoherence taught me what hard work it would be to keep making relevant art."*

Lorraine O'Grady, 2017

**Lorraine O'Grady *Mlle Bourgeoise Noire* (1981)**

Slide courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

Photo: Coreen Simpson





## DANCENOISE

### ***Bread and Circus (1985)***

DANCENOISE (Anne lobst and Lucy Sexton) explores female body politics in *Bread and Circus* (1985). Throughout the performance, DANCENOISE enacts a series of haptic movements wearing various costumes and interacting with female sex dolls. The kitchen becomes a site-specific context for these actions, in addition to being a site of women's liberation and empowerment. Through a queer-feminist lens, the performers critique mainstream ideas of femininity and patriarchal representations of women. Together DANCENOISE conjures a radical agenda that explodes social constructions of female identity in patriarchal culture.

### **DANCENOISE *Bread and Circus* (1985)**

Photograph courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

Photo: Wendy Workman





## FRANKLIN FURNACE

### ***Artists' Books Discussion at Queens College (1985)***

In *Artists' Books Discussion at Queens College* (1985), Martha Wilson presents a selection of artists' books from Franklin Furnace's archive. Wilson discusses the importance of collecting artists' books as other cultural institutions have failed to acquire such materials. She traces the history of artists' books from Futurism, Conceptual Art, and Fluxus, defining the medium at the intersection of art and literature. Wilson discusses the visual elements of artists' books and notes how the book page becomes a performative space for language. Later, she is joined by Franklin Furnace Archivist Matthew Hogan, who presents artists' books from the organization's collection. This discussion featured artists' books by Charles Henri Ford, Kevin Osborn, Ed Ruscha, Don Celender, Mark Berghash, John Baldessari, Eleanor Antin, Scott Hyde, Warren Lehrer, Jessie Affelder, Sol LeWitt, Dick Higgins, and David Horton, among others.

#### **Franklin Furnace Artists' Books Discussion at Queens College (1985)**

Eleanor Antin *100 BOOTS On the March*

La Jolla, California. July 6, 1972, 11:45 am

Mailed: February 20, 1973

Courtesy of the artist and Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York



## DIANE TORR

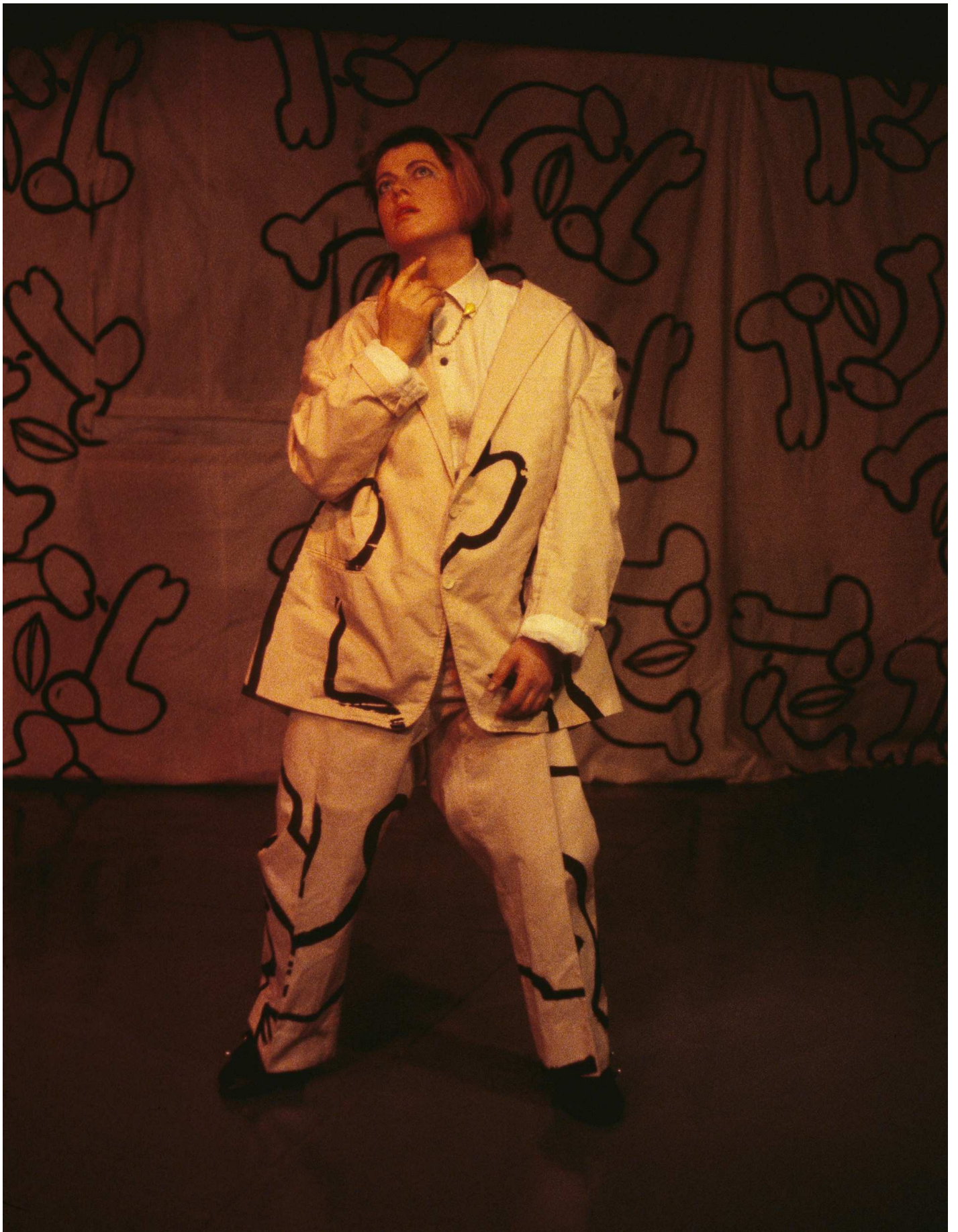
### ***Girls Will Be Boys Will Be Queens (1986)***

Diane Torr investigates the politics of gender fluidity and sexual identity in *Girls Will Be Boys Will Be Queens* (1986). Performed by Diane Torr, Christine Koenig, and Lizzie Olesker, the cast subverts gender binaries by performing on stage as drag kings—females who embody masculinity and portray stereotypes of women. They explore the possibilities of becoming more than one gender through what Torr calls a "metamorphosis of the sexual imagination." Wearing men's suits and other costumes, the performers enact gender-specific poses that deconstruct stereotypical gender roles informed by heterosexuality. Together these acts work to expand the repertoire of gender performativity by challenging socially accepted constructions of female behavior.

**Diane Torr *Girls Will Be Boys Will Be Queens* (1986)**

Slide courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.





## JOHANNA WENT

### ***Twin, Travel, Terror (1987)***

Johanna Went creates a theater of the grotesque in *Twin, Travel, Terror* (1987). Went, along with assistants Anne lobst and Lucy Sexton of DANCENOISE, performs a series of actions depicting social anarchy, feminist motifs, and political upheaval. In avant-garde style, the all-female cast deconstructs, assembles, and recycles taboo subjects and found materials. Went expels unscripted grunts and phrases against a punk soundtrack composed by Mark Wheaton, while lobst and Sexton improvise movements with homemade props and costumes. The combined elements of the performance conjure a monstrous effect resulting in a surreal theatrical experience.

#### **Johanna Went *Twin, Travel, Terror* (1987)**

Slide courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

Photo: Lady Pink





## BILLY X. CURMANO

### ***Swimmin' the River* (1987–1997)**

In *Swimmin' the River* (1987–1997), Billy X. Curmano swims the length of the Mississippi River as a political gesture to advocate for the freedom from toxicity. Spanning from the headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico, Curmano uses the river as an artistic medium and political landscape to discuss environmental issues. He wades in the Mississippi River as the sunlight glistens and the wind shapes the tide. Each stroke that Curmano takes is an attempt to reclaim the river under the banner of art and to work toward a more progressive agenda for climate justice. The ecology of Curmano's swim becomes an extended metaphor of pollution—one in which the effects of eco-capitalism contaminate our existence.

**Billy X. Curmano *Swimmin' the River* (1987–1997)**

Slide courtesy of the artist

Photo: Darlene Hlidek





## FRANKLIN FURNACE

### ***Concrete Poetry* (1988)**

Franklin Furnace Archivist Matthew Hogan curates a selection of poetic works as part of *Concrete Poetry* (1988). This exhibition featured books, recordings, and videotapes of concrete poetry—a form of poetry depicted through semantic, visual, and phonetic elements of language. It drew from Franklin Furnace's artists' books collection—the nation's largest repository of the avant-garde book form at the time—and also included materials on loan from anonymous donors. These pieces expand upon the motifs of pop-up poems, constellation poems, and typopoems in *Concrete Poetry: The Early Years* (1986). This presentation of *Concrete Poetry* (1988) included poetic works by Augusto de Campos, Emmett Williams, Paul de Vree, Jiri Kola, and Wolfgang Schmidt.

#### **Franklin Furnace *Concrete Poetry* (1988)**

Slide courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

Photo: Franklin Furnace



## ESSEX HEMPHILL & WAYSON JONES

### ***Dear Muthafuckin Dreams (1988)***

Essex Hemphill confronts the politics of speech, language, and sexuality in *Dear Muthafuckin Dreams* (1988). Through a gay black lens, Hemphill addresses the cultural myth of the American Dream—the idea that every United States citizen has an equal opportunity to achieve success through hard work, initiative, and determination. Hemphill, along with Terence Johnson and Christopher Prince, employs the black tradition of call and response, while also utilizing vocal techniques of unison and counterpoint. The performers interweave their vocal harmonies with an eclectic soundscape composed by Wayson Jones. These sonic elements are juxtaposed with visuals by Sharon Farmer, Ron Simmons, and Joyce Wellman. *Dear Muthafuckin Dreams* comments on the unfulfilled promises of the 1960s–1970s political era to fundamentally provide social equity to Black Americans.

**Essex Hemphill & Wayson Jones *Dear Muthafuckin Dreams* (1988)**

Flier courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

Photo: Daniel Cima



**DEAR  
MUTHAFUCKIN  
DREAMS**

## SHERMAN FLEMING & KRISTINE STILES

### ***Western History as a Three-Story Building (1989)***

"Western History as a Three-Story Building was first performed at DC Space, followed by Intermedia Arts, and then at Franklin Furnace. Sherman Fleming and Kristine Stiles drew upon this passage from Ishmael Reed's *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972): 'Upstairs is a store which deals in religious articles. Above this is a gun store; at the top, an advertising firm which deals in soap accounts. If Western History were a 3-story building...it would resemble this.' Beginning with a prologue to their 3-part action, Fleming and Stiles appeared nude, separated only by a plank of wood extending from their feet to their chins. They shuffled into the space, hugging each other to maintain the position of the plank, and stopped in the middle of two contact mics. Still holding the plank of wood between them, they began drumming each other's buttocks until the rhythm became that of a heartbeat. They departed. Blackout.

"Now dressed, they began Part I: Fleming constructed a ritualistic labyrinth of ribbons, hanging coke bottles filled with water and suspended above metal bowls filled with burning coals, flowers, and candles, while Stiles copied esoteric terms and phrases from the Maori language, the I. Ching, the Bible and other texts on a blackboard. Fleming released the water-filled coke bottles which doused the coals in each bowl, filling the room with smoke. Next, they violently chopped onions and cilantro, and using fans, blew the smoke and scents into the audience such that it produced tearing among viewers. Blackout. In Part II, they reappeared dressed in formal attire: Stiles wearing a black ball gown, elbow length white gloves, heavy strings of pearls, and Fleming wearing a tuxedo. Both artists were blindfolded and Stiles, in high heels, carried Fleming on her back, causing them to crash through, become entwined in, and eventually destroy the labyrinth. Blackout. In part-III, the artists appeared again dressed in street clothes as in Part I, and projected slides with images of religion, violence and destruction, and advertising. Throughout Parts I through III, Fleming and Stiles also projected an image of Man Ray's *Compass* (1920). It is a photograph of a huge magnet holding a gun. They used it to emphasize forbidden erotic and emotional attraction, metaphysical and physical phenomena, and the violence and destruction underpinning American society."

Sherman Fleming & Kristine Stiles, 2017

**Sherman Fleming & Kristine Stiles *Western History as a Three-Story Building* (1989)**

Slide courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.





## FRANKLIN FURNACE

### ***Franklin Furnace Fights for First Amendment Rights (1990)***

In *Franklin Furnace Fights for First Amendment Rights* (1990), the artist community addressed the political climate of the arts during the culture wars in the United States. This event was prompted by the recent closure of Franklin Furnace by the New York Fire Department. The fire department believed that Franklin Furnace was an "illegal social club" despite their reputation as a preeminent venue for avant-garde art. Subsequently, Franklin Furnace was demonized by Republican Senator Jesse Helms for exhibiting Karen Finley's *A Woman's Life Isn't Worth Much* (1990)—an installation that examined rape, incest, and abortion through texts, drawings, and paintings. The art organization was audited by the Internal Revenue Service, defunded by the National Endowment for the Arts, and attacked by the religious right. In the spirit of the avant-garde, Franklin Furnace confronted such opposition by continuing to present artists who were seen as transgressors of the body politic. The presenters as part of this event addressed the heightened censorship of queer, erotic, and feminist art through performative interventions on stage. *Franklin Furnace Fights for First Amendment Rights* included presentations by Spalding Gray, Mary Schmidt Campbell, Eric Bogosian, Cee Brown, Allen Ginsberg, Diane Torr, Paul McMahon, Nancy Spero, Leon Golub, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Annie Sprinkle, Frank Maya, Lynne Tillman, and Karen Finley.

#### **Franklin Furnace *Franklin Furnace Fights for First Amendment Rights* (1990)**

Karen Finley *Preserve Freedom to Express Yourself* (1990)

Detail of event program courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.



Preserve  
Freedom  
to  
EXPRESS  
Yourself



binley

## TIM MILLER

### ***Stretch Marks* (1990)**

Tim Miller's *Stretch Marks* (1990) is a call to action that confronts the politics of homosexuality during the AIDS epidemic. Miller employs a queer temporality by relaying his coming-out in high school to his present identity as a gay man, artist, and citizen. He addresses the sociopolitical climate of HIV/AIDS in the United States and the homophobic agendas of President Ronald Reagan's administration. Miller assumes a voice of political agency through his involvement with ACT UP Los Angeles and critiques the medical-industrial complex for contributing to the AIDS death toll. He concludes by envisioning a queer futurity beyond the stigma of HIV/AIDS where gay men are free to be themselves. Miller's *Stretch Marks* was intended to be part of Franklin Furnace's *History of the Future* (1999) netcast on Pseudo Programs, Inc.'s the Performance Channel. However, the corporation went bankrupt during the height of the culture wars, leaving the performance footage dormant until it was preserved by the Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library.

**Tim Miller *Stretch Marks* (1990)**

Photo courtesy of the artist's website



## ESTERA MILMAN

### ***Fluxus: A Conceptual Country (1992)***

*Fluxus: A Conceptual Country* (1992) examined the history of the Fluxus experimental art movement. The exhibition included art objects, publications, and performance relics from this international network of artists. Centered around Fluxus events, these materials reflect how Fluxus transformed art from an object of aesthetic contemplation to a gesture of political action. The show highlighted the diverse practices of artists, composers, and poets affiliated with the movement. After being presented at Franklin Furnace, the exhibition traveled to the Madison Art Center, University of Iowa, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts, and Northwestern University. *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country* was curated by Estera Milman, who also served as the guest editor of the exhibition's catalog.

**Estera Milman *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country* (1992)**

Slide courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

Photo: Marty Heitner







## FRANKLIN FURNACE

### ***Too Shocking To Show (1992)***

In collaboration with the Brooklyn Museum, Franklin Furnace presented *Too Shocking To Show* (1992) as the culture wars erupted in the United States. This event was prompted by the growing institutional censorship of sexually explicit art that was sweeping across the nation. Due to the political climate, Franklin Furnace's Visual Artists Organization grant was rescinded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The organization held *Too Shocking To Show* to generate dialogue surrounding the freedom of expression and to continue their mission of "Making the world safe for avant-garde art." Through various forms of protest on stage, the New York City art community addressed the systemic effects of censorship by the NEA. The artists featured in this event transgressed the NEA's restrictive policies by presenting live performances that examined sex as a legitimate subject of contemporary art. *Too Shocking To Show* included presentations by Robert T. Buck, Martha Wilson, Carol S. Vance, Sapphire, Holly Hughes, Scarlet O, and Tim Miller.

