2003

Manifestations of desire

Angela Duron

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MANIFESTATIONS
OF
DESIRE

Anthology Of Bisexuality

Graduate Thesis
Master Of Fine Arts In Imaging Arts
School Of Photographic Arts & Sciences
College of Imaging Arts & Sciences
Rochester Institute Of Technology

By Angela Marie Duron
Rochester, New York
2003
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Preface

Proposal Statement:

Bisexuality is not the exclusion of heterosexuality or homosexuality. In fact, on the surface it may seem like a combination of both. Although it may be comforting to see ourselves as having fixed gender identities, preferring the same or opposite sex and performing according to expectations associated with these preferences in our culture, bisexuality transcends the contemporary hetero-homo bipolarization and expresses a distinct and separate reality.

It is proposed that this thesis project will examine the phenomenon of the bisexual female through the scripting, filming and editing of a short 16mm experimental documentary film. This documentary will work with notions concerning the narratives about female bisexuality that emerge from history and the lives of contemporary bisexual women in our culture. This film is personal in nature and allows me to explore and/or express my own experience of bisexuality throughout the work. I plan to utilize abstract imagery with representational images, and to include both a non-sync and synchronous original soundtrack within an installation context. During the course of my thesis work I will experiment with the possibility of exhibiting my film in the environment of an installation.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are so many people whom I would like to thank but I would fill this book if I were to name them all. First I would like to thank my committee, Lynne Bentley-Kemp, Angela Kelly, and Elliott Rubenstein, who have given me guidance as well as personal and professional advice when needed the most.

I would like to send my thanks to all the special friends I have made along the way, with whom we have all shared the good, the manic, the down and out, and the most extremely stressful times of our lives together. I’ll never forget you. Plus a warm thank you to all of you who have taken part in working on my film. You were a great cast and crew. It was a pleasure working with you.

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INTRODUCTION

On 3 April 1998, I held a thesis exhibition entitled Manifestations Of Desire. The exhibition is an installation comprised of cinematic projections and sculpture elements. The work is a personal exploration of being a bisexual feminist in today’s society. It is a way of bringing unspoken issues to the public sphere. It is an emotional journey that I am still embarking upon.

For me my thesis work began as a first year graduate student when I created an experimental black & white film titled, Sexual Expressions. Cinema is an art form, which crosses disciplinary boundaries more than any other. If you have ever tried to make a film, the viewer or reader will likely agree that it was difficult to produce. Filmmakers create a visual language by combining emotion and the power of art with the visual and technical imagination. Film itself is not an original medium, but an accumulation of painting, photography, language, music, sculpture, dance, and story telling.

I approach film much as I do when creating a still photograph. In my early films I concentrated on learning how to control and manipulate the technical properties of the medium. I experimented with composition, light, shadow, grain, texture and sound. I used 16mm film in various cameras and played with twenty-four static images per second, which projected the illusion of movement. I looked between the frames for my stories. Through film, I can accommodate both my desire to entertain and my need to explore the world through my vision.

In general, there is one major difference between mainstream and independent filmmaking. Mainstream film production is geared toward reflection, our collective feelings, and touching a common audience element. It can in some ways be seen as a social barometer, which addresses our collective concerns, whereas the independent art film often reflects the highly specific views of an individual.

I am not immune to the influences of mainstream television and film, music or literary trends. I am affected and influenced by a number of sources: popular culture, marginal culture, and the dominant sociopolitical climate of the country. I am also influenced by my concerns as a feminist, and as a bisexual. Even though these areas all influence me, it is my personal experiences that drive my creativity.

As a filmmaker I was affected by the language of film the history of cinema and representation, as well as the desire to communicate my ideas to a film audience. In order to bring all of these elements together into a coherent vision I combined both the cinematic and the personal. Through the cinematic I focused on the interplay of my chosen content and/or story with the implementation of film and language. It was my personal challenge as an artist to discover something about myself through the process of filmmaking.
In my experience no one ever really teaches us about sexuality. We grow up and either figure it out for ourselves or settle into some sort of habitual form of sexual expression. Sexual expression is a current of energy running through our bodies. When I was a child I remember having pleasurable sexual games with girls and boys. When I was a pre-teen I remember my parents telling me to leave the door open whenever I had a boy in the bedroom, even though we were usually just talking and listening to music. But when my girlfriends were over they never made that request.

By the time I was in 7th grade I was pressured by my peers to date boys. Once I did become sexually active with them, sex wasn’t what I wanted at all. What I really wanted was love and affection. I had many bad experiences with the men with whom I have had relationships. Sex with my girlfriends was fun, but it felt forced and disappointing with men. I found myself more and more attracted to women. “Was I a lesbian?” I would ask myself. But homophobia had set in, not just with me but also my friends. I was petrified to ever act upon these feelings. Eventually I acted upon my desires and got over my fears of fitting into society.

Being bisexual for me is not just to have sex with men and women, but it is about loving them with a feeling of depth, with all of myself. Either a man or a woman might meet my need for a steady, loving and fulfilling relationship. I am open to both kinds of relationships. Whether I am in a relationship with a woman or a man, I am the same person. It is the person I am attracted to, not just their gender. My sexuality is continually developing and maturing. It is society, which tries to split me into gay or straight, to label me, to make me deny half of my reality. “Bi” means dual, although bisexuality contains multiple and overlapping dimensions, the term “bisexual” implies two halves rather than one whole. Heterosexuality and homosexuality to a lesser extent are viewed as the only normal expressions of sexual intimacy. This assumption is based on value and cultural meanings as well as sociopolitical context.

What unites bisexual women and men is often a shared sense of alienation from our own gender in the outside world. Bi women have felt ostracized by both lesbians and heterosexual women. Bi men have felt unaccepted in both gay and mainstream environments. Some bi women and men embrace feminism and understand that gender roles based in sexism have limited us all. Along with this often comes and understanding that homophobia is rooted in sexism and that we all have internalized it and reproduce it among each other. But not all bi’s identify with feminism, or understand it in the same ways, so there are tensions and disagreements among us.

Also, not everyone identifies as either male or female for they’re entire lives. An increasing number of transgendered people identify as bi, but many bisexuals still do not understand transgender issues or how or why they are related to bisexual rights. If we don’t talk about gender and learn about it, we will never tap the potential power of our connected movements. Just because bisexuals love more than on gender doesn’t mean we know all there is to know about gender relations and identities. ¹
If one is bisexual, you are not always accepted in straight societies or gay societies. It can be very dangerous to be out and gay. If you are bisexual you could be accused of wanting what is known as “heterosexual privilege” whether you may want it or not. If you really do desire men and women, then what are you supposed to do? Then we are faced with the stereotype of the bisexual woman being confused or to be “just experimenting.” Plus there is the fantasy bisexual woman whom appears as a sex-loving goddess. Does being bisexual mean you actually have sex with both men and women on a regular basis, or does it merely mean that you have attraction to all human kind. And yet bisexuality is so difficult to define. It is so easy to assume we know what a bisexual is, yet when you try to define it, it can often prove to be quite difficult.

