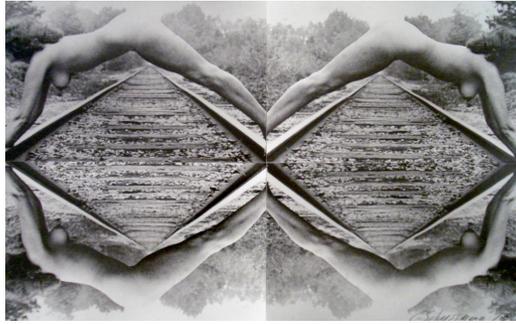


CAROLINA NITSCH PROJECT ROOM



PARALLEL AXIS, 1973

CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN

Performance Photographs from the 1970's

February 14, 2008 – March 28, 2009

Carolina Nitsch is pleased to present performance photographs from the 1970's by Carolee Schneemann at Carolina Nitsch Project Room in Chelsea, New York. This exhibition has been organized in collaboration with Elisabeth Ross Wingate on the occasion of several jointly published editions with the artist.

A pioneer of performance art, Schneemann's multidisciplinary work also includes assemblage, photography, film, video, and installation, while consistently referring to painting. Schneemann was one of the first artists to use her body to animate the relationship between the lived experience and the imagination. "Prior to Schneemann, the female body in art was mute and functioned almost exclusively as a mirror of masculine desire." (1)

Schneemann's work has had a huge influence on multiple generations of younger artists. "Cindy Sherman, Janine Antoni, Marina Abramovic, Ana Mendieta, Sean Landers and Matthew Barney ... have all worked in a direct historical dialogue (acknowledged or not) with her art" (2). Her leap to the forefront of cultural awareness took place with the seminal performance work *MEAT JOY* (1964).

The exhibition includes photographs, photo-collages, artist books and various remnants from her performances. Schneemann had foreshadowed feminist concerns already in her 1963 performance *EYE BODY*, where serpents crawled over her nude body in an evocation of a female goddess and the artist's own painting constructions served as the tableau's setting.

Her *INTERIOR SCROLL* performance from 1975, documented in this show with the complete sequence of 13 photographs (see reverse) has become iconic to the history of performance art: Schneemann entered the performance space wrapped in a white sheet and carrying a bucket of mud. After undressing, she ritualistically painted her body and read from her book "*Cezanne, She Was a Great Painter*". Schneemann then slowly extracted a scroll from her vagina and read a text that was a response to criticism from a male artist accusing her of making messy, female work.

"I thought of the vagina in many ways-- physically, conceptually: as a sculptural form, an architectural referent, the source of sacred knowledge, ecstasy, birth passage, transformation. I saw the vagina as a translucent chamber of which the serpent was an outward model: enlivened by its passage from the visible to the invisible, a spiraled coil ringed with the shape of desire and generative mysteries, attributes of both female and male sexual powers. This source of 'interior knowledge' would be symbolized as the primary index unifying spirit and flesh in Goddess worship." -CS

Other works on display include *PARALELL AXIS* (see above), a central work from Schneemann's series of solo actions in landscape, which she described as a physical seeing from within the body (1973); *PORTRAIT PARTIALS*, an intimate grid of close-up photos of body parts (1970), *BLOOD WORK DIARY* (1972), 5 panels with menstrual blottings on tissue, and more.

PROJECT ROOM: 534 West 22nd Street New York NY 10011 212 645 2030

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Carolee Schneemann received a B.A. from Bard College and an M.F.A. from the University of Illinois. She holds Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degrees from the California Institute of the Arts and the Maine College of Art.

Her work has been exhibited worldwide, at institutions including: the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; The Reina Sophia Museum, Madrid; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and the National Film Theatre, London. In 1997, a retrospective of her work entitled *Carolee Schneemann - Up To And Including Her Limits* was held at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York.

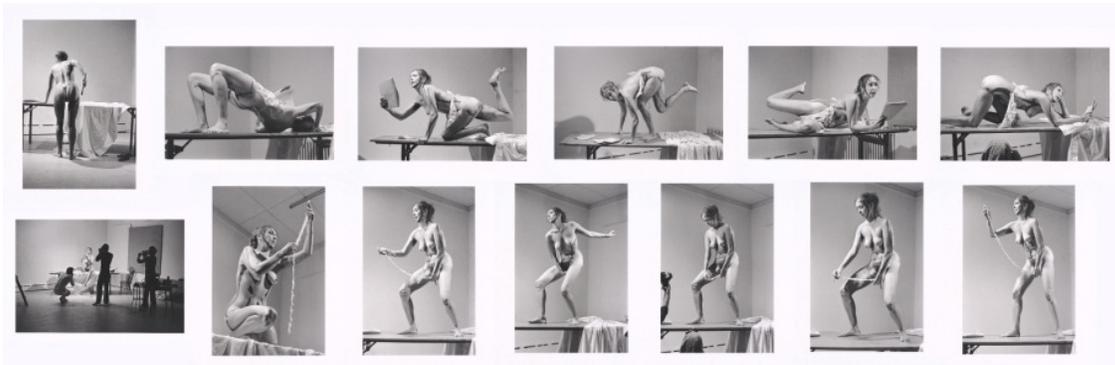
Awards received include: Art Pace International Artist Residency; two Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grants; Guggenheim Fellowship; Gottlieb Foundation Grant; National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship; Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship; and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the College Art Association. Her published books include: *Cezanne, She Was A Great Painter* (1976); *More Than Meat Joy: Complete Performance Works and Selected Writings* (1979), *Early and Recent Work* (1983); and *Imaging Her Erotics - Essays, Interviews, Projects* (2002). She has a forthcoming book through Duke University Press, edited by Kristine Stiles.

She has taught at many institutions, including: New York University; California Institute of the Arts; Bard College; and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Carolee Schneemann - Performance Photographs from the 1970's, coincides with the first extensive survey of the artist's paintings: "*Carolee Schneemann - Painting, what it became*" at PPOW Gallery, also in Chelsea (2/21 -3/28).

The exhibition at Carolina Nitsch Project Room is on view through March 28. Hours are Tuesday through Saturday 11am - 6pm. For additional information or photographic materials please contact info@carolinanitsch.com or call 212 645 2030.

- (1) Jan Avgikos, Artforum, March, 1997
- (2) Dan Cameron, *Carolee Schneemann - Up To And Including Her Limits*, 1997.



INTERIOR SCROLL, 1975

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