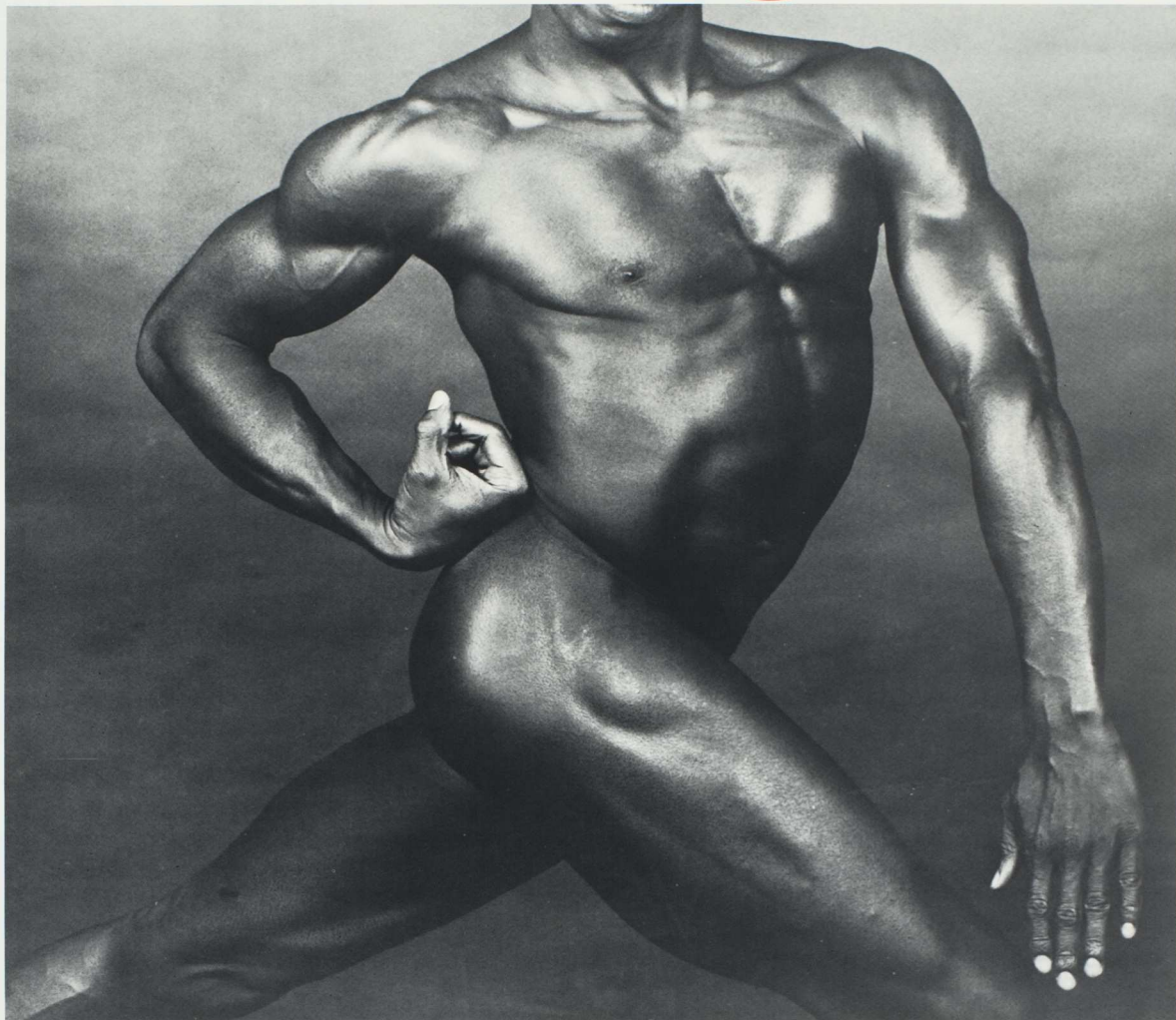
#### **Franklin Furnace *Too Shocking To Show* (1992)**

Poster courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

Photo: Michael Katchen



# Too Shocking



Robert Mapplethorpe (American, 1946-1989). *Derrick Cross*, 1982. Black-and-white photograph, image, 15 1/4 x 15 1/4 inches, sheet, 19 1/4 x 15 1/4 inches. The Brooklyn Museum. 89.30.11. Anonymous gift in memory of Jack Boulton. © The Brooklyn Museum 1992.

## To Show

Franklin Furnace and The Brooklyn Museum present

Performances by **Holly Hughes, Tim Miller, Sapphire, and Scarlet O**

Introductory remarks by **Carole S. Vance**

Sunday, June 21, 1992

The Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, New York 11238

Performances will take place at 2:30 and 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available at The Brooklyn Museum Information Desk, 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn (10 a.m.-5 p.m., Wednesday-Sunday), and at Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin Street, New York (12-6 p.m., Tuesday-Saturday). Prices are \$75, \$50, and \$20, or for Franklin Furnace and Brooklyn Museum members \$65, \$40, and \$15. Make checks payable to The Brooklyn Museum. Please do not mail checks after June 15.

Direct motorcoach service to The Brooklyn Museum will depart from the Plaza Hotel, 59th Street and 5th Avenue, Manhattan, at 1:30 and 6:30 p.m. and from the southeast corner of West Broadway and Houston at 2 and 7 p.m.

Return service will depart from the Museum at 5 and 10 p.m. Fare is \$3 one way and \$5 round trip to be paid on the bus.

To reserve seating on the bus, call (718) 638-5000, ext. 326, by Wednesday, June 17. For more information, call (718) 638-5000, ext. 230, (212) 925-4671, or TDD (718) 783-6501.

These performances have been made possible, in part, by The Gordon Matta-Clark Foundation. Franklin Furnace would also like to thank the Art Dealers Association of America for its support during the current funding crisis. Please note that some of the material in these performances is sexually explicit and may not be suitable for all audiences.

## PETER CRAMER & JACK WATERS

### ***SPEW: A New York Glamrock Operadrama (1992)***

Peter Cramer and Jack Waters explore their identities as visual artists and gay men in *SPEW: A New York Glamrock Operadrama* (1992). Cramer and Waters express the personal as political through monologues while using visual and sonic elements to form a pastiche of opera. They reflect upon their personal and creative lives in the 1970s before the AIDS epidemic impacted New York City in the 1980s. The artists use classical and avant-garde forms to merge the differing aesthetics of the uptown and the downtown art scenes. An important element that Cramer and Waters utilize throughout the performance is montage. This technique culminates most notably on stage with a film projection of the artists' *Black and White Study* (1990)—an exploitation of race and sexuality through dance. *SPEW* reflects Cramer and Waters' artistic process as partners in art and life.

**Peter Cramer & Jack Waters *SPEW: A New York Glamrock Operadrama* (1992)**

Peter Cramer *Variations on B&W Study* (2014)

Artwork courtesy of the artists



## ANNIE SPRINKLE

### ***Post Porn Modernist* (1993)**

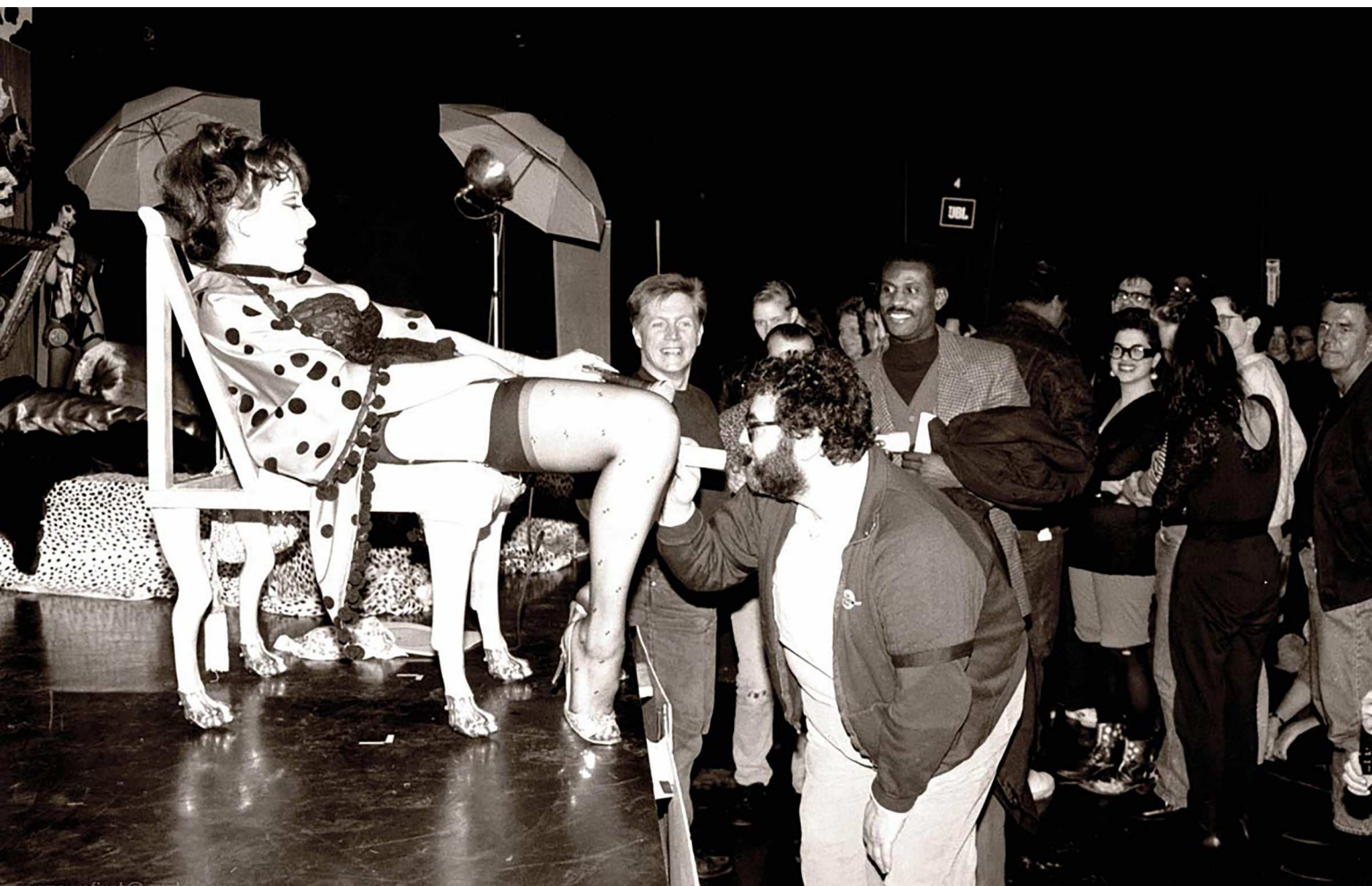
Annie Sprinkle's *Post Porn Modernist* (1993) chronicles her career as a sex worker, pro-sex activist, and visual artist. Sprinkle narrates a story about her transformation from Ellen Steinberg to Annie Sprinkle, an act that prompted her sexual revolution. In this process of becoming, she criticizes patriarchal ideals of female sexuality and second-wave feminist anti-porn agendas. Furthermore, Sprinkle subverts the male gaze by performing erotic poses on stage that bring her sexual pleasure. She provides a playful critique of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) while alluding to her participation in Carnival Knowledge's *The Second Coming* (1984)—an exhibition that explored the politics of feminist pornography through books, photos, sculptures, videos, and performances. This exhibition sparked national controversies about the pornographic content depicted in the artworks and led federal organizations such as the NEA to defund Franklin Furnace for presenting such provocative works. Sprinkle then discusses the labor politics of the sex work industry and her close relationships with clients, some of whom are disabled, lesbian, transgender, or gay men with HIV/AIDS. During the AIDS pandemic, she focused on developing new practices such as the breath orgasm—a technique created with Barbara Carrellas—which allowed people infected with HIV/AIDS to experience pleasure without having sexual intercourse. This shift in Sprinkle's work prompted her transformation from Annie to Anya, a persona who embodies the sacred energy of ancient sex worker goddesses. Sprinkle's *Post Porn Modernist* was intended to be part of Franklin Furnace's *History of the Future* (1999) netcast on Pseudo Programs, Inc.'s the Performance Channel. However, the corporation went bankrupt during the height of the culture wars, leaving the performance footage dormant until it was preserved by the Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library.

#### **Annie Sprinkle *Post Porn Modernist* (1993)**

Photo courtesy of Efrain Gonzalez

Photo: Efrain Gonzalez





## SHIRIN NESHAT

### ***Unveiling* (1993)**

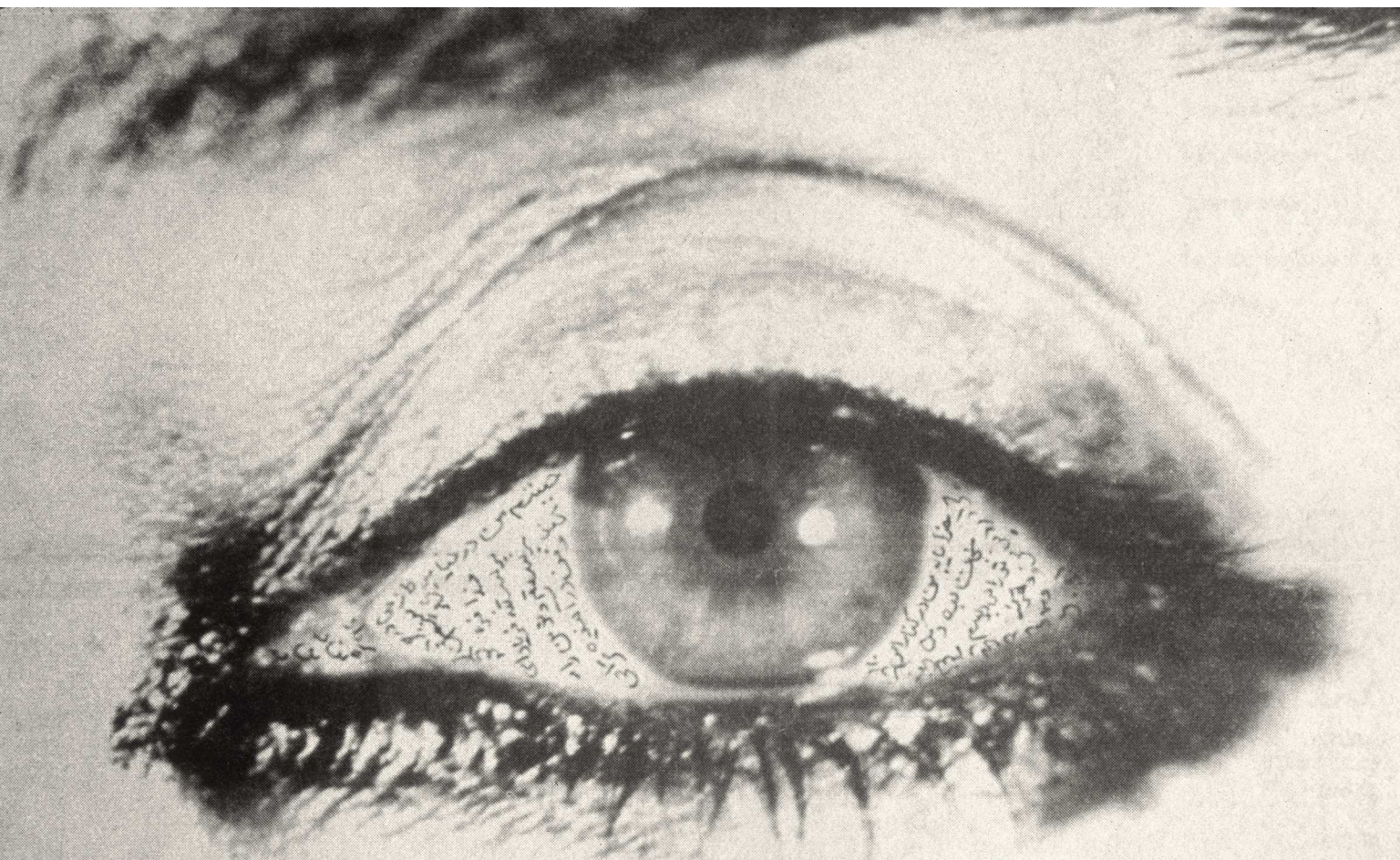
Shirin Neshat's *Unveiling* (1993) explored the politics of women living behind "the veil" in Islamic countries. This multimedia exhibition featured photographs, sculptures, and films that expressed the different affective experiences of wearing the veil. Neshat integrated text into her artworks from Forough Farrokhzad (1935–1967)—an influential modern Iranian poet whose writing concerned women's liberation and independence. As the exhibition text noted, "the artist [was] well aware of the profound complexities behind the significance of the veil within Islamic cultures and [did] not intend to deny its traditional values to many contemporary women." Rather, Neshat was interested in exploring the question of what shapes the female experience: the veil or the body? The artist also brought into focus "the problems of transposing Western presumptions of feminist artistic expression to another culture." Ultimately, Neshat created new understandings of the veil, while challenging stereotypes about female identity in Islam.

