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Astronauts and Xingu: an exhibition of cultural ideograms

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ASTRONAUTS AND XINGU
AN EXHIBITION OF CULTURAL IDEOGRAPHMS

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The intention of my thesis is to alter some of American culture’s prevailing sentiments on the relationship between: masculine and feminine; visceral and cognitive; natural and technological; as well as altering perceptions of the loci of power in our culture. The thesis exhibition was composed of seventeen gum bichromate assemblages composed of elementary images appropriated from popular media. Each composite piece is a recontextualization of extant representations. I have taken things from their typical or original context and re-presented them in a context that I have selected and directed. The new relationships established among the appropriated component images and the viewer are meant to: illuminate some aspects of our culture and to obscure others; accent farces; and subvert biases. My goal is to offer the viewer an experience that has the capacity to alter their existing perspectives on the relationships stated in my intention above.

The theories and methods associated with Postmodern art had a tremendous impact on this thesis. I do not, however, characterize my work as Postmodern. I view my work as made with an awareness of Postmodernism, but not in strict adherence to its philosophies. I use its methods for their effectiveness, and I work in the enlightened perspective of images that it offered, but I do not share many of its motivations and goals.
Works of art characterized as Postmodernist comment on art and media in general and Modernism and contemporary Western culture in particular. The anti-Modern motivations of Postmodernism have already been absorbed into the art world and into culture as part of the norm. Sherrie Levine's exhibitions of reproductions from art book images signed as her own and the remanufactured commercial pieces by Jeff Koons are examples of this anti-Modernist art. The Postmodern artists and their scribes presented evidence on the state of images that I could neither deny nor ignore. Repeating or elaborating on the flaws in Modernist principles in today's world as topics in themselves are not part of my thesis proper. Rather, I utilize a knowledge of the state of imaging to comment on the reigning meanings of representations. Calvin Tomkins' book *Post to Neo: The Art World of the 1980s*\(^1\) speaks of how we live in a world of signs that have become detached from the real things they represent. He refers to Jean Baudrillard who wrote that we are in a world of "simulacra," meaning that reality has been replaced by the signs and images that refer to it. Artists can no longer make art, they can only refer to it. The artist Peter Halley wrote that the elements of modernism "are reduced to their pure formal state and are denuded of any last vestiges of life or meaning."

Postmodern does not refer to the chronology its name suggests. It could be more appropriately named contra Modern or Modernism's self-appointed executioner. Postmodernism is a temporal thing, its philosophies are too full of contradictions to remain as a doctrine. Postmodernism drew attention to

approaches and theories of art that have run parallel to Modernism since at least the time of Duchamp. It is not new or indicative of the death of any other form of art. Postmodernism is not unlike the discovery that our planetary system is not earth centered. This realization did not render branches of science defunct. It simply meant some aspects of science had been illuminated and could not proceed without embracing these observable facts.

Postmodernism is a name attributed to a transition of focus and emphasis from one strand of Modernism to another. If Modernism was the thesis, Postmodernism was its antithesis and the work that follows is a synthesis. I work with a consciousness of the shift in emphasis that Postmodernism established.

My efforts are more positive and optimistic than those of Postmodernism. I subscribe to Postmodernism's concern with context, its use of memory, its pluralism, research, confession, fiction, irony, whimsy and disbelief. I value Postmodern preferences for hybrid instead of pure characteristics, and ambiguity over articulated sentiments. Kim Levin, in her article "Farewell To Modernism," describes Postmodernism as "subjective and intimate, blurring the boundaries between the world and the self." The insignificance of objectivity, genius, originality, pure truth, and an ultimate reality have been argued well by Postmodernism. As Picasso put it, "We now know that art is not truth. Art is a lie enabling us to approach the truth . . . . It is up to the artist to find the means of convincing the public of the truth of his lie."

In his 1936 treatise "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,"

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Walter Benjamin presented a convincing argument on how mechanical reproduction in general and photography in particular have greatly affected art, imagery, values, myths and our view of the world. Today's artists, theoreticians and critics widely support the validity of Benjamin's insight. Images are considered "representations" of their original believed to be real enough to merit criticism for their inaccuracies and for the effect that they have on the psyche and behavior of the represented. An original no longer can hold the same special value as it did previous to the proliferation of reproductions in this age. John Berger's book, *Ways of Seeing*, deals with this topic at length and served as a reference text for several fine art courses I have taken since the mid 1970s. Take for example Leonardo Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. The importance of that painting no longer lies in its meaning, message or craft. The original painting has a value only as a commodity. It is significant because it is the original of its reproductions. Images of art have become widely available and valueless.4

The authority and power once held by images of art have been replaced by a language of images. The power reproductions bear is not drawn from the qualities of the original art image but from their proliferation and the audience's tendency to absorb those reproductions. Popular media has created a never ending continuum of reference with unrivaled power. Berger argues that use of the visual language resulting from the glut of reproductions offers this new kind of power. Within that visual language our personal and essential historical experiences would be more precisely defined in areas where words

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Words are the elementary component in most languages. A language that has images as its elementary component would be like having statements or stories instead of words serving that capacity. The appropriation and representing of familiar images for this visual language functions in much the same way as the quotation of familiar statements and stories does for the spoken and written arts. A wealth of associations and information is attached to each reference. Just as in spoken and written language, the quoting of an image, by appropriating it and re-presenting it, taps the power and authority associated with the image and allows its power to be applied to one's own purposes.

In the choosing of my quotes, I also chose my targeted audience. The time of the original appearance of these images and their frequent republication since have made them familiar to a rather large population with a correspondingly large variety of experiences associated with the quoted images. The center of my target is the "Baby Boomers," those Americans born during the birth rate explosion attributed to the return home of World War II Veterans (1946 to 1964). I expect the mean aged Baby Boomer (36 years old) to be my most captive audience. The images are acutely familiar to those born in the same decade as TV, schooled in the technological age and working in the age of information. They are also, however, readily accessible to anyone who is mass media literate. They are common images,

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5 Ibib., 33.
democratically approachable regardless of one's specific familiarity with them.

The source images in this exhibition have been chosen to create an appropriate, palatable and fertile forum for the reassessment of the prevalent perspectives on culture mentioned in the first paragraph. The images I appropriated are generally from, or are characteristic of, America from the mid 1940s to the late 1960s. It was a time of growth, prosperity, success and strength. The images carry associations of innocence, optimism, confidence and idealism. They are linked to experiences that are expressions of American culture as the World's benchmark. Our culture was seen as right and well intentioned; our country's imperialism was seen as just; if others had only become like us, a utopia would have existed. Our technology was seen as the best; it would solve the world's problems as quickly as humans created them; it would keep us comfortable, secure and superior to others. The images I appropriated are representative of these cultural myths. The power of images does not lie in their truth but in the couching of their messages in the context of long term myths, values, longings and desires. My re-presentation of them utilizes their power, aspects of their general frame of reference, and their specific representation to create an atmosphere conducive to an open discussion.

The prints in the exhibition not only quote, but also resemble the popular media images from that era. They call to mind old applied-color photo-lithographic post cards, stereo views, calendar and magazine images. Their appearance is intended to reinforce the same optimistic, comfortable and empowered
state of mind that I described above as characteristic of the period from which the quoted images are drawn. The alignment of the prints' appearance with popular, mass produced imagery of that time is intended to further illuminate my desire to avoid the appearance of elitist motivated, classical high art.