Research findings suggest that distrust and suspiciousness may be a particular problem for women who adopt a bisexual rather than a lesbian self-identity and who are part of the lesbian community. Blumstein and Schwartz (1974, 1976) first noted that bisexual women were perceived as a threat and as untrustworthy by some lesbians. This appeared to derive from the political meanings with which lesbian sexuality and self-labeling have been imbued. For some lesbians, personal identity is a political statement derived from feminist analysis. Bisexual women are thus viewed as avoiding both the commitment to the political ends of the lesbian community and as unwilling to face the loss of “heterosexual privilege” by taking on the stigmatized identity of the lesbian (Ponse, 1978).

A friend of mine told me that she felt that choosing a bisexual identity meant that I was declaring my sexual ambiguity. She said “you like having your cake and eating it too.” In fact many people seem to think this of bisexuals. Most bisexuals like myself do not think of themselves as “having it all”. For this perception makes us sometimes the most hated and other times the most lusted after sexual group under the sun. The bisexual woman is the one who will try anything, who is comfortable enough with her sexuality to act on her same gender desires. That brings us to the stereotype that bisexual women are often considered disdainfully as having no taste, to liking everything. Many people think that to be a bisexual woman means that you have a 50/50 split of men and women in your erotic life.

Another source of confusion is the notion that a person attracted sexually to more than one gender must be incapable of sustaining a monogamous relationship (since obviously there are too few hermaphrodites to go around, the only source in one partner of the male and female genitals or qualities we supposedly "need" to be satisfied). Bi people, then must live somewhere on the nether side of monogamy, or so the mythos goes. We must, at least, seek triadic relationships in which we have one partner of each gender, or perhaps we are out-and-out sluts—promiscuous people who do fuck anything that moves. But the strategies developed by bisexuals in real life make both others’ assumptions of our promiscuity and our defensive response to them (“We can too be monogamous!”) seem simplistic. The monogamy/non-monogamy question can be complicated, and not just for bisexuals. Many bisexuals do eschew monogamy, preferring a variety of sexual friendships of varying degrees of emotional intimacy. Some prefer serial monogamy, and some choose partners of different genders at different times. Some seek (and few find) the ongoing more-than-twosome of our dreams, making polyfidelitious commitments to two or three (or more) lovers. Some, while monogamous, derive our bisexual identification from acknowledging fantasies.\(^3\)

In a way, bi women have become the ultimate pornographic symbol. They are a staple of most porn and erotica. It is rare to find a mainstream porn film without your token “girl on girl” scene. For the straight man, seeing two women in erotic scenarios seems to offer a glimpse into the compelling and arousing mysteries of women. But for women, this offers an image of themselves as super-sexual beings. The straight woman who is curious about experimenting views the bisexual women as someone they can relate to and learn from. People seem to have a hard time responding to a woman’s sexuality without having the desire to literally touch it. I guess in some ways, sexuality implies that, but I don’t think sexuality necessarily invites someone else to participate. I have found that this stereotype is exaggerated with my being a bisexual woman filmmaker. I don’t want people to interpret my work as an invitation to fuck me.

Fig. 2: Film Stills From Manifestations of Desire

In contrast to the way heterosexual male erotic art usually shows women as ideal and unreal victims for male pleasure, female erotica is less likely to objectify and exploit women, who are not shown as helpless and passive victims. Women artists are creating images of women making love or openly showing affection for one another. Erotic images which are primarily intended for female audiences have appeared within the pages of lesbian feminist publications but now extend into painting, sculpture, photography and a variety of graphic forms. Writing in Gay News, Sharon Feinstein argued that it is only lesbians who are creating 'explicit images of women making love to each other'. While male and female heterosexual artists do deal with their subject matter, they may do so with a different emphasis.  

Opinions about bisexuality represent wide and varied beliefs. Using the broadest interpretation of the term—people who have had at least some sexual attraction to both males and females would be considered bisexual. In my own experiences I keep finding that there are always some people who will insist that there are no bisexual people, that bisexuals are merely people in the process of coming out as homosexual. Among bisexuals however, I find that there is a general agreement that the majority of bisexuals do not have an equal attraction to females and males at the same moment in time. However, those who do feel an equal attraction often feel they are attracted to men and women in different ways.

"Alfred Kinsey proposed a homosexual-heterosexual continuum, with exclusive homosexuality on the one end, exclusive heterosexuality on the other end, and bisexuality in the middle. Accordingly, he introduced the 7-point (0-6) Kinsey Scale. Five of the seven points (1-5) of the scale represent various degrees of bisexuality, perhaps suggesting that bisexuals constitute a large segment of the population."  

The general belief seems to be that anyone who has an attraction to males and females can be considered bisexual, whether or not they are currently engaged in relationships with both. Whereas many bisexuals are engaged in monogamous relationships while others can be celibate. This seems prove that it requires more than just physical evidence of sexual relations during any period of life to determine whether or not an individual is truly bisexual.

---

4 Cooper, Emmanuel. 258. The Sexual Perspective, Homosexuality and art in the last 100 years in the West. London: Routledge, 1986.

The Kinsey heterosexual-homosexual scale.

0. Exclusively heterosexual.
1. Predominantly heterosexual, only incidentally homosexual.
2. Predominantly heterosexual, but more than incidentally homosexual.
3. Equally heterosexual and homosexual.
4. Predominantly homosexual, but more than incidentally heterosexual.
5. Predominantly homosexual, only incidentally heterosexual.

Fig. 3: The Kinsey-Heterosexual-Homosexual Scale

Another interesting attempt to try and quantify an individual's sexual attraction was made by Dr. Fritz Klein, who offered an interesting critique of the Kinsey Scale while he published research based on his Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (KSOG) in 1985. Subjects using the Grid were asked to place themselves on each of twenty-one seven-digit scales, rather than the single Kinsey digit scale. The Klein scale indicates each subject's past, present, and ideal rating for sexual attraction, sexual behavior, sexual fantasies, emotional preference, social preference, self-identification, and lifestyle. This results in a multidimensional grid of behavior over time. This grid is meant to embrace, rather than to label, people of all sexual orientations. The problems I have with this method is that, realistically, it is too hard to avoid using labels. Perhaps in a utopian situation we might all come to have our own unique and distinct identities but presently our society demands the categorization of people.

The Klein Sexual Orientation Grid

In order to ascertain your sexual orientation, add the numbers in the twenty-one boxes and divide by twenty-one in order to see where you place on the Kinsey scale. If you have a dash in any box, divide by one less for each dash. You can then ask yourself if this grid is a fairly accurate indicator of your sexual orientation.

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<th></th>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Ideal Future Goal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual Attraction</td>
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<td>Sexual Behavior</td>
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<td>Sexual Fantasies</td>
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<td>Emotional Preference</td>
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<td>Self-identification</td>
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<td>Lifestyle</td>
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**Sexual Attraction.**
Who turns you on? Who do you find attractive as a real or potential partner?

**Sexual Behavior.**
Who are your sexual contacts (partners)?

**Sexual Fantasies.**
Who do you enjoy fantasizing about in erotic daydreams?

**Emotional Preference.**
With whom do you prefer to establish strong emotional bonds?

**Social Preference.**
Which sex do you prefer to spend your leisure time with, and with which sex do you feel most comfortable?