#### **Shirin Neshat *Unveiling* (1993)**

Slide courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

Photo: Marty Heitner







1994–  
2004

## **BOB FLANAGAN & SHEREE ROSE**

### ***Visiting Hours Interview (1994)***

Franklin Furnace Founding Director Martha Wilson and her partner Vince Bruns interview performance artists Bob Flanagan and Sheree Rose. Conducted within the exhibition *Visiting Hours* (1994) at the New Museum, this interview chronicles Flanagan and Rose's collaborative practice as artists and lovers. Throughout the interviewers and interviewees talk about the following subjects: the sexual politics of art; pain as an art medium; the gaze of receiving and witnessing pain; art as an erotic gesture; and the spiritual in art. This subject matter is further elaborated upon in the broader context of art history. The interview concludes with a discussion about performance artists Ron Athey and Annie Sprinkle, who also explore sex, pain, and spirituality in their performance artworks.

#### **Bob Flanagan & Sheree Rose *Visiting Hours Interview* (1994)**

Photo courtesy of Michel Delsol

Photo: Michel Delsol





## RON ATHEY

### ***Four Scenes in a Harsh Life (1994)***

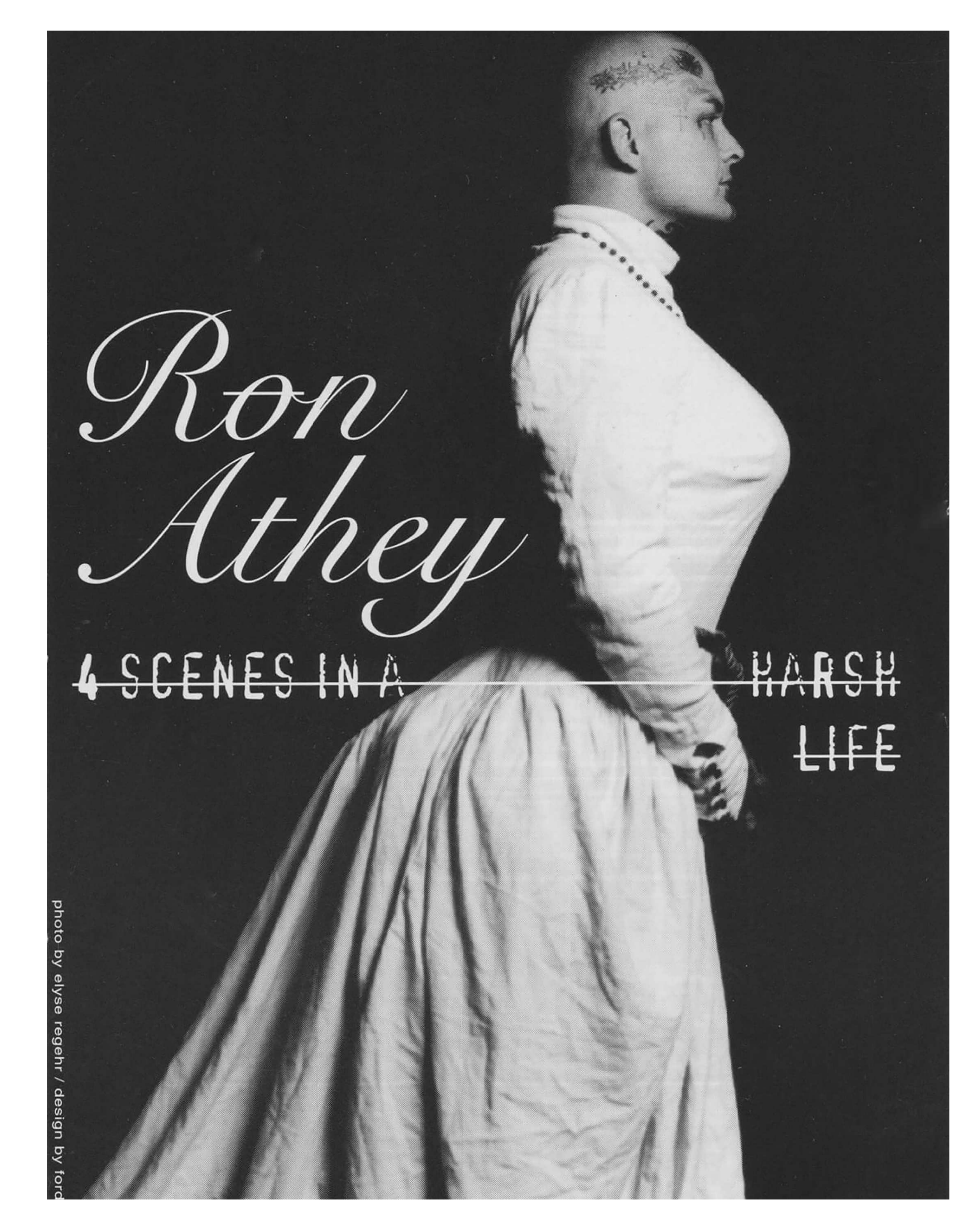
Ron Athey addresses the queer sexual politics of religiosity in *Four Scenes in a Harsh Life* (1994). Throughout the performance, Athey engages in masochistic acts with performers Divinity P. Fudge, Julie Tolentino, and Pig Pen. Most notable is when Athey cuts into Fudge's back and makes imprints of his blood on paper towels, which are suspended on a clothesline above the audience. Later, the performers queer religious iconography by affirming Athey's gay male body as a site of reverence amid the AIDS pandemic. Oftentimes, Athey resembles Saint Sebastian when piercing his body with needles, which symbolize the arrows shot into the saint for converting people to Christianity. The exploration of religion and the exposure of blood in this performance were met with homophobia by the media. A *Minneapolis Star Tribune* reporter who did not attend the performance accused Athey of exposing the audience to AIDS-tainted blood. However, the blood that was central to the live act was *not* from Athey, but from Fudge whose HIV/AIDS status was negative. The controversy surrounding the blood in the performance led to national debates that called for the censorship of Athey's artwork. Finally, Athey was attacked by right-wing politicians and religious groups for examining religion through a queer lens. Following the conservative protests against Athey's artwork, video documentation of *Four Scenes in a Harsh Life* was netcasted live as part of Franklin Furnace's *History of the Future* (1999) on Pseudo Programs, Inc.'s the Performance Channel.

#### **Ron Athey *Four Scenes in a Harsh Life* (1994)**

Flier courtesy of the artist's website

Photo: Elyse Regehr





# Ron Athey

~~4 SCENES IN A~~

~~HARSH~~

~~LIFE~~

## TRACIE MORRIS

### ***Afrofem* (1995)**

Tracie Morris' *Afrofem* (1995) critiques stereotypical representations of black women in the media. In this work-in-progress performance, Morris portrays the multifaceted character Deetra, who embodies different black women archetypes—the gangsta bitch, the little hottie, the creole mama, the mammy, and the welfare queen. She performs spoken word poetry to jazz-funk music and forms a bond of sisterhood with the character played by Suzanne Y. Jones. Throughout Morris draws from elements of B-girl culture and Blaxploitation film—a genre that emerged in the early 1970s starring black male and female characters, which was later criticized for portraying black people in negative stereotypical ways. She attempts to reverse such representations of black women by refusing to conform to respectability politics. In doing so, Morris becomes emblematic of black female empowerment while shattering racist stereotypes perpetuated by white supremacy in America.

#### **Tracie Morris *Afrofem* (1995)**

Slide courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

Photo: Marty Heitner



## PAMELA SNEED

### ***Imagine Being More Afraid of Freedom Than Slavery (1995)***

In *Imagine Being More Afraid of Freedom Than Slavery* (1995), Pamela Sneed navigates the historical tensions and political legacies of slavery. Sneed references Audre Lorde, Assata Shakur, and Harriet Tubman to historically resuscitate their important contributions made to social activism. Across this temporal journey, Sneed retraces her lost identity as a black woman, while also commenting on the contemporary politics of race, gender, and sexuality. She tackles the tensions between freedom and slavery in the Post-Civil Rights era by explicating upon the psychological impact of colonial, patriarchal, and capitalist structures. By confronting these past issues, Sneed recovers her identity while moving toward a state of personal liberation.

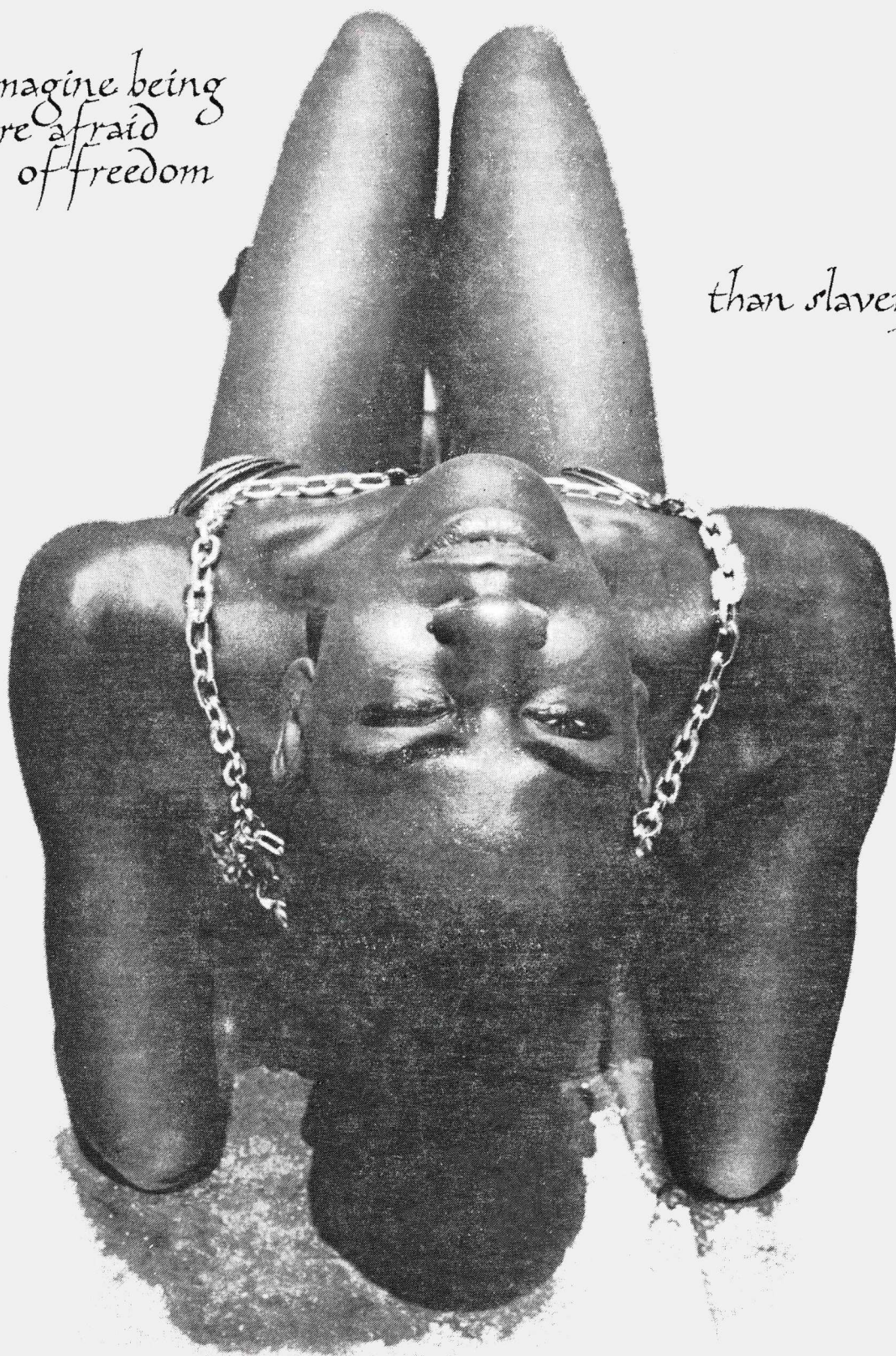
**Pamela Sneed *Imagine Being More Afraid of Freedom Than Slavery* (1995)**

Photo courtesy of the artist



*imagine being  
more afraid  
of freedom*

*than slavery...*





## MARTHA WILSON

### ***Interview on Performance Art (1995)***

Martha Wilson discusses Franklin Furnace's history as an avant-garde venue that presented political performance art during the culture wars in the United States. Wilson begins by explaining how performance art evolved from art movements such as Futurism (1909–1944), Constructivism (1915–1940), and Dadaism (1916–1920). She defines performance art as a medium that transmits conceptual thinking through live actions. Furthermore, Wilson discusses how presenting Karen Finley, Scarlet O, and Annie Sprinkle—artists who explore feminism, pornography, and sexuality in their performances—impacted Franklin Furnace during the culture wars. She notes how religious groups falsely accused the art organization of showing pornography to children with government funds. These accusations prompted the National Endowment for the Arts to rescind a grant awarded to Franklin Furnace. Despite the upheaval, Wilson proclaimed that "Until they cart me away in a straitjacket, I am going to continue to present performance art." While Wilson advocates for federal art funding, she is critical of the government's regulation of artworks that examine sex as a legitimate subject of contemporary art.

#### **Martha Wilson Interview on Performance Art (1995)**

Video still courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.



## FRANKLIN FURNACE

### ***Franklin Furnace at Pseudo Programs, Inc. (1998)***

*Franklin Furnace at Pseudo Programs, Inc. (1998)* marked the first season of Franklin Furnace's collaboration with Pseudo Online Network. Franklin Furnace's move from a physical space to a virtual one resulted from the culture wars on artistic freedom in the United States. Despite efforts to maintain other physical spaces in downtown Manhattan, the Franklin Furnace Board agreed that the organization's prime focus would be to increase access and broaden their audience through new media. This radical move marked Franklin Furnace's shift from presenting avant-garde art in physical spaces to netcasting it in digital realms. Through Pseudo's innovative online platform, Franklin Furnace investigated the democratic landscape of the Internet as a censorship-free space to present political performance art. *Franklin Furnace at Pseudo Programs, Inc.* features performances by Halona Hilbertz, Bingo Gazingo, Patricia Hoffbauer, Jon Keith, Jason E. Bowman, Kali Lela Colton, Nora York, Anna Mosby Coleman, Lenora Champagne, and Alvin Eng with Yoav Gal.

### **Franklin Furnace *Franklin Furnace at Pseudo Programs, Inc. (1998)***

Nora York & Nancy Spero *Fire Fox* (1998)

Video still courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.



## GUERRILLA GIRLS

### ***Secret Identities (1999)***

The Guerrilla Girls discuss the historical exclusion of women artists, writers, and performers in *Secret Identities* (1999). Concealed behind gorilla masks, the Guerrilla Girls take on the names of dead women artists—Claude Cahun, Julia de Burgos, Audre Lorde, and Ana Mendieta, among others—as a feminist gesture to counter the erasure of their artworks by mainstream cultural institutions. Furthermore, this piece includes footage of Guerrilla Girls street actions targeting museums that have largely excluded women artists in their public exhibitions and permanent collections. Several women artists are listed at the end of *Secret Identities* as a political act to re-inscribe their names into art history, which has otherwise failed to recognize such artists' contributions to the field.

#### **Guerrilla Girls *Secret Identities* (1999)**

Photo courtesy of the artists

Photo: Lois Greenfield





## HOLLY HUGHES

### ***Preaching to the Perverted (1999)***

Holly Hughes investigates the politics of art and democracy in *Preaching to the Perverted* (1999). She begins by discussing her experience as one of the artists involved in the U.S. Supreme Court Case *National Endowment for the Arts v. Finley et al* (1998). Hughes, Karen Finley, John Fleck, and Tim Miller had their grants revoked by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) on the grounds of obscenity. Later known as the "NEA Four," these artists challenged the decency provision in government grants to artists through the NEA. Throughout the performance, Hughes reenacts scenes from the Supreme Court trial that she calls "theatrical spectacles," while noting the heightened censorship of art in the United States. She decenters national debates surrounding freedom, citizenship, and democracy from a lesbian feminist point of view. In doing so, Hughes asserts her artistic freedom by creating a performance that transgresses the body politic. She concludes by explaining how the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the NEA's general standards of decency—a statute that the court determined was not unconstitutional and was not a violation of the First Amendment. Hughes' *Preaching to the Perverted* was intended to be part of Franklin Furnace's *History of the Future* (1999) netcast on Pseudo Programs, Inc.'s the Performance Channel. However, the corporation went bankrupt during the height of the culture wars, leaving the performance footage dormant until it was preserved by the Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library.