High art, as defined by "Modernist" ideals serves no purpose for the masses. High art tried to protect its value by maintaining a separation from the media and thereby from the masses. The nineteenth century Industrial Revolution made the leisure time applied to art forms for aristocrats available to a class of people who could not previously access them because of a lack of education in those forms. Capitalist entrepreneurs satisfied that class's demand for a "culture provided." A culture that the consumer effortlessly and passively absorbed. This Popular Art places no demands on its audience outside of consumption. It is experienced vicariously. Clement Greenberg, in his article, "Avant Garde and Kitsch," states that the masses will neither generate nor sustain their own cultural expressions.7

The Pop Art of the 1960s and the Conceptual Art of the 1970s began the argument that Postmodern Art finished. Popular art must be engaged with, it can not and should not be destroyed. Popular images have become our visual language. Ignoring, denying or futilely attempting to overthrow that language's position of power and authority is foolish. The significance of any difference between high art and popular art has been blurred and limited by the role of the media in a capitalist/consumer culture. Artists can no longer show hostility towards popular art. High art and popular art are both

7Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch." 8-11
commodities constructed from the same visual language. The quoted elements that I used in the prints fall into the framework of the passively absorbed, vicariously experienced, provided culture. My prints are meant to avoid esoteric references that would discourage or discriminate against accessibility to their meaning.

The high art presentation techniques I used, double mats separated by thin gold fillet frames and surrounded by gold leafed outer frames, are meant to show the precious value of the work, not its superiority over mass art. I do not differentiate between mass art and high art as to its value. Value for me is not dependent on a method of acquisition, be it purchased, found or created. Nor is value necessarily a function of intended purpose, be that decorative, economic, educational, or carnal. The real value of high art or of the art of the masses is not limited by class distinction. Real value is determined by the significance of meaning to the viewer's unconscious. It is the viewer's unconscious that distills surface value to base personal value. Real value is axiomatic to defining the quality of our lives. It is the base of the pyramid that defines an individual. As example; wealth or the economic value of a commodity is not a value that defines us but one that satisfies a real value such as physical comfort. Knowledge or enlightenment is not a value, but the security it establishes is.

Like many people, I try to alter my environment to contain things precious to me. I enhance my home with framed comic books, lithographs, and oil paintings, as well as displayed can labels, album covers, glassware and original sculpture. All these are presented with equal importance. That same
aesthetic applies to the body of work presented as this thesis. The precious quality of the prints in this exhibition and their classical appearance are enhanced by the framing techniques. My application of that framing provides a contrast that elevates and celebrates the images. The irony, characterized by the source images of the prints compared to their treatment and framing, also supports the irony used in the prints themselves.

The Modernist motivations of genius, avant-garde, aesthetics, and enlightenment, for the production of art and fiction, have been undermined. Attempts to create something "original," something avant-garde, appear futile and lack substance. The shock of the new (which happens to be the title given to a BBC series on the rise and fall of Modern Art) was one device artists employed to try to capture an audience's attention and create a memorable statement. Today's audience is calloused. The speed, distribution and density of media in our culture is such that any dissonance is quickly absorbed. Things shocking are assimilated into the mass. Nothing can remain avant-garde because it almost immediately becomes part of the main stream, dissonance is absorbed not eradicated.

Instead of competing for the viewer's attention by creating something new or shocking, I seduce the viewer to enter a state of open mindedness, a position without threat. I hope to catalyze a suspension of the established belief system in the viewer, catching them with their guard down, willing and able to experience new associations between widely recognized ideograms. The prints are intentionally attractive and avoid elements associated with dissention or displeasure. It is the same approach favored by large advertising
campaigns in the last decade. Telephone, coffee, automobile, and broadcasting companies, have made it a priority to promote an association of their company, product or services with "magic moments" of comfort and warmth through their advertising campaigns. I avoided the use of more contemporary sources of media images to maintain the integrity of that enticing frame of reference. Contemporary images are harder edged and less innocent in appearance than the elements I chose. I felt such bold, unrestrained images would stain that innocence and disrupt that comfort. A further benefit in using these older sources lies in the patina that time has laid on them. They have become recognizable ideograms. Even those images that represent specific events have become icons of beliefs rather than specific documents of history.

The quoting of contemporary images carries associations with a specific time, place and source. Such images raise issues of current affairs rather than of cultural phenomena. This reportage posture results in a kinship to a traditional documentary approach to imaging. There is little evidence of positive change in society as the result of the creation of "social documentary" art. Rather, history shows that the opposite occurs.

In March 1936, while working for the Farm Security Administration, Dorothea Lange made a series of photographs of a Cherokee, Florence Thompson, and her children. One image from that series became the world's most reproduced photograph and is probably the most famous photo made for the FSA. The print is typically titled Migrant Mother, Nioma, California. Lange's field notes said, "She thought that my pictures might help her, and so she
helped me." At age 76, United Press International reported that Ms. Thompson's income was $331.60 from Social Security and $44.60 in health benefits. In 1978 she was found by the American Press living in a trailer in Modesto California. They quoted her as saying, "That's my picture hanging all over the world, and I can't get a penny out of it. . . . What good's it doing me?"8

The traditional documentary approach to art has been for a well intentioned group of people to provide information about a powerless group of people to a socially powerful group of people.9 The person (or condition) rendered is presented to the viewer with the intention of challenging them to reconsider their assumptions and beliefs with the purpose of initiating change. An audience is confronted with an unpleasant experience. When an audience responds to an unpleasant stimulus, they will resolve it as quickly as possible. A sensitive nerve within the unconscious had been hit and the unconscious searches for a way to reestablish comfort. So, the audience closes the book, makes a donation or changes the channel. The audience becomes more jaded each time the negative stimulus is presented. The result is that the artist gains some degree of fame and wealth, and the condition depicted continues. In fact, the rendering reinforces the social distance between the the viewer and the subject. These characteristics of documentary art are well substantiated in Martha Rosler's article "In, Around, and Afterthoughts (On Documentary Photography)."10

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9 Ibid., 73.
10 Ibid., 73-78
Despite the collaged nature of my prints, I chose to compose my work along some realist ideologies with respect to the maintenance of Renaissance perspective for the sizing and positioning of elements. The gum print's characteristics helped to homogenize the syntax of the elementary images to a common level. High quality offset color images, coarsely screened newspaper images, and black and white photographs were blended to a common quality. As Linda Nochlin argues in her article, "The Realist Criminal and the Abstract Law:" the contextual base (time, geographic place, and social place); concrete appearance; and contiguous structure give realist art a (justified or not) perceived veracity. Its low distance character offers a closer to first-hand experience for its viewer. Virtually all the component images in my thesis prints originated as photographs. Regardless of arguments against the perceived veracity of the photographic image, be they related to an awareness of the detection of hand or computer manipulations, the photograph's realist characteristics still align with Nochlin's arguments. The knowledge of the existence of manipulation in a photographic image seems to have no more effect on the viewer than when one experiences becoming "part of" a movie knowing that "It's just a movie . . . not real."

The 19th century composite artists Oscar G. Rejlander and Henry Peach Robinson applied those literal and credible characteristics of photography to make moral allegories become "real." Their professed motivations were to apply photography in a fashion that established or confirmed its capacity for

use as an art form. The most significant criticism reported of their work, however, was related to the perceived reality of the images, not their success or failure as an art form. Rejlander's masterwork, The Two Ways of Life, was draped during exhibition to censor the perceived real nudity it depicted, as opposed to photographically depicted nudity used for studies in painting. Robinson's masterwork, Fading Away, was criticized because it did not depict death, an acceptable photographic record, but illustrated the act of dying, considered to be rude and tasteless.\(^{12}\)

I have no interest in arguing the case for photography or any other media's capacity to function as an art form. The Postmodernists, and indeed many Modernists, have illustrated the hollowness of that topic. I am, however interested in making an allegory real for the viewer. Rejlander and Robinson were interested in conveying a moral message to establish or reinforce their values on their audience. They chose genre scenes that appealed to the middle class to create tableaux to instruct and uplift the viewer.\(^{13}\) I also chose familiar images with wide appeal to instruct the viewer. My instruction, however is not along moral lines as much as it is along the lines of perceptions.

