Image, media, and installation

Chih-Fu Wang

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IMAGE, MEDIA, AND INSTALLATION

BY

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

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INTRODUCTION

By the spring of 1989, I had been enrolled at R.I.T. for one year and a half. Something had been hidden in my mind for a long time. Since I was a child, I had problems with my father. I thought these problems influenced my sexual orientation. I didn't know whom I could talk to or how to open this subject to discussion with other people. At the same time, my younger brother had mental health problems also stemming from issues relating to my father. I wanted to deal with these problems in a situation where I was anonymous, free of the network of friends and peers in the R.I.T. community. I decided to move temporarily to Toronto, and to make these issues the topic of my thesis work as a graduate student.

During the first six months, I collected information by reading books and talking with people. I had a chance to join the gay Asian community to see and think about my sexual orientation, in relation to my cultural background. The intersection of gay issues within an oriental framework became central to my thesis work.

In this thesis paper, I start with my original concept and development, and show how my idea changed. There are five stages in this section of the paper. The discussion of the installation is also divided into five units, to fully explain each unit's meaning and form. The next part is the parallel development of my personal philosophy and personal psychology. This is followed by a section dealing with the work of six artists whose ideas influenced my thinking. Since this installation was shown in three cities, Rochester, Toronto and Taipei. I discuss the different reactions of audiences in the three different cultural settings. In the final analysis, I deal with some problems I had when I was doing the project, and other personal conclusions.
1. ORIGINAL CONCEPT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THESIS

STAGE 1:
AUGUST, 1989

The installation was to be composed of twelve pieces of collage made up of large negatives, each one 12 feet by 5.6 feet. I started with an arrangement of these images in my sketch book, then I analyzed and studied each of the twelve units, using each unit to address one theme. The images were taken from family albums, magazines and some pictures from popular photographers.

These twelve pieces were to be installed at equal distances in rows in an open space, consequently the audience could move freely. By setting the lights strategically, the images would be cast onto the ceiling, walls and floor. Each image was arranged to overlap with a view of multiple images from other units placed at other angles.

STAGE 2:
OCTOBER, 1989

It was difficult to create negatives large enough, I substituted photo copies of images on sheets of vinyl for the film negatives. Each vinyl sheet was approximately 12 feet by 5.5 feet. I enlarged the images on a photocopy machine and then pasted them on vinyl sheets. Some of the images required much larger magnification, I cut up the pictures before enlarging them, and then reassembled them onto the vinyl sheet.
I followed closely the original designs of the sketch book, and then made adjustments according to the needs that arose in the final collage. In the final phase of the compositions, some images became redundant and less important.

STAGE 3:
DECEMBER, 1989

After pasting the photocopies images onto the vinyl sheets, I supplemented the images with paint and red tape. I started with water-based ink, with terrible results. The vinyl sheet has a slippery surface, to which water based ink would not adhere and would crack after drying. I tried adding resin to the ink with very poor results. I finally used oil-based paint to attain the desired effect. Before applying the coat of paint, I outlined selected images with red tape, and added some abstract symbols to focus the attention on the most important subjects. The images outlined in red tape stand out from the large black and white spaces.

STAGE 4:
FEBRUARY, 1990

The twelve compositions created in Toronto were transported to Rochester for final assembly. I arranged them in a rectangular shaped structure with flood lights from within to project the images onto the walls. The audience could move freely in the open space. This installation differed from the original design. The space of the exhibition hall required some adjustments. While assembling, the project I adjusted it to the space of the studio. The structure looked like an ancient Chinese ancestral hall,
which I found amusing. The audience could view the exhibition in this stage from inside and outside. At this point I had doubts about this set up, and began to consider other ways to structure the installation.

FINAL STAGE:
MAY, 1990

SECTION 1

Entering the exhibition was encountering my biography. One part of the installation was influenced by the form of the oriental paper window. Using the concept of a Chinese paper window, I further developed it into a tunnel of “windows”, an illuminated hallway of images. This part of the exhibition was largely based upon old family portraits. These images were reflected on the ceiling, upon the walls and onto the floor by strong floodlights. I added a wide-angle projector with slides running with continuous projection of the various images, to give this section a sense of motion and time.

