INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

ProQuest Information and Learning
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA
800-521-0600

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

NOTE TO USERS

This reproduction is the best copy available.

UMI

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

A

NANCY SPERO'S INSTALLATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL INCURSIONS, 1987-2001: DIALOGUES WITHIN THE MUSEUM, AND ELSEWHERE

By

DEBORAH FRIZZELL

VOLUME I

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2004

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

UMI Number: 3115250

Copyright 2004 by
Frizzell, Deborah

All rights reserved.

UMI Microform 3115250
Copyright 2004 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

© 2004

DEBORAH FRIZZELL

All Rights Reserved

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Approval Page

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Art History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

12/12/03 _____.
Date Chair of Examining Committee

12/14/03 _____.
Date Executive Officer

Professor Harriet Senie _____.

Professor Rose-Carol Washton Long _____.

Professor Robert Storr _____.
Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Abstract

**NANCY SPERO'S
INSTALLATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL INCURSIONS, 1987-2001:
DIALOGUES WITHIN THE MUSEUM, AND ELSEWHERE**

by

Deborah Frizzell

Advisor: Professor Sally Webster

This dissertation is an art historical analysis of Nancy Spero's (b. 1926) wall painting installations in museums and alternative spaces. The text takes the form of a monograph, examining the genesis of Spero's wall paintings (1987-2001) in relation to her earlier paintings and scroll works (1948-1987). The aim of the dissertation is to document and analyze Spero's installations by employing a variety of methodological models for an examination of her site-specific strategies, themes, iconography, formats, and techniques. I interweave a range of methodologies as frameworks for interpretation, including the following: formal, visual analysis and examination of technical processes and materials; biographical elements informing specific projects and themes; critical reception and studio practices; cultural contexts, such as the "performative" aspects of installation; feminist psychoanalytical theory; poetic and epic structuring of the work.

I posit that Spero's wall paintings, as orchestrated and dialogic, are contingent for their meanings on the architectural elements and functions of the site, a condition which implies open-ended viewer participation. Further, I emphasize Spero's consistent formal enlivening of socially engaged art, her valuing of subtext and layering, and of political meanings manifest in an aesthetic commitment to re-presenting, remembering, and recounting within public spaces. I show that Spero enters into an affective,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

phenomenological, and formal dialogic relationships with architectural space and its meanings, anchored in corporeal experience as an aspect of intellectual cognition. By these means, Spero transcribes solitary questioning within broader communities of judgment, embodying a humanist, critical, and self-reflexive stance.

Chapter One, "Biographical Elements as Narrative, 1926-1987," employs biographical and art historical analyses of Spero's early works as a student, a young artist, and a mature artist. Chapter Two, "The First Wall Painting Installations, 1988-1989," focuses on the crucial years of Spero's development of wall painting strategies, themes, and iconography. Chapter Three, "Fragmentation and Recreation, 1990-1994," analyzes Spero's formal and technical means, her expansion of thematic and iconographic materials within the museum framework, and her oscillation between political, historical, and mythic idioms within the practice of installation. Chapter Four, "Wall Paintings in Museums and Elsewhere, 1995-2001," employs multiple methodologies to examine Spero's conceptual, formal, and technical extensions of installation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have been written without the patience and unwavering support of Nancy Spero. Since my first meeting with Nancy in 1996, I have spent many days "camped out" in her studio and archives, researching and observing. Nancy's friendship and our many conversations have encouraged me to question and reflect in ways I had not imagined when I began this project. Both Nancy and her husband, Leon Golub, welcomed me into their studios and living spaces, always displaying an unbounded intellectual and spiritual generosity. I am deeply grateful to both of them

My advisor at the Graduate School, Professor Sally Webster, has been enormously supportive of this project on many levels. Her commitment from the beginning has been steadfast and she has inspired me to think more deeply about the discourses of art history, while encouraging my own strengths and visions. I owe many thanks as well to my readers, Professors Harriet Senie, Rose-Carol Washton Long, and Robert Storr. In addition, I have benefited immeasurably from the opportunity to research Spero's permanent installations in Europe made possibly by a John R. Rewald Dissertation Fellowship from the Graduate Center at CUNY.

I am especially indebted to Samm Kunce, Spero and Golub's primary assistant and organizer of their studio and archives in New York. I am also grateful to the Spero/Golub Studio assistants, Alexandra Sax, Gyan Shrosbree, Elizabeth Schuh, Shari Zolla, Jessica Reeves-Cohen, Leia Jervert, and Anahita Vossoughi. I owe special thanks to the filmmaker and video artist, Irene Sosa, who has documented many of Spero's installations.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

I have profited considerably from my conversations with colleagues and friends: Jon Bird, Susanne Altmann, Werner Hanak, Dr. Sabine Fehlemann, Erika Hoffmann, Beatrice Pecha, Iris Kurat, Friedrich Scheibler, Dr. Barbara Wally, Peter Soriano, Ingeborg Kaehler, Amy Schlegel, Marek Bartelik, Ellen Levy, Marina Temkina, Jacqueline Gourevitch, Duston Spear, Jane Sutherland, Ann Chernow, Debra Pearlman, and Carolyn Temlock.

Special thanks are due to Galerie LeLong, New York; Barbara Gross Galerie, Munich; Christine Koenig Galerie, Vienna; Rhona Hoffmann Gallery, Chicago; Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, NY; Josh Baer Gallery, NY; Jack Tilton Gallery, NY; Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London; Lee Jaffe, CA; Vancouver Art Gallery, BC; Williams College Museum of Art, MA; Sandra Simpson, Toronto; Museum of Modern Art, NY; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Lydia Bradshaw at the MTA Arts for Transit, NY; Margaret Schlesinger at the Department of Cultural Affairs, Chicago.

I am obliged to the following photographers: Irene Sosa, David Reynolds, Miquel Bargallo, Olaf Bergmann, Diana Church, Charles Crist, Augustin Dumage, Abe Frajndlich, Andre Morain, Sheila Pepe, Walter Petzi, Cosimo Di Leo Ricatto, Londa Salamon, Max Scheugl, Lothar Sprenger, Susan Unterberg, Jan Uvelius, Susan Weiley, Antie Zeis-Loi.

I thank the following institutions for their assistance: the National Museum of American Art and the Archives of American Art, New York and Washington (AIR Gallery Records, Leon Golub Papers, Lucy Lippard Papers, Sylvia Sleigh Papers); Sylvia Sleigh and Lawrence Alloway Archives, Leon Golub Archives, AIR Gallery, and New York Public Library, NY.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Finally, I dedicate this text to my husband, David, without whose support and encouragement, I would not have been able to sustain my efforts.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Volume I

Title Page

Copyright Page ii

Approval Page iii

Abstract iv

Acknowledgements vi

Table of Contents ix

List of Illustrations x

Introduction: Collaging Narrative Voices 1

Chapter One: Biographical Elements as Narrative, 1926-1987 27

Chapter Two: The First Wall Painting Installations, 1988-1989 154

Chapter Three: Fragmentation and Recreation, 1990-1994 210

Chapter Four: Wall Paintings in Museums, and Elsewhere, 1995-2001 292

Volume II

Appendices 391

Illustrations 397

Bibliography on Nancy Spero 477

Bibliography of Sources Cited and Consulted 512

Selected Bibliography of Nancy Spero's Studio Library 526

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

List of Illustrations*

Fig. 1 Photograph of Henry Spero and Polly Susselman Spero, Pennsylvania, 1925.

Fig. 2 Nancy Spero, *Dancing Figure,* 1948, lithograph, 9.75 x 7.75 in. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Fig. 3 Nancy Spero, *(Great) Mother and Child (3),* 1954, o/c, 48.5 x 27 in. Photograph: David Reynolds. Collection: Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Keith Westergaard and Cordell Couillard, VAG 94.76.1.

Fig. 4 Leon Golub, *Thwarted,* 1953, o/c, lacquer on canvas, 48.5 x 32 in. Collection: Nancy Spero.

Fig. 5 Nancy Spero, *The Opening,* 1949 sketchbook, charcoal & pastel, 7.5 x 10 in.

Fig. 6 Nancy Spero, *Portrait of My Mother,* 1949, sketchbook, charcoal, 10 x 7.5 in.

Fig. 7 Photograph of Nancy Spero in her Chicago studio, 1952.

Fig. 8 Nancy Spero, *Four Figures,* ca. 1954-1955, lithograph, 15.5 x 13. 75 in.

Fig. 9 Nancy Spero, *Mummified,* 1950, plaster, nylon stocking, string, paint and paper, 15 x 4.5 x 4.5 in. Collection: Leon Golub.

Fig. 10 Nancy Spero, *Lovers III,* 1962-1965, o/c, 54 x 80 in. Collection: Lee Jaffe.

Fig. 11 Nancy Spero, *Le Couple (Lovers XIII),* 1962, o/c, 54 x 78.5 in.

Fig. 12 Nancy Spero, *At Their Word The Sick Woman,* 1957-1958, o/c, 63 x 40.5 in. Photograph: David Reynolds. Collection: Stephen Golub.

Fig. 13 Nancy Spero, *Mother and Children (2),* 1956, o/c, 55 x 48 in. Collection: Paul Golub.

Fig. 14 Nancy Spero, *Great Mother Birth,* 1962, o/c, 68 x 44 in. Collection: Leon Golub.

Fig. 15 Nancy Spero, *Hangman,* 1958, o/c, 81 x 44.5 in. Collection: Stephen Golub.

Fig. 16 Nancy Spero, *Il Mondo,* 1958, o/c, 82 x 37 in. Photograph: David Reynolds. Collection: Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Keith Westergaard and Cordell Couillard, VAG 94.76.3.

Fig. 17 Nancy Spero, *Homage to New York (I Do Not Challenge),* 1958, o/c, 47 x 31 in. Photograph: Diana Church. Collection: Philip Golub.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 18 Photograph of *Nancy Spero in her Paris Studio*, 1962, Photograph: Andre Morain.

Fig. 19 Nancy Spero, *Mother and Children*, 1962, o/c, 76.75 x 43.5 in. Photo: Augustin Dumage. Collection: Leon Golub.

Fig. 20 Nancy Spero, *Lovers V*, 1962-1965, o/c, 50.5 x 63.5 in. Collection: Leon Golub.

Fig. 21 Nancy Spero, *Les Anges, Merde, Fuck You*, 1960, gouache and ink on paper, 17.25 x 22 in. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Fig. 22 Nancy Spero, *Nightmare Figures II*, 1961, o/c, o/c, 51 x 63 in. Photograph: David Reynolds. Collection: Leon Golub.

Fig. 23 Nancy Spero, *Poem I: Fuck You*, 1960, gouache and ink on paper, 17 x 22 in. Photograph: Diana Church. Collection: halley k harrisburg and Michael Rosenfeld, New York.

Fig. 24 Nancy Spero, *Victim, Eagle, and Medusa Head*, 1969, gouache, ink and collage on paper, 24.5 x 39 in. Collection: Leon Golub.

Fig. 25 Nancy Spero, *S.U.P.E.R.P.A.C.I.F.I.C.A.T.I.O.N.*, 1967, gouache and ink on paper, 24 x 36 in.

Fig. 26 Nancy Spero, *Artaud Painting Untitled (I also preach...)*, 1969, gouache, charcoal on paper, 21 x 25 in. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Fig. 27 Nancy Spero, *Codex Artaud XXI*, 1972, detail, typewriter and painted collage/p, 71 x 24 in. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Fig. 28 Nancy Spero, *Codex Artaud I*, 1971, detail, typewriter and gouache collage/p, 23 x 89 in. Collection of the French Government.

Fig. 29 Nancy Spero, *Codex Artaud XXV*, 1972, detail, typewriter and painted collage/p., 24 x 193 in. Collection: Williams College Museum of Art, Museum purchase, Kathryn Hurd Fund 97.4.

Fig. 30 Nancy Spero, *Torture of Women*, 1976, Installation at A.I.R., detail, handprinting and typewriter collage/paper, 20 in. x 125 feet. Collection: The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Fig. 31 Nancy Spero, *Torture of Women*, panel 10, 1976, detail, handprinting & typewriter coll./paper, 20 in. x 125 feet. Photograph: David Reynolds. Collection: The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 32 Nancy Spero, *Notes in Time on Women*, 1979, panel 21, detail, handprinting, gouache, typewriting, collage/p., 20 in. x 210 feet. (24 panels). Photograph: Diana Church. Collection: The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Harriet and Rick Meyer.

Fig. 33 Nancy Spero, *Notes in Time on Women*, 1979, panel 6, detail, handprinting, gouache, typewriting, collage/p., 20 in. x 210 feet. (24 panels). Collection: The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Harriet and Rick Meyer.

Fig. 34 Nancy Spero, *The First Language*, 1981, panel 15, detail, handprinting, printed and painted collage/p., 20 in. x 190 ft. (22 panels). Photograph: Diana Church. Collection: Leon, Stephen, Philip, and Paul Golub.

Fig. 35 Nancy Spero, *The First Language*, Installation View, 1981, detail, Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London. Collection: Leon, Stephen, Philip, and Paul Golub.

Fig. 36 Nancy Spero, *Sky Goddess*, 1985, detail, handprinting and printed collage/p., 20.47 x 111.02 in (6 panels). Collection: Barbara Gross, Munich.

Fig. 37 Nancy Spero, *Sheela and the Dildo Dancer*, Installation View at Josh Baer Gallery, New York, 1987, detail, handprinting, collage/hand and wall painting, 24 in. x 880 in.

Fig. 38 Nancy Spero, Photograph of zinc plate of Sheela-na-gig from Spero studio, 1986. Photograph, David Reynolds.

Fig. 39 Nancy Spero, *Chorus Line 1*, 1985, detail, handprinting and printed collage/p., 20 x 110 in. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Fig. 40 Nancy Spero, *Sheela and the Dildo Dancer*, Installation View at S.L. Simpson Gallery, Toronto, Canada, 1987, detail, handprinting, collage/hand and wall painting, 24 in. x 880 in. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Fig. 41 Nancy Spero, *Re-Birth of Venus*, panel 6, 1984, detail, handprinting and printed collage/p., 20 inches x 63 feet. Photograph: David Reynolds. Collection: Sandra Simpson, Toronto.

Fig. 42 Nancy Spero, *Waterworks*, Wall Painting Installation, 1988, detail, R.C. Harris Water Filtration Plant, Toronto, Canada.

Fig. 43 Nancy Spero, *Waterworks*, Wall Painting Installation, 1988, detail, R.C. Harris Water Filtration Plant, Toronto, Canada.

Fig. 44, Photograph of Nancy Spero in her studio with printed figures, New York, 1993. Photograph: Susan Unterberg.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 45 Photograph of Nancy Spero in her studio with printed figures, New York, 2003. Photograph: Abe Frajndlich.

Fig. 46 Photograph of Nancy Spero in her studio with printed figures, New York, 1993. Photograph: Abe Frajndlich.

Fig. 47 Nancy Spero, *To Soar,* Wall Painting Installation, 1988, detail, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA.

Fig. 48 Nancy Spero, *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950,* Installation, 1987, detail, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Fig. 49 Nancy Spero, *Rebirth of Venus,* Wall Painting Installation, 1989, detail, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany.

Fig. 50 Nancy Spero, *Rebirth of Venus,* Wall Painting Installation, 1989, detail, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany.

Fig. 51 Nancy Spero, *To Soar II,* Wall Painting Installation, 1990, detail, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA. Photograph: Sheila Pepe.

Fig. 52 Nancy Spero, *Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore,* Wall Painting Installation, 1990, detail, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA. Photograph: Sheila Pepe.

Fig. 53 Nancy Spero, *Four Cities Project,* Wall Painting Installation, 1990, detail, Westland/Blucher Street Junction, Orchard Gallery, Bogside, Derry, Northern Ireland.

Fig. 54 Nancy Spero, *Minerva, Sky Goddess, Madrid,* Wall Painting Installation, 1991, detail, Circulo des Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain. Photographer: Miquel Bargallo.

Fig. 55 Nancy Spero, *Minerva, Sky Goddess, Madrid,* Wall Painting Installation, 1991, detail, Circulo des Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain. Photographer: Miquel Bargallo.

Fig. 56 Nancy Spero, *Ballade von der Judenhure Marie Sanders,* Wall Painting Installation, detail, 1991, Collection: Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, Germany. Photograph: Antie Zeis-Loi.

Fig. 57 Nancy Spero, *To Soar III,* Wall Painting Installation, detail, 1991, Harold Washington Library, Chicago. Property of the Chicago Public Art Program.

Fig. 58 Nancy Spero, *To Soar III,* Wall Painting Installation, detail, 1991, Harold Washington Library, Chicago. Property of the Chicago Public Art Program.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 59 Nancy Spero, *The Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore* and *Voices: Jewish Women in Time,* Wall Painting Installation, 1993, detail, The Jewish Museum, New York. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Fig. 60 Nancy Spero, *Masha Bruskina,* Wall Painting Installation, 1993, detail, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Fig. 61 Photograph of Nancy Spero performing *Homage to Ana Mendieta* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993. Photograph: Abe Frajndlich.

Fig. 62 Nancy Spero, *Premiere,* Wall Painting Installation, 1993, detail, Ronacher Theater, Vienna. Courtesy Ronacher Theater, Vereinigte Bühnen Wien GesmbH, and Christine Koenig Galerie, Vienna.

Fig. 63 Nancy Spero, *Premiere,* Wall Painting Installation, 1993, detail, Ronacher Theater, Vienna. Courtesy Ronacher Theater, Vereinigte Bühnen Wien GesmbH, and Christine Koenig Galerie, Vienna.

Fig. 64 Nancy Spero, *Black and the Red III,* Detail, 22 Panel Scroll Installation, detail, 1994, 19.69 inches x 96.5 feet.

Fig. 65 Nancy Spero, *A Cycle in Time,* Banner Installation, 1995, 30 in. x 168 feet, Residenzgalerie, Salzburg, Austria. Photograph: Ulrich Ghezzi.

Fig. 66 Nancy Spero, *A Cycle in Time* in-progress detail at Nancy Spero's New York Studio, 1995, Photograph: David Reynolds.

Fig. 67 Nancy Spero, *Sheela-Na-Gig at Home,* Installation at Jack Tilton Gallery, New York, 1996, detail, handprinting on paper and underwear on clothesline, Dimensions variable. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Fig. 68 Nancy Spero, *L'envol,* Wall Painting Installation, 1995, detail, Musee National d'art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France.

Fig. 69 Nancy Spero, *L'envol,* Wall Painting Installation, 1995, detail, Musee National d'art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France.

Fig. 70 Nancy Spero, *Raise/Time,* Wall Painting Installation, 1995, detail, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Fig. 71, Nancy Spero, *Raise/Time,* Wall Painting Installation, 1995, detail, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Fig. 72 Nancy Spero, *Improvisations,* Wall Painting Installation, detail, 1996, Heeresspital, Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria, Courtesy of AG FM CONRAD and Christine Koenig Galerie, Vienna.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 73 Nancy Spero, *Improvisations*, Wall Painting Installation, detail, 1996, Heeresspital, Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria, Courtesy of AG FM CONRAD and Christine Koenig Galerie, Vienna.

Fig. 74 Nancy Spero, *Installation der Erinnerung*, Wall Painting Installation, detail, 1996, Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien, Austria. Courtesy The Jewish Museum Vienna and Christine Koenig Galerie, Vienna.

Fig. 75 Nancy Spero, *Installation der Erinnerung*, Wall Painting Installation, detail, 1996, Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien, Austria. Courtesy The Jewish Museum Vienna and Christine Koenig Galerie, Vienna.

Fig. 76 Nancy Spero, *Ballade von der Judenhure Marie Sanders III*, Wall Painting Installation, detail, 1998, Festspielhaus Hellerau, Dresden, Germany. Courtesy Europaische Werkstatt fur Kunst und Kultur Hellerau e.V. Photograph: Lothar Sprenger.

Fig. 77 Nancy Spero, *Ballade von der Judenhure Marie Sanders III*, Wall Painting Installation, detail, 1998, Festspielhaus Hellerau, Dresden, Germany. Courtesy Europaische Werkstatt fur Kunst und Kultur Hellerau e.V. Photograph: Lothar Sprenger.

Fig. 78 Nancy Spero, *Artemis, Acrobats, Divas and Dancers*, Mosaic Installation, detail, 2001, tesserae glass and ceramic mosaic. 66th Street-Lincoln Center Subway Station, 1, 2 line. Commissioned and owned by Metropolitan Transit Authority Arts in Transit, New York.

Fig. 79 Nancy Spero, *Artemis, Acrobats, Divas and Dancers*, Mosaic Installation, detail, 2001, tesserae glass and ceramic mosaic. 66th Street-Lincoln Center Subway Station, 1, 2 line. Commissioned and owned by Metropolitan Transit Authority Arts in Transit, New York.

Fig. 80 Photograph of Nancy Spero by Abe Frajndlich, 1998.

*Unless otherwise stated all artworks are in the collection of the artist.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Introduction: Collaging Narrative Voices

Nancy Spero's wall painting installations expand and redefine the prescriptive categories of history and mural painting by creating a distinctive lexicon of representation and an epic-scale visual poetics conceived in relation to the surrounding architectural environment. Spero's experimentations with image/text and figure/ground conjunctions, allied with collage and printmaking techniques, engage in visual dialogues within a variety of site-specific spatial contexts. The artist's wall paintings highlight an intensely profound engagement with history and mythology as well as with contemporary political, social, and cultural concerns. Combining her stylized, cross-cultural figures in shocking juxtapositions, the artist depicts the extremes of human experience from the horrific to the transcendent. Spero's themes mine the full range of power relations: unraveling the political as a manifestation of individual landscapes and tracing the psycho-topography of individual memory and collective witness.

For nearly fifty years, Spero has been a chronicler of wars and apocalyptic violence as well as a visionary of ecstatic rebirth and possibility. In the 1970s, her primary center of gravity led her to critically re-present allegories, mythologies, and histories of women from pre-history to the present. Spero's three-hundred-plus hand-printed images, or "cast of characters," move through historico-psychological time on the momentum of associations and metaphor. Spero's gestural and figural mutations, as shape-shifting dramatis personae, enact unscripted, fractured visual narratives oscillating in point-counterpoint formal play with architectural elements. The stylized but fluidly expressive body languages of Spero's "paper dolls" printed in relation to the elements of architecture, convey the subtleties of thought and feeling which establish recognizable

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

symbols and themes. As "doubles," her "cast of characters" blur the lines between animate and inanimate, text and image, psychological space and outward action; they ignite both identification and fantasy. Within her site-specific compositional formats, Spero integrates this hybrid hieroglyphics into a web of relational graphic, architectural, and discursive contexts. By condensing and fragmenting simultaneous time frames, and by relating dynamic figures of differing scales and historical eras within an architectural space-as-ground, Spero's multiple points of view enact a critically updated, mutated form of wall painting installation.

Spero's wide-ranging figurative oeuvre has received substantial critical recognition and art historical analysis, yet discussions of her significant conceptual and formal innovations remain ghettoized, for the most part, within American and British feminist discourses on the "first generation" of feminist artists and within the methodology of French post-structural literary theory. Indeed, the artist's mature scroll works were formed within the historical conditions of the Women's Movement and emergent feminism. However, the curator and art historian, Robert Storr has pointed out the difficulties of analyzing Spero's work from within proposed categories of feminist art practices and generations: "Known as a 'feminist' – which she most certainly is but which label has become a primary means for isolating and so disregarding her achievement, Spero is notable for her stamina and her stubborn refusal to be boxed in by stylistic, ideological or generational labels."[1] In addition, feminist analyses of Spero's "place" in the "first generation" of feminist artists have focused primarily on Spero's collaged and framed scroll work, while her painted and printed installation projects in alternative spaces and museums have received scarce scrutiny or contextualization. The

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

goal of this dissertation is to both rectify a lack of continuous documentation of the artist's installations and broaden the spectrum of methodological analyses of Spero's complex site-specific installation strategies, themes, iconography, formats, and techniques. In addition, I foreground this documentation and analysis in the first chapter by closely tracing the artist's early life and artistic experiences in Chicago, New York and Europe, as narrative threads key to the formation of Spero's artistic identity and primary working themes evinced in her subsequent installations.

While Spero's installation projects since 1987 have numbered more than two dozen, no in-depth, multivalent art historical discussions have yet been published on the continuous development of these projects in relation to architectural space and museum sites. *Nancy Spero,* a monograph published in 1996 which includes the artist's chronology, employs a multi-voiced format of texts, comprising an extensive in-depth interview with the artist by Jo Anna Isaak; a sampling of the artist's writings; creative prose pieces by other artists and writers, entitled "Artist's Choice"; a focused essay by Sylvere Lotringer on Spero's printed serial project, *Woman/War/Victimage/Resistance* (1994-1995), for the Viennese newspaper, *Der Standard*; and an art historical analysis by Jon Bird, charting the themes and formats of Spero's oeuvre by employing theoretical models from French feminist theory, particularly those of Helene Cixous and Julia Kristeva.[2] The two primary exhibition catalogue texts published for Spero's 1987 retrospectives, one in the U.K., *Nancy Spero* (with essays by Bird and Lisa Tickner), and the other in the U.S., *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950* (with essays by Spero's husband, the painter Leon Golub, Jo Anna Isaak, Dominique Nahas, and Robert Storr), necessarily focused on the earlier work executed prior to the fully integrated site-specific impulse

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

initiated in 1988.[3] Catherine de Zegher's exhibition catalogue essay, "Tongue, Torture, and Free Rein in Spero's Explicit Series of Paintings," is a post-Freudian psychoanalytical analysis of Spero's early work and scrolls.[4] Susan Harris's catalogue essay, "Dancing in Space," offers an overview of the artist's engagement with space in her scrollwork and early wall paintings through 1993.[5] Although Spero has been the subject of a case study in a recent dissertation by Amy Schlegel, "Codex Spero: Feminist Art and Activist Practices in New York Since the Late 1960s" (1997), the emphasis of Schlegel's dissertation is on the themes and structuring of Spero's collaged-scroll, *Codex Artaud* (1973), analyzed within the context of American feminist art, activism, and theory.[6] Both Jon Bird's detailed analysis of post-structural French feminist literary theory in relation to Spero's oeuvre and Amy Schlegel's dense, contextual study of the evolution of feminist art practices in New York, informing Spero's themes and strategies, offer valuable feminist theoretical narratives as points of departure for any focused examination of Spero's wall paintings. In addition, Schlegel outlines both the affinities and differences of Spero's early work in relation to the work of other 'first generation' feminist artists, such as Eleanor Antin, Hannah Wilke, and Carolee Schneemann. Employing a similar contextual approach, Yvonne M. Gaudelius' dissertation, "Art-Iculating Women's Voices: An Exploration of Women's Subjectivity in Contemporary Women's Visual Art, Feminist Pedagogy and French Feminist Theory," compares Spero's thematic and strategic connections and differences with the signature feminist works of Joanna Frueh and Mary Kelly.[7]

The aim of my dissertation is to interweave a wide range of methodologies, including feminist theory, among others, into a narrative structure whose subject is

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

resistant to categorization and theorization. Providing methodological models for a broad-based, multivalent art historical approach which I apply in my examination of Spero's museum and site-specific wall paintings and projects, Robert Storr's essays on Spero's scrolls and wall paintings published in exhibition catalogues -- "Nancy Spero: Central Issues, Peripheral Visions," *Nancy Spero: Work Since 1950* (1987); "Rebirth of Venus," *Nancy Spero: Rebirth of Venus* (1989); and "When This You See..." *Nancy Spero: Woman Breathing* (1992) – offer complementary paradigms: close attention to formal, visual analysis and technical processes and materials; research of biographical and functional elements informing specific projects and themes; and inclusion of a wider sphere of art historical and cultural issues central to Spero's conceptual and formal concerns.[8] I examine as well the shifting conceptual frameworks which inform the artist's installations within specific museums and alternative public spaces. I address Spero's studio practices, especially those impinging on notions of authorship, such as the mechanisms of active collaboration with printing assistants in the studio and on site, and the varying roles of in-house curators, directors, and audiences. How Spero and her crew actually work in the studio environment and translate these practices on-site is crucial for an understanding of the artist, whose wall paintings are orchestrated, highly performative, and contingent for their meanings on the architectural elements and functions of the site, a condition which implies open-ended viewer participation. In addition, I analyze Spero's figurative iconography, its genesis and transformation within museological narratives, which the artist interrogates and problematizes. How and to what effect does Spero construct and employ her arsenal of strategies: quotation, repetition, fragmentation, stylistic disunity, mimicry, distortion, radical juxtaposition, androgyny,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

recontextualization, western and non-western as well as historical and mass media sources? How do these strategies and printmaking techniques reconfigure the genres of mural painting and museum incursion?

While I do not posit for Spero a psychologically 'unified' personality or an "autobiographical" oeuvre, I do consider significant the impact of the artist's intensions, critical biographical circumstances, developments and events informing her major themes, and the artist's on-going artistic dialogues with her painter-husband, Leon Golub, and certain of her colleagues, such as Ana Mendieta, a close friend whose artistic themes often paralleled Spero's. Within historical contexts, I quite often interject the artist's voice as well as Golub's and those of critics and studio assistants. My own "polyphonic" narrative strategies seek to complement the epic qualities of Spero's wall paintings by piecing together her complex, fractured poetics – an accumulation of fragmented stories staged on site. I discuss as well the artist's consistent formal enlivening of socially engaged art, her valuing of subtext and layering, of political meanings manifest in an aesthetic commitment to showing, observing, remembering, and recounting within public spaces. Rather than focusing on an abstract metaphysics within the isolation of the studio, Spero enters into an affective, phenomenological, and formal dialogic relationship with the architectural space and its meanings, anchored in corporeal experience ineluctably tied to intellectual cognition. By these means, Spero transcribes the abrasive forces of solitary questioning within broader communities of judgment, embodying an intensely critical, humanist, and self-reflexive stance. The artist allies her working processes and formats with an activist orientation and an on-going questioning of the characteristics and formation of memory, representation, and identity. She thus argues within her installation

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

projects that the activist life, as an integral part of public discourse via aesthetic form, allows for the possibility of redemptive encounters.

For the first time, I bring together numerous primary source materials to document, interpret and narrate Nancy Spero's continuous engagement with museums and archaeological sites as resources for imagery, beginning with her student years at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (B.F.A. 1949), where she was in constant contact with the Art Institute's collections. During this period, Spero made crucial and frequent trips as well to Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History, which served as an ethnographical resource for a number of her figurative, mythological "cast of characters." As repositories of multiple cultures and time periods, the museums of Paris were frequented by Spero during her study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and at the Atelier of Andre Lhote in 1949-1950, and later revisited by her, when her family moved to reside in Paris from 1959 to 1964. Paramount in the development of Spero's growing inventory of over three-hundred figures was her year spent in Florence and Ischia, Italy (1956-1957), visiting museums and archaeological sites, studying archaic and classical sculpture as well as Etruscan and Roman frescoes and funerary figures. Back in New York, Spero's dialogue with the museum-as-repository shifted to an overt critical stance when she actively confronted museum exhibition and collection policies at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Museum of Modern Art, from 1969 to 1972, at which time she was an artist-activist go-between, articulating issues and positions (as a member of Women Artists in Revolution and the Ad Hoc Women Artists' Committee), writing letters and pamphlets, demonstrating and appearing in panel discussions on a regular basis. Often marginalized or categorized narrowly during the 1960s and into the 1970s as a figurative,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

feminist, and anti-war artist, Spero's complex and conflicted relations with the museum-as-resource and the museum-as-institution were underscored by her co-founding of SoHo's A.I.R. (Artists in Residence) Gallery in 1972, the first women's cooperative gallery in New York.

The predominant themes of Spero's scrolls and wall paintings center on the communicative language of bodily gesture and motion in relation to the female body as "represented," as constructed within a variety of cultures, historical eras, and within art historical periodization. Her earliest painting series, the *Black Paris Paintings* (1959-64), large-scale oil on canvas works, emphasized the relationships between mothers and their children, lovers, prostitutes, and the symbolism of archaic goddesses. These dark, existentialist canvases articulated the ties that bind human relationships and, more generally, the cyclical dimensions of the human condition. When Spero and Golub moved with their three sons from Paris to New York in 1964, they arrived in the midst of the escalation of the Vietnam War and the Civil Rights Movement marches. During the first two years of settling her family in New York, Spero found a public voice in her pivotal collage-paintings on paper, the *War Series* (1966-1970). Affected by the horrific images of the War broadcast nightly on television and the racial violence erupting in the streets, she painted startlingly immediate images with gouache, collage, and ink on paper, executed rapidly, linking the themes of sexual obscenity, racism, and the destruction of war. Combined with the scatological language of war and the political-speak of governments, Spero painted defecating, phallic bombs, anthropomorphic helicopters pointing like forefingers to targets below, and mutant humans spewing paroxysms of death and chaos. The artist's technical means included collaged, expressionist figures and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

fragments, cut and recombined on a ground of archival paper. Her aggressive strokes appeared uncensored and unedited, while she concurrently developed a collage technique to free-up the figures in relation to ground, affording them fluidity within initially unplanned configurations and relationships. Spero's collage-on-paper strategy related her themes of expression to both the political and metaphysical realms, as Golub commented at the time: "as action, spontaneous and casual, the collage became a carrier of indignation, harking back to street art, graffiti, burlesque, the carnival, the dance of death."[9]

By 1971, Spero developed a unique pictographic "language of gesture and motion," the body re-presented within a visual/textual hieroglyphics.[10] In her signature scroll paintings, *Codex Artaud* (1972), *Torture of Women* (1976), and *Notes on Time on Women* (1979), Spero painted, hand-printed, cut, and collaged images and texts to form unfurling visual epics: discursive, non-linear compendiums which the viewer could enter at any point. Her figured paper panels, glued end-to-end and push-pinned contiguously around gallery and museum walls, violated the normative scale, valued materials, and arrangement of discrete, framed paintings. With this gesture outward into real space, Spero developed a critique modernist strategies by devaluing the hierarchy of commodified art objects, deploying instead a borderless image-surface to wall-surface, interacting and straining with the properties, cadence, and shape of the surrounding space. Her horizontal and vertical scrolls referenced the formats of ancient Chinese scroll paintings and Japanese hand-scrolls, Egyptian papyri and tomb paintings, Medieval illuminations and wall tapestries. In long, horizontal scrolls, such as *The First Language* (1979-1981), the artist performed a poetic reconstruction of the diversity of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

representations of women from the ancient to the contemporary world, validating a subjectivity of female experience. Her scroll-space became a symbolic space that put women at the center of a universe in which their perceptions and choices mattered. Spero's re-presentations gave substance to women's social and political concerns, to their emotional lives and their strategies for role-playing and masquerade, offering alternative possibilities for being and imagining. Snatching figures from a wide range of sources -- ancient mythology, contemporary media, art history, and literature -- she repainted and reworked the figures and their contexts into a multi-voiced, contemporary vehicle embodying both critical perspective and transformation.

In 1987, following her retrospective exhibitions in Great Britain, the U.S. and Canada, Spero jettisoned the picture plane of her scrolls by moving her images directly onto the walls of museums and public spaces in order to rewrite the representational forms of women through historical time, thereby engaging in a dialogue with architectural spaces and their histories, and with recontextualized museum objects. Spero's bodily hieroglyphics are printed with rubber stamps and polymer plates by her crew of assistants, closely orchestrated by the artist, enacting a controlled sense of chance on walls and ceilings, pedestals and classical columns, air-ducts and beams. Her repertory-like "cast of characters" or "paper dolls" survey and critique representational styles and notions of embedded meanings within images. Spero's multiple sources for her subtly differentiated and recycled images, not originated by the artist's hand in a single process, upsets tenets of authorship. This anti-hierarchical and unpredictable approach floats a matrix of layered correspondences across time and space, whose meanings are left open-ended and whose vectors can go in any direction. In addition, the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

emphemerality of these installations underscores Spero's critique of the notions of permanence and preciousness exemplified by museum practice.

In 1988, Spero painted her first temporary, full-fledged wall installations, *To Soar* (1988), at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art and *Waterworks* (1988), an installation at the Filter Gallery in the R.C. Harris Water Filtration Plant, Toronto. From this point on, Spero focused primarily on developing both temporary and permanent site-specific installations, engaging in visual dialogues and critiques within specific architectural sites in galleries and museums, and with their collections of objects. In selecting particular installations for analysis, I have chosen those with themes representative of the Spero's artistic scope and vision -- ranging between the celebratory and ecstatic, on one hand, to the horrific and tragic, on the other. In addition, I include a discussion of those wall paintings which, in my judgment, most intimately and dynamically integrate the elements and themes of the particular architectural and institutional environment. The installations that I examine include the following: *To Soar* (1988), *Waterworks* (1988), *Rebirth of Venus at 'Prospect 89,'* Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany (1989); *To Soar II* and *Ballad of Marie Sanders, the Jew's Whore,* Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA (1990); *Bogside, Derry* and *Well Woman Centre, Four Cities Project,* Derry, Northern Ireland (1990); *Minerva, Sky Goddess, Madrid,* Circulo de Bellas Arte, Madrid, Spain (1991); *Ballade von der 'Judenhure' Marie Sanders (Brecht)* and *Homage to Ana Mendieta, ein Nachschaffung von 'Body Tracks,'* Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, Germany (1991); *To Soar III,* Harold Washington Library, Chicago, IL (1991); *Premiere,* Ronacher Theater, Vienna, Austria (1993); *Ballad of Marie Sanders* and *Voices: Jewish Women in Time,* The Jewish

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Museum, New York (1993); *Masha Bruskina* and *Homage to Ana Mendieta,* The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (1993); *L 'envol,* Musee national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France (1995); *A Cycle in Time,* Banner Installation, Residenzgalerie, Salzburg, Austria (1995); *Raise/Time,* Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (1995); *Installation der Erinnerung,* Jewish Museum, Vienna, Austria (1996); *Improvisations,* Heeresspital Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria (1996); *Ballade von der 'Judenhure' Marie Sanders III (Brecht),* Hellerau, Dresden, Germany (1998); *Artemis, Acrobats, Divas, and Dancers* (2001), Arts for Transit, Metropolitan Transit Authority, Subway Station at 66th Street/Lincoln Center, New York.

Contributing enormously to my research has been the on-going access to both Spero and Golub's studios in New York, which include extensive archives and an exposure to the artists' separate but dialogic working methods. On an almost weekly basis, from March 1999 to March 2002, I visited with Spero in her studio to observe, research, and conduct in-depth interviews with her as well as with Golub and their colleagues. These formal, taped interviews and my innumerable, informal conversations with Spero and Golub were invaluable exchanges, contributing specific technical and general conceptual material to inform a richly complex background, while bringing into focus the kinds of questions I sought to address in the dissertation. In addition, the awarding of a John R. Rewald Fellowship, 1999-2000, from the Graduate Center, CUNY, allowed me to travel to Europe to complete research on Spero's permanent installations in the cities of Vienna, Innsbruck, Dresden, and Wuppertal. Constituting the case-study groundwork for contextual museological and installational frameworks were a CUNY

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Independent Study Project, "Artists in Museums: The Museum as Site" (1996, with Professor Sally Webster) and two Seminar Papers, "The Museum as Site: Artist-in-Residency Installations at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum" (1996, with Professor Robert Storr) and "Is This a Solo Dance or Can Anyone Join In? Three Case Studies of Artist-Curated Museum Installations" (1996, Professors Harriet Senie and Sally Webster). The confluence of these points of departure set the stage for my study.

Chapter One: Biographical Elements as Narrative, 1926-1986

Chapter One narrates key biographical elements, for the first time, as they relate to and illuminate the primary themes of Spero's mature work as well as tracing the evolving definitions of her identity as an artist. With a chronological study of her first exhibitions and her process of working in the context of family life with her painter-husband, Leon Golub, the chapter navigates among constellations of influences, complementary and antagonistic, from her years at New Trier High School (1940-1944, Winnetka, IL), the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1945-1949) and visits to the Field Museum of Natural History, the Paris Atelier of Andre Lhote (1949-1950) and museums and archaeological site in Italy (1956-1957). In post-World War II Chicago, Spero absorbed the sometimes conflicting ideas concerning definitions of modernism: those of Jean Dubuffet and Art Brut, French Existentialism and Surrealism, German Expressionism and the School of Paris. At the AIC, her earliest student works, especially her prints, reveal explorations of these multiple visual/cultural languages in representing the gesturing body moving in space, referencing dance and the performative. By 1950, after her graduation from the AIC (BFA, 1949) and a year in Paris studying with Lhote, Spero positioned the parameters of her work against the predominant tenets of a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

burgeoning Greenbergian Modernism and the idiom of abstraction, allying her painting with the figurative expressionism emerging in Chicago. Although she was juggling motherhood and marriage to an artist, Spero continued to paint, as did Golub, studying Etruscan and Roman art in Italy (1956-1957). Living in Paris with her family (1959-1964), Spero received critical recognition for her oil on canvas series, *Black Paris Paintings*. While working on these large-scale unstretched canvases of ambiguous figures merging with each other and with space, Spero painted smaller, gouache on paper, nightmare figures, often scrawled with obscenities or graffiti-like word/image conjunctions. As prescient images, they informed the material and conceptual direction her work would take.

After returning to New York in 1964, Spero continued to concentrate on working small and on paper, producing the *War Series* (1966-1970). Ardent anti-war activism and a nascent feminist consciousness combined to propel Spero's reaction against the prevailing, commercially viable, deadpan idiom of Pop Art and the rigidity of Minimalism's cool opacity and gestalt abstraction. Spero's breakthrough, idiosyncratic adaptation of Antonin Artaud's fractured texts within collaged, word/image sign systems, highlighted the disjunctions and inadequacies of language, especially within habituated, syntactic forms. The marginalized artist's angry persona (Spero's persona overlaying Artaud's), gesticulating in *Codex Artaud's* (1971) long, spliced scroll format, embodied an epic scale and employed a visual poetics as structure, interweaving stylized figures and fragmented, torn, and typed collage.

At A.I.R. Gallery in 1972, Spero discovered the freedom of space and movement to conceive and display her signature collaged, painted, and printed scrolls, *Torture of*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Women (1974-1976), *Notes in Time on Women* (1976-1979), and *The First Language* (1979-1980). Spero's readings of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and her dialogues within the Women's Art Movement precipitated her re-presentation of an alternative language of female subjectivity, cross-cultural mythologies, and obscure histories brought into the foreground of an enveloping architectural space. Spero's female-figures-as-protagonists began to strategically jump over and through texts in rhythmical, counterpoint movements; celebratory figures joined forces and suggested motion through space. The artist's figure/ground play implied that other boundaries were porous -- including those of nature/culture, private/public, and body/spirit -- as Spero eschewed the binary thinking habits of exclusive, oppositional categories. With three simultaneous one-person exhibitions on display during 1983 in New York, Spero realized herself as a "historisized" artist; she emphasized her differences with the work of emerging, mostly-male Neo-Expressionist artists of the 1980s by creating her scroll works, *Rebirth of Venus* (1984), *Sky Goddess* (1985) and *Sheela and the Dildo Dancer* (1987).

Chapter Two: The First Wall Painting Installations, 1987-1989

Chapter Two closely follows the genesis of Spero's figure/ground strategies in breaking the boundaries of the scroll format by directly printing on walls to affect the occupation of architectural space. Spero's envisioning of the installation format in relation to architectural elements and scale furthered the development of her themes, techniques, and imagery. She began the process of organizing a performative orchestration of her printing assistants on site and focusing on the ephemeral nature of her project, undoing the value assigned to the art object and disrupting the museum's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ultimate mission to house and preserve art objects. In 1987, during the retrospective exhibition of her work at London's Institute of Contemporary Art, Spero spontaneously printed a freeze-frame contingent of her protagonists/personae onto the entryway walls, splicing mythic figures with specific histories, and condensing the action removed from the general flow of events. In the following year, 1988, Spero printed her first temporary wall painting, *Waterworks*, at the R.C. Harris Water Filtration Plant, Toronto, within a 375 foot skylight corridor. Spero directed her crew to print on strategic architectural elements, her figures' punning and parodying the elements' formal and conceptual underpinnings. Implying centrifugal motion, the artist's figures appeared to emerge from different axes and perspectives, spinning trajectories outward. Fully engaged with architectural space and its meanings, Spero carried the collaborative and dialogic aspects of studio practices into the public sphere. With her tellingly titled 1988 installation, *To Soar*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, Spero embodied soaring-as-freedom. By articulating and highlighting the Museum's white spaces as poetic caesuras, as generative structural elements in which re-presentations of women -- culled synchronically from within various cultures and diachronically linking past, present, and a visionary future – performed in a space of imaginative fantasy, Spero re-created white space as paradoxically infinite and flat.

The artist's 1989 retrospective at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York signaled a change of status and critical reception for Spero's work. Critics such as Michael Brenson and Roberta Smith, writing for *The New York Times*, and Thomas McEvilley, writing for *Artforum*, discussed the consistent hallmarks of the artist's installations, emphasizing their transitory and performative nature, manifesting definitive

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

refusals of pictorial centrality, unity, mastery, center/edge dichotomies, apparent coherency, and closed meaning. I analyze these perspectives, representing critical commentary on Spero's formal strategies, while investigating the artist's themes in relation to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theorization of phenomenological space -- as an infinite unfolding of space inexorably linked to bodily movement, sharing boundaries of the psychic and physical. The perception of space as relational and social, as embodied, is a theme reappearing in Spero's installations, which I explore in the light of contemporary philosopher Martha Nussbaum's examinations of emotion as cognition. These theoretical tools are especially helpful in discussing Spero's 1989 installation, *Rebirth of Venus,* at the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt, Germany.

In concert with phenomenological and affective theories, I study Spero's artistic relationship to the mural tradition, her inversions and expansions of its parameters, by employing Francis O'Connor's discussions of the defining qualities of mural painting, especially those encompassing street art and graffiti. Within the mural tradition, movement through real time and imaginative timeframes is established by the artist in conjunction with crucial considerations of changing orientation, scale, sightlines, and light sources in play with complex architectural elements. Dovetailing with these particular elements of mural painting, I discuss Spero's encounters with technical challenges and negotiations on-site. Finally, I examine Spero's wall paintings, especially *Rebirth of Venus,* in relation to Luce Irigaray's feminist psychoanalytical theory of the development of play and language in girls, related to movements and gestures creating an active dancing and circling to define a symbolic space around themselves, attentive to relationships rather than to objects per se.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter Three: Fragmentation and Recreation, Wall Paintings, 1990-1994

Chapter Three continues an integration of formal, thematic, technical, and theoretical contexts with a discussion of Spero's two adjoining installations at the Smith College Art Museum from 1990, *To Soar II* and *Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore*, the title of a poem by Bertold Brecht, presaging the Holocaust in Germany. In these installations, Spero conjoined the horrific and ecstatic, the public and private, in a specifically poetic engagement with historical meanings. Eschewing synthesis for a discomfiting, participatory recognition of history in a site of encounter with memory, collective commemoration, and redemption in action, Spero visualized Brecht's poetics in the ballad genre, transcribing both the spoken voice and written, graphic text in relation to the Museum's architectural space. In so doing, Spero employed an Aristotelian notion of time, as physically unfolding, rather than as duration.

During the same year, the artist's installations in Northern Ireland, *Bogside, Derry* and *Well Woman Centre,* were conceived and developed within the historical context of the violence of the North's "Troubles" and the city of Derry's tradition of mural painting. I discuss the context of murals in Northern Ireland, as community demarcations of territories and political allegiance, as representing spaces to depict struggles for power, and as symbolically effective means for coalescing a cultural base of nationalism. I examine Spero's strategies in the context of this history -- deploying poems and images from contemporary Northern Ireland, local graffiti, and commemorative symbolism -- and the problematic reception to the artist's montage of historical, mythological, and contemporary images on the Bogside wall. Many of the artist's formal strategies echo visual interpretations of Brecht's ideas of an Epic Theater, which aimed to undermine

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

verisimilitude and naturalism by employing disorientation and disruptive fragmentation in order to disturb ordinary, normative associations and habits of syntax. In 1991, Spero continued to explore these disjunctions as well as the conjunctions of contemporary political conflict, myth, and history with her permanent installation, *Minerva, Sky Goddess, Madrid,* at the Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain. Spero and crew printed on multiple surfaces, outdoors on the terrazzo rooftop, integrating views of the city as backdrops. Mingling themes of the scared and profane, the cyclical in nature and the strivings of culture to establish permanence, Spero employed the mythic theme of Minerva (a statue on site) as a fulcrum for her wall and floor painting. Installed during anti-war demonstrations against the Persian Gulf War, Spero spontaneously incorporated an allegorical "chorus" as a communal voice for society in miniature.

At the Von der Heydt-Museum in Wuppertal, Germany, Spero reprinted during the same year a new version of *Ballade von der 'Judenhure' Marie Sanders (Brecht)* and directed an unplanned elegiac installation, *Homage to Ana Mendieta.* Integrating Brecht's original, German-language *Ballade* into the Museum, as a site of German cultural memory and collective, historical remembrance of the Nazi past, Spero's *Ballade* became a permanent architectural/mural element. Spero denied the anonymity of the "victim" by giving Marie Sanders a face and a voice, by naming her and retelling her tale. The *Ballade* was printed adjacent to a reenactment of Ana Mendieta's *Body Tracks* (1972-1974), which Spero had seen the artist perform at Franklin Furnace in New York in 1982. Spero ritualized Mendieta's performance, itself a renewed form of ritualization, displaying the bloodied body as a metaphor of sacrifice, transformation, and the female protagonist's control over her own representation and sexuality. Focusing on the theme of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

transformation, Spero installed a celebratory, permanent wall painting in 1991, *To Soar III,* at Chicago's Harold Washington Public Library in a 125 foot corridor. Here, Spero emphasized a space of imaginative time and historical/mythological timeframes, alluding to the reader's internal act of reading and mentally picturing possibilities, while interacting with historical knowledge, researching, and learning. Also in 1991, Spero printed a temporary installation, *Vulture Goddess* and *Chorus Line,* on the ceiling I-beams at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, in the group exhibition curated by Robert Storr, *Devil on the Stairs: Looking Back on the Eighties..*

In 1993, Spero revisited and reinterpreted the themes of *Ballad of Marie Sanders* at the Jewish Museum, New York, where she juxtaposed a related text/image installation, *Voices: Jewish Women in Time.* By visually interpreting the poetic structures of Nellie Sachs's poem, "That the Persecuted May Not Become the Persecutors," and Irene Klepfisz's poem, "Death Camp," the artist wove the ballad and the lyric into an epic sweep, confronting the viewer with a synesthetic passage which implied relentless "footsteps," heading toward separation and absence through a poetics of incantation and repetition. Spero re-presented a highly charged reenactment of *Homage to Ana Mendieta* at the Whitney Museum of American Art in the 1993 Biennial Exhibition, provocatively pairing it with a historically inflected installation, *Masha Bruskina.* Emphasizing women's exclusions from canonical history, *Bruskina* re-presented a collaged, journalistic tale, tracing one particular erasure from history, and then, reinstating voices and images of witness, resurrecting them from oblivion.

Even in her most celebratory installations, Spero injects self-reflexive critiques of representation -- pointing to the processes of representation -- evinced by her permanent

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

wall painting, *Premiere* (1993), at the Ronacher Theater in Vienna, Austria. Re-presenting female entertainers from Vienna's popular revues, burlesques, and cabarets from the 1920s and 1930s, and mingling them with mythical figures, Spero's images pun the architectural conceits of faux, neo-classical elements and decoration, subverting proportion, harmony, and balance with a centrifugal motion outward, around the rotunda of the theater foyer. Highlighting the themes of the "threshold" as linked to transformation, and theater space as fantasy in a "suspension of disbelief," the artist's female performers gesticulate in role-playing, masking, and mocking their own exotic "otherness." Irreverently shifting the borders of identity, illusion, and masking, the artist's interplay of images within the Theater references the ecstatic arts of dance, music, and theater.

Chapter Four: Wall Paintings in Museums, and Elsewhere, 1995-2001

Once she had 'released' the centrifugal motion of *Premiere,* Spero literalized this soaring outward in 1995, with a silk, collage-like banner printed with images, *A Cycle in Time,* installed in a horseshoe pattern, hanging overhead in the foyer of the Residenz Galerie, Salzburg, Austria. From the Residenz collection, the artist appropriated new allegorical figures into her "cast of characters" and formally mimed the Baroque/Rococo architectural elements of the Museum into her format. To analyze Spero's allusions to decoration and her use of textile to mime architectural elements, I discuss Gottfried Semper's theories on the origins of architecture in the ancient draping of fabric textiles over armatures, uniting decoration and structure. Spero's images printed in architectural contexts consistently pun the binary aspects of ornamentation/structure and unfolding/seaming by marking a simultaneous separation and joining of exterior and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

interior spaces. By deploying an inverted strategy from the one in Salzburg, Spero addressed these same themes in her printing of *L'envol* (1995) at the Musee National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris. Emphasizing transitional points in a dynamic structure, Spero and crew printed figures on the Pompidou's cylindrically shaped glass escalator, integrating a site of ascending and descending movement with the reflective, doubling qualities of glass. The artist mimed the building's inside-out fluidity and employed the glass framework as a transparent ground for an illuminated panorama of City.

Spero reinterpreted another swath of art historical periodization with her installation, *Raise/Time* (1995), in the Classical Greek and Roman galleries at the Arthur M. Sackler Museum of the Harvard University Art Museums. Leaving untouched the Museum's display of classical objects in the galleries, Spero and crew integrated a play of printed, gesturing, shadow-puppet figures on walls, skylights, and pedestals, parodying architectural elements, addressing "the classics," and usurping white wall spaces as structural reference points. With a variety of printing techniques and formal strategies, the artist disrupted the "authority" of the "classics" and the solemnity, balance, and harmony of classical presentation. Spero unleashed another disruption of established authority in 1996, with her installation, *Improvisations*, at the Heeresspital Innsbruck, in the Tyrol, Austria. On the interior walls of an Austrian military base hospital, home to medical trainees, the artist linked the themes of improvisation, cyclical healing, and rhythmic dance and music. Via her formal and iconographic strategies, Spero nevertheless aimed to upset the rational ordering and symmetrical structuring of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

architectural space with a centrifugal movement outward, disordering the machine-like clarity and discipline of the military structure.

Earlier in 1996, Spero returned to the themes of individual and collective memory in her project, *Installation of Remembrance,* installed at the Vienna Jewish Museum. Spero integrated historical and contemporary images and texts with objects from the Museum's collections, ritual and everyday objects from Jewish life in Vienna before the community was destroyed in 1938 with Hitler's Anschluss. The artist's primary themes of rescue from oblivion and re-presentation in visual/textual languages complemented the Museum's mission of piecing together the histories of Austrian Jewish culture. Spero's own Jewish heritage spurred her research and her undertaking to add female voices in a dialogue with patriarchal voices. The drama embedded in rituals -- reflecting the cycles of human life -- integrated into the Jewish calendar year, offered the artist images and formal strategies to reinterpret within the architectural framework, reenacting an allegory of loss and mourning while recognizing the triumph of survival and regeneration in the continuity of life.

Spero further explored these themes in Germany in 1998 at the Festspielhaus, Hellerau, Dresden, with her installation *Ballade von der 'Judenhure' Marie Sanders III.* Hellerau's uniquely layered history is condensed within its buildings: a utopian artists' and artisans' colony begun in 1912, taken over by the Nazis as a training academy, and then, occupied by the Soviets as a military hospital. Spero's apocalyptic/ecstatic formal and iconographical languages found a complementary match in the architectural ruins created by utopian dreams subsequently usurped by the "nightmare" of history's two powerful and destructive twentieth century ideologies. Spero interwove a reinterpretation

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of Brecht's *Ballade* with gestures of ghostly processional movement, ritual, dancing, and a *Rebirth of Euridice*, as an active protagonist. The artist "resurrected" Euridice on the level of the imaginary/sensory, weaving lyrics and images, and condensing action in an exemplary, evocative space. In this section, I examine Spero's formal and thematic relations to gestural dance/theater, especially to the contemporary, German expressionistic dance of Pina Bausch and her Wuppertal-based Tanztheater.

The last installation I discuss is Spero's most recent and most complex project, *Artemis, Acrobats, Divas, and Dancers* (1999-2001), a mosaic for the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority's Arts in Transit Project at 66th St. – Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts Subway Station. On the walls of the North and South stations are twenty-two colored glass and ceramic mosaic panels, designed by Spero as an architectural environment interweaving ninety-two figures, translated into a mosaic of the ecstatic and performing arts. The artist's celebratory themes are transcribed into cubes of tesserae, carrying luminescent light from within triggered by ambient light. I examine the formal properties of light, a recurring structural element key to Spero's installation projects, as a major thematic and compositional element. While Spero's subway muses reference the majestic stasis of Byzantine mosaics as well as Gustave Klimt's Viennese art nouveau murals and the "faux antique" generally, the artist's protagonist-muses are active creators, athletes, mythic and historical figures, contemporary roller-bladers and aboriginal spirit-figures-cum-hip-hop dancers. In addition, Spero emphasizes the fluid, interpenetrating passages of perceived timeframes -- compressed and symbolized -- represented by figure/ground relations and the formatted gestures of the Diva. The Diva-as-performer, subtly suggesting movement in repeated freeze-frames, imitating a huge

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

flipbook whose pages have been blown open, integrates the themes of performance, light, and movement through time and space, while acknowledging the framework of trains flickering past.

To conclude, I summarize the contextualization of Spero's installations within her own oeuvre as well as within feminist art, Holocaust art, and installation art. I discuss how Spero's work has been historicized and her influence on the work of younger generations of artists. Finally, I update the status of Spero's planned and recently completed installation projects.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Notes

[1] Robert Storr, "Peripheral Visions," *Parkett* 14 (November 1987): 6.

[2] Jon Bird, Jo Anna Isaak and Sylvére Lotringer, *Nancy Spero* (London: Phaidon Press, 1996).

[3] *Nancy Spero,* exh. cat. (London: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1987). *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950,* exh. cat (Syracuse, NY: Everson Museum of Art, 1987).

[4] Catherine de Zegher, "Tongue, Torture and Free Rein in Spero's Explicit Series of Paintings," *Nancy Spero,* exh. cat. (Birmingham, England: Ikon Gallery, 1998), 4-15.

[5] Susan Harris, "Dancing in Space," *Nancy Spero,* exh. cat. (Malmo, Sweden: Malmo Konsthall, 1994), 9-43.

[6] Amy Schlegel, "Codex Spero: Feminist and Activist Practices in New York Since the Late 1960s," Ph.D. dissertation (Columbia University of the City of New York, 1997). Two other dissertations employing similar feminist theoretical frameworks in analyzing Spero's oeuvre as one case study among relational studies of inter-generational feminist artists are: Yvonne M. Gaudelius, "Art-Iculating Women's Voices: An Exploration of Women's Subjectivity in Contemporary Women's Visual Art, Feminist Pedagogy and French Feminist Theory," Ph. D. dissertation (Pennsylvania State University, 1993) and Cheryl K. Dudek, "The Pictorial Narrative in Contemporary Art," Ph. D. dissertation (School of Education, New York University, 1995). Neither text addresses installation. See also Duston Spear, "Foremothers: Ancestor, Activist, Artist and the Construction of a Painter's Lineage," M.A. Thesis (New York University, Gallatin Division, 1998).

[7] Ibid., Gaudelius.

[8] Robert Storr, "Nancy Spero: Central Issues: Peripheral Visions," *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950,* exh. cat. (Syracuse, NY: Everson Museum of Art, 1987): 45-60; Robert Storr, *Nancy Spero: Rebirth of Venus,* ed. Edit deAk (Kyoto Shoin, Japan: Art Random, 1989); Robert Storr, "When This You See...," *Nancy Spero – Woman Breathing,* exh. cat. (Ulm, Germany: Ulmer Museum, 1992): 17-22.

[9] Leon Golub, "Letters," *Artforum* 7, no. 1 (March 1969): 3-4.

[10] Jeanne Siegel quotes Spero in "Nancy Spero: Woman as Protagonist," *Arts Magazine* 62 (September 1987): 13.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter One: Biographical Elements as Narrative, 1926-1987

In Chicago

> Nancy Spero knows the science and the art of fragmentation and juxtaposition. She knows how to be broken apart and put things together again... How far can memory and meaning be stretched before the visual bond snaps?... Graffiti, anguished scrawls that can read as names or imprecations but really say Listen, Look. I Exist.
>
> Lucy Lippard, 1976[1]

> I think that if you don't use the body there is an absence. And to use the body embodies an idea, and in a sense, it's the most complex and challenging kind of conceptual reference ... the body is a symbol and a hieroglyph, in a sense, an extension of language.
>
> Nancy Spero, 1987[2]

A year after Nancy Spero's birth (b. 1926) in Cleveland, Ohio, her family picked up stakes and moved to the bustling city of Chicago, where she grew up and began her career as an artist. Since the 1880s Chicago had been a preeminent modern urban environment, boasting iron and steel skyscrapers and home to significant architectural projects by Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright. By 1937, Lazlo Moholy-Nagy would choose Chicago as the premiere site to transplant the New Bauhaus, later to become The Institute of Design and, in 1938, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe began his historic teaching career at the Illinois Institute of Technology, developing modular grid master plans for the school and designing such internationally recognized projects as the North Lake Shore Drive apartment houses. During the years that Spero came of age, Chicago became the City where International European modernism and design took root, with its emphasis on an idealized functionalism and austerity tied to concepts of a new, utopian social order to be achieved via good design and technologically advanced materials.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Contrasting the 'purist' perception of Chicago as a modernist designer's Mecca were the economic realities of City life, which revolved around its gritty industrial hub. This Midwestern nexus was a huge Merchandize Mart, a center for meat packing, steel mills and iron works, manufacturing and heavy industry, employing immigrants from many cultures and diverse backgrounds. The tensions between the two conceptions of a modern Chicago – one emphasizing a utopian aesthetic of good design and the other focusing on the everyday struggles emerging from the daily grind of production, consumption, and survival – defined the culture of the City. The dichotomy of the two Chicagos would inform the attitudes and approaches of cultural figures, writers, and artists as diverse as Upton Sinclair, Carl Sandburg, Norman Mailer, Irving Petlin, and Leon Golub.

The first modern School of Urbanism established to study the dynamics of the contemporary metropolis opened at the University of Chicago, where Robert Maynard Hutchins, renowned educator and President of the University (1929-1951), encouraged a liberal humanist education and the study of the Great Books of the Western World as the foundation of undergraduate education.[3] The Art Institute of Chicago, including its prestigious museum as well as its schools of art and drama, and theater and exhibition spaces for students, was increasingly open to a modernist aesthetic, while becoming a vital part of the city's cultural life. Chicago's rapid urban development and growing cultural institutions made it an upstart rival to New York City. By the 1920s, Chicago had achieved the status of an international city and in the first half of the twentieth century this new, modern metropolis produced a group of artists, Spero prominent among them,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

who would immerse themselves in the challenges of articulating a critical modernist aesthetic tied to the crises of humanist themes emerging from the post-World War II era.