Strict applications of Realism tend to be too specific for my purposes, hindering generalization of the message from a specific event to a more universal application. Realism tends to be rigidly dated. It is limited to linear time references and tends to deal only in the present. I avoided the limitations of

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strict adherence to realism by incorporating some of the principles of Surrealism. Surrealism distills the experiences of society by activating society’s collective unconscious. It is not limited by rational possibilities. It permits nonlinear time frames, and allows for non-historically specific or scientifically accurate subject matter. The most important aspect of the Surrealist principles, in the context of my work and of today’s culture, lies in Surrealism’s belief that art and life could renew themselves by contacting the unconscious.

The work of the Surrealists artists was motivated by a belief that the human machine is powered and driven by the unconscious. We are like an iceberg with a small percentage of our motivations that are visible and within our awareness (the conscious), but the vast majority are unseen and out of our awareness (the unconscious). The Surrealists wanted to tap the unconscious mind to access the marvelous world it contains. Some (like Dali and Magritte) attempted to subvert the rational mind and evade the oppression of reason by creating images that brought a sense of reality to the unreal. These artists used the rational mind’s vocabulary to slip past the repression of reason and unleash the unconscious mind, thus releasing its potential to renew the world.14

The unconscious is the place all experience is processed and stored. Even conscious deductive thought is driven by the unconscious. More direct and effective communication occurs when one applies an awareness of the unconscious mind and its role. I used these same devices, applied to collage, to communicate with the unconscious mind of my targeted audience.

Just as the cinematographer uses cinematic techniques to mesmerize the audience in an effort to convince them that they are having a first hand experience, I build a frame of reference that is meant to perform similarly. I try to identify the characteristics of the collective unconscious of my target audience and communicate to them on that level. Middle to upper class Americans born between 1946 and 1964 have shared many experiences in their lives by virtue of the fact that they have lived in the same country at the same time. They experienced the Cold War and bomb shelter preparedness. They experienced the Space Race and the lunar landing. They are familiar with Love Story, 10, and various media personalities of their time. They lived with the same myths as their guides. They have processed similar information into a similarly human data base. The shared characteristics among groups of humans results in shared characteristics in their unconscious, referred to as the collective unconscious. There are layers of the unconscious within a given individual. There is a layer: shared by all humans; by all humans of a given gender; by all humans of a given gender in a given era; by all humans of a given gender in a given era in a given location; by all humans of a given gender in a given era in a given location in a given gene pool; and so on.

Robert Hughes, in The Shock of the New, said that the Surrealists saw dreams as the instrument to access the unconscious mind, the gate to art. The human dreaming mind and neurosis offered unlegislated truth. These ideas were founded in the writings of Freud (though these artists were neither strict nor well read Freudians)

I believe that focusing on dreams as an expression of truth is a means not an end. It provides a way for artists to suppress their ego and

15ibid.
enter a creative flux. If artists have such expressions of ultimate truth as their
goal, then they are merely performing exercises of personal enlightenment
and not communicating a new or substantive experience to their audience.

Throughout the thesis process I found myself in a struggle between unconscious
and intellect driven creations. The prints seemed to be recognized by critics
as stronger when I depended more on intuition than on rational thought to
determine the juxtapositions. I found that specific media images or events
would frequently stimulate an idea for a print. Unless I separated the piece
from that conscious association and linked it to my unconscious motivation for
identifying that stimulus as significant, the print would be lackluster.

I share the Surrealist and Freudian focus on and value of the unconscious mind,
but I utilize more contemporary theories and applications. An analysis of the
structure of, and modes of communicating with, the unconscious was
extended through the work of Freud's student, Carl Jung. Jung's work on
communicating with the unconscious and affecting behavior through that
communication was further developed by Milton Erickson. I use Erickson's
model of the unconscious as the highway for my travels as a communicator.
An Ericksonian considers the unconscious mind to be the source for all creative
processes and as the true locus of reality. His is a psychology of inter- and
intra-personal communication the goal of which is to make explicit and
accessible the physiological, perceptual and cognitive patterns that support
and drive emotions, behavior and communications. The structure of
subjective experience is the relationship of the conscious to the unconscious
mind.
Erickson's model of the unconscious mind is like a file cabinet. The cabinet has some drawers and certain structural components common to humans (like the desire to walk and the filtering and identification of experience by its similarity to past experiences). The remaining drawers, folders and files are built by the individual over time based on their own experiences. The mind develops personal filters that help identify the idiosyncratic categories that an experience falls into.¹⁶

A novel experience does not occur for an audience if their minds are able to simply place an experience into an already existing file in their unconscious mind's file cabinet. That would result in a conditioned response, requiring minimal reaction by the brain to a stimulus, like a muscular reflex or seeing a familiar object. A new experience or a modification of perspective occurs only as a result of novel experiences. A novel experience occurs in a viewer when links are made with the viewer's personal experience and those links create questions or conflicts in the viewer's default filing location. The changed perspective is not the result of the story line, content or outcome of a new experience. Changes in perspective result from the retrieving of and the linking to past personal experience. The novel experience enables the audience to retrieve a personal past experience through such devices as detailing, imagery and symbols. The links needed to those past experiences are made by providing proximity, suggestions and binds to the viewer.¹⁷

The intent of my thesis exhibition was to create experiences that would alter attitudes. My prints are metaphors. They are like stories that are meant to capture the attention of the audience and provide a framework through which they can entertain a novel experience, a modified perspective. The images quoted and method of production were methods I employed to achieve retrieval of past personal experience for the viewer. I attempted to capture the viewer's attention through: beauty in presentation; familiarity of subject matter; use of common ideograms and symbols; and, referencing emotions. The linking of those references was a result of the specific representations quoted, familiarity of the subject matter, and, the ironies created.

I provided elements that, when viewed separately, are considered innocent. I then punctured that innocence by taking images out of their context and placing them in a new one. The wishes for a wonderful world assumed in the original presentations of the elementary images has been tampered with. In the print Wrestling the Python, Amelia Erhart is seen being cheered by a crowd. A woman, dressed as the men are, is being praised for doing a man's job. Amelia leans confidently on her flesh colored aircraft appearing amused. Her gaze is caught by the activity in the foreground, where three uniformed men are wrestling their maleness in the form of a python. The combinations are ironic. Her activity and that of the wrestlers does not "file" effortlessly into the viewer's data base, so the viewer tends to try to write their own script for what is seen. The audience can take pleasure in the humor of the situation and in the game of making sense of the image before them.
The prints titled *Ideal kitchen; Venus; and A week's worth* were similarly motivated to *Wrestling the Python*. All four prints are meant to raise issues related to the folly of the macho enlightened male serving as female's protector or savior. The prints titled *Today you can pick them yet six months from now; They're easy to handle; and, Disarmed*, are intended to bring up issues of the locus of empowerment through sexuality. Women depicted as being in control of their own roles in the world are referenced in *Miss; Buy strump brushes; and, Clown Klan. Trophies; Hunter hunted; and, Boy, joined by men, joined by women* celebrate being exotic, the visceral, and the hunt for the exotic. *Presentation; Indoctrination; Archer; and, Stonehenge theatre* deal with the power of the media and our relationship with technology.