#### **Holly Hughes *Preaching to the Perverted* (1999)**

Photograph courtesy of University of Michigan's website

Photo: Kelly Campbell



## PATTY CHANG

### ***Fountain* (1999)**

Patty Chang addresses standards of beauty, representations of Asian women, and the politics of the male gaze in *Fountain* (1999). Throughout the performance, Chang stares into a mirror while drinking water from her reflection. To create the imagery in the video recording, she reverses the orientation of the performance footage captured on camera. By displaying the footage vertically—as seen in the preserved video documentation, rather than horizontally as it was initially shot—Chang creates an illusion of herself drinking water from an upright mirror. Positioning the footage this way flips the visual plane and reshapes the viewer's perception of the performance recording. Chang's *Fountain* was intended to be part of Franklin Furnace's *History of the Future* (1999) netcast on Pseudo Programs, Inc.'s the Performance Channel. However, the corporation went bankrupt during the height of the culture wars, leaving the performance footage in the artist's possession until it was preserved by the Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library.

#### **Patty Chang *Fountain* (1999)**

Slide courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.





## JULIE TOLENTINO

### ***The Bottom Project (2000)***

Julie Tolentino confronts the body politics of movement in *The Bottom Project* (2000). Tolentino's eighteen performer cast explores the collective body in motion as an act of resistance against the backdrop of the AIDS pandemic. The performers engage the meaning of the word "bottom" as a precarious space through a non-linear narrative that encompasses movement, visuals, and sound. As evidenced in the performance, the bottom becomes a metaphorical space of exploration, a space of radical unbecoming, and a space free of social hierarchy. Furthermore, Tolentino employs a queer mestiza lens by drawing from her mixed-race identity to create a body positive movement style. This radical choreographic approach becomes a movement intervention on stage. Here, Tolentino's cast forms a new set of body politics that confront the lack of intersectionality in the performance scene. The diverse performers collectively embody a fluid configuration of race, gender, and sexuality. Together the cast creates a space for building coalitions across communities, while also envisioning new ways of being queer in the world.

**Julie Tolentino *The Bottom Project* (2000)**

Flier courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

Photo: Peter Ross



**Julie  
Tolentino**  
The Bottom Project



2005–  
2014

## RASHAAD NEWSOME

### ***Shade Compositions (2009)***

Rashaad Newsome explores the sociocultural politics of the black vernacular in *Shade Compositions* (2009). Working with a chorus of black women, Newsome records, edits, and loops their gestures live by using a hacked Nintendo Wii game controller. The different racial tones of blackness expressed in the sound score derive from cultural stereotypes associated with the black female body. Newsome and the chorus remix such representations constructed by mainstream media and popular culture. Essentially, the performers throw back the "shade"—a term historically used to disrespect black women, which recently has been reclaimed as a positive term—as a gesture to critique negative perceptions of black women. In the process of doing so, they create a sound and image that works to uplift and affirm black women's identity.

**Rashaad Newsome *Shade Compositions* (2009)**

Photo courtesy of the artist's website





## DREAD SCOTT

### ***Money to Burn (2010)***

Dread Scott confronts the politics of capitalism in *Money to Burn* (2010). Performed on Wall Street in New York City, Scott repeatedly sings the phrase "Money to burn" while lighting currency on fire. The currency that Scott burns includes his personal money, grant money awarded by Franklin Furnace, and donated money from pedestrians. His gesture of burning currency—an action that is considered a crime in the United States under Title 18, Section 333—illuminates the epidemic of income inequality and signals for an economic system not based on profit. It is important to note that Scott does not exchange any money during the performance for goods or services. Rather the pyre of dollar bill ashes becomes a site for the public to imagine an economy outside of capital gain. After twenty-five minutes of performing this public intervention, the New York Police Department shut down Scott's performance and cited him a ticket for "disorderly conduct."

#### **Dread Scott *Money to Burn* (2010)**

Digital photo courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

Photo: Dexter Jones



## CASSILS

### ***Hard Times* (2010)**

Cassils transgresses social gender constructions in *Hard Times* (2010). Throughout the performance, Cassils alludes to Tiresias—a blind prophet in Greek mythology that mediates between male/female, blind/seeing, and present/future. Cassils poses on a scaffold in a coral bikini, blond wig, and prosthetic mask that blinds their vision while the audience gazes at their body. They perform literal and figurative gestures that subvert iconography in classical sculpture and portraiture. Cassils provokes affect through body language that works to liberate gender binaries and standards of beauty. Ultimately, Cassils employs a trans temporality by creating an image over the course of the performance that challenges superficial understandings of gender identity.

#### **Cassils *Hard Times* (2010)**

Digital photo courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

Photo: Luke Gilford



## ZACKARY DRUCKER & FLAWLESS SABRINA

### ***At Least You Know You Exist (Excerpt) (2011)***

Zackary Drucker and Flawless Sabrina investigate the erasure of transgender history in *At Least You Know You Exist (Excerpt)* (2011). In this excerpt from the film, Drucker engages in a trans-generational dialogue with Flawless Sabrina inside of her New York City apartment—a salon for queers and artists since 1968. The acts that the artists perform can be viewed as embodied repertoires that transmit memory, identity, and culture. They also reflect how transgender history has largely been excluded from mainstream archives and how transgender people have passed down their history through the oral tradition. Furthermore, Drucker and Sabrina use film as a medium to record their artistic relationship through a trans lens as both creators and subjects of the work. They create what Drucker calls "a new vision for transgender performativity" and construct a historical narrative on their own terms. This is most evident when Drucker proclaims to Sabrina at the end of the excerpt: "Because of you, I know that I exist." Essentially, the film becomes a document of transgender history for future generations to access.

**Zackary Drucker & Flawless Sabrina *At Least You Know You Exist (Excerpt)* (2011)**

Film still courtesy of the artists





## LAWRENCE GRAHAM-BROWN

### ***Rites of Passage/Sacred Spaces (2012)***

Lawrence Graham-Brown confronts the politics of religion, sexuality, and blackness in *Rites of Passage/Sacred Spaces* (2012). Presented at Judson Memorial Church, Graham-Brown and cast perform ritualistic acts that draw from Afro-Caribbean folklore. The performers use fetish objects and various aromas in the tradition of Obeah—religious, spiritual, and magical practices developed by West African slaves in the Caribbean to ward off misfortune or to cause harm to another—while performing explicit homoerotic gestures with each other. In this rite of passage, the gay black male body becomes both a site of worship and a symbol of resurrection. This queer form of salvation seeks to reverse oppressive colonizing discourses that deem homosexuality a sin. Instead, the power of redemption is displaced and reclaimed from a gay black male perspective. These acts work to combat and dispel homophobic ideas in religion, especially in Graham-Brown's native Jamaica and other Caribbean nations where such doctrines have historically been used to justify the killing, oppression, and punishment of L.G.B.T.Q.I. people.

**Lawrence Graham-Brown *Rites of Passage/Sacred Spaces* (2012)**

Digital photo courtesy of the artist

Photo: Daniel Talonia



## M. LAMAR

### ***Surveillance Punishment and The Black Psyche (2013)***

M. Lamar examines the sexual politics that surround the surveillance of the black male body in *Surveillance Punishment and The Black Psyche* (2013). Set in the American South during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Lamar portrays a death row prisoner who sings about the historical legacy of black men being watched by white overseers. Performed in the tradition of the spiritual, the song's narrative centers around a slave condemned to death for killing his master whom he loved. Throughout this plantation fantasy, Lamar explores the politics of interracial and same-sex desire from a black man's point of view. As evidenced in the lyric "With his touch I felt free," discipline becomes a form of pleasure rather than punishment. Here, Lamar reverses the power dynamic of the white male overseer's gaze—the black slave associates his master's watch with affection rather than persecution. As the song ends, the prisoner alludes to the prison-industrial complex as a form of modern-day slavery, while connecting the role that police surveillance plays in enforcing such oppression. For Lamar blackness is always under surveillance and subject to punishment by white supremacy.

**M. Lamar *Surveillance Punishment and The Black Psyche* (2013)**

Video still courtesy of the artist



## AMBER HAWK SWANSON

### ***Doll Closet (2014)***

Amber Hawk Swanson's *Doll Closet* (2014) explores the closet as a site of secrecy for queer sexuality and doll ownership. Livestreamed online for one week, this durational performance is a collaboration between Swanson and Jesse—both of whom are active members of the sex doll community. Throughout Swanson constructs a replica of the hidden closet where Jesse secretly kept his life-size sex doll Heather for fifteen years. Jesse instructs Swanson on how to build the closet and also discloses intimate details about his relationship with Heather (whose body parts are displayed as objects in the live performance to witness the replication of her closet). Here, Swanson makes the private accessible to the public by creating a space for the sex doll community to share "closeted" desires, fantasies, and sexualities without breaking anonymity. The metaphor of the closet becomes a rendered site where Swanson asks "What kinds of relationships can flourish in secrecy?" Through the process of replicating Heather's closet, Swanson constructs a queer body politic that confronts binary notions of what constitutes intimacy, sexuality, and artificiality.

**Amber Hawk Swanson *Doll Closet* (2014)**

Digital photo courtesy of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.





## DYNASTY HANDBAG

### ***Soggy Glasses, A Homo's Odyssey (2014)***

Dynasty Handbag's *Soggy Glasses, A Homo's Odyssey* (2014) is a feminist epic of self-exploration. Handbag parodies Homer's *Odyssey* by revising the masculine allegory through a queer-feminist lens. Through the artist's signature blend of physical humor and camp aesthetics, she takes the audience on a voyage through her heart, mind, bowels, and "artist colon-y." Utilizing props, video, voice-overs, and animation, Handbag critiques the male archetypal journey home and searches for her true nature outside of patriarchal culture. Handbag notes that in the performance she "employs the female physical and spiritual body as the terrain for her journey home." Ultimately, she works to dismantle patriarchy through a feminist body politic by symbolically calling for the end of phallogentric logic.

**Dynasty Handbag *Soggy Glasses, A Homo's Odyssey* (2014)**

Digital photo courtesy of the artist

Photo: Alex Escalante





INTERVIEW

## INTERVIEW

### ***Oraison H. Larmon & Martha Wilson***

Oraison H. Larmon conducts an interview with Franklin Furnace Founding Director Martha Wilson. Throughout the co-curators discuss specific works and artists featured in the *Franklin Furnace: Performance & Politics* (2018) collection. The interview explores Franklin Furnace's history as an archive, funder, and presenter of avant-garde art.

**ORAISON H. LARMON:** Prior to founding Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc., you were creating performances for the camera—*Solo Performance Compilation* (1972 & 1974), *Posturing* (1972–1973), and *A Portfolio of Models* (1974)—which are included in the *Franklin Furnace: Performance & Politics* (2018) collection. These early solo performances examine your subjectivity as a woman artist and confront the aesthetic practices of male conceptual artists working in the 1970s. Could you discuss how your early solo performances led to the founding of Franklin Furnace in 1976?

**MARTHA WILSON:** I want to begin by discussing the politics of the male conceptual art world in the early 1970s. When I informed my painting teacher, Jerry Ferguson, that I wanted to be an artist he told me that "Women do not make it in the art world, but if you are serious, you will make black and white art." I was outraged because he was saying that women had no chance of making it as artists. So, I stomped over to the drugstore to buy a roll of color film to create these performances for the camera. When I was making such work, male conceptual artists—Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, Jan Dibbets, Lawrence Weiner, and Ian Wilson—dominated the art world. These artists were creating works that examined the structure of art rather than its aesthetic value. I remember saying to myself "Who cares about this art? Why is this work important? This artwork is not important!"

However, I met with Vito Acconci when he was in residence at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. After reviewing my artwork, he suggested that I read *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1956) by Erving Goffman. This book uses theatrical performance as a framework to discuss how we present ourselves in society. Acconci also made me realize that sex could be a legitimate subject to explore in contemporary art. From this point forward, my female subjectivity became the central focus of my performances for the camera.



There was not much of a connection between my early solo performances and the founding of Franklin Furnace. What happened was that my boyfriend broke up with me while we were living together in Canada. My options were to continue teaching at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, or move to New York City to explore my potential as a woman artist. After shortly living in the city, I saw that there was a vacuum in the art world—the uptown art institutions were ignoring the invention of postmodernism that was occurring in the downtown art spaces. So, I founded Franklin Furnace in 1976 to champion ephemeral art that was rejected by mainstream institutions and politically opposed to mainstream cultural values.

**OHL:** Franklin Furnace was first located at 112 Franklin Street in the Tribeca neighborhood of lower Manhattan. Around the same time that you founded Franklin Furnace, there were many other alternative art spaces—The Alternative Museum, Art in General, Artists Space, Clocktower Gallery, Collective for Living Cinema, Dia Art Foundation, Just Above Midtown, The Kitchen, and Printed Matter—that were located in proximity to Franklin Furnace. Could you describe the art scene during the mid-1970s to the early 1980s in New York City? Why do you think that so many alternative art spaces, some of which still exist today, were founded during this time? What were the politics between the alternative art spaces and the mainstream art institutions in the city?

**MW:** The New York City art scene during the 1970s and 1980s was full of possibilities to experiment. When I first moved to the city, the artist Dan Graham told me to check out the Clocktower Gallery in Tribeca. Founded by Alanna Heiss, the Clocktower quickly became a legendary alternative art space known for their exhibitions, installations, and performances. Heiss also was the founder of The Institute for Art and Urban Resources and The Idea Warehouse. She later founded P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center (now MoMA PS1), which she transformed into a renowned venue for international contemporary art. Heiss was a leader of the alternative art space movement in New York City. She radically changed how avant-garde art was presented at the time.

I remember attending a performance by Virginia Piersol at The Idea Warehouse in the mid-1970s. She was wearing a harness with two 8mm film projectors mounted onto her body. As Piersol roller skated around the loft, the projected images changed sizes as she traveled throughout the space. I thought that her performance at The Idea Warehouse was great! Piersol told me about the ground floor at 112 Franklin Street when I was looking for a loft in Tribeca. I was able to secure a space in the building and

this is where Franklin Furnace was born. The downtown art scene during the 1970s and 1980s was full of people working together to create alternative spaces for avant-garde art.

I believe that the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) played a significant role in developing the alternative art spaces in New York City. For example, Brian O'Doherty from the NEA's Visual Arts Program invited me to have lunch with him and the artist Richard Kostelanetz. He told me that Franklin Furnace should apply to the endowment because they had money to fund art spaces. So, we applied to the NEA seeking funds for our performance art program, which later became problematic in the 1990s when the culture wars erupted in the United States.

The alternative art spaces operated in very different economies from the art world. Uptown art institutions such as the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum were selling artwork for profit. Whereas the alternative art spaces downtown were supporting artists who were creating ephemeral artwork under the banner of "postmodernism." Although there was no such terminology during the 1970s, postmodernism evolved to describe time-based art such as artists' books, temporary installation, and performance art. I believe that this style of art developed from the conceptual art movement, which was concerned with ideas rather than aesthetics. The uptown art institutions did not have much interest in time-based art until the gallery dealers began exhibiting and marketing it. Then the day came when the dealer Leo Castelli sold a Bruce Nauman video for \$85,000. This transaction meant that the dealers had figured out how to sell time-based art to mainstream institutions for major profit. Those of us running alternative art spaces downtown knew that this purchase signaled the end of a golden era.

**OHL:** Franklin Furnace began as an archive of international contemporary artists' books. The *Franklin Furnace* collection includes a few artists' books exhibitions—*Dialects: Diverse Bookworks by Black and Hispanic Artists* (1980), *Artists' Books from Mexico* (1982), and *Concrete Poetry* (1988). These exhibitions showcased contemporary artists' books that included a range of aesthetic forms and political subjectivities. What was your interest in collecting, exhibiting, and preserving such materials? How did Franklin Furnace evolve from a collector of artists' books in the mid-1970s to a presenter of performance art in the early 1980s? Could you discuss the relationship between these mediums in the context of art history?

**MW:** I was interested in collecting artists' books because mainstream art institutions were disregarding them as serious works of art. So, I founded Franklin Furnace to collect, preserve, and

exhibit contemporary artists' books from around the world. We became the largest archive of such materials in the United States during the 1980s. Franklin Furnace's collection policy was that we would accept anything that an artist called a "book." We did not make judgments about whether the artists' books were good or if they had any political viability. After years of housing the artists' books collection, Franklin Furnace sold it to the Museum of Modern Art in 1993 to ensure that these materials would be historically preserved.

Franklin Furnace's performance art program naturally evolved from the artists' books collection. The artists who were creating such books wanted to read from them. In the fall of 1976, Franklin Furnace launched its first Artist Reading series, which included works that blurred the lines between the written word, visual poetry, and performance art. Martine Aballea's *Sleep Storm Crystals* (1978) was one of the first performances that we presented at Franklin Furnace. She was encouraged by Franklin Furnace Curator Jacki Apple to read from her one-of-a-kind artists' books. Aballea was joined on stage by Apple and the dancer/choreographer Erin Martin, who created a setting for Aballea to read aloud from her books. After that reading, Apple proposed that Franklin Furnace should have a performance art program and that is how we began to present performance art.