The unprecedented growth of Chicago's printing and publishing industries was perhaps a major factor in Henry Spero's decision to move his young family to the City. Spero's father, Henry, was a successful businessman who owned and operated a business that purchased, repaired, and sold enormous printing presses for the city's many newspapers and publishers (Figure 1). Henry Spero had been born into a large family of German Jewish heritage at the turn of the century in Cleveland, Ohio.[4] Henry's father, a first generation Midwesterner, died when Henry was twelve years old, leaving the eldest uncle to head the family of seven siblings. The artist recalls her father's being "an anglophile. He was tall and looked rather austere but a bit less sober than a puritan; he was a puritan with a sense of humor."[5] In Chicago's business world and at home, Henry was "something of a maverick with a fine reputation in the printing business. He was a sort of Don Quixote, a curious combination of the practical and impractical. He never knew when the next sale of a printing press was coming. Sometimes business was good, but my parents had many anxieties and worries between times."[6] Among Spero's most vivid childhood memories is a strong kinesthetic sense of the living spaces the family occupied as they moved from Chicago to various homes in the suburbs, the spaces expanding or contracting proportionately in sync with the neighborhood's character. These significant haptic experiences of the rooms Spero lived and played in left spatial memory traces on the young girl.[7] Both the potent phenomenological experience of living spaces and the materials of letterpress printing, in particular, would figure large in the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

development of Spero's later working processes and the graphic quality of her collaged images.

Polly Susselman, the artist's mother, was born at the turn of the century in Scranton, Pennsylvania, one of six siblings whose grandparents had emigrated from Russia. Polly's father had designed lace for factory production in Scranton. Spero remembers her mother as an extremely private person, constantly attempting to protect Nancy and her younger sister, Carol (b. 1928), from any anxiety concerning the ups-and-downs of the printing business. The two sisters attended local public schools, and in 1940, when Nancy was in junior high school, the family moved to the Chicago suburb of Winnetka. Although Spero attended and enjoyed art classes in school, she did not consider making art a career: "I guess I was encouraged early to be an artist by teachers, even during grammar school. But I never thought about being an artist because somehow I felt that it wasn't serious enough, ... I didn't think about it in those terms – that an artist wasn't able to make a tangible contribution to society. I don't know why; I suppose it was my familial situation."[8] At this early stage in her life, Spero was absorbed by the dynamics of a successful middle class family's coping with the Depression era, giving her an ethical perspective on making a contribution to society and fostering an acknowledgement of a wider world in which she could, and perhaps should, act.

One of the primary reasons for the Spero family's move to the suburbs of Winnetka was to ensure that both Nancy and Carol would have access to quality educational institutions. Nancy attended New Trier High School, a highly regarded and progressive school. As a rigorous public school, New Trier's curriculum was competitive with those of many private schools. Students interested in art could choose from a range

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of art courses in studio and art history: painting, sculpture, design, figure drawing, murals, stagecraft, printmaking, art appreciation and applied art. The Head of the school's Art Department, Catherine M. Murphy was supportive of Spero's talents, but the young artist's most important art teacher was Frank E. Holland, who would later write about his former pupil's paintings as a critic for the *Chicago Sun Times*.[9] In addition to giving basic instruction in the working methods of various media and design principles, Holland was conversant with the general themes and styles of modernism, especially cubism and expressionism. Spero studied painting techniques and styles, completed the expected collage preparatory courses, and was a member of the student Arts League and News Staff, graduating in 1944.[10]

While she was encouraged in her studies by her art teachers at New Trier, Spero recalls feeling socially uncomfortable and restless in the homogeneous suburban high school environment of middle class America:

> I felt disassociated from my peers, particularly in high school, detached, withdrawn, and rebellious of middle-class suburban existence and things as they were. In a WASP school environment I felt alienated by being Jewish, although my family was non-religious and assimilated -- and my intent in art was accentuating my alienated status... Later learning about the Holocaust, I became more aware that one's circumstance of birth -- that religion, race, gender, sexual preference, etc. -- could victimize one... The antennae were out, picking up signals, super-sensitive. But on the other hand, I repressed a lot, not knowing my role yet.[11]

As Spero's internalized search for her role as an artist emerged, it was integrated with a social conscience shaped by the harrowing catastrophes of World War II and her nascent perceptions about what an identity as a vulnerable "outsider" meant: as a woman, as a Jew, and an aspiring artist.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

By 1944, Spero considered whether she ought to attend art school or pursue a liberal arts degree. She decided to enroll at the University of Colorado, Boulder, after having spent a summer as a camp "arts and crafts" counselor in rural Colorado. Spero was attracted to the rough beauty of the landscape and hoped that this new environment might translate into an adventurous challenge away from home. For generations of artists, the West had been synonymous with personal freedom and a romanticized version of cowboy culture and Spero's generation was no different, especially with America's entry into grim realities of the War. But Spero's experience of the prevailing atmosphere and the West's heartland culture accentuated her isolation. Her tastes and aesthetic sensibilities were forming:

> My year at the University of Colorado, before I transferred to art school [School of the Art Institute of Chicago], was a drag. I had gone to Colorado looking for cowboys and freedom! It was during war time, the fall of 1944. There were all these officers around, training in languages, in Japanese. I went to Denver with my roommate a few times. We went to clubs there. And here were all these fliers, these pilots, very cocky guys. I found I didn't like the whole atmosphere.[12]

The Art Institute of Chicago

Spero had grown accustomed to the lively urban culture and sophistication of Chicago. In the midst of the War, she applied and was accepted into the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1945), an environment that proved crucial not only for her artistic development but also for the identification of a role for herself as an artist: "When I went to art school, I had found my milieu, alienated ones. Society's misfits – artists!"[13] At last, Spero encountered a like-minded creative, critical, and heterogeneous culture. Within the Art Institute, she became part of a small group for whom aesthetic, cultural, and social

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

issues converged in explorations of the human form as the most potent carrier of meaning.

Significantly, the beginnings of the Art Institute can be traced to the Chicago Academy of Design which had been founded by artists in 1866 to provide education in the studio arts and exhibition opportunities. The Academy's collections began as a modest gift of plaster casts from the French government. After the devastating fire of 1872 destroyed its home, the Academy incorporated into the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts in 1879, an institution founded by a group of Chicago businessmen. The Academy was renamed the Art Institute of Chicago in 1882. The Institute and its School moved into a building erected for the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893: a building on Michigan Avenue and Adams Street which housed numerous international conferences held under the auspices of the Exposition. With broad-minded and idealistic visions, the entablature was engraved with the names of Michelangelo, Rembrandt, van Eyck, and Kanaoka (a tenth century Japanese painter with no surviving paintings), and other western and non-western artists of legendary status. By the time Spero arrived to study in 1945, the Institute was the oldest and largest art museum and school in the Midwest, with renowned international collections, including Greek, Etruscan, Roman, and Egyptian art; paintings, sculpture, prints and decorative arts from the Middle Ages through the 1900s; Asian art; textiles and drawings.

While Spero was a student, the School and the Institute's museum were located in the same building; the School's classes were held in the basement of Blackstone Hall. Students would make their way to the basement and pass by the classical casts and temporary exhibitions on view. In addition, classes were often held in the galleries and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the students always had access to the collections. "We'd go down into the bowels of the museum to school everyday and there would be huge classic casts in this big hall, and the temporary exhibits of student work. We would go into the museum any time we liked. I always had the feeling that as a potential artist and as an art student I had access to museums."[14] The notion that artists should necessarily engage in ongoing dialogues and critiques of interpretation within museums and their collections would become a significant theme in Spero's oeuvre, culminating in her installation projects. Her ongoing exploration of the role of the museum as a repository of cultures, objects, and their narratives became a theme embedded in Spero's conceptual and working processes.

Some of the first special exhibitions that the young art students would have seen at the Art Institute in 1945, 1946, and 1947 were on modernist themes: "Prints by Picasso," "Fourteen Paintings by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque," "Recent Lithographs by Pablo Picasso," "Henry Moore," "Max Beckmann," "Lithographs by Stuart Davis," and "Prints by Adja Yunkers." Other prominent focuses were on the textile collection, "Seven Hundred Years of Spanish Textiles," "Mediterranean Textiles," and "Tapestry: The Weaver's Pictorial Technique," and on the Asian collections, "Japanese Prints," "Landscape Views of Edo," and "Exhibition of Japanese Primitives."[15] Spero frequently revisited and studied these changing exhibitions as well as the permanent collections and was particularly drawn to observing modernist painting and printmaking, historical textiles and tapestries, and Asian art.

Exposure to international modernism from France and Germany and to non-Western cultures was encouraged by Spero's most important teacher at the AIC, the Bauhaus-trained, Paul Wieghardt (1897-1969). Wieghardt had attended the Art and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Applied Art School in Cologne (1920) and continued his studies at the Weimar Bauhaus in 1923, working with Wassily Kandinsky, Moholy-Nagy, Lyonel Feininger, Oskar Schlemmer, and Paul Klee. Wieghardt soon cultivated a personal friendship with Klee, sharing his interests in music, the study of nature and non-Western cultures, and developing an abstract pictorial language while retaining a figurative vocabulary. Wieghardt's subject was the figure in space, which he executed with a fauvist color sense, an awareness of Matisse's compositional styles, and an expressionist emotional verve. The lessons he learned in design at the Bauhaus and his affinity for both the School of Paris and the German Expressionists were passed on to his students.[16]

Absorbed by the environment of the School and Institute, Spero reveled in her new milieu: "I really think that was my happiest time as a student... It was a lively place. There was a lot of interchange with students."[17] Peer dialogue and teacher-student exchange was an integral part of the young artist's experience. Chicago-based sculptor, Richard Hunt, a student at the Art Institute in the postwar years, recently noted that the international influx and mix of students and teachers, political refugees from all parts of Europe and Asia, contributed to the School's diversity and the open engagement of ideas. Hunt became the sculptor Nellie Bar's student assistant.[18] The variety of life and art experiences, philosophies and approaches, percolated in a Chicago culture expanding its conceptual notions about the arts, precipitated by the return of GI's from the devastation of war-torn Europe and Asia.

Among the returning GI's who went back to school under the GI Bill and who would figure so importantly in the artistic upheavals at the Art Institute was Leon Golub (b. 1922), a Chicago native. Golub had completed a BA degree in art history at the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

University of Chicago (1942) before becoming a cartographer for the US Army during World War II. He returned to study painting under the GI Bill at the Art Institute in 1947, where he met Spero, his future wife. Golub was clearly fascinated by Spero's working methods and her artistic presence: "Among the students I would characterize her as elegantly subversive. You see, she moved between things in a kind of interesting way. And she had a rather interesting air about her and so she was central to our little group... [In the studio classes] there would be this flurry of activity and she'd throw paint around in all directions. And then she'd disappear again."[19]

The "little group" with whom Spero had dialogues consisted of art students, some of whom were older GI's, engrossed in studying German Expressionist art as well as ethnographic and tribal arts. They looked to the modernisms of Germany and France for examples of pictorial experimentation and subject matter rather than to Midwestern Regionalism (e.g. Thomas Hart Benton or John Steuart Curry), naturalism, or academic art. Spero remembers her artistic interests often dovetailing with the group's concerns: "I was in a loosely knit group then, and we were interested in German Expressionism, Insane Art, so-called Primitive Art ... Outsider Art. But I had this natural expressionist impetus in the work."[20] The interchange of information via journals and exhibition catalogues was paramount; students exchanged international journals including *Cahiers d'art* and *Minotaure*. Art historian Peter Selz, a graduate student during this period at the University of Chicago, has described the general aesthetic and philosophical contexts informing this group of artists, which included Golub, Cosmo Campoli, George Cohen, Ray Fink, and Joseph Goto.[21] Within a figurative vocabulary, these artists sought a pictorial means to symbolize the scope and character of the horrors encountered in the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

War which would reverberate historically but would speak in contemporary terms. "Auschwitz and Hiroshima were fresh in people's minds," emphasized Selz.[22] The utopian dreams nurtured at the New Bauhaus, linking the geometric abstraction of the International Style to early twentieth century notions of improving the social order, were unequivocally rejected by this group at the AIC. Selz hypothesized later: "Perhaps it was partly in rebellion against this cool rationalist and authoritarian quality that an art of surreal intuition and expressionist subjectivity was collected and produced."[23]

For Spero and her "little group," European expressionism, especially the paintings and prints of Emile Nolde, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Oskar Kokoschka, and Max Beckmann, encompassed the extremes of emotional intensity and an exploration of inner psychological states, while aspects of international Surrealism in the work of Max Ernst, Joan Miro, and Matta (Roberto Matta Echaurren), offered the technique of automatism as a visual parallel to Freud's method of free association in order to mine the subconscious. With their readings of Freud allied to their search for meaningful figuration, Spero and her peers felt an affinity for the work of Surrealist artists, while rejecting the specific formulations and manifestoes of the older artists. Serendipitously, in 1947, Chicago's Fifty-Eighth Annual Exhibition of American Paintings and Sculpture was held at the AIC, *Abstract and Surrealist American Art,* curated by Frederick A. Sweet and Katharine Kuh, featuring a broad overview of Americans working in a Surrealist vein. In addition, Chicago artists had access to international Surrealist works by Ernst, Klee, Yves Tanguy, Rene Magritte, and Matta in Joseph Shapiro's Chicago collection, which was open to artists to visit.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Spero's student lithographs from 1947 and 1948 embody a passionate expressionist impulse toward distortion and exaggeration in the service of subjective feeling evinced in a trail of overlapping, automatist-inflected paroxysms and scrawled letters. *Dancing Figure* (Figure 2) is comprised of a scattering of alternately bold and delicate markings full of energy, circulating centrifugally like electrical charges moving outward. The zigzagging and scalloped motion of simultaneous timeframes, captured in a kind of 'time-lapse' is sketchily traced in layers of fluctuating lines, shadows, and textures. The linear dancing figure, surrounded by an aura of unpredictable energy, invokes a transcription of the incendiary, Dionysian wildness of a "Rite of Spring," a kinesthetic experience of an initiate's brutal transformation. The figure and her vibrating echoes define a horizonless space and imply movements in all directions simultaneously, forward and back, and side-to-side. The dancing figure, its relationship to space, and its transformations during the action of the dance will become primary themes within the artist's oeuvre. In fact, Spero's student lithographs contain the seeds of primary themes which she will fully explore in her later scrolls and wall paintings. *Dancing Figure* represents a condensed nugget which Spero will tap into for multiple pictorial and thematic strategies on an epic scale in the 1970s and 1980s.

Dancing Figure references as well the use of words (a coupling of fragments, perhaps spelling the words "Ballet," "Alle," or "Shall We...") or text in conjunction with images that will become hallmarks of the artist's work: "I used a lot of language in those days. It is some frenzied, fiery, apocalyptic kind of dance."[24] Spero notes further, "I did these spastic, dancing, angular, stylized figures. On one lithograph, I might still have it, I wrote "K" for Kafka. ... I was careless. Sometimes the letters would come out backwards

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[reversed in the printing process], but nevertheless, it was graffiti-like writing."[25] Drawing and writing, including street graffiti, were both related codes for Spero, systems of expression that had visual, graphic, aural, and symbolic qualities: "One was an extension of the other, a natural interaction or continuum."[26] Spero recalls influential experiments by European artists, "There were certain French artists who used language, such as Henri Michaux's automatic writing."[27] Michaux (1899-1984), the Belgian poet and artist who lived in Paris, first exhibited his calligraphic ink drawings in Europe during the late 1930s, as "exorcisms" of modern industrial society and formal aesthetic canons.[28] His pencil drawings and gouache on paper, informed by the surrealist fantasy worlds of Ernst and Klee, crowded grotesque human forms within ambiguous existential wastelands. Michaux's concept of drawing as handwriting, a spinning out of spontaneous responses in the process of uncovering raw primal emotion, had permeated expressionist and surrealist thought during the 1930s and 1940s, thus impacting Spero's approach to image making via her teachers and the European journals which her group shared.

In the spring of 1948, Spero studied with the renowned British-born, Paris-based printmaker, William Stanley Hayter (1901-1988), at the AIC. Hayter was an artist of strong political and social convictions, who enlisted his passionate graphic language in support of the republican cause during the Spanish Civil War and in other anti-fascist causes. In 1945, Hayter established the well known Atelier 17 in New York's Greenwich Village, named after his old Paris studio on the Rue Campagne-Premiere. He was admired for his cooperative approach to studio printmaking practices and his experimentation with new techniques, subsequently going on to work closely with Abstract Expressionists such as Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko, and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

David Smith. Hayter wrote theoretical texts on automatism and expressive abstraction as well as writing indispensable compendiums on printmaking processes. In addition, word and image conjunctions were important facets of his graphic approach; he often collaborated with writers, such as Samuel Beckett, in seeking a contrapuntal dialogue between the two sign systems, rejecting mere illustration. Spero was struck by Hayter's commitment to socio-political themes and his technical virtuosity. She printed only one etching in his class, with the cheeky title, *The Burp* (1948). In her etching, a linear figure drawing suggestive of automatic writing, Spero incorporates a continuously serpentine line with the handwritten title in the lower third of the image. The wobbly, balloon-headed figure circumscribes a scrawny form, full of nervous energy and suggesting an irreverent wit by lifting an over-sized hand to squelch a burp. In this early student etching, Spero's drawing-cum-handwriting invokes the utterance of sounds via its scrawling form, creating a synesthesia of sound, touch, and texture implied by visual means. The etching bears the hallmarks as well of Spero's lightness and delicacy of touch and her self-mocking humor, characteristics which would emerge in the artist's celebratory scrolls.

The contexts informing the subjects and visual language of Spero's prints and paintings during her years at the AIC were multiple, a constellation of ideas emerging from the trauma of the post-Holocaust, post-Hiroshima world. In the late 1940s, distorted and tortured images of human forms appeared simultaneously in the work of artists such as Jean Dubuffet, Alberto Giacometti, and Henri Fautrier.[29] Of all these artists, it was Dubuffet (1901-1985), a critical creative force internationally in the post-war era, who had an especially strong presence in Chicago. Artists knew his work from art journals,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

visits to Katherine Kuh's Diana Court Gallery, Joseph Shapiro's collection, and the Institute's own collection of modern and contemporary art (later curated by Kuh). Dubuffet's work and his interests in ethnographic, folk, and schizophrenic art confirmed the direction these young artists were taking.[30] While staying in New York for several months during the winter of 1951-1952, Dubuffet visited Chicago, where a major exhibition of his work was mounted at the Chicago Arts Club. At the Arts Club he delivered his notoriously iconoclastic speech, "Anti-Cultural Positions," on December 20, 1951, which was discussed at length within Spero and Golub's circle.[31] In common with other artists working in Paris after the Nazi occupation, such as Fautrier and Giacometti, Dubuffet was drawn to a style of rawness, energy, and directness which often incorporated found materials and detritus. Dubuffet used the term 'art brut' to signify this gritty, raw art form, which owed much to the spontaneity of children's art and to the scatology of graffiti adorning post-war Paris. He offered an alternative figurative and anti-aesthetic interpretation of post-war alienation and existential concerns.

In his personal, anarchistic treatise delivered at Chicago's Arts Club in 1951, Dubuffet decried as specious the notions of beauty and harmony dominant in Western art, championing instead the authenticity of ritual objects of "so-called primitive peoples... Personally I believe very much in the values of savagery. I mean instinct, passion, mood, violence, madness."[32] While taking his inspiration from the streets (and often, his materials) to attack the complacency and bourgeois values which, in his analysis, had failed to halt the spread of Nazi terror, his mocking polemic referenced the semiotics of language, which he characterized as an arbitrary, "rough system of signs."[33] This "rough system of signs," in fact, the culture's pinnacle of semantic achievement,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was seen by many artists as having been irreparably dismantled and destroyed by Fascism and Nazism; language and all means of habitual, learned representation were therefore in crisis, as was the West's system of gaining knowledge through empirical observation and rational analysis.[34] As an antidote, Dubuffet embraced the directness of visual art as a new means of immediate and profound communication: "Painting manipulates materials which are themselves *living substances*. That is why painting allows one to go much further than words do in approaching things and *conjuring* them... [Painting is] much closer to the *cry* or to the *dance*."[35] Dubuffet's emphasis on the transformative qualities of primal matter and embodiment, of conjuring movement and visualizing emotive sounds appealed to Spero. She eventually came to focus intuitively on these alchemical, performative, and initiatory aspects related to Dubuffet's ideas: the magical transformation of material substances, an alchemy of raw matter responding to unmediated emotion, provoking synesthetic sense experiences.

In addition, Dubuffet rekindled an important artistic recognition of Hans Prinzhorn's (1886-1933) collection of the art of the mentally ill. A fellow participant in the Art Institute's "little group," George Cohen, wrote to art dealer Richard Feigen, "We all seemed to know about Hans Prinzhorn's *Bilderei der Geistkranken* [*Artistry of the Mentally Ill*, 1922]; later, in 1951, Maurice Culberg [the Chicago collector and asbestos manufacturer] gave me a copy of Dubuffet's *L'Art Brut Prefere aux Arts Culturels*."[36] Both Spero and Golub were familiar with the Prinzhorn Collection via art journals and magazines. Prinzhorn believed in the curative power of personal expression and the therapeutic benefits of the act of drawing. The images made by his psychiatric patients chronicled the painful struggle to reconcile personal, interior existence with the demands

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of external forces, familial and societal forces that Freud had charted in his patients earlier (i.e. *Civilization and its Discontents* and *Totem and Taboo*).

In the Museum

An equally vital source feeding Spero's visual and conceptual landscape was Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History, a museum visited frequently by her coterie of artist friends. Fellow artist, Cohen wrote to Feigen about the importance of their trips to this museum: "When we wanted something to see we often would go to the Field Museum to look at the then-not-so-well-displayed-not-thought-to-be-great-art collections from New Guinea, New Ireland, New Caledonia and Old America. It held a lot more than form for us."[37] The Field Museum had been founded in 1893 as the Columbian Museum of Chicago during the Exposition, when it housed biological and anthropological collections. In 1905 the Museum's name was changed to Field Museum of Natural History, after its major benefactor, Marshall Field (the department store mogul), when its collections reflected a focus on the natural sciences. Regarded as among the finest of natural history museums in the world, it houses departments of anthropology, biology, geology, and zoology, conducting research programs and having strong links to University of Chicago. It includes encyclopedic collections of biological and geological specimens and cultural objects from Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Pacific.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the Field Museum's bountiful display cases and vetrines seemed to Spero to be filled with an endless cornucopia of objects. While more contemporary curatorial tastes in display design tend toward the spare or arid isolation of "precious" objects, a walk through the Field Museum in the post-war period was an intense and direct sensory experience due to the densely packed display of objects, and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

their colors, textures, and aromas. Spero remembers her visits: "And then there was the wonderful museum, the Field Museum. We used to go there all the time (I haven't been there in so many years), stuff was literally dumped out of the cases. There was so much stuff that it was literally all over the floor. Things like that really influenced us all very much."[38] As Cohen noted and Spero describes, the Museum objects were much more than formal or stylistic examples of exotica for the Chicago artists. The Museum offered both the experience of interconnected steps back in historical time and the possibility of non-teleological, cultural perspectives radically different from the Western and European models. In an atmosphere of post-war distrust and pessimism, these modern artists' fascination with ethnology, anthropology, and tribal arts rested on the utopian hope that *somewhere,* at some time, there may have been a more 'authentic' culture, whose spirit the artist might be adept enough to tap. Retrieving remnants of common human experiences, despite contemporary cultural differences, became a leitmotif for many artists. Ancient and non-western cultures were culled for the study of primal mythologies and rituals, objects and archetypes, which might illuminate universalist patterns or primordial memories.[39]

Many of the same intellectual sources, including Freud, Joseph Campbell, and Erich Neumann, fed the imaginations of both the Chicago figurative artists and New York Abstract Expressionists.[40] But the Chicago artists channeled the articulation of ideas through the human form and literary allusion. Spero recognized the overlapping intellectual roots of the two groups of artists: "I think Abstract Expressionists had an original interest in mythology and a passionate commitment to their statements, but in a non-objective [*sic*, abstract] fashion. Whereas in Chicago, the mythology and let's say,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the things of the spirit (the Abstract Expressionists were very much of the spirit), were primarily oriented toward figuration, and expressed in primal and very brute form."[41] According to Campbell, whose books are in Spero's art library, mythology sought to explain the meaning of the inexplicable: birth, death, the chaos of being. Thus, ancient myths embodied forces and images arising from the unconscious layers of a common historical psyche. Myths and archetypal images constituted fundamental historical patterns of symbol formation which, according to Campbell (and his mentor, Carl Jung), occur in all cultures throughout time and are ancient and primordial. As Dore Ashton has emphasized in analyzing the common themes circulating in the post-war modernist milieu, "In all of these extensions, expansions, invasions, evasions, and implosions of the arts, several motifs keep recurring. One of the most persistent is interest in archaic forms, in myth and ritual; for modernists since Wagner believe that these have a superior ability to communicate immediate feeling."[42]

In common with her peers, Spero's artistic interests were broad, encompassing many of the significant themes of the post-war epoch. Her painting was self-admittedly "... expressionistic. It was also 'Frenchified' -- there were some French elegances in the work. I was interested in masks, existential personas, obscure, distorted, sometimes frenetic gestures."[43] Stylistically, Spero absorbed the sophistications of French modernism, but she aimed to incorporate the emotional pitch and psychological dynamics of expressionism, and to combine into this mix a sense of archaic ritual and presence. At the Field Museum, Spero was awed by the objects from New Guinea, New Hebrides, Alaska, and the Northwest Coast:

> I was fascinated with the frontality of these works and the power they had on the viewer...I liked the idea that these objects were used as a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> part of a worship or magic ritual... [Objects were] integrated into the culture and not merely objects for commodity... When you look at those objects you begin to realize that there is some powerful force behind them. They possess so much of the earth and energy of these people who used them. One got a sense of how they were made and used.[44]

While few works exist from her student days, except the lithographs and etchings, Spero's slightly later oil painting on canvas, *(Great) Mother and Child (3)* (1954) (Figure 3), deploys the haunting frontality of figures she often depicted during the 1950s. By pressing the hieratic figure against a surface plane of unstretched canvas with ragged edges, Spero related her image format to a wall hanging, tapestry or a kind of skin. The artist depicts the mother-figure with her arms wrapped completely around the child. Both figures seem to emerge and, simultaneously, recede into painterly background passages, suggesting with this technique a vulnerability to time or fate. The mother and child are the color of muddy earth tones, nearly merging with the ground except for flickering under-layers of golden luminosity. The iconic stature of the "Great Mother," drawn and winnowed to a poignantly simple shape, is symbolic of the cycles of birth, death, and regeneration. Spero was experimenting formally with the means to convey cyclical forces and metaphysical energies. The artist described her working process to achieve these elusive goals: "Underneath is a sized canvas. The paint is multi-colored and gold oil, and then to make it ancient-looking, I painted over it with black. ... I rub off a lot which made kind of a dull grey surface. Sometimes the surface would go rough (with the layers of paint) where the surface – muddied as I worked -- got grayer and then I would rub out a certain area with turpentine and then redraw it and repaint it."[45] Figure/ground relationships become blurred, ground subsuming passages of figures and figures penetrating ground, alluding to the condition of flux. In addition, these early oil paintings

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

were labored over for months at a time in contrast to the sketchy, quickly executed lithographs and prints.

Golub was also experimenting at the same time with the impact of a cropped frontality, shifting and ambiguous figure/ground relationships, and the links between archaic art and contemporary existential themes. In his lacquer on canvas, *Thwarted* (1953) (Figure 4), an encrusted and almost sculptural surface texture of earth colors literally encases the armless torso with its anguished, mask-like face, brutalized and menacing. While Spero and Golub examined similar sources at the Field Museum, the AIC, and numerous art journals, seeking imagery to confront the disturbing spaces of the psyche, Golub emphasized an embodiment of the mythological and historical pervasiveness of violent conflict and power struggles (later to become a theme of Spero's), male aggression and the "will to power," starkly picturing the deeply rooted mythologies underlying culture.[46]

Exchanging artistic ideas and intellectual readings among themselves, these AIC students attempted, as Dennis Adrian has observed,

> ... to envision a new kind of art in which the most profound aspects of human existence and feeling, rooted and centered in the unconscious, would be the concern of a monumental art, diverse in technique, which would be figurational and imagistic but not based on renderings of the outside world. This art was intended to have an impressive and forceful emotional intensity, fixed in powerful images drawn from the unconscious.[47]

Spero, Golub, and their artist friends discussed the exhibitions at Kuh's gallery (including the works of Klee, Joan Miro, Rufino Tamayo, Carlos Merida, Henry Moore) and at the AIC (Kuh had become curator of twentieth century art in the 1940s) as well as Surrealist and German Expressionist works from Chicago collections and illustrated in art

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

books. At the same time, Spero was well aware of her own idiosyncratic concerns and aesthetic reactions to the same modernist works.[48] She had a separate trajectory:

> I felt somehow that this [group, dubbed the "Monster Roster" in 1959 by Franz Schultz] was a macho thing, even though June Leaf was included... I intuitively avoided the designation... I hadn't really found a voice or how to get it out in the world, but I didn't want it to be through the Monster Roster. It wasn't my aesthetic; too much of a brute thing. I was moved by the German Expressionists.[49]

A Space of One's Own

Spero's charcoal portraits of friends and family in her sketchbooks from 1949, including drawings such as *The Opening* (1949) (Figure 5), evince the study of an expressionist energy of line, and a desire to condense overlapping time frames, implying a figural momentum and movement in space. The sketch, *Portrait of My Mother* (1949) (Figure 6), is an introspective study in three-quarter view of a fine-boned woman looking inward, rendered with a spare, suggestive line integrating the expressive use of erasure marks. Spero allows the white paper space to predominate in defining the sitter's turning, asymmetrical position, bone structure, and curled hair. Each large, deep-set eye is seen from a different perspective, a formal cubist element. An elongated, slender nose, a determined mouth and acute-angled chin attenuate the form of the face into a defining elegance. At the same time, the portrait is invested with an edgy emotional intimacy and psychological immediacy. Spero's portrait sketch is informed stylistically by the School of Paris, and psychologically, by the interiority of German Expressionist drawings and Austrian Expressionists, such as Egon Schiele or Oskar Kokoschka.

As Spero worked privately toward identifying and articulating her own aesthetic concerns, she did share with Golub and the "little group" a public, activist stance in the Chicago art world. Performance oriented events in Chicago during the late 1940s and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1950s included street theater and artists' actions; Spero participated in student political actions (such as "Exhibition Momentum," discussed below) and the Institute's Surrealist and Beaux-Arts Balls, with the students' tableaux vivant of AIC paintings.[50] In addition, she and Golub were aware of the "Second City" theater group performances, including Elaine May and Mike Nichols, with their improvisation-based and politically savvy comedy routines.[51]

In 1948, Spero participated in her first group exhibition at Chicago's newly opened Bordelon Gallery, with a display of her expressionistic figures. This was also the year of the inauguration of "Exhibition Momentum," a contemporary art show that represented a turning point for many AIC students and was among the most significant activist events of the post-war period in Chicago. An artistically progressive group of students from the AIC, including Spero and Golub (who was the second chairman), allied with their aesthetically formalist 'adversaries' who attended the Institute of Design to mount a contemporary juried art exhibition that signaled their distance from Midwestern regionalism and artistic provincialism generally. In 1946 and 1947, students, many of them war veterans, had won prizes at the prestigious "Chicago and Vicinity Show," the preeminent art exhibition in the area, attracting collectors and curators. As Golub explains:

> Since students had won a number of prizes, the older artists were aghast. They went to the museum authorities, who then excluded the students. I wrote a petition of protest. The SAIC was joined by students from the Institute of Design ... We organized and became activist ... Eight hundred students signed the petition ... We set up 'Exhibition Momentum' in 1948. 'Exhibition Momentum' ran from 1948 to 1957, nine exhibitions in all, eventually covering seventeen states.[52]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Jurors for this ambitious student-run exhibition of contemporary art included art world luminaries, such as the dominant Formalist theorist and critic, Clement Greenberg (1950); Abstract Expressionist artists, Robert Motherwell (1954), Jackson Pollock (1951), Adolph Gottleib (1953), and Ad Reinhardt (1953); Manhattan dealers, Betty Parsons (1954) and Sidney Janis (1952); museum curators, James Johnson Sweeney (1954, Guggenheim) and Alfred Barr (1952, MoMA); and older artists such as Max Weber (1951) and Philip Guston (1957).

Meanwhile, in *Vogue* magazine (March 1950), Jackson Pollock's drip paintings were displayed as backdrops for fashion photographer Cecil Beaton and the Abstract Expressionists, who made headlines as "The Irascibles" in *Life* magazine in 1951, were in critical and theoretical ascendance, overshadowing the experiments of Chicago's imagist painters. Spero continued to resist the dominance of abstraction, sanctified by New York's avant-garde art world:

> The group was perfectly aware of Abstract Expressionism going on in New York at the time; but you know the climate in Chicago, in the art world, it's one of resistance to New York. I feel that this resistance is characteristic of a lot of Chicago artists (and I certainly still have that too). I felt resistant to what was going on in New York, maybe because I was interested in painting the figure. Why accept so-called 'mainstream' thought coming from New York?[53]

While the Abstract Expressionists were developing a collective persona as "The Irascibles," cultivating an outsider status against a traditionalist New York museum world, they were lionized by a cadre of powerful critics, curators, and writers, their images employed as representative exemplars of freedom of expression. Spero and those progressive artists working with figuration and narrative elements were doubly marginalized as Midwesterners; but they used this "exile" status as a confrontational

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

stance in establishing an alternative identity: "New York was the center of the art world and Abstract Expressionism was so powerful then. In Chicago we were always aware of New York. There was a theatre group at the time called Second City: if you were in Chicago, you knew you were in the Second City."[54]

Yet, by identifying with the Second City, one could develop guerrilla tactics from the margins, obliquely observing and critiquing, using the center as a dialogic counterpoint. A maverick, outsider status, had been championed by Dubuffet and his art brut, reflecting an existentialist perspective of man thrown naked and alone into the universe, wrestling with the problems of free will and the contingency of life.[55] The periphery nurtured the imperatives of the avant-garde and defined the artist's function in society. Dore Ashton wrote with regard to the alienation of progressive postwar artists who were against the times, *a rebours*: "Each artist seemed to see himself not only as an outsider, but an individual morally obliged to be one."[56] Aesthetics and ethics were fused realities for Spero, Golub and their group at the AIC.

In 1949, during her last semester as a student at the AIC, Spero had a solo exhibition at her alma mater, New Trier High School. She was invited by her former teacher, Frank Holland, to display her recent paintings of expressionistic figures and portraits of friends. In addition, her work was included in a group exhibition, "Young Artists Among Us," at the Evanston Art Center. Spero spent a month during the summer of 1949 at Mills College in Oakland, California, studying French as well as designing and painting murals for a Bastille Day celebration on the campus at French House. A women's college founded in 1890 by a graduate of Mount Holyoke College, Mills stressed the diversity of its student body and its progressive approach to education. The

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Bastille Day mural project allowed Spero to work on a large scale project within an architectural environment and to plunge into a political subject matter in which multiple figures interacted. In addition, she was able to perfect her French, which she would need to polish, because in September, the young artist was off to Paris with her sister Carol, then a student at Stanford University. Both Speros would live and study in Paris from 1949 to 1950.

Paris/NewYork/Chicago

As a present for her college graduation, Spero's father financed a year-long study in Paris for Nancy at the Ecole des Beaux Arts and at the Atelier of the painter, Andre Lhote (1885-1962). Paris had been a center for European modernism and the 'City of Lights' had attracted American students from the nineteenth century onward. Equally important, Wieghardt, Spero's painting professor, had stressed the value of a working knowledge of modernism's pictorial and plastic experiments. But Spero's experience at the Ecole consisted of academic lessons in the technique of figurative bas-relief. Antique relief sculpture was still being employed at the Ecole to provide basic lessons for history painting by teaching students to design figures within complex narratives and spaces. While Spero would later rework the historical techniques of designing multiple two-dimensional figures in complex narratives integrated within architectural spaces, she found the antiquated teaching methods at the Ecole dull and boring: "I had a terrible time doing this kind of academic bas-relief and the poor nude models freezing on one side and burning up on the other side with the little heaters they had."[57]

Lhote, on the other hand, encouraged Spero's expressive language in the depiction of human form and called her "le genie," the genius or guardian spirit.[58] His

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

American students watched from the balcony of the Atelier as he held forth on the pictorial techniques of figure painting. Lhote was a native of France, where he was also an important critic, teacher, and a colleague of Robert Delaunay, Jean Metzinger, Fernand Leger, and Albert Gleizes. He was one of the few twentieth century artists who exalted the notion of the 'decorative' in connection with art, finding mural painting the highest public realization of his ambitions. Lhote fully embraced cubism when his work was included in the famed 1912 exhibition, "Salon de la Section d'Or." He painted stylized but clearly delineated representations of the human figure and believed that in all significant painting the interior reality that the artist imposed on his vision of the world was paramount. He was an artist who had reconciled pre-war experimentation (the fauve palette of Matisse and formal cubist play of Picasso) with inter-war figuration.[59] It is important to note that Spero's teacher, Lhote, retained an adherence to the depiction of the figure and to the mural tradition's imbrications within the space of architecture, its elements and decoration.

A self portrait by Spero and several of her figure paintings were chosen by Lhote for the Grand Palais's "61e Exposition." Spero recalls that, "Wieghardt and subsequently Lhote, with derived French styles, thought that I carried on that way of working. So Lhote put me in the Salon des Independents [1950] with several canvases, a big thrill!"[60] While she was working through the formal preoccupations of the School of Paris, Spero continued to incorporate the subject matter and darker psychological roots of expressionist concerns. In fact, she mailed a copy of the French art journal *Art d'Aujourd'Hui* (November 1950) to Golub for his perusal back in Chicago. The journal issue focused primarily on the art of mental patients and of children, two of Dubuffet's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

favored categories of collecting and inspiration, closely linked to ideas about direct expressive value. In addition, Haitian art was featured as a folk art, a supposedly untrained art that intuitively tapped into primal emotions. This issue of *Art d'Aujourd'Hui* tied Modernism to these "outsider art" forms in discussions and illustrations of Russian avant-garde art from the pre-revolutionary era: the Rayism of Mikhail Larianov and Natalia Goncharova.[61] Spero studied and sifted through the implications of these art idioms as viable languages for a post-war epoch.

Spero and her sister Carol visited museums and galleries while living in Paris and attended concerts and productions of modern plays, including Eugene Ionesco's play, "The Bald Soprano," premiered at the Noctambules. Spero reflected on the burgeoning cultural experimentation: "I was vaguely aware of [Camus and Satre] in Paris. It was the aura, the ambience, actually."[62] Carol had a piano studio in the same building where Spero had her painting studio. The two young women spent much of their free time together. While the cultural atmosphere of post-war Paris was exhilarating, Spero remembers that her more introverted nature during this period kept her from interacting with the many French students in Lhote's atelier and prevented her from fully exploring what Paris had to offer culturally; she would take advantage of the opportunity to know the city in an intimate way several years later.[63]

After returning to the States in the summer of 1950, Spero worked as an apprentice scene designer for a summer stock theater company in Ivoryton, Connecticut, which produced popular Broadway hits. She subsequently lived for a year in New York City on the upper West Side, working as a fashion illustrator, painting, and attending museum and gallery exhibitions. She soon become familiar with museum collections at

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Golub also came to Manhattan to visit her and both artists surveyed the work of progressive artists in galleries and studios. They were learning the ropes of the complex operations of becoming professional artists.

In addition, Spero and Golub were in the process of defining their individual thematic concerns as well as their overlapping artistic philosophies. In 1950, after completing his MFA degree while teaching studio art classes at Wright Junior College in Chicago, Golub wrote a cogent and timely catalogue essay for that year's "Exhibition Momentum," in which he outlined the contemporary artist's urgent imperatives in seeking new symbols for the post-war condition. From the perspective of a concerned, humanist-oriented figurative artist, he discussed the post-war era's dominant sociopolitical concerns and the necessity of rethinking the traditional role of the modern museum impacted by these cultural transformations. Golub emphasized the major themes of the intellectual Left -- the pervasive discomfiture and the implications of urban alienation, the modern sense of psychological fragmentation, and the afflictions of an internal exile – as conditions which many contemporary artists sought to examine and express in a visual language.[64] For both Spero and Golub, these ontological questions-of-being in the modern world were their shared, compelling artistic motivation. Their formative years of young adulthood were characterized by knowledge of the Holocaust, and the consequent moral and ethical crises in the artistic culture of the 1940s and 1950s. Although Spero and Golub were not religious or practicing Jews, nevertheless, historical, cultural, and spiritual memory became essential themes in their work. The dynamic

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

forces of solitary questioning and the link to a broader, public community of judgment were integral to both artists from their student years onwards.

In December 1951, the two comrades-in-arms, Spero and Golub, married and settled in Chicago. They lived in a two-story converted garage located on an alleyway in a run-down neighborhood. But this location and set-up were far superior, in the minds of the young artists, to the crackerjack boxes in the suburbs, the lines of track houses that Spero's father envisioned helping them to purchase. Spero recalls, "After we got married we rented a garage in the back of Clark Street. We lived on an alley. A young architect had fixed up the place. Downstairs was the studio [Figure 7] and upstairs were the living quarters, a primitive kitchen, and the only dividing line was this big grey curtain."[65]

Spero had a solo exhibition of her paintings at the Leonard Linn Gallery in Winnetka, Illinois in 1951, and another solo show the following year at Stuart Brent Bookstore Gallery, Chicago. In the summer of 1952, both Spero and Golub exhibited paintings in the annual group exhibition at the Renaissance Society of the University of Chicago in the Goodspeed Hall Galleries. Spero's former high school teacher, Frank Holland, wrote a review of the annual in the *Chicago Sun Times*, stating "the best of the show is a big canvas called "Figures" and painted by Nancy Spero, a newcomer to the group. Colorful, semi-abstract and powerfully brushed, the painting properly represents one of Chicago's best young painters."[66] Holland describes a merging of pictorial means: a cubist-oriented, semi-abstraction of human form and an expressionist brushwork. Spero's alternately linear and roughly textured lithograph, *Four Figures* (ca. 1954-1955) (Figure 8), acknowledges these origins. Irreverently mocking canonical bordello scenes, such as Picasso's *Les Desmoiselles d'Avignon* (1907) and Grosz's or Dix's Weimar era

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

etchings of Berlin prostitutes, Spero's darkly humorous and febrile figures cavort and smirk. Gesticulating and colliding, the figures erupt from angular scratches and scribbles, smeared curves and oozing blobs. Androgynous grotesques, the figures' bawdy and raucous parade across the paper will reappear later in a mutant form in Spero's scrolls and installations.

In 1953, Spero had a solo exhibition at Seven Stairs Bookshop in Chicago. Marilyn Robb, a Chicago-based reviewer for *Art News,* wrote in her article, "Summer in Chicago," that Spero's paintings exuded an existentialist atmosphere, poised on the border between internal musings and external reality. Robb wrote of the young artist's paintings, "In order to decide whether these are really interior conversation pieces or public utterances, one must look long at these moody, expressionistic pictures."[67] Robb perceptively targets the artist's struggle to represent an interior world of feeling as it relates to the palpable reality of an exterior world mediated by the picture plane. Spero had yet to develop her voice as an artist or her compatible medium, her "public utterance" and her own vocabulary. In the oil paintings on canvas, oppositional constructs of figure/ground and interior/exterior were in a fluid state, so that as a result, "reading" the images was a test of the acuteness of the viewer's observational skills. Spero had titled the mixed media and oil images generically but pointedly, "Figures" and "Dancers," leaving the perceptual details of interpretation to the viewer. Interestingly, as part of the exhibition, Spero displayed her sketchbooks, and Robb noted that there were "fragments of poems found in the Spero sketchbook," with several poems describing a "self-enclosed soul."[68] To display one's sketchbooks is a gutsy decision and implies an open-ended working process, a sense of the impermanent and the contingent. While the artist was

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

clearly exploring the parameters of the word/image conjunction, she was striving as well to link internal, individual visions and universally understood components of an external materiality.

A few months later, *Art News* published another review by Robb, "Art News from Chicago," describing Golub's paintings from his solo exhibition at Kerrigan-Hendricks Gallery. Golub's exhibition included works from his early 1950s series, *Burnt Man*, a pictorial response to the Holocaust and Hiroshima. Robb characterized these paintings, with their textured lacquer surfaces, as resembling "raw metal flesh," images informed by an intersection of tribal imagery with contemporary icons: neon signs and electric light bulbs.[69] In a serendipitous juxtaposition on the same page, Robb reviewed a concurrent exhibition at Alan Frumkin Gallery (later, to become Golub's dealer), "Germany: Portrait of the 20s, artists' responses to World War I," including the brutal and sardonic anti-war, Weimar era works of Grosz, Beckmann, and Dix – all three German artists were significant artistic presences for both Spero and Golub.

During this period, the content of Spero's painting also extended to relationships between individuals: lovers, couples, and mothers and their children. In 1953, Spero had become a mother; her first son Stephen was born in Chicago and in 1954, her second son Philip was born.[70] Attempting to keep pace with her busy exhibition schedule (she had another solo exhibition at M. Singer and Sons Gallery in Chicago in 1954), the artist juggled being a mother with painting at night:

> I nearly killed myself. We had children right away. The first two were very close in age, and we had no help. By the time the third one came [Paul, born in Paris in 1961], I was exhausted....I forced myself to work at night. I've always been a night person. As soon as they'd go to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> sleep, I got to it, just to prove to myself, and no one else, that I was not only a mother but an artist as well. I didn't try to show. I didn't externalize it. It was a very personal need that kept me going.[71]

After having experienced a fledgling but autonomous role as a young artist in Chicago, Spero detected a shift in attitude toward her as an artist by her colleagues after she became a mother: "I was treated differently as a wife and mother... The stigma of motherhood had stuck. It seemed even artist friends regarded me differently as if there couldn't be two artists in one household." Thus, Golub was "honing his skills in theoretical explanations of a powerful oeuvre, recognized as a 'young Turk.' My art was more lyrical and layered, less accessible -- coming from a female sensibility? Less accessible meaning the Chicago art world that I knew was unwilling to grant access. The 50s, like the 80s, was an era of macho roles. I was hidden behind the nuclear family, and the general denial of validity to women artists, particularly mothers."[72] Spero's general themes depicting lovers, prostitutes, and motherhood fit into the epic themes of birth, death, sexuality, alienation, and violence tackled by the (male) post-war modernists, but the context of a pre-feminist 1950s worldview could not overcome the negative stereotyping of a professional artist-mother daring to paint the complex and contradictory experiences of motherhood or female sexuality. Spero was seeking a language for what would later be termed, a female subjectivity.

Painting at night and sharing the studio with Golub, Spero worked for months on a single canvas, repainting and reworking her pared-down archetypal figures in order to achieve a timeless, transcultural quality in surface texture and form: "I did try to get a kind of primal or basic notion. I started on a series of mothers and children (I became a mother). I worked on family groups and a series of lovers; prostitutes... timeless images

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that were ambiguous, that were in ambiguous spaces and that were existential in character. And I struggled very hard from 1951 to 1966 working on canvas, trying to get the basic images."[73] In the 1950s, French existentialism had stressed a form of radical reduction to the essence or beginning of things, the need to engage an elemental, raw "reality" in the process of working, a theme which Spero approached from a visual image-maker's standpoint.[74] The artist sought to engage the experience of her own life in order to produce meaning, an existentially inflected jumping-into-life-as-action.[75] Spero's working process was intimately related to her themes: "Even in the early 50s, the paintings began to get darker and darker because I would repaint the damn things for months at a time. I would start out very colorfully...and then! Trying to reach the primary essence of a figure. The figures would become obscure and they would merge with the background."[76] The boundaries of Spero's figures would inevitably become blurred, ground infiltrating the figure and the figure melting into ground, inextricably woven, erasing the distinctions between inside/outside. Using the surface of the canvas as a membrane to mediate interior and exterior worlds, the artist literally merged figure with ground: one aspect always "becoming" the other aspect, a transformative theme which Spero carried over into her wall paintings.

In Spero's painting from 1954, *(Great) Mother and Child (3)* (Figure 3), discussed above, the artist sought to uncover forms that would suggest not only a physical and psychological relationship but a symbolic one as well: "With *Mother and Child* I was exploring an idea of destiny, and the individual and characters were tied together but with separate fates. I felt that way with the *Couples* (1960s) paintings also, that the figures are elegiac and lyrical but existential; together, but in this ambiguous

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

space."[77] The multiple meanings associated with the concept of birth, as Spero's image hints, are symbolic, psychological, and sensual. The child is a mirror of the mother, and yet, not an exact double but an independent being entering the cycle of life, death, and regeneration via the mother as progenitor. Inevitably, the infant will establish a separate identity, moving away from the mother's voice, smell, and touch, entering into the detached realm of the abstraction of language and into a maze of social relations.[78] Spero depicts the pull of contradictory, irreconcilable emotions (both elegiac and lyrical) by depicting the totemic mother figure in a hieratic format, as an iconic ritual figure awkwardly embracing her baby in a gesture of protection, tense with vulnerability, resonating with the theme of Madonna and child in an earthbound physicality. By orienting the mother's body hieratically toward the viewer, fading in and out of an ambiguous 'soup,' Spero evokes the unknowable future, whose only certainty is death and regeneration.

Spero's mother-and-child paintings are a translation of the domestic and personal to the level of the symbolic, bringing the domestic and everyday into a relationship with the heroic or the creative enterprise. Yet this experimentation with the permeability of borders between the lyric (personal) and epic (communal) was sometimes perceived in the half-light of stereotypes. In an anonymous review of Spero's work in a 1953 exhibition at Chicago's Avant Arts Gallery, the reviewer baulked at the female artist's choice of media and style in an article entitled, "Art Exhibition by Housewife Opens in Area": "Domestic life reportedly has influenced Miss Spero's painting. She has used lipstick, shoe polish, sugar, and even hairs from the family collie, Rouge, for her non-realistic pictures."[79] Spero employed the detritus of everyday life as raw material, a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

strategy heralded by Dubuffet and one which would be championed in the 1960s by arte povera and Pop art. But Spero chose household, domestic scraps from the life of a woman at home. The reviewer is taken aback by the artist's unorthodox use of materials in "non-realistic pictures," belittling the integration of the domestic into the sphere of fine art, a strategy later exploited by the (male) Pop artists. Remarkably, in the midst of living a "domestic life," Spero assembled a solo exhibition while tending to her infant son and household duties. In addition, she surveyed and scavenged her immediate environment for useful materials with which to build pictorial form while suggesting everyday realities.

In a rare, early sculpture from 1950, *Mummified* (Figure 9), Spero had combined materials at hand: plaster, nylon stocking, paint, paper, and string. She constructed a primal and hauntingly taut, metaphorical sculpture -- a totemic, frontally oriented figure with an oversized head and shriveled torso. Suggestive of the spectral or decaying otherworldly qualities associated with ancient Egyptian or Pre-Columbian mummies, but equally evocative of a broken torso invoking a muted violence, the disquieting mummy fragment is fetishistic in its presence, recalling the artist's trips to the Field Museum's ethnographic collections. Seeming to grope for speech or gestural articulation but thwarted by physical constraints, the mummified figure will reappear in later paintings in which the implication of violent eruption is finally given voice. While working within the themes of motherhood and birth, *Mummified* marks a primary trajectory in Spero's oeuvre which will reappear in her wall paintings: the theme of transition in the cycles of death and rebirth, decay and regeneration.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

As both Spero and Golub explored materials and extended their themes, Golub's painting had received recognition in prestigious group exhibitions: the Guggenheim's *Young American Painters* exhibition (1954, curated by James Johnson Sweeney), the Carnegie International (1954), and the Whitney Annual (1955). In 1955, Golub defined the maverick stance of many Chicago imagist painters, including Spero, in a polemical essay published in the *College Art Journal*, "A Critique of Abstract Expressionism." Pitting the vehicle of figurative painting allied with the narrative impulse against the dominance of the tenets of Abstract Expressionism, Golub declared that the overriding ambiguities and anonymity of non-referential painting, combined with the aim toward flatness, rendered it either decorative or transcendental, implying only a vague "action that is pre-logical, pre-cognitive, and a-moral."[80] Golub argued that Abstract Expressionism's exclusive self-referential, formalist concerns served only to strengthen the devaluation and dehumanization of the individual in modern industrial society. Non-referentiality, the loss of individuated voices, and the abandonment of representational imagery, Golub stressed, reinforced anonymous, non-committal withdrawal into a diffuse transcendentalism, disengaging the artist from the polis. He pointed to the work of Giacometti and Dubuffet as powerful alternative idioms; their use of figurative expressionist means created works responding to and connoting the effects of unprecedented mass violence, genocide, and a brutalized society's subliminal fears. Golub championed the individual artist's head-on examination of irreconcilable issues at the core of painting in relation to the major shifts in Enlightenment, humanist values in the post-war world.[81] Thus Golub theoretically positioned his artistic goals, and those of the Chicago figurative artists, tied to an intellectual, art historical framework in public

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

opposition to the primary claims of Abstract Expressionist artists. Golub had found a distinctive voice in a discourse with authorial weight, but Spero had yet to formulate a voice and a space for her work in order to enter into the public discourse on art.

In Italy

A decisive moment for both Spero and Golub came in 1956 when a patron, Herbert Greenwald (known as 'Squiff'), a prominent developer and builder who had brought Mies van der Rohe to Chicago, offered to finance a break from teaching for Golub, whom he had known years earlier; Greenwald had been completing a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago while also working as the Principal at a synagogue where the young Golub had taught art classes as a teenager. The two reconnected courtesy of Pat Malone, a former AIC student and junior curator at the Institute. With a $4,500 check, Greenwald made it possible for the artists to travel to Italy to work undistracted. Simultaneously, Golub had sold three paintings to a businessman who was a student in his night class at Northwestern University, allowing both artists to live in Ischia and Florence for an entire year: June 1956-June 1957. In a village on the island of Ischia, the couple found a small, inexpensive house to rent for three months during the summer, which included a unfinished basement with a low seven foot ceiling, suitable as a studio for Golub. Ischia, located in the Bay of Naples, is known for its volcanic origins, hot springs, and thermal baths as well as its excavations in the necropolis and on the acropolis of Monte di Vico, settled by the Greeks in 770 B.C.E. Attic ceramics and fragments of architectural terra cotta from the sixth century B.C.E. and trade goods from the Near East, such as scarab seals and jewels, were uncovered at archaeological sites on the Island.[82] Surrounded by natural and cultural richness, Spero quickly became

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

immersed in the antiquities of the Greeks, Etruscans, and Romans. The couple visited museums and excavation sites in and around Naples and Rome, and then, they rented an apartment in Florence for nine months, from which they made additional excursions.

Spero had more time to both study ancient art and to paint: "I was able to get some help with the children. It was a revelation to have some relief. Even though I didn't exhibit, I had more of a sense there of my own being. There was a change in my work."[83] In Naples, Spero visited the Archeological Museum with its Borgia Collection of Etruscan and Egyptian Art, and its comprehensive collection of art from Pompeii and Herculaneum, Cumae and the Compania. The artist's aesthetic sensibility and her interest in ancient mythology led to an affinity for Etruscan figures, in particular: "I was struck by the tomb figures of the Etruscans, the single figure or couples reclining on an elbow, staring at a cosmic future. The mature body, an aura of heavy sensuality. I also reacted to tarot cards, in 1958-1959, using divided space, the suggestion of double images, austere mothers and children, processional or ritualized images."[84] Spero was especially drawn to Etruscan tomb figures of couples: the embracing and smiling terracotta couples on the lids of sarcophagi in the Borgia Collection and in the Villa Giulia, Rome, and the stone cinerary urns in the Archeological Museum of Florence. Couples recline like brides and grooms at a banquet conversing, showing affection on the marriage bed-cum-sarcophagus. The stylized, frontal figures represented marriage or sexual union as a rebirth, associating death with a renewal of sexual powers.[85] The regeneration of nature through the mysteries of sexual union are embodied in these 'divine' couples, symbols of a rite of passage from this world into the next. Spero's absorption of these themes as well

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as Etruscan stylistic details informed the artist's work for decades, especially the development of her full-blown wall paintings.

By reinterpreting the sarcophagi figures and evoking archaic mythologies, Spero incorporated ancient associations while updating the representation of sexual love. Her paintings of lovers from 1959-1965, such as *Lovers III* (1962-1965) (Figure 10) and *Le Couple (Lovers XIII)* (1962) (Figure 11) are examples of a rethinking of the genre after studying Etruscan artifacts. Spero's figures share with their Etruscan ancestors an expressive stylization and flickering surfaces, a linear abstraction of form, and sensuous but slightly awkward, elongated poses and an earthy coloration. Often embodying the ecstatic via facial expressions, intertwining of limbs, and sinuous line, Spero's figures float in a murky atmosphere. Irregular black outlines, receding or emerging, narrowing and bulging, define the ghostly figures, lifting them out of the indeterminate space; contrasting white brushstrokes suddenly illuminate passages rather than highlighting flesh. In translating the three-dimensional sarcophagus figures onto a two-dimensional surface, Spero also referenced art books: "Being in Florence, I found the Etruscan was a great influence. I actually did work from that impetus. Italy was crucial for a sense of liberation. Also, Leon and I have always had a lot of art books, and we would spend evenings poring over them, especially the antique, classical, and prehistoric art. It would creep into the work."[86]

Etruscan and Roman frescoes were equally important sources for re-imagining the figure in space. Spero examined wall paintings from Roman Pompeii and at the Museo e Gallerie Nazionale di Capodimonte in Naples. The House of the Vettii's erotic brothel paintings and the Villa of Mystery's sacred-erotic murals were catalysts not only for

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

expanding the artist's figural repertoire but also for pictorial and graphic strategies which emerged later in her scrolls and wall installations. As Spero recollected more recently while visiting the Etruscan and Roman frescoes from Boscoreale at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, "I just have a gut reaction to them ... to me this is painterliness, more so than Baroque art. There is a sense of vast space and of figures moving in the empty space that reminds me of ... they are as spare as Giacometti."[87] Spero connects the ancient frescoes' airy "dreamscapes" with the modern idiom of Giacometti, especially his plucking of "spare," attenuated figures out of context to be reinserted in an elegiac symbolic space.[88] In addition, the frescos' unrecoverable dramas of long dead rituals, and their meanings, would continue to play a role in Spero's conceptual layering of ancient mythologies with contemporary issues.

Rites of passage, relations in family groups, mothers and children, and prostitutes, already significant themes for Spero, became even more complexly layered due to the artist's encounters on site with the representations of ancient initiation rituals, which continued to fascinate her long after she returned home. In Pompeii's Villa of Mysteries, a female initiation chamber is painted with twenty-nine life sized figures on a "Pompeian Red" architectural background dating from the middle of the first century B.C.E. The Villa's fresco scenes enact secret rites to the god Dionysus, a source of sensual liberation and spiritual fulfillment: the god associated with music, poetry, healing and divination (patron god of drama and theatrical splendor). The fresco's initiate figures symbolize the death of childhood and innocence through suffering and transformation, a simulated death and rebirth. The initiate's psychological advancement, or maturity, is a transition through the cycles of life: the Greek word for 'rite' meaning, to 'grow up.' The rite

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

becomes a drama enacted, while the painted priestess with a scroll and stylus records the performance of a dying of the old self and the birth of a new self, mirroring the cycles of death and rebirth.[89] Spero's interest in seeking forms which reveal these socio-psychological transitions as cyclical and dynamic -- and intrinsically embedded in all human societies, while each form is culture-specific -- has been and continues to be a primary theme for the artist, a theme which began with her first mother and child paintings and matured with her wall paintings.

During 1957 and 1958, Spero made an important painting which identified the female form as an embodiment of transformative cycles and of the passages of death and rebirth, *At Their Word The Sick Woman* (1957-1958, Figure 12), which merges image with text. The artist lifted three lines of text from the poem known as "The Descent of Inanna," published in Joseph Campbell's widely-read book on world mythology, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1956), which describes the Sumerian legend of the goddess Inanna and her ordeal in the underworld before her rebirth.[90] It is the oldest ritual dramatization of a lunar myth, composed some 2,000 to 3,000 years before the Christian story of the crucifixion, descent, and resurrection. Inanna represented a primal, dual form: goddess of the living, Queen of Heaven (later to became Aphrodite and Venus) and goddess of the dead, Ereshkigal, Queen of the Underworld, who would later become Persephone. Inanna was the originary personification of the power of space, time, and matter. Spero cursively wrote the first three lines of the Inanna poem with her brush in the lower right of the canvas, over the ground's partially illuminated earthen tones, "At their word, the word that tortures the spirit,/ the sick woman was turned into a corpse,/ the corpse was hung from a stake," quoted from Campbell's translation.[91] The doubled

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and blurred outlines of a female form, arising from shadowy depths to give the appearance of an apparition, float above the scrawled words as though issuing from them. Painted on the unstretched canvas, the figure/ground's dark, somber tones sketchily outline a face in profile, with a twisting, attenuated body. The face in profile suggests an interiority of the psyche, while the doubled or vibrating figure merges with the surface-skin of the canvas, invoking a transformative state signaled by a sloughing of skin. The artist reinterprets the originary goddess Inanna, often represented as a serpent coiling around a staff (the oroborus), as a personification of a paradoxical, dual aspect, as both a martyr and a symbol of rebirth. Spero would later transform and recontextualize this ancient Sumerian text in her epic scroll, *Torture of Women* (1976, panel 13), uncovering, as a feminist, the historical continuum of women's subjugation reinforced by Western classical mythology and Biblical tales of origin, in which patriarchal heroes subdue the goddess and the feminine aspect of creation/destruction. These nascent explorations in the 1950s of early goddess mythologies, embodying cyclical transformation and paradoxical dualities, would become the basis for the major themes elaborated in Spero's wall paintings. The decisive, face-to-face contact with objects and sites, their particular presence, informed the artist's developing pictorial language.

Back in the U.S.

