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Cindy Workman

the women.

June 18-August 14, 2009

Gallery hours: through June 27 Tuesday-Saturday, 10-6; after June 30 Tuesday-Friday 10-6

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Daisy Nude, 1995



Yellow Nude, 1995



Fig. 35-92, 2000

This is the first retrospective exhibition to survey what has emerged as the central theme of Cindy Workman's art: women. She combines pictures of women with contrasting imagery to construct an inquiry about sexuality, body image and social identity. Workman writes: *These composite images invite the viewer to perceive many roles at once. While addressing the complexity of today's female self they invite the observer to process and examine this new model, continuing art's long tradition of shifting universal perceptions and prevailing standards.*

Working in New York in the early 1990s during an era when the bravado of neo-expressionist painting was giving way to social critique and introspection, Workman began to focus on images of women, derived initially from art historical sources, comic books and from her own family photographs. She made direct, physical collages with printed images, colored plexiglass, wood and prominent hardware. In the mid 90s, she incorporated less mediated pictures of real women, posed and photographed as objects of desire - a type of soft-core amateur porn that she collected along with other source material at flea markets.

Daisy Nude and *Yellow Nude*, both 1995, are the earliest works in the exhibition and present an interesting contrast. In the first work, the figure is demure, her head bowed and her form overlaid with a delicate botanical illustration resulting in an artful image. In the second, the woman's forthright gaze and swiveled torso project sexuality and the overlaid target mirrors the roundness of her female attributes. Sexy as she is without her clothes, though, she's still the girl next door with fluffy pigtails, a pretty necklace and a ring. *Sexy and safe.*

Special Occasion Flower 4, 1996, isn't so safe. It consists of a red vinyl-upholstered disc encircled by eight smaller discs with images of bondage and cartoon pistols, suggesting the potential for violence between the sexes. *Concrete Blond*, 2000, shows a classic Pop Art-style comic strip heroine overlaid with a pinkish diagram of a well-marbled cut of meat. The four stacked panels of *Exquisite Corpse I*, 2000, imply the revelation of a hidden identity as what begins with a girl's face at the top ends with a penis at the bottom.

The idealization inherent in illustration also interests Cindy Workman, as do the mechanics of printed reproduction. *No. 42*, 2000, gives us a



Pebbles, 2003



Large Woman 17, 2006



Large Woman 12, 2006

wide-eyed little girl seemingly responding to a corseted figure drawn in bold black lines. *Fig. 35-92*, also 2000, shows a perfect blond child and an alluring blond woman - one drawn, the other photographed - gazing away from each other as though one is imagining, one is remembering, beneath an overlay of a scientific diagram. By this time, the artist had begun to realize her work in a fully digital realm that allowed her to layer images and structures with greater control than before.

Indeed, in *Pebbles*, 2003, she skillfully combined three sources – a large-breasted woman posing with spread legs and cupped hands, a child's crayon drawing of Pebbles Flintstone and a connect-the-dots diagram of a skating girl. Three faces overlap in a cascade of eyes and smiles and hair and the overall image creates a chord of mixed dominance as the viewer's focus shifts from one figure to another. In the recent series *Large Woman*, Workman's figures achieve a fully blended identity. She has digitally manipulated the transparency of nude photographs and pretty girl pictures and merged them into a single figure in which neither layer can be seen completely independent of the other.

The exhibition includes twelve medium sized to large scale works which consist of archival digital prints laminated to plexiglass and presented either framed or attached to the wall with custom hardware. The show will also include a selection of smaller works that mirror the development of the major pieces. An illustrated brochure will accompany the exhibition with an essay by independent curator Elizabeth Saperstein.

Cindy Workman was born in 1961. She received a BFA from the State University of New York in Purchase in 1983 and an MA from the Chelsea School of Art in London in 1985. She lived and worked in Paris for two years before returning to New York. Represented early on by Muranushi Lederman Productions, Workman has been exhibiting with Lennon, Weinberg since 1998. She had a solo exhibition at the Forum Kunst Rottweil in 1996 and has been included in numerous group shows in New York, Los Angeles and elsewhere.

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