The audiences were surrounded by these images, they were also reflected on their bodies. This was like a time tunnel. Images from my childhood days, together with my father, younger brother, friends in the army and classmates.

There were three different aspects to this unit: the images themselves; the images cast by the lights; the distorted images created by the projections on the audience. There was a mixture of image and shadow, of the real and the abstract, the audience experienced a movement between the real and abstract. Some of the projected images were very sharp, some were distorted. They represented our memory, when we opened a photo album, we can remember some pictures but others we can no
longer recall. No matter what, these events were gone. The reflected image was very clear, yet it was not as sharp as the original. This was my feeling of reality.

A photograph is a two dimensional image of a three dimensional subject captured by the lens of a camera. When the image is reflected by a projector onto a surface, it is still a two dimensional image. How could I make this photographic image have three dimensional properties and at the same time not simply “duplicate” the original? I discovered that if I altered the three dimensional surfaces where the image would be projected, the reflected image would come to life in a different shape. The image when projected onto the meeting place between the ceiling and the wall. It became more than a two dimensional space, two slightly different images appearing on two different surfaces.

This entire area was brightly lit - the ceiling, the floor, the white walls - the brightness was intended to give the impression of innocence and purity. Like the paper window used in the orient, there was a play between what exists on the two sides of the window, and their relationship to one another. Because of the bright light, the person on the outside could guess from the shadow on the window what was happening or who was on the other side of the window. The window became a medium of communication. The images used in this hallway were somewhat abstract, and the messages, therefore, not very direct. I hoped the ambiguity would arouse the curiosity and interest of the audience.

SECTION 2

The next part of the hallway was hung with many cocoon-like objects, made of soft screen mesh, leading to the end of the corridor. Turning the corner, one entered an area which represented a review of my youth in Taiwan. Turning again, one entered a
very dark area which represented my experience in Toronto after encountering the gay community.

The audience was then led into another space where they encountered a triangular column made by two huge vinyl sheets, there were two sets of images on it. On one side were images of the male anatomy. On the other side were images of modern man and ancient Chinese sculptures made in the Chin Dynasty. I set up a spotlight inside this column to make it look like a lantern. The light inside the column was too strong, the image’s density was too thin, so the viewers had difficulty seeing the images. I put sheets of translucent paper behind the two vinyl sheets, this diffused the light and made the images clearer.

From here one entered a dark and confused world, like venturing into a cave. This represented my first experience of entering a gay bar in the West, where I had to bring along a lantern to discover the secrets hidden inside. Why did I use a lantern and not a flashlight? Because the beam from a flashlight was very direct and strong, while the illumination from a lantern was more subdued and mysterious.

SECTION 3

The next unit was composed of nine objects. Six full size images of a couple were shown. I used a lighted and curved drain pipe (1 foot by 6 inch) to represent the male member. The first three pipes were dark. The pipes were protected with projecting tree-branches which kept the audience at a distance. The floor was covered with melted wax and candles. The only source of light came from a tiny candle on the floor. The next three objects had light the bulbs turned on. Part of the floor and wall were covered with pieces of broken mirror. The wall with the three collages was composed of burlap, paper and glue.
The construction of this part of the installation grew out of conversations about sex among men, the fears and questions' men have about sex. I discovered the most common topics and fears among men are the size of the male organ and sustaining power. Most feared are impotence, and identification by non-gay people as homosexuals. These questions and problems lead to bragging and exaggeration, escapism and hypocrisy. How could I communicate these messages? I used humor to express them. The representative symbols, such as dead branches, candle wax, black light bulbs were all representative of sexual impotence. The drain pipes and brightly lit bulbs were representative of exaggerated sexual prowess. From this stage onwards, I tried to use an absurd way of depicting these ideas. The entire area was dark and dangerous, implying an underground feeling. One had to be careful while passing through this exhibit and sometimes had to bend to get around the burlap strips and strings hanging from the ceiling. The audience came into direct contact with these hanging objects, and sometimes permanently altered the arrangement of the structure. To allow the audience physical interaction with the structure distinguished it from the first area. In both instances the audience's movement affected the exhibition itself. The unpredictable behavior of the audience and the changing experience of the exhibit was a component of the exhibit.