Returning to the United States in 1957, Spero continued to focus on early mythological themes in relation to contemporary experience, while Golub taught studio art courses at Indiana University in Bloomington, where the family settled from 1957 to 1959. In 1958, both artists had solo exhibitions of their paintings at Indiana University in a double exhibition with the unfortunate title, "Leon Golub and Nancy Spero (Mrs. Leon

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Golub)." A poet friend and colleague at the University, Jack Hirschman, wrote an article about the show emphasizing both artists' classical and mythic themes reconfigured in modern images of the human condition. Each artist exhibited nine oil paintings on canvas; Golub displayed paintings such as *Orestes* (1956) and *Ischian Sphinx* (1956), and Spero focused on the mother-and-child theme, using "a dark and brooding palette ... without sentimentality."[92] Hirschman described Spero's painterly technique as exemplifying her theme, "the arms of the mother and the bodies of the children are liquefied."[93]

Spero's canvas from 1956, *Mother and Children (2)* (Figure 13), evinces this liquefaction in oil paint, the intertwining and melding of mother and children. The image brings to the fore a psychologically darker aspect of the maternal symbolized in ancient mythology but often repressed in the modern era:

> One of the early mothers and children that I did in 1956, *Mother and Children (2),* was a mother with her arm holding the child in a very angular way. I was thinking of the way a Medieval figure would be painted or shown. ... the children are held, contained horizontally, in an extreme gesture of protection. But now, in retrospect, it looks to me like the mother is going to eat her children. So it isn't neutral.[94]

The mythic duality of creation/destruction as ineluctably woven is the subject of *Mother and Children (2).* Cropped, hieratic, and aggressively frontal, the wide-eyed face and angular body shapes are reminiscent of terra-cotta Etruscan votive figurines of mothers with infants on their laps, later a common theme in Italian Medieval sculpture, as Spero suggests.[95] But Spero's mother holds her children up to her mouth; they are stacked horizontally, pushed flush against the picture plane. Ghostly in their milky transparency, the figures evoke ambiguous mythological or psychic realms. The mythic child-devouring Lilith, who suckles her children on the poisoned milk of dreams, appears in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

literature as early as the Babylonian *Epic of Gilgamesh* (ca. 2400 BCE) and as the first Biblical woman created before Eve, symbolic references attesting to her primordial presence in the cultural imagination. Lilith was portrayed as the vampire-nymph of inquisitiveness who claimed equality with Adam (as both were created from dust), quarreled with him over sexual dominance, and then, flew away to begin her mission as mythic she-devil. She is represented in the *Burney Relief*, a terra-cotta plaque of Lilith, Goddess of Death (Inanna-Ishtar) (ca. 2300-2000 BCE), with bird-claw feet and wings of red and black, accompanied lions and owls, an image Spero would deploy in her later scrolls.[96] Spero's early *Mother and Children (2)* prefigures more overtly the artist's monstrous dual beings to come.

Seeking an updated symbolization for the dual nature of creation/destruction in its psychological and metaphysical manifestations, Spero mined the Great Goddess figures: "I really did try to mythologize my mothers and children. For instance a lot of mothers were *Great Mothers.* In Paris around 1959 or 1960, I did *La Mere Feroce (The Ferocious Mother).*"[97] As in the later painting, *Great Mother Birth* (1962, Figure 14): "She is many-breasted and almost animal-like and has a ferocious expression on her face."[98] Related to her readings of the mythologies and the illustrations in Erich Neumann's popular book from the Bollingen Series, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype* (dedicated to C.G. Jung), Spero's *Great Mother Birth* is frightening in aspect, encased by dark shadows and seeming to vibrate the ground of her being in her ferocity. Neumann's book illustrates the many-breasted Mother Goddess known as "Artemis of Ephesus" or "Diana of Ephesus" (second century CE, Rome), an immense statue of alabaster and bronze, likely a local manifestation of the Great Mother, renamed Artemis by the Greeks. Spero

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

marked the Neumann text concerning the transformations of the Great Goddess -- Inanna to Ishtar to Lilith, Artemis to Diana -- each partaking of "the enchanting, seducing, orgiastic, and nightmarish form of the feminine, whose ambivalent character for man's ego begins when the excessive power and fascination of the numinous becomes a disintegration of consciousness, and hence is expressed as negative and destructive."[99] Sheer psychic terror of the double-edged, dual aspects of feminine power, according to Neumann, threatens to undermine and finally dissolve man's ego and individuality in an oceanic cosmic consciousness.

Reflecting further on mythological themes of duality, Spero had often referenced the esoteric symbolism and doubled imagery of Tarot cards. During this period, Spero read books concerning the history and practice of Tarot, which relies heavily on the reader's interpretive prowess, stimulated by the imagination and unconscious powers of intuition. A deck of seventy-eight cards (with twenty-two major arcana and fifty-six minor arcana), Tarot encompasses common elements in myths and legends from Europe, Asia, and Egypt, inflected with Judeo-Christian, Pagan, Celtic, Buddhist and Gnostic symbolism. Its heraldic symbols include wands, cups, swords, pentacles, kings, queens, knights and other figures. In common use by 1392 within the French court of Charles VI, Tarot cards informed Jung's ideas about the collective unconscious and symbols of transformation.[100] The Tarot reader is called to lay out the shuffled cards and make associations by way of context, orientation, and a knowledge of the cards' layered symbolic meanings. While Tarot is traditionally described as a divinatory art, the cards do not 'predict' or picture unchangeable events. Historian Juliet Sharman-Burke concludes, in concert with Jung's interpretive concepts: "The riddle of why the Tarot

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

cards work lies within the mind of the reader rather than in the actual cards. The images act as mirrors which offer a reflection of unsuspected knowledge buried deep in the unconscious mind."[101] In psychoanalytic terms, these Tarot images describe fantasies of psychic desire.

Spero explored the associative qualities of doubled images in her paintings *Hangman* (1958, Figure 15), inspired by the Tarot card figure of the Hanging Man (XII), and *Il Mondo* (1958, Figure 16). *Hangman,* with the top figure's limply hanging body and flaccid head, melds into another figure at the legs; a not-quite-mirror image of another man faces head-downward with arms extended, seemingly twisting his body in space. The double image could be read as 'hanged-man-and-executioner,' as Spero has noted: "You can't really tell who is the hanged man and who is the executioner. They both look like they have hoods over their faces. This was the beginning of the double images.... They aren't literally mirror images, but the figures are always attached to each other."[102] The dual aspect of Tarot cards, in which each card in its upright position carries both positive and negative possibilities, is particularly relevant for Spero's theme. The Tarot card's Hanging Man traditionally connotes the paradoxical state of being both victim and executioner, but it is sometimes interpreted as picturing a completely internalized strength found in the trained mystic. The mystic pathway is associated with the meditative and intuitive, motivations dictated by the senses and imagination. The Tarot's inverted figure faces head-first into the earth, representative of chthonian rejuvenation, as regenerative forces circulating upward from earth to heaven bring cyclical interchange embodied in the seasonal forces of nature.[103]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

This theme of lunar rejuvenation is echoed by Spero's painting *Il Mondo (TheWorld)* in which outlined spectral figures morph, one into the other, in a huge ellipse, halved by a dreaming male figure lying horizontally, facing toward the viewer. The artist's ellipse of four connecting figures is serpentine and undulating. Arching over and under two mirrored cocoon-like, phallic-shaped forms, the transforming figures seem to swim in aqueous regions: two poles of being joined together in an endlessly repeated interchange of energies. *Il Mondo* is both a mythic cosmic egg and a human family, much like the Spero/Golub family (complete with two sons). In an imaginative world reminiscent of William Blake's, the painting's figures seem to perform regenerative feats and transfigurations in rhythmic syncopation. As in the reading of Tarot cards, the paintings' doubling shapes, interrelationships, and multivalent layering harbor meanings which escape the viewer's grasp and require contextual interpretation. Thus, *Il Mondo* refuses to submit to any singular reading.

While integrating primal mythic themes with the "domestic sphere," Spero mordantly ridiculed art world politics in her painting, *Homage to New York (I Do Not Challenge)* (1958, Figure 17), a defiant and irreverent literal tongue-wagging at the entrenched dominance of New York School abstraction in the late 1950s. Back in Bloomington, Indiana, Spero had been coping with the stereotype of the "faculty wife" during Golub's stint as a professor at the University. In her estrangement, wrath spilled out in a searing, sardonic "homage," with words and images combined in a symmetrical double image. Spero recalled:

> I did this painting with a tombstone right in the middle and then on each side are two heads with dunce caps and rabbit-like ears and their tongues are sticking out. And on this phallic-like tombstone in the middle of their tongues are the initials of all the artists who were

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> prevalent then. Some of the initials you can recognize very easily [Robert Motherwell, Helen Frankenthaler, Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock]. On top I wrote, 'I do not challenge' and then 'Homage to New York' below.[104]

Like a warrior's chant or a soccer fan's cheer, "death to ...," the heraldic figures testify to their impudence, sneering and threatening subversion of norms. The obscene tongues mock individuals and challenge a system, viewed from Spero's perspective, as solipsistic, focusing merely on self-referential, formal problems. The grotesque human-animal hybrids sticking out their tongues are wittily declarative and combative, much like their 'ancestors': medieval heraldic animal symbols, coats of arms created to signify social and political identification in battle.

In 1959, Spero had a solo exhibition at Rockford College in Rockford, Illinois, of paintings completed during her stay in Italy and in Bloomington, Indiana. It was also the year of the controversial figurative exhibition curated by Peter Selz at the Museum of Modern Art, *New Images of Man,* which was criticized at the time for its sprawling, uneven quality and its out-of-fashion-at-the-time figurative theme.[105] Selz brought together figurative works by older, renowned artists, such as Dubuffet and Giacometti, younger emerging artists, such as Golub, Karel Appel, Kenneth Armitage and Reg Butler, and New York School painters, de Kooning and Pollock. Golub exhibited several works, including *Damaged Man* (1955) and *Colossal Head* (1958), but Spero was not included in this overwhelmingly male club, despite her obvious affinities with Selz's broad theme. Lawrence Alloway, quoted by Selz in his catalogue essay on Golub, discussed the overlapping characteristics and themes of the new figurative painting: its often fragmented or brutalized forms, its trajectory toward pathos and monumentality, and its general aim to reincarnate symbolism from classical art into modern existentialist terms.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Interestingly, Alloway had previously underlined the proclivity of many figurative artists, including Golub, to look to the classical notion of the "idea of sculpture as a symbol of the human condition."[106] The conceptual weight and presence of sculptural form as the quintessence of and impetus to reinterpretations of the figure could be translated into both modernist painting and sculpture. The post-war human body was depicted not as an ideal or a psychologically complete whole, but as an anguished and mutant, fractured form, hugely vulnerable in its instability and isolation, as an outcome of the psychological and social trauma exacted on the War's soldiers and civilians alike. "The body as the container of a shocked consciousness," Alloway wrote, made it the most complex, ambiguous, and compellingly appropriate form.[107] While these pictorial themes can be identified in both Spero and Golub's paintings at the time, Spero's figurative, humanist-based, and existentially inflected paintings were absent from Selz's exhibition. Spero's impetus to form, depicting the "human condition" in family groups and originating primarily in pre-classical sculpture and frescos, in mythology and esotericism, would have dovetailed and crucially expanded Selz's figurative theme.

After experiencing exclusion from major group exhibitions, such as *New Images of Man*, and the overwhelming dominance of Abstract Expressionism in New York, Spero sought an artistic climate more open and amenable to diverse pictorial forms. The artist looked toward Europe, where her mythically layered themes had found resonance earlier. By the late 1950s, Max Ernst, Andre Masson, Fernand Leger, and Francis Picabia had all returned to Europe. In addition, Europe's burgeoning art movements manifested a variety of approaches and philosophies, such as Art Informal, Neo-Dada, Nouveau Realisme, and Situationism. Spero sought an expanding and international artistic

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

dialogue: "I felt Paris was still an open place, allowing me the freedom to create in an individual way. I needed to get away from the all-consuming pressure of the art system in New York."[108] Having previously found a level of expressive tolerance in Paris, both Spero and Golub sought to return to Europe. Golub's dealer, Allan Frumkin, had a solution. As Spero remembers: "Allan Frumkin, Leon's dealer, said we would be able to live in Europe for a year. It turned out that Leon was able to sell enough work and to win a grant [Ford Foundation Grant, 1959] so that we were able to live there comfortably enough for five years. Our third son [Paul] was born in Paris. I remember those as wonderful years, getting a lot of work done night after night in my studio."[109]

Paris II

From 1959-1964, Spero and Golub lived in Paris in what had been the vacant ground floor of a house with a basement off the Bois de Boulogne in the sixteenth arrondissement. Golub welcomed the change: "Our idea was that maybe one could internationalize oneself, be part of a wider world art scene."[110] Spero and Golub developed a sphere of acquaintances including a small expatriate community of artists and writers through their friend, Darthea Speyer, a Chicagoan and the American cultural attaché. Speyer ran a gallery connected to the American Embassy and introduced Spero and Golub to the expatriate group, which included, Wayne Andersen, Max Kozloff, and Irving Petlin. Golub had the opportunity to meet Dubuffet and Giacometti for the first time, and both American artists regularly visited Paris's museums, especially the Musee d'Art Moderne and the Louvre.

In Paris, Spero painted a series of works which would become known later as her Black Paintings, referring to their predominant tone: a nuanced blackness. Their surfaces

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

appear carbonized or, at times, like emerging archaeological fields in which bodies and earthen ground are intertwined, as in the digs at Pompeii which Spero had visited. Worked on at night and over a period of several months, the figures and backgrounds of these monumental oils began as strokes and scumbles of mustard ochre, pink, or sienna. Scraped and often repainted with shades of black, the underpainting illuminates the darkness, suggesting a shifting movement in space. Instead of depicting light falling on the body's surfaces to define the underlying structure, Spero scraped away at the surface to reveal an internal light, a flickering luminescence. Precariously poised, outlined figures interlock in alternately tender or frenzied embrace, seesawing rhythmically, embodying fugitive emotions and an erotic charge, fading in and out of focus. In addition, the artist hung the Black Paintings unstretched -- like aging, grafted skins -- with white hospital tape outlining the canvas. In a 1962 photograph taken by Andre Morain in her Paris studio (Figure 18, 1962), Spero sits in front of one of these paintings in progress, *Lovers III* (1962-1965), with her paints spread out on her work table in front of her.

Spero dug deeper into her primary themes in Paris: "These paintings are about timeless subjects which continually appear in our society. They dealt with lovers, great mothers, children and prostitutes; women have been an important part of myth and women continue to be important subjects in art. I have always felt this, since I was a student looking at artifacts at the Field Museum."[111] *Mother and Children* (Figure 19, 1962), another large-scale work, pairs a walking woman with two young sons at her side, her hand guiding their progress. Lovers or couples are another main focus, as in her painting *Lovers V* (Figure 20, 1962-1965), inspired by Tarot cards and Etruscan sarcophagi. Spero wrote in an artist's statement dating from 1965: "For years I have

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

returned to a double image which has assumed diverse forms – in a series of 'le couple' or 'the lovers' – existentially expressed through the inspiration of Tarot cards. This theme embodies a rapport, a contact of two beings in a ritual or sensual sense. ... I would like to believe I am creating images of poetic ritual."[112] During this period, Spero paired and layered thematic meanings in the doubled figures as though highlighting two sides of the same coin: ritual and sensual experience, lovers and prostitutes, intimate contact and isolation, life and death. She recognized lunar aspects in the *Lovers:* "... these are paintings of the night revealing things that happen at night. The darkness envelops the figures and gives them a sense of protection. These works were meant to be about isolation. The figures are related and yet they are not. We are ultimately alone and isolated. I wanted to make an existential statement about the self."[113] As in her paintings of mothers and children, the lovers are connected fleetingly, psychologically as well as physically. Spero's figure compositions from this period suggest the experience of individuated consciousness, emphasizing separate existential fates, while at the same time, her conjoined figures, merging with each other and their environment, imply a sense of indivisible connections in spiritual or intimate relationships. On another level, The Lover's image in Tarot, as Spero knew, symbolizes the ritual ordeal of choosing one's path during puberty or maturity: choosing a mate or moving toward virtue or vice. The double image of the Tarot card Lover connotes a time when primal emotions are revealed and churned up, further suggesting that nothing can be achieved without recognizing and bringing to light the relationship between conflicting emotional drives, a key concept and recurrent theme of Spero's, which she will expand to its fullest in her wall paintings.[114]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The double, embodied in the lovers' embrace, is also symbolic of self-knowledge, as Spero has recently said:

> At first I was just figuring out what to do with joined bodies -- lovers or symbolic jottings. I was interested in the mirror or double image; what was on the other side of the mirror, this sense of possibility on the other side of the mirror. It's utopian, but I was interested in looking at the world from the past to the present and rejoicing, to escape from the sense of victimization and tragedy that I'd had earlier on. This was in the early 60s, to reach the other side of the mirror, to reach the celebratory ... [115]

Characteristically for Spero, she mines in her paintings all aspects of the psychic double, however heterogeneous or paradoxical. The artist embraces the dreaded *doppelganger*, stemming from German romanticism, with its tragic and fatal overtones (our complement, the foe we are lured to fight in a presage of death), just as readily as the mirror-image revealing a self-awareness.

The French psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan, in his discussion the "mirror-phase" of a toddler's psychological development, theorized that "the mirror-image would seem to be the threshold of the visible world"[116] Seeing her own image in a mirror, the child would form an *imago*, an image of being and identity separate from the mother, presaging the attainment of language and entry into the cultural world of symbols. In the esoteric world of Tarot card reading, the double becomes an image in which psychic realities manifest themselves, mirrors being one of the oldest forms of divination (mirrors and water surfaces were used to interrogate the spirits in divination). Related to the Narcissus metaphor, Luce Irigaray reads this self-reflection -- when eyes meet and see the pupil in the other -- as our consciousness dividing to observe itself, hence, the aphorism, "know thyself."[117] That other, invisibly watching within us, is our own death. We come to our

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

self-knowledge only through the eye of our mortality; if we were immortal, such experiences would not be so precious.

Early on in her career, especially after becoming a mother, Spero represents pictorially these inexplicable, ontological paradoxes as an integral part of the precariousness of life, its fleeting and irreplaceable quality referenced in archetypes from ancient mythology. Spero acknowledges in her figure painting that it is precisely because we are mortal beings that things have a significance and an intense presence. This intense, contradictory presence and the resulting ontological questions it poses will resonate in Spero's transient wall installations as she aimed toward updating, replenishing, and critically differentiating contemporary archetypes.[118]

Spero exhibited her new black paintings in Paris and her audience was receptive. Her first one-woman exhibition in 1962 was at the Galerie Breteau, where she continued to exhibit in 1965 and 1968. She participated in important group exhibitions in Laussanne, Switzerland (Salon Internationale, 1963), and at the American Center in Paris (Huit Americans de Paris, 1964). The American poet, John Ashbery, who wrote frequently about visual art, reviewed her first exhibition at Galerie Breteau, describing her figures as, at once "monstrous and pathetic," evoking pathos and "tenderness" in a "bitter poetry."[119] Ashbery had recognized immediately in Spero's figures an oscillating duality and a layering of oppositional emotions. And he pinpointed in Spero a lyric, poetic sensibility which was anything but sentimental. In his discussion of technique, he highlighted the figure/ground relationships and the significance of a vast textured space: "It is not the figures but their surrounding void which one retains: the transparent sooty depths, black flickering with pale blue and pink, are impressively painted."[120] Spero's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Black Paintings belong to a poetic, visionary lineage in the history of Western painting: the black period works of the Romantic symbolist painters, Odilon Redon or William Blake. Her tenebrous paintings also highlight Spero's experiments with figure/ground conjunctions, variations of contour, transparency, and luminescence in order to conjure up the visionary. For Spero, the phenomenological 'feel' of physical space, as indivisibly woven with the conceptual, is a major organizing unit that inflects her figures.

What Ashbery described as a "surrounding void" or an infinite, other-worldly space, Spero saw as a pervasive psychological space as well: "I deliberately treated each composition with delicacy, in order to emphasize the sense of relaxation and other-worldliness that lovers experience."[121] The metaphysical and psychic realms invoked by the Etruscan frescos and erotic wall murals she had studied in Naples are thus echoed in Spero's pictorial strategies. Sensuality is related to both the physical and metaphysical, as Spero notes of these couplings, "It is sexual in content but there is nothing explicit; I was suggesting rather than saying exactly what these figures were doing; gesture extended existentially."[122] Sexuality, as phrased by the brushstrokes and undulating forms, is pictured as energy dispersed, effervescent, and scattered in the luminous passages of figures 'melting' into their background. "They're literally painted together, one figure merges into the other, inextricably intertwined, but separated as well. In a certain way they are quite lyrical, raw, virtually obliterated but lyrical," recalls Spero.[123]

Appearing during the same period as the Black Paintings were their doubles, so to speak, smaller scatological paintings, primarily gouache and ink on paper, full of nightmarish terror and intense anger: *Les Anges, Merde, Fuck You* (1960, Figure 21), *Nightmare Figures II* (1961, oil on canvas, Figure 22), and *Poem I: Fuck You* (1960,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Figure 23). Mask-like howling heads, thrust in wild trajectories emerging from the depths of muddy tones, are scrawled with obscenities over scumbled surfaces. These stormy demons connote a dueling of emotions, a ritual exorcism, or a release of psychic energies. Like the first word uttered by the infamous protagonist Pere Ubu -- "merde!" ("shee-yit") -- in Alfred Jarry's darkly absurdist play, "Ubu Roi" (1896), Spero finds her tongue to taunt and curse with hyperbolic fury. Red tongues flicking, the nightmare-black angels spit and snarl, their streamlined "wings" flapping at their sides. Their deathly white heads are outlined in black as they swoop downward and upward. Often these dark angels appear doubled, with two menacing heads careening in opposite directions attached to one snaking body. In discussing the generalized influence of Freudian dream theory and Jungian archetypes on her paintings made in Paris, Spero recalled these haunted images as revelations: "At that very time I did some small drawings – some small gouaches on paper that were very angry. Even now, when there is an acceptance of figuration and weird images and kind of nasty and obscene images in the art world, I still have this residual embarrassment because that work was so much out of its time."[124] These gouaches are formally related to the scratched figures and pictorial strategies found in Spero's graffitied prints and drawings, such as *Dancing Figure* and *Four Figures* as well as her paintings, such as *Great Mother Birth.* The artist's mutation of outlined figurative forms, which can easily double themselves or grow wings or change sex, allows for their insertion into new contexts, suggesting new meanings, a concept which would grow more significant for Spero once she developed collaged scroll and wall painting formats.

The importance of working quickly on paper, allying and meshing the skills of drawing, handwriting, and printmaking, led Spero to reflect later on her use of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

medium and its implications: "Paper was more suitable for the irreverent spontaneity of political graffiti. I agreed with the subversive notion of the sixties Arte Povera movement -- a rebellion against fine art's material preciousness and value as acquisition. I also like Dada for its mocking of the status quo. So this is how I saw paper as suitable for a swift attack, accessible."[125] Unlike the more precious quality of viscous oil paint on canvas, inks or gouache on paper captured an immediacy, lightness, and swiftness. The contemporary post-war graffiti of Paris as well as the antique classical graffiti found in Italian excavations, usually anonymous and at the edge of the transient, reinforced Spero's inclinations to incorporate graffiti's compulsive and contorted articulations. Employing graffiti's random scrawl, she dispersed disorder (much as she did in Golub's description of her studio tactics at the AIC), subverting notions permanence and continuity. Fighting aggressively against being subsumed into the general text of the victor's history, graffiti testifies to a paroxysm of life. It is a tongue-wagging aimed at oblivion in defiance. Spero's evolving technical strategies -- her use of graffiti as a physical, somatic dimension of writing and her interest in the effects of ink and paper in her smaller scatological paintings -- became all the more critical when she and Golub returned to America with their three sons to settle in New York.[126]

New York and the War

On their return to New York City in the summer of 1964, the family stayed temporarily at the Chelsea Hotel until Golub rented a loft on Wooster Street, and all five family members moved into the loft. Golub retained a studio teaching position in the Art Department at Rutgers University in New Jersey, and in 1966, relocated his painting studio a few blocks away from Wooster Street to LaGuardia Place, where the entire

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

family moved a decade later. As Spero remembers, "SoHo, still unnamed, was desolate, grungy. There were sweatshops all around, wonderful cast-iron buildings, but really cruel places."[127] What immediately overwhelmed both Spero and Golub was not the condition of their specific neighborhood or the current exhibitions of contemporary art, but the socio-political realities permeating every aspect of life in America in the 1960s. The Vietnam War was raging and the Civil Rights Movement was exploding.[128] Student demonstrations against the War were beginning in 1964, and newspaper reports and photographs from war correspondents in Southeast Asia began to appear daily. As young men were being drafted for military service in Vietnam, Congress passed the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964. Draft calls increased one-hundred percent in 1965 and U.S. bombing commenced in North Vietnam. College students began to burn their draft cards in protest against the War and riots erupted in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles, as racial unrest surged nationally because of continued discrimination, segregation, and the escalating killings of blacks and Civil Rights workers.

It was hardly an environment of neutrality. Both Spero and Golub joined the Artists and Writers Protest Group, at once immersing themselves in anti-war projects as they settled into their family into the loft. On November 26, 1965, in the *Los Angeles Free Press,* Irving Petlin -- a fellow artist-resident of Paris during the 1950s and a Chicago Imagist colleague -- proposed building a collaborative anti-war project in Watts, the *LA Peace Tower.*[129] Petlin and other anti-war activists, including Golub, sought a more visible and effective way to protest war and violence than advertisements and debates due to the news blackout of anti-war rallies in effect at the time. In February 1966, the huge collaged *Peace Tower* rose as an international symbol of protest and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

outrage, with over four-hundred artists contributing artwork panels. Spero's contribution was a painted image of a U.S. military helicopter, a ubiquitous sight in newspaper photographs. The artist anthropomorphized the helicopter as a giant insect-like killing machine, consuming terrified and fleeing people. Spero later told Lois Tarlow, "I decided I was going to make very quick manifestos, which expressed my anger and said something about violence, collusion, and power in a way that would shock the viewer."[130]

Thus Spero's series of *War Paintings* (1966-1970) emerged during a period of national crisis and personal-artistic crises: "When I got back to New York from Paris, I decided I really couldn't stand doing these dark paintings any more. I had to find another way of expressing myself as an artist... Pop Art was coming in and it was bright and shining and new and commercial. Minimalism came in and that was sleek, that was a skin to kind of cover any sort of emotional input that an artist would have."[131] The bright-and-shiny and the sleek-and-detached did not serve Spero's pictorial temperament or her thematic concerns. She was deeply affected by the warfront news from Vietnam, as the film footage began to roll-in on people's T.V. sets at night, and she thought continually about the futures of her three young sons and the vulnerabilities of mothers and children caught in the middle of a vast struggle for power in Southeast Asia. Spero's small, angry, ink and gouache paintings on paper, *Les Anges, Merde, Fuck You* and *Poem I: Fuck You,* full of curses -- reflections from a psychic netherworld of darker forces which she had painted in Paris -- began to resonate less as existential, individual cries and more as a specific means to both uncover and protest the profanity of war and to represent its reality in symbolic form. Spero was finding a public voice at last in a pivotal form which linked power and sexuality:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> I started to do a war series in 1966. The Vietnam War was going on, so it was both personal and a political crisis... And a crisis in my way of thinking, that I really could not go on with these [Black Paris] paintings forever. I had to rethink what I was doing as an artist. So I started thinking about the Vietnam War as content for the work. And at first I started doing atom bombs because that was and can be and is total destruction. What happened was this terrific outburst -- that the bombs became very sexual and very phallic. Mostly male bombs -- a long penis with heads at the end of the penis. Something that was once again unacceptable art! On top of the bomb cloud there were heads spewing out poison or vomiting or sticking their tongues out. It got really violent; the implication of sex and the power of the military, the power of a country having the atom bomb. But it had to do with male power...But my idea in using sex with the bomb, with the power thing, was that I couldn't think of any other way of showing the obscenity of the bomb, except through this expression of sexual obscenity... So I did stuff like the bomb shitting. And I was told by some guy who saw the work that that was indeed the way that the pilots thought about dropping the bomb. And then, sure enough, later on, I read what a pilot had said and I used that quote, not actually in the War Series but later on. He said, "I laid my stuff all over it." What could be more obscene and really connected to these obscene images? And as horrified as people were at this work, reality was much worse. That has always been my rationale, that reality far overrides anything that I might be able to do."[132]

In Spero's *War Series,* including paintings such as *Victim, Eagle, and Medusa Head* (1969, Figure 24) and *S.U.P.E.R.P.A.C.I.F.I.C.A.T.I.O.N.* (1967, Figure 25), the artist employed collage with gouache and ink, emphasizing the process of isolating free-floating figures and objects set against an indeterminate, horizonless ground of white paper. Spero's collaged figures and fragments -- images from mythology, history, and contemporary news clips -- were painted, cut, and recombined on a ground of archival paper. Her aggressive initial strokes were thus captured uncensored and unedited, while she developed her collage technique to free-up the figures in relation to ground, affording them a fluidity within unplanned configurations and relationships.[133] Recording a visceral response to the trauma and displacement of war, the artist 'unhinged' her figures from the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

course of ordinary life and inserted them into a whirlpool out-of-time. Instead of being inextricably embedded in a picture plane of layered, viscous oil paint, her figures were now 'unprotected' and hurled into uncertainty, spatially and temporally. Spero explained her methods and the gradual emergence of potent, condensed imagery:

> These pictures were just full of bloodied victims. They were small, about 24 x 36 inches, and done very fast and spontaneously and had lots of color and were actually rather delicately done for the horrendous subject matter that I had. Then I decided to zero in and I painted helicopters, because that represented the Vietnam War; somehow this hovering helicopter was the real symbol of the Vietnam War, the helicopter with victims being thrown. I picked up from the press and the media all the obscenity and I put a lot of language like "pacification" and "search and destroy" in the paintings. Pop language and immediate, accessible imagery.[134]

Spero highlighted the Orwellian double-speak of governments, calling into question the actual meanings or subtexts of throw-away terms and mass media representations of the War depicted on T.V., representations which had become synecdochic expressions in the larger culture, and spreading internationally via T.V. She exposed, from the inside-out, not a science fictional morphing of men into killing machines, but rather, anthropomorphic machines designed by men to dehumanize and terminate life. Spero graphically depicted this transition into debasement -- mutating excrement, urine, and vomit -- as an inchoate, savage violence taking on a life of its own in cycles of sexual/destructive impulses. In her *War Series,* Spero painted grotesque female as well as male bombs, and she did so from the point of view of a woman on the home front, increasingly bombarded with T.V. images from the front lines of war. As art historian Jon Bird has discussed, nothing of the sustained tone, pitch, and intensity of Spero's *War Series* had appeared in the visual language since Otto Dix's etchings of the First World War (1924) and Francisco de Goya's *Disasters of War* (1820).[135]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In addition, Spero critically referenced the deep seated psychological power of cultural symbolism from ancient mythology – such as, the Medusa Head, an apotropaic image of terror, chaos, and instantaneous destruction coupled with the Imperial Roman/American Eagle – as well as from the incantatory and ritualistic, which she had aimed to translate into her pictorial language since her trips to the Field Museum and archeological sites in Europe: "When I did the War Series I felt, at a primitive level, that if I revealed all this nastiness in some way to the world, then I would be exorcising the evils. The art was, in a way, shamanistic."[136] Spero's physicality of approach to materials echoed a psychic struggle:

> To exorcize my vengeful feelings about the war, I had to be extreme. The way I think of it, an exorcism is pretty primitive but it's something outside myself that results in some kind of action... I used bloody colors, and literally a lot of spit with gouache paint. I used it to thin the gouache like watercolor -- to correct anything I would rub spit in with my finger. Even though they seem delicate, they are violent: a lot of them are patched on the back from all this rubbing.[137]

The patches on the back of the artist's *War* paintings as well as the passages of burnishing and rubbing manifest the temporality of process existing in tension with Spero's more immediate passages of mark-making and brushwork within the same painting.

By working in the less precious, sketchy medium of paper, Spero declared an anti-heroic stance from the margins: "It was just like a kind of rebellion... in that medium [oil paint] I couldn't express what I needed to articulate. Painting was too conventional, too establishment, too limiting, too much like wall paper. I wanted something freer, more temporal, ephemeral."[138] Spero had been witness to the critical and popular ascent of Pop Art and its 'shock' tactics of a deadpan banality; Andy Warhol's *Cow Wallpaper* had

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

been shown at Leo Castelli Gallery in 1966, hence, Spero's "wallpaper" simile referencing the assimilation of art in the marketing of consumer culture, and vice versa. There were also practical, logistical reasons for working on a small scale and on paper in order to construct images so full of rage: "When the images got very small, it was to deflate them even more. Also, it was to hide the weird little things I was doing from my children."[139] Spero concluded in retrospect:

> Perhaps motherhood was part of a political, personal choice in my changing mediums and content. I started working rapidly on paper, angry works, often scatological-manifestos against a senseless obscene war, a war that my sons (too young then) could have been called up for... Making these extreme images, I worried that the children might be embarrassed with the content of my art, what 'their mother' might be doing as an artist.[140]

While painting, cutting, and collaging on a "domestically" intimate scale, easily whisked out-of-sight when the children entered, Spero paradoxically tapped into a more public, emphatically political voice.

From January 29 to February 8, 1967, "Angry Arts Week" took place in New York, an anti-war collaborative program of cultural events, including *Collage of Indignation I*, to which over one-hundred-and-fifty artists, including Spero and Golub, made contributions. Organized by the Artists and Writers Protest Group and installed at Loeb Student Center Gallery at New York University, the 122 foot *Collage* was a single facet of a many-pronged project, which included street theater, film, and performances as a collective political/cultural expression with its roots in precedents including Dada, Happenings, and the beginnings of Performance Art.[141] Critics Dore Ashton and Max Kozloff had sent letters of invitation to participate in the *Collage* to artists, specifically requesting, "... whatever manner of visual invective, political caricature, or related savage

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

materials you would care to contribute."[142] Inserting critical intervention, collectivity, and the theatrical, burgeoning groups such as the Bread and Puppet Theatre, lead by Peter Schumann, organized radical political productions with enormous puppets and masks; there were films and recordings of stories from Vietnamese civilians, and agit-prop caravans circulated during the week. Oppositional practices were the strategies featured at numerous venues downtown, invading and disrupting the regular flow of life. These multi-media collaged elements, with their genesis in Dada, could not be curated, exhibited, and conserved in the conventional sense; they represented a transience and fluidity, as though sites of protest and dissent might appear anywhere. Leon Golub described the performative, political/metaphysical origins and contemporary significance of the activist collage in a position letter, published in *Artforum* in 1969, aimed at opposing the narrow confines of the Greenbergian modernism of Michael Fried, circumscribed in Fried's canonical essay published in the same journal in 1967, "Art and Objecthood."[143] Golub characterized and championed collage (which Spero was deploying in her *War Series*): "... And as action, spontaneous and casual, the collage became a carrier of indignation, harking back to street art, graffiti, burlesque, the carnival, the dance of death."[144]

Although Spero had found an ostensibly broader public voice in the paper collage format, it was difficult for her to get this voice out into the public sphere, except in anti-war, activist group exhibitions, such as Colgate University's *Viewpoints* (1969), New York Public Theater's *Mod Donn Art* (1970), and Judson Memorial Church's *Flag Show* (1970). In frustration, Spero had joined the Art Workers Coalition in August 1968, an anti-war, quasi-Marxist organization set up to offer an alternative to established art

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

institutions.[145] But women were again marginalized and overlooked in AWC, so in the Fall of 1969, Spero and others joined a radical splinter group, Women Artists in Revolution (WAR), an anti-war group which also addressed the particular roles of women in society and culture. A feminist consciousness was developing in Spero and her peers:

> It was a very lively time: we wrote manifestos and engaged in actions and protests. Once we went over to Museum of Modern Art, eight of us, one woman even had a child of about six or so, dragging along. We marched into [Director] John Hightower's office, and we demanded parity for women artists at MoMA. He asked us to sit down, and we wouldn't sit down. We demanded parity, and then we left. Later I joined the Ad Hoc Committee of Women Artists [October 1970]. We did all kinds of actions, sit-ins, and picketing. A whole bunch of us invaded an opening at the Whitney [Museum of American Art]. We went inside and sat down, plop, right in the middle of the museum. [146]

Spero engaged in public actions and panels, writing petitions, and demonstrating, and in 1971, the January issue of *Art Gallery Magazine*, published her article, "The Whitney and Women," a stinging critique of the art world's sexism and discrimination.[147] While the predominantly male conceptual and minimalist artists were being critically acclaimed -- in 1970, the Museum of Modern Art's important contemporary exhibition, *Information*, included conceptual, arte povera, earthworks, systems, and process art by an overwhelmingly male cast -- Spero perused and annotated Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*, a touchstone for the artist.[148] After her personal experiences of exclusion in the art world, including AWC, she declared: "By now I figured out the relationship between sex and power and I was angry."[149]

Enter Artaud

In 1969, Spero discovered an apposite voice through which to channel her personal and political/cultural anger, ventriloquizing the fractured, excoriating texts of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the founder of the Alfred Jarry Theater and the creator of the Theater of Cruelty, Antonin Artaud (1896-1948).[150] Spero explained her immersion into the oral paroxysms of the brilliant though profoundly disturbed twentieth century French writer, Artaud:

> We got a book [Jack Hirschman's translations of Artaud] and my middle son [Philip] started reading to me and translating Artaud back into French, and I said, 'That's it.' The language was so extreme and agonized, and kind of a personal point of view of the artist in a bourgeois society. So I decided that his language was so extreme and on the edge that it would be a logical following to the *War Series*. I thought that his language, in conjunction with my images, would reveal my intentions and make my work more meaningful and perceptible to an audience.[151]

Hearing Artaud's words spoken aloud in both English and French was key to recognizing that sound had a physical presence, and that one could 'see' images through sounds and 'hear' through visual languages simultaneously. Spero had employed the synesthesia of image/text conjunctions since her student days, but the necessity of building a contemporary apocalyptic language via expressive, contorted figures and texts that moved outside the specific subject matter of the *War Series* drove the artist to expand her pictorial language.

Artaud, the Parisian avant-garde author of plays, essays, and poems is perhaps best known for his manifestos and correspondence on theater and such works as "Van Gogh, the Man Suicided by Society" (1947), "Fragments of a Diary From Hell (1925)," and "The Nerve Meter (1925). For Spero, the tenor of Artaud's language, his tearing apart of linear narrative, plot, and syntax, in fact, his violent disruption of the structure of language were all strategies to be visually translated and inserted into her collage framework in order to push toward extremity and to the limits of language itself. Spero

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

recognized the parallels between her anger at the lack of an acknowledged public voice, the arbitrary qualities of language, and the significance of Artaud's rage:

> Artaud is exceptional for having uttered the most extreme expressions of dislocation and alienation in the 20th century. He represents himself as the victim par excellence. While violent in gesture and language, he is masochistic and passive. Nevertheless, he plays the part of the female victim... I identified with Artaud's sense of victimage -- using his language to exemplify my loss of tongue -- fracturing his already fractured texts, because I felt a victim as regards to both being a woman and an artist.[152]

Artaud 'performed' for Spero, under her direction, as her double, the double suggestive of a self-knowledge which the artist had depicted more literally in her Paris paintings.

In paintings such as *Artaud Painting-Untitled (I also preach...)* (1969, Figure 26), Spero circulates Artaud's apocalyptic words (here, in English) in a spiral of script encompassing a floating Medusa-like head, severed and caught within a milky blue star. The artist excerpts, manipulates, and reconfigures the poet's metaphors of cosmic destruction and recreation. Spero wrote of Artaud: "He speaks of his tongue being cut! -- silenced. I fragmented these quotes with images I had painted -- disembodied heads, defiant phallic tongues on tense male, female, and androgynous straightjackets, mythological or alchemical references. I'm literally sticking my tongue out at the world -- woman silenced, victimized, brutalized, hysterical, talking 'in tongues.'"[153] Paradoxically, by using the words of the misogynist writer as a kind of complementary *doppelganger*, Spero released her own voice in word/image conjunctions.[154]

The artist described her working method for the Artaud Paintings (1969-1970), which harnessed the physical qualities of her materials for their maximum expressive qualities:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> I used sheets of Sekishu paper torn in half, each approximately 25 inches by 19 inches (as it is handmade, the size varies somewhat from sheet to sheet). I hand-wrote (painted) fractured quotes from Artaud's writings, using my left hand to give the text a more out-of-control feel. The figures and abstract shapes were painted on 100 percent rag bond paper, cut out and glued onto the Sekishu with Higgins vegetable glue -- it has lasted well. The paper puckered and yellowed, which I liked for the Artaud works (including the *Codex Artaud*) because I wanted the work to look used and old.[155]

Spero's 1965 edition of an anthology of Antonin Artaud's writings is dog eared and full of underlining and marginalia. The anthology, translated by the poet Jack Hirschman, includes photographs of Artaud and illustrations of his drawings sandwiched between Artaud's fractured texts, full of pressurized, hemorrhaging metaphors of acute pain and psychological fragmentation. In 1971, Spero's painted, hand-printed, and collaged "Artaud Paintings" (1969-1970) debuted at the University of California, San Diego. These paintings on paper gathered hybrid, nightmarish figures gesticulating in an uneasy visual dialogue with Artaud's poetry and prose fragments. David Antin, the curator of the exhibition, decided to push-pin Spero's paintings on paper directly onto the walls of the gallery. Antin positioned the images, angled slightly off-center, accompanied by reproductions of the poet's drawings and photographs of Artaud -- the whole becoming a collaged environment echoing an updated Dadaesque gesture, contingent and seemingly impromptu.[156] By unframing Spero's paintings and juxtaposing them with photographs and drawings reproduced from Hirschman's anthology edition, Antin had "unframed" the formality of the modernist gallery space, integrating the paintings' pictorial field with the surface of the walls. Spero's painted transcriptions and graphic manipulation of Artaud's texts, paired with copies of photographs and drawings, created a conceptually radical approach to the predominant strategies of displaying contemporary

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

painting as bounded, discrete objects. In a sense, Antin had brought into the gallery aspects of the casual intensity, flux, and percolation of Spero's studio environment -- with its collage sensibility of stacked media images, books, and paintings-in-gestation on tables, floors, and tacked on the wall. This tactic rejected the notions of preciousness and value adhering to the art object, instead, emphasizing the processes of visual thinking as fragmentary and incomplete yet condensed and associative. Visitors had to move up close to read images and step back to absorb the whole, which was impossible to take in all at once and extremely difficult to photograph. Formerly discrete objects were linked to one another within a network or web of relationships. Antin, himself a poet (and married to Eleanor Antin, the role-playing performance artist, who began her masquerades in 1972), had expanded the perception of Spero's "Artaud Paintings" by doubling their collage qualities and equating texts with images, while weaving together their figure/ground relationships on the gallery walls.[157] He had referenced the book form as well as the discursive quality of Spero's oeuvre in an installation of reciprocal relationships.

In her Hirschman edition of Artaud's writings, Spero underlined and bracketed Artaud's poetic speculation that painting might obtain "an ideal absolute space," a real space.[158] By perceiving the conceptual and graphic implications offered in the San Diego exhibition installation, Spero intuitively moved toward an interplay with this real, absolute space. In 1971, expanding and amplifying the implications of the scale of text and figures, the artist developed a radically new format which became her signature, a long scroll format suggesting the form of an unfurling visual epic: "After the Artaud Paintings, I wanted to move into space, so I used these archival papers that were around the studio and glued them together. They are all different types of paper... [including]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

French vellum, a tracing paper."[159] In *Codex Artaud.*(28 x 196 inches), consisting of 32 paper panels glued end-to-end (Figures 27, 28, 29, 1971-1972), Spero painted, collaged, and hand-stamped images of varying scale (approximately 1 inch to 20 inches in height) interwoven with slices of text, typed on an array of different typewriters including a large Bulletin typewriter. She fragmented and tore, spun and clotted Artaud's lines, sometimes over-typing sentences into incomprehensibility, forming abstract patterns of concrete poetry, while interlocking her figures drawn from prehistoric and classical myth with contemporary media, thus mingling historical timeframes. Artaud's language, violently ventriloquized, resided in dissonant tension with Spero's expressive figures, demanding viewer participation in an intimate reading, while functioning graphically at a distance, the rippling pictorial scroll punctuated with strong shapes in relation to one another, gesturing and posturing. Most important, Spero incorporated into this mix of signs and symbols the poetic caesuras of white space, which appeared both flat and infinite, encompassing silence and implying an unutterable isolation. By employing this encircling horizontal format, push-pinned continuously around several walls at eye-level, Spero constructed a non-linear compendium which the viewer could enter into at any point. Her scroll violated the normative scale of modernist painting (even at odds with Golub's massive scale of painting), valued materials (not-so-precious paper), and the formal arrangement of discrete framed paintings in museum and gallery displays. With this gesture outward into real space, Spero developed a counter-modernist strategy, devaluing the hierarchy of art objects, deploying instead a borderless image-surface-to-wall-surface, interacting and straining with the properties, cadence, and shape of the surrounding space.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Spero exceeded Antin's curatorial/poetic strategy by push-pinning tiers of long scrolls end-to-end, both vertically and horizontally, so that her figures and their surrounding spaces could be read either up or down, left or right, as determined by the movement and proclivities of the viewer. She literally took over the gallery space with her push-pinned scrolls to adapt an edited version of studio play into a non-commercial gallery environment, while at the same time entering into the public sphere. In fact, the artist performed an integration of the two spheres, as she declared to Corinne Robins in 1973, "Now I have an arena in which to participate in the art world."[160] Her deliberate use of the term "arena" implies a performative space of interaction and encounter, while ironically resonating with Harold Rosenberg's famous metaphor, first printed in a 1952 issue of *Art News*, that the canvas was "an arena in which to act" for the "American Action Painters."[161] Rosenberg's analysis of the "heroic" individual's non-narrative, non-literary immersion into the "event" of "action painting," takes place within the self-referential confines of the canvas, however large and expansive, and within the solitude of the individual hero's existential/aesthetic quest. Whereas, Spero's action is outwardly bound (conceptually and materially) in an unfolding of space outside the frame support and not oriented within the confines of a rectilinear canvas ground.

Her horizontal and vertical scrolls referenced instead the formats of Chinese scroll paintings and Japanese hand-scrolls, Egyptian papyri and tomb paintings, Medieval illuminations and wall tapestries, all formats with which she had been familiar since her days at AIC. These formats represent varied scales and fluctuating frameworks: the hand-held intimacy of Japanese scrolls and the mural-scaled Egyptian tomb paintings. Spero

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

described her impetus to move into space, triggered by an amalgam of factors, including a response to materials and popular media formats as well as the study of Egyptian art:

> When I started pasting the paper together for the *Codex* I was looking at Egyptian hieroglyphics – their methods of composition on walls and papyrus, to give me some ideas, and along the way I collected many images and references. I wanted to develop my work spatially and I particularly liked the ephemeral and fragile qualities of certain varieties of paper... On reflection, I do think of the scrolls as having a cinematic quality, not just because of their length, but, for example, seeing the various scales of the images as analogous with movements of a movie-camera zooming in and out, the use of framing devices, etc.[162]

This unique format allowed Spero's spatial, structural strategy to connote the cyclical and the fluid as opposed to a teleological linearity or a object-oriented, unified picture plane. The artist reiterated the open-ended, cyclical, and rhythmic by the repetition of her figures or parts of figures, recycling and juxtaposing fragments. She emphasized fluidity in the 'morphing' of her figures -- sometimes androgynous and sometimes half-animal -- by painting or collaging their changing forms with slight variations, as they appear to seep, hop, and stride into adjoining panels. Like Artaud, Spero sought a "language of gesture," focusing on visualizing the organic basis of emotions and the physicality of ideas in the body of 'actors,' her stylized, gesturing figures posed and cropped in implied states of motion within freeze frame panels.[163] A decade later, critic Peter Schjeldahl pointed to this pictorial language of the artist's figures inserted in her fractured, scrolling format as an investiture of "complex emotional states in figurative images, ventriloquizing through the tilt of the head or turn of an ankle."[164]

On the skin-like paper panels, metallic-colored, earthen-colored, or golden figures gesticulate in concert with or in counterpoint to Artaud's irregular, Bulletin-typed

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

excerpts, the figures' contours emphasized by cutout collage and printing stamps. Thus Spero developed a pictorial language that approached Artaud's performative ideal of theater in his call for "... a new physical language with its basis in signs and no longer in words."[165] Spero emphasized text as visual gesture, dislocating its semantics, and she depicted her figures not as individual characters telling a story but as another kind of graphic sign system akin to hieroglyphics. In 1973, the critic, Lawrence Alloway, identified Spero's unique discursive language in the *Codex* as a "remarkable compound of two kinds of sign in which the verbal text and visual interpenetrate."[166] Alloway discussed the normative, linear form of writing as progressing sequentially in time, while the normative, pictorial form of drawing expands spatially; but Spero disrupted this classical Lessingesque order of distinguishing the two modes by contracting, displacing, and cross-fertilizing these genres.

Spero 'performed' Artaud's nightmare visions as a disjunctive poetry-in-space, allied with the writer's theatrical notions of a "language of gesture," operating on both a pictorial level and on the level of suggestive, poetic meanings. Artaud intended his writings as well as his drawings to act "as magic spells" and incantations, transformative themes with which Spero had been working since her Paris paintings.[167] In particular, Spero had closely studied the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, and its hieroglyphic incantations and magical spells, depicted and recited, to ease the journey of the dead through the underworld and into rebirth.[168] According to the structure of this ancient text, a synesthetics of vision and orality enhanced the potency of the magic spells. Spero sought an updated version of the incantatory integrated into her scroll by the repetition of Artaud's poetics in conjunction with the repetition of certain of her figures. For example,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

she repeated and recontextualized the symbolic image of a hissing serpent as a vehicle and sign of transformation, as a ubiquitous force for regeneration, similar to its role in the *Egyptian Book of the Dead*, rather than its role in the Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions in which the serpent becomes the devious tempter of Eve precipitating the Fall of humankind.

In ancient Egyptian mythology, the serpent resides in the belly of the earth, where cyclical regeneration and rebirth occur; it is the predominant influence on the forces that create all form. Deriving most likely from primeval serpent mythology, as an expression of formless primal matter, the serpent appears at the beginning and end of numerous creation myths.[169] Reappearing throughout the *Codex*, often slithering in rhymed trios with tongues extended – a format predominant in the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* – Spero's rhythmically repeated serpents reinstate an eschatological significance to the motive power of life and representations of time; her serpents 'move' the action along and catalyze a morphology of figures and text. In this sense, Spero complements Artaud's notions concerning bodily action as a living force of vibrations or energies endlessly circulating, which he aimed to embody in the theater: "I propose acting upon spectators as music upon snakes, causing them to return to the subtlest ideas through their entire body."[170] Artaud envisioned vibratory encirclement in a gestural, theater-in-the-round, closely approximating, in his mind, the effects of Medieval Mystery Plays, with their circulating caravans which moved from station to station, forming nomadic troupes, performing violent pageants of martyrdom, destruction, and regeneration. Spero's own Medievalist anthropomorphizing of Artaud's texts and her morphology of figures interacting within the long scroll format were noted by Roberta Smith in a review of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

encompassing *Codex* installation at Barbara Gladstone Gallery in 1988: "It is Medieval and *in extremis*... form, brushwork and the paper itself define a kind of boundary-less, all-consuming abyss."[171]

Spero recognized in Artaud's writings a sensibility harnessed by an urgent attempt to communicate extreme physical and psychological pain.[172] The artist has recently stated that at the time of composing *Codex Artaud,* she was suffering from the cumulative effects of almost ten years of rheumatoid arthritis: "This [rheumatoid arthritis] started happening in Paris [at age 34, after birth of her son, Paul] and I didn't want to admit to myself that I had this terrible disease. So I was in great pain and it resonated: Artaud, the art world, my being silenced, bourgeois society's indifference, my physical pain and the inherent futility and/or tragedy of life itself. It fuelled my imagery."[173] Spero had been searching for a formal language to channel the unremitting experience of pain that was affecting her entire body, including her hands: "I was suffering a great deal from arthritis, and I thought, that is what he [Artaud] talks about, mental and physical pain, I can use this."[174] The artist understood that Artaud's expressive language merged metaphysical anxiety and acute physical distress, offering her a means to transform personal anger and suffering into a broadly resonating poetics, recording the passing of a living force from one level to another.

A.I.R.

But Spero's voice, her gestural language of intermingling sign systems within the scroll format, remained marginalized. Her activist, political/artistic stance was that of an outsider. She therefore used this marginality in counterpoint to the artworld and sought ways to exhibit her work in New York outside the commercial gallery and institutional

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

museum structures. Her participation in WAR and the Ad Hoc Women's Committee gave her confidence to pursue alternative venues and approaches: "This political activity was so revelatory, it really helped me comprehend my situation and the situation of women in and out of the art world."[175] Spero networked with fellow activist artists to discuss exhibition opportunities: "Then [artist] Barbara Zucker got the idea that we could form a gallery. There were so many unaffiliated strong women artists floating around. Six of us met: Barbara, Dotty Attie, Susan Williams, Mary Grigoriadis, and Maude Boltz. We discussed the idea of an all women's gallery. We thought it was a great idea."[176] Spero and her colleagues opened the doors of the first women's cooperative gallery, A.I.R. (Artists In Residence) on September 16, 1972, with a membership of twenty-two women. Spero was forty-six years old at the time. Thus, in her comment to critic Corinne Robins ("Now I have an arena in which to participate in the art world."), the artist defined her "arena" as physically and emotionally multi-layered.[177] Having both the camaraderie and the open, physical space of A.I.R. as a public venue, Spero was able to take over the gallery space during her solo exhibitions -- which the artists planned and controlled individually -- to unfurl her scrolls as she wished, push-pinning *Codex Artaud* around the four walls of A.I.R. in 1973. The artist recalled her feelings of inclusion and a new sense of possibility: "From that time on, I had a voice with which to have a dialogue with the art world."[178] Spero's sense of engagement in an ongoing dialogue with an art world community, with museum objects and archaeological sites, and in studio dialogues with Golub and A.I.R. peers, were crucial to the construction of her artistic identity and to her work.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In the flush of a new level of confidence stemming from the evolution of her visual language combined with feminist/political consciousness-raising and the subsequent growth of support structures like A.I.R., Spero decided to embark on another scrolled, word/image conjunction -- an epic framework for an updated form of history painting. In *Torture in Chile* (1974) and *Torture of Women* (Figures 30 and 31, 1974-1976), the artist mingled female images originating from ancient art and contemporary media with misogynist quotes from various historical figures, countered by the testimony of women as documented by Amnesty International in reports on political atrocities. At the start of 1974, while working on these projects, Spero chose to depict only women in order to conceptually shift the 'universal' representation of 'mankind' from the predominant male subject to the female subject, whose representation had been cast as the eternal "other." In Simone de Beauvoir's discourse, which Spero had read, reread, and annotated in her 1954 edition of *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir wrote of developing an alternative language to combat the myths of the "eternal feminine" constructed by men to contrast a preferred, overtly masculinst framework which poses Woman as "the absolute Other, without reciprocity, denying against all experience that she is a subject, a fellow human being."[179] Spero directed her focus to both document and imagine Beauvoir's "dispersed, contingent, and multiple existences of actual women."[180] Challenging the canonical language which had originated during the patriarchal overthrow of goddess mythology in the ancient world, by such figures as Abodah Zarah -- "I have come to destroy the works of the female" – Spero deployed an inversion: "I believe I'm directly contradicting the way human beings are represented in our society. I think the universal is [represented] as male. And so in my deliberately turning this around and trying to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

universalize the female – the rites of passage for women – birth, puberty, childbirth, death would become universal." [181]

Spero worked on *Torture of Women* (1976) during the same period in which Golub completed his mural-scaled *Vietnam* series and began painting his smaller-scale, transitional Power Portraits (1976), depicting close-ups of international male power brokers, representing the twentieth century's range of democratic, fascist, and totalitarian governments, including images of Nelson Rockefeller, Francisco Franco, and Mao Tse-Tung. Spero was documenting a cumulative record of the oppression of women -- historically and mythologically inflected -- with typed text fragments juxtaposed to media-based painted and collaged figures, while Golub depicted media-based close-ups of the world's most powerful men in sketchy and scraped acrylic on linen, documenting the representation of state and military power concentrated in the faces of men wielding this authority. Spero embodied, via specific documentary evidence and testimony, the multiple acts of witness, unspeakable cruelties now spoken, in a recovery of individual voices and collective histories and myths. Both artists aimed at picturing the historical pervasiveness of political terror and its effects on contemporary society and its 'naturalization' in cultural mythologies. Their divergent pictorial strategies conjured palpable encounters with history in relation to the politics of the present.

Spero's working method for *Torture of Women*, a fourteen panel scroll, measuring 20 inches by 125 feet, consisted of laying several panels contiguously on the floor in her studio. Each panel sheet is 20 inches by approximately 9 feet long, which is four sheets of paper glued together. The artist painted images directly on the panels as well as arranging the cut-out collaged or typed elements to be glued in place. On several old typewriters

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and a large-print Bulletin typewriter, Spero typed out the reports from Amnesty International and women's testimonies from the media to be composed and integrated on the panels: "I type badly, and I kept all the messy corrections which revealed my emotion in transcribing these personal accounts of torture and incarceration."[182] The artist's "expressive" typing technique creates tension with the distancing mechanism of unified typeface (allying it, paradoxically, with the individual signature of script), unmasking the concept of a supposed "objectivity" informing newspaper reports. This tension between the information transcribed within a regularized grid of typeface and Spero's emotive traces, erupting in "expressive" typing errors, gave resonant voice to the witnesses personal stories. The artist told Carol De Pasquale at the time: "The content is so powerful that you need pillars to structure it."[183] Spero's structural, formal "pillars," intersecting the caesuras of white paper, were in fact the wedges of type representing women's voices. Therefore, the artist did not illustrate the torture victims, for fear of aesthetisizing violence, instead, she depicted contemporary and mythological women in a gestural dialogue with original testimony from texts, which often graphically describe the experience of torture. To further the friction between the expressive/individual and the objective/mechanistic, Spero interwove her cross-cultural, painted figures and new, hand-printed figures, transformed via context into "symbols of resuscitation, nature, and structure."[184]

Spero's additional incorporation of hand-printed images derives from typeface, allowing the artist to repeat and 'rhyme' figures, which are painted by her or photo-transferred from books or newspapers and then altered by her. Spero's father, Henry, who repaired and sold huge printing presses, had years earlier given her a variety of old

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

alphabet letters from letterpress plates.[185] In 1975, when she was shopping for more examples of alphabets to add to her repertoire, a salesman told her about the ease of transferring her drawings to metal plates. Spero added the letterpress process to her other techniques at once: "I make drawings from the media or from art history or I cannibalize my own drawings. Then I send them to a place in New Jersey to be made into zinc plates. They can be put in a printing press and be printed millions of times, but I print them individually, by hand, to give a handmade look."[186] Within this hand-printed method, Spero again shifts the mechanistic, repetitive means of doubling an image via letterpress regularity, by undermining this regularity in handprinting, emphasizing the endless variations of pressure, inking, and papers. Spero's first small black-and-white letterpress plate mounted on cherry wood was made from a drawing of the artist's Sky Goddess, an amalgam of the ancient Egyptian tomb figure of the Sky Goddess, Nut (ca. 116 B.C.E. – 34 C.E.), and the mythical four-breasted she-wolf that nurtured Romulus and Remus in Rome's origination story, represented by the bronze figure, the *Capitoline Wolf* (ca. 500-480 C.E.). Spero's related earlier canvas, *Great Mother Birth* (1962), painted in Paris, had been informed by this same Etruscan/Roman bronze statue as well as another bronze statue, the many-breasted *Artemis of Ephesus* (second century C.E.), interpreted by the artist not as a goddess but as a half-human, half-animal mother protecting her offspring.[187] By 1971, Spero's hybrid-mutant Sky Goddess had become androgynous, with four breasts and a penis in *Codex Artaud,* while in the scroll, *Torture of Women,* she resides in a prison-like grid, until morphing in the 1980s, extending her body like a canopy or nurturing arch in a celebratory aspect of her powers.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Spero's female figures, originating from ancient and classical mythology but recontextualized by the artist in collaged scrolls, act as transformational elements pointing to the allegorical force of myths as expressions of historical "fictions" that formalize a culture's fears and desires. The artist explained her conceptual/textual themes in *Torture of Women*:

> Both men and women are sexually abused in torture centers, but for women sexual assault is always central to attacks upon the body – frequently the woman becomes impregnated by the guards. So woman has the status of victim 'par excellence' from time immemorial, as is evidenced by the quote [from the Babylonian epic, *The Tale of Gilgamesh*] I include of Marduk catching Tiamat [the Mesopotamian great mother goddess] in his net, brutalizing and then idealizing her – 'and with a knife he split (her body) like a flat fish into two halves, and one of these he made into a covering for the heavens.'[188]

Representing the patriarchal gods in the *Tale*, Marduk challenges Tiamat's power and slays her, cutting open her heart, crushing her skull, and casting her body upward to form the dome of heaven and downward to comprise the earth below.[189] The myth's subtext is the violent taming of chaotic, unpredictable nature (embodied in the goddess) by a hero-centered consciousness in binary opposition to cyclical, communal values; Marduk is the god of cites and civilization, the Logos and the Law. In classical Greek mythology, Marduk is reincarnated in the hero, Perseus, who cut off the head of Medusa, the only mortal Gorgon, thus controlling the dark realm of unbridled emotion and unreason.

Lawrence Alloway described the encompassing, even imprisoning effect of Spero's push-pinned installation of *Torture of Women* at A.I.R. in September of 1976: "[The figures] do not turn the field of paper into a three-dimensional zone. They are *written*, even when they are exquisitely modeled. They are no less signs than the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

characters in the verbal passages... The alliance of text and emblem sometimes tugs apart, sometimes condenses. That is to say, there is no perfect communication, only approximate conjunctions of signs and referents."[190] Alloway was the first to theorize elements of Spero's scrolls and to fully apprehend their recontextualization of pictorial space. The artist floated her varyingly scaled sign systems on the paper scrolls without reference to horizon lines. Referring to Spero's figures and her excerpted handwritten or typed documentary texts as "signs," Alloway stressed their discursive quality and their narrative drive -- with both sign-elements alternately fragmenting or merging. The critic underlined Spero's paradoxical joining of the private and public spheres as well as those of writing/painting and narrative/performance. He emphasized that Spero's installed scroll was on a scale comparable to sculpture (particularly, to pediment friezes), meaning that she had conceptualized, sighted, and realized her scrolls' scale (and not the individual figures' scale) to room scale. Echoing Artaud's primary theme of the inadequacy of language to directly communicate, Spero had woven "approximations" in space, or "doubles," colliding on an extended scroll format, which could be read in alternating, sporadic sequences of scale as either personal letters or public billboards.