The use of irony requires a second meaning to be developed by the audience. Martha Rosler describes how it is through irony that quotation gains its critical force. She said, "One speaks with two voices, establishing a kind of triangulation between the quoted, quoter, and audience, ..." As quoter, I am not standing in judgement of the representations per se. My intention is not to ridicule, scorn or place blame. I am setting up images that are laden with cultural information for deconstruction by the viewer. I am trying to bring the invisible or ignored to the level of an object of scrutiny. I want to elucidate the representations and to assess and arbitrate their perceived relationship to reality. Reality and appearance have become blurred by the strength and proliferation of representations in the media. Considering an original and its representation as the same thing does not preclude the possibility that either

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Rosler also states that "Irony permits an outlet for relatively unexamined and sometimes only superficially understood feelings of resentment and exclusion."\(^{19}\) Irony is intended to destroy the credibility of reigning historical accounts in favor of the designated loosers.\(^{20}\) A lot of attention has been deservedly given to artists arguing the case of the feminist perspective on culture. Regardless of the scope, need or degree of validity, of feminist art -- as a male in its presence -- I experience those relatively unexamined and sometimes only superficially understood feelings of resentment and exclusion. I am not working in opposition to, or in support of, feminist perspectives. I am working in addition to them and in balance with them.

I want the audience to enter a rigged experience that forces prejudiced attitudes to be set aside to consider the perspective I offer. There are no victims, heroes or saviors in my exhibition, in either gender. The machismo representations of men are exposed as hollow and obviously humorous. The representations of women as a creature of desire show her in control of her destiny. No one is even truly empowered with the exception of the representations of media itself. The work recognizes and respects a lust for the exotic and sexual, and attempts to undermine the constraints built by our culture on these desires.

\(^{19}\)bid.
\(^{20}\)bid., 68.
Section 2

THE GUM BICHROMATE PROCESS

The gum bichromate process itself is quite simple. A solution of gum arabic and water soluble pigments are mixed with a light sensitive bichromate solution. A prepared substrate is coated (completely or selectively) with this solution and is allowed to dry. The images are exposed by contact printing with an ultraviolet light source. Through that exposure the pigmented gum is hardened and rendered insoluble in proportion with its exposure to the light. The unhardened gum and pigment is washed away in a water bath 'development' leaving the pigments, as the photographic image, behind. The tonal response of the coating is severely limited as compared to conventional silver emulsions. If the appearance of a long tonal range is desired, several density range negatives must be used for each image. Each print therefore may require many different negatives, coatings and washings.

Preparing the Negative and Masks

The first step in the process is to generate the negatives needed for a given print. For composite gum prints, like those in this thesis exhibition, each negative needs to be made to final size, at its registered position on the film, and in a series of densities. The density ranges could most simply be described as normal exposure, normal minus 1/2 stop exposure, normal plus 1/2 stop exposure, normal plus 1 stop exposure, and normal plus 2 stops exposure. Each negative needs to be registered with respect to each other and to their respective masks for accurate placement on the page.
The vast majority of my negatives were generated from flat art originals using a stat process camera. Stat cameras are normally found in graphic arts and other prepress shops. If accessing the camera itself is difficult, the service of making the negatives can easily be purchased. The stat camera allows for quick and simple adjustments to the size of the negatives needed. It also produces convenient black and white positive stats used to evaluate the final appearance of the print and determine the size of negatives for the final composite. I adjust the scale (percentage of size) of the component images for a print, make a mock-up by cutting and pasting the elements together, evaluate the results and continue to make adjustments as needed. Once the size of each negative has been determined and verified by a final mock-up, the exposure series of negatives can be run for that component image.

At this point any necessary block out masks and window masks are made. A blockout mask is an opaque silhouette on a clear background, and a window mask is its reverse (a clear silhouette on an opaque background). They are used to block certain areas of a negative from being exposed onto the light sensitized paper during a given exposure.

Window masks are sandwiched with a component negative to eliminate the background (or anything else that should not be printed) from that negative. These negatives are typically the figure of the figure/ground in a composite print. Anything that should not be printed is covered by opaque areas of the film. Everything that needs to be printed into the final composite print is covered by clear film (the window).
Block out masks are sandwiched with the component negatives that are typically the ground of the figure/ground in a composite print. The block out mask is used with the background component negative to prevent a portion of the background from being printed during an exposure. That blocked out area will later be occupied by another component image (a figure). Most of the block out mask is clear film with a smaller area of opaque film (the block out).

The window and block out masks are generated from silhouettes painted onto a clear acetate sheet. The silhouettes are prepared by first laying the sheet of clear acetate over the component negative needing masking on a light box layout board. The acetate is attached or pin registered to the negative to prevent it from moving during the steps that follow. The silhouette is then created by painting the area to be blocked (or its compliment) with opaque. That opaqued acetate is then used to make a same size high contrast film negative mask and a same size high contrast film positive mask on the stat camera. Those masks become the block out and window masks.

The original silhouettes can also be made by replacing the clear acetate sheet with Rubylith. This material is a clear based acetate sheet with a thin layer of red or amber film attached. The contour of the area to be silhouetted is scored with an artist's knife. The film layer is peeled off the area that should be clear, leaving the silhouette intact. The resulting film silhouette can be used in the same way as the painted silhouette. The orthochromatic high contrast materials used in the stat camera are blind to red and therefore the Rubyliths have the same effect on the film as opaque paint.
The window mask is then sandwiched with its normal component negative that could best be described as the figure, eliminating (blocking out) the background of that negative. The normal exposure figure component negative is placed on the light box. The window mask is placed on top of the figure negative. Its position is adjusted until it successfully eliminates the background of the figure negative without interfering with the desired areas in that negative. It is then attached to the negative with tape.

Next, the mock up is taped to the light box again. The component negative that could best be described as the background is taped in its proper position over the mock up. Each of the required block out masks that apply to that negative is aligned with its element in the mock up and is taped to the background negative. That negative sandwich is removed from the mock up and is placed on the light box. The masked figure negative is placed on top of the masked background negative and is adjusted until the window mask and the block out mask line up perfectly. The entire negative pile will appear black when viewed from directly above. When the negatives are in position they are taped together and punched on a registration punch. The system I used was an Acme animation pin registration system. At this point the registered and masked background negative is separated from the registered and masked figure negative.

Previous to employing the Acme animation punch and pins, I registered all the negatives by cutting a series of "V's" along the edge of the negatives. With all the negatives in position and taped together I cut two "V" shaped notches
along the narrow edge of the packet and one along the long edge.

Take as an example the print titled "Miss." There are three different source images in that print: The Goldigger chorus line originated from one source; the three Miss America contestants from another; and the woman holding the pistol from a third. The background negative (the chorus line) required masks to prevent exposure of the areas to be occupied by the other two elements (the contestants and the guard).

The two foreground elements (the contestants and the guard) were joined together into one negative using the registration pins and the stat mock up as a guide for accurate registration. A clear acetate sheet was registered onto registration pins on the light box over that combination negative. The figures were silhouetted with opaque paint on the clear acetate. That painted acetate was then set up in the stat camera to make the masks and windows. A high contrast negative and a high contrast positive were made at 100% of the size of the original acetate.

The high contrast film negative window mask (background opaque and figures clear) was visually registered and then attached to the normal exposure negatives of the contestants and the guard. This negative sandwich is the masked figure negative.

The normal exposure background negative (the chorus line) was then positioned to line up over the mock up of the final composite. The high contrast film positive mask, the block out mask (background clear and
figures opaque), was then positioned to line up over the figures in the mock up. The block out mask was then taped to the negative of the chorus line. This negative sandwich is the masked background negative.

The masked background negative was then separated from the mock up and placed on the light box. The masked figure negative was then lined up on top of the masked background negative and positioned in such a way as to cancel each other. One negative sandwich is exactly the opposite of the other. When they are aligned no image can be seen. The two masked negative sets were temporarily attached to each other while they were punched on the registration punch. The two sets were separated and the main masking and registration was complete.