SECTION 4

The next object the audience encountered was a cave-like space made of burlap hanging from the ceiling to the floor. The outside of this cave-like structure was entwined with rope. The inside contained hanging vines and six cut-out photographic images of male body (a view from the back) with "knife" blades protruding through them at different angles. The lighting was creating by blackened light bulbs. The floor
was covered with wood blocks and horizontal standing blades.

A man's world has always been a world of competition. This installation relates, in my mind to the competition among men which has made it difficult for them to become close friends. Another problematic aspect of male relationship is the taboo against touching. Bodily contact as a form of communication, is forbidden to men after a certain age. Chinese women are more liberal with this form of bodily communication and they can hide underneath a bed sheet and share their secrets. Men do not express their feelings or shed tears because of social pressure. Under such social norms and pressures, men must be strong and ready for competition at all times. Within the confines of a cave, danger lurks everywhere - every man must be like a fighting fish always ready for battle. This cave structure was wrapped and covered with burlap, to make it more mysterious, so that it can arouse the curiosity of the audience to deal with the secrets hidden within.

SECTION 5

The last section that the audience encountered was a “tornado” made of three transparent vinyl sheets covered with black and white photo transparencies, entwined with ropes, held taut by smaller ropes attached to the surrounding walls. The ropes emphasized the support and strength of the tornado's rising power. On the ground there was a whirlwind design made out of ropes.

This last stage of the exhibition offered two choices - one was a sense of uplift, the other was a sense of destruction and despair. The uplifting power was the “tornado” made out of ropes and covered with thorns, to symbolize struggle, energy and upward motion. The cave represented the feelings of despair.
The installation was finished. The audience had to follow a winding path to see the complete installation. First, the Chinese paper window section, then the lantern section, followed by the three dark and three bright sculptured images. Finally they encountered the cave object and the tornado.

Finally I added music - Silver Air I, by C. H. Denter, to heighten and intensify the mood I wanted to create. My installation is circular, so I used music that resembled the movement of air echoing through a cave, evoking the evolving life cycle of the Buddhist “Samsara.” The music also acted as a unifying element for the entire installation, and as a source of energy in the circulation of air.

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE THESIS THROUGH LIFE AND THINKING

A. PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY

I believe that the artwork I do is, in part, a product of the time and place in which the piece is created. These elements constantly interact with one another with unpredictable results. My first twenty-five years were spent in the Orient. My Western experience is only a part of my life, one of many stages of my development. Perhaps the more than two years of western education have influenced me. The element of logic for instance, one can see in my structuring the audience’s path through the exhibit in one particular route. I also felt the freedom to break the traditional distance between the artwork and the audience, by the use of claustraphobic space and of objects which project into the audience’s natural path.
When I operate as artist, I am basically an oriental. I have tried to live like an American, adopted a western lifestyle, but then I felt very uncomfortable and unhappy. I started all over and returned to my oriental roots. It is like frying an egg, both the taste and color differed greatly if cooked in a Chinese wok or a frying pan. I am not trying to be prejudiced. I want to be my true self- an oriental.

One may ask how do I rediscover my oriental roots through the mirror of the West. I did not expect this would be the result of my presence in another culture, but it has been a gradual process of awakening. The same is true with art, it is a product of the artist’s interaction with his environment and history. To me it is an honest communication of self.

I used both Western and Eastern approaches to my work at different stages. Some of Western contemporary art is laid out in verbal terms during the preparation. I have spoken of “Samsara”, one aspect of Buddhist philosophy, which concerns the cycle of birth - death - rebirth. I am also affected by the Buddhist concept of chance or destiny. One must “go with one’s nature”, not force one’s self into any action. Perhaps oriental philosophy is more abstract. It is basically intuitive; it can be understood better with feelings. When I first started the project, I was very systematic in my preparations. When the final phase came along, I became a free spirit, allowing my intuition and feelings to take over.

The differences in cultural background may cause Westerners to find my work difficult to understand. Someone had said that art transcends culture. I think art can be enjoyed trans-culturally but understanding requires cultural knowledge. Should one enjoy art before trying to understand it, or is it the other way around? One uses feelings, the other uses intellect. They are different in nature. Understanding my art
requires some knowledge of oriental culture. To enjoy my art, only a sense of curiosity is required.

My work also differs in appearance from that of the traditional orientals, because of the evolution of time and history, so my work can not simply be equated with traditional Chinese artwork.

B. PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THESIS

For a Chinese person, “sex” is not only a personal matter, but it is also “dirty”. When I entered puberty, I was ashamed of my pubic hair. Pubic hair in China is called “shameful hair.” Relationships between men have been neglected and avoided in art and literature, at best - it is a taboo subject. In Chinese society, man represents the macho image of discipline and morality, which is beyond doubt and question.

In my personal life, the father whom I love is only a shadow beyond my comprehension. Even though he may be physically close to me in real life, there is a great abyss between us. I could neither understand nor be close to him. Yet I am of his own flesh and blood. His many images in my photo album are different from the person I see in real life. I wonder why I have that happy smile in pictures taken with him. Is it because I love to be photographed? I have learned from my father what it is “to become a man”, but I don’t feel that manly image suits me. So I started searching from my friends, classmates, teachers, etc., for a lifestyle that I feel would be compatible with my understanding of the image of a man.

After I learned that unity between man and woman is the harmony between heaven and earth, I felt more ashamed of myself. Sometimes I wish I could have remained a child without the challenges of creating myself. Children are born while real adults are
self created and creating. As a child I could never know the joys of my sexual orientation.

On other hand, after I arrived in Toronto, I encountered GAT (Gay Asians in Toronto). This association gave me many chances to learn and experience various aspects of male homosexual relationships. Why is it that such homosexual relationships are always underground? To be a gay oriental, how do I face my family, my society? How do I develop my gay instincts? From my discussions with other gay orientals, I found most of the oriental gay men are either eldest, youngest or only one child. They are often fascinated by the search for a perfect male image which always escapes them. Both the father and brothers play an important role in their lives. Some may look for a father image and some may look for a brother image (younger or older). Psychologically, very few would like to admit that they were born gay.

To Choose the topic, “relationships between men”, a topic which is shunned by Chinese men. I was faced with the challenge of self examination and discovery. I am a twenty-seven year old man who is still afraid to face his sexual identity. I am afraid to see my family, relatives, friends. Even the unknown audience’s criticism and discussion causes me to tremble. I have been afraid that they will all discover the hidden side of myself, my innermost self. Still, I boldly chose this topic to give myself a chance to know and express myself. I had no choice but to continue on this unknown journey.

I did not find any answers, but I did raise some questions. When I realized that there were no answers to some questions, I understood that it is good to reserve some questions in life. It is better to have good questions than poor answers.
This is a process of bringing what has been hidden to the light. I am still not sure that it is necessary, and still have fears: "Have I exposed too much of myself? Should I still keep some mystery behind?"

3. THE INFLUENCE OF OTHER ARTISTS

1) MARCIA PITCH

Marcia Pitch's previous works were large sculptural installations that provoked thrills and fears, humor and terror. The artist's work addressed the issues that we want to avoid most: nuclear disaster, death, and childhood fears. She said "Fear is not the point, for my work uses fear and black humor to comment on social traditions." (from Theater tableaux, p20)

Her installations were like the virgin forests, where the space was entwined and filled with trees and branches. The audience entered this defined space, and slowly discovered small sculptures on the ground and on the trees. These sculptures were related to topics of our childhood fantasies. I was very interested in this type of structure. There was a freshness in the mixture of fear and humor. Her works were like a scene out of the movies, each of them could be an independent unit. I was interested in creation of atmosphere of fear and humor.
2) AYA KIMURA

"The environment of the Tea House is controlled to provide an ambiance that calms and quiets the mind and aids meditation, in installations that draw viewers into curvilinear, entertaining mazes." (from Vision magazine 1988, p11)

Her idea and form came from Tea House. She aroused my interest in oriental architecture and interior design. Her works were basically horizontal lines hanging from the top to bottom, similar to oriental landscapes. This form was very interesting to me. This hanging style created a space where the viewer could walk around. When I set up my work, I had to take into consideration in addition the different viewing habits of Westerners (left to right) and Easterners (right to left, top to bottom), in planning how the audience would experience the installation in time and space. I was also influenced by the Chinese method of viewing scrolls, in which the viewer unrolls the scroll from the right, while rolling it back up on the left, giving the viewer a constantly changing but limited panorama. The viewer's motion when he came into contact with the various hanging objects made him an element in the changing installation. The paper window was similar to Kimura's inspiration for Tea house. The difference was my emphasis on the story of the image, while she placed her emphasis on the visual composition.

3) CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI

i) Monument: Les Enfants de Dijon

I liked the arrangement of the electrical wires and light effects. He used very dim illumination, to create an atmosphere of horror. The wires looked like tree branches or veins, to connect pictures to each other. This seemed to me a poetic and metaphorical
approach. His method of illumination and the use of electrical wires somehow influenced my work. The difference was that I hung my light bulbs in mid air to suggest a sense of direction for the viewer. His arrangement of wires caused me to study linear composition and reminded me of the family tree. In this work, the absence of light tends to suggest the absence of life.

ii) Les Ombres

This work portrayed the relationship between an object and its shadow. I was fascinated by this method and it influenced the first part of my “Chinese Paper Window.” I have always been fascinated by shadows and have used projected shadows in earlier installations in Taiwan. An object becomes exaggerated and distorted through the effects of light. It becomes theatrical. Various forms of shadow plays are found in many countries dating back to ancient times. The Chinese shadow plays and paper window are closely associated with these traditions. To cast the shadow into an open space instead of just onto a piece of cloth is more interesting to me, although it is not as defined and clear. It is like a person narrating his story, which may not mean anything to his listeners but is very connected to every detail in himself.

4) NILS-UDO

His works were closely related to nature. Most of his works were about oneness and unity with nature. His works were not copies of nature. He put his philosophy into practice by creating work within nature with natural materials. Sometimes his works are huge, sometimes minute. The element of time in his works made them grow, change, decay and die. His works were all unique, and all changes were part of his works.
My works were about human relationships. Although I used symbols from nature, like a cave and tornado, all of mine were constructed from processed materials. I wanted to use processed materials to recreate natural phenomena, that men have invested with associations of danger, fear, evil ...etc. I want to transfer these symbols into my narrative, to borrow the timeless references they invoke in our minds.

5) BILL VIOLA

Viola’s work was a beautiful blend of light, time and sound. He had a video/sound installation titled “The Theater of Memory” I saw in New York two years ago. It succeeded in putting the audience into a dark and scary mood. The soundtrack appealed to me, with the variations from loud to absolute silence. The mood of the viewer was heightened or calmed with the rise and fall of the musical score. I had considered using this soundtrack, to make the space in the room feel expanded.

6) ANSELM KIEFER

I had always admired Anselm Kiefer’s use of natural ingredients in his works, hay, soil and sand. He also likes to use earth colors, white, black and gray. In his photographic works, there is an atmosphere of solemnity in the midst of sadness. In the second installation of my show at the Artefect Gallery in Toronto, I revised the film collages with a more active painting style. I used Pollack-like brushwork and Kiefer-like color to express my thinking and mood.

Some of the above mentioned artists had influenced me well before I started my thesis - Kiefer, Viola, Bolitanski. Some inspired me during the period of my thesis,
Pitch, Kimura and Udo. Their works had inspired me to new venues of creation, but my work was not simply an adaptation of their work.

4. THE TRAVEL EXHIBITION TOUR

The thesis was exhibited in the three most important cities in my life, Rochester, Toronto and Taipei. These three cities in three culturally different countries necessitated adjustments and variations. The differences in space and the cultural differences of the audiences all gave me new challenges to present the same project to audiences with different aesthetic, social and psychological values. I also received different forms of satisfaction and response in the three cities. Each gave me varied critiques of my work and myself. These cities represented the various stages in my personal growth: twenty years of Chinese upbringing in Taipei, higher education in Rochester, and my encounter with the cosmopolitan lifestyle in Toronto. They also represented my growth from child to a man.

The Rochester exhibition was held in my own studio, the audience was mainly the faculty and students of my school. The last day of the exhibition coincided with a open house which brought my work and myself into contact with a more general audience. I remember the comments of an eight year old girl. After going through my exhibition a few times, she exclaimed that it was like "Indiana Jones." This was the most honest and memorable comment I ever got. And I will always treasure it.