In another article from the same year, written for *Artforum*, Alloway declared that Spero revises, "our conception of the scale of drawing. It is neither preparatory for other work nor intimate in scale. There has been a dilation of drawing to room size, as in the wall drawings of Sol LeWitt and in the door-size graphite sheets of Michelle Stuart. Spero expands collage to environmental scale without losing that subtle fragmentation of diverse parts central to the tradition of collage."[191] Alloway points to Spero's doubling and oscillation of the scale of her figure/text. In fact, Spero's signs became a structural

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

part of the work itself (texts as "pillars") in the context of studio production and the work's reincarnation in the space of the cooperative gallery; the meanings embedded in the work were suspended until installation, responding to a dialogue with the space.

These graphic images on contiguous scrolls ("that subtle fragmentation of diverse parts") also acted as an archaeology of shards and loose signs or hieroglyphs, scattered and regrouped. Alloway used the technical term "grotesque," in its classical meaning, to describe Spero's scroll images in which human, vegetative, animal, and culturally-made forms commingle in a common morphology.[192] Most important, by paralleling Spero's environment-scaled collages with the "grotesque," he references the contexts of classical decoration within architecture: on pilasters, panels, lintels, or small domes.

Spero's push-pinned scrolls, installed at AIR in 1973, appeared during the emergence of a wall aesthetic in the early 1970s, referred to by Alloway with the examples of LeWitt's conceptually-based and Stuart's earth-mapping programs.[193] This new wall aesthetic was defined by the mediation of the architectural space as a whole -- as the context for a complete integration of the artist's work contingent on the architectural framework. In contrast to LeWitt and Stuart's primary concerns, Spero's wall aesthetic combined an expressive, figure-based idiom with a conceptual figure/ground "leap" onto the push-pinned horizontal scrolls in the overtaking architectural space. Spero's figure/ground "leap" preceded the experiments of a younger generation of artists, accepted into the mainstream, such as Jonathan Borofsky. In his 1975 solo exhibition at Paula Cooper Gallery, Borofsky jam-packed all of his works from a single year into the small gallery space in order to create a collaged environment emphasizing studio-like, ad hoc visual relationships, compressing a linear, diachronic

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

time frame. He repeated this strategy in 1984 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art with his *Installation* -- push-pinning onto the walls all of his sketches from that year.[194] While Borofsky's literalist reading of a wall aesthetic did, in fact, unframe these works on paper and make public a private studio cognition, his installation of notebook sketches, or paper ideas not intended to be finished works, were not composed to recontextualize or scale figure/ground relationships within architectural space as were Spero's scrolls. In addition, his *Installation* expressed a singular, condensed, linear timeframe.

By overtaking and occupying A.I.R.'s space with her scroll installations, Spero initiated an epic, heroic scale on paper, which, paradoxically, could be rolled up and carried under the arm. The artist had engaged the room's scale and had become a chronicler -- archiving and compiling pictures and quotes out-of-context and out-of-time – installing her scroll as a temporary event. Spero assembled an archaeology of shards, accompanied by sixteen footnotes from various sources -- *Amnesty International, The New York Times, Time* and other magazines and journals – recontextualizing the excerpts on a continuum of paper, which is nevertheless fractured by caesuras and collage elements in an open-ended dialogic form, where meanings and allusions must be pieced together by the viewer.

Notes in Time and Space

In 1976, Spero and Golub divided a large loft space for two studios at LaGuardia Place, which also became their family home where they continue to live and work. During the same year -- in which Spero exhibited *Torture of Women* and began working on another, even more comprehensive scroll project, *Notes in Time on Women Part II: Appraisals, Dance, and Active Histories* (Figures 32 and 33, 1976-1979) – the artist

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

picketed in solidarity with her colleagues from A.I.R. and feminist activists at the Museum of Modern Art's landmark contemporary drawing exhibition curated by Bernice Rose, "Drawing Now." She also picketed during the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's historical overview, "Twentieth Century American Drawings: Three Avant-Garde Generations," in response to the museums' lack of inclusion of representative numbers of women artists.[195] Spero was in the midst of countering this historical continuum of under-representation in her scroll, *Notes in Time,* comprised of twenty-four panels, with each panel measuring 20 inches by 9 feet for a total length of 210 feet. The artist composed five panels at one time, laying them end-to-end on the floor. She printed directly on the panels or collaged text and images together on the paper, while sometimes writing/drawing over the entirety. Spero incorporated ninety-six footnotes into the configuration, linking her intensive study of texts referencing women and their histories to that of an investigative journalist or a chronicler:

> It was like working on a book, a solitary activity. I had to sequester myself. I had nothing to show for years. Rarely was anybody interested enough to ask to see my work in those days. I was stockpiling collaged painted images and hand printing images and quotations directly on paper. Then in the last few months of work, I put everything together.[196]

At first, Spero conceived of *Notes in Time* as a "second chapter," as a Part II of *Torture of Women,* but there was such an abundance of accumulated material that she decided to formulate a distinctive emphasis and theme for *Notes in Time:* "Working on this [*Torture of Women*] was so depressing, the history of women was so horrific, so negative, that I thought, 'How can I counteract this?' That is how all these depictions of athletic women got started."[197] Spero injected *Notes in Time* with a gestural body language of release and energy in both figures and texts, investing sporadically printed

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

texts with body-gesture equivalents patterned to form cascades, scallops, or ripples in dialogue with adjoining blocky-shaped textual excerpts or truncated figures. The artist structured *Notes* as an oppositional dialogue in counterpoint, referencing the annotational quality of "notes" in a musical score or the historian's piles of citations for narrating or choreographing histories. Shifting the compositional/thematic weight from that of witnessing histories to a more buoyant and celebratory counteraction, Spero's women leap over and through a phalanx of denigrating, misogynist quotes concerning the "nature" of Woman and the "authoritative" canonization of stereotypes. The gestures and movements of the artist's figures embody vitality and regeneration in contrast to an excess of male loquaciousness and turgidity, visualized as "disembodied," rigid text fragments. Spero's jumping and flying figures mock and parody, attacking the males' words, subjecting their quotes to appropriation, chopping, splicing, rearrangement, reinterpretation, and mangled repetitions. Deploying the weapons of wit and parody, Spero's ironically titled, *Notes,* offers a cumulatively monumental rebuttal, a treatise assembled with words and images, whose sources range from pre-history and antiquity to encompass contemporary feminist and cultural scholarship.[198]

Spero quotes from diverse journalistic and historical sources on the themes of childbirth, battle, revolution, African-American women, torture, goddesses, menstruation, divorce, World War II women pilots struggling for veterans benefits, female medical students, discrimination at NASA in the space program, and Episcopal Church Doctrine; a compendium of quotes by Pliny, Jacques Derrida, Friedrich Nietzsche, Claude Levi-Strauss, and other historical and cultural figures. By formulating a scrolled, visual/textual structure which weaves this material side-by-side, Spero enters the territory of a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

contemporary epic poet, gathering together fragments of stories, some familiar to the larger community as mirrors of dominant values and others previously buried, obscured, or marginalized. Unlike a cohesive narrative, Spero's poetic, epic form of re-presentation highlights disjunctions and splicings as well as the prominent silences of white space integrating allegorically within the page/wall and the 'book' of architectural space -- winding twice around the walls of A.I.R. in 1979. This interweaving of pauses within the action implies a repeated, cyclical regeneration, and mimics the epic's rhymed format of time passing, "and then, ... and then..." Rather than simply denoting a lack of voice or connoting a void, the white surface/space integrates the dialogues of image/text with the tactility of paper, space, and light.

Spero's growing repertory of figures photo-transferred to metal plates precipitated the rhyming of images and the structural, rhythmic repetitions of her visual poetics: "With these plates I hand-print and cut-out many figures -- stockpiling them for future use. In collaging these disparate figures, juxtaposing, repeating, I create ritual like events, action-movement -- across the space of the extended linear paper format."[199] Using a variety of printmaking techniques, Spero modulated the tonality and pitch of her figures' expressive range to induce a subtle rhyming, alternating with the impetus of implied movement: "I print a figure, then I reprint the same image but using a different colour or tonal value, or I apply less pressure to the plate, or reduce the amount of ink. Sometimes the images are almost transparent so the overlays create the impression of movement – a carnivalesque movement of frenzied, dancing figures."[200] In *Notes,* Spero's intermittent freeze-framing techniques and overlapping of images create shifts of energy, bursts of wild Dionysian frenzy, presaging the artist's later depiction of unfettered sexuality and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

celebratory resonance, linking space with freedom, and culminating in the scroll, *The First Language* (1981). Occupying one of the last panels in *Notes* (Figure 32) is the figure of a woman, originating from a classical, erotic Greek vase, who seems to be walking off stage, that is, off the scroll, with a huge phallus tucked under her arm. This figure is introduced in the scroll by a valedictory bevy of figures in motion and is subsequently followed by bands of pregnant women, females waving dildos, dancing and copulating. Spero's female figure assertively grasping a phallus, the "authoritative" symbol of power and procreation in patriarchal culture, reclaims authority for herself, and strolls off the page as if to begin another cycle of scrolls. The artist's parodying gesture embodied in this figure, confidently 'usurping' the authority of the phallus, references a performative persona for the artist, as one of her doubles, who will reappear and metamorphose often in Spero's scrolls and wall paintings of the 1980s and 1990s.[201]

In 1979, while Spero completed *Notes in Time* and began work on her culminating scroll, *The First Language,* a new artist member joined A.I.R. Gallery, Ana Mendieta (1948-1985). Mendieta, a Cuban-American artist who had settled in New York the previous year, quickly became a close friend of Spero's as well as an A.I.R. colleague. She and Spero came to share a deep affinity for each other's work, spending many hours discussing their individual methods and common themes.[202] In fact, both Mendieta and Spero were seeking a contemporary language of gesture via the figure-in-context in order to reinsert women as active protagonists within a broad mingling of Western and non-Western cultures. As feminists, they articulated critical perspectives on the normative representation of the female body in history and myth, tracing the trajectory of these representations. Mendieta, who had suffered exile from her native

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Cuba when she was twelve years old, explored the means to recover memories of place, to wrestle with recurrent feelings of anger, displacement, and loss, and to represent these political/spiritual struggles. Mendieta's father, Ignacio, initially a supporter of the Cuban Revolution, had been arrested by Fidel Castro for participating in the U.S. led Bay of Pigs invasion. Soon after her father's arrest, the young girl from Havana was air-lifted, along with her older sister -- as part of Operation Peter Pan -- to an orphanage in Iowa in 1961. She and her sister were consequently shuttled between foster homes in Iowa during their teenage years. Mendieta decided to study art at the University of Iowa, receiving a B.A. in 1969 and an M.A. in painting in 1972, and working in graduate school with such visiting artists as Vito Acconci, Nam June Paik, and Robert Wilson. Emphasizing process and the body, and the relationship between art and the viewer, these performance-based artists influenced Mendieta's move toward documenting her later ephemeral, performative works in the formats of video and photographs.[203]

Within a key on-going series, the *Silueta* Series (1973-1984), Mendieta reinterpreted older, pre-colonial mythologies in a new language of ritual. She identified symbols for the body and its absence within specific sites, explored the permeability of the categories of nature/culture, and sought new performative means to represent rites of passage and bodily/spiritual transformation. In preparation for the first of the *Silueta's,* Mendieta researched the multiplicity of Latino cultures and especially, Santeria, an Afro-Cuban religion which attributes a universal energy in continuous circulation through all beings, matter, space, and time. Like Spero, Mendieta aimed to embody a kind of magic, an ephemeral transformation of the shared and mutating energies represented in the cycles of nature and materialized metaphorically within concurrent rites of passage: "I

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

wanted my images to have power, to be magic."[204] Employing basic elements, such as earth, fire, and water, Mendieta performed earth-body sculptures, documented by photographs and videos, using her own body/silhouette traced within the continuum of the landscape, to be transformed by nature in response to her own acts of alchemical intervention. Mendieta re-presented in these earth-body sculptures the extremes of ecstatic bliss and abjection, anger and desire, and growth and decay, building an intense oeuvre ranging from violent fire pieces to quiet lyrical works. While the specific materials, formats, and techniques of their artwork differed, both Mendieta and Spero emphasized the possibilities of reinterpreting new sets of symbols and allegories of transformation for the female body within the metaphorical and gestural. The characteristic psychic intensity shared by their individual oeuvres attests to an acknowledgement and a harnessing of energies embedded at the extremes of human experience.

Perhaps, Dance is the First Language

Spero achieved an expanded metaphorical/gestural lexicon with her watershed, 190 foot scroll, *The First Language* (Figures 34 and 35, 1979-1981). Here the artist jettisoned text entirely to examine the full range of expressive possibility and eloquence of figures in relationship to each other and to the scroll space, releasing a dynamic, hieroglyphic language. With a newly found optimism spurred by her scrolls' integration in the architectural space of A.I.R. and her exchanges in dialogue with colleagues from the Gallery, Spero honed a choreography of the body in motion and in relationship to the scroll space. The artist recalled, "*The First Language* came from a little book I have in French on prehistoric art, called *Forty Thousand Years of Modern Art*, which is where I

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

found the first images that I used of prehistoric women... Many times I find images of men but then I transform them into their female counterparts... I did come across the phrase 'perhaps dance is the first language.'"[205] Spero investigated the porous boundaries of gender identification, the subtleties and directness of body language, and the language of ritualized dance as both a communal and individuating force. The artist's printed and collaged figures reenacted the cycles of birth, puberty, childbirth, growth, decay, death, and regeneration. Focusing on a critical reevaluation of women's representation from within non-linear, synchronic swathes of time, Spero intermingled a revisioning of the classical Greek/Roman goddess, Artemis/Diana, traditionally the virgin huntress and healer of women's pain, with collaged figures of contemporary Olympic champions, images originating from popular track and field magazines: "*The First Language* is about gesture, directness, body language – about woman as protagonist in control of her own body, idealistically in a non-male controlled world."[206] Spero literally and figuratively posed the body in collage-relief as a carrier of multiple and often contradictory meanings via its contextual placement and relationships to other figures as well as to the "idealistically" inflected white space of the scroll, furthering the references to the scale of the surrounding walls. Within the long horizontal format, Spero assembled fractured pieces chronicling women's historical circumstances and actions, from victimization to triumphal celebration, and back, alternately contrasting or paralleling these histories with recurring mythological resonances. In the process, the artist's own struggle for identity was implied in relation to the battles of other historical and mythological women, as Brooks Adams observed: "[I]t is also possible to see them [the scrolls' figures] as a cycle of self-discovery, even as an extended form of self-portraiture."[207]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Spero's feminist artistic themes were paralleled during the same period in Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* of 1979, a symbolization of historical and mythological women realized in an elaborate installation format and comprised of thirty-nine china-painted plates and embroidered runners draped over an extended, triangular dinner table. While the two artists did not know each other personally and were working on opposite coasts, with quite different artistic approaches, their groundbreaking projects were influenced by the shared historical conditions of American cultural feminism. In addition, both women sought emblematic languages to narrate women's achievements over time and represent their historical and cultural circumstances in order to formulate a lineage of women ancestors on which to build or differentiate their own artistic identities.[208] Thus, many women artists in the forefront of the 'first generation,' who emerged in the 1970s, were concerned with multiple historical perspectives and the mythologies of the goddess, such as Spero and Chicago, Mary Beth Edelson, Dotty Attie, Carolee Schneemann, Ana Mendieta, and Buffy Johnson. In addition, themes relating to the research and interpretation of "The Great Goddess" were featured in feminist journals like *Heresies*, which dedicated its spring 1978 issue the goddess.

The First Language presented an encircling figurative epic, informed by cinematic freeze-framing as well as the more traditional genre of panoramic murals, and yet, in contrast to these art forms, it was a defiantly non-linear, discursive compendium, which the viewer could enter at any point and "read" in any direction. The scroll/ground became an infinite space, an imaginative space of possibility, validating a subjectivity of female experience. Spero's scroll/space became a symbolic space that placed women at the center of a universe in which their perceptions and choices mattered. Her re-

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

presentations gave substance to women's social and political concerns, to their emotional lives and their role-playing personas, offering alternative possibilities for being and imagining. The writer and critic, Christopher Lyon, observed these spatial/thematic qualities in the scrolls and related them to a dialogic, multi-voiced encounter: "Most importantly, the encounter of her art with its audience becomes a subject of the work itself... There is a frustrating open-endlessness to it, a rambling linear quality that doesn't allow the viewer to pin it down... It is only when we... allow ourselves to become aware of our own responses that Spero's work comes alive, so to speak." [209]

In addition to her scrolls' multiple art historical references and subversions or reinterpretations of those references, Spero may be seen as having composed an updated, feminist interpretation of a grand epic relating to and inverting elements of an older tapestry-narrative genre, exemplified in the *Bayeux Tapestry* (ca. 1066-1082), a work which fascinated the artist during her study of its format and themes while attending the AIC.[210] The embroidered *Bayeux Tapestry* depicts the highly politicized story of the accession to the English throne by William the Conqueror after his decisive victory at the Battle of Hastings over Edward the Confessor in 1066. As an incomplete and tattered remnant, 20 inches by 231 feet long, the surviving tapestry lacks closure, but it makes manifest in a strong visual language an "authoritative," epic narrative, establishing identity and depicting origins -- soldiers and kings in battle, heraldry and corpses, active male heroics and mythology. It pictures "the hunter and the hunted" in an ultimate struggle for power, intended to send a strong message from the victorious, to be displayed publicly, circling around the walls of baronial halls and accompanied by dramatic oral improvisations elaborating the performative reenactment of the epic tale.[211]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fashioned and stitched by women, whose identities remain "unknown," the *Bayeux Tapestry* is composed of multi-colored wool threads and embroidered strips of linen, and includes hundreds of figures and animals in episodes pictorially interpreted within landscape and architectural scenes. The style of the gesturing figures, as broad character types, echoes period English manuscript illustration. Major protagonists reappear in scene after scene, carrying the action forward in time, as in helical Roman relief. The outlined figures are filled-in with a variety of colored and textured stitches, as are the active peripheral margins and the accompanying Latin synopsis of events. While Spero deploys a similar scrolled and paneled format on almost exactly the same public scale as the *Bayeux Tapestry,* incorporating equally flexible and suspended panels within an architectural space, the artist counters the epic, masculinist heroics of violent suppression and subjugation, the narrative prototypes for which were found in Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid.* Spero's figurative, visual epic is as ambitious in scope and poetic vision as the *Tapestry*, interweaving accretions of rhythmic figures in motion with symbols from past epochs and images of contemporary events, but the artist reconceives the traditional genre which pictures linear sequences of action to solidify and lock into place an epitome of masculine authority. Spero plucks from the peripheral margins the politically and socially vanquished and inserts these multiple voices into the scroll's central core of protagonists engaged in physical and metaphysical struggles. In a real sense, the artist rescues from oblivion the "anonymous," stitching women who made the *Tapestry*, placing them in the authoritative roles of action. Although they are not pictured within the *Tapestry* itself, Spero recognized that the stitching women were represented by their "handiwork," which, in fact, gave the definitive form to the tapestry's structure and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

interpreted the entire assemblage of characters and events in threadwork. Spero denies authority to a single voice by her photo-transfer, collage, and printing methods, juxtaposing scavenged and incomplete passages in disjunctive timeframes, arranging remnants in new contexts. With these strategies of inversion and subversion, applied to a historically resonant format, Spero established multiple feminine identities and origins, inventing a redefinition via older epic forms, a strategy she carried over into the wall paintings.

In 1983, Spero had three simultaneous solo exhibitions in New York, covering the full range of her career as an artist: *War Series 1966-70* and *Artemis 1983* at Gallery 345/Art for Social Change, Inc.; *Black Paintings, Paris, 1959-64* and *Codex Artaud, 1971-1972* at A.I.R. Gallery; *New Paintings 1979-83* at Art Galaxy. Spero characterized the importance of this overview in historicist terms: "These 3 shows signaled my 'history' as an artist."[212] The retrospective view gave Spero the opportunity to take stock of her figurative lexicon and expand the audience's understanding of her oeuvre. But while women had made headway in representation within art institutions during a period when figurative painting was making a "comeback," it was the Neo-Expressionist artists, especially the young German and Italian male artists, who dominated the artworld spotlight and critical discourse. During the 1980s, the Neo-Expressionist persona was embodied by a macho-male stance in sync with the social backlash of Reagan-era conservatism. Lucy Lippard, an early supporter of Spero's from the Women's Art Movement, wrote of the artist's significant differences from the young male poseurs of this period in aesthetic, political, and moral terms: "She emerges at this particular moment as both the precursor and vivid contemporary of the shouting, spitting, shitting,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Neo-Expressionism now in vogue. With one difference -- Spero cares. Her mythical imagery is rooted in decades of political activism as well as in an aesthetic far fresher and more disturbing than that of her reactionary peers."[213] At the time, Spero was clearer than ever about her direction as an artist working in opposition to prevailing social constructs and aesthetic norms; she operated from the margins, but asked the "big" questions about pictorial representation and tackled the most challenging problems of socially engaged art:

> But what does it mean, then, to forge ahead and try to create, let's say, a feminist language? Maybe it is too optimistic a thing ... but to kind of recreate a sense of life... to try to symbolize women -- and women's attitudes (which maybe aren't that different in some cases than men's) and to provoke thought, to get away from the attitude that the women's input is "meaningless" in the final analysis. I don't think I'm going to change the world but I have a viewpoint. It is not like a call to action. It is changing consciousness that I am aiming for, a new consciousness.[214]

Spero's hand-printed, textual frieze over the threshold to both her own and Golub's studios concisely rephrases her concerns: "Ars Sine Scientia Nihil Est" or "Art without knowledge is nothing."

From the Edge, Outward

Spero continued to tackle experimentation with nonlinear, synchronic timeframes, shifting figure/ground relationships and scale-relationships within architectural space. In 1986, she push-pinned her newest horizontal paper scroll, *Sky Goddess* (1985, Figure 36), well above eye level, hugging three walls in relation to the ceiling at Josh Baer Gallery, her new commercial gallery affiliation in New York. Her installation tactic referenced architectural elements and classical decorative motifs, which in turn reverberated with mythic content. The 20 inch by 54 foot scroll expanded like an elongated Parthenon

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

frieze over the heads of visitors. The viewer was compelled to look up, step back to study the overall form, and then approach closer to identify details, shifting focus and point of view to read the individual figures. *Sky Goddess* was an updated, animated frieze of action and implied narrative, resonating with ancient architectural elements reinterpreted in a contemporary gallery space. As critic Thomas McEvilley emphasized in his review of the exhibition:

> Most of the figures in *Skygoddess*, for example, are arranged processionally, as if they were walking or running from either end of the long paper scroll toward a central meeting place. Extending around the room above eye level, *Skygoddess* recalled early Greek friezes, particularly certain sections of the Ionic frieze from the Parthenon, in which priestesses and their female attendants solemnly move toward the central station, where the goddess Athena waits to be clothed in a new gown.[215]

Earlier in 1986, Spero had attended a panel discussion on public art and Maya Lin's Vietnam Memorial, "Fixed in Time," at the Sculpture Center Gallery, in which the classical art historian Richard Brilliant was a panelist. After the panel discussion, Spero spoke with Brilliant about her thematic and formal movement toward an integration with architectural scale. She described her working methods, which brought to mind for Brilliant certain features of Greek and Roman temple pediments: the ambiguities involved in trying to clearly decipher from below the inscriptions and scaled, symbolic carvings above, whose meanings may elude our grasp as they lie on the periphery of vision and are affected by sunlight and shadow.[216] It was exactly these peripheries and margins that engaged Spero's kinesthetic and haptic senses of expansion into architectural space and its borders -- for its borders and elements would become Spero's new pictorial ground.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The scrawled, attenuated, and linear figures of the *Sky Goddess* scrolls inhabit the upper reaches, literally and figuratively. The Sky Goddess figure was one of Spero's earliest images to metamorphose; from the 1970s to the present, this image has undergone continuous change. The composite figure of the Sky Goddess [originating from the artist's combination of the ancient Egyptian sky goddess Nut, derived from the *Book of the Dead,* and the four-breasted Etruscan *She-Wolf,* ca. 500 B.C.E., from the Capitoline Museum, Rome] evinces Spero's working familiarity with museum objects, art books and, most important, her visits to ancient sites which had long informed her conceptual and formal frameworks beginning with the period of her early images of mothers and children.[217] The mythical She-Wolf had suckled Romulus and Remus (the sons of Mars, the god of war) as depicted in the origination story of Rome; but Romulus grew up to slay his brother Remus, continuing the deadly martial tradition, pitting brother against brother in a struggle for power. The possibility of an amalgam of the two different aesthetic forms, Egyptian and Etruscan/Roman, attracted Spero as well as the conceptual elements embodied in Nut and the She-Wolf. Contrasting drives, motivations, and perspectives existing in a single being connoted on-going physical and metaphysical struggles. Informed in part by her interest at the time in Tarot card doubling and its interpretive claims of revealing psychological dialectics, Spero grafted together into one figure these two goddesses representing dual aspects: the ferocious but nurturing She-Wolf conjoined with Nut (whose name in Egyptian means, "sow who eats up her piglets").[218]

Nut, the female goddess of the sky, was often depicted on Egyptian tomb ceilings as a protector of the dead: her children entered her mouth to re-emerge through her

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

womb, setting in motion the endless cycles of life and death, day and night. Because Nut descends from earlier goddesses, such as the Mesopotamian Great Mother, Tiamat (*The Tale of Gilgamesh),* Spero sought to reinterpret her dual aspects as she evolved throughout different periods and cultures. In *Codex Artaud VI, XXV,* and *XXXIII,* the Sky Goddess becomes androgynous before her bifurcation into the two sexes. The Goddess then emerges to subsume male and female power into herself via cannibalization, only to reemerge as the nurturing and protective goddess: the entire voyage paralleling the transformation story from the *Egyptian Book of the Dead.* Spero sought to retell a contemporary origination story, fully aware of the constructs of representation, by redrawing the image of "the female transcending ... and becoming a symbol of resuscitation."[219]

From her earliest contacts with museums and ethnographic objects, reinforced by her readings of Erich Neumann, Spero identified within mythology the representation of critically relevant forces and recurring images arising from unconscious layers of a common historical psyche, patterns of symbol formation representing powerful underlying elements of the human personality. Her scroll images collaged the fullness and complexity of these conflicting forces and images, which had been violently ruptured and bifurcated with the dominance of patriarchal cultures. She sought a representational structure to highlight these contradictions and paradoxes inherent in the experience of life forces and embodied in cultural mythologies.

Spero explored the transformations of the mythic in conjunction with her extension of the installation aesthetic. As British critic Michael Newman described in *Art Monthly*:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> That Spero's major works of the last 12 years all take the form of installation is an important context of feminist art which dispenses with the monumentality and competitive assertiveness of large-scale painting, for it allows the artist to assume control of the conditions under which the work is seen, and break down the hierarchy of fine art and decoration.[220]

Taking a further step toward integration with architectural space, Spero began to "release" some of her figures by printing them directly onto the walls. In 1987, at both the Josh Baer Gallery and the S.L. Simpson Gallery in Toronto, the artist presented her scroll painting, *Sheela and the Dildo Dancer* (1987, 20 inches by 100 feet, Figure 37). Spero had discovered her new figure/ground structure:

> In the installation at the Josh Baer Gallery in New York, the 8 nine-foot panels of the work were hung in a band, with the printing on the walls of the two images – Sheela and the Dildo Dancer – continuing as if running off the paper... When the images are printed on the walls I have found that the artwork becomes integrated with the architecture itself. The images "belong" to the space in a different sense than a placed object. Unlike the "heroic" possession of a space by mural painting, my female images dance across spaces in irregular, sporadic, and aleatory fashion.[221]

Spero's nascent transition from scroll to wall surface was commented on by critics at the time. Critic Ellen Handy discussed the unsettling, unfamiliar elements of combining paper scrolls and painting on the walls at Josh Baer in *Arts Magazine*, "In places the frieze moves directly onto the wall. Did Spero run out of paper? ... It would be sad if the whole piece were on the walls and destined to be destroyed by repainting. But it would probably look a bit nicer."[222] While Handy concedes that looking "nice" or tidy within the confines of acceptable aesthetic harmony was never a criterion for Spero, either from a formal or conceptual perspective (in fact, quite the opposite), the critic deems the artist's experiment as "uneven" and "a compromise between purity and expedience," a comment which references the contingent and ad hoc, the irregular and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

marginal.[223] These borderless notions fell outside the rigidity of formalist (Greenbergian and Friedian) tenets of modernism, while the transience of temporary wall paintings was equally anathema to the realm of the commercialized art object. Earthwork artists, such as Michael Heizer, and Minimalist artists, such as Dan Flavin, had championed the devaluation of the commercialized object from the late-1960s on, but Spero's project involved pinpointing a way for engaged, figured, painting/collage to move outside the pictorial, commercialized object.

In *Parachute* magazine, the Canadian critic, Carol Laing, discussed Spero's exhibition at Toronto's Simpson Gallery, and emphasized the significance of her wall aesthetic: "Spero's images, I go on feeling, would wear very well worked on some real walls in some real places, and the few figures printed directly on the gallery walls here only confirmed that for me."[224] The implications of Spero's initial move onto the wall at the Simpson Gallery were acknowledged at the time by Canadian critic Earl Miller:

> The work has an installational quality; the space mediates the object. Adding to this departure from the art object is the direct printing of one of Spero's running figures onto the wall... Spero alludes to the archaeological in general through this iconography devoid of specific signifieds... The archaeological dig functions as a metaphor for the unearthing of a lost history, the unwritten, suppressed history of the feminine.[225]

The metaphor of an archaeological dig emphasizes an action or a process, not a static object: a search, an uncovering and digging up of fragments, and a removal in order to puzzle out symbols without known contexts. Imaginative recreation within new contexts as well as inspired re-presentation are required of the artist and viewer. In addition, Spero's hand-printed re-presentation of figures, which employ several graphic techniques -- either linear schematic drawings which appear to be incised outlines or tracings (in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

profile or en face) or her shaded relief-like figures suggesting three-dimensions (as captured in rubbings) -- parallel the drawing techniques used in archaeological illustrations from scholarly texts and journals (linear, shaded, or silhouetted illustrations). In contemporary archaeological journals, renderings are often used, rather than photographs, to illustrate site objects, deriving from the nineteenth century tradition established by the batteries of artist illustrators and engravers sent to Egypt by the emperor Napoleon. Thus Spero is referencing the archaeological dig as a process of uncovering and re-telling a story as well as its graphic means of reproduction, its re-contextualization of fragments, and its imaginative recreation in spaces such as Josh Bear Gallery.

Since the completion of the collaged scroll *Notes in Time on Women* (1979), Spero had put aside written text in order to condense and refine a discursive code consisting solely of female figures (from 1974 on), a visual hieroglyphics of women's histories from prehistory to the present, employing "the language of gesture and motion." Spero went on to explain her methods and goals in conversation with Jeanne Siegel: "These depictions of ancient goddesses along with images of contemporary women become palpable reminders of our relationship to the past and our memories of the past. The past and present become inextricably interwoven ... A pose is how one carries oneself, identifies oneself – how one confronts the world and the gaze of the viewer, male or female."[226] The language and word choice of the artist reveal her paramount themes: to depict palpable reminders (in space) within relationships inextricably interwoven (in time) by poses which confront. By deploying the corporeality and yet the abstract symbolism of stylized body gesture in a tactile graphic medium capable of repetition

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

(originating in letterpress printing and transferred to hand-printing), Spero referenced transcription and storytelling. Rendered in a public space, the images running onto the walls imply narratives which expose themselves as if they were fragmented dramas or theater works with characters role-playing. Spero had broached the beginnings of a gestural theater with a "cast of characters" playing roles (historical, mythical, contemporary) and moving into the viewers' space.

Sheela-Na-Gig and the Grotesques

With the artist's selection and transformation of images in *Sheela and the Dildo Dancer* at Josh Baer and Simpson Galleries, Spero continued her investigation of ancient images originating not from heroic classical paintings or sculptures but from peripheral sources, architectural elements, and decorative objects. One of her protagonists, Sheela-na-gig, had originated from carvings on church doorways, which appeared as early as the eleventh century in Ireland and England. Sheela's were apotropaic gestures, talismans against evil and lust. They probably descend from carvings on thresholds, high up on the battlement walls of tower houses, of the "Old Woman on her Hunkers" or the "Old Hag of the Breasts," ancient fertility symbols showing off their large vulvas, originally related to Tellus Mater or Earth Mothers such as Gaia, Cybele, or Demeter.[227] In classical literature, the Old Hag Baubo finds Demeter in deep mourning after her daughter Persephone had been abducted to the underworld, and so the Hag lifts her skirts to bring laughter to Demeter. Obscene gesturing was an amulet against death represented in carved or painted figures signaling regeneration in the cycles of life and death, from womb to tomb to rebirth. In her double aspect, Sheela was one of Spero's first images transferred to a zinc plate (Figures 38 and 39).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Art critic Lucy Lippard featured illustrations of Sheelas from corbels on the Church of St. Mary and St. David in England in her influential thematic text from 1983 on the works of feminist artists, *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Pre-History*.[228] Lippard noted that the carved Sheelas, known as she-devils, were popular images warning against the sin of lust, and were found along the medieval pilgrim routes to Santiago de Compostela.[229] Sheelas owed their bulbous form to the ferocious vitality and fecundity of ancient "pagan" goddesses, a point not lost on Spero, as she re-contextualized their forms yet again, mimicking in her printing placement the concept of passage through a threshold, literally and metaphorically. Sheelas represented the epitome of primordial "fertility" images which had lost their original meanings. Having been usurped and reinterpreted by the dominant Christian ideology, Sheelas were 'rediscovered' in the 1970s and reinserted into new contexts by feminist writers such as Lippard. Spero aimed to emphasize Sheela's disturbing double-edged powers of life and death when she printed Sheela on the walls of Derry, North Ireland: "If women have been obliterated by history, then we can obliterate history by ignoring it."[230]

Spero paired the distorted, "grotesque" Sheela with an equally provocative image originating from an Athenian Red-Figure vase, a crouching female figure in profile grasping large dildos in her hands: "This image was taken from an erotic Greek vase. In the Greek version she had two dildos in her hand. They are in the panel on sexuality in *Notes in Time on Women*. When I first started to make these printing plates, I took out the dildos."[231] The rollicking woman is bending and swaying, wielding a ample dildo in each hand (Figure 40). She is a simplified, linear form, discursive and stylized. Spero originally culled the classical Greek dildo dancers from black and white images in John

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Boardman's *Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Archaic Period*, which included images the artist continued to transform over the years: a double dildo dancer and Hetaera, a flute player and a harpist, and a Gorgon with wings on a Panathenaic Amphora by the Berlin Painter.[232] By exhibiting a frank autoerotic sexuality in a schematic profiled print-form, Spero deploys the notion of a female erotic as shear physical gratification of desire (unhinged from reproduction, love, or marriage). On another level, the symbolic phallus is taken in hand by the protagonist, representing her image-making power and resonating in a rhythmically dancing linear form in concert with Sheela's creative/destructive energies. Spero reinstated the dildos (from a figure on a Red-Figure drinking cup) in *Rebirth of Venus* (1984, Figure 41), scroll works shown in 1985 at the Atrium Gallery of the University of Connecticut. There the Dildo Dancer was flanked by a image derived originally from a contemporary media photo of an African-American female athlete who had won track and field medals at the Olympics.[233] The figures re-present a multiple and varied gestural language, partially leaping on the walls. Running, dancing, sexual energy, athleticism and metaphors of creation converge in an action-oriented retelling of women's stories.[234]

Mark-making directly on walls connotes marginalized, or even, childhood paroxysms of trespass, graffiti, and random contorted articulations from the street.[235] The erotic or obscene may enter via margins, walls, and alleyways. Spero's provocations and rethinking of female sexuality and desire found a new symbolic resonance by moving onto the walls for public scrutiny. Aggressively challenging the dominant masculinist mythologies, represented canonically by Willem de Kooning's high-modernist "Woman Paintings" (1950-1952) or Andy Warhol's archly postmodernist send-ups of macho

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"Action Painters" in his "Piss Paintings" (or "Oxidation Paintings," 1978), Spero began spreading and dispersing her women protagonists directly on to the walls, displaying a different kind of eroticized trespass: a feminist subversion epitomized by her Sheelas, Dildo Dancers, and Sky Goddesses. She underlined in red ink a description from the first century Roman poet and satirist, Juvenal, in his observations of female sexuality: "They strap a phallus on the statue and take turns riding it ... Women get all stirred up with wine and wild music; the drive themselves crazy; they shriek and writhe -- worshipers of the phallus. And sex. They moan, they quiver with lust; there's a steady stream running down their legs."[236] This was precisely the kind of perception and characterization by a historical male luminary that Spero excelled at parodying, inverting, or mimicking.

In the spring of 1987, Spero had a retrospective exhibition curated by the British art historian and theorist, Jon Bird, at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London. The retrospective traveled to the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh and the Orchard Gallery in Derry, Northern Ireland. At the ICA, Spero 'released' some of her "worshipers of the phallus" onto the walls in the entryway: "Images on the stairwell to the upper gallery, for instance. There was an image of a Greek dildo dancer, a beautiful figure, and when the show opened the ink was still wet, we put up signs explaining this, and sure enough it was graffitied and smeared. It was out of context, even so close to the exhibiting area."[237] Jon Bird noted that a corporate board meeting had taken place in the space the evening before, and when the staff returned in the morning some images on the entryway had been graffitied and otherwise defaced.[238]

Sprawled graffiti markings had been a feature of Spero's early prints and scrolls. At the ICA, her wall paintings were responded to *with graffiti*, "sure enough," a form of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

dialogue (presumably, gendered male) with the artist. Her refigured, ancient Greek dancers occupied the margins, outside the "normal" framing context of the exhibition's white box. Their form had a sketchy, discursive quality (not a classical purity and balance), and they audaciously flaunted a self-assertive feminine pleasure, rather than a male fantasy of passive submission to male desire. Printed on the walls, naked, they were interpreted as an obscenity, as a discourteous affront. They schematically represented, like graffiti, a private scene of autoeroticism not allowed in public spaces, except in lavatories. In her study of emblematic sexual images from ancient cultures, Spero found that ritualized obscene gesturing signaled regeneration as an amulet against death. For years, Spero had been mining archaic figures from many mythological traditions which depicted the origins of the bifurcation of the sacred and profane, creation and destruction (i.e. Tiamat and Marduk). She sought pictorial/discursive means to represent a celebratory but conflicted and complex re-union:

> I picked these two [the classical Greek Dildo Dancer and Northern European Sheela-na-gig] because they are kind of wild and art on the edge always appeals to me... I hope I made her ritualized in a dance... Sheela is a very eroded image. She almost has an aura [due to deliberate defacement and natural erosion over the ages]. Sometimes she changes aspects through the sheer repetitions of the printed material, ink and pressure. There is a dynamism to it.... Rituals are involved with a gathering. It's not a solitary thing.[239]

Refashioning images once adorning vases and cups, walls and tombs, Spero reinstated an aura by means of over-printing and under-printing techniques, repetition and compositional placement. Her methods evoked a sense of aged layering, syncopated rhythms, and implied ritual.

Spero's movement from the scroll onto the wall surface, with reference to architectural elements and scale, brought her images into an interplay with real space,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

developing a borderless image-surface to wall-surface exchange. Escaping the pictorial edge and eschewing any implied reference to stable horizon lines, the artist's new pictorial ground became contingent on a highly performative, visual dialogue with the totality of architectural space.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Notes

[1] Lucy Lippard, *Nancy Spero, Torture of Women,* exhibition brochure (New York: A.I.R. Gallery, 1976), n.p.

[2] Nancy Spero quoted in Jeanne Siegel, "Nancy Spero: Woman as Protagonist," *Arts Magazine* 62 (September, 1987): 13.

[3] See Sigfried Giedion's discussion of modernism and Chicago architecture, *Space, Time, and Architecture; The Growth of a New Tradition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962). For an alternative Marxist perspective on Chicago's cultural tradition, see Peter Fuller, "Chicago for Real: Leon Golub," *New Society,* July 26, 1979. See Lynn Warren's discussion of Chicago's cultural modernism, *Art In Chicago: 1945-1995,* exh. cat. (New York and Chicago: Thames and Hudson and the Museum of Contemporary Art, 1977) and *Who Chicago? An Exhibition of Contemporary Imagists,* exh. cat. (Sunderland, England: Ceolfrith Gallery, Sunderland Arts Centre, 1981). Hutchins was only 30 years old when he became president of the University of Chicago. His Chicago Plan for undergraduates encouraged liberal education at earlier ages and measured achievement by comprehensive examination rather than by classroom time accumulated. He vigorously opposed faculty loyalty oaths in the 1950s and championed academic freedom. In 1959 he founded the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in California, and was chairman of the Board of Editors of *Encyclopedia Britannica* from 1943 until 1974. He was editor in chief of the 54-volume *Great Books of the Western* World (1952) and coeditor, from 1961-1977, with Mortimer J. Adler, of an annual, *The Great Ideas of Today.*

[4] The family name "Spero" may derive from the Latin verb, "to hope," and may have originated in Spain before the Diaspora. Spero's son, Philip, has researched the genealogy of the family name "Spero," as the artist noted in her interview with Keller Cushing Freeman, "Self-Portrait of the Artist/Conversations With Nancy Spero," *1993 Emrys Journal,* exh. cat. (Greenville, SC: Greenville County Museum of Art and Emrys Foundation, 1993) 16.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Author's interview with Spero in her studio, notes from 5/30/99.

[8] Spero is quoted from an interview with Kate Horsfield, "On Art and Artists: Nancy Spero," *Profile* 3, no. 1 (January 1983) 2.

[9] Frank Holland, "University of Chicago Group Holds Exhibit," *Chicago Sun Times,* June 8, 1952, 10.

[10] Author's interview with Spero in her studio, notes from 5/30/99, and *New Trier Student Handbook, 1942-1943* (New Trier, Winnetka, IL: New Trier Township High School, 1942).

[11] *Emrys Journal,* 14.

[12] *Emrys Journal,* 16.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Robert Enright, "On the Other Side of the Mirror; A Conversation with Nancy Spero," *Border Crossings* 19, no. 4, issue no. 76 (November 2000): 21.

[15] Art Institute of Chicago: Exhibition History 1945-1949 at the web site www.edu/aic/libraries/musarchives/archhist_1945-1949.html, 6/18/01.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[16] From 1931 to 1939, Wieghardt lived and worked in Paris, exhibiting regularly during this period at the Salon des Independants and the Salon d'Automne. He emigrated to the United States in 1940 with his wife, the sculptor, Nellie Bar, who would also teach at the Art Institute. Wieghardt had a successful exhibition at Knoedler Gallery in 1943, and Albert Barnes began collecting his paintings in 1945. The following year he began teaching at the Art Institute, just as Spero was entering the program. In 1950, Mies van der Rohe invited him to teach as well at the Illinois Institute of Technology. Author's interview with Spero in her studio, notes from 5/30/99.

[17] Horsfield, 2.

[18] Jan Garden Castro, "Richard Hunt; Freeing the Human Soul," *Sculpture Magazine*, 17, no. 5 (May/June 1998), 37.

[19] Dominique Nahas and Abe Frajndlich, *Gone Beyond Gone*, exh. cat. (New York: Thread Waxing Space, 1993), 12.

[20] Marjorie Welish, "Word into Image: Interview with Nancy Spero," *Bomb* 47 (Spring 1994): 42.

[21] Peter Selz, "A New Imagery in American Painting," *College Art Journal* 15, no. 4 (Summer 1956) 292; See also Patrick Malone and Peter Selz, "Is There a New Chicago School?" *Art News* 54 (October 1955): 36-37; Peter Selz, *New Images of Man* exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959); Peter Selz, "Surrealism and the Chicago Imagists of the 1950s: A Comparison and Contrast," *Art Journal* 45, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 303-306. See also Franz Schulze, *Fantastic Images* (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1972).

[22] Selz, "Surrealism and the Chicago Imagists of the 1950s," 304.

[23] Ibid. In his article Selz notes that in 1949 the Art Institute exhibited the Arensberg Collection, with thirty works by Duchamp, and works by De Chirico, Dali, Ernst, Klee, Magritte, Masson, Miro, and Tanguy. The students also had access to the collections of Joseph Shapiro, (whose collection included works by Ernst, Tanguy, Magritte, Delvaux, Matta, Klee, Cornell, Balthus, Bacon, and Dubuffet), Morton Neumann, Bernard Hode, Edwin Bergmann, and Maurice Culberg (the first major private collection of Jean Dubuffet).

[24]Spero is quoted in "Jo Anna Isaak in Conversation with Nancy Spero," *Nancy Spero*, exh. cat., Jon Bird, Jo Anna Isaak, Sylvere Lotringer (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), 8.

[25] Welish, 42.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] See a detailed discussion of Michaux's artistic development in Catherine de Zegher, ed., *Untitled Passages by Henri Michaux*, exh. cat. (London: Merill; New York: The Drawing Center, 2000); See a recent review of a Michaux drawing exhibition at the Drawing Center, in Alfred Corn, "Henri Michaux at the Drawing Center, Michael Werner, and Zabriskie," *Art in America* 89, no. 4 (April 2001) 136; See also *Henri Michaux*, exh. cat. (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1978).

[29] Stephen Polcari analyzes the facets of European and American modernist interchange and the intellectual climate informing post-war avant-garde movements in *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience*, 1991 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); See also Dore Ashton, *A Rebours: the Informal Rebellion*, exh. cat. (Madrid: Museum National Centre de Arte Reina Sophia, 1999), especially her discussion regarding the emergence of 'art informal' or 'unformed art.' Taken from the French, 'informe', the term meant unformed or formless, and referenced the paintings of artists in such general artistic groups as Tachisme, Lyrical Abstraction, and American Abstract Expressionism. 'Art informal' was group of artists

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

working in Europe, whom Dubuffet associated with in 1952. Karel Appel, Wols, Alberto Burri, Fautrier, Willem de Kooning, among others, were associated with this "unformed" art. Its hallmarks encompassed anti-geometric, anti-naturalistic, non-figurative formal preoccupations, loose form, the irrational, the gestural, expressive, and calligraphic marks. See Ashton's discussion of Fautrier's *Hostage* (1943-1945) paintings, which Andre Malraux called "hieroglyphs of pain," 20; Note that Alberto Giacometti's haunted, attenuated figures were exhibited in 1948 at Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York, e.g. *Man Pointing*, 1947, in the collection of MoMA. See Ashton's discussion of the emergence to CoBRA in post-war Europe, "Cobra In Context," *Arts Magazine*, Feb. 1978, 106-109. CoBRA was a loosely knit artists' group formed in 1948, when a group of dissident artists wrote their manifesto in a Parisian café at a postwar Surrealist Congress. The renegade artists were from three of the Nazi-occupied European capitols during the War: Copenhagen, Brussels, and Amsterdam; thus their acronym, CoBRA. They railed against lyrical abstraction and the geometric abstraction of De Stijl, declaring brute matter and figurative imagery as the source of their art. Pierre Alechinsky, one of the most well known of the group, had studied Japanese calligraphy which informed his paintings. It is important to note that these emerging artistic sensibilities and aesthetic approaches were in circulation in post-war Europe, because Spero would first study (1949-1950) and, later, take up residence in Paris (1959-1964) as well as in Italy (1956-1957).

[30] Selz, "Surrealism," 303. Shapiro's collection of Surrealist art, open to artists, included works by Dubuffet, Ernst, Tanguy, Matta, Klee, Balthus, Bacon, Lindner. The CAI purchased Dubuffet's *Corps de Dames* in 1950, as well as a Pollock and a de Kooning. See Warren, *Art in Chicago: 1945-1975*; See Dennis Adrian, "The Artistic Presence of Jean Dubuffet in Chicago and the Midwest," *Jean Dubuffet: Forty Years of His Art*, exh. cat. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) 27-30; See Dubuffet's lecture at the Chicago Arts Club reprinted from 1951, "Dubuffet and Anti-Culture," *Arts Magazine* (December 1969/Januray 1970) 36-38; The Arts Club exhibited 32 paintings and works on paper by Dubuffet at the time of the artist's lecture. Chicago collector Maurice Culberg was a major lender as was the AIC.

[31] Horsfield quotes Spero: "Dubuffet came to Chicago during the time that we were students and we all went to hear him speak; the Art Institute acquired a Dubuffet and we all rushed to see it," 3. In more recent years, Spero and Golub have recalled AIC student discussions about Dubuffet's lecture, but neither remembers specifically whether they attended the lecture, 1/24/02, interview with Spero and Golub in their studio. The salient point is that they were keenly aware of the content of Dubuffet's lecture and his stance. Dubuffet was accompanied by Alfonso Ossorio on his trip to Chicago in December of 1951.

[32] "Anti-Cultural Positions," *Arts Magazine*, 53, no. 8 (April 1979): 156-157; originally published in Richard Feigen's *Dubuffet and Anti-Culture*, exh. cat. (New York: Richard L. Feigen, 1969). Dubuffet's painting of 1946 *Will to Power* and *Triumph and Glory* of 1950 were collected by the Guggenheim Museum.

[33] "Anti-Cultural Positions," 157.

[34] Note that Robert Motherwell's 1951 edition of *Dada Painters and Poets* was circulating Dadaist ideas and Katherine Kuh had organized the exhibition of the Walter and Louise Arensberg Collection, including the work of Marcel Duchamp, at the AIC in 1949, where she was curator.

[35] "Anti-Cultural Positions," 157, italics mine.

[36] Dore Ashton quotes Cohen's letter to Feigen in *Dubuffet and Anti-Culture*, 37-38, reprinted in *Out of the Whirlwind: Three Decades of Artistic Commentary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987) 61-63. Golub and Spero were familiar with the Prinzhorn collection, as was Cohen, 1/24/02 interview with Spero and Golub in their studio. Prinzhorn, a pioneering psychiatrist and art historian, was teaching and researching at the University of Heidelberg when he collected 6,000 drawings made by psychiatric patients from 1918-1921. Prinzhorn's collection was included by the Nazis in their infamous propagandistic exhibition, "Degenerate Art" of 1937, including the works of Kandinsky, Oskar Kokoschka, Otto Dix, George Grosz and other modernists. The Surrealists, especially Andre Breton, had known and drawn

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

inspiration from Prinzhorn's collection; artists such as Alfred Kubin and Klee, and sociologist Georg Simmel, had visited and studied the collection.

[37]"Letter to Richard Feigen," Oct. 1, 1969, in *Dubuffet and Anti-Culture* (1969), 10.

[38] Horsfield, 2.

[39] Stephen Polcari plots much of this intellectual territory and heritage, this search for authentic experience, in his comprehensive study, *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993). See also the postmodernist critiques of museum culture, most notably, Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (New York: Routledge, 1995) and Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993).

[40] Post-war figurative and abstract art movements often incorporated overlapping philosophical ideals, including antecedents in German Expressionism and its preoccupations with 'primitive' and 'exotic' cultures; see Jill Lloyd's discussions of these issues in *German Expressionism, Primitivism and Modernity*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991). Spero's personal library includes the following publications relating to these subjects: Edith Hamilton, *Mythology* (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1940); Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), which draws heavily from Jung, Frazer, Boaz, Freud, Joyce, Nietzsche; Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*, Bollingen Series 47, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Pantheon Books, 1955), dedicated to C.G. Jung; Robert Goldwater, *Primitivism in Modern Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967); Jean Dubuffet, *Mirobolus, Macadam et Cie* (Paris: Galerie Drouin, 1946).

[41] Horsfield, 3.

[42] Dore Ashton, "A Planned Coincidence," *Art in America* (Sept/Oct 1969): 36-47, *Whirlwind*, 330.

[43] Horsfield, 3.

[44] Elaine H. King, *Nancy Spero: The Black Paris Paintings, 1959-1966*, exh. cat. (Pittsburgh, PA: Hewlett Gallery, Carnegie-Mellon University, 1985), 10.

[45] Isaak interview with Spero in *Nancy Spero*, 10. Many of Spero's early paintings from the 1950s, those works done before her move to Paris in 1959, have not survived.

[46] See Matthew Baigell, *Jewish-American Artists and the Holocaust*, Rutgers U. Press, New Brunswick, 1997. p 46-47. See Golub's lithograph, *Charnel House* (1946), and painting, *Evisceration Chamber* (1946), his first pictorial reactions to the Holocaust and Dubuffet's *Will to Power* (1946, oil, pebbles, sand, glass on canvas, Guggenheim Museum), the title taken from the rhetoric of the Nazis and their readings of Friederich Nietzsche, which mocks male aggression by emasculating authority and its romanticizing of brutality; Selz notes in "Surrealism" that a number of AIC students, including Golub, underwent Freudian psychoanalysis at the Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis, headed by Franz Alexander, formerly of the Berlin Psychoanalytic Institute, 304. Jon Bird notes in *Leon Golub, Echoes of the Real* (London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 2000) that Golub had read Freud's *Totem and Taboo* and *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 19.

[47] Dennis Adrian, "The Artistic Presence of Jean Dubuffet in Chicago and the Midwest," *Jean Dubuffet: Forty Years of His Art*, exh. cat. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1984), 28.

[48] See Robert Enright, "The Ambiguous Witness: An Interview with Leon Golub," *Border Crossings*. 9, no. 1, issue 73 (February 2000): 18-37, especially, 22. Katherine Kuh, an important force in introducing modernism to the Chicago art world, was also an art reviewer for the *Saturday Review of Books* as well as a curator at AIC.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[49] Robert Enright, "On the Other Side of the Mirror: A Conversation with Nancy Spero," *Border Crossings*, 19, no. 4, issue 76 (November 2000): 18. Franz Schulze coined the term, "Monster Roster," to describe the grotesque figuration of certain Chicago artists, including: Golub, Cosmo Campoli, George Cohen, Dominck Di Meo, Theodore Halkin, June Leaf, Seymour Rosofsky. The term also ironically designates the Chicago Bears football team, "Monsters of the Midway," as Richard Vine notes in "Where the Wild Things Are," *Art in America* (May 1997) 98-111; See also Leon Golub's discussions about his artistic dialogues with Spero, Cosmo Campoli, and George Cohen at the AIC in his book, *Do Paintings Bite: Selected Texts, 1948-1996*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Obrist, (Germany: Cantz Verlag, 1997) 9.

[50] Carmela Rago, "Chicago Performance," in Warren, *Art in Chicago: 1945-1995*, 129-130.

[51] Author's interview with Spero in her studio, notes from 5/30/99.

[52] Enright, "The Ambiguous Witness: An Interview with Leon Golub," *Border Crossings*, 25.

[53] Horsfield, 2.

[54] Isaak interview with Spero in *Nancy Spero*, 9.

[55] Existentialist tempered, the term "alienation" was a recognized phenomenon and was popularized in cultural circles by the works of Albert Camus and in Jean-Paul Satre's plays, "No Exit" and "The Flies," published in English in 1946, as was Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. Artists recognized their own feelings of isolation depicted in these works, as Dore Ashton notes in *A Rebours*, 26. More recently in the *Chicago Tribune*, Alan G. Artner discussed the cultural climate in "Jean Dubuffet's lasting influence in Chicago," July 31, 2001. In Artner's article, current Arts Club director, Kathy Cottong stated, "The timing of Dubuffet's lecture was perfect, providing rationalization for Chicago's artists who had been looking at non-Western material and had been toying with similar ideas regarding beauty and layered states of consciousness." And Daniel Schulman, associate curator of modern and contemporary art at the AIC, was quoted in the article as stating, "how much Chicago artists were influenced by European things in a way that was completely different from New York City."

[56] Ashton, *A Rebours*, 39.

[57] Enright, "On the Other Side of the Mirror: A Conversation with Nancy Spero," 25.

[58] Author's interview with Spero in her studio, notes from 6/25/01.

[59] Daniel Robbins, *Andre Lhote, 1885-1962: Cubism*, exh. cat. (New York: Leonard Hutton Gallery, 1976).

[60] Enright, "On the Other Side of the Mirror," 25.

[61] *Art d' Aujourd' Hui* 2, no. 2 (November 1950), a copy of which is in Spero's personal library.

[62] Enright, "On the Other Side of the Mirror," 25.

[63] Author's interview with Spero in her studio, notes from 6/25/01.

[64] Leon Golub, *Exhibition Momentum*, exh. cat. (Chicago: The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1950).

[65] Enright, "On the Other Side of the Mirror," 25.

[66] Frank Holland, "University of Chicago Group Holds Exhibit," *Chicago Sun Times*, June 8, 1952, 10.

[67] Marilyn Robb, "Summer in Chicago," *Art News* 52, no. 4 (Summer 1953): 58.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Marilyn Robb, "Art News From Chicago," *Art News*, 52, no. 8 (December 1953): 51. Also on page 51 was a review of the work of George Grosz, Max Beckmann, and Otto Dix at Alan Frumkin Gallery, "Germany: Portrait of the 20s." Golub would later exhibit with Alan Frumkin Gallery from 1955 to 1964.

[70] Stephen Golub is an economist and research professor at Swarthmore College. His wife, Kit Raven, is an architect. Philip Golub, who received his doctoral degree at the Sorbonne, is a political journalist for *Le Monde*, living in Paris with his wife, Manuella Burgi, a professor of socioeconomic sciences at the Sorbonne.

[71] Lois Tarlow, "Profile: Nancy Spero: Fierce and Savage Imagery," *Art New England*, 11, no. 3 (March 1990): 8. Paul Golub is a theater director and producer living in Paris with his wife, Lucia Coppola, who is a choreographer and dancer.

[72] Nancy Spero, "Forum on Motherhood," *MEANING*, no. 12 (November 1992), 38-39.

[73] Horsfield, 3.

[74] It is important to note here that Giacometti was a significant figure for both Spero and Golub, and that Jean-Paul Satre wrote the much-circulated catalogue essay for Giacometti's exhibition at Pierre Matisse Gallery in 1948. In addition, Giacometti's attenuated figure in space, *Man Pointing* (1947), was on view at the Museum of Modern Art. Attempting to cut away rote training and conditioning, Giacometti depicted the human condition through non-narrative gesture, plucking the figure out of context, which he then reinstated in a symbolic space.

[75] See, for example, Hannah Arendt's important lecture at the New School for Social Research, New York, delivered in 1952, "The Spiritual Quest of Modern Man: The Answer of the Existentialist," at the American Memory Project, Library of Congress, Hannah Arendt Papers: http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/arendthtml/arendthome.html.

[76] Horsfield, 3.

[77] Ibid.

[78] See Jacques Lacan's discussion of the infant's separation from the mother's identity during "the mirror-phase" of psychological development, "The Mirror-Phase as Formative of the Function of the I," *Ecrits: A Selection* (New York: Norton, 1977) 1-7. This 1949 lecture was first published in English in *New Left Review* 51 (September-October 1969).

[79] A quote from an anonymous article, "Art Exhibition by Housewife Opens in Area," dated 1953, from an unidentified Chicago newspaper in Spero's archives. Avant Arts was located at 64E. Walton St., Chicago. The article quotes Spero, describing her paintings as "expressionistic with primitive overtones." It further notes that Spero and Golub lived in a converted garage at 548 Addison St., with their son, Stephen, 8 months old, and that she was teaching at the Lawson YMCA and Golub at Wright Junior College.

[80] Leon Golub, "A Critique of Abstract Expressionism," *College Art Journal*, 14, no. 2 (Winter 1955): 143; see the full text, 142-147. For Golub and Spero, Abstract Expressionism represented a solipsistic escape from the realities of the post-war condition; notes from an interview with Spero by the author, 5/30/99.

[81] Also published in 1955: Peter Selz and Patrick T. Malone, "Is There a Chicago School?" Art News, v. 54, (October 1955): 36-37; the authors discuss the parameters of defining a Chicago Imagist movement in opposition to the New York School. In addition, see Peter Selz, "A New Imagery in American Painting," *College Art Journal*, v. 15, no.4 (Summer 1956), 292. See also Richard Sennett, "In the Presence of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Difference," *El Sueno Imperativo,* exh. cat. (Madrid: Circulo de Bellas Artes, 1991), 16-45; Sennett discusses the sociological concepts of the fragmented self and internal "exile" as the predominant conditions of the modern urban environment, outlined by Georg Simmel's *The Great City and Mental Life.* Sennett traces definitions of fragmented self in 'exile,' during the 1950s, in the writings of Hannah Arendt and Samuel Beckett.

[82] Notes from an interview with Spero by the author, 5/30/99.

[83] Tarlow, *Art New England,* 8.

[84] Katy Kline and Helene Posner, *War and Memory: Nancy Spero and Leon Golub Retrospective Exhibition,* exh. cat. (Cambridge, MA: The American Center, Paris and MIT List Visual Arts Center, 1994) 32.

[85] Larissa Bonfante, "Excursus, Etruscan Women," *Women in the Classical World,* ed. E. Fantham, H.P. Foley, N.B. Kampen, S.B. Pomeroy and H.A. Shapiro (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 243-259. See also Larissa Bonfante, *Etruscan Life and Afterlife* (Warminster, Wiltshire: Aris and Phillips, 1986); Larissa Bonfante, "Etruscan Sexuality and Funerary Art," *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy,* ed. n. Kampen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[86] Tarlow, *Art New England,* 8. Spero's library includes an annotated copy of Arturo Stenico, *Roman and Etruscan Painting* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

[87] Spero is quoted in Michael Kimmelman, "Two Artists Always Prowling for Ideas to Use Again," *The New York Times,* January 5, 1996, C 1, 5. Kimmleman also quotes Spero describing the frescoes as "dreamscapes" and praising their "airiness," two qualities she would reinterpret in her scrolls and installation wall paintings.

[88] Ibid.

[89] See R.A.S. Seaford, "The Mysteries of Dionysus at Pompeii," in Diotima, www.stoa.org/diotima/, 2/11/00, first published in H.W. Stubbs, ed., *Pegasus: Classical Essays from the University of Exeter* (1981), 52-67. See also the following books in Spero's library: Richard Cavendish, ed., *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology* (New York: Crescent Books, 1980). Spero annotates pages 143-146, concerning the myth of Demeter, mother of Persephone (Kore), at Eleusis. Demeter, the earth mother, is united with her daughter Persephone at Eleusis; in this myth, death and rebirth are symbolized and mirrored. Thus, the Eleusinian Mysteries of the ancient world celebrate the earlier goddess of grain and the annual renewal of life which brings a form of immortality. The Great Goddess of life, fertility, and harvest, appearing in Egyptian mythology as Isis, employs sympathetic magic to bring renewed life back into the world. The goddesses of Eleusis are then linked to Dionysus, god of poetry, music, healing, and above all of divination, patron god of drama and theatrical splendor. See also Spero's copy of Arturo Stenico, *Roman and Etruscan Painting* (New York: Viking Press, 1963), annotated, with outlines, concerning Roman and Etruscan tomb paintings with specific female figures and deities.