Additional registered masks and windows were then made for special exposure treatment of certain areas. In particular, a set of masks was made for all the skin tone areas in both of the main negatives. Special purpose masks such as those were used to improve the appearance of areas receiving selective coloration during the printing process. Selective coloration can be achieved through selectively coating an area with a given color sensitized solution or by coating larger areas with the sensitized solution and preventing unwanted coloration by blocking the exposure from selected areas. The masking technique was employed to improve the accuracy of selective coloration as well as improve the evenness of color in a coating.
Preparing the Paper Stock

The prints in this thesis exhibition were coated and processed an average of twenty times each. Multiple coatings increase the risks of shrinking of the paper stock and of sizing failure. This meant that great care was needed in preparing the paper for printing. I chose white Rives BFK as my paper stock for its color, surface, durability, and dimensional stability.

These next steps, shrinking, sizing and hardening the paper stock, are time consuming, smelly, unhealthy and messy. I therefore prepare the maximum number of sheets that I can comfortably handle at one time (twenty 14 x 17 inch sheets). I determine the front of the paper, the side from which the water mark of the paper can be read correctly and tear the paper to its rough final dimension. I notch the upper right corner, according to photographic convention, to facilitate future identification of the imaging side. I then soak the sheets and shuffle them through a tray of 140°F running water for fifteen to forty five minutes. The sheets are hung to dry by their narrow side in a heated film drying cabinet. This soaking shrinks the paper to minimize any future dimensional changes. If the paper were to shrink or stretch later in the process the result would be improper registration of the layered exposures, colors or composited elements.

While the sheets dry, I set-up a bath of dissolved gelatin to size the paper. Most every description of the gum process I researched indicated that grocery store gelatin could be used for this purpose. My experience was that photographic quality inert gelatin crystals performed far superior to the grocery store variety. Paper that I sized with grocery store gelatin failed to hold its sizing
throughout all required coatings. Staining from coatings of darker colors began to occur after the sixth coating or so. That problem never occurred with the paper that I sized with inert gelatin crystals.

Once dry the paper stock is soaked in a sizing bath. To size the paper a tray is set up inside a water tempering bath. The sizing tray should be filled with about twice the amount of water needed to cover the batch of paper to be sized. Thirty grams of gelatin are sprinkled onto each liter of water in the sizing tray. The tempering bath is set at 100° - 140°F to facilitate dissolving the gelatin. When the gelatin is completely dissolved, the pre-shrunk paper is immersed one sheet at a time, imaging side up with the notch in the upper right corner of the tray. Shuffle through the sheets, to eliminate air bubbles on the paper surface and insure saturation of the paper. Continue shuffling for fifteen minutes and then begin to remove the sheets one sheet at a time. Flip the sheet to be removed so that the imaging side is down in the bath and the notch is in the lower right corner of the tray. Drag it over the side of the tray to draw off excess liquid to help achieve an even coating. Check the surface for dirt, bubbles or congealed gelatin. Dab them off or resoak the sheet and drag it over the tray edge again. Then hang the sheet from the same edge as before to dry completely. Repeat this procedure for each of the remaining sheets. Cover or save the remaining gelatin solution for the second sizing run.

The first coat of sizing must be hardened in a formaldehyde solution. This step makes the gelatin no longer water soluble. Formaldehyde or Formalin® were not readily obtainable from drug stores as many reference books suggested. I recommend contacting a scientific supply house such as Ward's Scientific or
the biology department of a college if you have a similar problem. Formaldehyde is a dangerous material and must be used in a well ventilated environment. Your sink must have a ventilation hood, and you need to wear an appropriate breathing mask, gloves and fluid protection eye wear. If a well-vented sink is not available, this step could be carried out outside.

Set up a tray that will support your batch of paper. Mix enough hardening bath to completely cover all the sheets comfortably. This bath can be used over and over, so having extra solution will not be wasteful. Mix 25cc of 37% formaldehyde solution for every liter of water in the tray. Immerse the sized sheets, one at a time, imaging side up with the notch in the upper right corner of the tray. Shuffle through the sheets for fifteen minutes. Remove them from the tray one at a time in the same fashion as from the gelatin bath and hang them to dry from the same narrow edge as before.

While the sheets dry, rewarm the gelatin solution in its tray. When the sheets are dry, Immerse the sheets one at a time, as done previously. This time the sheets should be placed with the imaging side up and the notch in the lower left corner of the tray. After they have been soaked and shuffled for fifteen minutes, they should be removed one at a time. This time, flip the sheet to be removed so that the imaging side is facing down in the bath and the notch is in the upper left corner of the tray. Drag it over the side of the tray to draw off excess liquid to help achieve an even coating. Check the surface for dirt, bubbles or congealed gelatin. Dab them off or resoak the sheet and drag it over the tray edge again. Then hang the sheet to dry from the opposite edge than before.
After the sheets are dry, set up the formaldehyde bath again. Immerse the sized sheets, one at a time, imaging side up with the notch in the lower left corner of the tray. Shuffle through the sheets for fifteen minutes. Remove them from the tray one at a time in the same fashion as from the recent gelatin bath and hang them to dry from the same narrow edge as the recent gelatin bath. The hardening bath should be saved for reuse. If you need to dispose of the bath, it is recommended that you contact a biology lab to determine appropriate disposal procedure. Formaldehyde solutions should not be poured into sewage systems.
Coating the Paper

The paper is now ready for coating. The coating is composed of three parts: a 10% solution of ammonium dichromate; 14° baume gum arabic; and, water color pigments. There are many methods to prepare the coatings. I chose and altered one to be comfortable for my methods and lab.

Many people prefer to use a saturated solution of ammonium dichromate as the their light sensitive component. I used a 10% solution because the a kit I purchased to experiment with the process was set up that way. A 10% solution is made by dissolving 10 grams of powder into 100cc of water. This should be stored in a brown glass bottle. Remember that ammonium dichromate is a dangerous chemical to handle. Always wear appropriate eye, respiratory and skin protection when handling the powder or its solutions. Flush any liquid or powder dichromate from your tools, gloves, sinks etc. down the drain with large quantities of water.

The gum arabic solution is most easily obtained by purchasing 14° baume liquid from a graphic arts supply store. Mixing the solution from its powder form is time consuming and it can not be stored for later use. The preservative that allows for its storage is a mercury compound, making home mixing more dangerous than it is worth.

Any water soluble pigment can be used for this process. I used a variety of water colors, including Winsor Newton, Winsor Newton London and Pentel. The amount of a given pigment needed for a coating must be determined by experimentation. It depends on: the brand of the water color; the source
of the pigment; the intensity of color desired; and, the area to be covered. Lamp black works differently than any other pigment. Two identical magenta colors, even from the same company, can perform radically differently. This seems to be a function of the pigment used to obtain a color. The more expensive brands of water color paints offer a chart that describes the properties of each color they offer. The data listed includes permanence ratings, wash out capacities, and degree of translucency or opacity. The permanence rating offers information that can assist an artist in choosing pigments that will contribute to the long term stability of his or her prints. The opacity/translucency rating can help the artist predict the visual effect layering these pigments will have. The most important information for me is the wash out rate. Pigments with a high wash out rating are less likely to stain than those with low ratings. An additional benefit served by pigments with a high wash out rate is felt when over exposure occurs. Extending the water bath development has a greater impact on these pigments.

My method of combining these three parts is to first squeeze an appropriate length (a 2 to 5mm long bead) of color onto the bottom of a standard stainless steel 35mm film processing tank. Placing the water colors in the tank allowed me to preview any mixes of colors before altering their appearance with the color of the gum and the dichromate. I then pour equal amounts of dichromate and gum into small graduated cylinders dedicated to each chemical. Four to five cc's of each would cover a full 14x17 inch page. Contrast could be effected by increasing or decreasing the ratio of gum to dichromate. Increasing the amount of gum for a given amount of dichromate results in coatings increasing in contrast. I poured the two chemicals into the
tank and blended them with a Kodak mixing paddle. Coating can be carried out in normal tungsten type room light levels.