Fig. 4: The Klein Sexual Orientation Grid
Dr. Ronald Fox's research shows that many people who have physical attractions and/or sexual encounters with both males and females still identify themselves as gay, lesbian or even straight. For some, this is because they have had no particular emotional attractions to partners of one sex. Where-as for others, the reason is pressure from their social support network to retain a particular identification.

So I find that to call oneself a bisexual-lesbian is not contradictory, nor is it to call oneself a bisexual-heterosexual. It is the naming of one's identity that is moving towards the combining of our personal and the public-selves. They are identity vehicles that link together the political, social, and personal dimensions of the self. To name is inclusive of the reality of the bisexual-lesbian who is politically and socially aligned within the lesbian community, but who knows that her personal capacity may someday be open to relationships with men. It embraces the bisexual-heterosexual, who is socially involved in a relationship with a man, but whose personal and political alliances embrace diversity. We all have the choice to name with regard to our identity that encourages diversity within and without as well as acknowledging that sexuality is a dynamic and changing facet within ourselves, a possibility unavailable as soon as we start boxing ourselves into labels defined by the dominant society.

MANIFESTATIONS OF DESIRE: THE INSTALLATION

As viewers approached my work in the gallery they first came upon the freestanding glass pyramid piece with the show title “Manifestations of Desire” to the left of the door and the 3 forged copper torsos to the right. They then entered the space to find themselves immersed with audio and visual stimulation. The film itself started out on the monitor sitting on a custom designed table along the front wall, with pillows on the floor to sit on while joining the conversation of the film. When the scene was finished the monitor went silent and black. When the film segued into the sensual footage it suddenly become projected onto the walls to the left and the right simultaneously. Meanwhile along the back wall was another video monitor also sitting on another custom designed table to play the film at its assigned interval, leaving viewers uncertain of where they were to lead to next.

The video projectors projected the film imagery on 2 sides of the gallery walls. In the center of the room hung copper breast forms for the viewers to touch, hold, try on and read if they pleased, as they walked through the installation. Along the two back corner walls the viewer would find a glass casting in each. The one to the left was the glass heart. To the right the viewer found a colorful glass pyramid similar to the one out front at the entrance.

The symbolism of the sculptural elements each expresses separate meanings for me. The torsos represent the human body. The heart represents human emotions. The pyramids represent spirituality in queer culture. The copper vessels, breast forms, each represent aspects of a queer woman in today’s society. The placement of these sculptures in the installation is a personal ritual for me. By arranging these objects in the physical space I am arranging the spiritual and emotional aspects of my life. The installation invites the viewer to come into my thoughts in my life.

The Film

In my concept of making this film I broke it down into various segments.

Instead of formally scripting the dialogue for the conversation group part of the film I decided it would be stronger to let the conversation flow in a stream, as conversations do naturally. I chose an all-female cast consisting of lesbians, bisexual, transgender and straight women. I first discussed the purpose of this film with each member upon casting. It didn’t take long to get a large group of women together once word got out about this film. A number of women approached me from not only the film and photo departments but also from the art department. They all wanted to be a part of this project. When it came to the day of the shoot we all got together in the room to discuss freely my chosen topics. It was quite wonderful and couldn’t have gone any better. Everyone felt comfortable and were able to talk freely without worry of pressure.

I also chose an all female crew for the conversation piece because it was important to me to have the energy of all these wonderful women working together sharing our thoughts and experiences with each other. I found and a number of my cast members found ourselves more grounded when around women than around men. This turned out to be an exhilarating experience, positive not just for myself but also for many of my co-filmmaker women on the set. The experience was so positive that they chose all female crews and casts when applicable for their subsequent films.

Fig. 9: Film Stills From Manifestations Of Desire
I made the decision to have my cast consist of a mix of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and heterosexual women because in order to discuss my topics on bisexuality in women I needed to have all these different women on the set to openly and honestly share their thoughts and experiences. It was important to me to cover a wide range of the issues surrounding bisexuality; such as monogamy vs. non-monogamy, being ostracized by both the gay and the heterosexual communities, acceptance, various types and levels of relationships, mainstream culture, criteria, gender, sexuality, feeling safe and just being a woman. I chose a cast with varied lifestyles to increase the dialogue. I chose to emphasize this by inter-cutting the scenes of sexuality with shots of lesbian romance as well as heterosexual encounters into the female discussion group footage.

When it came to filming the sensual imagery I felt that it was important to focus on the androgyny of the characters so the viewer did not know exactly who was who or what their gender was. I then slowly and subtly revealed the individuals to the audience through slight glimpses, pans and movements. Sexual encounters were filmed in low light, with close-ups of body parts. Body parts were entwined, hair was moving in the air and on bodies, hands embraced showing passion and pleasure. I wanted sensuality and sexuality to show through. I did not want any part of the film to seem pornographic or gratuitous. I chose camera angles that would enable the viewer to feel as though they are actually there apart of the scene, involved.

I chose to use not just gender-specified individuals but also some androgynous individuals, for they are more flexible and less obvious then gender-typed individuals. I am especially drawn to the gestures expressed by hands. They can be very sensual and reveal a lot about a person. It was important for me to get the actresses and actors out of the bedroom and into filming the non-sexual, social aspects, the relationship situations in the film.

Fig. 10: Film Stills From Manifestations Of Desire
I had a camera crew follow my girlfriend and me around as we went about a normal day in NYC, in neighborhoods where I grew up and where she at the time of filming, lived. Walking, talking, eating, riding the subway, shopping, taking a break and spending quality time together... For being bisexual is not just about sex to me but also about the relationship as a whole.

I took myself and my cast and crew to places and filmed scenes designed to cover the topics and examples used in the main group conversation. I directed the camera angles in the bar footage to be up close and personal views, capturing gestures, facial expressions, and body language. This kept the interactions personal and similar to my style of shooting with the sensual imagery. I filmed this footage to support the conversation between the women on how ever since childhood they have felt competition with they’re interactions with straight men on various levels. It also supports the issues of feeling safer going to lesbian and gay bars verses straight bars, for we commonly feel uncomfortable going to straight bars, which leaves us feeling not safe at all. Wanting to spend more time around women, for around women we feel more centered.

Then when the discussion turned to the issues of gender and how society puts us in roles, the constructing of gender and being forced into it from the day we were born and how we are treated by our appearance is when I chose to film a scene of two young, innocent children playing to cut in. This scene is constructed to be a flash back, tapping my memory of growing up. I chose these two children in particular because of they’re different upbringings. The girl, whom is being raised by an accepting open minded father whom lets her choose what she wants to do or wear whether or not it may be girly or tomboyish. Where as the boy in this clip is being raised by my extremely close-minded, Christian cousin of mine, whom feels the need to segregate her son and daughter’s activities according to their gender. Cheyan, the girl in this clip reminds me a lot of myself when I was her age and the boy represents what I had forced upon me by society to accept as the norm whether I agreed with it or not.