[90] Spero would return to this theme in the 1970s with her scroll works, *Notes in Time on Women* and *The First Language.*

[91] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956) 108. See Stephen Polcari's *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience* for a discussion of the ubiquitous significance of this book for many of the New York artists.

[92] Jack Hirschman, "Classics in Modern Art, Theme of Two-Man Show," *Indiana University Newspaper,* March 1958, 3.

[93] Ibid.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[94] Horsfield, 5.

[95] See Bonfante, "Excursus; Etruscan Women," especially votive terra-cotta figurines, 255; See Otto F. Brendel, *Etruscan Art* (New York: Penguin Books, 1978, especially images of women from the Isis Tomb, Vulci, 127.

[96] See Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series XLVII, 1955), in Spero's library, illustration, 126. See also Anne Baring and Jules Cashford, *The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image* (New York: Viking Arkana, 1991), 216-220.

[97] Horsfield, 5.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Neumann, 146.

[100] See in Spero's library Juliet Sharman-Burke, *The Complete Book of Tarot*, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1985; also, Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, trans. John Buchanan-Brown, *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* (1969) (New York: Penguin Putnam, 1996).

[101] Sharman-Burke, 16.

[102] Jo Anna Isaak quotes Spero in an interview, "Jo Anna Isaak in Conversation with Nancy Spero," *Nancy Spero* (New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 1996), 10.

[103] See Sharman-Burke, and Chevalier and Gheerbrandt, 470-472.

[104] Isaak, "Jo Anna Isaak in Conversation with Nancy Spero," 9.

[105] Peter Selz, *New Images of Man*, exh. cat. (Garden City, NJ: Museum of Modern Art and Doubleday and Company, 1959).

[106] Selz quotes from Lawrence Alloway's "Introduction," *Leon Golub, Paintings from 1956 and 1957* (Chicago: Allan Frumkin Gallery, 1957), 4; Selz, "Leon Golub," *New Images of Man*, 79.

[107] Ibid. See also Franz Schulz's discussion of the Chicago figurative artists, whom he dubbed, The Monster Roster, in "Here Come the Monsters," *Time*, Sept. 7, 1959, 62.

[108] King, 10.

[109] Tarlow, 8.

[110] Suzanne Muchnic quotes Golub, "Together Again, on the Battlefield," *Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 1994, 86.

[111] King, 11.

[112] "Statement about Painting, 1965," previously unpublished statement in *Nancy Spero*, exh. cat. (1996), 122.

[113] King, 11.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[114] Chevalier and Gheerbrant, "The Lover," 620-621.

[115] Enright, 31.

[116] Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection*, 3.

[117] Luce Irigaray, "Kore: Young Virgin, Pupil of the Eye," *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1985), 147-151.

[118] In Spero's library are the following texts related to mythic and ontological themes, including Irigaray's text: Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, trans and ed. James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1962); Jane Ellen Harrison, *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (New York: Meridian Books, 1962); Arturo Stenico, *Roman and Etruscan Pottery* (New York: Viking Press, 1963); Felix Guirand, *Greek Mythology*, trans. Delano Ames (London: Paul Hamlyn Ltd., 1963); Albert Champdor, *Le Livre des Morts* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1963); Marius Barbeau, *Totem Poles*, (Ottawa, Canada: National Museum of Canada, Anthropological Series No. 30, 1950); Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*, (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago, 1963); William Chase Green, *Moira: Fate, Good and Evil in Greek Thought*, 1944 (New York: Harper and Row, 1963); Edna Gunther, *Art in the Life of the Northwest Coast Indians*, exh. cat. (Portland, Oregon: Portland Art Museum, 1966).

[119] John Ashberry, "Paris Notes," *Art International* 6, no. 9 (November 1962): 58.

[120] Ibid.

[121] King, 13.

[122] Horsfield, 3.

[123] Enright, 28. The flickering, broken color and jagged whirling lines, suggesting a floating, flurrying movement, are an expressionist echo of Kokoschka's erotic painting of Alma Mahler and himself, *The Bride of the Wind*, (1914, Kunstmuseum, Basel).

[124] Horsfield, 5.

[125] Stephen Goetz, *American Artists in Their New York Studios: Conversations About the Creation of Contemporary Art*, exh. cat. (Cambridge, MA: Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, Harvard University Art Museum and Daco-Verlag, Guenter Blaesé, 1992), 149. Arte Povera, or impoverished art, was coined by Genoes critic Germano Celant, in 1967, for group of Italian artists who, from the late 1960s, attempted to break down the dichotomy of art and life. See Celant in "Arte Povera," Flash Art, 5 (November-December 1967): 3. In 1967, at Galleria La Bertesca, Genoa, Arte Povera performances were staged with startling juxtapositions of apparently unconnected objects, classical allusions, and elements from contemporary culture mingled. Art Povera was a group linked to the political activism of the 1968 student protests. Luciano Fabro, Gilberto Zorio, Giulio Paolini, Mario Merz, Jannis Kounellis were prominent figures in the movement. See Germano Celant, *The Knot: Arte Povera*, exh. cat. (New York: Institute of Art and Urban Recourses, P.S. 1, 1985).

[126] See Benjamin Buchloh's discussion of graffiti in relation to Spero's and Cy Twombly's painting in "Spero's Other Traditions," Catherine de Zegher, ed. *Inside the Visible:An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art In, Of, and From the Feminine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 239-245.

[127] Enright, 25.

[128] See Francis Frascina, *Art, Politics and Dissent* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999). In November 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated; in 1963, Betty Friedan

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

published *The Feminine Mystique*; in July 1964, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act and President Lyndon Johnson launched the "Great Society" program; in 1965, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* was published; in August, 1965, riots broke out in Watts, Los Angeles.

[129] See Frascina, 1-107.

[130] Tarlow, 9.

[131] Horsfield, 5-6.

[132] Horsfield, 6.

[133] Spero recalled her process in an interview with Horsfield, 9: "In 1970 I bought some Japanese rice paper [Sekishu White, 24-25 inches by 39 inches] and I wanted to use that in the *War Series*. I found that I couldn't work on this paper the way that I could on the other paper, so I started collaging these figures on to this rice paper." Spero elaborated in an interview with Goetz, 149: "I would paint on the Sekishu almost abstract outlines of helicopters with metallic paint, over which I collaged figures in various configurations. So the figures gained a second and more literal level of freedom from the ground... In the later works of the [War] series, collaging allowed greater fluidity in the relationships between figures and their relation to the ground. Figures could be cut up and recombined in new configurations... The medium is not slow-drying oil paint, but the thinner water-based vehicles of gouache (Winsor & Newton) and India ink, which bleed instantly into the surface of the paper as indelible stains or transparent washes and outlines. The paper is a smooth, thin, rag content bond that came in 24 inch by 36 inch pads from Sennelier in Paris. *Chinese Bomb*, for example, resembles Chinese calligraphy (hence the title). I wanted to preserve the aggressive initial movement of the stroke-not embellish or censor it. I used the stroke as a more externalized, language-oriented sign."

[134] Horsfield, 6.

[135] See Jon Bird, Phaidon, 55. It is interesting to note that years later, Spero's painting, *Search and Destroy* (1967), was illustrated on the cover of Wayne Enstice and Melody Peters' *Drawing: Space, Form, Expression* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), a widely distributed technical manual for drawing used in college-level studio art courses. Additional images from Spero's *War Series* are illustrated on pages 35 and 36 to illustrate an essay tellingly entitled, "Gesture Drawing as a Means to Capture Space." Spero's anthropomorphic helicopters demonstrated, according to the authors, "the essence of a set of spatial relationships with directness and immediacy," 35-36.

[136] Spero is quoted by John Hutchinson, "Nancy Spero/Leon Golub: In Conversation With John Hutchinson," *Circa* no. 36 (September-October 1987): 31.

[137] Enright, 30. During this same period, Golub, too, referenced the mythological as well as classical imagery in relation to war and power struggles, with huge, heroic-scale friezes in acrylic on canvas, his *Gigantomachy* paintings (1964-1968). Golub employed ancient and classical allusions exclusively, until his *Napalm* (1969) and *Vietnam* Series of the early 1970s, which incorporated contemporary media images, especially of athletes, as equally relevant raw material to be reinterpreted within the context present-day war. In contrast, Spero had worked on a small paper format, mingling popular contemporary and ancient imagery, since 1966. Golub, working on out-sized unstretched canvases, built up layers of encrusted surfaces, scraped and abraded. While both Spero and Golub painted images in testimony to the madness and destruction of war, expressing their contemporary artistic/political engagement, their formats, materials, and pictorial approaches diverged considerably.

[138] King, 13.

[139] Tarlow, 38.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[140] Nancy Spero, "Forum: On Motherhood, Art and Apple Pie," M/E/A/N/I/N/G, no. 12 (November 1992), 39.

[141] See Frascina, 108-159. See also for a discussion of anti-war movement tactics and genres as well as the emergence of a women's art movement from peace movement, Simon Taylor and Natalie Ng, *Personal and Political: The Women's Art Movement, 1969-1975*, exh. cat. (East Hampton, New York: Guild Hall Museum, 2002), 9-14. See also a detailed discussion of the roots of the genres of activist practices in New York and Spero's relationship to these genres and the Feminist and anti-war movements, Amy Ingrid Schlegel, "Codex Spero: Feminist Art Practices in New York Since the Late 1960s," Ph.D. dissertation, (Columbia University in the City of New York, 1997), 1-150.

[142] "Dore Ashton File," Museum of Modern Art, PAD/D Archive.

[143] Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," *Artforum* v. 5, no. 10 (June 1967): 12-23. Fried was pointedly critiquing Minimalism, but his article appeared only months after the Los Angeles Tower and New York's *Collage of Indignation I* were constructed. Fried, reiterating Greenberg's tenets of distilling painting's and sculpture's separate spheres of purity and self-referentiality, attacked, especially, Minimalism's application of duration, theatricality, implied narrative, and anthropomorphism. Of course, Golub and Spero's expressionist, literary, and political art would have been particularly anathema to these qualities, as an egregiously impure, mongrel form of anti-art.

[144] Leon Golub, "Letters," *Artforum* 7, no. 1 (March 1969): 3-4.

[145] AWC members included Robert Morris, Gregory Battcock, Hans Haacke, Mark DiSuvero, Faith Ringgold, Irving Petlin, and Lucy Lippard.

[146] Jo Anne Isaak quotes Spero in "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction: Nancy Spero's *Notes in Time on Women*," *Notes in Time, Nancy Spero and Leon Golub*, exh. cat. (Catonsville, MD: Fine Arts Gallery, University of Maryland Baltimore County, 1995), 34.

[147] Nancy Spero, "The Whitney and Women," *Art Gallery Magazine*, January 1971, 26-27. Stephen Weil, Administrator at the Whitney at the time, replied that the Museum would not "impose a quota system" in selection of artworks. Private correspondence in response to Spero's published remarks, among the Whitney's Leon Levine, John Baur, and Weil, and the Magazine's Jay Jacobs, is included in a detailed accounting of Spero's activist interventions while a member of WAR and the Ad Hoc Women Artist's Committee in Schlegel, 1-150.

[148] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, ed. and trans. H.M. Parshley (New York: Vintage Books, Random House, 1952). Spero first read de Beauvoir's book in 1964; she reread it and annotated it over the years.

[149] King quotes Spero, 13.

[150] See Susan Sontag's "Introduction," *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, ed. and intro. Susan Sontag, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976).

[151] Horsfield, 9-10. Spero's library includes *Antonin Artaud: Anthology* by Jack Hirschman, a friend from Indiana University (2nd edition, San Francisco: City Lights Press, 1965). Spero's copy is heavily underlined. The anthology includes works by Artaud in various genres and his drawings as well as photographs of the writer. Spero's library contains Artaud's *Oeuvres Completes d'Antonin Artaud*, vols. 1, 4, 8, 9 (Paris: Gallimard, 1971) and Artaud's *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. M.C. Richards (New York: Grove Pres, 1958).

[152] Nancy Spero is quoted, speaking about *Codex Artaud*, in Lenore Malen, ed., "Symbolism: Contemporary Manifestations," *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* 8 (November 1990): 7-8.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[153] Nancy Spero, "Creation and Procreation," *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* 12 (November 1992): 39.

[154] See Jon Bird's discussion in "Part II: 'Codex Artaud' – the *phallic* tongue," *Nancy Spero*, 24-28.

[155] Stephan Goetz quotes Spero in *American Artists In Their Studios (Conversations about the creation of contemporary art)*, Craigen W. Bowen and Katherine Olivier (Cambridge, MA: Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, Harvard University Art Museum and Daco-Verlag, Guenther Blaese, 1992), 149.

[156] See Brian O'Doherty's discussion of collage as "the second great force that altered the gallery space," in its counter-modernist challenge to the modernist hermeticism of the "White Cube," in his often-quoted article, "Inside the White Cube, Part II: The Eye and the Spectator," *Artforum* 14 (April 1976): 26, 28.

[157] See Amy Ingrid Schlegel's discussion of the similarities and differences in Spero and Eleanor Antin's projects in her section on "Spero and Antin," in "Codex Artaud: Feminist Art and Activist Practices in NewYork Since the Late 1960s," Ph.D. Dissertation (New York: Columbia University, 1997), 186-189.

[158] "There is an Anguish," *Antonin Artaud*, Jack Hirschman, trans. (San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 1965), 31. Spero's library also includes volumes 1, 4, 8, and 9, *Oeuvre Completes d'Antonin Artaud* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971).

[159] Jo Anna Isaak quotes Spero, "In Conversation With Nancy Spero," *Nancy Spero* (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), 15.

[160] Corinne Robins, "The Woman Artist – 1973," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 24, 1973.

[161] Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," *Art News* 51 (December 1952): 22.

[162] Jon Bird quotes Nancy Spero, "Part II, 'Codex Artaud' – the *phallic* tongue," *Nancy Spero*, exh. cat. (London: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1987), 25.

[163] Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double* (1931-36), in Sontag's, *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, 234. No longer trusting the communicative value or accuracy of language, Artaud had sought a bodily hieroglyphics, inspired in part by Balinese Theater and its stylized, symbolic gestural language, as well as his study of alchemy, tarot, the occult and astrology, all of which Spero would reference in her figures.

[164] Peter Schjeldahl, "Opposites Attract," *Village Voice*, April 15, 1981, 83.

[165] Leo Bersani quotes Artaud in "Artaud, Birth and Defecation," *Partisan Review* 43, no. 3 (1976): 439. Spero owns a copy of this issue of *Partisan Review* and has underlined several passages in Bersani's article. It is interesting to note that Spero's figure's stylized poses, their rhythmic repetitions of pose in sync with Artaud's verses, their grimaces and spasmodic gestures, and the play of abstract geometrical elements mimic the elements of Balinese theater which Artaud most admired and which Bersani lists and discusses in his article.

[166] Lawrence Alloway, "Art," *The Nation*, April 2, 1973, 445.

[167] Stephen Barber, "A Foundry of the Figure: Antonin Artaud," *Artforum* 26 (September 1987): 89.

[168] See in Spero's library Maurice Bessy, *A Pictorial History of Magic and the Supernatural* (New York: Spring Books, 1970); E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians or Studies in Egyptian Mythology*, v. 1 (Dover Publications, 1969); E.A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Magic* (New York: Dover Publications, 1971); Albert Champdor, ed. *Le Livre des Morts* (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1963).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[169] See in Spero's library, Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* and *Egyptian Magic*. See also in Spero's library Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (1969) trans., John Buchanan-Brown (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 844-858. Spero has in her library many books referencing mythological symbolisms from many cultures, including Fred Gettings, *The Book of Tarot*, (London: Hamlyn, 1973), which discusses the cross-cultural orientation of Tarot card symbolism, and the Tarot's symbolic reading of the circle, as representing a spiritual focus, protecting humans from darker forces, marked by Spero in a passage on page 80, and the symbolism of the snake consuming its own tail, marked on page 90, as the continual balancing of light/dark cosmic forces within the circular form. Spero would reinterpret and reinvigorate these cross-cultural symbols in the formats and content of her wall paintings.

[170] Paul Arnold quotes Artaud in "The Artaud Experiment," *The Drama Review TDR* 8, no. 2 (Winter 1963): 23.

[171] Roberta Smith, "Greene Street," *The New York Times*, February 26, 1988. See also JoAnna Isaak's discussions of the medieval qualities of the carnivalesque in Spero's work in "Nancy Spero: A Work in Comic Courage," *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950*, 25-36.

[172] Artaud had been subjected to electroshock treatments for his metal illness while confined to the Rodez asylum. See Sontag's "Introduction," *Antonin Artaud*.

[173] Enright quotes Spero, 30-31.

[174] Isaak quotes Spero in, Phaidon, 18

[175] Isaak quotes Spero in "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction," 36.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Corinne Robins quotes Spero, "The Woman Artist-1973," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 24, 1973.

[178] Tarlow quotes Spero, 9.

[179] Spero marked in red this passage in Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed., H.M. Parshley, (New York: Vintage Books Random House, 1952), 286.

[180] Ibid.

[181] Merlin Stone quotes Abodah Zarah from *Book of the Hebrew Talmud*, in her book, *When God Was a Woman*, (New York: Harvest Book, 1976), marked by Spero in red, 193; Spero marked a number of misogynistic quotes, representing a trans-historical, trans-cultural litany of patriarchal aphorisms. Spero is quoted by Jo Anna Isaak, "Spero: A Work in comic Courage," *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950* (Syracuse, NY: Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse University, 1987), 28.

[182] Marjorie Welish quotes Spero in "Words into Image," *Bomb*, 37 (Spring 1994): 42. 1977. Goetz quotes Spero, 151, "Since the 1970s, I've generally used the same paper: Bodleian handmade and mouldmade and the Sekishu... When I use a different paper, it's to vary slightly the color and feel. I like papers which appear fragile." Spero has used Japanese paper, Kozo 30, that comes in rolls and has to be torn, which is extremely thin, like a pale skin, and looks delicate but is actually very strong because it is a matrix of fibrous material. In addition, Spero and her assistants often use old fashioned, heavy irons to smooth wrinkles in the paper.

[183] Carol De Pasquale quotes Spero, "Dialogues with Nancy Spero," *Woman Art* 1, no. 3 (Winter/Spring 1977): 10.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[184] Ibid.

[185] Author's interview with Spero in notes from 5/30/99.

[186] Tarlow quotes Spero, 38.

[187] Spero knew the Diana of Ephesus and Egyptian Sky Goddess Nut from Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*, 25 and 36. Spero knew the *Capitoline Wolf* from her visits to Rome.

[188] Bird quotes Spero, ICA, 30.

[189] Spero used a translation of *The Tale of Gilgramesh* by EA Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians or Studies in Egyptian Mythology*, v. 1 (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 327. Budge traces the roots of Egyptian mythology to Sumerian/Babylonian mythology. Spero also referenced Erich Neumann, *The Great Mother* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963) and Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1956) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973).

[190] Lawrence Alloway, "Art," *The Nation*, September 25, 1976, 282.

[191] Ibid, 283. See also a review of the same exhibition by Lawrence Alloway, "Nancy Spero," *Artforum* 14, no. 9 (May 1976): 52-53.

[192] Alloway, *Artforum*, 53.

[193] Sol LeWitt's 1968 wall drawings were based on carefully written instructions for execution of simple, geometric images which achieved maximum flatness in eliminating the paper support; by the 1980s, LeWitt's Wall Drawings evolved into more intricate, fractured, brightly colored isometric forms. Stuart's *High Falls* (1975) works were vertical scrolls of earth and graphite silver on rag paper, where indexes or rubbed traces of riverbeds or other geographic elements were brought into the gallery via the format of long, vertical scrolls descending to the gallery floor.

[194] See Mark Rosenthal and Richard Marshall, *Jonathan Borofsky*, exh. cat. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art; New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1984)

[195] During the same year, Spero received a 1976-1977 CAPS Fellowship from the New York State Council on the Arts in support of her scroll projects, a major boost to her career. In addition, it is important to note here that in 1977, Marcia Tucker, who had left her curatorial position at the Whitney Museum of American Art, founded the New Museum of Contemporary Art, a forum of dialogue and provocation, engaged with contemporary art. Spero was included in Bernice Rose's important thematic exhibition of drawing, *Allegories of Modernism: Contemporary Drawing*, in 1992 at the Museum of Modern Art.

[196] Isaak quotes Spero in *Notes in Time*, 1995, 30.

[197] Ibid., 31.

[198] See Jon Bird's discussion in "Part III: Rites of Passage," *Nancy Spero* (1987), 29-38.

[199] Keller Cushing Freeman quotes Spero in *Nancy Spero: 1993 Emrys Journal*, 12.

[200] Isaak quotes Spero in *Notes in Time*, 1995, 31.

[201] Spero may also be punning Linda Benglis's much-criticized-at-the-time, notoriously 'bad-girl' color glossy advertisement for her solo gallery exhibition in the October/November 1974 issue of *Artforum*, in which Benglis posed nude, with her body well-greased, wearing sun glasses, holding to her lower torso a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

large double-ended dildo. Her send-up was formulated in response to Robert Morris's blatantly sadomasochistic advertisement for his solo exhibition printed in a previous issue of the journal. Benglis, in her ad, boldly equated sexuality and power, role playing in the art world and gender stereotyping by artist's themselves. Earlier, in 1968, a coyly smiling Louise Bourgeois had posed with her phallic sculpture, *La Fillette*, under her arm, in a portrait photograph by Robert Mapplethrope, *La Fillette*, (1968). Holding the "little girl," her sculpture, as though a doll or a baby, Bourgeois carries the authority of the phallus in Mapplethorpe's photograph; the phallus, in Freudian terms, symbolizes authority and power; in Jungian terms of pre-sexuality, it is symbolic of gender dualism, representing the modeling of the universe as an interplay of two opposed yet complementary forces. See a discussion of Bourgeois's *La Fillette*, in Robert Storr, "The Matter at Hand," *Louise Bourgeois*, ed. Peter Weiermair (Zurich: Stemmle Edition, 1995): 19-21, and in the same text: Rosalind Krauss, "Portrait of the Artist as Fillette," 23-29; Lucy Lippard, "Louise Bourgeois: From the Inside Out," 13-17; Thomas McEvilley, "History and Prehistory in the Work of Louise Bourgeois," 31-39.

[202] Author's interview with Spero from notes, 5/30/03. Both Mendieta and Spero had represented the contingency of the individual and social female body within a patriarchal culture. Mendieta had documented her performance on the theme of violence against women, *Rape/Murder* (1973), after a series of students were raped at the University of Iowa, at a time when Spero was documenting institutionalized violence against women in *Torture of Women*. Other A.I.R. artists focused on analyzing the depiction of the female image as represented in ritual and myth, such as Mary Beth Edelson, who collected everywoman's tales, tracing social and spiritual transformation; Dotty Attie, who juxtaposed fragments of texts and images to interrogate art history and establish a female subjectivity. But Spero and Mendieta achieved a level of continuous critique and an intensity of pitch -- of rage and anger -- as well as an ecstatic energy that was absent in the work of the other members.

[203] Kaira M. Cabanas, "Ana Mendieta, "Pain of Cuba, body I am," *Woman's Art Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1999): 12-17.

[204] Mendieta is quoted in John Perreault and Petra Barreras del Rio, *Ana Mendieta: A Retrospective* (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1987), 28. See also Robin Greeley, *Afro-Cuban, 'Woman,' and History in the Works of Ana Mendieta, Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, and Marta Maria Perez Bravo*, exh. cat. (Storrs, CT: William Benton Museum of Art, 2000).

[205] Bird quotes Spero in "Part III: Rites of Passage," *Nancy Spero*, 1987, 32.

[206] Ibid.

[207] Brooks Adams, "Spero's Muse: the Printed Painting," *Print Collector's Newsletter*, 17, pt. 1 (March-April 1986): 11.

[208] See Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage* (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1979) and Chicago's *Embroidering Our Heritage: The Dinner Party Needlework* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1980). See also a contextualization of Chicago's and Spero's differing roles within the Women Artists' Movement in, Simon Taylor, "The Women Artists' Movement: From Radical to Cultural Feminism, 1969-1975, *Personal and Political: The Women's Art Movement, 1969-1975*, exh. cat. (East Hampton, NY: Guild Hall Museum, 2002), 9-32, and Natalie Ng, "Embodying Feminism," *Personal and Political*, 33-43. See also, Mary Beth Edelson and Ameilia M. Trevelyan, eds. *The Art of Mary Beth Edelson* (New York: Seven Cycles, 2002), in which Edelson, fellow A.I.R. member, discusses the Women's Art Movement.

[209] Christopher Lyon, "Art According to Gender Gives Fragmented View of Women," *Chicago Sun Times*, Oct. 16, 1983, 25.

[210] Spero's library includes a tourist brochure she had purchased on a trip to Bayeux, France, which is in a long, fold-out format with the complete cycle illustrated, *Tapisserie de Bayeux*, (Bayeux, Frane: Edit. Ville

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

de Bayeux, n.d.). Spero has since collected books on the *Bayeux Tapestry*, including the recently published, Wolfgang Grape, *The Bayeux Tapestry: Monument to a Norman Conquest*, trans. David Britt (New York and Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1994).

[211] See Richard Brilliant's discussion of the content, format, and original performative context of the tapestry, "*The Bayeux Tapestry*: A Stripped Narrative for Their Eyes and Ears," *Word & Image* 7, no. 2 (April-June 1991): 98-119.

[212] Spero is quoted by Keller Cushing Freeman, *1993 Emrys Journal*, 10.

[213] Lucy Lippard, "Nancy Spero's 30 Years War," *Village Voice*, April 19, 1983, 100.

[214] Horsfield, 17-18. Spero's wide range of readings from French and American feminist literary theory in the mid- and late-1970s confirmed the direction her work already had taken intuitively and via Simone De Beauvoir's thought in the late-1960s and early-1970s. With Horsfield, Spero discussed, among other topics, Helene Cixous's call for a "feminine writing" or a "writing of the feminine" in Cixous's article, "Castration or Decapitation?" *Signs* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1981): 51. During the mid-1980s, a new generation of feminist artists, including, among others, Mary Kelly, eschewed the depiction of the female body altogether as forever tainted by the male gaze and masculinist constructs. Spero disagreed with this approach as well as the binaries of essentialist/constructivist categories established by some feminist theorists; see *Emrys Journal*, 12: "There's a group of feminists for whom the imaging of the female body has become forbidden territory... Instead of incorporating media images, I was parodying and defying male hegemony -- laughing at male control -- and the dominance, so-called, of the male gaze... There is a fear of the female body -- it is both cherished and reviled by men, and male artists through the years have so abused the image of woman as muse, temptress, devil, angel, etc., that some contemporary feminists decry the use of the female body visually. And as a result they have banished 'Her.' A strange self-denial. I would argue that this sort of attitude fits in neatly with the dominant culture."

[215] Thomas McEvilley, "Nancy Spero," *Artforum* 24 (Summer 1986), 123.

[216] Notes from interview with Spero, 5/12/99. Spero had shown her sculpture, *Mummy*, in the group exhibition "The Figure as an Image of the Psyche," curated by Mary Ann Unger at the Sculpture Center Gallery in 1985. Spero has copies in her library of books by Brilliant including, *Arts of the Ancient Greeks* (New York: McGraw Hill Books, 1972). See Robert Storr's discussion of Spero's emphasis on peripheries in "Nancy Spero: Central Issues – Peripheral Visions," *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950*, 45-60.

[217] Spero's library includes Paul Hamlyn's *Greek Mythology* (London: Batchworth Press, 1963), with the image on page 49 marked: *Artemis of Ephesus*, Capitoline Museum , Rome. Another photograph of *Diana of Ephesus*, Spero found in her copy of Erich Neumann's *The Great Mother: an analysis of the Archetype*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Pantheon Books, 1955), 35.

[218] See in Spero's library, Lucie Lamy, *Egyptian Mysteries* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981); E.A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Magic* (New York: Dover Publications, 1971); Merlin Stone, *Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood: Our Goddesses and Heroine Heritage* (New York: Sibylline Books, 1979); Clifford Geertz, ed., *Myth, Symbol, and Culture* (New York: Norton and Co., 1971).

[219] Spero is quoted in an interview (September 1976) with Carol J. DePasquale, "Project/Thesis: The Work of Nancy Spero," M.A. Thesis (New York: CUNY, Hunter College, 1977), 22.

[220] Michael Newman, "Nancy Spero," *Art Monthly*, no. 79 (September 1984): 19-20.

[221] Spero is quoted by Susan L. Jenkins, "An Interview with Nancy Spero," *Nancy Spero*, exhibition brochure (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, 1988), n.p.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[222] Ellen Handy, "Nancy Spero," *Arts Magazine* 61 (May 1987): 105.

[223] Ibid.

[224] Carol Laing, "Nancy Spero," *Parachute*, 48 (September/October/November 1987): 63.

[225] Earl Miller, "Nancy Spero," *C Magazine*, no. 15 (September/Fall 1987) 52-53.

[226] Jeanne Siegel, "Nancy Spero: Woman as Protagonist," *Arts Magazine* 62 (September 1987): 12-13.

[227] Spero's library contains copies of *Sheelas in Cultures of Contention*, Douglas Kahn and Diane Neumaier, eds. (Seattle: Real Comet Press, 1985), and on page 24; Spero marked a Sheela illustration with snakes writhing on either side (an attribute to ward off evil); Stella Cherry, *A Guide to Sheela-na-gigs*, (Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1992); Eamonn P. Kelly, *Sheela-na-gigs: Origins and Functions* (Dublin: Country House and National Museum of Ireland, 1996), 5.

[228] Lucy Lippard, *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Pre-History* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 219.

[229] Spero has recently been asked by the curator Susan Harris to make a literal link with the medieval pilgrim route and its endpoint, Santiago de Compostela, Spain, by exhibiting scrolls and banners in that city's Centro Galego de Arte Contemporanea, scheduled for 2004.

[230] Spero is quoted by Deirdre Hanna in "Spero's Transcendent Imprint," *Now* (Toronto), January 26 – February 1, 1989, 46.

[231] Isaak in *Nancy Spero*, 30.

[232] John Boardman, *Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Archaic Period* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), illustration 153, Panathenaic Amphora by the Berlin Painter, was cut out by Spero in addition to many other illustrations of Red Figure vases and cups in Boardman's book. See also in Spero's library, Arturo Stenico, *Roman and Etruscan Painting* (New York: Viking Press, 1963); Betty Radice, ed., *Who's Who in the Ancient World; A Handbook to the Survivors of the Greek and Roman Classics* (New York: Penguin, 1973); Merlin Stone, *When God Was a Woman* (New York: Harvest Books, 1976); Susan Groag Bell, ed., *Women: From Greece to the French Revolution* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1973); Veronica Ions, *World's Mythology in Color* (London: Chartwell Books, 1974; Richard Cavendish, ed., *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology* (New York: Crescent Books, 1980); Robert Graves, ed., *New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology* (New York: Prometheus Press, 1959); Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians, Their History, Culture and Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963).

[233] See in Spero's studio archives a number of uncatalogued files entitled, "Feminist Files," which contain cut out or torn images from books and newspapers, with no citations noted; see Spero's library, which includes, Trix Rosen, *Strong and Sexy: The New Body Beautiful* (New York: Delihah Books distributed by Putnam Publishing Group, 1983); Bernard Rudolfsky, *The Unfashionable Human Body* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1971).

[234] Also in Boardman's text, Spero cut out and reworked illustration number 342, a column crater by the Pan Painter (ca. 530 BCE), in which an image of a female figure carrying a large phallus under her arm is depicted. Spero incorporated this image into her scroll, *Notes in Time on Women*, exhibited at AIR Gallery in 1979. The symbolism of abducting the power of the phallus for one's self as creator and protagonist had permeated feminist discourse as discussed in endnote 201. See also, Susan Rubin Suleiman, ed. *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[235] Michael Brenson writes of Spero's scroll installation, *Sky Goddess*, at Josh Baer Gallery, "In "Sky Goddess," the main new work in this show, she moves her characters around in a way that suggests the obsessiveness and intuitive cunning of a child. Decisions about scale, placement, and color never seem systematic. Nothing seems fixed or permanent. Each gesture and scene seems only a momentary stop in a continuum.," in "Nancy Spero," *The New York Times*, March 28, 1986, C. 30.

[236] Sarah B. Pomeroy quotes from Juvenal in *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*, (New York: Shocken Books, 1975), 209.

[237] Adrian Searle, ed., quotes Spero in "Leon Golub and Nancy Spero in conversation with Adrian Searle," *ICA/Talking Art I*, (London: Croft and Co. Inc and ICA, 1993), 51.

[238] Conversation with Jon Bird in Spero's studio, 9/4/01.

[239] Bridgitte Engler, "Women of Motion," *Paper: NYC*, March 1987, n.p.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter Two: The First Wall Painting Installations, 1988 – 1989

From Scroll to Wall

Nancy Spero's gradual movement from scrolls to walls, integrating her figures within a surrounding, "real" space, expanded her paintings' pictorial/thematic fields onto the surface of architecture and its complex relationships. During the mid-1980s, while depicting her epic re-presentations of the histories of women in her signature gestural language of body movement, in conjunction with figured texts printed and collaged on paper scrolls, Spero experimented with forays into a borderless image-surface to wall-surface.[1] By 1988, during her retrospective exhibitions in the U.S., Canada and Great Britain, she entered into a fully engaged visual/conceptual dialogue with architectural space and its meanings. The meanings embedded in these wall paintings, with their figure/ground relationships tied to architecture, and often, within museum architecture, were contingent and suspended -- until the actual performance of a collaborative installation on site.

In addition, Spero's wall painting projects involved finding a way for actively engaged, figurative painting/collage to move outside the strictures of commercialized objects into the arena of the 'polis' via an embodiment of space. Imaginative recreation within new architectural and historical contexts, and inspired re-presentation, were required of the artist, her assistants, curators, and viewer/participants. And as a consequence, Spero broached the territory of a genre of gestural theater, with a "cast of characters" playing roles (historical, mythical, contemporary) moving into the viewers' space.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In this chapter, I discuss Spero's earliest wall painting installations in museums and alternative spaces in Toronto, Canada; Los Angeles; and Frankfurt, Germany. The range and intensity of this geographical matrix will become crucial for Spero's development of themes and images linking the ecstatic arts – "dance" as metaphor and "soaring" as freedom – with the apocalyptic and commemorative.[2] Spero's on-going themes of transformation and embodiment oscillate between these fields of human experience rather than synthesizing, eliding, or bifurcating them. Instead, the artist's strategies aim toward an embodiment of re-presentation in an interplay with architectural space tied to the cyclical and the ephemeral. Spero's formal structuring is thus integrated into an ongoing visual/conceptual dialogue with architecture, its decorative elements, themes, and functions. The temporality of the wall paintings is highlighted by their emergence from architectural space and their disappearance in a wash of white paint at the conclusion of an exhibition's tenure.

Dancing in Time and Space

Spero had entered the public sphere in the mid-sixties, first with her political actions and anti-war activities linked to the development of the *War Series*, and then, with her feminist protests in major museums and her scroll installations of *Codex Artaud* and *Torture of Women*, first shown at A.I.R. She proceeded to expunge text in her long scroll, *The First Language*, revisiting the crucial theme of dance as a physical, somatic dimension of writing -- dancing as a form of cognition and ritual communication within the community, themes which had interested her from the time of her first lithographs at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Expanding the synesthetic theme of her approach (combining the haptic and kinesthetic implied within the visual vehicle), Spero

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

had explored the ancient visualizations of dance as the first language of the human species: " 'The First Language' came from a little book I have in French on prehistoric art, called 'Forty Thousand Years of Modern Art,' which is where I found the first images that I used for prehistoric women... I did come across the phrase 'perhaps dance is the first language.'"[3]

Dance in pre-historical and ancient times had been an important form of communication, linking the community in public ritual, as Spero knew from her contact with and study of Minoan, Etruscan, and Roman frescos as well as Greek vase painting.[4] For earlier pre-literate cultures, dance was more than a vital life-force. It signaled to the community the timely cycles of harvesting and sowing crops as well as the shared religious rituals marking birth, puberty, and death. Contemporary archaeological findings concur with the broad tenets that the artist's older French text identified, suggesting that dance was indeed the first language. Dance preceded written language and was depicted in the earliest art of the ancient Near East (from the ninth to the sixth millennium B.C.) at a time when local peoples switched from hunting and gathering to settling in villages. Dr. Yosef Garfinkel of Hebrew University, Jerusalem, has recently argued that because planting and harvesting were relatively new experiences for these emerging cultures, they developed dancing as a way to organize these group activities which ensured their communities' survival.[5] According to Garfinkel, "It was part of the ritual for coordinating a community's activities...Everyone would gather and dance, and the next day they would go to work."[6] Many of the scenes of dancing figures depicted on pre-historic and archaic sites, and on objects now in museums -- reproductions of which Spero has collected in her files -- show groups of people dancing in a line or a circle, supporting the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

idea that the group was more important than the individual. Dance performance had profound social contexts and cognitive aspects, correlating the dancing scenes found on pottery and stone with the development of symbolism, religion, and social organization. As a dynamic symbolization, dance performance and movement into space via posing and tracing gestural patterns in the course of rhythmic measured units of time, provided an orchestrated, multi-sensory memory-aid and an emotional bonding often ending in ecstatic or trance-like states.[7]

By establishing a continuity, parallel with the enveloping four walls of gallery space, Spero's push-pinned horizontal scrolls articulated a form of "line dance," while her early forays into direct wall painting would enact an expansive version of a "circle dance" around the viewer: "I create ritual-like events, action-movement across the space of the extended linear paper format."[8] Spero's first, full-fledged wall painting installations, discussed in this chapter, occupy a contiguous, horizonless 'ground' of walls and architectural elements by surrounding the viewer. The artist positions her work within the public space, the polis, or the "space of appearance," as French philosopher Julia Kristeva employs the term to define the ideal nexus: a "space of appearance" within the polis that allows for individual and collective memories, histories, and stories to coalesce.[9] Similarly, Spero's fragmented, poetic narratives, spliced with myths and specific histories, condense action and draw attention to acts and to testimony, removed from the general flow of events. Wall surfaces become productive spaces to compose a gestural theater, exposing a web of human relationships tied to the representation of the body and the acts of role playing.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Waterworks

In the spring of 1988, Spero decided to fully move out of the extended linear paper format and onto the walls with a total conception responding to architectural space. While her retrospective exhibition, *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950,* was traveling to museums in the U.S. and Canada, Spero was asked by curator, Tom Follard, to create an installation for *Waterworks*, an invitational exhibition at the R.C. Harris Water Filtration Plant in Toronto sponsored by Visual Arts Ontario. Spero confronted a 375-foot sky-lit corridor, where she and her assistants, Valerie Sivilli and Matt Kovaleski, hand-printed figures from her "cast of characters" with French oil-based inks. The artist interpreted the installation as a process and collaboration: "It is like a ritual dance, and by the rhythm of the figures and the groupings, I try to diffuse what I feel in contemporary art is a kind of narcissism – the emphasis on the personal status of the artist... Not that my work is not personal, because it is, but by this repetition and ritual I am trying to talk about body gesture, body language, human energy."[10] Thus Spero was able to fuse her experimentation with working processes on site, her interest in ritual and the ecstatic arts, and movement onto the wall/ground in multiple trajectories outward and on divergent axes.

The Art Deco-cum-Neo-Romanesque style water filtration plant was designed by Thomas C. Pomphrey and constructed from 1932 to 1941 on Lake Ontario. Its massive expanse displayed a majesty and confidence in technological progress during a period of economic despair in the midst of the Depression. The dominant axis of the facility's structures parallels the shore of the lake, while its cross axis joins three separate buildings of the facility down a terraced site. The vast horizontal rectangle of the pump building,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which houses the great turbines and pipelines, contrasts with the adjoining vertical extrusion of the tower laboratory used for alum powder in the purification process. The filter gallery, where Spero printed her wall painting, stretches the width of the site and contains the main corridor linking the rectalinear filtration pools with viewing windows for operators and the public. Scattered throughout the entire site were installations by invited artists, including Komar and Melamid, Francois Girard, members of Team Zoo, John Scott, John Baldessari, and Rebecca Horn.

In her overview essay on the *Waterworks* installations, published in a special issue of the Canadian journal, *Art Views*, Patricia C. Phillips remarked that Spero's response to the project was more intuitive, dialogic, and perceptual rather than a conceptual or didactic scheme worked out beforehand referencing the iconography of specific environmental issues: "Spero's work establishes a poetic dialogue with the site – not with its special functions – and the emotive dimensions of an architecture as a representation of memory and of other spaces. Her project asks how environment controls human beings, influences actions, incites aspirations and affects art."[11] In her scroll works, Spero had often employed an array of visual poetics: rhyming figures, repeated lines of text, metaphor and metonymy, rhythmic syncopation, caesuras inserted as silences, enjambment of overlapping images, a condensed synesthesia, and the disruption of regular syntax. Spero had translated these poetic strategies into visual, graphic means to enact her repertory company, her "cast of characters." In her wall painting, the artist combined these poetic strategies within architectural space as a 'ground' in which her figures emerge and act, and into which they recede, engaging in a re-presentation of memory and histories. Tactile or haptic response and kinesthetic

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

muscular perception of space were just as important to the artist as the ideas and archaeology embedded in its forms. In fact, it was through the vehicle of architecture and its chambers, remembered and imagined, that the classical epic poets envisioned loci through which they mentally moved in reciting epics, drawing on images as mnemonic clues anchored to these loci.[12] The artificially trained memory of the classical poets, rhetoricians, and philosophers was based on visualizing mental images within specific architectural settings, as literary historian Frances Yates has written: "The ancient memories were trained by an art which reflected the art and architecture of the ancient world, which could depend on faculties of intense visual memorization which we have lost."[13] Spero's intuitive and aesthetic responses to architecture and space, and her deployment of figures in relationship to interlocking wall spaces as 'ground,' reinforce the strategies of imagined visual/sensual forms as mnemonic devices.

In *Waterworks* (1988, Figure 42), the artist approached the cream-white, sky lit corridor with its wainscoting of beige and charcoal-color travertine marble:

> I was trying to integrate my work into the architecture of the building by using the space... I wanted to enhance the architecture the way artists have done from time immemorial – like the Egyptians or the Greeks – I am thinking of paintings directly on the walls... the movement of repeating figures down the corridor. And the viewer becomes a participant when walking down the corridor, involved in the continuum of the work and of the architecture.[14]

Spero decided to set in motion an irregular but rhythmic scattering of figures leaping from wall to wall, over doorways, above control panel windows, and flying up towards the sky light: "And so I could ideally use the space – real space to soar and to have freedom of space – to pause [a caesura], for an image to pause, to have blank space and clusters of images [enjambment] – to create repetitions [rhyme] and rhythms [meter] and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

subtle shifts in the images themselves."[15] The long corridor was punctuated at regular intervals by archways and sky lights, windows and doorways leading into filtration pools, and so, Spero countered this regularity with irregular rhythms of figures playing along peripheries, fanning outward or jumping upward, punning architectural elements and defying gravity. Primary red, yellow, and cerulean blue maenad's (the maenads originating from a Satyr and Maenad Red Figure cup of the late archaic period, ca. 490-480 BCE, attributed to Macron) spear the beastly centaurs with pinecone-tipped staffs in repeated rhythms, sometimes overprinted and heavy with ink (like hoof prints), or alternately, ghostly and fading into cloud-like white walls.[16] Banishing these violent abductors-of-women over the doorway, the spirit of Dionysus reigns in celebratory frolicking. The French oil-based printing ink applied on the walls absorbed some of the color, giving the images a chalky, pastel quality similar in appearance to fresco. By varying the application pressure, the amount of ink on rollers and polymer plates, and mixing colors on site, Spero achieved a muted to intense range of expression in her figures.

Cinematic freeze frames of images appear to run -- as in Spero's Egyptian dancing acrobat (from ancient Karnak) vaulting over lintels -- or to walk in stately fashion like the classical stoic Roman mourning women in procession, transforming into a colonnade.[17] Some images are deliberately smudged or over-printed to form a shifting, clotted opacity. A single mourning figure mimics a three-dimensional caryatid as she strides toward a column. Others are light and linear, veiled or barely visible. Most give the impression of movement via printing techniques, positioning or repetition, while others, like the Inuit fertility goddess, seem rooted, oriented towards earth (the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

wainscoting) and in stony relief. Attenuated, linear figures from African rock paintings and tattooed and incised mythological Aboriginal beings seem to float toward the light.[18] Across the corridor, raving maenads, "wild, hot-blooded women," given to orgiastic convulsions, and intoxicated with love and desire (inspired by Dionysus) take flight. In a diverse but animated procession, the whole company is overseen by Artemis (from a Roman copy in the Louvre), printed in bright yellow on the cross beam of an arch.

Artemis (Diana), goddess of the hunt and the wild beasts, was the mythical healer of women's pain in menstruation and childbirth, a goddess of the moon and night, descended from ancient vegetation and fertility goddesses.[19] Reincarnated by the Greeks and Romans, she carried a bow and quiver, wore a crescent moon in her hair, and was accompanied by a golden hind or a faithful dog. Spero removed the classical attributes of bow, quiver, and hind, leaving only the older symbol of the crescent moon and upraised arm. Knowing that the Amazons were thought to be the mortal form of Artemis, the artist gave Artemis an athlete's muscular arms, though her draped Dorian chiton and stance identify her as a classical goddess. This revamped Artemis heads a motley procession, reinvigorating history and myth in a public space that encloses a vital living resource. As classical historian Mary Carruthers has recently written:

> Processions [in the ancient Mediterranean cultures] are images moving within locations, locations spaced distinctly apart and in clear relationship to one another... Participants and audience together *make up* these processions, and remember them viscerally, the way we remember how to ride a bicycle or how to dance. Such knowledge cannot really be obliterated: it can, however, be relocated.[20]

Ritual and performance are suggested by Spero's installation of figures; architecturally defined space and movement in time are accentuated as elements of her compositional on-site structuring. The artist goes so far as to print a dramatis personae, a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

stylishly bobbed-hair-1920s-type figure in "Egyptian" profile (with head and legs in profile and shoulders frontal) wielding a paint brush, in the process of 'making/painting' a figure over a doorway. The image that Spero's persona "paints" is an Egyptian acrobatic dancer performing a summersault in midair, who is, in turn, connected to a chorus line of female figures spanning history and time. The wall is Spero's ground, a seemingly infinite space, neither representative of a monocular Renaissance box space nor a solely optical, Greenbergian flat surface.

These processional arrangements combined with the artist's choice of images, associated with ancient processions, highlight the development of Spero's ongoing theme of depicting transformative rites of passage, first expressed in her earliest oils but now fully articulated. Artemis resided over transition from one state to the next (cycles of the moon, the passage of night into day, childbirth), embodying change itself (menstruation). Continuous passage, transformation, and circulation are at the core of the filtration plant's functioning; its technology purifies water polluted by human technology. The circulation of water above and below, its dynamism and replenishing qualities, its flux and flow, are the source of all life. Water is at the center of regeneration and fecundity, representing a primordial formlessness but also a formless potentiality.

In Jewish and Christian traditions, water symbolizes the beginnings of creation, and as the foundation of the universe, water makes manifest the transcendent. But as with all symbols, water may be regarded from two diametrically opposite points of view which are not irreconcilable; as Spero's cumulative oeuvre emphasizes, this ambivalence occurs on all levels, physical and metaphysical. Water is the source of both life and death, as creator and destroyer. The symbolism of water contains that of blood, and blood partakes

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of a dual symbolism: celestial blood associated with sun gods and fire, and menstrual blood associated with the earth and moon.[21]

Both the rolling sky overhead and its reflective rays directed the artist's image placement at different times of the day, while circulation of recycled substances took place simultaneously in filtration water pools below. Thus Spero is once again dealing with pairs of opposites, doubles discerned as dualisms of light and dark, conscious and unconscious. Spero chooses to expose this dualism (male/female) within the representation of female energies, as she explained to Dena Shottenkirk: "Themis, the goddess of law and tradition, Artemis and Athena, had the same stature as male gods, at least equal if not superior to men in sexual vitality and authenticity."[22] The artist literally and figuratively 'infiltrates' the water filtration plant with female representations, while emphasizing both the physical and metaphysical symbolization of "waterworks." Circulation is represented by her appropriation and recycling of images to polymer plates and their rebirth in new contexts, while the viewer must circulate through corridors to take in the entire project. Cycles are symbolized in Spero's image choices (Artemis, Egyptian tomb acrobat), while movement and circulation are suggested by the printed image's placement and its repetition.

Spero's *Waterworks* project extended into the rotunda area where Komar and Melamid's *Triton's Remains* (1988) was placed on a low pedestal. After printing the "cast of characters" in the arched corridor, the long connection point of transfer, Spero and crew moved in to engage the Russians' *Triton*. Spero wrote of her figure's engagement:

> To depict the female body is to depict ranges of difference. Not to set up an ideal or universal (classical whole – how can a woman be

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> universal if she has a hole?), but particulars, a kind of naming... their refusal of closure. Woman in process, never a fixed or stable entity, woman as continuous presence, woman in motion -- gesture and movement being the earliest forms of human communication."[23]

Spero's running athletes, Greek Hetaeras, and Artemis figure all join in to taunt the *Triton's Remains* from the sidelines and the margins of arched walls. In profile, frontal poses, and three-quarter views, they seem to skip around the centrally located and didactically displayed *Triton's Remains.* Komar and Melamid's life-sized, aberrant creation is a striding (Rodinesque) human skeleton with a huge skeletal fin protruding from its backside. With this conglomerate figure, the Russians performed a send-up of traditional natural history museum displays (instead evoking P.T. Barnum) and the seductions of overwrought, overdetermined, site-specific installations. Komar and Melamid ironically reference the connections among evolutionary mutation, genetic cloning, didactic scientific display, and the classical mythology of Triton, son of Poseidon and Amphitrite. Spero's figures doubled Komar and Melamid's hybrid parody by resonating with the mythological and morphological themes raised by *Triton's Remains,* performing a gestural dialogue with the mock specimen.

Part Two of Spero's *Waterworks* project, located in the tower of this "castle of future-past," was composed of already existing scroll works.[24] Lodged in the rather sinister looking alum tower, she deployed scrolls from her series, *Torture of Women,* in a stark contrast to the celebratory, airy flight of her wall figures in the filtration gallery. Responding to the stiflingly grim prison-like brick and concrete alum tower lab, now abandoned but once used for mixing alum to purify water, she chose to emphasize the disturbing aspects of the room's use and its physical presence, with its frightening industrial drums of unspecified "waste." The tower scrolls, which feature 'disappeared'

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

women and their witnessing texts, are smothered in clear plastic, a potent metonymical gesture. Art critics, Jennifer Fisher and Beth Seaton, analyzed Spero's sensitive response to space with her varied approach to installation:

> It would be tempting to recall the optical and architectural metaphor of the Panoption to describe this forlorn sentinel, but this tower is Bentham's dream inverted, for its operative principles of isolation and surveillance only take place within the tower itself, rather than finding its locus outside... Spero has chosen to install artworks dealing with the death and "disappearances" of dissident women. Indeed, this is a room fitting for torture... Here Spero hung long paper banners upon which various images and text are stenciled: women crouching; women running and falling; the words 'El Salvador' and 'Guatemala' stamped in red; the names of the elements – earth, fire, water, air. Each of these elements can be used for torture.[25]

Thus, with essentially the same "cast of characters," Spero establishes, within each context and framework, totally different fragmented narratives or gestural theater plays.

After her assistants, Sivilli and Kovaleski, completed installing the project, Spero offered to donate the painting in the water filtration corridor to the Filtration Plant. The administration turned down the offer and painted over the figures when the exhibition closed per the original plan. Territorial contests and organizational structures vying for control emerged during the project: the curator sought permanence and status validation for the artworks, the art dealers sought control over the artists' products and public image, and administrative directors were responsible to the Board of Directors and the public, who frequently toured the facility. The complexities of negotiating a life cycle for the wall paintings became evident to Spero, and repeated on another level her continuing battles since the 1960s with the art and political establishments. Her images of women, in particular, brought into focus a disturbing disruption of the narratives of received myth and history: they were "foreign bodies" introduced within the pristine environment of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

water purification. Into an architecture of delineated clarity, white walls, and cleanliness, Spero injected disorder and paradoxical or conflicting points of view. While she responded sensitively to the architectural elements, "reading" their formal symbolism with a depth of understanding, she subverted the classically harmonious whole with her skewed point-counterpoint composition and often provocative figures. The singular story of harnessing natural resources tied to a machine aesthetic, which the building exemplified, was called into question by her choice of images and her seemingly scatter-shot printing techniques. White walls and decisive, predictable intervals signaled an idea of purity and implied a transparency.[26] If the building represented a generalized concept of purification and health in the public domain, then this identity excluded the random and unexpected, which could be equated with serious danger.

Spero's consistent emphasis on borderlessness and transformation brought to the fore another area of conflict with accepted practice. Contingent studio processes were highlighted with Spero's move to wall painting. The installation remained unresolved, unfinished, until it interacted within space, until it was performed, leaving traces of the performance by Spero and her assistants (Figure 42). The artist reiterated: "The performer's body is her actual vehicle."[27] For both the field of art history and the marketplace of art, the studio had been considered only a staging area for a final unique product. But for Spero, the studio had become an archive, library, printmaking lab, collage-arena, and "rehearsal" or "dressing room" area (Figure 43). The percolation of themes, moods, and formal composition occurred in a dialogue with (the site) space and with assistants. Bringing a version of studio practice, with its forays into unruliness verging on chaos, deviates from and flaunts the rules of artistic conduct in the public

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

arena; it crosses the line between studio (private) and gallery or museum (public). It exposes a glimpse into a heretical kind of alchemy allowed in the studio (inside the body, as it were) -- where the concocting of secret recipes takes place – which is not allowed in formal, public exhibition spaces. Outside normative art-making decorum – in a tangling of stray feelings and observations with body movement and printing processes -- Spero threatened to collapse distinctions.

In the Studio

Responsive collaboration, taking place in the studio as well as being carried over into installation practice, was integrated into Spero's working process from the time of her first scrolls, and was expanded, on many levels, during the 1980s. As her working practice evolved from the small gouaches of the *War Series* and the *Artaud Paintings* -- which the artist made while her children were youngsters and which she could quickly stash away -- Spero's scrolls grew longer and longer, and increasingly employed cut-out collage and letterpress processes in the reproduction of images and text. By 1981, the photographer David Reynolds began photographing the artist's images and illustrations from books selected by her. These photographs were then repainted and altered by the artist, at which time, the final negative would be exposed to a zinc plate, etching Spero's images onto the plate (reversed), ready to be inked up for hand-printing.[28]

This relief process proved so adaptable that Spero transferred the process to rubber stamps and, later, by laser technique, to flexible polymer plates used to print on a variety of wall surfaces (Figures 44, 45, and 46). Reynolds experimented with Spero in blowing up and reducing the 8 by 10 inch black-and-white images, accentuating specific lines, forms, or shadows, subtleties or ambiguities, using a variety of high-contrast, linear

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

or continuous-toned, screen shots in order to attain a range of effects: from a relief-like dimensionality to a flattened, simplified, manifesto-like quality. Reynolds's skills as a photographer dovetailed with the kinds of manipulation of images Spero needed to extend her "cast of characters." Her expressive painting style could be accentuated, condensed, or blunted by the letterpress method, and an endless variation of reproduction was assured; the more generalized or stylized figures originating as illustrations from art books could be equally adopted to her purposes. In addition, Reynolds's 35 mm Leica (1956) series "M" camera with range-finder offered a more expressively sensitive optics.

The serendipitous give-and-take afforded by Reynolds's photographing methods coincided with the worsening condition of Spero's rheumatoid arthritis. In constant pain, the artist's movement and strength in her hands and fingers became more stressed. Letterpress printing techniques and photographic collaboration were significant breakthroughs contributing to Spero's experimentations with the history and variety of figurative representation. And collaboration had been central to Spero's thinking as a feminist artist during her years of political involvement in the women's movement. Community orientated and dialogically active in her studio practice, Spero found a format and technique that meshed with her artistic philosophy and the content of her work. Deriving from her continuous dialogues with Golub, their studio assistants, Reynolds, other technicians, and certain close friends, such as Lawrence Alloway and Sylvia Sleigh, and Ana Mendieta, Spero transferred her natural dialogic style to a complex method of working on her wall installations. She gradually honed her skills, becoming herself a hybrid combination of conductor/choreographer/theater director, supervising and working closely with her assistants who print her images. The everyday

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

collaborative activities of the studio environment -- the processes of examining, talking and listening, looking, changing, reworking, shifting gears and perceiving anew – were refined by Spero into a totality of working that included gathering fragments, researching, and continuously recontextualing and assembling a "cast of characters."

To Soar

A few months after completing the *Waterworks* installation, Spero and her crew tackled another wall painting installation, *To Soar,* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles in October, 1988 (Figure 47). The wall paintings were accompanied by a number of panels from her scroll series, including *The First Language.*[29] Chief Curator Mary Jane Jacob and the Director of the Museum, Richard Koshalek, invited Spero to install her mammoth scrolls and to print directly on a section of the walls of the Museum's new California Plaza building. Spero's exhibition was scheduled to coincide with and celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the opening of the Woman's Building in L.A. in 1973 (two years after its sister space, AIR, opened in New York, and where Spero had had a solo exhibition in 1978).[30] Jacob and Koshalek introduced Spero and her project at MOCA in the exhibition brochure:

> Nancy Spero builds a community of women. Female images springing from history, myth, and the news media, from ancient times to the contemporary world, join a women's procession in her art... For this exhibition the impressive and heroic scale of the galleries at MOCA's new California Plaza building offered Spero an opportunity for developing the installation potential of her art. A contemporary space imbued with classical simplicity that combines eastern and western design sensibilities, the architecture parallels the joining of past and present and of different cultures in Spero's own art. The dynamism of her women activates the entire gallery; by employing the same process of handprinting that she uses in her paper scroll works, here she prints directly on the wall to create an installation that reveals parts of the gallery that are usually unnoticed background for static pictures.[31]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Curator and Director's introductory words frame Spero's long-term project, even at this early stage, as *a process of building a community with a procession of nomadic images* culled (synchronically) from within various cultures and (diachronically) linking the past, the present, and a visionary future. Heroic scale is linked to Spero's projects in the sense of offering an architectural space in which to move; dynamism and activation are the descriptive terms in contrast to "static pictures." The heroic or epic quality of the artist's ambition is implied in her massive documentation of women's histories and in her presenting new re-presentational possibilities within the architectural context. The unnoticed peripheral spaces, the spaces of transition in doorways and skylights, are the artist's ground, not a singular plane but multiple planes and axes in relationship. In addition, Koshalek and Jacob emphasize the marriage of classical Western and Eastern design sensibilities manifest in the building's architecture which are echoed in Spero's cross-cultural art forms.

Arata Isozaki, the Japanese architect who designed the new MOCA, based the entire geometric composition of the building complex on the golden section (the Greek concept and ratio developed by Pythagoras to define a theory of natural harmony) as the Western method of planning shapes and subdivided spaces, and on the Eastern philosophy of yin and yang as pairs of complementary forces that move continuously in the universe.[32] Descriptive of the cycles of nature, "the yin-yang relationship is a complementary one in which seeming opposites harmoniously balance each other": the hard glass pyramid skylights are complemented by the warmth of red stone, while the soft and fluid water fountain is realized in a pyramid shape and complements the solid opaqueness of the building's eclectic geometric shapes.[33] The yin/yang is not two

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

separate forces moving to their extremes, but one inseparable force which continuously evolves: the so-called "void," representing spiritualized space and the so-called "solid," material space, being but one example. Spero's doubled images, her use of ambivalent symbolization as embodying contrasting but complementary psychic forces, and her distinctive use of what formalist critics had termed "negative space" as a generative structural element, allied her artistic sensibility with certain non-Western perspectives.

Critics had noted early on a number of Eastern resonances in Spero's scrolls, generalizing as structural corollaries the traditional Chinese scroll format as well as contemporary Chinese political wall posters.[34] Michael Brenson, writing a thematic article for *The New York Times* entitled, "Why Asian Culture Answers the Needs of Western Artists," cited Spero's work as an apt example of the mingling of cultural aesthetics. He noted that she had encountered Oriental art on a daily basis while studying at the Art Institute of Chicago. In addition, he emphasized her conception of space as paralleling an Eastern approach:

> Gradually her works began to have more and more in common with Oriental scrolls. They might combine images with words that reported incidents of violence to women. They are on paper. They place a good deal of emphasis on the void, which is offered as a space of possibility, as it is experienced in the East, not as nothingness, as the void is perceived in the West.[35]

When Spero moved from the horizontal and vertical paper scroll format to the wall, her use of the void/wall as caesura -- as a space of transition, cyclical dynamics and possibility -- became an ever more complex structural element relating to architectural elements, sighting, and scale, as well as operating in the modes of symbolic and poetic form: "I have had this wish for openness. The space suggests a new kind of freedom to me."[36] As a specific silence, the caesura or musical breath (the breath of life and a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

transition from one state to the next), attempts to suggest a seemingly infinite space. By referencing Western and non-Western traditions, Spero allied the Eastern sense of vast space and figures moving in this horizonless space with the tradition of Etruscan and Roman fresco paintings' airy dreamscapes, referencing an infinite silence/space of possibility.

Deriving from the earlier influence of Tarot cards (which incorporate Western and non-Western myths and symbols, including those from Taoism and Ch'an Buddhism), Spero had incorporated the symbolism of doubled and mirrored imagery with themes of an ephemerality of being, continuous change and dissolution in cycles, reflecting the seasonal forces of nature. In her 1963 copy of Osvald Siren's *The Chinese on the Art of Painting*, Spero read that Chinese painters, steeped in practicing the philosophies of Taoism and Ch'an Buddhism, "utilized space as a most important means of artistic expression."[37] Space was not visually designated as empty cubic volume (interpreted on the plane/field as monocular, linear perspective) to be filled up, as in West; instead, space was expressed as infinite and incalculable, as the space from which forms emerge. Switching gradually from scroll space to wall space, Spero began to perceive architectural walls as an infinite space from which her "cast of characters" could emerge in the handprinting performance, and into which they would disappear, in another transition, with a wash of white paint.