I trace the origins of artists' books and performance art back to Futurism—an artistic and social movement that originated in Italy during the early twentieth century. In the summer of 1910, the Futurists staged an action at the Clock Tower in Piazza San Marco (Venice, Italy) where they threw 800,000 copies of their manifesto off the top of the tower as people were getting out of a church. The Venetian public was enraged because the Futurist Manifesto claimed that if you worship the past, you are of no value, but if you worship the future, you are of value. So, the townspeople rushed up the Clock Tower, and the Futurists rushed down the tower. They collided in a fistfight at the bottom of the tower over the political content written in the manifesto. The point that I am trying to draw here is the performative relationship between language and the body. Artists' books and performance art converge through the use of words, images, and gestures to communicate ideas. These are confrontational art mediums that convey notions the general public does not want to hear.

**OHL:** C. Carr's "The Fiery Furnace: Performance in the '80s, War in the '90s" (2005) examines Franklin Furnace as a presenter of avant-garde art and political art during the culture wars in the United States. In this article, you are quoted stating that by "[...] the mid-1980s the avant-garde was viewed as a virus

eating away at the body politic—something that needed to be stamped out if possible. Artists should be—if not killed—at least silenced." Could you discuss how Franklin Furnace confronted the body politic during the culture wars?

**MW:** Franklin Furnace confronted the body politic by presenting artists who examined sex as a legitimate subject of contemporary art. Prior to the culture wars, we were already in trouble with the NEA for mounting Carnival Knowledge's *The Second Coming* (1984)—an exhibition that explored the politics surrounding feminist pornography. When Franklin Furnace was promoting this exhibition, we included the NEA on our promotional materials. Someone at the endowment said that "Unless the NEA awarded you a grant specifically for this show, you should not be crediting us for it. Do not put language on the front of your brochure to credit the endowment for everything that you do. Just credit the NEA for the shows that we specifically fund." This response from the NEA was an early sign that the culture wars were going to affect the administration of art. The culture wars were primarily about whether artists were allowed to explore sex as a subject with public money. Representations of sex in performance art, especially queer sex, were very problematic for right-wing politicians.

In 1996, Franklin Furnace received a \$100,000 advancement grant from the NEA. The religious right claimed that we spent all that money on *Voyeur's Delight* (1996)—a multimedia exhibition that explored the power and pleasure of participating in voyeurism. However, Franklin Furnace did not receive any public or private funds whatsoever to mount this show. The Christian Action Network later staged a Funeral March on the steps of the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. Their performance spectacle featured a grim reaper with a funeral procession that called for the death of the NEA. The group carried two coffins that contained a death certificate for the NEA and sexually explicit images from *Voyeur's Delight*. This march was one of many political attacks by the religious right that sought to abolish the NEA.

**OHL:** The political right attempted to silence Franklin Furnace funded artists Karen Finley, Holly Hughes, Scarlet O, Annie Sprinkle, and Johanna Went. These female artists are included in the *Franklin Furnace* collection to counter such silence by historically preserving their political agency. What do you think prompted the radical shift that led right-wing politicians to silence artists during the 1980s and 1990s? What is the relationship between political censorship and archival silence in the construction of historical narratives? How did Franklin Furnace counter such silence as an independent archive?

**MW:** I do not think that the right-wing politicians were successful in silencing artists, especially Karen Finley, Holly Hughes, and Annie Sprinkle. These artists kept creating performances that examined sex despite the political backlash they received from the right. The irony of the culture wars was that sex had been a legitimate subject of analysis in art history for 50,000 years. However, the right-wing politicians did not want to fund art that depicted sex with public money. As time progressed, the focus of the culture wars shifted to other public sectors. The avant-garde art community was left behind in a political trail of dust, and the artists continued making work that explored sex. While the focus of the culture wars never changed, the strategy of the movement shifted over time. The political right became more invested in targeting culture at schools, libraries, and television networks.

Political censorship and archival silence play similar roles in the construction of historical narratives. The group of artists known as the "NEA Four"—Karen Finley, John Fleck, Holly Hughes, and Tim Miller—experienced political censorship when the NEA revoked their grants on the grounds of obscenity. This incident was a historic moment that impacted how artists were thinking about documenting their artwork. For example, I know that Karen Finley was selective about recording her performances because the press attacked her. Tim Miller was careful about who had access to video documentation of his shows because the footage was used against him by conservatives. Other artists chose not to document their performances during the culture wars for political, conceptual, and personal reasons.

As an independent archive, Franklin Furnace has countered archival silence by preserving avant-garde art. Being a Quaker pack rat, I save everything that Franklin Furnace does so that future generations can access our history. We never had an exclusive policy about what materials we should collect as part of our archives. Instead, Franklin Furnace's highest priority has always been to provide access to our materials. We created an online database called the Event Archives so that people around the world can research our archives. These are a few ways that Franklin Furnace has confronted archival silence, especially considering that performance art is often not collected by mainstream archives.

**OHL:** During the culture wars, Franklin Furnace was defunded by corporate agencies, subjected to political attacks by right-wing politicians, and investigated by federal art organizations. These issues were publicly addressed in *Franklin Furnace Fights for First Amendment Rights* (1990) and *Too Shocking To Show* (1992). Could you further explain the different political attacks that the organization underwent during the culture wars? How was visual documentation from Franklin Furnace's archives used by the political right to construct narratives against the organization?

**MW:** The political attacks on Franklin Furnace began with the religious right. They came to Franklin Furnace to pick up brochures for Carnival Knowledge's *The Second Coming* (1984). The religious right wrote to our funders and local representatives claiming that we showed pornography to children. This incident created a media frenzy with reporters from various news outlets showing up on our doorstep. Subsequently, Franklin Furnace was dropped by funders because of this smear campaign staged by the religious right. I heaved a sigh of release when *The Second Coming* closed because I thought that this would be the end of the attacks. However, this was just the beginning of many politically motivated attacks against Franklin Furnace. As the culture wars erupted in the early 1990s, Franklin Furnace was audited by the Internal Revenue Service, dropped by several corporate funders, and investigated by various branches of the government.

Visual documentation from Franklin Furnace's archives was used to construct false narratives about us. A reporter from *The Washington Times* came to view our archival materials for a newspaper article. As part of Franklin Furnace's open collection policy, we allowed the reporter to search through our archives. Here, he found photographic slides of naked ladies and other materials that he thought were obscene. We did not know at the time that this reporter was writing for a socially conservative newspaper. When the reporter's article appeared in *The Washington Times*, visual documentation from our archive was circulating in the news around the country. This article depicted Franklin Furnace as a prostitution ring by including photographic slides of live performances that examined sex as a legitimate subject. There was enough dirt in this newspaper article to smear Franklin Furnace's reputation in the public eye.

**OHL:** Documentation strategies for performance art have varied in approach throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. In a previous conversation, you mentioned to me that artists were experimenting with "performance for the camera" in the 1970s. Performing for the camera was a critical feminist method used by many female artists during this time. Artists included in the *Franklin Furnace* collection, such as Eleanor Antin, Ana Mendieta, and Martha Wilson, utilized the camera to decenter the male gaze by becoming the creators and subjects of their performance artworks. The relationship to the camera shifted in the late 1970s because artists believed that it changed their behavior while performing live. You explained that artists then began to solely perform for the audience without the presence of the camera in the performance space. This approach shifted in the 1980s and 1990s when artists returned to documenting their performances for grant application purposes.



The camera has played a crucial role in the construction of performance art history but has not captured many live performances for various reasons. Therefore, the act of witnessing becomes integral to performances that are undocumented, and the audience becomes an extended archive of such works. How do you think about archiving performances that are undocumented for conceptual reasons? What is the archive's responsibility in addressing and witnessing these absences from live performances? How has Franklin Furnace approached the archiving of performance art given its ephemeral nature?

**MW:** We have to accept that ephemerality is a part of the performance art archive. Franklin Furnace presented the artist Ralston Farina who was apprehensive about documenting his live performances. We did not videotape Farina's performance because that was part of his art practice. There is a catalog record of Farina's 1976 performance in our database, but it contains minimal information about his piece. The act of witnessing becomes important when archiving such ephemeral works like Farina's performance. Otherwise, there are no other traces of the live performance for us to archive.

Performance studies scholar Peggy Phelan argues that documentation is incomplete and invalid for describing the live performance. Other scholars of performance such as Philip Auslander, Amelia Jones, Rebecca Schneider, and Diana Taylor have expanded upon Phelan's argument by proposing new ways to critically think about performance art's relationship to the archive. Considering these viewpoints, we questioned if any form of documentation could be as valid as the live performance itself.

Franklin Furnace has approached the archiving of performance art by documenting it to the best of our abilities. We used whatever technologies were available to us at the time—35mm slides, photographs, and videotapes if we could afford it. However, in the 1990s we decided that performance art specifically needed to be documented by video. So, we hired R & B Video to make VHS tapes of all the performances that we presented at Franklin Furnace. We never decided what performances were going to be videotaped based on content because it was our policy to document everything.

**OHL:** Franklin Furnace was subjected to attacks by the political right and religious groups during the culture wars. Right-wing politicians targeted other art organizations such as The Kitchen and Walker Art Center for presenting artwork that was deemed "obscene." Their main argument was that federal tax dollars were being used to fund pornography. This propaganda was used as a smear campaign against Franklin Furnace, The Kitchen, and Walker Art Center for presenting Ron Athey,

Karen Finley, and Annie Sprinkle. These artists radically confronted sexism, misogyny, and homophobia in their performances despite the backlash of the culture wars. Looking back at this critical moment in Franklin Furnace's history, what was the political legacy of the culture wars for the organization? How did the shift in federal arts funding during the early 1990s affect art organizations and performance artists? What impact did such political economies have on the art community post-culture wars?

**MW:** The political legacy was that Franklin Furnace continued to present art that confronted the body politic during the culture wars. We got into big trouble for showing artists who were examining sex as a legitimate subject in their artworks. As I mentioned earlier, Franklin Furnace was picketed by the Morality Action Committee for presenting Carnival Knowledge's *The Second Coming* (1984). The religious group organized churches to send postcards to our funders and elected officials stating that we showed pornography to children. After the exhibition closed, we were audited by the New York State Comptroller, the Internal Revenue Service, and the NEA from 1985–1995.

After the opening of Karen Finley's *A Woman's Life Isn't Worth Much* (1990), the New York Fire Department closed our performance space for allegedly being an "illegal social club." Subsequently, Franklin Furnace's grant for the 1991 season was rescinded by the NEA. We presented *Franklin Furnace Fights for First Amendment Rights* (1990) as a form of protest against the NEA for censoring artists. The Peter Norton Family Foundation replaced our grant that was rescinded by the NEA. After Franklin Furnace exhibited *Voyeur's Delight* (1996), the Christian Action Network staged a performance in Washington D.C. that called for the death of the NEA and Franklin Furnace.

Federal arts funding for performance artists dramatically shifted during the culture wars. For example, the NEA Four had their grants rescinded by the NEA on the grounds of obscenity. Three of the four NEA artists—Karen Finley, Holly Hughes, and Tim Miller—were affiliated with Franklin Furnace. Even though a peer review panel selected these artists to receive grants, the NEA thought that their proposed performances were obscene because of the sexual content. While the NEA Four sued to have their grants reinstated by the NEA, they failed to change the definition of "obscenity" in the general standards of decency that Congress enacted in 1990.

I think that the artists lost the culture wars and that the right-wing politicians won them. The political right was successful in selling the idea that no tax dollars should fund obscene art. In opposition, we

argued that artists had the right to the freedom of speech under the First Amendment. However, the outcry for the freedom of speech did not have the same ring to it as no tax dollars for obscene art.

The political economies surrounding the funding of art shifted post-culture wars. After the NEA terminated individual artist fellowships for all programs except jazz and literature, the legislators thought that they could silence the avant-garde art community. However, the effect of losing NEA individual artist fellowships was the opposite—artists started to practice in public spaces, performing for unwitting audiences, and taking their messages to non-art publics.

**OHL:** As the culture wars persisted in the United States, AIDS was killing many people due to the neglect of the government and the lack of accessible treatment for the disease. The *Franklin Furnace* collection includes many artists who address the politics of AIDS. One such artist, Essex Hemphill, died of complications from the disease in 1995. While his publications have been out of print for some time now, Hemphill's poetic legacy is still present in contemporary art and literary circles. When researching at Franklin Furnace, I came across Hemphill's *Dear Muthafuckin Dreams* (1988)—a literary performance that examines the American Dream from a gay black man's point of view. Hemphill's voice lingers in the archives and has become historically resuscitated here. Furthermore, the artists Ron Athey, Peter Cramer, Tim Miller, Julie Tolentino, and Jack Waters examine AIDS in their performance artworks. Not only did these artists perform highly charged political works on stage, but they also put their bodies on the front-lines as activists in ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power). Could you discuss how Franklin Furnace responded to the AIDS crisis? What impact did AIDS have on the art scene in New York City? How was performance art used as a medium of protest for AIDS activism in the 1990s?

**MW:** Franklin Furnace responded to the crisis by presenting artists who examined AIDS. We showed the artist S.K. Duff who was concerned with the disease just as the crisis began. His piece *Pink Triangle: Not Forgotten* (1985) was a performance and installation about homosexual men who were persecuted during the Holocaust. Duff was outspoken about AIDS being an urgent issue affecting the gay community that needed to be addressed politically.

Artists with AIDS were not always out about their status due to the stigma that they may have faced. The artist David Wojnarowicz complained that he was known as an "AIDS artist" for publicly disclosing his status. He was angry about being confined to that label because his artwork dealt with other social

issues. Wojnarowicz was an artist who just happened to have AIDS. He fervently continued to make significant artwork until he died from the disease in 1992.

I remember that AIDS was called "gay cancer," but the disease did not discriminate against nobody. While gay men, drug users, and sex workers were the most vulnerable populations, the disease killed many people worldwide. When the AIDS crisis hit New York City, it was like the Black Death had moved through the downtown art scene. There were funerals to attend every month as gay artists died in mass numbers from the disease.

The activist group ACT UP used performance art as a medium of protest for AIDS activism. Throughout the crisis, members of the group put their bodies on the front-lines targeting the Reagan and Bush administrations, who were not addressing the urgency of the disease as thousands of people were dying from it. ACT UP staged many direct actions against religious institutions, health organizations, and government offices, where performance art was central to their political interventions.

**OHL:** The *Franklin Furnace* collection includes poetic works by Tracie Morris, Sapphire, and Pamela Sneed, who were crucial voices during the culture wars. However, these poets are not often talked about in the broader historical context of this period despite their politically charged works that commented on race, gender, and sexuality. Could you discuss the importance of these black women's poems during the culture wars? Also, what impact did the culture wars have on the literary community? Do you think that poetry was less threatening to the body politic compared to performance art during the culture wars?

**MW:** Tracie Morris, Sapphire, and Pamela Sneed were critical voices during the culture wars. These women poets performed spoken word poetry in a literary scene that was dominated by white men. They lyrically explored the personal as political while also confronting social issues affecting their communities. These poets created powerful works when crack cocaine and AIDS were killing many Black Americans during the 1980s and 1990s. Their spoken word poetry confronted issues that left most people at a loss for words. This period of the culture wars was an elegiac time with so many unnecessary deaths.

I think that literature was less of a target than visual art during the culture wars. Language operated under the radar compared to visual imagery. A photo of a naked performance artist was much easier

for the right-wing politicians to take out of context than poetry for their political motivations. However, Sapphire's poem "Wild Thing" (1992) became the center of controversy early in the culture wars. The poem was written through the voice of a teenage boy who was involved in the rape and beating of a Central Park jogger. "Wild Thing" was published in the NEA-funded literary magazine, *Portable Lower East Side*. The Reverend Donald Wildmon sent an excerpt of the poem about Jesus Christ and oral sex to Congress. This excerpt set off national debates about the NEA's perceived endorsement of blasphemy. The NEA Chairman John Frohnmyer defended the artistic merit of "Wild Thing," but was fired by President George Bush for endorsing the literary magazine that published the poem.

While the NEA still funds the fellowship in literature, it no longer offers the visual art fellowship. I believe that the visual art fellowship was terminated because performance artists were challenging definitions of sex in art. Performance artists such as Karen Finley, Cheri Gaulke, Tim Miller, Frank Moore, and Annie Sprinkle, were examining sex as a legitimate subject of contemporary art. The government did not want the general public to know about these artists fearing that their performances would corrupt American family values. So, the right-wing politicians eliminated the NEA fellowship in visual art to silence performance artists.