Fig. 11: Film Stills From *Manifestations Of Desire*
The sound track that was to accompany the sensual imagery was edited to the visual footage. I wanted people to walk into the space and to be able to evoke sensual responses in them and to instill confusion at the same time. The voices of males and females were unidentifiable, moving back and forth between them, some calling out in a sensual whisper, some questioning and others replying in a seductive tone such as: Do you want me? Do you need me? Do you trust me? Do you respect me? Do you love me? What turns you on? Are you? Can I? Yes... I want you...etc... These voices sounded simply sexual, non-language, more primal then anything. These tracks were then inter-spliced and copied to a separate track to be a delayed and a stretched out version of the first mixed down track.

I then chose to create a monologue over the darkness between random scenes. Here again the sound track was layered into separate tracks using various effects such as reversing, flanging adding reverb and then mixed down. The tracks calling out from the darkness consisted of poetic statements, stories and social science quotes pertaining to bisexuality. Using various voices fitting the separate personalities of each reading. But at times I also left the darkness between silent, without narration, giving the viewer a chance to sit, think, wonder...

Fig. 12: Film Stills From Manifestations Of Desire
THE SCULPTURAL ELEMENTS
COPPER VESSELS

Desire. 1998, Forged/Raised Copper.
I can make love to a woman or a man or both at the same time as a queer woman. 1998, Forged/Raised Copper.
As a Bisexual Feminist, I seek to take control of my pleasure. 1998, Forged/Raised Copper.
To be a sexual being one must be able to desire. One must be able to say “I Want” 1998, Forged/Raised Copper.
What is in a label anyway? 1998, Forged/Raised Copper.
Don’t tell me you never thought about it. 1998, Forged/Raised Copper.
And what is wrong with a little promiscuity? 1998, Forged/Raised Copper.

Fig. 13: Breast Plates, Copper Vessels, 1998.

The first four vessel forms are currently traveling in a group show with the Evolutionary Girls Club in the USA and Europe. These vessels were created to symbolize the thoughts and emotions of my own personal experiences as a bisexual woman during my coming out process. I chose copper to signify armor and protection. I chose to make the vessels in the form of a woman’s breast to symbolize my self as a female: sensual, and nurturing. I engraved personal quotes on each piece to express my feelings as a bisexual. I choose to present the copper vessels with different finishes, to make them all diverse not only with their quotes and size and shape but also in color. Finishes such as liver of sulfur, ammonia, urine, and heat patinas as well as various ways of burnishing and polishing were used.

Kay Turner’s book Beautiful Necessity, The Art and Meaning of Women’s Altars, explored the act of connection to something larger then the self. Turner reminds us of the process that we all go through when we make a meaningful connection through the objects and images we see. She gives examples of altars “objects that we make meaning from” as varied as the stage of a performance artist to small altars that people keep in their homes.
In the introduction to her book Turner outlines the importance of the domestic altar underlining a consistency in female/feminine values. These values include "Fertility, maternity, birth and re-birth, family generation and social regeneration, creativity, sacred embodiment of the feminine, the self-other relationship, self-identity, and autonomy. Our concerns and values consistently addressed at women home altars worldwide."9 The sculptural work that I made is a representation of these same concerns and values. The objects I make are a way of giving voice to these concerns and values within a society that marginalizes them through patriarchy. Turner’s work provided a bridge between the physical and psychological spaces that are specifically female and women’s experiences and values. My work can be one of these altars; it explores the spaces that Turner is talking about. The sculptures embrace the values and concerns that women have apparently dealt with throughout recorded history. My sculptures do not just merely deal with the representation of the ideas and theories that construct the meaning of my work. They deal with the literal, the symbolic, the emotional, and identity issues, the true complexity that makes up the human experience.

Fig 14: Breast Plates, Copper Vessels, 1998.

Fig 15: Breast Plates, Copper Vessels, 1998.

The actual hands on creation of the sculptural pieces was a very good experience for me. It gave me the chance to not only experiment with different mediums to express my thoughts and feelings, but also to release anger and frustration during this time. Completing these pieces also allowed me to express my sensual feelings and experiences on the topic of desire.

The copper in my structures is used as a metaphor for my own skin. The choice of metal symbolizes strength, armor, and protection. The act of forging the metal into the torsos was very therapeutic, using physical energy to express my thoughts with the viewer. This was a very challenging project for me. It took a lot of trial and error before I could accomplish my goals. Many hours, days, nights of pounding out my soul were filled with literally the output of blood, sweat and tears into these sheets of copper.

All of the torsos were modeled after characters in the film. The first, is of my girlfriend the second of myself, and the third my/our male lover. I finished all three of the torsos with a heat patina, highlighting them with striking red and brown metallic tones. Then I designed a method of displaying them by constructing a wooden frame of maple to house all three of the torsos then taking steel airplane cable and stringing it through each body and then through stainless steel eyelet bolts in the maple frame. This gave the torsos a feeling of floating in space while all interconnected.
I choose glass as a symbol of...translucence, fragility. An anatomically correct glass heart cast with the motion of being pulled apart by inserting 4 copper shards into the wax heart before casting it into glass by the pate de verre Method. Upon display I strung the heart by the copper shards and hung it in a glass and wooden (maple) case I made for this piece. The case hung from the gallery ceiling by a stainless steel airplane cable. The heart symbolized my emotions of being pulled apart by norms and expectations and personal desires.
The other two glass castings were symbols of the bisexual icon. Both of these pieces consisted of blue, pink, and lavender. The traditional inverted pink triangle was adopted by queer culture in remembrance of the homosexuals who were killed by the Nazis in Europe. In the concentration camps, homosexuals wore pink triangles. Pink suggested these men are like women. In later years bissexuals incorporated this triangle with the color blue, suggesting females who are like males. The combination of these colors gives us lavender, the color now mostly associated with queer culture. All three colors were cast in individual molds and then ground and polished until they were ready to be glued together under ultraviolet lights. I also designed the pedestals for these two pieces. The first being a triangular table of solid maple designed to hang with the support of the wall with the use of the same type of cable used to hang the glass heart and the torsos to keep a relationship between the pieces. I made a steel stand to support the glass piece while sitting freely on the table.

The second pedestal I designed to stand on the floor supporting the piece with a thin steel rod stand bolted to the center of the table. The pedestal itself was made of four solid triangular 3’ walnut legs connected to four 2” x 6” x 2” maple pieces to create the pattern on top surrounding the black steel base of the stand.
How My Work Has Evolved: Technical & Aesthetic Influences

Over all I would say my work has evolved in a number of ways during my studies at RIT. I started with a conventional photographic background. With my love of learning, I immersed myself into a diverse selection of courses. I did not limit myself to the course offerings in the photo graduate program. I supported my conceptual base with classes in the undergraduate applied photography department, and with an array of technical and graduate courses in the film/video department. I also took classes in the School of American Crafts, where I studied metalsmithing (Sculpture and Jewelry), glass, ceramics and woodworking. Upon taking the graduate elective courses in the School for American Crafts I learned the skills needed to work with each medium. I was also exposed to the history and the works of various artists of the subjects studied. Not only did my technical skills and capabilities grow but so did my way of thinking. I nurtured the development of the concept, symbolism, purpose and messages behind my artwork.