To coat the paper I used a variety of bamboo handle Chinese water color brushes. I trimmed the length of the bristles to about one and a half inches long and rounded the sides. This saved chemistry and facilitated even and smooth coatings. Before coating, I always soaked my brush in water to minimize the effects of the absorbancy of the bristles on the first coat of the day. I pull the brush from its soaking jar, blot the excess water from the brush with a paper towel and place it in the can of coating liquid. I stir the liquid with the brush to saturate it and paint the coating onto the paper. The brush and tank must be cleaned immediately after coating. The brush should be stored in the dark to minimize the exposure of any residual coating on the brush. The brush should be replaced at a point when the bristles are discolored by hardened coating or uneven coatings can occur.

Different pigments act very differently in the coating process. Magenta and blue are less forgiving than green, cyan and red when it comes to staining potential. Expensive magenta pigments required a lot more volume than their cheaper counterparts but the investment was justified by their decreased tendency to stain. In general one needs to watch for smooth coverage without glossy areas. Areas that look glossy will tend to flake off during the wash out steps of processing. This flaking can also be caused by too high a concentration of gum relative to dichromate. To avoid glossy areas I would often blot my brush of the excess liquid while coating an area. The most logical approach for sequencing colors in this process is to begin with the
lighter or highlight colors and proceed towards the darker shadow colors. Another coating phenomena to be aware of as one plans the sequence of coatings is that each coating becomes increasingly difficult to lay down in a smooth flat layer.

Once coated, the paper is placed in a light tight drawer to dry. The dry coated paper is then placed in a cold dry mount press to flatten the paper to insure accurate registration and good contact with the negative.
Exposure and Registration

The first negative to be exposed onto the paper is typically the normally exposed or normal minus one half stop exposure negative. It is also typically the negative that takes up the most area on the paper, such as the background negative in the earlier discussed example of the print Miss. The print changes dimension slightly with the first coating that covers the whole sheet. It is in the printer's best interest to make that coating first to avoid difficulties caused by changes in dimension later on. This exposure will determine the color of the highlight areas of that print. Additional exposures will be made to successively fill in the mid tones, and then the shadows, and then the black areas.

The first negative to be exposed is placed on the coated paper and taped in place with drafting tape. The registration holes in the negative are then traced with a soft sharp pencil onto the paper for future registration needs. The negative and paper are then placed into a spring back proofing frame for exposure. My exposure unit is a 12 x 24 inch bank of eight fluorescent UV tubes. The unit is a World War II surplus Besslar POP (printing out paper) exposure unit. Typical exposure times ranged from three to eight minutes and result in some printing out.
Processing

A series of trays filled with water at about 80°F is used for processing the exposed print. Gloves should be worn. The print is gently placed onto the water. To do so, hold the print by the two longer sides with the coated side down and bend it into a slight "U" shape. The center of the print will touch the water first. Continue to lower the print, straightening out the "U" as it touches the water. This method prevents air from becoming trapped under the paper.

The unexposed coating will slowly dissolve and drop off the paper. After five to ten minutes, the print should be removed from that tray and transferred to a fresh tray of water. Lift the print from one corner, moving it slowly and carefully to prevent damage to the coating. These steps should be repeated until there is no color to be seen in the water dripping from the print when it is transferred.

The wet surface of the print is very fragile and susceptible to damage. Areas that are over exposed can sometimes be lightened by using running water or by using a brush and water. These aggressive development techniques can have dramatic effects on the surface as well as the density of a print. The longer one still-water develops the print first, the less risk of damage later more aggressive techniques will have on the surface.

When the water draining from a print is clear, or when it is clear and the desired density has been achieved, the print is ready to dry. Hanging the print as in the sizing steps is the drying method of choice.
Additional Coatings and Exposures

The dry print can then be recoated either completely or selectively as desired. The appearance of a long tonal range in the print is achieved through additional printings with progressively darker color coats exposed through progressively more dense negatives. The second exposure is usually made by sandwiching the normal negative with the normal minus one half stop exposure negative. That negative packet is used to expose a darker color coating using the same methods as described above. The negative is registered to the paper using the drawn registration holes on the print. The still darker range of tones is achieved by sandwiching still a third negative to that negative packet and proceeding as before with coating, exposure and processing.

This method of sandwiching negatives to increase density, instead of swapping them, means that the windows and masks never need to be reset, which would place the accuracy of registration at risk. The sandwich is assembled on the light table. Long dust marks or flaws in the negatives are used as registration marks for the two negatives. A curly dust mark is identified in one corner and another in an opposite corner, then those marks are lined up on both negatives, and the new negative is taped to the packet. In the case of composite prints that utilize block out and window masks, attention should be paid to the sequence of the layers in a negative packet. If the additional negatives are stacked on top of the masked first negative, a harder edge is maintained in printing. If the additional negatives are stacked on under the first masked negative, a softer edge is maintained in printing. Hard edged objects appear closer to the viewer than softer edged objects.
Significant lightening of the early light color exposures occurs in the case of multiple printings and needs to be planned for. If a light color area is critical, it may be advisable to mask (not expose) that area until later in the printing sequence to minimize the effect of wash out.

The last coat is almost always the black coat. All the negatives for a given print are sandwiched to their maximum density together. The entire print is coated with a lamp black pigmented coating. Each of the negative sets is exposed onto the print in succession without processing until all elements have been exposed. This technique (sometimes applied with other coatings for a print) helps to tie all the component images together and to create the illusion of greater depth within an image.

**Clearing and Stabilizing**

After all coatings exposures and processing have been completed the print is cleared in a 5% solution (5 grams of powder per 100 cc of water) of potassium metabisulfite. The print is soaked for 5 minutes in the bath and then is washed in a gentle flowing water bath for 10 to 20 minutes and hung to dry. This step will eliminate the yellow stain sometimes left after complete processing of the gum print. It is also meant to make the print chemically stable.
Section 3

THE EXHIBITION PLAN

The thesis exhibition was at the Rochester Institute of Technology’s School of Photographic Arts and Sciences Photography Gallery on the third floor of the Ganett Building. The gallery space was divided between this exhibition and that of another MFA candidate, Shigeki Ito. The shows began with a joint opening reception on September 15 and continued until the evening of September 20.

The wall configuration in the gallery was altered and the pieces were positioned to maximize the benefits for both exhibitions. An effort was made to equalize the “first impressions” of a visitor as to the accessibility and significance of both exhibitions. Special consideration was given to sharing the total space available particularly since it was too small to accommodate both exhibitions properly. The viewing distance required; what pieces of work could be seen from a given vantage point; the significance that juxtapositions played on perceptions; and, the consistency of harmony and discord with both artists intentions were all considered.

The final edit, layout and sequencing the prints was determined while standing in the gallery with all the work. At the thesis board meeting just prior to the exhibition the final edit and sequence had been questioned. It was agreed that the final edit and its sequence should be determined in the exhibition space. I decided that the three pieces: Archer, Stonehenge theatre, and Indoctrination dealt with topics that could more appropriately be dealt with in
another media, digital imaging systems. I decided to separate them from the rest of the show by placing them on a wall outside of the normal path used to view my work. I found that the two pieces from which the title was drawn, *Presentation* and *Boy, joined by men, joined by women,* could best be used to set the stage for the rest of the show. They were placed in the entrance hall of the gallery and flanked the artist statement. I came to consider the remaining prints to be central to the thesis: *Miss, Disarmed; They're easy to handle; Wrestling the Python; Clown Klan, Buy Strump Brushes; Today you can pick them yet six months from now; Venus; Ideal kitchen; A week's worth; Trophies; and Hunter hunted.*

The gallery was prepared for the exhibition with neutral gray walls, similar to an 18% reflectance gray card. Research in Color Science Appearance and Technology has used color matching experiments performed with a colorimeter to determine that a middle tone neutral grey surround has the least effect on changing our perceptions of a sample color. This wall color was chosen because of my desire to highlight the inherent qualities of the gum prints.