At MOCA in Los Angeles, Samm Kunce and Matt Kovaleski, Spero's assistants, worked on *To Soar* in concert with and directed by the artist, handprinting her images on two of the walls within the skylight area, connecting the two galleries which housed her scrolls. The wall paintings engage in a dialogue with the room and with Spero's two

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

scrolls encircling two walls: significantly, *The First Language* (1981, the first scroll without text, integrating women's histories and myths) and *Sheela and the Dildo Dancer* (1987, shown at Josh Baer Gallery, and in which figures ventured onto walls). Because of the architectural context on which the unframed scrolls are hung, the circulating, printed wall figures appear to have escaped or leapt out of the paper scroll confines of horizontal and vertical, grid-like boundaries. In contrast, the paper ground is like a crinkly, sensitive skin unwinding but, nevertheless, confining the figures on translucent horizontal planes. Gravitating toward the orifices of the site as if to make a getaway -- exiting around doorways, flying 60 feet above to inhabit the skylight, hovering over lintels, scattering close to the floor or hugging a wall crevice – the linear, printed athletes, African, and Aboriginal figures congregate or work their way towards the light: skylight rays determining their placement at various times of day.

Above the threshold, blue and red maenads banish the burly centaurs from the space, with a flourish of blue and red ink merging into a purple/violet. The Celtic Sheela-na-gig is printed like a burnt-umber stone relief, changing mysteriously into a chthonic, primordial fertility figure repeated along the edge of the floor. Alighting and echoing lightly at eye-level is a barely discernable hybrid Egyptian Nut/Etruscan She-Wolf with truncated linear arms or legs, splayed and reconnected like a Nut figure from a burial tomb (*Birth of the Sun*, north wall burial chamber of tomb of Rameses VI, c. 1150 B.C.E., Valley of Kings, Thebes). The hybrids with raised arms or legs could be giving birth or hurling headlong like an acrobatic Etruscan dancer from a Tarquinian tomb painting, as in *The Tomb of the Bulls* (c. 540). Solidly opaque and fierce, Artemis oversees all, perched along the rim of the skylight. The ancient Greek Dildo Dancer,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

schematicized in profile, reappears in public space holding curved (unpenetrating), double dildos making an elliptical rhythm as she bends, dancing her way earthward toward the conjunction of floor and wall. Syncopated, she is repeatedly printed in varying shadings and opacities along the edge of the floor, circulating in the viewer's space. Disconcerting in their non-programmatic scattering, like insects or ghostly spirits fading in and out seemingly at will, the figures impinge on the viewer's space (one's perception of a culturally determined "space" surrounding the body), declaring a slippery domain of figural representations (out of context, differing in scale from one inch to twenty inches high) skirting around and within an ambiguous ground. The figures' cumulative presence around the viewer changes the perception of the space: the figures seem to glide into our space, or fly into cloud-like upper reaches, or descend, disappearing into hollows or folds in the walls. The ground/walls "read" as irregular spaces, couching a variety of figure-scaling and densities, high-key and low-key color relationships, unexpected fragmentations and croppings, light sources, flat patterning and recessive/projecting alignments. Figures in profile, en face, and in three-quarter view mingle.

The complexity of mixing frontal, profile, and three-quarter views sets up an intriguing conundrum for the viewer in deciphering images; it underscores representation's ambiguities. For example, the difficulty of registering consistent "readings" of frontal and profile images, even within a single culture's stylistic periods, was discussed by Meyer Schapiro in his essay entitled, "Frontal and Profile as Symbolic Forms" of 1973. He noted, for example, that in medieval art different modes (profiles and frontal figures) can be used within a single image to convey a duality of meanings or to mark distinctions, or to suggest different states of social reality or transcendence, a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

person or a personification.[38] Multiple meanings are embedded in these two types of presentation and exclude consistent explanations based on the qualities of profile or full-face view. A profile view may signal detachment from the viewer, belonging with the body-in-action in a shared space, analogous to employing the grammatical third person, "he" or "she," with an inflected verb. The frontal face may signal intent, a latent or potential glance directed at an observer, "I" or "you," existing in a space continuous with the viewer. Because Spero schematically generalizes, abstracts, and cuts images out of context, and then reinserts them -- several times photographically 'removed" and manipulated -- into a new context, the images can fluctuate among "I," "you," or "she," concurrent with their implied trajectories and contiguous spaces. The same frontal or profile image may be printed in many different ways, hinting at a fresh matrix of relationships in each site, so that a variety of directional movements is suggested, having the effect of free-for-all movement, and thus, a fuller possession of space: Spero's "new kind of freedom." The duality of frontal and profile (as in Tarot cards) may also mark a congruity between good and evil, sacred and profane, active and passive, living and dead: a yin/yang of continuous transitions and cycles.[39]

Spero's title for her integrated wall paintings at MOCA, *To Soar*, is an active (intransitive) verb, invoking movement in space. The artist characterizes *To Soar* as, "a release, an escape from the heaviness and gravity of one's own body."[40] While she expresses both heaviness and weightlessness, and those states in-between, by her choice of images, printing techniques, and compositional placement, the resulting impact leaves the viewer with the overall feeling of soaring. This feeling is compounded by the effects of the skylight and its height. Soaring above the viewer are vaulting figures suggesting a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

state of transcendence or of the imaginary, something beyond or before space/time/gravity. On site, the themes of transformation and transcendence are embedded in *To Soar's* composition, reflecting, perhaps unconsciously, underlying personal experiences transcribed and projected onto the installation format. Spero's battle with the effects of rheumatoid arthritis over the years caused her considerable, constant pain and shrinking mobility; it is not difficult to imagine the desire to escape one's own body via the act of losing oneself in the creative environment, which temporarily transfers focus outward and conjoins with her assistants' presence.[41]

The image of soaring to a transitional state is not an uncommon one in the case of psychic and physical trauma. Elaine Scarry, analyzing the body's reaction to relentless pain (experienced in extreme situations where torture is used or in diseases causing chronic pain), discusses the psychic stress and dislocation of pain's consequences. To the victim of such pain, according to Scarry's research, it is often the case that the contents of world seem cancelled out and a resulting path is cleared for "otherworldly experience."[42] What is *un*common is the artist's ability to abstract from the physical pain and accompanying sense of transcendence, a recognizable visual language. Spero's creation of the visual-symbolic representation transforms the personal into a broader witnessing that is uncannily collective. Whatever the specific combination of catalysts, the theme of soaring, on many levels (perceptual and conceptual), continues to be a leitmotif for Spero: "I'm going to use the height, as I did at MoCA [Los Angeles]. It was an installation of figures leaping from the floor to the ceiling, and it was called 'To Soar.' It's transcendent. I think about the Egyptians a lot in whose tombs there are these

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

wonderful, dancing, ritualistic figures. It's a celebration as they carry the souls into the afterlife."[43]

Sheela in the Museum

By mingling her scrolls and wall paintings in a dialogue at the Los Angeles MOCA, Spero saw the potential to reinterpret this strategy at another contemporary museum in the summer of 1989: The New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York's SoHo district (Figure 48). Spero's traveling retrospective exhibitions in the British Isles (London's ICA, Edinburgh's Fruitmarket Gallery, and Derry's Orchard Gallery) in 1987 and in the U.S. and Canada, from 1987 to 1989 (Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY; Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Albert and Vera List Visual Arts Center, MIT, Cambridge, MA; The Power Plant, Toronto), culminated at The New Museum, under the direction of Marcia Tucker, its founder. The artist was sixty-three years old and this was to be her first retrospective exhibition in the U.S., a belated recognition due perhaps to the remnants of ghettoization within the category of "activist-feminist."[44] Continuing and not abating her attack on the status quo from the periphery, Spero's retrospective at The New Museum afforded not only high profile recognition but an appropriate marriage of the artist's themes with the unique philosophy of the Museum. Spero could engage the architectural space of the Museum and establish an overview of her own work, ideas, and methods. She was able to historisize her work and "cannibalize" her own images in an environment supportive of open-ended experimentation.[45]

The New Museum of Contemporary Art opened its doors in 1977. Its Director, Marcia Tucker, had left as Curator of the Whitney Museum of American Art during the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

mid-1970s, when conflicting perspectives came to a head over the Museum's exhibition and collecting policies, which rarely featured women or minority artists. At the major New York museums – including the Whitney Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Guggenheim Museum -- in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Spero had participated in picketing and sit-ins, and in writing petitions to address these issues of representation. Tucker, as a curator at the Whitney, had sought to diversify the Museum's focus to include contemporary work in new media, and to expand the roles of women and other socially/politically excluded groups. Her establishment of the New Museum was a utopian-inspired project, fueled by the growth of alternative and cooperative spaces, to establish a new kind of contemporary museum dedicated to art as a living and vital social force extending beyond the artworld and into the broader culture. In its organizational and management structures, Tucker sought to manifest an anti-hierarchical, collaborative administration, democratized and anti-authoritarian. Tucker brought the energy and ad-hoc quality of both the artist's studio and a wider community activism into the museum via exhibitions, educational programming, performance, and new media. While collecting contemporary works, the Museum's purchases would be deaccessioned cyclically, after a designated period of time, to encourage continuous renewal. Spero's retrospective exhibition followed solo exhibitions that year (1989) of the work of Christian Boltanski, Robert Colescott, and Annette Lemieux, among other artists. Spero's own philosophy, political activism, and artistic structuring dovetailed with the Museum's parallel qualities. The Museum's loft-like SoHo space with Ionic columns had a long, narrow gallery on the first floor with an exposed ventilation system -- its innards turned outward; a divided space on the second floor with a mezzanine is maze-like or collage-like in structure.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Compounding these conjunctions was the nature of Spero's unusual two part exhibition, which Mira Schor, a painter and co-editor of the journal *M/E/A/N/I/N/G*, described in her review of the two shows: "A curious anomaly of scheduling caused the retrospective exhibition *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950* at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York to unfold in two overlapping installments, befitting the strong role a transhistorical narrative of women and violence – materially unscrolled across museum walls – has played in Spero's work."[46] In addition, the architectural space and anomalous, bifurcated installments emphasized the collage-like effect of Spero's presentation and working methods as well as the concept of ephemerality, heightened by the contiguous scroll/wall painting format. *Torture of Women* and *Notes in Time* anchored the two parts by continuous showing, with the first installment including works from the 1970s and 1980s, and the second including the *Paris Black Paintings* and the *War Series* as well as the *Sky Goddess*. Schor went on to discuss the exhibition's display: "In the second installment of the retrospective, the goddesses danced out from their frames. A burbling, transgressive laughter filled the museum. Cut-outs of Sheela, opening her sex, mischievously floated on the ceiling and ventilation ducts above. On the walls works done directly for political causes also defied the aesthetics of museum installation."[47]

Spero directed her crew to print colorful, stray, relief-like Sheelas under the Museum's postmodernist clerestory windows and on crisply defined lintels, corresponding to Sheela's traditional placement, presiding over all, warding off evil. Silhouetted and tattooed Aboriginal and African figures slithered up the smooth classical columns (with their own Ionic hairdos), refusing to become classically proportioned

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

caryatids bearing the load. Instead, the diagonally charging figures appeared to put the column into a spin. In their placement, they are technically grotesques; the figures pun the harmonious classical decoration found on elements such as pilasters and domes, splaying the common morphology of humans, animals, and plants. Consciously un-classical and subversive of order, Spero's figures crept outside onto the entrance's scaffolding, later to be painted over. But the ghostly images stubbornly resurfaced, leaving traces.[48] The printed figures were sparse, but sprang up unexpectedly in what seemed like strategic guerilla tactical movements, mocking aesthetic taste and decorum in a humor that did not lack self-deprecation.

Critic Lawrence Alloway had noted years earlier the basic structural characteristics that hold true for Spero's wall installations:

> She organizes her work on the basis of clusters and unexpected tangents. This loose array is partly the result of dispersal and partly of the scalar similarity of the elements, as in writing. The effect is sometimes centripetal [sic], as if the discrete marks were flying apart or slipping away at random. But this is deceptive. Her stretched web of correspondences can be compared to avoidance patterns... relationship does not depend here on the visual criterion of complementary parts in a higher unity. Her works are patterned, not on the basis of formal unity, but on antagonistic relationships and evasive action.[49]

Spero's figures' spasmodic, decidedly centrifugal motion outwards exploits threshold spaces. It highlights transitions: margins, doorways, corners, arches, ceilings, niches, beams, ruins, nether spaces at the edge of disappearance, the thresholds between the real and imaginary (accentuating the wall itself as a threshold).[50] Symbolic of beginnings, endings, and rebirth, these thresholds present the possibilities of the void, and as Spero herself once remarked, "the ease and violence of passage between the natural and the supernatural."[51]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

As with her solo exhibition installed at the MOCA in Los Angeles, Spero integrated framed scrolls and paintings, scrolls push-pinned onto the walls, series of works hung salon style (floor to ceiling), and scattered, wall-printed images in the New Museum's galleries. She experimented with this perceptual matrix which demanded much concentration from the viewer in its shifting scale and sign systems, expanding and contracting borders and frames. Once again, Spero echoed an all-encompassing, large-scale collage -- with its vertical grids, associated with transcendence -- and horizontal grids -- linked with discourse -- punctuated by invading figures, fragmentation, elisions, cyclical interconnections, and ideographic meanderings. Spero's "capacious sign system," as Alloway termed her images (whether text or figure), was expanded to include trespassing wall images, which often mimicked the slithering, sliding movements of the extended tongues of her Egyptian-derived snakes inhabiting her scrolls, or the shed snake-skins' borderless transparency.

Elaborating the distinctive characteristics reappearing throughout Spero's dense oeuvre, New York art critics from both the major 'newspapers of record' and alternative presses deemed the two part retrospective a significant art-world event, signaling a change of status for the often ghettoized, feminist-activist artist. Thomas McEvilley wrote in *Artforum* of Spero's conceptual and formal contributions: "This strange intellectuality of Spero's oeuvre combined with its sensitive visual experimentation, its social activism alongside its delicate incorporation of linguistic elements into design, make this exhibition a kind of model of much that the esthetic of the 70s has left us of enduring value."[52] *Village Voice* critic Kim Levin ironically entitled her review of the retrospective, "Mastery Exposed." Levin pointed to Spero's defiance of formalist

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

assumptions, her violation or inversion of the axioms of dominant styles (Pop, Minimal, Conceptual), her refusal of the rectangle as support framework, her rejection of centrality and, oftentimes, color, and finally, her refusal of the center/edge dichotomy. Levin argued that Spero's scrolls and wall paintings reject notions of mastery, apparent coherency, and closed meaning. She emphasized that Spero had appropriated images and texts, worked with ideas of mechanical reproduction and historical feminist writings before the texts written by Walter Benjamin or Julia Kristeva became popular references for artists and theoreticians during the 1980s. Most important, Levin positioned Spero's artistic invention as prescient of movements touted in the high-powered commercial galleries of the 1980s, especially neo-Expressionism: "Her references to Artaud have been joined by Schnabel's, her depictions of mouths that spew tiny heads by Clemente's, her stick figures by Penck's, her alienated females by Applebroog's, her printed cut outs by Taaffe's."[53]

Michael Brenson declared in *The New York Times* that Spero had been segregated critically within the feminist niche for too long: "Spero is a far more inclusive artist than she is given credit for being."[54] Writing two separate reviews (Parts I and II) in *The New York Times*, Roberta Smith argued: "Nancy Spero's exhibition at the New Museum of American Art is not as extensive as the artist deserves, but for the time being it will do quite well." She went on to examine Spero's deployment of the printed-collage format and wall painting as "an ephemeral, even disposable beauty that subverts traditional expectations of weight, craft and permanence in art objects." Smith recognized that while Spero had presaged aspects of neo-Expressionism (minus its macho posturing) and nurtured the spirit of younger artists such as Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger and Cindy

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Sherman, "Spero's art is more global in scope and more explicit, forcing us to bear witness repeatedly...you have to keep moving...to get the whole story."[55] In addition, Mira Schor stressed that Spero's oeuvre clearly mocked the limitations of dichotomous essentialist/constructivist theory and its characterizations of a feminist "generation gap." Schor contended that Spero had carved a space "between essence and social construction" as well as "a crucial place in the history of painting."[56]

In the alternative newspaper, *Downtown*, Calvin Reid remarked on the broader historical perspective afforded by the scope and intensity of the retrospective: "These works detail the steady march of personal transformation and visual/social extrapolation from the individual drama of the alienated self-creator in the early works to the recreation of an international, epoch-spanning female visual persona in works of the 70s."[57] Reid pinpointed Spero's development of an "epoch-spanning" dramatis personae (or "cast of characters"), paralleling "personal transformation" with "visual/social" translations of form. Fortified by the expressive potential of moving the figure/ground relationship from her early discrete paintings to scrolls, and then, to wall painting, Spero could literally step out into the public space/arena, while expanding a symbolic language of poetic gesture and motion, commentary and analysis. Her figures' transformation within different contexts meant that relationships were always crucial.

The artist-critic Reid continued in his examination: "What fascinates me about her work (as a Black male artist) is its plea to our common humanity, through the shared brutality of men and women... Spero's women take on the weight of universality and critical optimism...It's clear that we've watched the artist transform herself as much as create art."[58] In the scrolls and wall printings, Spero had interwoven a network of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

correspondences: private, psychological space with public, dialogic space. Movement was inexorably tied to emotion, the figures' implied motion was equated with emotion, as if referencing Leonardo's discourse on the common etymology of these terms. In addition, Spero's slippery figure/ground dispositions on the walls made multiple axes and trajectories of approach available for the viewer: "You can enter her assiduously documented expanse of recorded knowledge at any point and learn something important about the people and world around you."[59] Reid suggests that in moving through Spero's installations of pictographic and ideographic forms, syntax and grammar are fluid, according to the viewer's motion. Strings of narrative stories and personal epistolary voices (manifest in either figure or text) are fragmented, and therefore continuously transcribed into the suggested motion/emotion of the figures in relation to each other and their ground. Reid contrasted these elements of Spero's approach to Mary Kelly's linguistically-based, constructionist, and non-figurative feminist stance evinced in works such as Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* (1973-1979): "Though Kelly's work seems something of a giant science project (although granted, one of breathtaking density), Spero's equally dense accretions exude the ardor of a troubled correspondent. Her scrolls declaim in psychic relief like a melancholy letter."[60]

Movement Embodied

In her scroll work, Spero had developed strategies for the re-presentation of embodiment, movement, and the flow of emotion as authentic modes of cognition rather than segregated as secondary realms from the "intellect" or "reason," as in the pure Cartesian model. Her exploration of architectural space surrounding the phenomenological body in her wall paintings helped propel her further out of the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

framework of modernist detachment, implicit in its formal obsession with framing and borders designed to isolate the viewer in a sovereign Kantian or Greenbergian vantage point. Instead, Spero's project and sensibility have a close relationship to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological discussions interlocking psychophysical space with "the space of exchange."[61] The philosopher described perceptual experience as an infinite unfolding of space by bodily movement, which comprises the emotional field. From Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological perspective, painting can be an embodied mode of knowing and being, an integration of perception, space, and "sens," or sensuous involvement. For him, the body enacts the world; the world is not a separate entity to be discovered "out there." Spatiality is an active inter-involvement of perception and the perceiver, a notion Spero fully embraces with the performative and viewer-activated characteristics of her wall paintings.

Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology is neither solely consciousness nor an independent existence "out there." Sharing the boundaries of the psychic and physical, space is necessarily social and relational. The world is thus apprehended from within its own fabric -- the body -- and the body is a crossing (chiasmus) of sensing and the sensed, the co-existence of the dancer and the dance, a theme of paramount importance for Spero.[62] Her absolute insistence on re-presenting the body -- especially the female body, and especially in the process of wall painting within architectural space -- parallels the phenomenological approach: "The refusal to represent the female figure, perhaps the incapacity to represent the female figure is a denial of the body... To embody is to give form."[63]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Embodiment in movement and gesture, connoting emotion and action, reside at the core of Spero's projects. Contemporary philosopher Martha Nussbaum has recently discussed emotion as a mode of cognition, positing that there is an intelligence of emotions.[64] For Nussbaum, emotions and compassion are not mere inner forces that hurl us about, constantly threatening to unseat reason: they are themselves modes of responsive intelligence that express our conscious and unconscious judgments about what we value and what we believe will promote the flourishing of our lives. Emotions reconnect us to the fact of our own neediness and dependence, and the interdependence on which all life depends. Spero's statements regarding her own oeuvre are uncannily resonant with Nussbaum's argument. Spero's intuitive use of gesture, relationship, and motion/emotion linked to the process of art-making, placed her approach in opposition to the aspects of "cool" reduction, disconnection, and ideistic logic of conceptual art, in particular, to those tenets specified in Sol LeWitt's succinct and often quoted position paper published in *Artforum*, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art."[65] LeWitt wrote that the authority of conceptual art was grounded in the idea or concept, whose primary characteristic was that "all planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair." Conceptual art aspired above all to be, according to LeWitt, "mentally interesting" and therefore necessarily "emotionally dry," furthering the perceived disjunction and exclusivity of intellectual cognition versus emotions: the "higher" cerebral functions divorced from the "lower" chaotic and unpredictable realm of feelings (LeWitt has modified this hard line, increasingly, since the 1980s). Spero fought any submission to an artificial hierarchy or division of intellectual/emotional spheres. She eschewed the notion of "pure" conceptual, or closed, reductivist formats: "that [i.e.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Conceptual and Minimal Art] was sleek, that was a skin to kind of cover any sort of emotional input that an artist would have."[66]

Spero's themes and strategies of embodiment and the foregrounding of perception and feeling were artistic concerns shared by her friend and colleague at A.I.R., Ana Mendieta. Mendieta, who died tragically in 1985, had been given a posthumous retrospective in 1988 at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, the year prior to Spero's retrospective.[67] The exiled Cuban-American artist, like Spero, searched for a symbolic language of gesture tied to feminist and critical perspectives on the dominant aesthetic norms of the time. Drawing from the burgeoning genres of performance, earthwork, and video art, Mendieta developed ritual experiences to recreate a dialogue between the landscape, culture, and the body in such works as her *Silueta Series* (1973-1984). Photographs and videos documented private ritual performances on site, which were then formatted in public spaces. Torn from her native Cuba as an adolescent, Mendieta saw her own rupture with her native land within an historical/political/psychophysical matrix as well as in metaphysical terms (i.e., reflecting the imbalance and polarity of the nature/culture dichotomy in masculinist hierarchies). Although the specific genres and techniques of their artwork were quite different, both Spero and Mendieta emphasized the possibility of reinterpreting new symbols for representing multiple aspects of the female body by reinterpreting ancient ritual and myth in order to decipher the new conditions of the present. Both artists aimed to refigure rites of passage and revive the metaphorical power of the transformative cycles in nature: life and death, growth and decay, body and spirit. The characteristic psychic intensity of their different oeuvres attests to the extremes of human rage and desire, materializing gestures of exorcism and laconic

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

lyricism usually allied with magic and the ecstatic arts.[68] Indeed, their affinity of spirit is disclosed in Spero's prose-poetry piece written in tribute to Mendieta, "Tracing Ana Mendieta," and in Spero's three separate wall installation/performances of her *Homage to Ana Mendieta* (1991, 1993, 1995), discussed below in Chapter Three.[69]

Rebirth of Venus

Spero, in fact, united many of these cyclical, transformative themes in her wall painting, provocatively entitled, *Rebirth of Venus* (1989, Figure 49 and 50), installed in the circular atrium and loggia doorways of the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany. As part of the international art festival *Prospect 89* – an inventory of contemporary art chronologically placed between the Venice Bienniale and Documenta in Kassel -- Spero was invited by curator, Peter Weiermair, to make a temporary installation in the contemporary space, which displays as well changing exhibitions of ancient classical, old master, and Modern art. Spero chose to print on the spacious skylight cupola, forming the atrium focal point of the Kunsthalle. After receiving materials from the curator, outlining the structure of the architectural space and its predominant kaleidoscopic, encircling glass atrium, Spero decided to expand on a theme she had premiered in scroll form at the University of Connecticut's Atrium Gallery in 1985, *Rebirth of Venus.*[70] Parodying Sandro Botticelli's famous Renaissance painting in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, *The Birth of Venus* (c. 1485), Spero recreated her own version of cosmic birth within this classically inflected, postmodern museum space.

In its symmetry, balanced proportions, and regular rhythms, the clean linearity of the Kunsthalle's rounded atrium reflects self-consciously on its classical roots in a post-modernist skin: white walls and concrete detailing, sleek columns, gunmetal-grey

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

framing the glass rectangles and clerestory windows, hints of crenellation and running dentils. The skylight dome issues concentric circles within loggia circles, articulating a form echoing a chambered nautilus or growth patterns, mimicking nature's efficient design. Light and shadow alternately fill or obscure the three-story space in continuous fluctuations of weather. The predominance of reflective/transparent glass and encircling white walls suggests the aspects of transcendence and ephemerality. This was the stage-set for a performance of the *Rebirth.*

Spero and her assistants, Samm Kunce and Matt Kovaleski, arrived a week before the opening reception with the artist's protagonists, her "cast of characters," which had been photo-transferred to polymer plates. Instead of the rigid zinc plates used for scroll work, Spero and crew used flexible polymer plates that responded to the odd shapes and irregularities of printing directly on walls. The Kunsthalle walls, slightly concaved due to the primary structure of the fitted-glass dome's shape, were made of heavy stucco with an abundance of sand incorporated, making for a pebbly surface difficult to print on and requiring saturation with turpentine.[71] French oil-based printing ink was rolled onto the surface of the polymer plates and pressed onto the walls with varying hand pressures and the aid of rounded objects. A three-story scaffolding was built on site to allow for printing near the skylight and clerestory windows.

Spero, Kunce, and Kovaleski communicated with each other by walkie-talkie, using one band for all communications. The three levels of scaffolding followed the concaved walls, making three concentric circles moving upwards, connected by vertical scaffolding, which traced wheel-like forms paralleling the metal spokes emanating from the dome. A vivid kaleidoscopic space resulted.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The artist had continued her preparation practices of reading and conceptualizing both alone at night in the studio and during the day, when she could engage in a dialogue with Golub, Kunce, and Kovalevski. Kunce and Kovaleski would print Spero's images by hand on various papers in a variety of colors and saturation levels, overprinting and underprinting, smudging and intensifying or obscuring forms. These test printings done in the studio present only an idea of what kinds of visual effects are possible. The multiple expressions and moods conveyed by inking and printing would be totally different in their inflection on site. The final choreography of figures was executed on-site, responding to structure and compositional elements of architecture and light, atmosphere and building function.

After a selection of her linear and half-tone images are transferred onto polymer plates and test printings are done, Spero chooses ink colors to be mixed on site. Discussions always follow, and a few plates are inked up on portable tables. Both Kunce and Kovaleski are professional artists and trusted collaborators in the process; they each bring to the overall project their own printing "touch" or "hand" as well as individual interpretations of Spero's ideas. Guiding her assistants' hands by words, gestures, and demonstration, Spero orchestrates the wall printing. Knowing Spero's aesthetic and techniques, her assistants anticipate compositional approaches, but spontaneous trial and error, and shifting, multiple perspectives are interwoven in the process. Spero thus sets up in the studio the conditions for the performative aspects which emerge on site, leaving the process open ended. The studio acts as a percolation, winnowing, and testing chamber in concert with dialogue; a rehearsal of sorts is performed. Directing the action in a public space gives life to the "cast of characters," establishing a temporary, non-narrative drama

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which responds to space and historical contexts. This method simultaneously creates, in its new form, a reinterpretation of the site and its symbolism. The overarching vision – the fragmented, run-on epic tale as well as the many individual characters -- are of Spero's making; the performances and interpretations within each new context are activated in conjunction with her assistants on site, as an integration of energies, techniques, and temperaments.

This orchestrated but collaborative performance has its origins in Spero's political and artistic practices developed in the 1960s. Her crucial experiences in the women's movement, the anti-war movement, the cooperative AIR Gallery and activist-feminist alliances, taught Spero that dialogue and collaboration were potent tools for education, expression, and transformation in the public sphere. Her working methods and political philosophy, acquired early on, evolved into an installation process for wall painting. This process begins in the studio, branches out into archives, museum collections and libraries, is realized within specific museum and public spaces.

The collaborative, dialogic, and visionary elements embedded in Spero's installation practice have a complex relationship -- often oppositional and subversive, but sometimes surprisingly complementary -- to the tradition of mural painting. Americanist art historian Francis V. O'Connor has recently described mural painting as a social art, highlighting communal rather than individual expression, an inherently political art with a cultural function.[72] According to this definition, Spero's wall paintings would seem to have parallels with the mural genre. But while traditional American murals generally supplied a symbolic support for dominant values, Spero's critical position links her with the Mexican muralists who were commissioned to paint murals in the U.S., such as Diego

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Rivera and Jose Clemente Orozco (Orozco was, and remains, a strong influence on Golub). Her scorn though for modernist heroic, masculinist authority, including Marxist authority, breaks sharply with Rivera's macho perspective and the ideological perspective of the Mexican school. Her approach lies closer to O'Connor's positioning of contemporary street graffiti as a new form of mural -- as a rejuvenation of the mural genre in a vital communal/political sense -- in the way graffiti transform and empower marginalized groups by means of images which originate from within that community, helping to redefine the community internally and outwardly, as a critique of the dominant culture. In addition, O'Connor maintains that this contemporary definition of the mural reinvigorates atelier and craft traditions which had been shunned by the heroic individual expression of Greenbergian Modernism. Spero's open, nomadic atelier workspace – in the studio and on site – includes working with and training assistants in printmaking and hand-printing methods, although these assistants have professional careers which encompass a variety of artistic genres unconnected to Spero's oeuvre. Thus, Spero's approach is a very personal reinterpretation of these methods and genres.

Spero also integrates or reinterprets other significant characteristics essential to the specific form of mural painting. As O'Connor emphasizes, murals create environments through which viewers move in real time and within an imaginative time set up by the artist's comprehensive vision. In Spero's case, it is a vision that is constantly informed by dialogues with assistants and changing perspectives within the installation site.[73] Muralists must consider orientation, scale, sightlines, light sources, and architectural elements which figure in conception and execution, aspects which producers of discreet objects are not obliged to consider. Wall paintings demand a mental/physical

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

construction of imagined space in all its dimensionality. Arising as well are the practical issues of logistics, technical difficulties, vandalism, the coordination staff and assistants, and the skillful negotiation with various communities. The artist engaged in wall painting (or making murals; O'Connor uses these terms interchangeably) must be capable of public action as well as private studio concentration. Spero's activist experiences gave her the confidence and the tools to act publicly within her new process-oriented art form.

On entering the Schirn Kunsthalle, Spero decided to emphasize the importance of the dome from which a new Venus would be reborn. The circle of the sky-light dome -- having no beginning and no end point -- traced a cyclical momentum of regeneration all its own and triggered Spero's formal articulation of her theme. At the integrative midpoint, the sky-dome implies both shelter in the womb-like cylinder of the atrium and the infinity of the light-filled sky or the dome of heaven: a richly layered cultural metaphor for the spirit or cosmos. Spero's reincarnation of Venus printed at the juncture between heaven and earth is figured by that goddesses original relationship to older fertility goddesses discussed in Chapter One: Ishtar; the Egyptian goddess, Nut, "Queen of Heaven"; and the Sumerian goddess Inanna. Instead of the Roman version of the Greek goddess Aphrodite, who floats passively on a seashell demurely covering-up her sexual attributes while exuding an innocence and idealized languidity, as in the Renaissance approach of Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*, Spero's athletic images run and leap, dancing in celebration around the circular cupola, and satisfying only themselves in open displays of pleasure.

Spero inverts the seashell motif: the mythology of Venus emerging from the foam gathered around Uranus's genitals when his son, Cronus, hurled them into the sea in a fit

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of jealous rage. Spero re-invests Venus with regenerative powers of life, death, and rebirth. As Jon Bird notes, Spero returns to an ancient characterization of a sexually aggressive and independent Aphrodite, the symbol for the merging of heaven and earth, as the artist's rhythmical placement of the goddesses nude figure's indicates.[74] Filling the silence left by the loss of collective mythological, psychic, and historical memories, sometimes violently erased by the duality stressed in patriarchal cultures (i.e. the Christian symbolization of Eve/Mary), Spero reanimates in a visual poetics the representations of epic tales and historical moments, chronicling what has been omitted.

In her choice of figures, printing orientations, and the emergent composition on site, the artist straddles centuries and manifests the gaps of women's recorded histories in diachronic time, while showing -- by image juxtaposition or elision -- the layering of myth and archetypes within everyday reality. Spero explains her re-presentations: "Usually these myths have very complex meanings, Sheela is birth and death, fertility and destruction. Artemis is huntress and healer. I find that interesting, because any human being is complex and has these different facets. Somehow these kinds of beliefs had lots of similarities in different cultures. And it does symbolize a kind of mythic strength and endurance of spirit."[75] Refuting the rigidity of reductive polar oppositions or dualities, and their borders, Spero's Venus bursts forth on the cupola walls, issuing from between the halves of a limbless and headless Inuit fertility goddess, printed in half-tones, giving the appearance of split stone. Running fully-frontal toward viewer is Spero's schematic, sienna-colored drawing of a naked and muscular African-American Olympian athlete at the moment of emergence from the Intuit icon. Venus's Graces surround her as a boisterous insurgency. Spero's Dildo Dancers are rhythmically repeated in cadmium reds,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

cobalt blues, and earth tones. Artemis (Diana, the healer, goddess of moon, night, and the hunt) holds vigil from the four quadrants. The Celtic Sheela-na-gig haunts the scene from just above the ledge, as though a pre-mythological version of Medusa, whose stare turns men to stone.[76] Appearing in rhymed syncopation, alternately opaque or transparent, are an African fertility totem with Medusa-like hair (originally a male figure; Spero will often change the gender of an image or make it ambivalent), a skipping or rope-jumping figure from *Notes in Time on Women*, and Aboriginal and African Pre-Historic figures careening over loggia doorways.

Spero's centrifugal arrangement of figures appears to move outward from the concentric cupola and loggia as if streaming from the outermost ripples on a pond's surface, responding to a skimming and falling pebble. The dome's framed glass windows, casting ribs of shadow and light at certain times of day, suggested to Spero the rhythmical intervals and overall patterning of the figures' paths. Material, reflected light and real shadow activate the flow of figure movement along the cupola wall, movement absorbed into a shifting composition. The artist also considered the figures' repeated reflections on the paneled loggia windows as doubling images (as in symbols on Tarot cards) and illusions of infinite space, highlighting the themes of transparency, reflection, and movement. The dome's ribbed, glass framework set within circles, as wheels within wheels, referenced for Spero's purposes, an endless motion symbolically representing eternity. The immaterial reflection and doubling resonated as well with the cinematic freeze-frame aspects first developed in her scrolls. Let loose within the cupola, the intervals of light and shadow, framing Spero's gesturing images and caesuras, imitated the interplay between repetition and temporal unfolding, as in Etienne Jules Mareys'

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

rotating disks and chronophotographs (which led ultimately to Thomas Edison's first experimental films).[77] Thus, regeneration and cyclical transformation are invoked in the very act of weaving together Spero's "cast of characters" within the structural elements of the Schirn Kunsthalle; the images appear to transmute during different times of day and night, partaking of solar and lunar cycles. The conjunction of these elements suggests continuous creation and refers to the contingent and the ephemeral, to movement and the embodiment of spirit.

Spero disrupts the ideal rationality of the architectural program by her irregularities of placement – her use of cropping and asymmetry – and the imperfections in printing techniques which she exploits, such as overprinting, purposeful smudging, and ghost images. And yet, at the same time, she deploys the regularity of the structural elements as a vital dialogic counterpoint, as a framework for her figures to respond to and thereby reorganize the visual perception of the site. The wall is both a literal, ground/field (incorporating actual light reflection) and an infinity (incorporating continuous, subtle weather and diurnal/nocturnal cycles). By destabilizing the museum space to refigure the experience and thematic meanings of the space, Spero disturbs implied order, hierarchies, borders, historical chronology, authorship, and normative historical narratives. She engages the space's physicality to inscribe spirit/matter and to reference the dynamics of the creative process itself. In addition, the erasure of the temporary installation, as one of the most important aspects of Spero's project, undoes the value of the art object and the museum's ultimate mission to house and preserve, allying her installation instead to ritual performance, repetition, and the embodiment of magical action. These aims rely on the viewers' imagination and movement through the artist's dreamscape, an integration of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

fantasy (imagination) and reality (history), creating non-programmatic, emblematic environments.

To affect the viewer's sense of scale, or the relationship of size to surroundings and the size of a human body -- that which affects "reading" and meaning -- Spero must take into account a three-way balance of wall size, mural size, and human scale. As O'Connor points out in his discussion of murals, this complex scaling is not like a pictorial scale with reference only to itself, as in easel painting. O'Connor identifies a "transactional scale" as a set of kinesthetic and optical relationships congruent with a human's height, reach of the arms, and scope of the eyes' range, approximately 8 x 12 x 18 feet. This transactional scale sets up an interaction, and in a real sense, a drama, between the work and viewer (a conjunction which the Abstract Expressionists tried to maintain). Spero's scrolls had violated the transactional scale by their vast length (200-plus feet) and their stacking into tiers which wound around the entire gallery's length. In her wall paintings, Spero extended well beyond transactional into "architectural scale." According to O'Connor, this scale depends on architectural contexts, such as the break up of surfaces into pediments, lintels, pendentives, cupolas, and the other details. The architectural context both determines and mediates the scale of a mural -- containing, editing, and affecting perception -- while remaining monumental and enveloping. By punning, mimicking, and breaking out of these architectural elements which exist on peripheries or thresholds, such as the classical frieze or a caryatid, Spero plays on, or points to, the concept of the transitional and on the "place" of decoration, a loaded, taboo term in high modernism.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Latin etymology of decoration refers to decorum, aptness, and decency, to classical tastes which Spero flouts or mimics with her images and their placement. But decorative elements may coalesce into patterns and frameworks possessing imagistic or iconographic implications, thereby carrying psycho-social implications which make these areas particularly useful to Spero's project. In addition, the artist often employs the grotesque, or hybrid images, as bizarre decoration in the technical sense, printed on architectural elements, as a double pun. Her figures frequently are plucked and altered from decorative motifs, such as the classical Greek Dildo Dancer, greatly enlarged from a one-and-a-half-inch figure on a vase to the size of a pediment frieze figure as seen from below. Spero's insertion of humor or parody, as "a song sung beside," in a comic imitation or a burlesque printed on a decorative element, heightens the characteristics of a diversity of styles which bring into relief specific casts of mind from different cultural periods. Indeed, she brackets and celebrates decoration in saturated or high key color juxtaposition, patterning, architectural punning, and appropriation of images from the decorative arts. She often confiscates decorative spaces in architecture, on the periphery, scattering sightlines from the thresholds or vantage points from the other floors in order to highlight the ways that meanings emerge or shift according to perspective. Integrating the temporal factors of viewer movement and the spatial factors of peripheral figuration printed on architectural elements, Spero's figures-in-context may seem alternately to condense or expand a sense of space/time.

Even if the viewer "reads" the wall paintings in a preemptive fashion, or as odd irregular decoration (or graffiti), unaware of Spero's visual puns or the general cultural roots of her images, the viewer's experience of space and scaling, architectural elements

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and light or shadow, is made self-conscious and altered by the artist's incursions. Merleau-Ponty has described the space that one is in the middle of as ineluctably woven within the flow of bodilfy action, as a "milieu" always unfolding.[78] Paralleling this phenomenological perspective in describing painting, the art historian Sven Sandstrom (quoted by O'Connor in his mural discussion) defines the physical/psychological experience of murals specifically by their "milieu-creating effect," linking his definition to Merleau-Ponty's theme and extending it to architectural space.[79] Marrying this phenomenological approach to an interpretation of the "milieu-creating effect" within a feminist psychoanalytical methodology, Luce Irigaray has posited a gendered territory inscribed in space by studying the development of play and language in young girls.[80] A close reading of Irigaray's analysis provides another useful perspective from which to analyze Spero's wall paintings and the artist's re-presentation of space.

After studying the skills developed by young girls at play during the stage of language acquisition, Irigaray noted that the girls' complex games with their dolls involved a great deal of lavish attention paid to organizing a symbolic space around themselves and their dolls. To establish an identity separate from the mother, a subjectivity and difference from the mother, little girls tended to act out relationships in a territory they demarcated around themselves in a whirling or spinning dance.[81] The process of building relationships in this space was paramount, and not the object (doll) as object or mastery over the object. Without sliding into a reductive, simplistic polarity of essentialist/constructivist argument, Irigaray contrasts her findings on groups of girls with Freud's characterization ('normalized' from a group of male children) of the concentration on games of "fort-da" (gone/there), a controlling of the object: by casting

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

objects away (disappearance: "fort") and then reeling them back in (return: "da") to master the fear of the loss of the mother and signal difference, to control the object of desire while deferring immediate gratification in a "great cultural achievement."[82] Irigaray found instead that the girls' gesturing in the action of dance, "an action designed to master," was a way for the girls to cope with the absence of the mother.[83] Creating both a display space and a defensive space, the girls' gendered movement was a gestural attending to process rather than to an object; it was a milieu-building action.

Describing the activation of space, Irigaray writes: "Girls do not enter language in the same was as boys.... They enter language by producing a space, a path, a river, a dance and rhythm, a song... Girls describe a space around themselves rather than displacing a substitute object from one place to another or into various places."[84] According to Irigaray, the girls' dancing establishes a territory of their own in relation to the mother, who is always too familiar and too close. Girls tend to reproduce around and within themselves an energetic circular movement that protects them from abandonment, attack, or loss of self. They explore this gestural territory, testing its limits, and establishing a creative and performative space of actual making and doing. Irigaray's psychoanalytic theory suggests that the artist's gestural play in the studio, the physical negotiation of work by the artist, may be an echo of this early embodiment. The viewer, according to this reading of language and identity development, is an important player in the process of gendered movement because the territory, or milieu, is described by the performed body gestures. The physical gestures of the artist in the studio, the gestural structures embedded in work, and its re-figuration in an installation are the ways in which this milieu is made public, engaging the viewer.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The impulse to articulate this performative space in the motion of a whirling dance, re-inscribing the course of movement and rhythm, is particularly useful when examining the *Rebirth of Venus* at the Schirn Kunsthalle. By her own definition, Spero's oeuvre has always been a "language of gesture and motion," from the time of her first lithographic print in W.S. Hayter's class, *Dance,* to her animated hieroglyphic scrolls encircling the walls at AIR Gallery.[85] Plotting a gestural display space attending to process and context rather than the object became all the more urgent once her figures jumped out of the scrolls and onto walls. As Spero declared during that crucial transitional year, in 1987: "I take my space in other ways – by striking out horizontally and making a different kind of environment. So I'm making my claim as well, but in another way."[86] She was describing her "other" way of claiming space in contrast to the masculinist framework of Golub's "enormous and aggressive" paintings, which partake of the heroic scale of traditional history paintings: those great machines, perfected in the early nineteenth century.

At the Schirn Kunsthalle, Spero struck out horizontally and vertically, organizing a symbolic space around the cupola and its thresholds, emphasizing the spinning motion and circular movement outwards, which figuratively reinforced her themes of rebirth and the cyclical. The installation performance of Spero and her crew, and the walking viewer, trace this spatial expression of insatiable psychological need, always restless to reshape what is lost. The body's movement and orientation helps organize the perception of the surrounding space in a continuous extension of its own being. As a manifestation of inevitable transience, the installation performance becomes 'itself' through its disappearance in time. Spero emphasized this ephemerality: "Wall installations

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

disappear. It will be gone. That's why I talk about it in show-business terms. It's a performance. The show goes up and the show goes down; they strike the set."[87]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Notes

[1] Spero continues to make works on paper, which she sells through her commercial gallery affiliations, while simultaneously creating and planning her ephemeral wall painting installations. Her works on paper include vertical and horizontal scrolls and single panel printed and collaged works.

[2] See Pamela Wye's "Freedom of Movement: Nancy Spero's Site Paintings," *Arts Magazine* 65, no. 2 (October 1990), 55-58.

[3] Jon Bird quotes Spero in "Nancy Spero: Inscribing *woman* between the lines," *Nancy Spero,* exh. cat. (London: ICA; Edinburgh: Fruitmarket Gallery; Derry: Orchard Gallery, 1987), 32. While Spero has never taken any kind of dance classes herself, she does occasionally attend modern dance performances and practices weekly Iyengar yoga-based physical therapy with Genevieve Kapular, a teacher of Iyengar yoga, anatomy, and Alexander Technique in New York.

[4] See in Spero's library, Maurice Bessy, *A Pictorial History of Magic and the Supernatural* (New York: Spring Books, 1970).

[5] See Yosef Garfinkel, "Dancing and the Beginning of Art Scenes in the Early Village Communities of the Near East and Southeast Europe," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 8, no. 2 (October 1998): 207-237.

[6] Garfinkel is quoted by John Noble Wilford in "In the Dawn of Society, Dance was Center Stage," *The New York Times*, February 27, 2001, F1-F2.

[7] See Garfinkel's conclusions regarding the cognitive aspects of dancing scenes in "Dancing and the Beginning of Art Scenes," 227: "Dance symbolized rituals in the cognitive map of the early village communities. Religious experience was obtained through the ecstatic, high-energy activity of dancing. Furthermore, the most commonly depicted elements of dance are not related to costumes or bodily positions but rather to: a) the arrangement of the figures around the circumference of round objects (pottery vessels and cylinder seals), and b) the identical appearance of the figures in a scene." Spero's repeated figures are not identical, they have subtle or bold differentiations in their repetition.

[8] Keller Cushing Freeman, "Self-Portrait of the Artist: Conversations with Nancy Spero," *Nancy Spero: 1993 Emrys Journal*, exh. cat. (Greenville, SC: Greenville County Museum of Art, 1993), 12.

[9] Julia Kristeva discusses the etymology of the Greek "polis" with regard to Hannah Arendt's political philosophy, which was characteristically anchored in corporeal experience and bonds with other people while observing and acting within the polis, as opposed to detached, solitary rumination, isolated from the larger society, in Julia Kristeva, *Hannah Arendt,* trans. Ross Guberman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 71-81.

[10] Quote from the artist's statement in "Nancy Spero," *Art Views, A Special Art in Architecture Issue* 14, pt. 2-3 (Spring/Summer 1988), 67. This artist's statement is quoted originally from her interview in "Nancy Spero," *Gallerie 1988 Annual* 1, no. 1 (June 1988): 128-131.

[11] Patricia C. Phillips, "Infiltrations: Complicated Clarity," *Art Views,* 14, pt. 2-3 (Spring-Summer 1988): 25.

[12] See the classic text on memory and architecture, Francis A. Yates, *The Art of Memory,* 3rd. ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); see also, Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Mary Carruthers, *Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Mary Carruthers, "The Poet as Master Builder: Composition and Locational Memory in the Middle Ages," *New Literary History,* 24, no. 4 (Autumn 1993): 881-904.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[13] Yates, 4.

[14] Artist's statement in "Nancy Spero," *Art Views*, 67.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Illustration number 14, in Spero's copy of Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves* (New York: Shocken Books, 1975), n.p., the cup is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

[17] Spero's Egyptian Acrobat originated in a relief from the Karnak Temple, Egypt, and was reproduced in a book in Spero's library, Paul Hamlyn, *Egyptian Mythology* (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1965), 39, 57, 94.

[18] Robert Edwards, ed., *The Preservation of Australia's Aboriginal Heritage, Australian Aboriginal Studies*, no. 54 (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1975). Spero's images derive from illustrations of the spirit figures on a rock shelter at Nourlangie, Alligator Rivers in Arnhem Land, illustrated on the cover and in plate number 19, 56. See also in Spero's library, Marius Barbeau, *Totem Poles: Anthropological Series, No. 30* (Ottawa, Canada: National Museum of Canada, 1950); Edna Gunther, *Art in the Life of the Northwest coast Indians* (Portland, OR: Portland Art Museum, 1996).

[19] Spero's library contains a book very important to her since the early 1960s: Jane Ellen Harrison, *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (New York: Meridian Books, 1962). Spero has marked and annotated passages in Harrison's text, quoting passages from "Iphigenia Among the Taurians," by Euripides, in which the Greek chorus chants, "For Artemis who healeth women's pain.," 116. Harrison notes that Artemis is linked in patriarchy to Apollo, but her origins were in great mother traditions of matriarchy. As Lady of the Wild Things, she resided over rites of passage, the transit from one state to the next, and was an image of change itself, 229-231. The Heraea, the sixteen women who wove the robes of Hera, oversaw the cycles of festivals and games, 482-486. Themis absorbed the attributes of Gaia, as the Delphi Themis is another form of Gaia, who foretells the future. She was oracular and was the embodiment of the power of earth, above and before Zeus.

[20] Mary Carruthers, *Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 55. See also in Spero's library, the heavily annotated copy of Arturo Stenico, *Roman and Etruscan Painting* (New York: Viking Press, 1963), especially Chapter One, page 28, illustration 62: a tomb painting RUVO from the fifth century BCE, reworked by Spero for her "cast of characters."

[21] See Jean Chevalier and Alan Gheerbrant, "Water," *A Dictionary of Symbols*, (1969) trans. John Buchanan-Brown (New York: Penguin, 1996), 1081-1089.

[22] Dena Shottenkirk, "Dialogue: An Exchange of Ideas Between Dena Shottenkirk and Nancy Spero," *Arts Magazine*, 61, no. 9 (May 1987): 34.

[23] Nancy Spero, "Sky Goddess, Egyptian Acrobat," *Artforum* 26, no. 7 (March 1988): 105.

[24] Notes from author's interview with Spero, 5/12/99.

[25] Jennifer Fisher and Beth Seaton, "WaterWorks," *Parachute* (September/October/November, 1988): 52.

[26] See Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995).

[27] Nancy Spero, "Sky Goddess, Egyptian Acrobat," 104.

[28] Author's taped interview with David Reynolds in his studio, 3/7/00.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[29] The exhibition included panels from *Codex Artaud* (1972), *Hours of the Night* (1974), *In Memoriam: Nibya Sabalsagaray* (1976), *H.D. Fragments* (1979), *Torture of Women* (1981), *Vietnam/Irradiated* (1986), *Pakistan* (1985), *Sheela and the Dildo Dancer* (1987), *Sky Goddess/Egyptian Acrobat* (1987-1988), and *The First Language* (1981).

[30] The Woman's Building in Los Angeles, named after the 1893 Woman's Building at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, was opened in 1973. It developed from feminist art education initiatives by Judy Chicago at Fresno State College and Miriam Schapiro at California Institute of the Arts. In 1973, Judy Chicago, graphic designer Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, and art historian Arlene Raven founded the Feminist Workshop, offering comprehensive art education programs and activities for the burgeoning women's community. The Woman's building was also home to galleries, theater companies, bookstores, travel agencies, coffeehouses, and the National Organization for Women. In 1991, it closed its doors, having succeeded in increasing the regional and national visibility, recognition and integration of women artists though its programs and the high visibility of affiliated artists, such as Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro.

[31] Richard Koshalek and Mary Jane Jacob, "Acknowledgments," exh. brochure, *Nancy Spero* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, October 4 – December 31, 1988), n.p.

[32] Email correspondence with Americanist scholar of *japonisme*, Dr. Laurel Lyman, 7/26/02, on the subject of the philosophy of yin/yang and American interpretations of Eastern philosophy and visual art. See also, Donald Kuspit, "Concerning the Spiritual in Contemporary Art," *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985,* exh. cat. (Los Angeles and New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Abbeville Press, 1986), 321-322. Different from the Eastern yin/yang philosophy, the Golden Section is an ancient Greek concept. It is a formula developed in 600 B.C.E. by the Greek philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras to define the concept of natural harmony. Pythagoras decided random chance alone was not enough to account for the blending of strength and beauty found in plants, animals, and minerals. He proved that the balance between form and function which is the basis of nature's designs is the result of precise mathematical relationships. In architecture, art, and the natural sciences, the concept has since become the foundation for achieving classic, pleasing proportions. As a compositional device, it avoids bilateral symmetry while preserving the semblance of harmonious order. The Greeks used the Golden Section to create the Parthenon. Nearly 2,000 years later, the concept took hold in Europe where Chartres and other Gothic cathedrals are highly ornate expressions of the Golden Section. During the Italian Renaissance, Leonardo Da Vinci brought the same formula to sculpture and painting. Le Corbusier, in the twentieth century, deployed it in his modernist International Style buildings.

[33] Ibid.

[34] See especially those issues cited in Chapter One: Lawrence Alloway, "Art," *The Nation,* April 2, 1973; "Nancy Spero," *Artforum,* (May 1976); "Art," *The Nation,* September 25, 1976.

[35] Michael Brenson, "Why Asian Culture Answers the Needs of Western Artists," *The New York Times,* April 20, 1986, 31, 38. Brenson had just written a review of Spero's *Sky Goddess* installation at Josh Baer Gallery, "Nancy Spero," *The New York Times,* March 28, 1986, C. 30.

[36] Brenson, "Why Asian Culture," 38.

[37] Osvald Siren, *The Chinese on the Art of Painting* (New York: Schocken Books and Hong Kong University Press, 1963), 97.

[38] Meyer Schapiro, "Frontal and Profile as Symbolic Forms," *Words and Pictures: On the Literal and the Symbolic in the Illustration of a Text,* (Paris and The Hague: Mouton, 1973): 37-49.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[39] Spero had been studying Tarot cards (Chapter One) early in her career and the interpretation of Tarot card readings is dependent on their positioning and contextual arrangement; infinite possibility surrounds the individual cards out of context (a parallel to Spero's individual images). Spero interprets this basic idea in her wall installations beyond the scrolls; there is no single way to systematize or read the cards. They harbor meanings escaping a singular interpretation.

[40] Pamela Wye quotes Spero in her article, "Freedom of Movement: Nancy Spero's Site Readings," *Arts Magazine* 65, no. 2 (October 1990): 56.

[41] See Jonathan Scott Lee, "Bodily Transcendence," *PsychCritique* 2, no. 3 (1987): 271-291.

[42] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford University Press, 1985), 34.

[43] Lois Tarlow quotes Spero in "Nancy Spero: Fierce and Savage Imagery," *Art New England* 11, no. 3 (March 1990): 38. Spero's library includes Carol Andrews edition of *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead*, trans. Raymond O. Faulkner (London: British Museum Press, 1972), with underlined passages on transitional states and magic spells, 65, 77, 102.

[44] In 1983, Spero had three simultaneous solo exhibitions in New York galleries (which represented a retrospective of her works) at A.I.R. Gallery, *Black Paintings, Paris, 1959-1964* and *Codex Artaud, 1971-1972;* Gallery 345/Art for Social Change, Inc., *War Series*; Art Galaxy, *Paintings, 1979-1983.*

[45] Tarlow quotes Spero, 38: "I make drawings from the media or from art history or I cannibalize my own drawings."

[46] Mira Schor, "Nancy Spero," *Tema Celeste*, no. 22-23 (October-December 1989): 72.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Irene Sosa, film and video artist and Spero's video documentarian, is quoted by Keller Cushing Freeman in "Interview with Irene Sosa: Filmmaker," *Emrys Journal* exh. cat. (Greenville, SC: Greenville County Museum of Art, 1988): 30.

[49] Lawrence Alloway, "Nancy Spero," *Artforum* 14, no. 9 (May 1976), 53.

[50] See Robert Storr's, "Nancy Spero: Central Issues -- Peripheral Visions," *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950,* 45-60.

[51] Ibid., Alloway quotes Spero, 52.

[52] Thomas McEvilley reviewed the Syracuse venue of the Spero retrospective, "Nancy Spero, Everson Museum of Art," *Artforum,* 26 (May 1988): 153.

[53] Kim Levin, "Mastery Exposed," *Village Voice,* June 6, 1989, 88.

[54] Michael Brenson, "Nancy Spero," *The New York Times,* March 28, 1986, C. 30.

[55] Roberta Smith, "Collages That Seek to Fuse Beauty and Feminism," *The New York Times,* May 26, 1989, C.24. See also, Smith's review "Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950, Part II," *The New York Times,* July 7, 1989, C. 27.

[56] Schor, 72.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[57] Calvin Reid, "Nancy Spero: A Stream of Female Consciousness ," *Downtown*, no. 157, August 23, 1989, 10A-11A.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

[61] For a fuller discussion of the philosopher's phenomenological theory in relation to painting and cinema, see Brendan Prendeville's essay "Merleau-Ponty, Realism and Painting: Psychophysical Space and the Space of Exchange," *Art History*, 22, no. 3 (September 1999): 364-388. See also Galen A. Johnson, ed., *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting* (Everson, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1993). The volume contains Merleau-Ponty's three principal essays on visual art, with critical texts.

[62] See Jon Bird's discussion of Spero's conceptualization of space as it relates to Merleau-Ponty and Julia Kristeva, in particular, in "Dancing to a Different Tune," *Nancy Spero* (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), especially, 61-63. See also the feminist critique of Merleau-Ponty in Jeffner Allen and Iris Marion Young, eds., *The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989). Feminist critiques of Merleau-Ponty concern his discussion of human sexuality in a gendered language, a masculinist point of view, to be sure, in which he emphasizes embodiment in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945). While Merleau-Ponty's early work has its masculinist limits, the erotic and the sensual/emotional in the broadest sense is embodied in his writings. See also a key feminist critique by Griselda Pollock, "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity," *Vision and Difference* (London, 1988): 50-90.

[63] Tamar Garb interviews Spero in "Nancy Spero," *Artscribe International* no. 64 (Summer 1987): 62.

[64] Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[65] Sol LeWitt, "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art," *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (June 1967): 80; the following quotes by LeWitt are also from page 80.

[66] Horsfield quotes Spero, 5-6. See also, Amy Schlegel's analysis of Spero's connections and differences with the conceptual/linguistic works of Hans Haacke during the same period, "Victims and Institutions: Spero's and Haacke's Models of Activist Art," in her Ph.D. dissertation, "Codex Spero: Feminist Art and Activist Practices in New York Since the Late 1960s," (New York: Columbia University, 1997), 213-248.

[67] *Ana Mendieta: A Retrospective* (November 20, 1987 - January 24, 1988) was organized by Petra Barreras del Rio, Director, El Museo del Barrio, New York, and John Perreault, Visual Arts Director, Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Staten Island; coordinated for presentation at The New Museum of Contemporary Art by Lynn Gumpert and Karen Fiss.

[68] See Spero's library, especially, Maurice Bessy, *A Pictorial History of Magic and the Supernatural* (New York: Spring Books, 1970); Maurice Tuchman and Gail Scott, *Fifty Tantric Mystical Diagrams* (Los Angeles: Ahmanson Gallery, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1969).

[69] Nancy Spero, "Tracing Ana Mendieta," *Artforum* (April, 1992), 75-77. *Homage to Ana Mendieta* was performed in 1991 at the Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, Germany; in 1993 at the Whitney Biennial; and at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art in 1995.

[70] See Robert Storr, *Nancy Spero: Rebirth of Venus*, ed., Edit deAk (Kyoto Shoin, Japan: Art Random, 1989).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[71] Samm Kunce reviewed the entire working process in a taped interview on 3/29/00. Spero added details in an interview from which notes were taken on 8/15/02.

[72] Francis V. O'Connor, from his unpublished lecture, "Introduction to the Mural as an Art Form," in his series of seven lectures, "The Mural in America," delivered at the National Academy of Design in 2002, n.p.; http://members.aol.com/FVOC.

[73] Ibid; O'Connor quotes David Alfaro Siqueiros's remark about murals in an interview the art historian did with the artist: "Murals are to be seen with the legs."

[74] Jon Bird, "Dancing to a Different Tune," *Nancy Spero* (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), 71-76. Bird emphasizes that Spero's Venus also descends from the Egyptian myth of origin symbolized by Isis and Osiris, the children of Nut, the sky goddess. Separated at birth, Isis sought to unite with her brother. Isis found Osiris floating in the Nile and revived him with her wing beats. In the myth, brother and sister merge and have a son; Isis and Osiris resume the cycle of birth and death and rebirth, articulating the psychic longing for maternal reunion.

[75] Sally Norman quotes Spero in, "Feminist Artist Dares Herself and Viewers," *Choice, The Coloradoan*, March 22, 1990, B 1, 6.

[76] Spero replays by inversion and parody the sexual power battles of mythology resulting in the emergence of the patriarchal gods who subsumed the roles of the older fertility goddesses to become creator gods during the Greco-Roman period. Spero's library contains Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths*, v. 1 (London: Penguin Books, 1960), with annotations on the goddess Venus, 22, 73.

[77] See Naomi Rosenblum's discussion of Marey and Muybridge's experiments with these early "motion pictures," in *A World History of Photography*, Third Edition (New York and London: Abbeville Press, 1997), 250-257. Spero's cinematic references in her formal presentation allude to the early roots of cinema.

[78] Prendeville, "Merleau-Ponty, Realism, and Painting," 378.

[79] Sven Sandstrom, *Levels of Unreality: Studies in Structure and Construction in Italian Mural Painting During the Renaissance* (Upsala, Sweden: University of Upsala, 1963), 15.

[80] Luce Irigaray, "Gesture in Psychoanalysis," *Sexes and Genealogies*, trans. Gillian C. Gillian (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 89-104.

[81] Ibid., 97.

[82] Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," *Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, vol. 18 (London: Hogarth Press, 1950), 14-15.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Irigaray, 99.

[85] Jeanne Siegel, "Nancy Spero: Woman as Protagonist," *Arts Magazine* 62 (September 1987), 13.

[86] Spero is quoted by John Hutchinson, "Nancy Spero/Leon Golub in Conversation with John Hutchinson," *Circa*, no. 36 (September – October, 1987): 30.

[87] Spero is quoted by Kate McQuaid, "Boys Keep Out," *The Boston Phoenix*, February 10, 1995, Sec. 3, 11.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter Three: Fragmentation and Recreation, Wall Paintings, 1990-1994

Soaring Confrontation

In 1990, Nancy Spero realized a turning point in her response to architectural scale and thematic development when she traveled with her nomadic atelier to Smith College Museum of Art in Northampton, Massachusetts.[1] During her previous installation, *Waterworks* (1988), printed at Toronto's Water Filtration Plant, Spero had created two starkly contrasting installations which responded to two separate architectural spaces and functions; she interpreted the physical and metaphysical realities of political terror within an abandoned tower laboratory, while in the adjoining water filtration building, she depicted a fantastic lyrical procession. In the Smith College Museum's skylight gallery, Spero imbricated a poetic text with the graphic energies of a collective witnessing of savage political murder, which she then proceeded to integrate with representations of the struggle for transformation and healing rebirth. The aim was not synthesis or resolution, but rather a discomfiting participatory recognition of history, offering a site of encounter with memory, collective commemoration, and redemption in action.

At Smith, Spero and crew installed *To Soar II* (1990, Figure 51) -- a primarily celebratory wall painting which developed concepts the artist had first introduced at MoCA in 1988 – emerging from an adjoining wall printed with *Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore* (1990, Figure 52), based on Bertold Brecht's poem, "Ballade von der 'Judenhure' Marie Sanders" (1934-1936), in which the poet presaged the Holocaust by dramatizing one victim's individual story. During the four day installation of Spero's project, she directed her assistants, Samm Kunce and Valerie Sivilli as well as a class of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ten art students from the College. In addition, film and video artist, Irene Sosa, documented aspects of the process on site.