When it came to working on my thesis I was working in film. I wanted to create an installation space surrounding my film, which employed my skills that I learned in my sculptural electives. I found these electives embodied the ritualistic element that I had previously enjoyed in the making of the books and the Native American medicine wheel. I thought the installation was a great place to bring out my ideas, to have these physical ritual made objects in the space. My knowledge in techniques as well as conceptual growth can all be witnessed in my MFA Thesis Installation Exhibition.

I had previously taken a glass blowing elective and a glass casting elective and decided that with casting I could accomplish what I needed to express my vision for my thesis installation. Cast glass embodied the essence of my emotions on the subjectivity of the work itself. Creative on one hand yet technical on the other hand, the actual process provided a balance between art and craft for me.

In the metals courses I learned and used the technical skills needed to transform my visions into solid, tangible objects. I worked with various metals and basic hand tool techniques and also used industrial equipment such as the gas forge, spinning lathes, soldering and cutting with Oxygen and Acetylene and also welding with Gas Tungsten Arc (TIG) and Gas Metal Arc (MIG) welders as well as common electrical equipment. I found that forging copper and hand forming it with various mallets and hammers were what worked best for me. These processes gave me the connection needed to transform my thoughts and feelings into sculpture objects. I was so intrigued by this way of making my art that I wound up making Metals my minor for my Master of Science, in Art Education.
I had originally enrolled in a woodworking course to build an ultraviolet light box after taking an alternative process photography class. But later, after knowing that I needed to display my metal and glass sculptures in the installation, I decided to build the pedestals out of matching woods to give them all a relative connection. To gain access to the equipment in the wood shop, I signed up for more woodworking electives to accomplish this task.

Overall with the technical expertise learned from working with each medium and my conceptual ideas I was able to transform my vision and accomplish my goals for creating an installation space for my film in my thesis show.
BACKGROUND INFLUENCES
MY WORK: FIRST WALK-THROUGH UP UNTIL THESIS SHOW

RITUALS WITHIN THE LANDSCAPE

I did not arrive in Rochester with a thesis topic, but instead a topic developed over time. I began documenting the female body and spirit through a journey of self-realization, which started out with self-portraits, both still and on film.

My first walk-through, in the fall of 1995, was entitled Rituals Within The Landscape. The work consisted of the study of ceremonial acts taking place in the natural landscape. These images ranged from prints on the wall of the Native American Medicine Wheel and self-portraits, to hand bound books containing the images of dance movements depicting how I connected with the landscape. This process evolved from bringing nature into the studio to going through the ritual of building a medicine wheel.

Fig. 21: Installation View

Fig. 22: Close Up of Medicine Wheel

These self-portraits pertained to a self-realization project. They were rituals unto themselves not just the act of a photographer making a self-portrait but of which documented my personal experiences with the southwestern landscape. I continued this study in self-realization by choreographing dances, to figure out why I was drawn so strongly to the southwestern landscape. In my youth, I had studied ballet for eight years and modern dance for four. It was this previous training and the study of indigenous dance, which helped me to find my movements, which resonated with the natural surroundings.
The production of hand-bound books also has significance for me. It is the act of designing, creating, sewing, and binding, of these books that is a ritualistic task in itself. Even the act of reading a book is a ritual. It is a ritual that the viewer embarks on when they pick up the book. So too is the medicine wheel a ritual, one that is performed to bring world peace and love. It had its origins in Native American culture and is now built and celebrated all over the world.

This early work grew out of a journey in self-exploration that began six months before. The journey began out in the desert southwest. I had been asked to sign an agreement to assume custody of my good friend’s daughter, Cheyan, in case he died during his military service. Since my friend is Native American, Cherokee, I tried to learn as much of his and Cheyan’s culture as possible during my travels. I felt motivated to learn how I might connect to their culture. I later discovered that I have Meso-American roots mixed in with my European-Mexican Heritage. Because of this discovery, I started to research Native American philosophers on life. I discovered that Native American culture has a respectful outlook on homosexual behavior.

Homosexual and bisexual behaviors have been documented within Native American cultures. Sabine Lang has written extensively about Lesbians, Men-Women and Two-Spirit people. “Within their respective cultures women-men and men-women are classified as neither men nor women, but as genders of their own.”

Lang outlined the importance of the expectation that people of whatever sexual inclination will fit into the everyday life of the Native American community. “It is considered inappropriate to set oneself apart on the grounds of sexuality.” Lang quoted Erna Pahe (Navajo) “On the reservation you wouldn’t go out and advertise a gay barbeque, gay picnic, or something like that, because in their [the other Navajos’] eyes it would show that there is this group of people that are trying to be separate from the people, you know, all of our people on the reservation.”

Will Roscoe called North America the “queerest continent on the planet”. Roscoe’s writings focus on “Berdaches”, those who belong to a third and fourth gender. It is widely believed that “Berdaches” gained their identity through supernatural intervention.13 “Berdache is now considered to be an inappropriate and insulting term by a number of Native Americans as well as by anthropologists.” 14 “People who leave behind traditional gender roles become bridges to the other.” 15 In pre-modern Europe these people were called threshold persons. They were the jesters, belly dancers, sorceresses, magicians, and mimes. “Threshold persons introduced them (the wider population) to experiences they might otherwise never have known.” 16

Within my work I have socially constructed boundaries. In a sense, my work is an expression of my bridge between lesbian and straight women. My artwork acts to communicate my experience of these spaces to the other, people outside of myself. Part of the dilemma I explored had to do with my need to not separate myself, but to form an inclusive community. The conflict occurs when the dominant (straight) culture and the alternative (gay and lesbian) cultures both insist that I be separatist or included in neither.

16 Conner, Randy. Men-Women, Gatekeepers, and Fairy Mounds, People Who Leave Behind Traditional Gender Roles Become Bridges to the Other, 74 Parabola, Spring 2000.
The film Sexual Expressions was in reaction to two personal relationships I had had over the summer of 1996. In it I explored extensively the importance of my body in terms of identity, sexuality and politics. I worked through issues of sexuality with the making of this personal film hence this was my coming out piece.

Since this film is so personal in nature, I choose my framing to be tight, making the subjects identity ambiguous, thus showing emotion and sexual tension through the expression of hand and body movements. Hands can reveal a lot about a person so I choose to focus on hand expressions throughout the film. I also directed my cast and crew to capture the visual language of bodies embracing, the essence of the spirits connecting. As the camera moved panning across the body(s) it would casually hesitate and sometimes move on. Through the editing process I created transitions pulling the viewer deeper into my story, incorporating the narrative and the sound.