All the prints were made on 14 x 17 inch paper. They were presented in double four ply conservation board mats. The mat closest to the image is bright white. It is separated from the creamy white outer mat by a gold leaf fillet. The fillet creates a one quarter inch drop between the surface of the two mats, thus setting off the print dramatically within the 20 x 24 inch frame.  

The frames were hung vertically (with the exception of three abnormally
narrow horizontal images) regardless of the vertical or horizontal posture of the prints. They were hung "clothesline style," meaning that the top edge of all the frames creates a straight line around the gallery space. A 62 inch center line was used to determine the height of the frames off the floor. The print with the highest center point within the frame was used as the standard. I believe that the standard 58 inch center line used by many galleries is too low for the average height of today's audience. I also prefer a posture of looking slightly up at a print over looking down on it. Looking up is a more child-like, receptive position for the body. It also helps to eliminate seeing the reflection of ones own clothes in the glazing over dark areas in a print. Each print was accompanied by a laser printed wall label positioned to the lower left of the frame four inches from the frame. The bottom edge of the labels was parallel to the bottom edge of its corresponding frame.

The gallery's track lighting fixtures were all equipped with flood type bulbs. Washing the gallery with even flat lighting lacked the ambiance I wanted the gallery to have. I therefore obtained 150 watt spot lights to replace the floods available. Each print was lit with one spot, creating a halo around each frame. The image area of the prints became the brightest point in the room. The position of the fixtures was adjusted to prevent any shadows being cast on the prints by the viewers themselves. A six foot tall viewer standing two and half feet from the wall did not cast a shadow on any of the images. Seven foot tall palm plants were also purchased to further add to the warm and quiet atmosphere created by the wall color and lighting.

A combination announcement, invitation and poster for both shows was
designed by Jack Slutzky of Meta Imaging Associates and Professor at RIT. It was: circulated as an invitation; and was posted around RIT, at area galleries, and area photo and art programs. A brochure (see section 4) was developed to accompany the exhibition. Copies were available for visitors to carry with them when viewing the exhibition and to take with them to later peruse at their leisure. The opening reception was organized and executed by Patricia Russotti of Meta Imaging Associates and Professor at RIT. The reception tables were set up in front of and on the gallery’s balcony and featured American and Japanese foods. Still photo documentation of the reception was performed by Dimitri Papadimitrio Photography of Rochester. An additional half inch video record of the event was secured through volunteer videographers supplied with two camcorders.
The following section is a revision of a pamphlet that was available to each gallery visitor throughout the exhibition time. The format changes made are the result of feedback gathered at the thesis defense meeting. The original format was structured in encyclopedic fashion. Each element in all the prints was alphabetically listed along with its related data and cross references. It was widely thought that the original format was cumbersome. The revision that follows lists each print in the order that it appeared in the exhibition and lists the component images with their related sources.
ASTRONAUTS AND XINGU
An Exhibition Of Cultural Ideograms

BY
EDWARD MINECK
Astronauts and Xingu
An Exhibition of Cultural Ideograms

Our world has been supersaturated with images for decades. It has become as if all images already exist, and that the creation of new images, like the creation of new words, is superfluous. Images are considered "representations," frequently criticized for their inaccuracy in reflecting the represented and for their effect on the behavior and psyche of the represented. Popular media images have created a never ending continuum of reference and have acquired an unrivaled power and authority. The power of the media is not in its truth but in the couching of its messages in the context of long term myths, values, longings and desires. Reality and appearance have become blurred by the strength and proliferation of representations in the media.

The Modernist motivations of genius, avant-garde, aesthetics, and enlightenment, for the production of art and fiction, have been undermined. Attempts to create something "new" appear futile and lack substance. The artist's function has become like that of an editor of words. Preeminent additions to the image glut, not only quote images already in existence, but also tap their authority and context of origin while altering the viewers' memory of their former experience of the quoted elements.

The sources from which the images in this exhibition are drawn have been chosen in an effort to create a palatable and fertile forum for reassessment of prevalent perspectives on culture. Each piece is a recontextualization of extant representations. The new relationships established between the quoted images are meant to: aggrandize some aspects of our culture and retard others; accent farces; and subvert biases. My intention is to alter some of the prevailing sentiments on the relationship between: mass culture and the culture of the elite; instinct and intellect; nature and science; primitive and civilized; and male and female.

Ed Mineck
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation</th>
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| **Easter Island** | "Easter Island’s mysterious stone statues are up to 70 feet high and weigh as much as 90 tons. Their origins and meaning are still debated by the experts."
| From the collection of the American Museum of Natural History, n.d. |

| **Mercury astronauts** | The seven astronauts of NASA’s Mercury program, |
| photographed by Ralph Morse of *Life Magazine*, 1960 |

| **three children** | for the National Geographic Society (not published) |
| photographed by Gustav Heurlin in Sweden circa 1920 |

| Boy, joined by men, joined by women |

| **boy with watermelon** | "Watermelon Time" |

<p>| <strong>Xingu</strong> | &quot;Xingu men, joined by women at a Kuarup festival, blow sacred flutes to exorcise spirits of the dead.&quot; |
| n.d. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Miss</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miss California</strong></td>
<td>Joan Beckett, preliminary winner in the swimsuit division at the 1956 Miss America Pageant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miss Chicago</strong></td>
<td>Sandra Stuart, preliminary winner in the swimsuit division at the 1956 Miss America Pageant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miss Hawaii</strong></td>
<td>Jere Wright, preliminary winner in the swimsuit division at the 1956 Miss America Pageant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>woman with pistol</strong></td>
<td>'Mother of five learns to shoot. Vietnam, 1962. Army Training Centre, Binh tu Dong, outside Saigon. Paramilitary cadres for women were organized in 1958 by Madame Ngo Dinh Nhu, sister-in-law of the then Vietnam President Diem, as 'National Women's Solidarity Movement.' The youthful marksman in the front is the thirty-year-old wife of a city official.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>women with drums and flags</strong></td>
<td>movie still: Gold Diggers of 1937, produced by Hal B. Wallis, Directed by Lloyd Bacon, Screenplay by Warren Duff, Musical Numbers created and directed by Busby Berkeley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Warner Bros - First National Picture, 1937.
### Disarmed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Woman and sailor kissing</th>
<th>VJ Day, New York, New York, <em>In the middle of New York's Times Square a white-clad girl clutches her purse and skirt as an uninhibited sailor plants his lips squarely on hers</em> (Life Magazine Vol.19 No.9, August 27, 1945 caption)</th>
<th>Photographed by Alfred Eisenstaedt, August 14, 1945.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Woman holding Cupid</td>
<td>Photomechanical reproduction of oil painting, &quot;Love Disarmed&quot;</td>
<td>Painting by W. Bourguereau, 1885.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### They're easy to handle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cub Scouts</th>
<th>Advertisement, Mobil Corporation. <em>Mrs. Robert F. Young learns about lively performance from her cub scouts - and from her Mobil dealer in Philadelphia, Pa.</em> ... <em>Better all-round performance ... one reason to depend on your Mobil dealer and his High Energy Gasoline.</em></th>
<th>Life Magazine October 2, 1964, Vol.57 No. 14.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Puppeteer</td>
<td>Calender blotter advertisement for the Used Record Exchange, March 1949. <em>They are easy to handle when you know how.</em> <em>Figures don't lie and we have the BEST figures available when it comes to paying a top price for the records off your boxes.</em></td>
<td>1949.</td>
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</table>
### Wrestling the python