Edward J. Nygren, Director of Smith College Museum of Art, had invited Spero to make a temporary installation on a theme of her choosing in the three story high Dalrymple Gallery before its walls were scheduled to be torn down during the Museum's asbestos abatement project planned for the end of 1990. Spero was eager to examine the spatial/temporal implications of the toxicity and demise of the old walls and their transformation and renewal. Her exhibition, scheduled for February through May, 1990, would represent the transition point from past to present. Mimi Hellman, an art historian of French eighteenth century decorative arts and culture, acting as guest curator at the Museum, followed up on Nygren's invitation to Spero when the Director left the Museum in 1989 to assume another position. Hellman proceeded to organize Spero's installation process scheduled for February 1990, leaving the themes to Spero.

Hellman was intrigued by Spero's contemporary reinterpretation of historical decorative elements within architectural space, and more generally, how the design and usage of material environments shape perception, thought, and the dissemination of ideas embodying larger epistemological concerns. Working with Hellman as co-curator was Barbara Kellum, a scholar of Etruscan and Roman art as well as film history. The professional fields of inquiry and broad cultural interests of both art historians dovetailed creatively with Spero's approach and her conjoined historical/mythological themes. Kellum, in particular, had analyzed the construction of ancient spectacles and the varieties of visual experience inhabitants would have encountered as they moved through the spaces and streets of Roman Pompeii during the celebration of cyclical festivals. She

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

was interested in the complexity of visual perception in time, as audiences absorbed an array of shop signs and graffiti in public festivals, marking social and ritual time by participating in performative processions. Both Hellman and Kellum recognized in Spero's installations a refiguring of symbolic fragments emblematic of past ceremonies or popular spaces embedded within contemporary cultural environments, producing an altogether new visual lexicon. All three women were in pursuit of recovering the experience of images-in-context, including images whose historical meanings had been essentially lost.[2] For Spero, this pursuit meant the spatial/figural wedding within architecture of poetic engagement and historical understanding as well as phenomenological apprehension and intellectual commitment. In the act of orchestrating the printing process on Smith College Museum's soon-to-be-destroyed walls, Spero imprinted an enlivened "resurrection" with the aim of closing the gap between the past and the present.

Spero's two part installation in the austere modernist gallery spanned two adjoining walls, forming an L-shape and occupying a space which included an open metal stairway descending to an expansive rectangular wall topped by a skylight. The artist chose to work first on the open stairway wall to install *Marie Sanders*. The stairway wall represented the transitional periphery, a wall conducive to Spero's collage aesthetic. In addition, the stairway invited an intimate tactile experience and a close-up reading of the *Ballad* text, which the artist structured in four stanzas to be deciphered as one walked up or down the stairs and, in addition, offering extended sightlines from the mezzanine. Another doorway entry point located on the wall opposite presented a distanced sighting of *Marie Sanders,* affecting the shifting scale of the word-image installation. Spero thus

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

constructed a paradoxical joining of the private and public spheres in the "reading" of image/signs from both close-to and from a distance. *Marie Sanders* could be "read" as billboard-scale or as newspaper-scale, depending on the viewer's location. The stairway wall was layered underneath its whitewash of paint with wallpaper from previous exhibitions. The palimpsest quality of layered time appealed to Spero, and when the exhibition came down, the curators peeled away the wallpaper, lifting the whole cloth of the *Marie Sanders* installation in the process. The curators presented the slice of strata to Spero as an archaeological fragment before the asbestos abatement began. This archaeological slice remains rolled up and stored in Spero's studio.

Located across from the gallery stairs was a densely colored and precise rule-and-compass painting by Frank Stella from his *Protractor* series (begun in 1967): an elongated black arc, the height of the doorway, enclosing symmetrically fanned wedges of rich primary red, blue, yellow, and black. His shaped geometric canvas occupied the wall space as the literal support of a flat, modular abstraction, declaring the expanse of the field and its own structure. Parallel with his modernist philosophy at the time, Stella's *Protractor* purged the wall of any notion of a psychologically private space; the facts of the object's formal elements were its meaning as a non-expressive, deadpan object, discretely cordoning-off ambiguous or emotive content.[3] As if to engage in a polemical dialogue with Stella's rejection of Abstract Expressionism's tragic/transcendent manifestos, while mocking the precepts of Stella's reductive formalist aesthetics from the sixties, Spero mounted her epic cycle on the opposite wall: a comprehensive, eschatological embodiment, inserting a surfeit of poetic allusion, raging emotion, and political invective via image/text/ground interaction.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Returning to the integration of text for the first time since *Notes in Time* (1979), Spero selected blocky, uppercase newsprint letters for Brecht's four stanza ballad, "Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore," to be printed in conjunction with an image of an anonymous victim of Nazi atrocities. The artist sought to invoke the reverberations of history and to conjure a face, voice, and presence for an anonymous victim:

> I chose a poem by Bertolt Brecht because of his straightforward, unflinching look at the human condition – the poem's intensity and evocation of the horror of the times, 1934-1936 in Nazi Germany... I first heard the poem on National Public Radio. A year or so previous, Leon gave me this photo of a victim of the Gestapo he'd found in a French photo-magazine – he frequently finds images for me in doing research for his own work. The photograph is chilling – but if one doesn't know that it was found on a member of the Gestapo it could be perceived as pornographic titillation. She looks ashamed, violated, bound, her head averted, a heavy rope around her neck. When I heard the poem I was greatly moved by its power – and was struck how the photo of the Gestapo victim amplified the poem, sexual abuse and victimization of woman.[4]

In relentlessly throbbing, martial reprises, Brecht's ballad tells the tale of the prelude to an execution of a young gentile woman at the beginning of the Nazi era, who was driven through the streets of a German city with a shorn head and wearing only her slip. To the roll of drums, she was made an example for all to see of the enforcement of the anti-Semitic Nuremberg laws and the mass savagery to come: hung in public for having had sexual relations with a Jew. Spero was haunted by the impact of the voice reading Brecht's ballad on the radio, and when Golub found the image from the photo-magazine of a bound, naked woman which had been discovered hidden in a coat pocket of a Gestapo officer, she knew that the two, the ballad and the photographic image, were linked in historical resonance and would reinforce each other in juxtaposition – visually, contextually, and viscerally. By pairing on a mural scale in a disjunctive and audacious

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

way, the boldly lettered ballad as if it were being shouted out-loud, and the tabloid-like magazine photograph, enlarged and impinging, Spero brought together powerful synesthetic forces with the conjoining of two sign systems.

The artist had deployed this image/text strategy in her earliest prints and paintings as well as in her long scroll exhibited in an adjoining gallery at Smith College, *Notes in Time* (1979): a compendium of women's history through time which wove visual and verbal passages, stressing their discursive, graphic, and dialogic qualities. In these scrolls Spero quotes H.D.'s (Hilda Doolittle) epic poem "Helen in Egypt," an ironic retelling of the myth which inspired Euripedes' play "Helen of Troy." H.D. wrote of Helen: "How she was rapt away/by Hermes, at Zeus' command,/ how she returned to Sparta,/ how in Rhodes she was hanged/ and the cord turned into a rainbow."[5] H.D. composed the story of the martyred Helen on her own terms, retelling the ancient myth based on the historical event of the fall of Troy which had depicted Helen as a sexual scapegoat, "a witch," "a Hecate," a whore.[6] The recurrent portrayal of Woman (representing 'the feminine' as a totality) as violently subdued sexual/political victims within the mythic patterns of warring patriarchal authorities is bracketed, analyzed, and retold by H.D, and recast by Spero in her scroll's image/text conjunction. With H.D. as a catalyst, Spero sought the means to reenact the processes of acknowledgement, redemption, and healing in the refashioning of ancient paradigms. The artist had revealed and refigured these historical/mythical continuities in *Torture of Women* (1976), in which she referenced the martyred figure of the Mesopotamian great mother goddess Tiamat, who had been brutalized, slain, and then glorified in the epic poem, *The Tale of Gilgamesh* (ca. 2400 BCE). In her painting from 1958, *"At Their Word the Sick Woman,"* Spero had related

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the fate of the Sumerian goddess Inanna/Ishtar under the triumph of patriarchy, with Joseph Campbell's translation: "At their word, the word that tortures the spirit,/the sick woman was turned into a corpse./the corpse was hanged from a stake."[7] Once again, Spero revisited the persistence of gendered originary scenes from mythology depicting the 'inevitability' of masculinist gods and their supremacy over the female deities, implanted deeply within the cultural imagination, and replayed historically and in the realities of daily life. Refusing a disembodied history, the artist injects presence via poetics and graphic image, activating limbs and voices in recovering and confronting particular histories which mirror cultural mythologies.

In the image/text conjunction of *Marie Sanders*, the four Brecht stanzas follow the zigzag configuration of the stairway descending downward, printed in motled black typeface as though headlines from a hand-printed newspaper. Spero's printing of the repetitive rhythm of Brecht's choral refrains on the stairway wall synchronize with the stairway steps and the sound of the viewers' own steps, tapping on metal stairs: "The price is rising for butcher's meat./ The drumming is now at its height./ God alive, if they are coming down our street/ It'll be tonight."[8] The irregularly printed, ghost-like black-and-white image of the bound and gagged victim floats beside the first stanza and above the second – as a visual foretelling. Her head turned to the side, she wears only a headband, beaded necklace, half stockings, and Mary Jane-style shoes. She is bound tightly and brutally with a breast forced up, ropes cutting into skin. Originally a detailed photographic documentation of torture and humiliation preceding murder, Spero inverts the coat-pocket context of a glossy, eroticized image of sexual sadism (including fetish objects such as stockings and Mary Jane's) by bringing the image out into the light as

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

though a captured, nightmarish apparition traced from a fading document. As starkly recognizable evidence, Spero's printed image is equally suggestive of its own making; it hovers, spirit-like, de-eroticized by its hand-printed imperfections and partaking of Brecht's poetics by its proximity to the text and its degree of abstracted materialization as opposed to pictorial verisimilitude.

Spero reinforces Brecht's poetics not by harnessing despair or abjection but rather by reinforcing his call for awakening and action: "The price is rising for butcher's meat./ And Streicher's speaking tonight./ God alive, if we'd an ear to hear his speech/ We would start to make sense of our plight."[9] Spero reacted to Brecht's poem, "Ballad of Marie Sanders," as a transcription of the spoken voice *and* as a written graphic text in relation to the Museum's architectural space. She knew that Brecht's ballads were not meant to sit on a page but were intended to be performed and listened to; she first heard the poem read aloud before seeing it on the printed page. Brecht wrote that most of his early ballads were to be accompanied by himself on the lute or the guitar.[10] Spero thus "performed" the transcription of Brecht's ballad, directing her crew, the museum staff, and the students, and enjoined viewers to recreate sound, movement, and memory.

The horrifying theme resides in *tension* with the sung "Ballad," a traditional popular form. Spero's printed depiction of a woman to be executed in front of the populace for the purpose of terrorizing them into submission exists in tension with the printed, hectoring body of words on the wall; Brecht's reprise repeats the words "drumming," the sounds of feet "coming down our street," "yelling," "speaking," "ear," "hear," "speech" – words resonating with orality. The artist amplifies the distinctive oral and performative quality of the ballad with her collaborative hand printing techniques in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

conjunction with her structuring of Brecht's stanzas: pacing them down the stairs in imitation of the repetition and rhythm of footsteps down the street, menacing and heavy, of both executioners and victims. Spero conceives a version of Brechtian "Epic Theater" with her gestural and collaged compositions, retelling the fragmented stories and piecing them together in new contexts. She re-contextualizes the purloined text remnants and images, while at the same time continually shifting the roles played by her protagonist-figures in each new site.[11] The image-signs inhabit space, dependent on the shape and characteristics of the field and format as well as the image-signs' relative proportions and the axes of perspective from which they are viewed; these elements act in concert with expressive printing techniques that influence the viewer's 'reading' of the image represented.[12]

In addition, the artist's formal means point to the characteristics of the ballad genre as a popular, politicized form: a short, oral narrative focusing on a single crucial episode (the murder of Marie Sanders) or situation (the carrying out of the Nuremberg Laws and spread of Nazi terror) whose action is decisively directed toward its catastrophic conclusion (the foretelling of enslavement and genocide).[13] Spero therefore simplifies the elements of her composition as a parallel to Brecht's plain, conversational language with a single line of action, emphasizing the precipitous, intense dramatic action; we are not told about things happening, we are shown them happening. Dialogue and repetition loom large, heightening the emotional impact of the climax: the witnessing of the penultimate moment, whose conclusion is offstage (from the Greek for "obscene," meaning, "off stage," as in Oedipus' blinding himself off stage). Brecht's "Ballad" splices together three voices: those of the narrator, and Marie Sanders, and the chorus or

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

populous in reprise. Marie Sanders has an intimate and innocent voice: "Mother, give me the latchkey/It can't be so bad/The moon is the same as ever."[14] The Balladeer possesses an omniscient and contextualizing, rather than an individual voice, as the deputy of the public: "In Nuremberg they made a law/At which many a woman wept who'd/Lain in bed with the wrong man."[15] Spero synchronizes her figural/graphic stylization with Brecht's poetic stylization, which depends on the repetition of the chorus as the singer's effort to discharge emotions not exhausted in one saying, as having the potential to resonate into the future via other voices. The ballad form employs repetition (in reprise, rhythm, and rhyme) as a mnemonic device to embed crucial facts in the memory, since the song's listener cannot turn back a page to refresh herself about a fact. Spero utilizes repetition of figures (in rhythm and rhyme) in a similar manner, by reprinting a figure differently within each new context to create fresh interpretations of the stories or poems: the artist reinterpreted Brecht's *Marie Sanders* throughout the 1990s in museums in New York, Paris, Amsterdam, and in Brecht's native Germany. For Spero, the performance (singing the song) is reenacted and ritualized: "It's another kind of exorcism. I had to carry that message. In a way I'm a courier, carrying these images from the past and present, a kind of scribe."[16]

The ancient and medieval roots of the scribe's and transcriber's vocations are linked to Spero's layered themes. She had earlier studied illuminations by the medieval nun Ende in *The Beatus Apocalypse of Gerona* (975 AD, Spain), which informed the content, techniques, and formal qualities of her first scrolls and smaller works such as *Licit Exp* (1974), *Explicit Explanation* (1974) and *Gratian's Dictum* (1979).[17] The model of the "codex," embodied in Spero's *Codex Artaud* (1971), was historically infused with

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

orality and performance, with its open-ended construction of history as an ongoing succession of disjunctive events.[18] Stitching together in quires the transcriptions and translations (scribal interpretation and interpolation) of oaths, protocols, charters, and forgeries as well as Biblical Scriptures, the scribes codified in order to satisfy contemporary custom and historical desire. According to medieval art historian Robert A. Maxwell, seals and monograms were ceremoniously affixed to codices as signs of testimony to the visual aspect of transcribing. The scribe and illuminator's performance was a ritual repetition, authenticating the translation as a spoken witnessing for the future testament of past actions. The symbolic moment of conveyance in speaking, hearing, writing, and viewing combines in the codex to validate the acts and render them authentic. Reenactment and memory are essential for breathing life and presence into the forms of oral, written, and visual testimony.[19] Therefore, the scribe is not merely a vessel but an interpretive performer and orchestrator. The repetitive and cyclical nature of visually restaging the performance of conveyance achieves a renewed reenactment of the past through a new performance of writing, led by the scribe.

The invocation sparked by naming the anonymous martyr "Marie Sanders" and depicting her martyrdom, the violence done to the body, confers a contemporary political resonance to the visual tradition of representing The Passion: suffering, execution, and redemption. Brecht's ballad/text conjoined with the photograph becomes a continuous, synesthetic resource for Spero's enactment of histories created by multiple layers of allusion: twentieth century history, and specifically, the rise of fascism and the Holocaust; ancient goddess mythology; and Christian symbolism. Conjured with Brecht's repeated choral chants, death and rebirth are implied in Spero's re-presentation of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

martyrdom, which eventually leads the viewer to a caesura of white space, punctuated by yet more victims, "irradiated" figures of Asian women (first depicted in the *War Paintings)* creeping along the "underworld" bordering the floor. This cluster of victims introduces the viewer to a transitional point in the installation, introducing *To Soar II* on the adjoining wall. The image and tactile presence of the body in *Marie Sanders,* as the scene/site of transcription and transformation, pieces together an authenticating witness through time. And the transition from one stage to the next (death to rebirth) extends from the viewer's shifting of attention around the corner of the wall, after the descent to the bottom of the stairs -- to the sight straight ahead of crawling, and then, sprinting and flying figures.

Rising upward and mirrored across the skylight area toward the open arms of the Egyptian goddess Nut are the Olympic runner, pre-historic dancers, rope jumpers, and acrobats, printed in varying degrees of density, repeated and overlaid. This reinterpretation of an Ascension or rebirth (with no disjunction or bifurcation of body/soul) is a reflection of Spero's longstanding concern with the implications of nature's cycles represented in the images and legends of ancient mythologies. In addition, she employs the literal architectural elements of the space (in the stairway and skylight) and their figurative symbolism (in the creative imagination) to move the viewer through cycles in time; the artist adopts an Aristotelian notion of time as motion through space, as physically unfolding, and not as duration.[20] Spero insists on shifting the ground (horizons and axes) from under the viewer's feet, while her gesturing images and caesuras imitate the interplay between repetition and temporal unfolding. Her installation's coda (or prelude, depending on the viewer's path) is a bevy of flickering, linear dancers/rope

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

jumpers, invading from the doorway threshold and poised for action; their active gestures invert the ominous instrument of the death of Marie Sanders, the rope, by fashioning it into an invisible play thing. The rope is essentially turned in on itself, suggested as centrifugal movement circling the dancer.

Spero often updates and refashions traditional genres such as the ballad and the mural by alternately disrupting or miming their formal qualities, while at the same time maintaining an intimate connection to their spirit. She highlights the paradoxical and the seemingly polarized; Spero's juxtaposition of the tragic/ecstatic and the public/private as two sides of same coin, always inextricably woven and yet oscillating, is a hallmark of the artist's installations, whether realized in the most conservative of museum spaces or the most volatile of political situations. Staging these transformations through the representation of the female body contingent on the architectural space, Spero performed her next installation, *Four Cities Project, Bogside, Derry* (1990, Figure 53) in a highly charged atmosphere, an environment of incendiary territorial boundaries: the City of Derry, Northern Ireland.

The Wall

TSWA Fours Cities Project (1990) was organized by Derry Arts Coordinator, Sinead McSheffrey, and the Director of the Orchard Gallery, Declan McGonagle (subsequently the Director of the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin) as a large-scale installation project sponsored by the Orchard Gallery, the Derry City Council, and TSWA (a public arts organization supported by Television South West). The event brought together international artists – Spero, Dennis Adams, Melanie Counsell, Ilya Kabakov, and Moira McIver – to create temporary installations responding to various aspects and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

functions of the City: a factory, a school, the site of an old public housing project, and the city walls. After researching the history of Derry and gathering images and texts forwarded by McGonagle, Spero chose to work both inside Derry's Well-Woman Centre and outside on the walls at the Junction of Westland/Blucher Streets in the Catholic Bogside neighborhood, linking together, once again, private and public spheres. Her crew included assistants Samm Kunce and Valerie Sivilli, and the filmmaker Irene Sosa as well as three young artists from the Derry community.

Spero and her key assistant, Kunce, had anticipated the anxiety of having to work within a tense political climate in a city known for violent confrontations among Catholic/Republican/Nationalist and Protestant/Loyalist/Unionist factions. The crew's experiences during the weeklong installation immersed them in non-stop, running dialogues with residents (even after work hours, in the local pubs). Spero and her crew observed firsthand that the on-going war, or the "Troubles," as they were called, meant that the entire community had directly confronted (especially between 1969 and 1994) a series of continuous personal and political catastrophes. As Spero and Kunce recalled, very young British troops with high-powered machine guns were stationed on every street corner, and these troops surrounded the installation sites from the first day of work, closing in to watch as the crew worked from underneath a tarp (to protect them from continual rains) which had been thrown over a truck used to hold their supplies and equipment, polymer plates and inks.[21]

In addition, Spero was asked to present ahead of time the plates she was planning to print on the walls to the local representative of Sinn Fein (the All-Ireland political party which aimed for a socialist 32 county republic). Seeking to know the specific

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

compositional elements and overall design, as was the usual practice with local mural artists, Sinn Fein was taken aback when Spero presented no outlined plan; her general theme was to honor the political actions of the women of Derry and to respond to daily encounters with the site and dialogues with the City's inhabitants. She explained her working method and presented some printing plates (although a great many more plates were brought to the site). While the representative looked askance at the artist's signature Celtic Sheela-na-gig in an attempt at censorship, Spero did print a version of the ancient, eroded stone relief, Sheela, in black and red. Via Sinn Fein, the British troops, local artists, and residents, Spero learned about the evolution of the mural tradition as it grew in response to the "Troubles" in Derry.

Outdoor murals had become a potent means for all factions of the community to demarcate and take control of their territory and to display allegiance. Projecting a space in which to convey symbols representing the struggles for power, murals also contained spaces in which to imagine a destiny within a genuinely popular practice.[22] The theatricality of the events and the idealized figures characterizing these local murals are presented in a clear-cut, iconic, unambiguously ordered structuring, carrying an easily recognizable message. With the goal of animating political awareness on a large scale, the Derry wall muralists, mostly male, dominate key locations along the streets with aggressive visual and textual ideological statements. The murals' social contexts are the immediate geographical area as well as the psychological milieu of communities with their heightened political/social consciousness. Thus the murals are understood to be immediate barometers of political ideologies and the current state of political beliefs.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Contemporary murals in Northern Ireland trace their origins to 1969, when the first barricades were erected in Catholic Bogside, Derry, to exclude the forces of the British-backed state. Painted on a gable wall in St. Columb Street appeared the Republican admonition, still freshly repainted regularly: "You are now entering Free Derry." Emblematic of collective resistance, it is the focal point for Republican commemorations, declaring a public space transformed by political imagery. On "Bloody Sunday" in 1972, British troops fired on Catholic protesters in an escalation of the "Troubles." The first Derry murals on the Catholic/Nationalist/Republican side emerged in 1981, at the time of the Hunger Strike carried out by Republican prisoners in pursuit of their demands for political prisoner status. Led by Bobby Sands, the Republican prisoners refused to wear prison uniforms and clothed themselves instead in blankets. The graffiti which had adorned the streets by the end of the 1970s grew to become more intricate and was accompanied by symbols such as flags and coffins. By the spring of 1981, hundreds of murals sprung up depicting the hunger strikers and symbols associated with the IRA paramilitary forces (PIRA or the Provisional Irish Republican Army, an illegal Republican military group). Sands' death in prison during the Hunger Strike assured his martyrdom, as he was elected to the British parliament under the Sinn Fein banner. It was during this election that the Derry murals became infused with elaborate symbolism and proved an effective means of coalescing a cultural base of nationalism.[23] Most of these murals (by both Republican and Unionist factions) were located in working class districts and on gable ends and garden walls in shared communal areas. Early murals depicted primarily fictitious male members of the IRA as guardians and protectors from British troops, but the paintings' themes expanded to include historical heroes and heroines,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

rebellions and potato famines, Irish culture, and the themes resurrection and peace. Eventually the murals engaged in more broad protests against international repressions, prison conditions, and media censorship, and in support of anti-imperialist struggles elsewhere in the world. Today the communal walls contain both images of violence and retaliation as well as non-violent hunger strikers and symbols of peace: the phoenix rising from the ashes or a lark caught on barbed wire. These contemporary mural images are more encompassing than their predecessors of the range of human emotion and the possibilities of political action.

Spero discovered in her talks with many women – those passing by and in pubs -- that their experiences, aspirations, and contributions had frequently been neglected in analysis or subsumed into composite pictures which were based on information collected predominantly from men.[24] Though the lives of Irish women were often constrained by traditions defining women in terms of their responsibilities to home, family, and church, Spero found the majority of local women articulate, politically sophisticated, and activist oriented. The idealized media projection confining women's roles to those of "natural peacemakers" (citing 1976 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, Betty Williams and Mairead Corrigan) elided the concept of women's activist involvement in making that peace at the constitutional level, in drafting policies and implementing social justice and economic equality with the aim of reforming the established, male dominated structures.[25]

This was the context in which Spero worked as her goals grew to incorporate images and poems of women's political and non-violent actions, honoring and commemorating them, while allying these specifically local events with longstanding international human rights issues and trans-cultural symbols from her "cast of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

characters." The wall at the Junction in Bogside consisted of the squared gable end of a pitched-roof housing complex and a rectangular extension wall topped with barbed wire and a satellite dish. Although Spero preferred eccentrically shaped and challenging peripheral spaces, the gable wall seemed to her too reminiscent of the huge rectangular, "heroic" transactional spaces (O'Connor's term) favored by (male) Abstract Expressionist painters. For Spero, the wall configuration "announced that you were going to make a big, important statement; it was too obvious."[26] Indeed, most of the local mural artists had sought out uncomplicated, clean, and squared spaces on dominant walls. Spero decided to counter this aesthetic approach by using as her starting point the random spray-painted graffiti areas which she left on the wall. She integrated the strata of old images and writing underlying each successive image as a way to point to the temporal as well as to the marginalized, to inevitable transience and change.

The first image printed on the gable wall originated from a captioned newspaper photograph from 1981 of a procession of women marching at the funeral of Bobby Sands, with the woman in the foreground, whose face is obscured by ink, carrying a cross. Printed in black ink, its impact is that of a darkened etching raked by light. Floating above and toward the right corner of the wall is a block-printed poem, "Dionysia," by contemporary Irish poet Roisin Cowman, tersely condensing verbal images of public executions, Bedlam, dismembered hares, circuses, clowns, and a theater stage. Printed in ochre and sienna, classical Roman mourning figures congregate as a chorus line well above eye level, veering left and right in procession, while ancient Greek dildo dancers-sans-dildos skip across, toward the left, to form a sporadic arch, enclosing a craggy black, relief-like Sheela, ensconced on a red earthen-color square. Flanking left is

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

an eight-line poem, "Gang-Bang, Ulster Style," by Linda Anderson, which links the notorious Long Kesh prison with the suffocating conditions of the "larger prison" of Northern Ireland's barbed wire cities. As a parallel visualization of the themes of chaos and imprisonment in Cowman and Anderson's poems, the central area of the wall is empty of figures. In order to form a pinwheel caesura, Spero created an eerie void from the centrifugal motion of images and texts, flowing outward to the perimeter in a series of fractured and scattered vignettes. While three (and a half) figures crouch or crawl along the bottom of the wall, nothing "holds" the space as a cohesive, unified environment; nothing is anchored by gravity or coherent perspective. Spero diffused the various axes in a kind of guerilla tactics of subversion and dispersion, the life-saving tactics of avoidance and surprise. The artist's composition is infused with the tactile sensations of an uprooted and occupied people, bracketing the spaces between the figures as "territory."

The sense of a new Thirty Years War, never ending and continually changing in character, is implied by Spero's seemingly non-structured tactics and her references to street graffiti and heraldry (as an identification of factions in battle). A muscular Athena is surrounded by "survivors" in a moment of retrenchment: a repeated newspaper image of Derry women banging garbage cans ('Derry bin-bashers' alerting the community to the arrival of British troops) and a woman shown protesting strip searches in Derry prisons. Parallels to Christian martyrdom and The Passion as well as to pagan rites of mourning and transition are refigured and mingled. Spero was aware (through the texts and images McGonagle sent to her) of the reductive ways in which images of women had been used in the unambiguous mural iconography of both factions of the community -- consciously and unconsciously -- as tools for projecting ideological positions. Catholic

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

tradition had elevated the figure of Our Lady and often presented her as the Virgin Queen of Ireland, while Protestant traditions focused on biblical women who exemplified the "good wife:" the good woman who selflessly devotes herself to home and family. Nationalists frequently depicted the warrior maid of Celtic mythology as an allegory of the (victorious) spirit of Ireland or as a poor, suffering old woman (passive victim).[27] Spero eschewed binary, one-dimensional, and idealized roles, and presented instead a mix of a wide range of human responses. She sought out the ambiguous underside and layered remnants of emotions, traces of a dialogue between individuals and the symbolisms on Derry walls.

For some local artists and critics alike, Spero's departure from the normative mural style and composition was disconcerting. Her interruptions of narrative flow and her open-ended collage-like processes were "read" as confusing. The Belfast art critic Fionna Barber wrote in the contemporary art journal *Circa*: "It was difficult to perceive any connection between the figures in such a large space with the result that they tended to look more like sporadic graffiti... The gable end had formerly carried political murals and its change in function produced a hostile reaction from many local people, although others in the community were sympathetic."[28] Spero's application of a discursive graffiti aesthetic in response to the wall (already containing local street graffiti) seemed too close for comfort to the actual state of upheaval entrenched in Derry, so much so, that Barber did not consider Spero's mural a proper "political mural," even though the content represented clearly political events and texts. The mural's style, scaling, and structure – its centrifugal movement, use of white space as a container of meaning, and its general fragmentation and ambiguities -- were all strategies of an "outsider" language. Spero

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

intermingled public and private spheres with no easily recognizable, dominant ideological message. Most important, Spero was trespassing on prized territory; she did not comply with the recognized propaganda value of a highly politicized space. By alluding to the manipulation of representation in her printing techniques and by abstracting photographic reproductions (from newspaper clippings) and thereby pointing to the illusory nature of verisimilitude, Spero had made even the familiar slogans of posters seem provocative.

Spero's strategies alluded to Brecht's notions of "Epic Theater," which sought to shock the spectator with riddles, undermining a seamless verisimilitude in order to awaken a questioning of assumptions. This disorientation and disruption necessarily involved participation by the viewer with an aim toward a transformation of consciousness. Brecht's strategy was to oppose naturalism as well as illusionism ('suspension of disbelief'): all the harmonies of traditional theater which offered spectators comfort and familiarity in a classical unity of time, place, and action. Thus Spero deploys multiple voices (poems and texts) and stylized gestures (figures), collage techniques of fragmentation, repetition and rhythmic printing, an un-unified sense of time (allusions to past and present) and disjunctions of space (the viewer is "afloat" and uncertain of orientation of figure/ground). Spero does not write a "prescription" for healing and the understanding of meanings via specific political ideologies.

Making tangible by layering ancient and contemporary tropes in a provocation of new contextual possibilities, Spero and crew printed a circulating/circulatory installation of discursive images integrated within the interior space of Derry's Well-Woman Center, a counseling center for women recovering from physical and mental illnesses. This

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

"second half" of the *Four Cities, Bogside, Derry* project represented the flip-side of the jarring fragmentation of territory and traumatized spirit on Spero's public Bogside mural. A seating area nestled in an entryway, leading up to an encompassing stairway hall at the Well-Woman Centre, carried Spero in a more intimate, centripetal, and meditative tack toward healing, unity, and the reinforcement of well being. On the crème-colored walls and their niches, Spero celebrated the lithe flying and sailing body of the Egyptian Acrobat in rhythmic repetitions, orchestrating the dancing figures, soaring from around corners and entering as though through the windows. Artemis, repeated in red and brown linearity, resides on the threshold cornice as a healer of women's pain. From the interstices burst the dildo dancer-sans-dildo, Aboriginal spirit figures, contemporary dancers (originally painted by Spero years earlier), a Sheela, and prehistoric female forms from Africa. In contrast to the themes and structuring of the Bogside gable wall mural, here, Spero was concerned with echoing the enfolding spaces of the Centre and the feelings of warmth and wholeness. In a private enclave whose function was mending, Spero chose not to emphasize the overtly local/political but the cultural/historical continuity of a diverse community of women though time. The artist responded to the dynamic structural and affective forces embedded in the Centre to weave together the mythological and historical. Acting as visionaries of ecstatic rebirth and possibility as well as chroniclers of war and apocalyptic violence, Spero's "paper dolls" are choreographed and printed to perform as shape-shifting dramatis personae in dialogue with specific architectural spaces, scattering sightlines from thresholds and divergent vantage points.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The artist, her crew, and the volunteers who helped with printing became active performers in a highly charged "political theater," engaging the larger community in dialogue. Shocking encounters for all participants had ensued during the installation, and after it was completed. A confrontation with traditions, on many levels, was part of the process, as Spero recalled:

> There was an open discussion with a panel of six artists. I was attacked over and over again during this [for the Bogside mural]. This was after I had finished the installation, the day before I was to leave for the States and... that [confrontation] was fiery. I had said that I understood their viewpoint, but I tried to explain all along my own viewpoint [having been invited by Declan McGonagle to paint on the wall]. There was a certain collaboration occurring [with the young Derry artists and passersby], nevertheless it is the imprint of my work and it did go out in my name, and the third thing was that some of them claimed they didn't understand what it was about, so a great deal of time was spent with my trying to explain what I do, to explain my intentions, to them in particular... finally, the head of the Sinn Fein branch in Derry tried to ease the situation and to tell them, because they wanted to paint over it [even though it was temporary]; he tried to ask them to look at what I had done, to see what I was saying and then the woman who was head of the woman's group in Sinn Fein, and who was an artist herself, reiterated that and they left.[29]

As Golub pointed out at the time of the Orchard Gallery's panel discussion, most of the local Derry artists were left out of the process entirely due to the globally oriented, invitational format laid out by the Gallery (seeking also to enhance its own transnational credentials and progressive reputation).[30] An international response to local conditions as well as a dialogue with the community had been elicited by McGonagle, and that is precisely what occurred. Spero's installation process in Bogside was especially unpredictable and non-programmatic, indicative of the perilous though transformative passage through porous artistic/political/religious borders.[31] In fact, one of Spero's goals as an "outsider" was to counter any romanticized or aestheticized view of violence or a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

nostalgia for a homogeneous sense of community. The artist came to recognize that the local mural sites marked specific places to honor and remember the dead and imprisoned, which was reflected in her mural's content. While not unlike official war memorials -- although part-and-parcel of the daily routine and not secluded -- the Derry mural tradition became an aspect of the larger political process; its murals became symbolic artifacts of the "Troubles." Spero's experience in Derry confirmed her own thematic emphasis on understanding and re-presenting power relations: whether a mural remains for a time or is removed in short order becomes not a question of artistic merit or effectiveness but a question of the power exerted by the groups/factions who sponsor them, the strength of protesters, and the commissioners and local politicians.[32]

On Madrid's Rooftop

Spero's next installation project tackled cultural/political issues as part of another international site-specific exhibition, *El Sueno Imperativo,* at Madrid's Circulo de Bellas Artes in the winter of 1991. Mar Villaespesa, the Bellas Artes' Curator, invited Spero to create her first permanent installation. Spero chose to work on the rooftop terrace of the building overlooking Madrid as the framework for her installation, *Minerva, Sky Goddess, Madrid* (1991, Figures 554 and 55). The rooftop is accessible to the public via the Circulo's main lobby area and stairways The installations by the twelve invited artists were sponsored by the Union Based Housing Cooperative, a Cooperative Society founded by the General Worker's Union. Villaespesa chose the utopian title and theme, "The Imperative Dream," as an contemporary metaphor for a vision of global scope in which the artist was a catalyst for social and cultural change and an agent for dialogue in the local urban community.[33] Villaespesa sough to emphasize the links between social

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and political awareness, cultural activity, and the need for articulating metaphors for the post-modern urban condition. The invited artists included Thomas Lawson and Kevin Carter, who both executed works for the escalator, Chris Burden, who worked on the vestibule, Terry Berkowitz, who occupied the exposition hall, Francesc Torres, who was in the media room, and Krzystof Wodiczko, who projected images on the Triumphal Arch.

Located in downtown Madrid, just off the Plaza de Cibeles, the newly renovated building which houses the cultural institution known as the Circulo de Bellas Artes (Fine Arts Circle) was built in 1926 by Antonio Palacios. Indebted to the Wagnerschule in Vienna, Palacios was a celebrated Spanish architect who designed numerous public and private buildings from 1918-1943. He sought to demonstrate in the Circulo a sense of the monumental beyond customary academicism.[34] The architect was known for contrasting airily light and open spaces, like the Terraza where Spero and crew worked, with the solid appearance of monumentality in the use and handling of heavy stonework, primarily granite, in design details. The predominant feeling of monumental form derived from the stone piers composed of steel webs, shaped like stone forms, with detailed stone elements modeled like a mass slowly buckling under the pressure of the load. Decorative elements were wrapped around girders of the structure to invest the steel with a monumental appearance. The Circulo joined a ring of monuments, themselves encircling a fashionable urban environment. Palacios' Circle of Fine Arts was dedicated to the glory of modernity and the formation of the cityscape, playing on the motive of the wreath, a highly symbolic device employed by Otto Wagner in Vienna. The wreath shape also suggests the unity of the arts comprising The Circulo itself, a structure that was to serve a variety

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of functions as a performing arts center, with spaces for a radio station, theater, an auditorium for dance and music, and a cinema.

After receiving research materials and illustrations at her New York studio from the Circulo's curator relating to the building and its functions, Spero transferred her newly conceived images of "Minerva," represented as a thirty-foot statue on the Circulo's rooftop, to polymer plates. The keystone of the installation and the dominant image of the Circulo, the mythic Minerva originally had been the Etruscan goddess of craftsmen, the domestic arts, teaching and medicine, patroness of dramatic poets and actors. She was associated with the Greek goddess Athena, and thus, Minerva (the Latin root, *mens*, referring to the mind) evolved into a goddess of wisdom, medicine, and war, while her popular cult in ancient Rome spread at the expense of the venerated war god, Mars. The Roman version of the goddess encompasses wisdom, war, industry, and the domestic arts. In the Classical world, Minerva became a richly layered goddess figure, depicted as a magisterial matron who wore a helmet and a flowing toga with chain mail, inscribed with a medallion of her attribute, the owl. She typically held a shield, lance, or image of Nike. The owl omen, associated with Lillith and sacred to Athena, was a nocturnal and ambiguous symbol in Christian art, full of dark allusions to demonic forces. Therefore, Minerva possessed the cultural complexity and paradoxical attributes Spero reveled in mining.

The Circulo's stone statue of Minerva, carved during the long reign of the Fascist dictator Francisco Franco, is executed in a blocky deco-style which emphasizes the goddess's aggressive marshal traits. Franco saw to it that the imposing characteristics of a fierce and ruthless warrior dominated the building. The carved Minerva displays the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

dreaded aegis prominently on her shield; the image of Medusa, the only mortal Gorgon, whose representation Spero had previously enlisted in her cast of characters.[35] A grotesque, winged monster with hair of hissing snakes, Medusa represented the chaotic forces of nature and turned men to stone if they dared look on her. Thus Medusa adorned Minerva/Athena's shield as a sign of invincibility and destruction; in Freudian psychoanalytic terms, Medusa represents 'castrated' female genitals to the male viewer, whose subconscious registers terror at the possibility of his own castration. Spero printed a Medusa image on Athena's shield on the Bogside gable wall, relating the Warrior Athena to the Gallic goddess, Minerva (or Brigit, from the Gaelic for power or authority), inscribed throughout Ireland. In Gallic and Celtic art, Minerva had been depicted as the armed goddess warrior and as a *medica*, the symbol of medicinal springs. The genesis and multiple facets of Minerva/Athena intrigued Spero and related, on a mythological level, to her search for representational personifications of extreme polar states inextricably woven together in human consciousness.[36] Instead of squaring-off or locking-in-mortal-combat supposedly oppositional human impulses in a psychomachia-like drama, Spero understood these seemingly contradictory forces to be meshed and integrative -- not to be elided.

Spero was accompanied on the rooftop perch by her assistants Kunce and Sivilli, with Sosa filming the installation process. Outside in the elements, the artist and crew determined the effects of printing on five different surfaces, each with distinctive abrasive and absorptive qualities: terrazzo floors, white washed plaster walls, sandy surfaces of cement, metallic galvanized steel, and red ceramic tiles. Spero was experimenting with new inks for the occasion and was philosophically sanguine about the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

elements eventually overtaking her installation: "I use oil base printing inks but presumably they will weather as the work is out-of-doors... the procession of images will not only dance across the walls but react to the terrace's reach to a limitless space as if some of the figures might jump from the wall to the sky or the city."[37] As the title of Spero's installation declared, *Minerva, Sky Goddess, Madrid,* the artist's "cast of characters" would span the roof's Minerva statue, the sky, and the City of Madrid, integrating the elements characterizing a particular place with ancient mythologies and an infinity of nature as a "ground" integrated into the installation. The Trinitarian title reinforces the artist's emphasis on active relationships and unpredictable, shifting contexts, on the cyclical rather than on the linear, teleological, or on purely discrete elements.

The view from the rooftop is a spectacular three-hundred-and-sixty-degrees, with the City stretching outwards, encompassing the horizon. The junction of earth and sky, mimicked by the horizontal line of the terrace wall and the viewer's elevated or "sacred" positioning on the roof structure topped by Minerva, becomes a mediating territory. The sky mediates and sheds its light and shadow on the installation, and the culturally layered skyline of City becomes a complementary, integrative midpoint. The sacred and profane are not bifurcated but interwoven. Spero extends her goal of breaking down the hierarchies distinguishing separate, impenetrable realms: transcendent/polis, metaphysical/political, fine arts/decoration. As in Spero's cupola installation, *Rebirth of Venus* (1989) at the Schirn Kunstahalle in Frankfurt, the transitional point of meeting is a theme echoed by dynamic and fluid borders established and scaled by Spero's images on architectural elements; the perception of these layered, multifaceted spaces (architectural

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and "natural") is reconfigured to reflect self-consciously on the coming-into-being of the cycles of nature, time of day, and the seasons.

In Madrid, the sky dome is opened up fully to the firmament, extending a "transcendent scale" (to use O'Connor's terminology), invoking the awesome or cosmic, beyond human measurement.[38] At the same time, Spero's integration of image, support, and surface, wall and architecture with nature and sky, confounds the normative distinctions. Viewers must perch, like birds, taking the aerial view, while also moving throughout the roof's crannies, stooping and crouching, where Spero has inserted her figures in profile and en face. Scaling fluctuates in this unpredictable environment: wall sizes comprising the whole area differ greatly; axes (on horizontal, vertical, and curving surfaces) and mural size (which fluctuates from space to space, around corners and over building elements) shift; the infinity of the sky's scale and reflective qualities change dramatically throughout the day. The break up of varying surfaces with different qualities of texture and color, ranging over pediments, floors, pilasters, circuit boxes, and pipes, afforded Spero subtexts of spaces and themes to explore in relation to the whole.

The installation's fulcrum is the massive Minerva statue, rising from a twelve-foot pedestal, placed toward one end of the alternately curvilinear and rectilinear periphery wall which measures a secure four feet in height. On the statue's cement pedestal, Spero and crew printed a dark grey, silhouetted Minerva in profile issuing like an apparition from a squared slice of the skyline.[39] Minerva/Athena's aspect as protector of the City of Madrid is highlighted; her existence is grounded in the City and its life. Printed as alternately linear, outlined, or dimensional relief-like figures, an array of acrobats, athletes, and Hetaeras overlap and impinge on Minerva's pedestal, countering the statue's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

stolid gravitational pull, while her graphic form, overprinted in red and black, escapes the pedestal to float on other surfaces nearby. Both ferocious and subdued printings of Minerva/Athena point to different incarnations or characteristics of her metaphorical powers.

Cumulative and irregular, Spero's re-presentations mock any nature/culture dichotomy; allegorical figures morph into nude athletes and vice versa. Moving outward and striding onto the terrazzo floor tiles -- Artemis, Nut, contemporary athletes and African dancers, Aboriginal spirit figures and the Egyptian Sky Goddess, the Inca mummy figure and Egyptian Acrobat, Greek and Etruscan Hetaeras, and contemporary images of women from fashion magazine ads -- the printed figures circulate in overlapping bevies or in solipsistic retreats to occupy corners. These thematic and relational vignettes, scatterings, and caesuras form irregular patterns, evidence that the artist is not striving for a formally "higher" unity but for a continuous flux of confrontational, antagonistic, celebratory, and ecstatic actions representing the living forces embraced by a clamorous city. Color is often riotous -- primaries and intense hues -- or earthen, with umbers and siennas. Overlappings of opaque, transparent, or semi-transparent inks articulating shaded or shadowy figures are surrounded by solid areas of color or surface textures. Cracked plaster walls and stains are incorporated into a wide swath of curved peripheral wall, "held up" by the arms of an upside-down Nut as she hovers over a figure boxed within the underworld. With its epic quality, all manner of social/spiritual relations are suggested, including political events brewing at the time of the installation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

During the installation in January of 1991, students and workers were demonstrating in the streets below to protest Spain's involvement in the Persian Gulf War. A veteran anti-war protester, Spero went downstairs to talk to the demonstrators. In a gesture of moral and political support, the artist directed her crew to print on a long wall of galvanized steel rising on the terrace, *The Crowd*: a confluence of bobbing and weaving, truncated heads from her trans-cultural female phalanx. Spero's documentarian, Sosa, recalled Spero's spontaneous decision to incorporate the then-present political situation into a contemporary dialogue with the themes – wisdom and war – represented by Minerva.[40] Spero recognized an artistic convergence with political urgency and sought to communicate this allegorical resonance on the spot. The printed horizontal band of gesticulating faces had been gleaned from many epochs and cultures, stemming originally from Spero's "Chorus" for the scroll, *Notes in Time on Women* (1979). In Madrid, *The Crowd* included the addition of contemporary figures snatched from the Spanish popular media. Spero mingled the heads of a cacophonous "chorus" in a synecdoche: as stand-ins for the chanting crowd of anti-war demonstrators.[41] In fact, the etymology of "chorus," from the Greek, "to dance," dovetailed with Spero's notion of the archaic origins of "dance" as the first language. The "chorus," as a poetic device, arose from the earliest lyric and religious performances which incorporated masked and singing dancers, serving in ancient Greece as a communal voice for society in miniature and giving a public resonance of individual action.[42] The "choruses" of Aeschylus and Euripides intensified dramatic tension, often emerging from confrontations between the protagonist and societal constraints or traditions. Thus, the conceptual subtext of Spero's raucous *Crowd*,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as a strategic version of the "chorus," parallels the tensions embodied in classical poetics brought into the contemporary political sphere.

The public, Madrid's actual "chorus," constituted a continuous stream of people, including art students and demonstrators, circulating onto the rooftop, conversing with Spero and crew. With the help of Venezuelan-born Sosa, as translator, conversations in many languages ensued; Spero's natural affinity for languages and conversation surfaced. Surrounded by the City and the constant din of people talking and walking around the terrace, discussions about politics and art extended Spero's proclivity toward the "encounter" as a catalyst in an evolving performance, a "milieu-creating effect," weaving together many elements and participants. Sosa described the weeklong experience as a "carnivalesque" event, uniting the dramatic and ecstatic arts with an on-going political dialogue amid the sounds, colors, and textures of everyday public life.[43] The dramatic performative and processional aspects of Spero's Madrid installation are extensions of the spatial/temporal themes which first attracted the Smith College Museum curators, Kellum and Hellman, to the artist's integration of recontextualized mythological/historical iconography within museum spaces. Spero's reinterpretations of symbolic fragments from myth and history, deriving from ancient festivals originally embedded in specific cultural and popular spaces, are brought to life once more at the meeting point of the Circulo set within a contemporary urban environment. The artist's figures, interacting in new contexts, emphasize movement, relationship, and process rather than static art objects. Imaginative recreation within living contexts is required of the viewer in Spero's interweaving of political and metaphysical realms, revealing a subtle identification of the contrapposto in human sensibility. Spero incorporated the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

cycles of both erasure and memory when she printed, tucked in an obscure corner of the Terraza, a "gravesite" of remembrance, including golden figures of classical Roman mourning women, pre-Columbian mummies, and a robed Medieval personification of death wielding a scythe.

These spatial/temporal themes culminated unexpectedly in the ultimate fate of the Madrid installation. While Spero's installation was intended as a permanent addition to the Circulo's architecture, her oil-based printed images have all but disappeared from the roof terrace due to a combination of weather and wear as well as a lack of adequate research on the durability of oil-based inks when printed on such varying surfaces outdoors, exposed to the elements. The lessons learned from Madrid indicated that Spero and her assistants needed to carry out more extensive technical research ahead of time, whenever possible. The processes of recovery and attendant loss were unintentionally played out in *Minerva, Sky Goddess, Madrid*; the installation became a trace of a performance, existing solely in the form of film, photographs, and memory.

A Ballade in a Museum

After attaining an apogee of "limitless space" as her "ground" in Madrid, Spero's next project emphasized an inward, inverse trajectory. During the spring of 1991, Spero returned to the theme of Brecht's "Marie Sanders" in Wuppertal, Germany, where she was invited to paint a temporary installation, *Ballade von der "Judenhure" Maria Sanders (Brecht)*, at the Von der Heydt-Museum (Figure 56). However, Spero's installation of Brecht's *Ballade* so thoroughly integrated with the architectural and historical framework of the Museum that the Director decided to preserve the installation

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

as a permanent component of the site; the artist's installation became part of the Museum's collection.

The industrial city of Wuppertal, less well known culturally than its sophisticated neighboring cities of Dusseldorf and Cologne, houses the Von der Heydt-Museum's collections. Originally constructed in 1902 as the City Hall (Rathaus), the Museum is renowned for its strong holdings of German Expressionism and twentieth century modernism, with major works by Max Beckmann, Paula Modersohn-Becker, Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Otto Dix and George Grosz. From 1986 to 1990, the Cologne architects Peter Busmann and Godfrid Haberer renovated and expanded the Museum with a synthetic postmodern design which retained the building's original neo-Classical features.[44]

The Museum's Director, Dr. Sabine Fehlemann, organized Spero's installation plans. The guest curator for the project was the international art collector, Erika Hoffmann Koenige. Along with her late-husband, Rolf Hoffmann (renowned in the fashion trade for the establishment of the Van Laack Company), the couple had focused on collecting twentieth century and contemporary art. Soon after German reunification in 1989, the Hoffmanns moved from Cologne to Berlin, opening their collection to the public in 1997, Sammlung Hoffmann, a "private lived-in collection."[45] Represented in their collection are the works of Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Rineke Dijkstra, Pipilotti Rist, Lucio Fontana, Gerhard Richter, and John Coplans, among others. Erika Hoffmann had attended Spero's retrospective at the New Museum in 1987. Two years later, when she visited Spero's studio, Hoffmann singled-out a delicate hand-printed version of *Ballad of Marie Sanders* lying on the artist's work table. Both the collector and the artist agreed

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

that the combined impact of Brecht's "Ballade" in the original German, with the photo-magazine image printed on a mural scale within the German museum, would be a potent carrier of meaning.

Since German reunification in 1991, Hoffmann had observed an ominous resurfacing of xenophobic fears toward "foreigners," especially toward immigrants and Turkish workers. Questions regarding the definition of a "German" identity (e.g. "Who is German?") were on the national agendas of political parties. Stressing the need for education, discussion, and encounter to dispel stereotyping, Hoffmann sought out several artists who would directly address issues of the construction of memory, history, and myth in word/image conjunctions. The resulting exhibition, *Buchstaeblich: Bild und Wort in der Kunst heute* ("Image and Word in Today's Art"), was installed at Wuppertal's Von der Heydt-Museum. The invited artists -- including Spero, Joseph Kosuth, and the late, German-born polymath, Martin Kippenberger – created their temporary installations in May of 1991. In contrast to Kosuth's more programmatic, detached linguistic analysis of the representation of art and culture within historical contexts and Kippenberger's flamboyant "bad boy" performances, Spero's resuscitation of Brecht's ballad, as an imprint of individual and choral voices, focused on confronting the viewer with a visual/aural vortex of irrecoverable loss and the imprint of history, acknowledging tactile and visceral cognition as an integral aspect of intellectual understanding.

After the experiences of her installations in Derry and Madrid, Spero was eager to reenact *Marie Sanders* as a performative installation in a politically charged site, less tame than Northampton's rural academic oasis. While Wuppertal is home to premiere collections of German Modernism and Expressionist art, it is also an old industrial city

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

whose vibrant community of Jews had perished in Nazi concentration camps. The Museum (a former Rathaus) is therefore a site of German cultural memory and collective remembrance as well as a venue for modern and contemporary art. Within the totality of this layered site, the artist chose to weave together political, communal, and existential realities. She deployed a Brechtian poetics to resurrect a particular voice and bodily presence in an attempt to narrow the gaps between past and present, language and meaning, word and image. Spero recognized that historically, within the epic and lyric forms, the poet is charged with compelling the reader to relive the trauma of pain over again with each reading. From well before the Classical period, poets were distinguished by their ability to create parallel worlds by means of artifice and eloquence, bringing to the surface feelings long buried in oblivion; thus poets were summarily banished by Plato in his ideal Republic.[46] By reenacting Brecht's ballad, breathing life into its poetic form, Spero aimed to renew the reality of individual and historical suffering, keeping the wounds open via a strategy of visual/poetical doubling.

Spero discussed with Hoffmann the ways in which her artistic approach would intersect with the meanings lodged in image and text:

> Image and text are simultaneously and equally important and relevant. The visual impact of the text is as crucial as the figures – both express strong content printed with a staccato rhythm – a varied, almost fractured disjunctive look. The images are extensions of the text – in some instances virtual hieroglyphs... For the most part I am interested in a continuum – an open-ended quality to the work – a flexibility – the possibilities of the human image, in this instance woman as protagonist, as she moves through, intervenes, in time... As I funnel my voice and thoughts through the art – it is of primary importance to create a dialogue – to have a voice, a tongue, to speak.[47]

On their arrival in Wuppertal, Spero and her project assistant, Samm Kunce, walked through the Museum for the first time; the artist was offered the marble stairway

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

area in which to install *Marie Sanders,* as it was a prominent space linking the lobby to the second floor galleries.[48] Spero rejected the neo-classical stairway and its spacious opening onto the lobby entry as too grandiose in its articulation, centrality, and scale. On the second floor, adjacent to a large modern gallery for changing contemporary exhibitions, Spero noticed a vertical shaft of natural light streaming in from a doorway to the right. As she crossed the threshold of the narrow space, it reminded her of an intimate chapel filled with raking light. The natural light emerged from a row of tall, deeply inset and arched windows. The wall opposite the windows, a few feet away, was stepped back, with a break in its plane. Spero reacted intuitively to the space's aesthetics, its gothic proportions, design details, and the effects of natural light and atmosphere. This was an attenuated peripheral space ripe with associations implied by its physical layout and its sheer impingement on the body, relieved only by the windows. For Spero, the phenomenological experience of the architecture itself suggested the basic structure of her composition; the text/image would wind its way around the extended wall facing the arched windows as though it were a stark projection emanating from the light filtered through the windows.

By rendering a shape to Brecht's four stanzas, hand-printing three-inch sans serif block letters to form words within measured and stacked rectilinear formats, Spero projected a billboard/architectural scale to the "Ballade." Inked and printed with irregular hand pressures like enlarged excerpts from cheaply printed pulp novels, the textured lines of verse ranged from a height well above eye level to just below eye level, with the last stanza fragmented and trailing horizontally along the extent of the interrupted wall opposite the windows.[49] The wraparound tactic compresses the viewer's movement in the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

long, narrow space, and accentuates the feeling of entrapment, alluding to the imprisoning environment established by Spero earlier in her scroll installation of 1976 at AIR Gallery, *Torture of Women*. Spero's compositional strategies formulated on site engage the viewer's phenomenological encounter of space in order to reinforce her themes. In the case of Wuppertal's *Marie Sanders*, the installation aimed to echo the continuum of the dark political history of oppression brought into the light of the present.

The half-tone image of a naked and bound woman, originating from the photograph found in a Nazi officer's pocket, is suspended underneath Brecht's printed refrain: "The drumming is now at its height / God alive, if they are coming down our street / It'll be tonight." The black-outlined figure, first printed on the wall in Northhampton, is tinted here a pale, flat, sickly "flesh" color. The body is literally "tattooed" by the block letters forming Brecht's verse. Her torso dangles below the first stanza's lines with her lower body descending into a caesura which links with the second stanza: "Marie Sanders, your lover's hair is too black." Spero thus imprints in memory a female physicality and sexuality linked to the political: a Gentile woman's "forbidden" sexual relations with a Jewish man and her death sentence for the "crime," carried out by Nazi thugs incited to murder by propaganda and, most specifically, by the speeches and articles of Julius Streicher, editor of the viciously anti-Semitic publication, *Der Sturmer*. Words have power, Brecht's voice declares in his reprise, urging the listener to understand the instrumentality of words, the manipulation of humans into "butcher's meat." Spero's visual reincarnation of the poet's words as discursive elements in relation to discursive images, and the manner in which she prints these elements within the dynamics of spatial arrangement, coalesces the forces of oral and visual energies. The

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

artist *names* the anonymous bound woman, "Marie Sanders," giving her a presence and a story, reinserting her identity into German history and within the City Museum's walls.[50] Further, Spero implicates the viewer and her footsteps as part of the "Ballade's" street crowd.

Spero's palpable, stamped printing method manifests and underscores Brecht's repetitive "drumming" (down the street in the blackness of night). By her printing technique, she doubles the repetition of the "Ballade's" horrific reprise, its rhythm and rhyme. The scale and positioning of Spero's "Ballade" in the narrow space forces an up-close confrontation with the viewer; her extension and enjambment of the verse lines extract additional footsteps from the visitor. Finally, under the poem/image is a photo-credit caption excerpted from the French photo-magazine where the image was originally printed: "Document trouve sur un member de la Gestapo." Spero denies the anonymity of the victim in the contemporary French media, her erasure and hidden identity, by coupling her representation with Brecht's narrative voices: those of Marie Sanders (victim), the Balladeer (story teller), and the Chorus (witnesses). She imparts a voice, a name, and a body to the image, and she documents, as in a footnote, the origin the fragments.

Formally, the artist deploys the poetics of enjambment by forcing part of fourth stanza into a corner of the fractured wall, while bending the last reprise around the next corner. Enjambment in poetics is a run-on of lines, carrying the rhetorical weight without a breath, heightening the intensity of emotion and fragmentation. The motion of reading begins high up on the wall's surface only to plummet downward and across to an extended and then enjambed climax where the execution takes place in the mind. In

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

contrast to her technique in Northampton, Spero did not print Brecht's poem in upper case letters but rather in all lower case letters and in the original German. Even the title, including the name "Marie Sanders," is entirely printed in lower case, "marie sanders." The German text is made more potent by this subtlety; by not capitalizing the nouns in printing, difficulties arise. More concentration is demanded from the German-speaking reader in order to decipher the text, disturbing the rhythmical structures of reading in which capital letters signal parts of speech in this highly inflected language. Normally used as a strategy distinguishing modernist and postmodernist poetry and experimental texts which mimic stream-of-consciousness, Spero deploys this strategy to embed obstacles in the reading process, "making strange" the viewer's experience of image/text conjunctions.[51] She seeks to reinforce the reader/viewer's memory by the demands of her formal compositional tactics.

On the day that Spero and Kunce had completed *Marie Sanders*, Dr. Fehlemann decided to make the installation a permanent part of the Museum's collection and architectural space. As a visual ballad, a form of commemoration linked to the dead, and as a historical voice of witness, Spero's installation was then inserted into the discourses of German history and culture. The artist had reinterpreted Brecht's "Ballade" and integrated the graphic language of a recovered photograph into the ongoing German dialogue on the events leading up to the Shoah. During her conversation with Dr. Fehlemann regarding *Marie Sanders*, Spero discussed the representation of the martyrdom of female victims and the recurrence of historical and mythological archetypes assigned to the feminine throughout patriarchal history, themes addressed by the artist since the 1960s.[52] Spero recalled for Dr. Fehlemann, Ana Mendieta's (1948-

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1985) mining of these themes in the Cuban-American's performative series, *Body Tracks*, begun in 1972 (and extending through 1974). A good friend of Mendieta's and an A.I.R. colleague, Spero had attended the 1982 performance of *Body Tracks* at Franklin Furnace in New York. As Spero described Mendieta's performance, while sitting in Fehlemann's office, she felt compelled to perform an homage to the late artist in the Wuppertal museum by reenacting *Body Tracks*. The artist and the Director agreed to a wall space around the corner from *Marie Sanders* in which to perform *Homage to Ana Mendieta, eine Nachschaffung von Body Tracks* (1991). Spero rehearsed her homage with Kunce, who then recreated the ritual act as demonstrated by the artist.

Spero wrote a descriptive essay on Mendieta's performance, printed as a Museum hand-out for visitors and dated April 23, 1991:

> Ana Mendieta was a friend and colleague. She was a brilliant artist. Her vision was as intense as her life – an outspoken, volatile, oftentimes angry woman. I saw Ana perform "Body Tracks" in 1982 at Franklin Furnace in New York City. Its starkness and brevity were memorable. For the performance, the audience entered and sat down. The performance space was empty except for a large bowl of animal blood mixed with paint and a large piece of paper pinned to the wall. A record of drums of Cuban Santeria rites was playing. Ana entered, strode towards the bowl and dipped her hands in the mixture. She raised her arms, palms out pressed to the paper, then pulled down towards the floor leaving a bloody trace. The drumming continued and she left the room... Ana Mendieta fell to her death from Carl Andre's 34th floor apartment in New York City in 1985. This work is dedicated to her memory – as a fighter who refused to compromise or give in to physical or mental pressures.[53]

With Brecht's rhythmically printed verse-images in the background as synesthetic triggers ("the drums are rolling"), Spero led Kunce through the ritual of dipping her hands in red paint, pressing the wall with her reddened hands, and pulling her body down toward the floor. The reenactment was done without an audience (as in many of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Mendieta's private, videotaped performances). Only red traces remained as testimony to the action, with the black brushed words, "Homage to Ana Mendieta," scrawled toward the bottom. Kunce was the actor, the interpretive performer, following the directorial lead of Spero, whose hands were too painful at the time to carry out the restaging. The repetition or doubling embodied in the *Homage*, manifest in ritualized form, secured a commemoration of Mendieta's own reenactment of *Body Tracks*. Spero and Kunce shared the discharge of emotions as a symbolic moment of conveyance -- of authenticating witness to the contingency between the individual body and the social body, the private and the public. While renewing and refiguring rites of passage, Spero linked her doubling of Mendieta's action in *Body Tracks* to the metaphysical power of transformative cycles. As Mendieta had used her own ritualized, bloodied body as a metaphor for sacrifice and transformation, Spero recreated the drama of political violence projected outward, specifically, onto the historical body of Brecht's "Marie Sanders," and despite the self-consciousness of this act, turned any exoticizing gaze back toward the viewer by her formal and compositional means. Spero further linked Brecht's political drama to Mendieta's reenactment of originary creation myths and to Mendieta's own untimely fall to her death.[54] Occupying the Museum periphery as a sacral or consecrated space, Spero sought to revive Mendieta's redemptive ritual to point to the female subject's control over her own representation and sexuality; rather than a call to utopian matriarchy, Spero offered a recognition of the structuring principles of marginalization and representation. Within the Museum's context, Spero ventriloquized Mendieta and Brecht's voices in a dialogue, unraveling the political as a manifestation of personal landscapes and tracing the psycho-topography of individual memory and collective

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

witness. Spero's dual recreation harnessed images, as Mendieta wrote, "to have power, to be magic," by literally, affirming embodiment in absence.[55] Unlike the permanent installation of *Marie Sanders,* the *Homage to Ana Mendieta* was erased when the exhibition at Wuppertal's Museum closed.

