



MEDIA RELEASE

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Henry Art Gallery

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Carolee Schneemann: Within and Beyond the Premises

Henry Art Gallery

Stroum Gallery

September 26 – December 30, 2011

Media Preview: Thursday, September 22, at 11:00AM

RSVP to betsey@henryart.org



If I am a token, I'll be a token to be reckoned with.
– Carolee Schneemann

New York in the 1960s and '70s saw an enormous outpouring of new ideas about what art could be and how it might be experienced. Visual artists shared space and life with dancers, musicians, filmmakers, and poets; feminism, race politics, and other identity struggles developed initial inroads into both the artistic production and the consciousness of individuals. Carolee Schneemann was a primary figure in creating this revolution in culture, producing radical works of art that have influenced subsequent generations of makers. A multidisciplinary artist, Schneemann transformed the definition of contemporary art, steering it toward a discourse on the body, sexuality, and gender. She initially examined these issues through the medium of painting, but in the early 1960s she began employing other media – notably, performance art, installation art, and documentary photography – to explore suppressive taboos and the relationship

Carolee Schneemann. *Eye Body: 36 Transformative Actions*. 1963/2005. Gelatin silver print. Courtesy the artist and P.P.O.W. Gallery, NY. Photo: Erró.

between the individual human body and the social body. Collaborating with friends, such as the composer James Tenney, the filmmaker Stan Brakhage, and the dancers associated with Judson Dance Theater, as well as working independently, Schneemann brought a gesture familiar from Abstract Expressionism into environments she animated literally with her body, producing such acclaimed works as *Eye Body*, *Meat Joy*, and *Up to and Including Her Limits*, all of which are represented in this retrospective exhibition.

Best known for her focus on what might be termed the “experiential erotic body,” she has focused as much passion against brutal wars and other political malfeasance; her work throughout more than five decades defiantly collapses boundaries between art and life. This retrospective exhibition presents Schneemann’s career from her earliest work to her most recent investigations, ultimately revealing the artist’s thought process in paintings, drawings, photography, installation work, video projections, and writings from 1959 through 2010, attesting to the range of her achievements in both form and content.

Carolee Schneemann: Within and Beyond the Premises was first curated by Brian Wallace for the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art at the State University of New York at New Paltz and is organized for the Henry by Chief Curator Elizabeth Brown, in partnership with the Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The presentation at the Henry is made possible by the generous support of the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation and Steven Johnson and Walter Sudol.

“I was supporting myself when I first came to New York as an artist's model. I was lying naked listening to these terrible men, most of them really ruining their students' drawings... I had to listen to them say everything that would prevent the students from seeing fully and well.... Then I come back to the studio where the cultural message was, "You're incredible but don't really try to do anything." I would just pick up my hammer and start fracturing my materials with a full arm swing and focused aim. My work was about motion and momentum and physicality. The next step was to see what would happen if the body went in among my own materials. And would my rage at predictive rejection be supplanted by the gendered form exposed, displaced: active, present, and accusatory! Once I saw the images, I thought I had done something incredible with *Eye Body*, but I didn't know exactly what.”

-Carolee Schneeman, from a 1998 interview by Kate Haug for *Wide Angle*, Copyright © 1998 Ohio University School of Film. All rights reserved.

About the Henry

THE HENRY ADVANCES THE ART, ARTISTS, AND IDEAS OF OUR TIME

Since its founding in 1927, the Henry Art Gallery has served the Pacific Northwest as a pioneer in bringing contemporary art and ideas to the region. The Henry is a hub for audiences of all ages to experience the discovery, wonder, and surprise that contemporary art, artists, and ideas provide. The Henry staff, board, and community are committed to taking risks, and fostering dialogue and debate. Exhibitions, collections, and public programs at the Henry stimulate research and teaching at the University of Washington, provide a creative wellspring for artists, students, and educators, and reveal a record of modern artistic inquiry from the advent of photography in the mid-19th century to the multidisciplinary art and design of the 21st century.

HOURS: The Henry Art Gallery is open 11-4, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday and 11-9 on Thursdays and Fridays; closed Mondays and Tuesdays. Holidays closed: Thanksgiving, Christmas & New Year's Day, and Independence Day.

ADMISSION ***By suggested donation:*** \$10 general, \$6 seniors (62 and older); free to Henry Art Gallery members, UW students, faculty and staff with ID, high school and college students with ID; children 13 and under.

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