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Woman</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date/Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amelia Earhart</td>
<td><em>First woman to fly alone across the Atlantic, Amelia Earhart acknowledges cheers of a crowd upon touchdown at Londonderry, Northern Ireland, on May 21, 1932. The following month, for her accomplishment Earhart received a Special Gold Medal - the first awarded to a woman by the (National Geographic) Society.</em></td>
<td>May 21, 1932, National Geographic</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men wrestling snake</td>
<td>New York Zoological Society, 1906</td>
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</table>

### Clown Klan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date/Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clown</td>
<td>Azo postcard, &quot;Arabella Carle&quot; handwritten on the back.</td>
<td>January 1, 1921</td>
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<thead>
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<th>Image</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date/Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women behind fence</td>
<td>&quot;Student smiles from five states flash through old scrollwork gates at Ashley Hall.&quot; &quot;Young women in a Charleston, South Carolina boarding school.&quot; Dufay-color photograph</td>
<td>taken by B. Anthony Stewart for National Geographic, March 1939</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Buy strump brushes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>women on porch</strong></td>
<td>&quot;First Sterilize 500 yards of soil ... Russel Artken built himself the perfect croquet court in Newport.&quot; &quot;Artken's Newport neighbors enjoy a heady game of croquet.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Photographed by</strong></td>
<td>Curtice Taylor, 1986.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>saleswoman</strong></td>
<td>movie still, Mrs. Russ Meyers performing in <em>Eve and the Handyman</em> produced by Russ Meyers.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>circa 1958</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Today you can pick them yet six months from now</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>boy with cherries</strong></td>
<td>British postcard. &quot;<em>a hand-painted photograph</em>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>n.d.</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl with braids and cherries</strong></td>
<td>Advertisement: for Wheeling Steel Corporation, <em>Today, you can pick them</em> from the tree. Yet, six months from now... or in the dead of winter and far removed from any orchards... you may still enjoy the rich flavorful freshness of tree-ripened fruit...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Color photograph by Fidelis Harrer, 1939.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Venus</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Venus of Willendorf</td>
<td>plaster sculpture based on reproductions of photographs of a 4 3/8 inch high stone sculpture c25,000-20,000 BC, currently at the Museum of Natural History in Vienna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman and Moses on the mountain</td>
<td>movie still from The Ten Commandments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Rushmore</td>
<td>stone sculpture in the side of mount Rushmore, South Dakota representing the heads of American presidents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal kitchen</td>
<td>Woman in kitchen</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Man in kitchen</td>
<td>&quot;...A white man, too, can have mighty muscles. &quot;As a child,&quot; wrote Sandow, &quot;the professional strong man, &quot;I was exceedingly delicate. More than once, indeed, my life was dispaired of.&quot; But in later life he could lift a horse at arms length above his head and march with it to musical accompaniment.&quot;...&quot;</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### A week's worth

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pygor winged man</td>
<td>movie still, <em>Barbarella</em>, see above</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Trophies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>man seated on hippopotamus</td>
<td>&quot;Happy Jack Eckert; World's Prize Fat Man; age 34 years; weight 739 pounds; largest Elk, Moose and Woodman of the World. BPO Elks 752, Americus, Ga.; LOO Moose 861, Alexandria, LA.; WOW Reese camp 66, Huntington, W. Va.&quot;</td>
<td>Photo postcard by Carter and Carter, n.d..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>woman in front of hippopotami</td>
<td>Magazine cover. &quot;Sports Illustrated $1.95... Here Comes the Sun ... Paulina Porizkova Is In The Pink In Aruba&quot;.</td>
<td>Photographed by Paolo Curto for Sports Illustrated, February 13, 1984 Volume 60, No.7.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Hunter hunted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Source</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bara, Theda: woman in the woods</td>
<td>Marilyn Monroe as Theda Bara. &quot;... the screen's first great temptress, for whom the slang abridgement 'vamp' was coined.&quot; from Life</td>
<td>Photographed by Richard Avedon, n.d..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Archer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Photographed By</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apolo astronaut</td>
<td>Edwin Aldrin on the surface of the moon at the time of the first lunar landing</td>
<td>Neil Armstrong of NASA, 1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archer</td>
<td>Sportsman's calender illustration,</td>
<td>Ozzie Sweet, 1989.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stonehenge theatre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Photographed By</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>drive-in movie theater</td>
<td>Moab, Utah, 1954</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kennedy, John F.</td>
<td>Kennedy/Nixon television debates, <em>If you listened to the debate on radio, it was at least a stand-off, perhaps even a victory for Nixon.</em> ...(Bill Wilson: JFK's TV producer)</td>
<td>Philip Drell of the Black Star, September 25, 1960.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nixon, Richard M.</td>
<td>Kennedy/Nixon television debates, <em>At this moment, I noticed the reaction shots on Nixon, while Kennedy spoke, were going to be beneficial to my man.</em> ...(Bill Wilson: JFK's TV producer)</td>
<td>Philip Drell of the Black Star, September 25, 1960.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stonehenge</td>
<td>View from center toward Heel stone, evening light</td>
<td>Paul Capinegro, 1970.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indoctrination</strong></td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bunny, Bugs</strong></td>
<td>animation cel., A Corny Concerto</td>
<td>Warner Bros., 1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hitler, Adolf</strong></td>
<td>Posed in Bavarian national costume,</td>
<td>photographed by Heinrich Hoffman, n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Looney Tunes</strong></td>
<td>Animation cel, Opening graphic for Warner Bros. Cartoon, Color by Technicolor.</td>
<td>Warner Bros. circa 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pope</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Imposters in the City of Angels... It's a pope impersonator named Eugene Greytak, whom Sander photographed for a story about the immanent L.A. visit of the real John Paul II.&quot;</td>
<td>Photographed by Eric Sander/Gamma-Lason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>television</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Postwar prosperity also brought TV sets (32 million by 1955) and babies (40 million in the 1950s). Mass culture boomed.&quot;</td>
<td>Photographed by Myron Davis. Time/Life publishers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The images in this exhibition were made using the gum bichromate printing process. A gum arabic solution and water soluble pigments are mixed with a light sensitive bichromate solution. A prepared paper is coated with this solution and is allowed to dry. The images are exposed by contact printing with an ultraviolet light source. The gum is hardened and rendered insoluble in proportion with its exposure to the light. The unhardened gum is washed away in a water bath 'development' leaving the dyes, as the image behind. Each image requires many different negatives, coatings and washings.

I would like to express my gratitude to:

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The School of Visual Communications;

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Shigeki Ito;

My Families, Mineck and Russotti;

Rob, Fran, Liz, Mary Ann, Dimitri, Ellen, Alex, and Joyce.
Section 5

APPENDIX

COPY PHOTOGRAPHS OF PRINTS IN THE EXHIBITION

AND

INSTALLATION VIEWS
Presentation

10 3/4" x 14"
Boy
Joined By Men
Joined By Women

9 1/2" x 12 1/2"
Miss

14 3/4" x 10 3/4"
Disarmed

9 1/4 x 12 1/2
They're Easy To Handle

11 1/2" x 8 1/2"
Wrestling The Python

10 1/2" x 10 3/4"
Clown Klan

15' x 7 3/4'
Buy strump brushes

10' x 12'
Today You Can Pick Them Yet
Six Months From Now

9 1/2' x 9'
Venus

10 1/2" x 13 1/2"
Ideal kitchen

12" x 10 1/4"
A Week's Worth

9 3/4" x 14 1/2"
Trophies

11 3/4" x 9 1/2"
Hunter  Hunted

11" x 9 1/2"
Stonehenge Theatre

15' x 8 3/4'
Indoctrination

10 1/2" x 13 1/4"
Section 6

SOURCES CONSULTED


"Photographers' Formulary, Classical Gum Bichromate Printing Kit." Instructions accompanying a kit of chemistry for gum bichromate printing. (Box 5105, Missoula Montana).


Rosler, Martha. "Notes on Quotes." Wedge 2. (Fall 1982).