**OHL:** Shortly after Karen Finley's *A Woman's Life Isn't Worth Much* (1990) opened at Franklin Furnace, the New York Fire Department (NYFD) closed the organization's performance space. A man attending Diane Torr's *Crossing the River Styx* (1990) called the fire department because he could not find an exit out of the building. Subsequently, the NYFD shutdown Franklin Furnace's performance space claiming that it was an "illegal social club." Despite efforts to reopen the performance space and present work in exile at other alternative art spaces, you later decided to reinvent Franklin Furnace as a "virtual institution" in 1996. Could you explain how Franklin Furnace transitioned from presenting performance art in physical spaces to netcasting such work online at Pseudo Programs, Inc.? What response did Franklin Furnace receive from right-wing politicians and federal arts organizations when presenting political performances on the Internet? How did the artist community respond to Franklin Furnace netcasting performance art online via Pseudo?

**MW:** Following the closure of Franklin Furnace's performance space in 1990, we presented performances in exile from 1990–1993 at the Cooper Union, Judson Memorial Church, and The New School. After presenting a couple of seasons in exile, I was seeking out people to find a suitable venue

to present performance art. I met an artist named Robert Galinsky who was working as the head of Channel P at Pseudo Programs, Inc. The company was seeking out new shows to netcast as part of their online programming. Galinsky suggested that Franklin Furnace present a show on Channel P, which was the performance channel on Pseudo. We decided to go virtual in 1996 to provide artists the same freedom of expression that we had afforded them at our loft space during the 1970s and 1980s.

The other reason that Franklin Furnace went virtual was that we did not have a space to present live performances anymore. Collaborating with Pseudo provided us a new venue to showcase performance artists who wanted to explore the Internet as an art medium. The artists that Franklin Furnace presented online were not examining sex as the primary subject of their artwork. While sex was still an important topic, artists were becoming more interested in the politics of surveillance during the digital age. Artists were also using new technologies to address social issues relevant to the time. Over the course of three seasons, we presented *Franklin Furnace at Pseudo Programs* (1998), *The Future of the Present* (1998–1999), and *The History of the Future* (1999). Franklin Furnace's collaboration with Pseudo ended mid-way through the 1999–2000 season when the company went bankrupt.

Franklin Furnace did not receive any threats from right-wing politicians for presenting political performance art online. By the end of the 1990s, the culture wars moved on to broader issues than sexually explicit art and disregarded the avant-garde art community. The political rhetoric that the right used against Franklin Furnace was tossed in the trash. We were no longer useful for their political agendas, which were targeting culture in larger public sectors. However, Franklin Furnace received complaints from the artist community about our decision to present performance art online. They claimed that the Internet was undermining the physical aspects of live performance that had existed up to that point. The artist community was concerned about what kind of effects performance art online would have on the contemporary avant-garde.

When I decided to go virtual, there was a strong backlash from the Franklin Furnace Board. Three board members did not want to go virtual for various reasons, and a geyser of opposition erupted across the board. There were a lot of internal fights because not everyone agreed that going virtual was the right direction for Franklin Furnace. After several confrontational meetings, I sought out advice on how to proceed from a New York State Assistant Attorney General. This attorney told me to invite



artists who made art online to join the Franklin Furnace Board. These artists approved of my decision to go virtual because they valued the Internet as a legitimate art medium.

**OHL:** Presenting performance art online raises questions about what constitutes liveness and the body. In *Franklin Furnace at Pseudo Programs* (1998), performance artists presented experimental works that utilized the Internet as an extension of their bodies across time, space, and matter. Could you discuss liveness, presence, and the mediatization of performance art online? How does the body configure in online environments compared to physical venues? Does presenting performance art online change the relationship between the performer and the audience?

**MW:** Franklin Furnace presented artists who used the Internet as a medium to challenge our understanding of liveness, presence, and the mediatization of performance art. The first performance that Franklin Furnace presented online was Halona Hilbertz's *Pseudo Studio Walk* (1998)—a performance where the artist walked toward and away from the video camera for fifty minutes. Her piece was netcasted in real-time, but viewers could also watch it live on-demand in other time zones. Hilbertz's performance destabilized our understanding of time and space by manipulating these elements online. Furthermore, the artist Nora York used animation technology to create the piece *Fire Fox* (1998). York asked the Pseudo technicians to place a camera down her throat to record the movements of her larynx while she sang a song. She overlaid this video footage with figure drawings by Nancy Spero to create a montage. Another artist Kathy Westwater used randomizing software in *The Fortune Cookie Dance* (1998), which generated a different sequence of the dance for each online viewer who watched the netcast.

The body has evolved into different configurations in online environments. I thought that the body would disappear when Franklin Furnace went virtual, but artists were exploring the digital body across time, space, and matter. Artists began to experiment with the avatar as a stand-in for the physical body online. For example, Adriene Jenik and Lisa Brenneis created the online networked performance *Desktop Theater* (1997), which took place in a 2-D avatar-based chat room called The Palace. Their avatars recited text from Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1952), and other avatars in the chat room interacted with them as they performed live. Jenik and Brenneis were creating born-digital performance art that complicated our understanding of what constitutes a body. They were also performing for an entirely new audience—people from across the world who were connected by

the Internet. This performance blurred the lines between physical and digital presentations of live performance art.

The relationship between the performer and the audience shifted when we presented performance art on the Internet. Pseudo was doing their best to get the online audience to interact with the performers through live "chat jockeys." The chat jockeys would instantly respond to messages from viewers around the world watching the performance netcast. This type of interactivity is now a common feature of the Internet, however, in the mid-1990s it was a futuristic way of communicating with each other.

**OHL:** After Pseudo Programs, Inc. closed due to bankruptcy in the late 1990s, Franklin Furnace no longer had a digital platform to netcast performance art online. However, the organization continued to present avant-garde art in exile at alternative art spaces across New York City. Franklin Furnace was still operating as a virtual institution in the early 2000s, but always maintained a physical office space where you conducted business and housed the organization's archives. With the advancements in new technologies, more opportunities to digitally preserve archives and showcase such materials online were presenting themselves. At what point did you think that it was important to make Franklin Furnace's archives accessible online? When did you decide to create the Franklin Furnace Event Archives—an online database featuring documentation of poetry readings, art installations, live performances, new media art, and benefit events at Franklin Furnace?

**MW:** We began thinking about how to publish the Franklin Furnace Event Archives online in 1996. Franklin Furnace Senior Archivist Michael Katchen and I attended the conference Museums and the Web, where we met Steve Deitz and Richard Rinehart. Together with Estera Milman and other advisers, they founded Conceptual and Intermedia Arts Online (CIAO)—a collaborative project designed to create networked access to conceptual art, intermedia art, performance art, digital art, and installation art. CIAO invited us to develop vocabularies for cataloging ephemeral works of art. Best practices for digitally preserving archival materials were still evolving in the mid-1990s. So, we worked with CIAO to create standards for digitizing photos, slides, texts, fliers, and other materials. Franklin Furnace and CIAO strategized on how to develop a database that linked such materials to each other. Together we conceptualized a relational database that documented our event archives.

Later in 2006, Franklin Furnace received grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Booth Ferris Foundation, and the New York State Council on the Arts to digitize the first decade of our

event archives. We created documentation strategies and developed standards for digitization with ARTstor—a nonprofit organization committed to digital collection solutions for universities, museums, schools, and libraries worldwide. The organization published Franklin Furnace's archival materials on their website and contributed \$20,000 for us to continue digitizing the first decade of our archives. With the support of ARTstor and other funders, we launched the Event Archives online in the summer of 2009. This database contains fundamental information about every live performance, temporary installation, and art exhibition presented by Franklin Furnace. The Event Archives provides electronic access to what are now rare artifacts of political, social, and cultural expression.

Currently, Franklin Furnace is in the process of preserving our video collection, which includes formats such as open reel, U-matic, and VHS tape. We can only preserve small batches of such materials at a time because funding to digitize video is limited. However, this collaboration with the Hemispheric Institute has provided us the opportunity to have more of our videos historically preserved. The videos in the *Franklin Furnace* collection will be maintained for 300 years, and the digital preservation files will be migrated to future video formats. I believe that the moving image record is essential to preserve because it is pedagogically imperative for performance art history.

**OHL:** Performance art often presents challenges for archives given its ephemeral nature. Many contemporary performance artists are using "re-performance" as a method to preserve performance artworks from the past. While re-performance is also subject to ephemerality, this approach seeks to circulate the archive of performance art through live acts rather than archival documentation. In Toni Sant's *Franklin Furnace and the Spirit of the Avant-garde A History of the Future* (2011), he writes that "Martha Wilson does not see reinterpretation as a viable preservation method; she believes that ephemerality is an essential element of live art." Could you discuss what you think is a viable preservation method for performance art? How has Franklin Furnace archived live performance given its temporal, visceral, and ephemeral dimensions? What best practices has Franklin Furnace established for physically and digitally archiving time-based art included in the Event Archives?

**MW:** I think that video documentation is a viable preservation method for performance art. The moving image record provides viewers a real-time experience of the live performance. Performance art becomes enhanced by video because the footage can be viewed multiple times. Whereas if you attend a live performance, you only get to see what happens on stage one time. I know that video is not

perfect because there can be technical issues. However, when the video documentation is good quality viewers can understand most of what happened during the staged performance.

Franklin Furnace created specific vocabularies for time-based art forms such as performance art, temporary installation, and new media art. For example, we noted that the term "Fluxus" meant something different when capitalized versus the term "fluxus" when uncapitalized. If these two terms are confused with each other, then problems can arise later on when materials are cataloged. We often draw from our personal experiences with the materials in our archive. Someone at Franklin Furnace such as Michael Katchen or myself would remember something about a performance. Other times, we rely on our backgrounds as artists to think about the best ways to catalog ephemeral artworks.

Michael established the best practices for the Event Archives, which included creating a selection policy for digitizing physical materials from our archives. Michael prepares such materials for digitization by processing them according to the event and then placing them into five acid-free folders: "Event Documentation," "Correspondence," "Support Material," "Duplicates," and "Updates." After processing the materials, Michael inspects each folder to ensure that they are not misfiled. Only the materials in the "Event Documentation" folder are the items that he considers for digitization. Michael suggests that materials in the "Duplicates" folder be compared to those in the "Event Documentation" folder to assure that the same materials are not digitized twice. Furthermore, Michael co-authored with Mary Haberle and Jenny Korn's "Best Practices and Guidelines: Digitization at Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc." (2012), which details the digitization practices that we use to produce quality archival scans of our materials. These guidelines ensure that the digital assets we create meet current archival standards for preservation and access. This document is free to access on Franklin Furnace's website for anyone interested in learning more about our digitization practices.

**OHL:** Finally, the *Franklin Furnace* collection includes performances by contemporary artists who are creating works in the tradition of the avant-garde. Artists such as Cassils, Zackary Drucker, Lawrence Graham-Brown, Dynasty Handbag, M. Lamar, Rashaad Newsome, and Amber Hawk Swanson, experiment with different media to examine sociopolitical issues. These artists employ critical lenses to explore race, gender, and sexuality while proposing new political imaginaries for the future. Where is the avant-garde right now in terms of practices, aesthetics, and politics? What do you think will be the focus of the future avant-garde? How will Franklin Furnace continue its mission of "Making the world safe for avant-garde art" in the next generation?

**MW:** Right now, I would say that the avant-garde is exploring social practice as a viable art form. Artists are focused on interacting with people, communities, and sectors of the world. They are utilizing social discourse in their artworks to comment on political issues that are affecting specific groups of people. I think that the current avant-garde's aesthetic is interactivity—artists are using the world around them as the social fabric for their artworks.

While any topic is up for examination, the artists of this generation's avant-garde are addressing the performance and politics of gender. The performance of gender, performance being the operative word, is at the forefront of discussions in the art world. Along with gender, artists are also critically addressing the politics of race and sexuality.

I believe that the future avant-garde will focus on artists of color. While racial discrimination is still a pertinent issue in the art world, being an artist of color is not a barrier like it was in the 1970s. I hope that white supremacy fades away so that artists of color become the forefront of the next avant-garde.

Franklin Furnace will continue to make the world safe for avant-garde art by collaborating with the artists who serve on our board, selection panels, and staff. Our highest priorities are to fund artists and to preserve their invaluable artworks in the Event Archives. As long as Franklin Furnace exists, we will continue to embed the social, cultural, and political value of avant-garde art into history.





# LIST OF WORKS

LIST OF WORKS

Franklin Furnace: Performance & Politics

1972

Martha Wilson

Solo Performance Compilation: Premiere, Routine Performance, Art Sucks, and Appearance as Value

Martha Wilson

Posturing: Drag

1973

Marta Wilson

Posturing: Age Transformation and Male Impersonator (Butch)

1974

Martha Wilson

A Portfolio of Models

Martha Wilson

Solo Performance Compilation: Cauterization and Deformation

1979

DISBAND

DISBAND at Franklin Furnace

Eleanor Antin

100 Boots: The Transmission and Reception

1980

Horace Brockington

Dialects: Diverse Bookworks by Black and Hispanic Artists

1982

Martha Hellion & Carla Stellweg

Artists' Books from Mexico

Ana Mendieta

Body Tracks

1983

Lorraine O'Grady

Fly By Night

1985

DANCENOISE

Bread and Circus

Franklin Furnace

Artists' Books Discussion at Queens College

1986

Diane Torr

Girls Will Be Boys Will Be Queens

1987

Johanna Went

Twin, Travel, Terror

Billy X. Curmano

Swimmin' The River

1988

Franklin Furnace

Concrete Poetry

Essex Hemphill & Wayson Jones

Dear Muthafuckin Dreams

1989

Sherman Fleming & Kristine Stiles

Western History as a Three-Story Building

1990

Franklin Furnace

Franklin Furnace Fights for First Amendment Rights

Tim Miller

Stretch Marks

1992

Estera Milman

Fluxus: A Conceptual Country

**Franklin Furnace**

*Too Shocking To Show*

**Peter Cramer & Jack Waters**

*SPEW: A New York Glamrock Operadrama*

**1993**

**Annie Sprinkle**

*Post Porn Modernist*

**Shirin Neshat**

*Unveiling*

**1994**

**Bob Flanagan & Sheree Rose**

*Visiting Hours Interview*

**Ron Athey**

*Four Scenes in a Harsh Life*

**1995**

**Tracie Morris**

*Afrofem*

**Pamela Sneed**

*Imagine Being More Afraid of Freedom Than Slavery*

**Martha Wilson**

*Interview on Performance Art*

**1998**

**Franklin Furnace**

*Franklin Furnace at Pseudo Programs, Inc.*

**1999**

**Guerrilla Girls**

*Secret Identities*

**Holly Hughes**

*Preaching to the Perverted*

**Patty Chang**

*Fountain*

**2000**

**Julie Tolentino**

*The Bottom Project*

**2009**

**Rashaad Newsome**

*Shade Compositions*

**2010**

**Dread Scott**

*Money to Burn*

**Cassils**

*Hard Times*

**2011**

**Zackary Drucker & Flawless Sabrina**

*At Least You Know You Exist (Excerpt)*

**2012**

**Lawrence Graham-Brown**

*Rites of Passage/Sacred Spaces*

**2013**

**M. Lamar**

*Surveillance Punishment and The Black Psyche*

**2014**

**Amber Hawk Swanson**

*Doll Closet*

**Dynasty Handbag**

*Soggy Glasses, A Homo's Odyssey*



BIOGRAPHIES  
CURATORS  
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## BIOGRAPHIES (ARTISTS & CURATORS)

**ELEANOR ANTIN** is a pioneering performance artist, filmmaker, and installation artist. Antin's groundbreaking work such as *100 Boots* (1971–1973), *CARVING: A Traditional Sculpture* (1972), *The King of Solana Beach* (1972–1975), *The Adventures of a Nurse* (1976), *The Angel of Mercy* (1977), and *Recollections of My Life with Diaghilev* (1979) are frequently referred to as classics of feminist, conceptual, and postmodern art. Her one-woman exhibitions have been presented at the Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, San Diego Museum of Contemporary Art, and Long Beach Museum of Art. A thirty-year retrospective of Antin's artwork was presented at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and was later exhibited at venues across the United Kingdom. Her artwork is included in collections at the Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Art Institute of Chicago, Jewish Museum, and Tate Modern. Monographs on Antin's work include *Eleanor Antin: Historical Takes* (2008) and *Multiple Occupancy: Eleanor Antin's "Selves"* (2014). Antin is the recipient of the AICA International Association of Art Critics award, Guggenheim Fellowship award, and National Foundation for Jewish Culture Media Achievement Award. She received an honorary doctorate from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Antin is Professor Emeritus of Visual Arts at the University of California, San Diego.