During the making of the film I read a number of books by the feminist poet, Adrienne Rich. I could relate so well to her writings and poetry that I felt as though her words were my feelings and experiences. I could not have written my own thoughts into fitter words. Her poetic stories filled my head. So to fit my vision I quoted her words that meant the most to me. I started out mixing her quotes with my own words working my way to the climax of the film at which point I tell my personal story of these relationships, which brings the viewer to the end of my film.
Images For Godard Part 3. By Adrienne Rich

To love, to move perpetually
as the body changes

a dozen times a day
the temperature of the skin

the feeling of rise & fall
deadweight & buoyancy

the eye sunk inward
the eye bleeding with speech

(‘for that moment at least
I was you—’)

To be stopped, to shoot the same scene
over & over

This film, Sexual Expressions has been screened in film festivals and
gallery exhibits in New York, Texas, San Francisco, plus in Kiev and Lugansk,
Ukraine. It has also been screened at Euro-Pride Festivals in Cologne &
Stockholm, Germany, during the summer of 2002 as well as in Sweden &
Helsinki, Finland. It was also screened in Minsk, Belarus & Moldavia and
Belgrade, Yugoslavia in the fall of 2002.

Fig. 24: Film Stills From Sexual Expressions

I continued my studies in filmmaking, concentrating on learning how to incorporate a synchronous soundtrack with my images. While doing so I created this film, which was left untitled but was about abusive relationships. This was the first complete sync-sound film I had ever created. It was an excellent learning experience for me. Putting to use all that I was taught in my film courses and more. I had an excellent cast and crew whom made creating this film a wonderful experience.

There are three main characters; the main actress who had just received an old photo album from her Mother and was showing it to a long time girlfriend who came over to visit. The images in the album bring up a lot of old memories for them both good and bad. They reminisce about many until her boyfriend came over to visit. His character is basically insecure, causing him to lash out with suspicion and jealousy. He is an emotionally and verbally abusive man. The script was written after a series of true-life experiences of my own and other girlfriends I have known who have had very similar relationships, relationships that we continued to fall into even though we knew better. The prescription was not to allow yourself to become a victim, but to be strong and get out of such unhealthy relationships.
Influential Artists

Filmmakers

I came to Rochester, New York without a strong education in art. I had only a technical education in photography, which did not touch upon much history. My exposure to art was self-taught and developed through viewing the abundance of media in everyday life growing up in New York City and visiting galleries and museums. I enjoyed the work of photographers and painters such as Ansel Adams, Sally Mann, Robert Mapplethorpe, Herb Ritts, as well as Frida Kahlo and Remedios Varo.

Throughout my graduate studies I was exposed to many artists as well as a variety of art media. Through my love of learning I began to seek out all the resources available to me. I was not confined to one area and was free to experiment. I became aware of ever changing, or should I say growing, confluences of expressive media. I was exposed to the work of so many great artists.

After my second walk-through show I was advised by several mentors to look at the works of Yvonne Rainer, Su Friedrich and Barbara Hammer. It was not easy to go out and rent their films, since independent filmmakers are hard to find at the video store. I found myself calling film houses and the Video Data Bank until I was successful. The most fruitful results were found at the NYC Public Library across the street from the Museum Of Modern Art. Here I found Yvonne Rainer’s films on file that I could view by appointment only: Lives of Performers, 1972, Film About a Woman Who... 1974, Kristina Talking Pictures, 1976, and The Man Who Envied Women, 1985. I then got the chance to catch her films Privilege, 1990, and Murder and Murder at the Yvonne Rainer Retrospective in NYC. Yvonne Rainer is not just a filmmaker but also a performer, dancer and choreographer. Rainer is very political and you can witness her attention to issues of sexuality, power, and emotion in her films.

Fig. 26: Lives Of Performers, Film Still.

Fig. 27: Portrait Of Yvonne Rainer
I attended the New York City Gay & Lesbian Film Festival in order to see Su Friedrich's films *Damned If You Don't*, 1987; *Sink or Swim*, 1990; *First Comes Love*, 1991; *Gently Down the Stream*, 1981; and *Hide and Seek*, 1996. (All films are black & white 16mm film). With the film Hide and Seek she explored lesbian adolescence in the 1960's, through the main character Lou, a 12-year-old girl, combining it with archival clips of junior high sex education films and commentary by lesbians reminiscing about their childhoods. This film really inspired me, not just the content but also mainly her filming style; it was very similar to my own. Her films are autobiographical in nature, extremely powerful and formally innovative. She links her aesthetic vision to feminist politics while also capturing real-live issues of growing up, loving, and loss.

Then through the Image Out Film Festival in Rochester New York over the years I was able to see a number of Barbara Hammer's films such as *Women I Love*, (1976), *Nitrate Kisses*, (1992), *Tender Fictions*, (1995), *Out In South Africa*, (1995), and *History Lessons*, (2000). There were several similarities in her filming styles compared to my own such as the use of collage and abstract film footage to start with as well as women loving women intertwined with symbolic imagery. I enjoy films that experiment with optical printing and layering images together. The film *Nitrate Kisses* plays out a similar structure to that of my own film, *Manifestations of Desire*. 

![Fig. 28: Hide & Seek, 1996.](image1)
![Fig. 29: Sink Or Swim, 1990.](image2)
![Fig. 30: Damned If You Don't, 1987.](image3)

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![Figs. 31 & 32: Film Stills From Tender Fictions, 1995.](image4)

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In Women I Love she incorporated still images into the film by panning and zooming into each one. Hammer also made short, stop motion animations of fruits and vegetables which blossom open like flowers. I was proud to learn that Barbara Hammer was showing her most recent piece *My Babushka: Searching Ukrainian Identities*, (2001) with the Evolutionary Girls Club in the European and New York shows with us during the summer of 2002. This piece explored Hammer’s own history as well as women’s issues and gay and lesbian issues in post Soviet era.

Fig. 33: My Babushka: Searching Ukrainian Identities, 2001, Barbara Hammer.
I have seen a number of metal sculptures placed in the environment, either cityscape or semi-natural landscape as well as in corporate and private settings. Of all the artists the one whose work has moved me the most is that of Leonard Urso. He has been my inspiration and my mentor while I have learned this art form. He taught me what I needed to know to create my vision into a reality. He has taught me to feel and to put all of myself physically as well as emotionally and spiritually into my art, to do what it is I do when I make photographs and films.

Leonard Urso is a sculptor, a painter and a jeweler, but it is his hand-formed, larger-than-life copper figures that influenced my work the most. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, being in museums as well as in corporate and private collections such as at the Memorial Art Gallery and Bosch & Lomb World Headquarters in Rochester, NY. Leonard Urso’s artist statement is as follows:

“My sculpture reflects the stories, myths, and characters that mirror some small part of the human condition. As an artist I have come to appreciate the unique characteristics of materials. I have learned the subtleties of the hands and their ability to shape material and to direct the movements of a tool. Sheet metal is treated like a sheet of paper and a hammer like a pencil resulting in a sculpture that is rendered as if it were a drawing in the round. I make use of this knowledge in order to more easily respond to creative ideas with a greater sense of clarity. In the end this reflection on the value of things comes together in a symbolic order, forming the language that embodies my art.” Len Urso

Fig. 34: Len Urso, 3 Copper Figures.
During my studies of glass art I studied the history of many glass artists throughout the ages. I went to galleries in New York City, Corning, NY and Seattle, Washington to view the works of many of those artists. Three glass artists have influenced me the most. The husband and wife team, Stanislav Libensky and Jaroslava Brychtova from Czechoslovakia have spent their entire lives living and working in Czechoslovakia. Their accomplishments were especially noteworthy since they were working in a country that was under foreign domination by either German or Soviet totalitarian governments for fifty years. Because of this they were isolated from the rest of the world. During this time they chose to study glass and they have continued with this medium. They were active in the arts, politically and educationally and they supported the restoration of the glass industry, which helped make Czechoslovakia recognized for its artistic advancement in this medium.