In Toronto, the exhibition was held in an art gallery. In general, Canadian art is conservative by American standards. The response was mixed. Some liked it, some hated it, some kept quiet and some didn't understand it.
The situation was quite different in Taipei. I faced an audience with same cultural background as mine where the subject matter is still a taboo and avoided in public forums. I was more nervous about this exhibition. I was surprised that the patrons openly discussed my work with me, which made me very comfortable and satisfied. My worst fears, rejection or scorn did not materialize.

This exhibition tour has had many positive effects on my life, especially with the Taipei exhibition. Not only did I have to adjust the exhibition to various cultural backgrounds, but I had to prepare and adjust myself psychologically to deal with pressures from various levels of society. From the critiques of my work, I now know more about my work and myself.

5. FINAL ANALYSIS OF THIS PROJECT

1. TIME

I did not have a good time-table for the installation of this project. I kept on coming up with new ideas during the installation of the project that required immediate changes. At the end I felt it was still imperfect. I was easily swayed by new ideas and did not have the patience to reserve those changes for the next exhibit. I
enjoyed these last minute changes. Perhaps in the future I will extend the exhibition to
a year, and plan to develop it in response to the reactions at various audiences. After a
year of changes, perhaps the project could finally be declared finished until the next
time. It would be like a performance piece, where there is a dialog between the artist
and the audience, with variations and new performances every week.

2. MATERIALS

In addition to using photographic materials, I used burlap, plastic, branches ect., altering them traditional use. The materials lost their original language and became tools for communicating something new. Although the substances were not altered; like the hardness of stones, the strength of metal, the transparency and softness of the vinyl sheet. They became metaphors for various human emotions and feelings. In the future, I would like to study languages of materials, so that I can communicate better.

I saved time and energy in enlarging my images by photocopying, but the original images suffered in the process. The contrast was poorly balanced and the tones were either too dark or too light. Next time I will try to come up with something better in the dark room. After the enlargements, some sections were not matched properly, producing a truncated effect.
6. CONCLUSION:

The title of this thesis is “On The Edge Of The Full Moon.” The full moon lasts a very short time, it takes a long time from the first moon to the full moon again. This is akin to my process in evolving the installation.

I relied primarily on my oriental philosophy and attitudes in creating this project. Though I wanted to use logical reasoning in documenting the process of my work.

I chose a controversial topic because it expressed my greatest questions. The moon has its many phases, there is no lasting happiness or pain, everything is related to every thing else. I am optimistic about my future, no matter what may happen - it is a part of my life cycles.

I would like to thank everyone whom I encountered in the process of creating my thesis. I have created a piece of art, or rather I have created an event for myself.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX 1

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

I want to do an installation about male relationships- father and son; brother and brother; male lovers, and in general male friendship. I want to do this within the culture I know the best, Chinese culture, and concentrate on relationships among Chinese men.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

My first use of photograph, was in social documentary in Taiwan. Then I was introduced to commercial photography, and produced photographs for catalogues (clothes and other products). Later, I began to use photography for my own personal art work, installations in which I combined found-objects, slides, films, and the audience itself.

I came to the U.S.A to continue my development as an artist. When I first came to R.I.T, I worked with Polaroid images of myself, altering them by peeling the image and adding lines cut into the image, thus, highlighting my interpretation more than the photographic reality. When I thought that I had exhausted my Polaroid technique, I
moved to collage, continuing with self-portrait and autobiography. In these collages of black and white images, I would also use some of the photographic information.

In my autobiographical collage, I was trying to deal with my Chinese identity in a foreign country. I set up visual relationships between self-portraits, family images and television images.

Looking back on the work I had done, some things connected all the work. One was the choice of myself, my family and other Chinese people as my subject matter. It is the gestures and expressions of the Chinese that I am most familiar with, and most sensitive to.

PROCEDURE

I planned to work from the specific to the general. I intended to photograph a number of men, in studio set-ups I had arranged, or sites in the environment I had chosen. I then expected to photograph other objects and settings that could be useful for their symbolic, personal or conceptual significance. I expected to shoot in both color and black and white. The original photographs would undoubtedly be transformed in many ways..... by collage, sculpture, and painting, maybe by a whole succession of alterations which in some way would intensify my feelings and attitudes. The final installation would be constructed of many different materials (glass, stone, mirrors, photo, paint etc.), in both two dimensional and three dimensional structures. The exhibit, in the end, was to become one gigantic piece of work. It was important to me that the viewer would have to actively, physically, relate to the work.