**RON ATHEY** is a performance artist based in Los Angeles. In his bloody portrayals of life, death, and fortitude in the time of AIDS, Athey calls into question the limits of artistic practice. These limits enable him to explore themes of gender, religion, and sexuality, among other topics in his performances. Athey first performed with Rozz Williams at underground galleries during the early 1980s in a collaboration known as Premature Ejaculation. Later, he began his solo performance career with *The Torture Trilogy: Martyrs & Saints, Four Scenes in a Harsh Life*, and *Deliverance* (1992–1995), and went on to develop *Incorruptible Flesh* (1997–2008) and *Solar Anus* (1998). His recent performances include *Judas Cradle* (2004–2005), *Self-Obliteration* (2008–2011), and *Gifts of the Spirit: Automatic Writing* (2010). Athey has collaborated with Lawrence Steger on *Incorruptible Flesh (In Progress)* (1996), Juliana Snapper on *The Judas Cradle* (2004), and Julie Tolentino on *THE SKY REMAINS THE SAME* (2007–). A monograph of Athey's performance artwork, *Pleading in the Blood: The Art and Performances of Ron Athey* (2013), was edited by Dominic Johnson and published by Intellect Ltd.



**HORACE BROCKINGTON** is a curator, gallery director, and consultant. He has organized exhibitions at Just Above Midtown, The Studio Museum in Harlem, Whitney Museum of American Art, Sculpture Center, and Franklin Furnace, among other venues. Brockington co-founded with Gilbert Coker and David Hammons Art Across the Park—a public art project that was instrumental in creating new site-specific artworks in parks throughout New York City. He is Founding Director of ICContemporary: Institute for Collaborations in Visual Culture, NYC, which commissions and produces projects by contemporary artists working across various forms of media. Brockington's writings on modern and contemporary art have appeared in magazines, journals, and anthologies. He currently serves as the editor of *Triannum: Journal of Visual Culture* and is a member of the planning committee for The Friends of Education at the Museum of Modern Art. Brockington has taught at Brown University, Kean University, and City University of New York, where he is conducting research on sculpture for a book-length project. Brockington holds degrees in Art History from Columbia University and Brown University.

**CASSILS** uses the body as a sculptural mass to deconstruct societal norms. By using a queer lens to examine physical training, kinesiology, and sports science, Cassils manipulates their body into a shape that defies the gender binary. They perform trans identity not as transitioning from one sex to another, but as a continual process of becoming. It is with sweat, blood, and sinew that Cassils constructs a visual critique around gender ideologies. Drawing on body art, feminism, gay male aesthetics, conceptualism, and Hollywood cinema, they create a visual language that is emotionally striking and conceptually incisive. [www.cassils.net](http://www.cassils.net)

**PATTY CHANG** explores gender, language, and empathy through a performative art practice. Predominantly working in video, Chang uses the medium to document her performances, often utilizing the camera's potential to misrepresent. Her works challenge the viewer's perception of what they may see, frequently creating visual sleights of hand that highlight fantastical representations of "Asia." Chang's artwork has been exhibited at the Guggenheim Museum, New Museum, Hammer Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Hamburg Kunstverein, and Moderna Museet, among other venues. She was nominated for the Hugo Boss Prize (2008), named the Guna S. Mundheim Fellow of Visual Arts at the American Academy in Berlin (2009), and received the Guggenheim Fellowship (2014). [www.pattychang.com](http://www.pattychang.com)

**PETER CRAMER** is an artist and activist based in New York City. Cramer's performances, films, and installations have been featured in alternative spaces, museums, and cultural institutions around the world. His films are available through the Film-Makers' Cooperative, Fales Library & Special Collections, and Allied Productions, Inc. Cramer is an artist+ member of Visual AIDS, which is an organization that utilizes art to fight AIDS by provoking dialogue, supporting HIV+ artists, and preserving the legacy of the AIDS epidemic. He is the recipient of a NEA InterArts Fellowship and a grant from the US Virgin Islands Council on the Arts. Cramer recently received the Kathy Acker Award—a tribute given to members of the avant-garde art community who have made outstanding contributions in their discipline. [www.alliedproductions.org](http://www.alliedproductions.org)

**BILLY X. CURMANO'S** art practice examines issues of consequence with absurdist flair. Formally trained as a painter and a sculptor, Curmano fuses the performative with traditional objects. He became the first person to swim the Mississippi River spanning from the source at Lake Itasca, through the continental United States, to the Gulf of Mexico. This performance resulted in the Hampton Award-Winning Documentary *Swimming the River* (1987–1997), which brought the artist critical acclaim. Curmano extended the swim by performing excerpts of the piece in the traveling exhibition *Objects Collected and Created in the Course of a Swim* (1995–1997). His artwork has been exhibited and collected extensively from Austria's III Vienna Graphik Biennale to New York's Museum of Modern Art Library. Mark Pezinger Verlag published *Billy X. Curmano Futurism's Bastard Son* (2012), an artist book that features a compilation of Curmano's performance artworks. Amused journalists have dubbed Curmano as "The Court Jester of Southeastern Minnesota" with comparisons to P.T. Barnum, Andy Warhol, Marcel Duchamp, and even... a happy otter. [www.billyx.net](http://www.billyx.net)

**DANCENOISE** is a dance-based performance art group created by Anne lobst and Lucy Sexton. Since 1983, they have performed throughout New York City nightclubs and theaters including the W.O.W. Café Theatre, Pyramid Club, 8BC, PS122, Franklin Furnace, The Kitchen, and Lincoln Center. The group hosted a weekly cabaret during the 1980s at King Tut's Wah Wah Hut in the East Village. DANCENOISE has performed, taught, and toured at the Phenomenon Festival (Jerusalem), Queer Up North (Manchester), Vienna Fest Wochen (Vienna), Mayfest (Glasgow), New York Live (Osaka), and numerous squatted houses across Europe. The group received a Bessie Award in 1989 for their performance *All the Rage* at PS122. In 2015, DANCENOISE exhibited a week-long retrospective

at the Whitney Museum of American Art in Chelsea and inaugurated the museum's new theater space with a performance. *The New Yorker's* theatre critic, Hilton Als, hails DANCENOISE as "One of the best performances I've attended in ages...DANCENOISE reminded us of what joy felt like as they took apart serious issues."

**DISBAND** was active in the New York downtown art scene from 1978–1982. The all-girl band of artists screamed, sang, and stomped through the heyday of the new-wave and no-wave scenes, blurring the lines between performance art and live music. Mirroring the chaos and temporality of that era, the band performed songs such as "The End," "Five More Years," "Every Day Same Old Way," "Get Rebel," "Sad," "Iran-y," and "DOW." They also addressed their status as women through songs such as "Girls' Bill of Rights," "Hey Baby," "Fashions," and "Look at My Dick." In 1980, DISBAND toured Italy with Laurie Anderson, Chris Burden, and other artists. The group has performed at MoMA PS1, The Kitchen, Mudd Club, TR3 Gallery, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, and Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. DISBAND reunited in 2008 to perform at MoMA PS1 as part of the touring exhibition *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*. Members of the band included Barbara Ess, Ilona Granet, Donna Henes, Daile Kaplan, Barbara Kruger, Ingrid Sischy, Diane Torr, and Martha Wilson. [www.disbandny.wordpress.com](http://www.disbandny.wordpress.com)

**ZACKARY DRUCKER** is a visual artist and cultural producer based in Los Angeles. Drucker's work examines perceptions of gender and sexuality through a transgender lens. Her artwork has been performed and exhibited at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Hammer Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Venice Biennale–Swiss Off-Site Pavilion, Whitney Museum of American Art, and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, among other venues. Drucker is an Emmy-nominated producer for the docuseries *This Is Me* (2015), as well as a co-producer on the Golden Globe and Emmy-winning television series *Transparent* (2014–). She is a cast member on the E! docuseries *I Am Cait* (2015). Drucker is represented by Luis De Jesus Los Angeles. [www.zackarydrucker.com](http://www.zackarydrucker.com)

**BOB FLANAGAN & SHEREE ROSE** began their artistic collaboration during the late 1980s in the Los Angeles club and art scenes. Their performance, photography, and video integrated elements of BDSM, which culminated in the exhibition *Visiting Hours* at the Santa Monica Museum of Art in 1993 and the New Museum in 1994. After Flanagan died from cystic fibrosis in 1996, Rose continued to make

artwork honoring his legacy and their collaboration. Rose made contributions to the documentary *Sick: The Life and Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist* (1997), which premiered at the 1997 Sundance Film Festival and was awarded a Special Jury Prize. She was commissioned by Japan to produce *Boballoon*—a 20-foot inflatable statue of Flanagan that was exhibited at Big Space in Tokyo. Rose continues to show her photography at international galleries, including the Coagula in Los Angeles, Tate in Liverpool, and Jeu de Paume in Paris. She has presented multiple performances at Highways Performance Space and Gallery in Santa Monica. Long after his demise, Flanagan's artwork with Rose continues to be a model for artists dealing with illness and death.

**SHERMAN FLEMING** identifies cultural and social mechanisms through his art practice and community-based projects as a public arts manager. Fleming's performance work has been featured at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Intermedia Arts, and Franklin Furnace. His solo exhibitions include *Big Rebus Paintings* (1990) at Nexus Gallery, *Watercolors* (2001) at International Visions Gallery, and *Codewords* (2006) at VIAP Galerie. Fleming has participated in group exhibitions such as *Other Bloods* (1995) at Arti et Amicitiae, *Endurance* (1995) at Exit Art, *Whisper! Stomp! Shout! A Salute to African American Performance Art* (1996) at Colorado Springs Fine Art Center, and *The Postmillennial Black Madonna* (2007) at the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts. He has lectured at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Design and has stewarded public art projects for the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program. Fleming holds a BFA from Virginia Commonwealth University and a MFA from Hartford Art School.

**LAWRENCE GRAHAM-BROWN** is an interdisciplinary artist working in performance, sculpture, painting, and media. As an openly gay Jamaican-American man, Graham-Brown's art practice works to combat homophobia and racism across geographical contexts. He uses his body as a canvas to dispel the stigma that queer, intersex, transgender, indigenous, and people of color face on a daily basis. His artwork has been presented at the Queens Museum, El Museo del Barrio, Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, Aljira A Center for Contemporary Arts, Institute of Jamaica, National Gallery of Jamaica, Galeria Homero Massena, Royal West of England Academy, Arnolfini Centre for Contemporary Arts, Galerie Lutz Rohs, and Shanghai Biennial. Graham-Brown's work has been written about in *The New York Times*, *Huffington Post*, *Jamaica Gleaner*, *Art Recognition Culture*, *Caribbean Art World*, and *THE ARCHIVE* journal of the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art.

The **GUERRILLA GIRLS** are an anonymous women's collective that takes on the names of dead women artists as pseudonyms for interventions. Concealed behind gorilla masks in action, the Guerrilla Girls use various tactics to intervene in art, culture, and politics. Through the production of printed materials, publications, and performance actions, the Guerrilla Girls expose political matters, convey information, and provoke discussions in public contexts. Notorious for exposing the exclusion of women artists, the Guerrilla Girls have staged interventions at the Museum of Modern Art, Venice Biennale, and Centre Georges Pompidou, among other venues. The Guerrilla Girls' artwork is presented from feminist and humorist perspectives. [www.guerrillagirls.com](http://www.guerrillagirls.com)

**DYNASTY HANDBAG (JIBZ CAMERON)** is a performance artist, video maker, and actor based in Los Angeles. Handbag has been heralded by *The New York Times* as "the funniest and most pitch perfect performance seen in years" and by *The New Yorker* as "outrageously smart, grotesque, and innovative." Her artwork has been presented at the New Museum, Performa, The Kitchen, MoMA PS1, Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Broad Museum, REDCAT, and Hammer Museum, among other venues. Handbag has acted in works by The Wooster Group, The Residents, and Kalup Linzy. She has produced numerous video projects and two albums of original music. Handbag's artwork has been supported by residencies at Yaddo, The MacDowell Colony, and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. She works as a professor of performance and comedy related subjects at various universities. [www.dynastyhandbag.com](http://www.dynastyhandbag.com)

**MARTHA HELLION** is a visual artist, radical publisher, and freelance curator. With Madeleine Gallard, David Mayor, and Chris Welch, she co-founded the Beau Geste Press—a Fluxus associated enterprise that was part of the transnational avant-garde during the 1970s. The collective published eight issues of *Schmuck* magazine from 1972–1978. They also published artists' books by Ulises Carrión, Felipe Ehrenberg, Allen Fisher, Michael Legett, David Mayor, Michael Nyman, Carolee Schneemann, and Cecilia Vicuña. The goal of the press was to publish materials that fostered international relationships between visual artists. Hellion has also served as the editor of *Ulises Carrión: Libros de artista* (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2003). She is the founder of the Center of Research and Documentation on Artists' Publications—an institution that presents, distributes, and disseminates publications in Mexico City.

**ESSEX HEMPHILL** (1957–1995) addressed issues central to the African American gay community through his poetry. His first collections of poems were the self-published chapbooks *Earth Life* (1985)

and *Conditions* (1986). Hemphill's *Ceremonies: Prose and Poetry* (1992) won the National Library Association's Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual New Author Award. His writing is included in the anthologies *Gay and Lesbian Poetry in Our Time* (1986) and *Life Sentences: Writers, Artists, and AIDS* (1993). Hemphill edited the anthology *Brother to Brother: New Writing by Black Gay Men* (1991), which won the Lambda Literary Award. He participated in the performance poetry group Cinque with Larry Duckette and Wayson Jones. The group's work was later featured in the documentaries *Tongues Untied* (1989) and *Black Is... Black Ain't* (1994). Hemphill's poetry was also included in the film *Looking for Langston* (1989). He received fellowships and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Pew Charitable Trust Fellowship in the Arts, and the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. Hemphill was a visiting scholar at the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities. He died of complications from AIDS in 1995.

**HOLLY HUGHES** is a writer and a performer who began her thespian adventures at W.O.W. Café Theatre in New York City. Her performance work explores questions of identity and sexual desire, drawing international recognition from the artist community. She is the recipient of the Obie Award and the Guggenheim Fellowship. Hughes has received funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, Creative Capital, and New York State Council for the Arts. Her books include *Clit Notes: A Sapphic Sampler* (1996), *O Solo Homo: The New Queer Performance* (1998), *Animal Acts: Performing Species Today* (2014), and *Memories of the Revolution: Ten Years of the WOW Cafe* (2015). Hughes is a professor at the University of Michigan where she founded the BFA in Interarts Performance.

**WAYSON JONES** is an interdisciplinary artist working in music, dance, spoken word, and painting. He performed with the renowned poet Essex Hemphill at the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater, La MaMa E.T.C., Painted Bride Art Center, and Blues Alley, among other venues. Jones has exhibited his art at the BlackRock Center for the Arts, Hillyer Art Space, District of Columbia Arts Center, Gallery O on H, Arts Harmony Hall, The David Driskell Center, Smith Center for Healing and the Arts, The Soundry, Candy Factory Center for the Arts, University of Mary Washington, Gallery 25, and Jeffrey Leder Gallery. His work has been purchased by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, and can be found in private and corporate collections around the United States. Jones holds a degree in Music from the University of Maryland. [www.waysonjones.com](http://www.waysonjones.com)

**M. LAMAR** is a composer working in music, performance, video, sculpture, and installation. Drawing from the Negro Spiritual, Lamar uses his operatic voice and piano playing to comment on the politics

of blackness. He combines western classical music and dissonant black metal to create narratives of radical becomings. Lamar has presented work at the New Museum, MoMA PS1, Participant Inc., The Kitchen, and PS122, among other venues. He has received grants from Franklin Furnace (2013–14), Harpo Foundation (2014–2015), Rema Hort Mann Foundation (2015), and Material Vodka (2016). Lamar was the recipient of the New York Foundation of the Arts Fellowship in Music and Sound (2016). He holds a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute and attended the Yale School of Art sculpture program before dropping out to pursue music. [www.mlamar.com](http://www.mlamar.com)

**ANA MENDIETA** (1948–1985) created groundbreaking work in photography, performance, film, drawing, sculpture, mixed media, and site-specific installations. Mendieta is a pioneer among artists dealing with identity politics and feminism. Her unique hybrid of form and documentation, works that Mendieta titled "siluetas," are fugitive and potent traces of her body in the landscape, transformed by fire, water, and natural materials. Mendieta's artwork has been the subject of six major museum retrospectives.