I have found their sculptures quite inspiring. They are monumental sculptures made from clear and colored glass that interact with light and create spectacular color effects. It is the way that Stanislav and Jaroslava shape light and color, which inspired me most to create my glass pieces. I studied their work to see just how they were able to come up with such wonderful optical effects. It was by varying the thickness of the glass and modeling the interior cavity that they have created spaces for light to interact with the glass itself. The light becomes just as important as the art itself. In my own work I strive to produce such optical effects.
Libensky often considered himself as a painter and creator of blown glass and stained glass, he would paint, enamel and/or etch, before meeting up with Brychtova whom had focused on her pate de verre castings. Since 1955 Libensky and Brychtova have collaborated as a team and been making art glass together ever since. They have become internationally known with large-scale sculpture presentations at the world’s fairs in Brussels, Montreal and Osaka. They both have been commissioned to place glass in architectural spaces and to create many freestanding sculptures, cathedral windows and various projects for public buildings internationally.

Fig. 37: William Morris, *Cache*, 1993.

The second glass artist who has so inspired me is William Morris, an American glassblower. He is noted for being Dale Chihuly’s chief glassblower. Where Dale Chihuly’s personal esthetic lies with sea forms, William Morris’s fascination is in the forest and earth. His work embodies the vision of a hunter, haunted by the death and aftermath of nature. His work expresses his enjoyments and fascinations with life and death of animals and humans and Native American burial sites. He is a hunter and archeologist sharing his hand blown artifacts, relics and kills.
Morris’s blown art glass consists of glass bones, skulls, antlers and tusks, burial urns rafts, pouches, canopic jars, petroglyph vessels and shards, standing glass stone and rock vessels and other artifacts. These all have been produced by surface designs of exquisite colors made with powdered glass drawings fused to the surface of the hot vessels during the preliminary stages of the blowing process. I not only admire his artistic vision, but I also personally relate to his fascinations with nature, life, death, native cultures and their rituals.
"And that visibility which makes us most vulnerable is also the source of our greatest strength."
Audre Lorde, *The Transformation of Silence Into Language and Action* 23

Audre Lorde often described herself as a “black lesbian, mother, warrior, and poet.” This description illustrated the bond between her artistic talents and her dedication to activism. Stylistically, Lorde was consistently direct and forceful in her language and actions. In her book *Poetry is not a Luxury* she stated “When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength and the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.” 24

Similar to Lorde’s work many of my pieces are intended to work both as artistic expressions and also as potential tools to create change. One of Lorde’s books is titled *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*. Zami is a Carriacou name for women whom work together as friends and lovers. This book was described by Lorde as a bio-mythography, a literary form that brings together the autobiography, the novel and personal mythology. In it, Lorde chronicled her experiences growing up in the 1950’s, the daughter of West Indian immigrant parents, in an extremely patriarchal home and as a lesbian. My work has also chronicled the experiences of coming out, an experience comparable to coming of age. My work attempted to visually portray the potential of women together as friends and lovers. It is activist in its visual assertiveness and it too, forms a personal mythology for me. The viewer has no choice but to question where they stand on the line between inclusion and exclusion.

Like Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich recalls her years of growing up as being dominated by the demands of her father. Rich acknowledged that her poetry could not exist separately from the context of her life. It has been the same for the visual artist. My work has existed within the context of my experiences to this point. Rich’s poetry uses rhythms derived from the cinematic techniques of jump cuts and collage. Within her writings, Rich acknowledges the desolation that patriarchy brings both to the literal and to the spiritual landscape. She sees her body as the beginning of enacting any change.

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In Rich’s poem “Tear Gas” she states, “The will to change begins in the body not in the mind, my politics is in my body.” Rich recognized that she is in a position of verbal privilege. She has had the means, the access, and the native intelligence to convey her experiences to a wide population. Her experiences have resonated in my work in that I too have used cinematic techniques, the rhythm of images, to help me communicate my message. I have explored extensively the importance of my body in terms of my identity, my politics and how I relate to the larger world. As an artist and an activist I recognize my position of privilege because I can make art, because I can buy the materials and because I can afford education. I too then have the verbal privilege that Rich describes. With that privilege comes the responsibility to communicate through the example of teaching.

This idea of verbal privilege can be traced back to Sappho. Sappho, whose birth date was approximately 612 BC, was a teacher whose sensual style was used to educate women in the arts. Her family’s wealth afforded her the means to live in whatever manner she chose. The content of her poems was usually about love, wanting and reflection. Sappho’s poetry was not condemned in her time, but was later disparaged by scholars for its lesbian content. It is now revered by scholars and disparaged by those who are unable to comprehend lesbianism. Sappho’s students were often the subjects of her poetry; eventually each of her students left to be married. Because of the lack of choice surrounding heterosexual marriage for women, Sappho was left torn between letting go of her lovers and being supported by society. As with Rich and Lorde my work echoed some of these same themes. Primarily the core of my art, deals with the fact that I am constantly faced with having to choose. My pieces reference love, wanting and are reflections of my experiences in having these emotions as a bisexual woman.

During Sappho's time it was traditional for poetry to be performed with musical accompaniment. Sappho composed her own music in order to control its rhythm and overall sound. Language delivered through music has had a great deal of impact on my development as an artist and a person. Over the last ten years there have been two musicians that I admire and relate to the most, Sophie B Hawkins and Ani Difranco. Their music has helped me in my own coming out experience. These are not just musicians, but also they are socio-political activists. They have created through their music much of what I have strived to create in my films.

Martha Nussbaum, in her book *Upheavals of Thought* talks about the differences and relationships between "contents" and "meaning" in musical compositions. Nussbaum considered the "contents" to be the chords, tempo, structure and lyrics. She further asks whether the music itself can "mean" anything apart from the words of a song. Again we are forced to realize that outside of the composer's context "meaning" is something subjective, left totally to the listener. We have already said the same for the visual arts. Nussbaum took on compassion and love as core themes in this book. In the end she questions if anything succinct can be said about love. She describes compassion is being extremely significant when people relate to other people in public. These subjective ideas, are difficult to base theory on and are experienced by all human beings. Nussbaum comments on the fact that theory often overlooks the importance of emotional life, that which is not rational. The music of Difranco and Hawkins has spoken to me because of its ability to convey meaning. In the case of both artists language has been at least as important if not more so than the musical score is. Language has made their music "activist". It is the relationship of the emotions to the subjective human experience through their lyrics that makes their music such a powerful medium. These same factors have empowered me as a visual artist and as a woman.
My work reached a culmination point when on three separate occasions three different artists expressed how much my installation had helped them with their own personal journeys. The first was an undergraduate photo student who was in a previous class I taught at RIT. She told me that her experience watching me make my artwork helped her find her own voice in her own artistic endeavors. She thanked me for the time, consideration and motivation I put forth for myself and towards others. The second was another undergraduate photo student whom volunteered to model for one of my sculptural pieces as well as to act in my film. Through his experience in helping me create my body of work it helped give him the courage to be true to himself as a bisexual. The third person, had been a graduate student in the ceramics department, came up to me a few years after my show and thanked me for the openness and honesty in my work for it also helped her to come to terms with her sexuality and not to be afraid of coming out to her peers. She said that my ability to delve so deep into my self and my emotions had given her new inspiration to shed some of her own inhibitions.