*Ana Mendieta: Traces* (2013) was organized by the Hayward Gallery in London, and traveled to the Museum der Moderne in Salzburg and the Galerie Rudolfinum in Prague. *Ana Mendieta: Earth Body, Sculpture and Performance 1972–1985* (2005) was organized by the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, and traveled to the Whitney Museum of American Art, Des Moines Art Center, and Miami Art Museum. *Covered in Time and History: The Films of Ana Mendieta* (2015) was the largest exhibition to date in the United States of the artist's films. Presented by the Katherine E. Nash Gallery at the University of Minnesota, the exhibition traveled to the NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale, University of California Berkeley Art Museum, and Pacific Film Archive.

Mendieta's artworks are found in public collections worldwide, including the Guggenheim Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Tate Gallery, Verbund Collection, and Centre Georges Pompidou. Mendieta was born in Havana, Cuba in 1948 and died in New York City in 1985. Her artist estate is managed by Galerie Lelong, New York.

**TIM MILLER** is an internationally acclaimed performance artist. Miller's work explores the artistic, spiritual, and political topography of his identity as a gay man. His performances have been presented



across the world in venues such as the Yale Repertory Theatre, London Institute of Contemporary Art, Walker Art Center, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Brooklyn Academy of Music. Miller is the author of *Shirts & Skin* (1997), *Body Blows* (2002), and *1001 Beds* (2006). His solo performances have been published in *Sharing the Delirium* (1994) and *O Solo Homo* (1998). Miller has taught performance art at the University of California, Los Angeles, New York University, School of Theology at Claremont University, and other universities across the United States. He is a co-founder of PS122 in New York City and a co-founder of Highways Performance Space in Santa Monica. [www.timmillerperformer.com](http://www.timmillerperformer.com)

**ESTERA MILMAN** is a distinguished art historian, curator, and researcher. She has published widely on art spanning the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and has curated major exhibitions in the Americas, Europe, and Asia. Milman was the Founding Director of Alternative Traditions in the Contemporary Arts and served as a Charter Member of Conceptual and Intermedia Arts Online. She has received grants and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and New York State Council on the Arts. Milman earned a BFA in Painting, Printmaking, and Film from the Rhode Island School of Design and a MFA in Photography and Photomedia from the University of Iowa. [www.milman-interarts.com](http://www.milman-interarts.com)

**TRACIE MORRIS** is Coordinator of the Performance and Performance Studies MFA program at Pratt Institute. Morris is a poet who also works as a scholar, writer, vocalist, bandleader, and performer. Her sound installations have been presented at the Museum of Modern Art, The Kitchen, Whitney Museum of American Art, Drawing Center, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning, and Dia Art Foundation. Morris has received grants, awards, and fellowships for poetry and performance from the New York Foundation for the Arts, Asian Cultural Council, Franklin Furnace, and Creative Capital. Her publications include *Intermission* (1998), *Rhyme Scheme* (2012), *handholding: 5 kinds* (2016), and *Best American Experimental Writing* (2017). Morris holds a MFA in Poetry from Hunter College and a PhD in Performance Studies from New York University. [www.traciemorris.com](http://www.traciemorris.com)

**SHIRIN NESHAT** is an Iranian-born visual artist based in New York City. Neshat's photograph series *Unveiling* (1993) and *Women of Allah* (1993–1997) examine femininity in relation to Islamic fundamentalism and militancy in Iran. Her video installation trilogy comprising *Turbulent* (1998), *Rapture* (1999), and *Fervor* (2000) portray abstract oppositions based around gender and society.

Neshat's video works *Soliloquy* (1999), *Possessed* (2001), *Pulse* (2001), and *Tooba* (2002) explore female identity in the context of Islamic culture, law, and religion. Since her first solo exhibition at Franklin Furnace in 1993, Neshat has presented exhibitions at the Serpentine Galleries (2000), Walker Art Center (2002), Hamburger Bahnhof (2005), Stedelijk Museum (2006), Detroit Institute of Arts Museum (2013), and Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (2014). A major solo exhibition of the artist's work, *Shirin Neshat: Facing History* (2015), was presented at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. She is the recipient of the First International Prize at the 48th Venice Biennial (1999), Grand Prix of the Gwangju Biennale (2000), Hiroshima Freedom Prize (2005), Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize (2006), and the Silver Lion Award (2009). Neshat is represented by Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels.

**RASHAAD NEWSOME** is a visual artist working in collage, video, sculpture, music, and performance. His art practice examines how images in the media and popular culture convey distorted notions of power. Newsome has exhibited and performed at the Brooklyn Museum, MoMA PS1, Whitney Museum of American Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, New Orleans Museum of Art, Centre Georges Pompidou, Garage Museum of Contemporary Art, and Museum Start Gallery Artothek. He participated in the Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum (2010) and Greater New York at MoMA PS1 (2011). Newsome has received awards and grants from Franklin Furnace, Harvestworks, L'Entreprise Culturelle, BCAT/BRIC Rotunda Gallery, and Location One. His artwork is included in public collections at the Brooklyn Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and New Britain Museum of American Art. He received a BA in Art History from Tulane University and studied Film at Film Video Arts. Newsome is represented by De Buck Gallery, New York City. [www.rashaadnewsome.com](http://www.rashaadnewsome.com)

**LORRAINE O'GRADY** is an artist and a critic whose installations, performances, and texts address issues of diaspora, hybridity, and black female subjectivity. *The New York Times* calls O'Grady "one of the most interesting American conceptual artists around." Her landmark performance, *Mlle Bourgeoise Noire* (1980–1983), was installed as an entry point to *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (2007)—the first institutional exhibition to examine the international foundations and legacies of art influenced by feminism. O'Grady's work has been featured in significant group shows such as the *Whitney Biennial* (2010), *Paris Triennale* (2012), *This Will Have Been: Art, Love & Politics in the 1980s* (2012), *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art* (2012), and *EN MAS': Carnival and*

*Performance Art of the Caribbean* (2015). Her artwork has been acquired by the Museum of Modern Art, Walker Art Center, and Art Institute of Chicago, among other renowned institutions.

[www.lorraineogrady.com](http://www.lorraineogrady.com)

**FLAWLESS SABRINA (JACK DOROSHOW)** (1939–2017) was a legendary drag queen and an icon of queer underground culture. Sabrina directed the drag beauty pageant *The Nationals* in the United States from 1958–1968. She starred in *The Queen* (1968)—a documentary about the 1967 Miss All-America Camp Beauty Pageant held at Town Hall in New York City. Sabrina also worked as a consultant on the films *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969), and *Myra Breckenridge* (1970). In later years, she became involved in politics advocating for gay marriage and working with Hillary Clinton on transgender issues. Sabrina was an active member of the queer community and was a resource for transgender people in the arts. She, along with Zackary Drucker and Diana Tourjée, founded the Flawless Sabrina Archive in 2014 to preserve and make accessible the rich legacy of her lifework. [www.flawless-sabrina.com](http://www.flawless-sabrina.com)

**DREAD SCOTT** makes revolutionary art to propel history forward. Scott works in a range of media including performance, installation, photography, screen-printing, and video. His artwork illuminates the oppressive structures forged by society and challenges the audience to envision a world where justice prevails. Scott has exhibited at the Cristin Tierney Gallery, MoMA PS1, Whitney Museum of American Art, Winkleman Gallery, Walker Art Center, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, and Pori Art Museum. He has presented *Dread Scott: Welcome to America* (2008) at the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts and *Dread Scott: Decision* (2012) at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Scott's artwork is included in collections at the New Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, and Akron Art Museum. His public sculptures are installed at Logan Square in Philadelphia and Franconia Sculpture Park in Minnesota. Scott has received grants from Creative Capital, Franklin Furnace, and Pollock-Krasner Foundation. He has also been awarded fellowships for his work from the New York Foundation for the Arts. Scott has been an artist-in-residence at Omi International Arts Center and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. [www.dreadscott.net](http://www.dreadscott.net)

**PAMELA SNEED** is a poet and a performer based in New York City. Her work explores the personal as political while commenting on race, history, and feminism. She is the author of *Imagine Being More Afraid of Freedom Than Slavery* (1998), *KONG* (2009), *Lincoln* (2014), and *Sweet Dreams* (2018). Sneed

has performed original works for sold out houses at Lincoln Center, PS122, Dixon Place, BAMcafé, and Central Park Summer Stage, among other venues. She has been featured in *The New York Times Magazine*, *The New Yorker*, *Time Out*, *BOMB Magazine*, *VIBE*, and *New York Magazine*. Sneed has taught at Sarah Lawrence College, Long Island University, and Columbia University.

**ANNIE SPRINKLE** is a prostitute/porn star turned artist/sexologist. She explores sexuality through her unique brand of feminist sex films, writings, artworks, performances, and teachings. Sprinkle has long championed sex worker rights and health care, and was pivotal in the sex-positive feminist movement of the 1980s. She received her BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York City and was the first porn star to earn a PhD from the Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality in San Francisco. For many years, Sprinkle has collaborated with her longtime partner Elizabeth Stephens, who is an artist and a professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Sprinkle and Stephens are active leaders of the Ecosex Movement. They are committed to making environmental activism more sexy, fun, and diverse through art practices. [www.anniesprinkle.org](http://www.anniesprinkle.org)

**CARLA STELLWEG** is a Latin Americanist who has worked as a museum director, writer, editor, curator, and professor. She is considered a pioneer for her efforts in introducing Latin American and Latino contemporary art to New York City. Stellweg began her career working as an assistant curator to Fernando Gamboa, the renowned museum builder who organized numerous international exhibitions on Mexican art and culture. At the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City, she founded and edited *Artes Visuales*—the first bilingual contemporary art journal that was renowned for its reportage on Latin American, international, and conceptual art. She also served as Deputy Director of Rufino Tamayo Museum in Mexico City's Chapultepec Park. Stellweg's 40-year archive comprised of her curatorial work, writing, and professional activities is housed at Stanford University's Special Collection Library.

**KRISTINE STILES** is France Family Professor of Art, Art History, and Visual Studies at Duke University. She specializes in contemporary global art, focusing on performance, artists' writings, trauma, and destruction in art. Her publications include *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art* (1996 and 2012), *Correspondence Course: An Epistolary History of Carolee Schneemann and Her Circle* (2010), and *Concerning Consequences: Studies in Art, Destruction, and Trauma* (2016). Stiles was the curator of the exhibition *Rauschenberg: Collecting & Connecting* (2014–2015) at the Nasher Museum of Art. She

is currently working with Kathy O'Dell on completing their manuscript *Mapping Experimental Art: Studies in Contemporary International Art Since 1933*.

**AMBER HAWK SWANSON** is a video and performance artist based in New York City. Swanson's work explores how the psychological debt of love animates us in a social-emotional economy. She has exhibited at the Palais de Tokyo, Denny Gallery, and Locust Projects, among other international art venues. Swanson's artwork is included in the permanent and MPP collections at the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago. Scholarly writing about Swanson's work has been published in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian & Gay Studies* and *TDR: The Drama Review*. Her artwork has been profiled and reviewed in the *Guardian*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Associated Press*. She teaches in the Sculpture Departments at Rhode Island School of Design and Virginia Commonwealth University. Her visiting artist lecture appointments include Yale University, Columbia University, New York University, Maryland Institute College of Art, McGill University, East Carolina University, Hunter College, and Fashion Institute of Technology. Swanson holds a MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. [www.amberhawkswanson.com](http://www.amberhawkswanson.com)

**JULIE TOLENTINO** is a performance artist, dancer/choreographer, and visual artist. Her art explores the intersections of queer sexual subcultures, Eastern healing practices, and HIV/AIDS cultural activism. Tolentino's solo and collaborative works have been presented at The Kitchen, Invisible Exports, New Museum, Participant Inc., Performa, San Francisco Art Institute, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Commonwealth & Council, The Broad Museum, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, and Wexner Center, among other venues. She has worked on projects with Ron Athey, Candidate, Robert Crouch, Stosh Fila, Gran Fury, Diamanda Galás, Gerard & Kelly, Stanley Love, Lovett/Codagnone, Catherine Opie, David Rousseve, Madonna, Mark So, and Meg Stuart. Tolentino was a founding member of ACT UP New York's House of Color Video Collective and the legendary Clit Club—a nightclub in New York City that promoted safe-sex for multiracial lesbians. She co-wrote the Lesbian AIDS Project's *Women's Safer Sex Handbook*, co-edited the *TDR: The Drama Review's* Provocations section, and served as the editor of *Guard Your Daughters: Clit Club 1990–2002* (forthcoming). Tolentino works in New York City and Joshua Tree, where she created a solar-powered live/work residency called FERAL House and Studio. [www.julietolentino.com](http://www.julietolentino.com)

**DIANE TORR** (1948–2017) was a performance artist who worked in dance, installation, and film/video. Originally from Aberdeen, Scotland, Torr developed her artistic career as an integral part of New York

City's downtown art scene. She created an extensive body of work that was presented at venues across the city including Franklin Furnace, The Kitchen, Danceteria, and The Mudd Club, among other spaces. Torr was a visiting lecturer at the Glasgow School of Art, Stockholm University of Arts, and Freie Universität Berlin. Her renowned Man-for-a-Day workshop was taught across the globe and was featured prominently in the documentary *Venus Boyz* (2002). She co-authored with Stephen Bottoms *Sex, Drag, and Male Roles: Investigating Gender as Performance* (2010). Torr lived and worked between Glasgow, Berlin, and New York City. [www.dianetorr.com](http://www.dianetorr.com)

**JACK WATERS** is a visual artist, filmmaker, writer, choreographer, and performer. His artwork has been included in the exhibitions *The Black Male* (1995) at the Whitney Museum of American Art, *Triple Threat* (2008) at Frise, *Not only this, but 'New language beckons us'* (2013) at New York University, *NOT OVER: 25 Years of Visual AIDS* (2013) and *Ephemera as Evidence* (2014) at La MaMa Galleria. Waters appeared as the lead character in the critically acclaimed film *Jason and Shirley* (2015), which was co-written with Sarah Schulman and Stephen Winter. The film has been screened at multiple venues including the Museum of Modern Art, British Film Institute, and Anthology Film Archives. His films are included as part of the Estate Project for Artists with AIDS and the AIDS Activist Video Collection at the New York Public Library. Waters' archives are held at Fales Library & Special Collections at New York University. Additional materials from his artistic career are housed at the Film-Makers' Cooperative and Allied Productions, Inc. As a journalist, he has published articles on politics, cultural affairs, visual arts, film, and media. Waters was a founding contributing writer for *Color Life*, the news journal for L.G.B.T. and Two-Spirit people of color, and for *LGNY*, New York City's L.G.B.T. news bi-weekly. [www.alliedproductions.org](http://www.alliedproductions.org)

**JOHANNA WENT** is a Los Angeles-based artist whose synthesis of avant-garde punk and performance art has made her an underground success. Known as the "Hyena of Performance Art," Went is recognized for assembling found objects and homemade props/costumes that her characters animate on stage. She is renowned for her use of improvised vocals and soundscapes that draw from punk, electronic, and industrial music. Selected works by Went include *Hyena* (1982), *Having Fun in the Dark* (1983), *Knifeboxing* (1984), *Interview with Monkey Woman* (1986), *Primate Prisoners* (1987), *Twin, Travel, Terror* (1987), and *Ablutions of a Nefarious Nature* (2007). Soleilmoon Recordings released *Johanna Went: Club Years* (2007)—a DVD/CD compilation that includes video of Went's performances in Los Angeles, live studio recordings with collaborator Mark Wheaton, and the full *Hyena* LP along with other musical works.

## CURATORS

**MARTHA WILSON** is a pioneering gallery director and feminist artist. In 1976, she founded Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.—an artist-run space that champions the exploration, promotion, and preservation of artists' books, temporary installation, and performance art. As an artist, Wilson creates innovative photographic and video works that explore her female subjectivity. *The New York Times* art critic Holland Cotter describes her as one of "the half-dozen most important people for art in downtown Manhattan in the 1970s." Wilson has been granted fellowships for performance art from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts. She is the recipient of a Bessie Award, Courage Award for the Arts, Obie Award, and Richard Massey Foundation-White Box Arts and Humanities Award. Wilson received an Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. [www.marthawilson.com](http://www.marthawilson.com)

**ORAISON H. LARMON** specializes in archiving, curating, and researching performance art collections. While working at New York University, Larmon processed archival materials for the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics. They have served as the curator of the two-day event *Performing the Archive* (2013), the co-curator of the full-scale exhibition *Desperate Archives* (2014), and the curator of the performance art program for the Radical Archives Conference (2014). Larmon's work addressing the practical, theoretical, and methodological challenges of archiving performance art has been presented at The New School, Pratt Institute, and New York University, among other institutions. Their current research examines how the archival body of performance art enacts a broader historical discourse through its material, corporeal, and digital compositions. Larmon is currently a doctoral student in the Department of Information Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. [www.oraisionlarmon.info](http://www.oraisionlarmon.info)



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*Martha Wilson & Oraison H. Larmon*





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