My work reveals a journey within myself. Over the past 4 years I have consciously dissected my own emotions and studied the relationship of society and it’s effects on the development of an individual. As a result my sculptures and film reveal the emotions of my whole being, particularly those emotions that tend to be hidden. This journey has brought about my interest in exploring the emotions that society ‘cunningly’ teaches the individual to feel ashamed of and suppress. These emotions interest me because it is in them that a person could find their greatest strength as an individual. Through a process of growth and self-acknowledgement my work addresses issues of sexuality and its connection to notions of the masculine and feminine in the culture. This spiritual journey underpins my thesis work, Manifestations of Desire.
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   A. Technical Notes From Filming
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td><em>Untitled, Glass Heart</em>, 1998. Cast glass, copper, wood, glass, stainless steel wire &amp; cable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Documentation of <em>Rituals Within The Landscape</em> walk-through, 1995.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Close up of medicine wheel, <em>Rituals Within The Landscape</em> walk-through.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Strip of “Film Stills” from <em>Sexual Expressions</em>, 1996.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Strip of “Film Stills” from <em>Sexual Expressions</em>, 1996.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Strip of “Film Stills” from <em>Untitled Film</em>, 1996.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Yvonne Rainer, portrait.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Sue Friedrich, <em>Sink or Swim</em>, 1990. Film Still.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Sue Friedrich, <em>Damned if You Don’t</em>, 1987. Film Still.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Leonard Urso, Untitled Sculpture, 1998. Photo by Angela Duron  


Strip of “Film Stills” from *Manifestations Of Desire*, 1998.  

Strip of “Film Stills” from *Manifestations Of Desire*, 1998.
The film equipment I used was an Arriflex 16mm camera with a Nagra 4.2 recorder. All non-synchronous footage was shot with a Bolex H16 Reflex 16mm camera. I ordered all of my raw stock; “Double-X Negative Film #7222” from Kodak making certain that all of the rolls were cut from the same batch. So there would not be any variations in the emulsion.

I spent a number of days and nights in Toronto, Ontario, Canada having my 3400 feet of film developed and printed onto a work print and then transferred to Digital Beta tapes (1600 feet of it having to be synchronized to the soundtrack) by Deluxe. Afterwards I had to transfer the film from Digital Beta to DV-Cam tapes in order to edit it at RIT on the AVID system. All of this was highly costly. Luckily Rod Haykin of the Film Department and Tom Berner of the Video Department at Deluxe both gave me an excellent deal because I was a graduate student. I then sent my Digital Beta tapes out to Monaco Video in San Francisco to be transferred to DV-cam tapes so that I could then edit my film on the AVID system at RIT.

After stock and lab costs, the bulk of my almost nonexistent budget went into providing food and drink for my cast and crew. I could not afford to pay anyone for their involvement and relied on my friends’ generosity.
The following information covers my personal notes for casting my three glass casted pieces. I used Bullseye casting frit, which has a softening point of 1250 degrees Fahrenheit, its annealing point is 990 degrees Fahrenheit and the density of the glass is 2.4. The finer the frit the more opaque and the larger the frit the more translucent. Soak them at 415 degrees Fahrenheit and again at 1100 degrees Fahrenheit for two to four hours at each soak level. I mixed the plaster to the silica 1:1.f and wrapped the mold with chicken wire and then covered the wire with more of this plaster silica mix.

Program Kiln - Part 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Temp</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Hold</td>
<td>Cure, overnight, 16 hrs approx.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1150</td>
<td>8 hrs</td>
<td>Soak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1150</td>
<td>12 hrs</td>
<td>Hold till the molds glow orange, approx 14 hrs, then start charging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1450</td>
<td>Hold</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once the charging is complete, shut off the kiln. Open the door completely to crash, watch the computer at 800 - 900 degrees, close door. After 5 minutes open door again. Continue this process a number of times until the temperature creeps up to 1050 - 1100 degrees. Enter new program.

Program Kiln - Part 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Temp</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>Hold</td>
<td>Anneal, approx 20 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>30 hrs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>60 hrs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leave in kiln until touchable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once pieces are at room temperature remove glass from molds.
**MANIFESTATIONS OF DESIRE FILM CREDITS**

Written and Directed by: Angela Duron
Director of Photography: Angela Duron

*Sensual Footage Sequences
Cast*

Luis Crespo
Angela Duron
Carmel France
Circe Hamilton

*Crew*

Amy Philips
Troi Riddle
Monica Rivera
David Stephanus

*Camera Operator:*

Lisa Angelo

*Additional Camera Operators:*

Angela Duron
Christine Russo
Lisa Angelo
Angela Duron
Joanne Kent
Kevin Lamark
Stuart Larson
Troi Riddle

*Narration & Soundtrack:*

Sensual Footage Sequences

*Discussion Group Footage
Cast*

Davya Brody
Toni Chiarenza
Angela Duron
Emily Faith
Carmel France

*Crew*

Melissa Lagod
Adel Gangai
Suzanne Grantham
Teri Homan
Joanne Kent

*Camera Operator:*

Monica Rivera

*Gaffer:*

Sandra Gluzgold
Zoe Sheehan-Saldana
Emily Faith
Joanne Kent
Christine Russo
Lisa Angelo
Jeff Hahl
Scott Pallo

*New York City Footage
Cast*

Angela Duron

*Crew*

Circe Hamilton

*Camera Operator:*

Chris Scarfile

*Key Grip:*

Gavin the Gaffer

*Dining Footage
Cast*

Angela Duron

*Crew*

Troi Riddle

*Camera Operator:*

Lisa Angelo

*Gaffer:*

Lisa Angelo

Fig. 40: Film Stills From *Manifestations Of Desire*
Bar Footage

Cast

Joshua Cook
Jennifer Doeschner
Angela Duron
Carmel France
Molly Hamblin
Megan Hoffberg
Scott Gentzke
Greg Keochakian

Crew

Assistant Director of Photography:
Camera Operators:
Gaffer:
Key Grip:
Location Provided by:

Children / Additional Footage

Cast

Cheyan Duval
Skyler Butcher

Crew

Camera Operator:

Technical Support

Jim @ RIT Physical Plant
Greg Barnnet
Dan Bogaard
Ginny Gross-Abbey
Jeff Hall
Marc Labbate

Titles created by:
Producer:
Editor:

Film Processing, Printing and Digital Transfer by: Deluxe Toronto

Produced in partial fulfillment of the Master of Fine Arts in Imaging Arts Program at Rochester Institute of Technology.

Copyright 1998.

This Film is Dedicated to Circe…

Fig. 41: Film Stills From Manifestations of Desire
BIBLIOGRAPHY