Soaring in the Library and onto the Beams

Spero was keen to recontextualize Brecht's *Ballade* in another Museum venue in order to examine the possibilities of activating the ballad format as a synesthetic, mnemonic device, carrying on the ballad tradition of repetition, energized by reinterpretation. But before she could realize another incarnation of *Marie Sanders,* she and her crew, Kunce and Kovaleski, revisited ecstatic and imaginative themes in a public venue in her home town of Chicago.[56] There she engaged her figures without text but within a complex interior architectural space in the permanent installation commissioned by the Chicago Public Art Program, *To Soar III* (1991), at the Harold Washington Library Center (Figures 57 and 58).

The Chicago Public Library's Harold Washington Library Center was designed by Hammond, Beeby and Babka and opened in 1991. The Harold Washington Library Center was named in memory of Chicago's first and only African American mayor, who died in 1987 at the beginning of his second term in office. The library is the largest public library in the country, and it includes a public restaurant and coffee shop, a bookstore, a winter garden with a fifty-two foot glass-dome, and a 385-seat auditorium for performances and events. By combining the grid patterns of the early Chicago skyscrapers and neoclassical details of the great white structures of the 1893 World's Colombian Exposition, the library's civic design reflects two major historical strands of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chicago's architecture. With its massive red-brick neoclassical edifice, occupying an entire city block at State Street and Congress Parkway, the library was planned as an anchor of the city's revitalization of State Street. The enormous library building is a post-modern behemoth, its neoclassical façade and details integrated with its big and brutal body in an echo of the cultured but gritty industrial city itself.

In the library's 125 foot main corridor, Spero resumed a dialogue with the mural tradition which she had updated in her previous celebratory installations, *Re-Birth of Venus* at the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, and *Waterworks* at Toronto's R.C. Harris Water Filtration Plant. With visitors moving through real time, Spero printed a collage-like space of simultaneous imaginative time, alluding to the reader's internal focus in the act of reading. Her integration of floating trans-cultural figures from the past and present circulate along the walls and ceiling, congregating and dispersing in an ebb and flow. While the exterior of the library is monumental and enveloping, Spero punctuates, perforates, and lightens the interior space by injecting a dispersion of figures on the white ground. The accompanying perception of weightlessness acquires the hint of infinity. The artist sought a convergence of the private, inner domain of active imaginings -- of fictive and symbolic worlds -- and an acknowledgement of the archival, civic function of housing and dispersing literature and history. Spero's own research in culling her vast "cast of characters" as a visual/textual archive and her dialogic impulses in altering her cast's representational styles and spatial orientation are reflected in *To Soar III.*

Within this site of compiled histories, cultures, and learning, Spero and crew printed sweeps, weavings, and irregular patterns of goddesses, athletes, and dancers, overseen by Athena, who unites the arts and sciences. Athena stands guard on a lintel

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

space, a transition point in one of two deep window wells, capped by a wooden grid of panes set in the upper floor. Light and shadow, emerging from the deep recessive spaces and the artificial light cast from sconces lining the wall, play on the ceiling, reformatting the figures' ground. Shifting illumination is once again an on-site trigger for Spero's overall composition, establishing the mood of reverie and the fluidity of boundaries among the fields of knowledge. Marble-faced, grey veined wainscoting and door frames further the grid notations as does the black and white diamond floor pattern, all of which Spero uses as foils and puns for the movement of her characters. Spero's figures appear alternately as specters, opaque presences, silhouettes in motion caught in a whirl of activity, or solid, stalwart friezes on window wells. Caesuras and silences intersperse with energetic bursts of mottled, streaming figures. In addition, Spero's fragmented, condensed procession can be seen from the corridor below and through the glass above. Reflections of figures on glass add to the surge of movement, undaunted by geometry or historical weight. Spero's consistent vision composed in dialogue with the architectural elements of the Library evokes the ecstatic arts, dance, and the creative imagination.

Mediating the ancient sacred and modern/postmodern urban secular space, Spero places the viewer on the border of interior fantasy and public space. While the artist performs the role of researcher and curator, she also functions as a "bridge" during the process of installation, pinpointing and articulating the relationships of her figures to each other and to the site. The viewer/participant enters with no "script," moving in a corridor space which is fractured and in which multiple perspectives and characters are juxtaposed. The site becomes activated by the imagination and movement of the viewer in a non-linear and unpredictable meandering.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Continuing her celebratory theme to end the year, in 1991, Spero and crew printed another soaring, yet fragmented, temporary installation, *Vulture Goddess* and *Chorus Line*. Robert Storr curated an important group exhibition inaugurating the new Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, *Devil on the Stairs: Looking Back on the Eighties*, and while planning the exhibition he invited Spero to participate.[57] The exhibition's title, *Devil on the Stairs*, is a French phrase alluding to the nagging doubts arising after a door closes and an opportunity is lost. Judith Tannenbaum, Associate Director of ICA, had invited Storr to curate a selective overview of themes and works significant to the 1980s. Storr's large group exhibition included a section featuring the work of both Ana Mendieta and Spero, juxtaposed with works by Louise Bourgeois and Francesco Clemente, devoted to exploring the themes and variations circulating around the concept of representing the "body." The category of the "Body" section focused on artists who figured the body as porous, as articulating a interior subjective and exterior social body simultaneously. Spero directed Samm Kunce to print *Vulture Goddess* and *Chorus Line*, with Sheelas and Egyptian Vulture Goddesses, romping across the ceiling's I-beams. Spero chose this area on which to print after rejecting the stairwell space; she sought out the structural, fundamental I-beams, drawing the visitor's eye upwards. Once again she lodged her "players" on the periphery, as Storr had noted earlier, within a threshold, intruding overhead, near Francisco Clemente's *What I Saw and What I See* (1990), an oil on linen painting depicting mirrored and stacked, symmetrical and striding males exhibiting erect phalluses.[58] While Clemente's painting traces symbolist, psycho-biographical roots, Spero's strategic positioning of her staccatoed "grotesques" overhead

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

mocked and defused the representative values of the Clemente's masculinist fertility image.

Voices of Jewish Women in Time

Soon after Spero completed the Chicago Library installation, she was invited by Curator Susan Tumarkin Goodman to participate in an invitational installation exhibition, *From the Inside Out: Eight Contemporary Artists,* which inaugurated an expanded and renovated Jewish Museum (1993) in New York.[59] Spero installed a tripartite wall painting, *"Ballad of Marie Sanders" & "Voices: Jewish Women in Time"* (1993, Figure 59), modulating Brecht's "Ballad" voices with those of the poets Nellie Sachs (1891-1970) and Irene Klepfisz (b. 1926). Goodman specifically requested an installation of *Marie Sanders* in the Jewish Museum and Spero had been conceptualizing the ways in which she might reinterpret Brecht's "Ballad" after the installation in Wuppertal, Germany. Spero found a key to reinterpretation via her formal means and the rethinking of figure/ground conjunctions on site, amplifying the expressive qualities of color in her work. As Spero told Jon Bird, "The first time I really used color as a background was at the Jewish Museum. I wanted to create a fiery section that would be a contemporary equivalent to the descent into hell, a ladder-like structure littered with bodies, with a hard-edged outline to contain it."[60]

Spero's confluence of individual poetic voices at the Jewish Museum is thematically linked to the chronicling of oppression in her epic image/text scrolls, *Torture of Women* and *Notes in Time on Women.* While the scroll epics imbricate narrative fragments to reveal the intersection of histories and myth, the tripartite installation at the Jewish Museum, directly printed on the three walls enclosing the poetic

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

voices, eschews the framed horizontal sweep and prosaic elements of the scrolls. Here Spero condenses the poetics of ballad and lyric with a synchronic cut into the darkest of historical times, mass extermination during the Nazi era. The artist presents a commemorative, sacral space in the Jewish Museum, bridging and extending her themes. Brecht's "Marie Sanders," as a presaging of targeted genocide, speaks in a present-tense, premonitory voice; Sachs, a German Jew who escaped to Sweden in 1940 and won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1966, looks back at the horrors she lived through in a prophetic voice, reaching toward future questions of ontological being in her poem, "That the Persecuted May Not Become Persecutors"; Klepfisz, a Polish Jew who escaped the Holocaust but lost her family in the camps, imagines her own liquidation in a crematorium's burst of smoke in "Death Camp."[61] Spero intersperses and interconnects these time frames, points of view, and voices on the three adjoining walls to form an enclosure: a room-sized memorial triptych.

In the Jewish Museum, Shari Zolla, a painter and former student of Golub's, joined Spero's installation crew for the first time. As with Kunce's observation during the inception of the Wuppertal installation, Zolla noted that the raking natural light entering the space and the shadows cast on the walls by scaffolding served as an impetus to the composition as a whole.[62] While Spero planned to project a version of descent into hell, the manner and particular details of representation were not known in advance.[63] The particular geometry of light and shadow skimming the walls suggested an overall perspective, which Spero directed her assistants to trace as a strong directional device: a diagonal V-shape on the central wall. Once this tilted, ladder-like shape was demarcated with masking tape onto the wall to preserve its memory, Spero had her crew apply shades

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

of red, flesh-tone, grey, and black inks in irregular layers onto the eccentric rectilinear shapes framed by tape. These mottled surfaces became a fulcrum for the outward fanning of figures and texts as well as defining backgrounds on which figures stood, tumbled, and floated. As bold parallelograms and painterly rhomboids marking the steps of a ladder, these shapes acted as alternating perspectival windows -- with figures "standing" on the white "foreground" -- or as flat or murky surfaces, or as infinities cradling apparitions. Spero's laddered forms juxtaposed and suggested aerial, axial, and one-point perspectives, so that the whole ladder appeared to both recede and project outward toward the viewer.[64] Thus the oscillation of figure/ground highlighted a combination of abstract forms and photomontage techniques, suggesting morphology, cycles, and transformation, themes embedded in the poems.

Several new images, originating as media photographs, were integrated into Spero's "cast of characters," especially in conjunction with Nelly Sachs's poem, "That the Persecuted May Not Become the Persecutors": Israeli prostitutes and female Israeli soldiers, a bound corpse, Israeli and Palestinian peace activists, Warsaw ghetto victims and Nazi concentration camps, and Israeli women protesting violence against women. Spero depicts signs of individual suffering, collective political action, and death as well as rebirth. Her "chorus of resistance" via witnessing voices, conjoined with an embodiment in the plurality of printed texts and images offers an entrée to viewer participation. Spero noted: "It isn't satisfying for me to try to analyze a situation in a detached way, as a matter of fact, I couldn't... The language of the body, the female body, its gesture and movement as in dance, or in movement to music, or ritual, took precedence."[65]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Sachs's poem, excerpted by Spero, occupies a central position and is printed in upper case, reddened and stacked verse lines, following a white margin on the right side of the predominant V-shaped ladder structure in a precipitous, angled descent. The poem repeats the word "footsteps" at the beginning of each stanza, allying Sach's lyric to Brecht's images of rhythmic footsteps and "drumming." By implying Time's relentless march with overlapping footsteps in a disturbing exchange of positions between the hunter and hunted, Sachs's poem ends with the line, "Where does your note shrill/ in the music of the spheres?"[66] Spero's poetics purposefully implicate the viewer in this shift of ground as she inverts an ascension to the transcendent 'music of spheres' in the heavens by plummeting the finale of the poetic structure downward. Spero echoes Sachs's formal poetic strategy with compositional and perspectival shifts, as she did in Brecht's ballad installed at Smith College, where she led the viewer's steps onto the stairway, rhythmically pacing the real physical and textual/visual "footsteps."

Spero aimed to "walk" the viewer into the installation: "I tried to envision her [Sachs's] poem as steps on stairs. I spread it out at the bottom, but it narrows to the top like traditional perspective."[67] Spero's steps achieve a concretization in abstract form and take on the symbolism of synecdoche.[68] A spatial vertigo is achieved by figure scaling and spacing, alternate perspectives, irregular outward fanning of images, and overprinting of three texts printed with three different letter fonts. Sandwiched in the middle wall, Spero's fiery-red-and-black hell suggests Dante's rings of hell, actualizing a terraced-like space reminiscent of the poet's image/space created to aid the reader in following Dante's progress by degrees. By employing the ladder-like or stepped structure as a fulcrum, Spero calls to mind the metaphor of the ladder in visualizing the relationship between

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

heaven and earth or heaven and hell. Ladders as symbols of ascension and realization and as channels of communication in both directions, up and down, are potent symbols (for example, the Biblical Jacob's Ladder and the Egyptian god Ra's ladder in *Egyptian Books of the Dead*).[69] Spero's ladder reinforces the poet's themes and images, and merges the physical with the metaphysical by placing the re-presented, textual/body's motions in sync with notions of the spirit, denying a body/spirit duality. In addition, Spero's ladder is comprised of seven steps which visually rhyme with Sachs's seven stanzas, sardonically inverting the ancient imagery of masculinist, Mithraic initiation ceremonies, where the ladder with its seven rungs was a symbol of mystical ascension away from the frailties of body and earth.[70] Instead, Spero's seven-stepped ladder is an apocalyptic descent into a man-made hell, relieved only by the possibility of redemption in a comprehension of history through image/texts and active resistance, represented by Spero's printed "choral" figures of women protesters, who evince political dissent in the third and last wall section, accompanied by Brecht's final words, "... we would start to make sense of our plight."

The opening section on the left wall is almost entirely empty, a void, except for the first stanza of "Marie Sanders," which is printed all the way toward the right corner, enjambed into the corner, continuing around to the center wall. The printed image of Marie Sanders as a golden specter hugging close to the refrain does not betray anguish; she is neither abject nor heroic. Spero historicizes her re-presentation within an explicit place and time, and with reference to Brecht's poem. The hand-printed image has none of the high gloss of verisimilitude or pornographic titillation. By both historicizing and linking Marie Sanders to Brecht's poetics, Spero enjoins the imaginary and the narrative

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

voices in an act of remembrance.[71] Running horizontally in a single, broken line, along the molding which meets the floor, is the final stanza of the poem "Death Camp" by the contemporary poet and scholar, Irene Klepfisz. This fragment of a lyric appears in sporadic couplets in a script-like typeface, as an intimate epistle.[72] The poet imagines her spirit as smoke ascending to a clear sky, leaving the body behind: "When I pressed through the chimney it was sunny and clear/my smoke was distinct/I rose quiet/left her beneath."[73] Spero positions the poem as a trickling residue of smoke, trailing along the bottom of the wall's molding, above which is the white caesura of space. Spero thus signifies a circulation of the body as simultaneously physical, spiritual, and metaphysical by mingling the poets' voices in space with her printed figures. She confronts the viewer with steps toward absence, separation and death, and revival. Finally, she draws the viewer into a tripartite memorial/commemorative space, whose coda is the redemptive possibility embedded in stories and memory, ritualized or performed in visual/textual dialogue.

Spero's vital use of repetition (Brecht's refrains in concert with her "cast of characters"), with subtle differentiations responding on site to new architectural contexts and combined with new textual/visual elements, harks back to her careful readings of Antonin Artaud and his emphasis on the performance of "poetry in space" as incantation.[74] For Artaud, incantation was the magical function of language, akin to casting spells. Spero's poetics of installation aims to perform the incantatory force, palpability, and physicality of language to "distribute it actively in space; to use intonation in a concrete and absolute way in order to restore its power of shattering."[75] Spero's repetitions and reinterpretations of voices and gestural images within

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

architectural spaces to create a visual hieroglyphics, reinforces Artaud's idea of theater in which performance is scattered in the manner of medieval Mystery Plays, where the action moved from station to station with the audience following. Mystery Plays evolved from seasonal festival enactments, depicting the themes of struggle and revival in folk plays and mummings. With roots in pagan ritual, agricultural feasts, and popular performances, medieval mummings emerged in Europe as a dramatic storytelling in symbolic form, uniting mime, music, dance, and narrative. Mummings strongly influenced the development of medieval Mystery Plays; before being trampled by the authority of the Church, mummings presented carnivalesque episodes of folk heroes in lewd, violent pageants of sword fighting, torture, martyrdom, and ultimate triumph or rebirth.[76] With their central incident of death and revival, mummings symbolized the resurrection of the year. Performed in private homes or open spaces in close contact with the audience, mummings in England utilized secular costumes created especially for the event, with processions and pageant wagons containing stage sets moving from site to site.

The British historian and philosopher, Richard Wollheim, has described Spero's artistic center of gravity as essentially Medieval: "Spero is in effect a Medieval artist in the sweep and drama of her vision and in the anthropologizing way she goes about trying to make it present to us: the [scroll] sequence is a modern version of the Florilegium."[77] In an updated version of a Mystery Play or a medieval mumming, Spero's nomadic atelier, performing from site to site under her direction, activates her "cast of characters" to perform renewed productions in a never-ending dramatic cycle to which Spero herself refers when she states: "Wall installations disappear. It will be gone. That's why I talk

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

about it in show-business terms. It's a performance. The show goes up and the show goes down; they strike the set."[78]

Poetic Tracks

Continuing the themes and production strategies explored at the Jewish Museum, Spero next conjoined multiple voices and textual fragments in a direct critique the practices of representation in the contemporary media, when she was invited for the first time (the artist was 67 years old) to participate in the 1993 Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Spero installed two installations in dialogue on two perpendicularly abutting walls: *Masha Bruskina* and *Homage to Ana Mendieta* (1993, Figure 60 and 61). The Whitney's curator, Elizabeth Sussman, had sought out artists for the Biennial who would "tinker" with the canon by employing the strategies of "dissent, eroticism, parody, and humor."[79] From a perennial, dissident perspective, Spero was a candidate who regularly deployed parody and humor along with inversions of eroticism. But Spero had done more than "tinker" with the canon since her breakthrough *War Series* from the 1960s, and Sussman was well aware of the trajectory of Spero's oeuvre and her history of feminist activism; the artist, as a member of Women Artists in Revolution, had participated in crucial sit-ins and actions at the 1970 Whitney Annual, protesting discriminatory policies toward women artists and minorities, and subsequently penning a critical article on endemic sexism in the art establishment in the January, 1971, issue of *Art Gallery Magazine* entitled, "The Whitney and Women."[80]

The Whitney's Director during the 1993 Biennial, David Ross, suggested that a political or, at least, critical tack would emerge that year: "This Biennial has allowed a set of ideas to emerge, mostly concerned with boundaries and borders, with territories... But

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

remember, I didn't do this show; I just set it in motion."[81] Demurring, Ross passed the responsibility to Sussman, one of his first Whitney appointments (Sussman had been a colleague of his at the ICA before his appointment at the Whitney). The 1993 Biennial was staged to be politically charged, with about eighty artists participating, including Glenn Ligon, Ida Applebroog, Kiki Smith, Cindy Sherman, Mike Kelley, Gary Hill, Gary Simmons, Byron Kim, and Zoe Leonard. Deborah Gimelson, art and design critic for *Architectural Digest* and *Mirabella,* declared that Spero, Sherman, Kiki Smith, and Applebroog were among "the veteran female provocateurs represented."[82]

In her installation of *Masha Bruskina,* Spero confronted the issues of media manipulation in the presentation of news and in the construction of dominant interpretations of history, which excluded the contributions of women and others. The artist had been haunted by an article and accompanying photographs which Golub had cut out and saved for Spero from a 1987 issue of *The New York Times,* "Was the Partisan a Jew? Echo of '41, Minsk, U.S.S.R."[83] The article concerned the public hanging in 1941 of a woman partisan, a resistance fighter, by the occupying Nazis in the Minsk ghetto. On October 26, 1941, Masha Bruskina was hanged and her body put on display at the front gates of a yeast factory in Minsk. The Nazis scrupulously photographed the spectacle and disseminated the photographs to terrorize the Russian populous into submission. Bruskina was the first person publicly executed during the Nazi occupation of Russia, followed by her male partisan companions.[84] Unlike her male compatriots executed that same day, she remained "unidentified" for twenty-five years, until Russian journalists investigated and easily uncovered her identity. It took twenty-five additional years before the Soviet government admitted she that was a Jew, thus *The Times'* headline, "Was the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Partisan a Jew?" The two partisan men had been recognized as heroes and named almost immediately after the war, but mysteriously, Bruskina became "unidentified," even though she was known in the community and her execution was public. Bruskina was erased twice, once for being a woman and once for being a Jew.[85] *The Times'* article followed this elision, an obvious exclusion from history, which for Spero, represented a condensed nugget, tracing precisely how the historical fate of women, minorities, and their stories have been ignored in the historical canon. Bruskina's story of "disappearance" linked her to "Marie Sanders" and to countless women throughout history, whom Spero had been chronicling since *Torture in Chile* (1974).

In her studio, Spero used acrylic and ink to paint on and alter two enlargements printed by David Reynolds of the Masha Bruskina photographs reproduced in *The Times*.[86] One photograph was an image of the hanged Bruskina and the other image pictured all three partisans being marched through streets wearing signs printed in German and Russian: "We are partisans and have shot German soldiers." Spero erased the male partisans in the photograph as women had been erased from history, purportedly "lost" in the cracks. Her acts of transcription and editing in the studio as well as her hand-printing methods and compositional arrangement on site call attention to the production of images and their manipulation in print. How the media discloses, disseminates, and sensationalizes information via text paired with images is highlighted in Spero's process of production.

While the artist and her crew transported many polymer plates to the site along with several styles of rubber stamp alphabet types, once in the Whitney's galleries, Spero decided on an austere use of images, with printed text predominating as in her earlier

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

scrolls on the subject of historical violence toward women. Spero thus emphasized the voices and witnessing narrative emerging from silence, from enforced oblivion. The streaming of natural light from the windows and the shape and scale of the walls inspired the dynamic of the compositional structure of the installation and resonated with the theme of recovery from obscurity into the illumination of history and remembrance.[87] The falling light, as the literal physics of light striking the architectural elements and defining them, is an active formal element in Spero's installations. As a temporal element, cyclical and yet unpredictable -- because of the filter of weather -- Spero's use of actual light complements the contingency and ephemeral nature of her installations. While watching the motion of light, the trajectory of a stream of light is marked with masking tape; this angled phenomenon sets the direction, makes the first move, from which the installation unfolds. Spero then walks around the space to mentally trace and physically experience the possible walking paths and approaches of visitors. Among the chaos of people mingling around the galleries during the Biennial as well as within the continuous dialogue that ensues, Spero begins to direct her team.

In fractured columns and enjambments, the artist circulated the entire text on two perpendicular walls with sparse, scattered figures impinging under and over the text. With no architectural interruptions of doors or arches, the chopped rectilinear units of text, some with margins of annotations, were printed like giant, dislodged cue cards or dispersed elements in a blown-up version of a newspaper layout. Leading into the space on the margins, Spero printed the first few paragraphs of the article, burgeoning in large sans serif type, trailing from the ceiling and spilling down to the floor. The irregular hand pressures and ink application gave the impression of an agit prop typeset: blotched letters

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and smears, figures diagonally slashing or alighting. Floating in a surfeit of silent white space is a skirted, winged Gorgon (Medusa), loosed and repeated in varying forms, assuring with her frightful gaze to turn men to stone and to destroy her enemies. With fluttering wings, the Egyptian vulture goddess performs as a healer accompanying souls in the afterlife while hovering over a nimbus of Bruskina's head, printed as though seen in a cinematic tunnel dissolve or as a fading ex voto offering at a shrine. Spero prints symbolic tears -- tears that Bruskina reportedly did not shed -- as stylized droplets like those emerging from Egyptian mourners carved and painted on ancient tomb walls.

The newspaper article continues at the top of the second wall, accompanied by the a dark printing of the photograph of Bruskina being paraded before her execution in Minsk. Tumbling images of her drifting, lifeless head in a noose descend. At the bottom, two cropped, forlorn figures hold their hands raised, recalling the same image in *Torture of Women* (1974-1976). Spero's handling of primary text as a graphic form of critique relates also to her ventriloquism of Artaud's voice in *Codex Artaud*. In *Bruskina*, the usual estrangement of the documentary news voice is countered by the artist's expressive visual/textual formal language in a disruption of normalcy, "making strange" the effort of reading and deciphering. In addition, Spero's self-reflexive printing methods and formal means skew traditional journalistic narrative and layout of news items sandwiched between advertisements or within seamless media framing devices. Her printing irregularities and fractures block the usual cathartic effects of the news. The impression instead is one of an uncovered, pre-Guttenberg scribal or ancient artisanal wall-sized codex, a paradoxical mix of hand-printed immediacy, historical memory reinstated, and metaphorical resonance with the weaving of symbolic characters from ancient

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

mythology. As Spero analyzes the grammar and syntax of constructed memory, she prints a world of discursive signifiers afloat. The artist's historical chorus, her "cast of characters," point to suffering and loss and to the actions of the living toward the dead and toward present time. Spero's wall installation suggests a form of redemption in the acts of recovering and recording detailed historical witness, reenacting mourning within a communal, civic space, and transcribing the living reception of these stories.

Masha Bruskina was accompanied by Spero's performance/printing of *Homage to Ana Mendieta* (Figure 56), which Spero had directed Kunce to perform previously in Wuppertal. Compelled by the act of ritual mourning and retelling, Spero decided to reinforce a testament to Mendieta and her work in the Whitney Museum. The photographer Abe Frajndlich was present to photograph Spero's *Homage* to Mendieta's *Body Tracks*. As a conjuring in the act of homage, the performance "touched raw nerves," and was supported by the curator, Sussman.[88] Spero's reenactment in the New York museum carried with it a questioning of the circumstances surrounding Mendieta's tragic death by falling and the media's sensationalization of the artist's death. Spero and Golub had originally introduced their friends, Carl Andre and Mendieta, to each other in the mid-1970s, and the artist-couple subsequently married. After Mendieta's fall to her death, questions arose concerning Andre's claim that Mendieta fell after becoming drunk. The print media exploited the uncertainties surrounding the artist's death, and Robert Katz published a series of articles in *Atlantic Monthly* which became the basis for his 1990 book, *Naked by the Window: The Fatal Marriage of Carl Andre and Ana Mendieta*.

By pairing the *Homage* with *Bruskina*, Spero critiqued media manipulation and highlighted gendered allegiances in the artworld, while at the same time, giving a voice to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and honoring both women within the public field of the prestigious American Museum, fully inserting the political into the Biennial.[89] The artist's updated history painting identified the political as a ubiquitous, time-honored element in art-making: "In medieval times art was political and instructive. The books of the Apocalypse, the statues in the cathedrals, told people that if they behaved well and if they had good religious practices and beliefs, then they would go to heaven, but if they were 'sinful' they would go to hell. That's political. Art has been political all along."[90]

Dancing in the Theater

To conclude the year, Spero and crew worked on a commissioned permanent installation, *Premiere* (1993, Figures 62 and 63), at the newly renovated Ronacher Theatre in Vienna. At first glance, *Premiere* seems much less confrontational than the artist's Whitney and Jewish Museum installations. Spero's Austrian art dealer, Christine Koenig, had set up the commission of Spero's work to be installed in the rotunda-foyer of the late-nineteenth century theater. For several months prior, Spero had culled images from the many books and articles sent by Koenig regarding the history of culture in the City of Vienna, the Ronacher Theater's history, and the performers who entertained in the Theater over the years. The theater was a natural venue for Spero's printed "cast of characters," and she was eager to jettison text once again to concentrate on the problems of articulating of gesture and movement in a challenging postmodernist architectural space. With a desire to revisit the buoyancy of imagery and mood of jubilation she had attained at the Schirn Kunsthalle and the Harold Washington Library, Spero traveled to Vienna with her assistants, Kunce and Zolla, and new additions for her "cast of characters."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The original "Establissement Ronacher" was opened by Anton Ronacher as a variety theater in 1886. The theater featured popular entertainment, dining and smoking, and had in addition an enormous ballroom and "Wintergarten."[91] Strongmen, comedians, acrobats, and athletes attracted noisy patrons, and middle class patrons attended the variety programs, which alternated with revues, operettas, concerts with dancers and singers, pantomime, bicycle tricks, magicians, and clowns. Revue girl groups like the popular British "Tiller Girls" performed as well as international stars such as Josephine Baker, Lilian Harvey, and Yvette Guilbert. Nude dancing and "Americanized" jazz music and entertainment became additions during and after World War I. Throughout the 1930s, the Ronacher Theater establishment, especially its Jewish staff and entertainers, became increasingly harassed by demonstrations, threatening letters, and organized rowdiness stemming from the growing power of the Nazi Party and virulent anti-Semitism. Hitler's march into Austria, the Anschluss (1938), was in fact welcomed by the majority of the populous. Jewish businesses were confiscated and Jewish life in the City was destroyed. Soon after the Anschluss, Jews were forced to emigrate, go into hiding, or were deported to their death in concentration camps.[92]

The Theater was dark during and immediately after World War II, until 1955, when it featured a cabaret-oriented repertoire through 1960. First becoming a television studio (1960-1975), the Ronacher Theater reopened after extensive renovations in 1993, when it hosted traditional variety and revue style shows. Spero's installation of *Premiere* was a key aspect of the massive reopening campaign, and her Jewish heritage and feminist-activist background made her contribution to the revival of the Theater all the more poignant and politically resonant.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

For the Theater's renovation design, the Viennese architect Luigi Blau contrasted neo-classical elements of pilasters, moldings, and dentil detailing in the rotunda-lobby with the richly Baroque interior performance spaces. The rotunda's pilasters had originally been columns to support a free-standing porch, protecting the carriages of the well-to-do as they made their way to the theater entrance. Blau enclosed the rounded space to make it a rotunda-lobby, a transition from the street to the body of the theater space. In an architectural pun, he painted these rotunda walls pale blue to echo a perpetually cloudless faux sky and to recall the space's elite functional history. The rotunda-lobby demonstrates Blau's amalgamation of the old and new in a synthesis of the historically built older structure and the clean lines of modern design. The architect accented the neo-classical moldings, trim, and coffered ceiling with white paint set against the blue walls. Four new doors placed at the four quadrants, repeating the molding detail in their design, are punctuated by large windows and transoms. Rings of pink marble and grey concrete complete the disc of the floor, where a stairway descends to the café.

Only the construction of the floor and stairwell was completed as Spero and crew arrived to plan the printing strategy, with workers attending to the installation of light fixtures and detailing. Spero's crew were assisted during their week at the Ronacher by local Viennese artist, Barbel Holaus. The interior's grainy walls had not been painted blue as yet, but color samples were available for the artist and crew.[93] Acrylic ink was employed for printing instead of oil-based inks because the terrace installation in Madrid had not held up as expected and was decaying due to the elements. The Ronacher's environment was hectic, with construction crews engaged in building details; scaffolding

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and lighting were an ad hoc affair. Constant traffic flow and interrelating design elements gave the whole process an added performative aspect -- as a spectacle of ensemble performers on stage -- with Spero, Blau, and contractors orchestrating their assistants in a choreography of movement. According to Kunce and Zolla, lots of "touch up" was done along the way by necessity because of the construction, with Kunce returning after the grand opening to rework a passage in one panel which Spero found too static while examining installation photographs back in the New York studio.[94] Kunce followed Spero's diagramed alterations on site to activate the flow between characters on the wall panel and to integrate their relation to the whole vision of *Premiere*.

When Blau's interior walls were painted a cool blue and the neo-classical molding frames and pilasters painted white, the curved interior rotunda walls appeared as a thin theater scrim or veiling, punning the illusion of theater and its suspension of disbelief. The idea of a sheer scrim was enhanced by the four doors with windows and transoms, which allowed natural light to enter, illuminating the interior and easing a transition to outer world. A lightness and translucency were evoked by the punning conceit of a not-quite-trompe l'oeil sky blue, framed by neoclassical harmony. Blau's allusions and punning games in the interior space of this 'threshold-to-illusions' was the impetus for Spero's installation process. Responding to the Ronacher's eclectic architectural mix, conceived with subtle humor and double entendres, Spero planned to play off this doubling and combine it with the theater's history of the burlesque and the bawdy in a subversive disharmony with the staid classics and the status quo.

Informing Blau's design was his sensitivity to the historical layers of Viennese architecture and, especially, to the heritage of Adolf Loos (1870-1933) and the Viennese

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

architect who was his teacher, Ernst Plischke (1903-1992). Loos and Plischke's debt to the German architect, Gottfried Semper's (1803-1879) theories of the origins of architecture and textile design, tracing the domestic origins of architecture to the draping of textiles over armatures, are engaged at the roots of Blau's punning, his intermingling of illusion and solidity, decoration and structure. Semper's two volume treatise, *Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts or Practical Aesthetics* (1860-1863), argued that historically, textiles were the primary space creators.[95] The wall as an essential element of spatial demarcation had its genesis in cladding or clothing for the body. Semper concluded that dressing and masking were as old as human civilization and that textile walls were true representations of the "spatial idea."[96] He argued that particularly during ancient festivals or carnivals, the convergence of masking and dressing blurred the boundaries of sacred and profane ("profane," pro-fanum, referring to the space in front of the temple).[97] Nomadic, decorated surfaces then emerged from provisional festival armatures before the advent of stable and grounded architecture. As a consequence, temporary, mobile constructions embodied the potential of the unexpected, disturbing the status quo by transgressing authority. The temporary constructions and fictions of the theater stage evolved from these spatial ideas; the theater scrim, as either a semi-transparent layer allowing for light to penetrate or as a sheer screen for the projection of images, creates faux spaces on the armature of the framing stage.

Spero seized on Blau's layering of architectural puns and historical functions by deploying her "chorus" in concert with the Theater's themes, harking back to the ancient Greek chorus consisting of masked singers and dancers who performed ceremonial songs at festivals and religious rites.[98] But while Spero references the classical chorus in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Premiere, she subverts the harmony and balance of classical aesthetics by disrupting the graceful geometry of the neoclassical elements and proportions of the rotunda. With clean, white trim and crisp moldings as foils, Spero's stylized figures dodge in and out, skirting around pilasters and alighting on lintels, employing these dimensional framing devices as props. Printed with colorful, rich hues (intense primaries and saturated secondary colors) and earth shades (varieties of sienna, umber, ochre) as well as pale, ghostly hues, the images culminate in a mottled dispersion -- centrifugal, asymmetrical, and dynamic, as though projected onto the blue scrim encircling the viewer. Hieratic figures defined by linear outlines or silhouettes mingle with profiled, relief-like shaded figures, skewing perspective in a push/pull of colors and textures, suggesting both flat or illusionistic spaces. Semi-transparent images ascend from flat, blotchy images, which become smoothed into watercolor-thin shimmers lit from behind by the ethereal blue. The overall perceptual impression built from the interrelationships of images and printing techniques within the architectural framework is one of buoyancy, flux, and interplay.

Spero echoed the faux blue-sky theme of the painted panels in her cobalt, ultramarine, and cerulean blue figures as a rhyming thread, uniting the diversity of her warp and weft composition; the saturated lapis lazuli figure of the African-American Olympic champion Marion Jones (winner of five medals in the 1992 Olympics) running diagonally upwards is repeated twice in ghost-images of cobalt blue and a reddened burnt umber outline; on the opposite wall a pale blue Egyptian Sky Goddess, Nut, protector of souls in the afterlife, is doubled and mirrored by a golden Nut hovering above. The double Sky Goddesses protect the Inuit Fertility Goddess below, who seems to be giving birth by self-dividing. A gold-toned image of the famed dancer and international

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

entertainer Josephine Baker (1906-1975), dressed in black short shorts, emerges from the split Inuit Goddess. Baker's image clowns, cavorts, and mimes with raised hands in a contrapposto pose. Her contrapposto is literally "set against" the relief-like Inuit Goddess and the flat but luminescent Egyptian Nut. The dancer's body is freed in a shift of axes, as "when contrasting actions set parts of the body in opposition to each other around a central vertical axis."[99] Spero thus layers through her re-presentations and formal means a cascade of art historical allusions, ancient mythologies, and recent media history. Birth and death, inextricably bound, are embodied in the trio, while the Egyptian acrobat from Karnak spins off either side of the trio into the faux columns, metamorphosing onto the other panels. Transmutation, a constant "becoming," reinforces the theme of rebuilding – the process of renovating the Ronacher -- and resonates with Spero's *Re-Birth of Venus* theme from her Frankfurt installation (1989). A constant "becoming" necessitates both doing and undoing, resistance and emotional urgency. Spero's shape-shifting dramatis personae, her "paper dolls," enact processions in movements across the architecturally framed but infinite blue scrim, blurring the lines between animate and inanimate, psychological space and outward action. The conjunction of figures in spatial context ignites both identification and imagination.

Spero added dance sensation Josephine Baker to her troupe because the dancer had performed at the Ronacher in 1932, and as an African-American "exotic" dancer celebrated in Europe, Baker's image was heavily constructed in terms of gender, race, and class.[100] Baker performed on Broadway in 1922 ("Shuffle Along") and was a star by 1924 ("Chocolate Dandies"). In these revues she exaggerated a comic clumsiness from the blacked-up minstrels, adding a sexualized 'vamping.' In 1925, she went to Paris and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

became famous for her performances in the Revue Negre on the stage of the Theatre des Champs-Elysees. Introducing the dance craze of the "Charleston" to the world, she became high priestess of jazz culture in Europe, an icon of male desire. As Jill Lloyd and other contemporary scholars have discussed, Baker represented the thoroughly "exotic other" – associated with 'untamed' nature or the "primitive" -- who could let loose the Dionysian in seemingly unbridled but highly stylized sexuality.[101] At the Folies Bergere, during the 1926-27 season, she performed her popular "Banana Dance," wearing only a jiggling skirt of satin bananas in an act which cunningly usurped the phallus and masculine authority; as the African character, Fatou, set in a jungle, she entered the jungle-stage by climbing backwards down a tree. Baker was feted by writers and artists, such as Gertrude Stein, Picasso, Alexander Calder, and Adolph Loos, who build a house for her in Paris (1928). Baker exerted a stylistic control in her flaunting of mores and irreverent mocking gestures – vamping the blackface male comics. Spero emphasizes and re-presents Baker's role-playing and masking antics. In fact, Baker's 'taking possession' of minstrel stereotypes is related to Spero's strategy of 'taking possession' of female stereotypes by mocking the poses and dropping the veil on the methods and underlying agendas of the stereotype.[102]

Mistinguett, born Jeanne-Marie Bourgeois (1873-1956), performed at the Ronacher Theater and was billed internationally as the "Empress of the Paris Music Hall."[103] At the Moulin-Rouge and Folies-Bergere, where she partnered with Maurice Chevalier, Mistinguett performed spectacular dances in elaborate headdresses. As a comedienne, operetta star, and popular singer, Spero places her image above her signature on the Theater panel opposite Baker. Decked out in a short, pale blue 1920s

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

flapper dress with dropped waist and wearing long black gloves, she emerges in a posed send-up of Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (c. 1485); the shell-form she pops-out of is the cupped hand of a rainbow-colored Egyptian Acrobat figure alighting on the extended arm of an earth-toned Aboriginal shadow figure. Mistinguett connects with the two floating mythic figures so that the three together make the spokes of a wheel, dancing in a spiral motion in an outward centrifugal spinning. Once again, a trinity is formed by Spero, comprising spirits from trans-cultural mythologies and from history. Mistinguett oscillates within masked poses, thumbing her nose at social conventions and restrictive traditions. Spero highlights the underground roots and the freedoms of cabaret and revue performance as social critique and as sexual power displayed in place of female passivity. The images gaze at the viewer and mime; their signatures identify their stage names, while their performative personas point to the ambiguity of identities. Spinning off the spiral is a chorus line of Egyptian flute and lyre players, originating from tomb paintings, and a Greek dildo dancer-sans-dildo appearing to beat an invisible drum. Music making in repeated rhythms is suggested as the chevron of players glides behind the pilaster.

A stylized version of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's gouache of an aged Yvette Guilbert (Emma Laure Esther Guilbert, 1867-1944) peeks around the corner of a pilaster, instead of a curtain.[104] Spero outlines the old Guilbert in black, with bubble-gum pink flesh, her black gloves gesturing "curtain up," mocking and teasing from behind the false column. Toulouse-Lautrec drew Guilbert over the course of her career and helped construct the public's image of her in his posters. Her mini-dramas, risqué songs, and ballads were a staple in the Chat Noir and Moulin-Rouge. Spero quotes a quote from Toulouse-Lautrec's famous poster images of Guilbert, manipulating the re-presentation to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

accent the discursive quality of performative masquerade and media images. As if to recognize the ineluctability of cyclical flow mirrored by the rotunda's form, Spero printed on the other side of the room, over the door lintel, an image of a young Guilbert, alluding to Toulouse-Lautrec's poster images. Spero's Guilbert coyly smiles with gloved hands crossed as a perch for her lifting chin. Guilbert's presence clearly marks the burlesque parody, or a 'song sung beside,' a gestural distortion highlighting in relief a cast of mind from the era. Spero "strikes the set" with Guilbert's casual glance over the threshold combined with her signature fetishistic black gloves and yellow puffy-sleeved dress, announcing an open-ended curtain call to illusion and fantasy.

Spero honored three more international performers, who had appeared at the Theater by printing their images and signatures within the transitional spaces over doorways. Lillian Harvey (1906-1968), standing in a come-hither contrapposto pose over another neo-classical lintel molding, is draped and golden. The actress Lillian Harvey was born Lilian Helen Muriel Pape, in London. During a performance as a singer and dancer at the Ronacher theater, she was spotted and chosen to act in films, where she rose to stardom. Within yet another doorway, the revolutionary dancer Loie Fuller (1862-1928) is elaborately draped in a flowing blue floor-length cape. Fuller seems to glide sideways on the threshold, sweeping across in an iridescent, flickering motion. She performed at the Theater and Folies-Bergere as a shadow dancer and skirt dancer, creating new illusionistic effects on stage through combinations of electric lights with mixed colored filters and veiled costumes. She transformed her body into an ethereal image with skirts of moving silk in tinted colors. As an expatriate American, she introduced Isadora Duncan to Europe as well as inventing and patenting chemical mixes

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for colored gels and slides used in her dances. Otero, a South American dancer, stands posed as though a bullfighter in a red cape extended into a semicircle by her raised arms. Grounded firmly on the mantel above the doorway (as opposed to rising from foam), with her shoulder length raven hair and wearing dancer's tights, Otero is a defiant Venus, emerging from her shell-like red cape, giving "birth" to herself as a staged persona. Spero activates these innovative entertainers, re-presenting their images along with their stage-name signatures, as performers who contributed to the ecstatic languages of dance, music, and theater. She presents them in the flow of history and myth, as a part of the movement of early twentieth century modernism.

Spero's figures, tightly woven into the fabric of Blau's interior design, reinforce the notions of both choral collaboration and individual voices in the theater arts and popular entertainment. Her chosen figures, and her re-presentation of them in relation, counter the mechanized depiction of iconic American kickline "girls" as representative of a singular modernism.[105] Spero's centrifugal and varied installation offers another strand of modernism to oppose the dominant image of Busby Berkeley's machinelike spectacles of women transformed into lines and patterns made up of identical female cogs within a grinding mechanism. For appearing also at the Ronacher were the famous kickline dancers, "The Tiller Girls," named after the British cotton magnate and former army sergeant, John Tiller. "The Tiller Girls" reflected mass production in their perfectly synchronized movements and identical appearances. Josephine Baker, while most often cast racially as the exotic "other," as spontaneous, wild, and uncultivated, performed a conscious antidote to mechanization; she ridiculed the precision act and disrupted the assembly-line. Baker's purposeful, grotesque excess seized control of the spectacle.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Spero re-presents this aspect of Baker, clothed in tantalizing short-shorts, employing masks and gesturing to parody representation.[106]

In its relation to the whole ensemble and architectural space, Baker's double-edged, politicized and theatrical image sets in motion multiple, complex associations in continuous engagement with each other and with historical memory. While embodying the fantasy and illusion of theater, Spero's printed "cast of characters" call attention to re-presentation itself and its fashioning of identity within both particular details and the broad sweep of the mosaic of cultural histories. The sky-blue panels of condensed cultural histories/mythologies become an open-ended chorus of individual and collective voices.

Spero's wall paintings from 1990-1994 subtly and successfully integrated her major themes of the celebratory (embodied in soaring and dancing) or the life-affirming with the realities of the political and historical (a new lexicon of women's history) in full engagement with architecture and its meanings. In the museum environments at Smith College, the Circulo in Madrid, the Von der Heydt-Museum in Wuppertal, and the Jewish and Whitney Museums, Spero's wall paintings transformed the galleries into sites of encounter with memory, collective commemoration, and the possibilities of redemption in action. By bringing together powerful synesthetic forces with the conjoining of sign systems, Spero's image-signs inhabited space, dependent on the shape and characteristics of the architectural field and format as well as the image-signs' relative proportions and the axes of perspective from which they are viewed; these elements act in concert with expressive printing techniques that influence the viewer's 'reading' of space. To achieve these effects, Spero insists on shifting the ground (horizons and axes) from under the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

viewer's feet, while her gesturing images and caesuras imitate the interplay between repetition and temporal unfolding, creating fractured, cinematic freeze-frames impossible to take in all at once.

Thematically, Spero sought to illuminate the ambiguous underside and layered remnants of emotions, following the traces of a dialogue between individuals and cultural symbolisms. As a consequence, the sacred and profane are not bifurcated but interwoven. With these installations, Spero extended her goal of breaking down the hierarchies distinguishing separate, impenetrable realms: transcendent/polis, metaphysical/political, fine arts/decoration. The artist's figures, interacting in new contexts, emphasize movement, relationship, and process rather than static art objects. Thus, imaginative recreation within living contexts is required of the viewer in Spero's interweaving of political and metaphysical realms, revealing the contrapposto in human sensibilities. In addition, Spero's poetics of installation aims to perform the incantatory force, palpability, and physicality of a gestural language in the dynamics of the compositional structure of the installation in order to resonate with the theme of recovery from obscurity into the illumination of history and remembrance.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Notes

[1] Irene Sosa, Spero's video and film documentarian, in a taped conversation with the author, 3/10/00; Sosa noted while filming this installation that Spero had realized a breakthrough in the expansion of the emotional range of her themes within the ephemeral performance at Smith College Museum of Art. As was her usual practice, Spero conversed about her themes -- and art and culture generally -- with people who entered the site, attracting the attention of the entire museum staff, including guards and students. The first day's work was erased as Spero rethought the visual/textual relationships alone during the evening. Spero recognized that each assistant and student had an idiosyncratic way of printing, as a defining signature, and Spero used these individual differences while she orchestrated the direction of the printing process. Toward the end of the four day project, Spero walked around the installation touching up areas and purposely smudging other areas she thought too perfectly or neatly printed, fine-tuning with delicacy the details and tonality of the whole.

[2] See Julia Kristeva's discussion of melancholy and mourning sublimated within the creative arts in *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

[3] See Anna Chave's discussion of the personal biographical elements or references interwoven in the works of Minimalist artists which were historically elided and withheld by their rhetoric in her essay, "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power," *Arts Magazine* 64, no. 5 (January 1990): 44-63. As Chave notes, the titles of Stella's paintings from the 1950s through the 1970s often belie and complicate their deadpan formalist tenets: *"Die Fahne Hoch!"* ("Raise the Flag High," 1959, taken from a Nazi marching song) and *Arbeit Macht Frei* (from the inscription over the gates at Auschwitz). While during this early period Stella held stringently to painting's presence as object (Michael Fried's "objecthood") and the logic of painting's formal abstract structure as content ("what you see is what you see"), he came to embrace allegory and narrative suggestion by 1986 with the publication of his Charles Eliot Norton Lectures at Harvard University, *Working Space* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

[4] Erika Hoffmann Koenige quotes Spero, "Interview with Nancy Spero" [March 5, 1991] in Sabine Fehlemann, *Buchstaeblich: Bild und Wort in der Kunst heute*, exh. cat. (Wuppertal, Germany: Von der Heydt-Museum, 1991)., 98-101. P. 100.

[5] Kathleen Fraser, "Letter from Rome: H.D., Spero, and the Reconstruction of Gender," *MEANING* 10 (November 1991), 41.

[6] H.D., *Helen in Egypt*, Intro. Horace Gregory, (New York: New Directions, 1961), 18-19. Spero's 1961 copy of H.D.'s epic poem includes underlined passages, brackets, and annotations. Spero noted that H.D. had composed her poem with several voices, commentary in prose, and mixed genres as part of the difficult task of translating a symbol in time: "So they fought, forgetting women, hero to hero, sworn brother and lover, and cursing Helen through eternity," from H.D.'s "Helen in Egypt," Book 2, 4. Spero underlined and bracketed synesthetic passages which evoked sound or rhythmic movement, "I will count the tread of my feet, as a dancer counts, faster or slower," 64. The artist also underlined Horace Gregory's conclusions in his introductory essay: "Troy's end became the center of a galaxy of myths, a cycle in which the present tense is in a continual process of becoming (which is the language of poetry), in which the past becomes the future," Introduction, viii. Spero noted that H.D.'s recasting of the myth of Helen initiated an exploration of the themes of rebirth and resurrection.

[7] Joseph Campbell translates and discuses "The Descent of Inanna," in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), 108. Spero's library includes Campbell's text.

[8] Bertold Brecht, "Ballad of Marie Sanders: The Jew's Whore," *Bertold Brecht: Bad Time for Poetry?*, ed. and trans. John Willet (London: Methuen, 1995), 67-68.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[9] Ibid., 68; Julius Streicher was Gauleiter of Franconia and the editor of the viciously anti-Semitic publication *Der Sturmer.* Streicher was tried at Nuremberg and hanged.

[10] See in Spero's library, Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht,* trans. Anna Bostock, intro. Stephen Mitchell (London: New Left Books, 1973), "Introduction," xii-viii.

[11] See Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht,* trans. Anna Bostock, intro. Stephen Mitchell (London: New Left Books, 1973). Benjamin had been a friend and supporter of Brecht from 1924-1939. Benjamin articulated Brecht's concept of "Epic Theater," which included the strategic use of montage and allegory to connect the dissimilar in order to shock the audience into new understandings and a recognition of disjunction. Benjamin wrote that the major constructive principle of the artistic imagination in the age of technology would necessarily deploy montage and allegory as opposed to seamless verisimilitude, naturalism or illusionism. With regard to these non-naturalistic theater techniques, Benjamin notes that Brecht had studied Medieval mystery plays and their use of role playing protagonists who exchange roles and identities within a montage-like structuring, xii-viii. Becht sought models to redefine a gestural mode, employing interruption in the stream of illusion, while retelling old stories in new ways to force a shake-up and rethinking of givens, 3. Benjamin championed the strategies of Dada and the use of photomontage to mitigate against illusionism.

[12] See Meyer Schapiro's discussion on the semiotics of sign systems within varying contexts, "On Some Problems in the Semiotics of Visual Art: Field and Vehicle in Image-Signs" (1969), reprinted in *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist and Society* (New York: Braziller, 1994), 12-22.

[13] See Albert B. Friedman, "Ballad," *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics,* Alex Preminger, ed. Enlarged Edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 62-64.

[14] Brecht, 67.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Robert Enright quotes Spero on *Marie Sanders,* "On the Other Side of the Mirror: A Conversation with Nancy Spero," *Border Crossings* no. 76 (November 2002), 33.

[17] See Spero's article, "Ende," *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 6, no. 1 (1987): 3-11. Linda Nochlin had discussed and illustrated *The Beatus Apocalypse of Gerona* in her important essay, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *Art News* 69, no. 9 (January 1971): 22-39, 67-71. See Meyer Schapiro's discussion of the same medieval text in "The Beatus Aplocalypse of Gerona (1963)," reprinted in *Late Antique, Early Christian and Mediaeval Art: Selected Papers* (New York: George Braziller, 1979), 319-328.

[18] Robert A. Maxwell discuses each of the points below as characteristic of the codex in his article, "Sealing Signs and the Art of Transcribing in the Vierzon Cartulary," *Art Bulletin* 81, no. 4 (December 1999): 576-597.

[19] These points are reiterated by literary historian Mary Carruthers in "The Poet as Master Builder: Composition and Locational Memory in the Middle Ages," *New Literary History,* no. 4 (Autumn 1993): 881-904, and by the classical art historian Richard Brilliant, "The Bayeux Tapestry: A Stripped Narrative for Their Eyes and Ears," *Word and Image* 7, no. 2 (April/June 1991): 98-119. The influence of the *Bayeux Tapestry* as a model for a building an alternative narrative structure for visualizing epochal history was significant for Spero from the time of years at the CAI as a student. Spero combined her exploration of the tapestry's motifs and composition with her serious on-going reading of and listening to spoken poetry (especially, listening to BBC and NPR radio stations at night).

[20] See the classicist art historian (Rutgers) Jocelyn Penny Small's article, "Time *in* Space: Narrative in Classical Art," *Art Bulletin* 81, no. 4 (December 1999): 562-575.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[21] Author's taped interview with Samm Kunce, 3/29/00.

[22] See Brian Friel's "Foreward" in William Kelly's *Murals: the Bogside Artists* (Derry, Northern Ireland: Guildhall Press, 2001), 4-6.

[23] See Anthony Buckley, ed., *Symbols in Northern Ireland* (Belfast, NI: Institute of Irish Studies, Queens University, 1998).

[24] Neil Jarman, "Violent Men, Violent Land: Dramatizing the Troubles and the Landscape of Ulster," *Journal of Material Culture* 1 (1996): 39-61.

[25] See Valerie Morgan, *Peacemakers? Peacekeepers? Women in Northern Ireland 1969-1995* (Londonderry, NI: INCORE, 1996).

[26] Kunce interview, 3/29/00.

[27] See Helen Harris and Eileen Healy, ed., *'Strong About It All... ' Rural and Urban Women's Experiences of the Security Forces in Northern Ireland* (Derry, NI: North West Women's/Human Rights Project Publications, 2001).

[28] Fionna Barber, "TSWA in Derry," *Circa, Art Magazine* (Belfast, Northern Ireland), no. 55 (January/February 1991): 25.

[29] Tony Bartley interviewed Spero in "New York Conversation," *The Big Spoon* (Belfast, NI) 3 (Spring 1995): 18-19.

[30] Ibid, 19.

[31] See Neil Jarman's discussion in "Painting Landscapes: The Place of Murals in the Symbolic Construction of Urban Space," *Symbols in Northern Ireland,* (Belfast, Northern Ireland: Queens University, Institute of Irish Studies, 1998). Jarman emphasizes that while murals appear to be finished artifacts, they actually mark the beginning of a complex social/politcal life which extends their impact after they have been painted over or destroyed. Murals are obviously contextualized in the city streets, but they can also be photographically documented and electronically transformed. Derry murals are circulated as illustrations for party publications, as posters, postcards, web sites, and as film and TV images as well as art book images. Jarman notes that after the British government put a ban on the broadcasting of actual voices of supporters of both republican and loyalist paramilitary groups, images of mural paintings became a way to convey the invisible presences of paramilitary gunmen. The murals became metaphors for violence and were shown nightly on news reports and in documentaries. Reporters and narrators would use the murals as frameworks for their TV reports. Murals became metonyms for the 'Troubles' of Northern Ireland. They extended the territorial reach of local propaganda. Even today, the local Derry press report the appearance of new murals as items of vital interest. Thus the murals remain a crucial part of the political process and signify place, endlessly carrying local messages to unforeseen sites globally.

[32] Thanks to Harriet Senie for her discussion of these issues and her suggestions offered on 10/31/03.

[33] Mar Villaespesa, ed., exh. cat, "The Imperative Dream," *El Sueno Imperativo* (Madrid, Spain: Circulo de Bellas Artes, 1991), 108-118.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Spero first painted a Medusa head in *Victim, Eagle, Medusa Head* (1969, Figure 24) for the *War Series.* See Thalia Phillies-Howe, "The Origin and Function of the Gorgon Head," *American Journal of Archaeology* 58 (1954): 221-235. Meant as an apotropaion to petrify the enemy, the Medusa conceit was

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

used to signify the triumph of reason and virtue over the emotions and the irrational. Homer's *Odyssey* tells the tale of Medusa, an underworld deity, fluid and monstrous, associated with flux and nature in its primeval chaotic state. Ovid popularized the Medusa tale in his *Metamorphosis,* describing Perseus' decapitation of Medusa while she slept. She awoke to her death with a shriek, caught in Perseus' mirror for eternity. In myth, the mirror image of Medusa had the power to turn men to stone, although it had no effect on women against whom Perseus used a sword. According to Phillies-Howe, the myth of Medusa evolved as a response to primal fears of the unknown and the irrational in nature, externalizing these primordial fears in masks and shields for psychological protection. As such, the Medusa was a symbol of human aggression made to overcome human-created fears.

[36] Almost immediately after her Madrid installation, Spero traveled to Munich in April, to continue her exploration of the representations of Athena/Minerva at the famed Glyptothek Museum, where she was invited to install framed scroll works in the galleries containing classical sculptures. Louis I of Bavaria founded the Museum collection and commissioned Leo von Klenze to design the neo-classical structure, the Glyptothek Museum, which was built between 1816 and 1830. Its severe Ionic portico contains classical sculptures in niches, while the interior structure features dominical vaulting to house its collections from Greek and Roman antiquity. Intrigued by Spero's frequent and repeated sourcing of reproductions of classical art in her contemporary works, Dr. Klaus Vierneisel, Director of Antiquities, invited Spero to mount some of her multi-paneled works on paper amidst the classics. During the process of printing the scrolls, Spero added images from some of the museum's holdings to her 'cast of characters:' Maenads (mythic beings who emerged from the wilderness accompanied by wild beasts) from the Brygos-Painter's Attic drinking cup; a Greek vase; a Cnidos Aphrodite, after a copy by Praxiteles; an "Athena Warrior," from the Temple of Aegina (c. 480 BCE), as a divine director of the battle between Greec and Troy. This installation of Spero's framed panels, encased like museum objects, did not integrate with or share the ground/surface of the walls or architectural elements. Thus the figure/ground relationships were not scaled to the architecture and did not encompass critical aspects of the wall painting installation. See Klaus, Vierneisel, ed., *Nancy Spero in der Glyptothek; Arbeiten auf Papier 1981-1991,* exh. cat. (Munich: Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek, 1991).

[37] Susan Harris quotes Spero, "Dancing in Space," *Nancy Spero,* exh. cat. (Malmo, Sweden: Malmo Konsthall, 1994), 22.

[38] O'Connor employs this term in discussing the earthworks and installations of Robert Smithson, James Turrell, and Christo. Francis V. O'Connor, from his unpublished lecture, "Introduction to the Mural as an Art Form," in his series of seven lectures, "The Mural in America," delivered at the National Academy of Design in 2002, n.p.; http://members.aol.com/FVOC.

[39] In Spero's library, Edith Hamilton's twenty-third edition of *Mythology* (New York: Mentor Book, The New American Library, 1964), describes Pallas Athena (Minerva) as "grey-eyed" and "pre-eminently the Goddess of the City, the protector of civilized life, of handicrafts and agriculture; the inventor of the bridle, who tamed horses for men to use," 29.

[40] Irene Sosa in a taped interview with the author, 3/10/00.

[41] Almost immediately after she installed *Minerva, Sky Goddess, Madrid,* including its subtext, *The Crowd,* Spero installed a long hand-printed scroll on paper, which she titled, *The Crowd* (1991), at Josh Baer Gallery, mounted near ceiling height.

[42] William Arrowsmith, "Chorus," *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 124-125.

[43] Spero was interested in ancient folk humor (for example, reinterpretations of the Celtic Sheela-na-gig) which erupted into the carnivalesque during the Middle Ages. Jo Anna Isaak had recognized and discussed this carnivalesque quality in Spero's scrolls and the works of a number of feminist artists in Isaak's *Feminism and Contemporary Art: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter* (London: Routledge,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1996) elaborated from her earlier essay "Nancy Spero: A Work in Comic Courage," in *Nancy Spero: Work Since 1950*, exh. cat. (Syracuse, NY: Everson Museum of Art, 1988), 25-37. As Isaak notes, during carnival festivals, the prohibitions, norms, privileges and orders of rank were suspended temporarily. Chaos and the comic reigned. Medieval tenets of asceticism, sin, atonement and fear of God were sidelined in favor of parody, satire and mimicry. Aimed at the Church and the social order, this form of ancient communal laughter was often maintained by Cackles, women who oversaw the cyclical gatherings associated with childbirth and other rites of passage. Women had a special relation to the kind of irreverent and subversive laughter of the carnivalesque; they were perceived as sisters of the fallen Eve, agents of sin, and incarnations of the diabolical in the Medieval and Renaissance debates known as the *querelle des femmes*. Women's generative powers and sexuality, all of their bodily functions, were to be controlled lest they wreak havoc on society and the souls of the community. Spero and other feminist artists working in the 60s and 70s employed the ancient notions of laughter and the carnivalesque as strategies in subverting the socially constructed, traditional representations of women.

[44] See the Museum's catalogue of the collection, *Bildfuhrer, Eine Auswahl neuer Gemalde des Von der Heydt-Museums, Wuppertal* (Bonn: VG Bild-Kunst, 1996).

[45] Author's telephone conversation with Erika Hoffmann Koenige, 1/7/00, and subsequent emails and faxes, 1/13/00. The Hoffmanns began by collecting works of Italian Arte Povera movement and the Zero Group, and then, Russian Constructivist art. Andy Warhol painted a diamond dusk portrait of the Hoffmanns in 1980 and Blinky Palermo painted a mural in their offices. The Hoffmanns commissioned Frank Stella to design a maquette for an architectural proposal in 1990, to build a Kunsthalle in Dresden, which was never realized.

[46] *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 642-645.

[47] Erika Hoffmann Koenige, "Interview with Nancy Spero" [March 5, 1991], in Sabine Fehlemann, *Buchstaeblich: Bild und Wort in der Kunst heute*, exh. cat. (Wuppertal, Germany: Von der Heydt-Museum, 1991), 100-101.

[48] Author's interview with Samm Kunce, taped on 3/29/00.

[49] Author's notes from a visit to the site in Wuppertal on 4/4/00.

[50] It is important to note that several months after Spero's installation was completed vitrines were set up directly across from the wall printing, along the wall containing the arched windows. The vitrines contain religious and secular objects made of gold and silver which once belonged to prominent Jewish families who lived in Wuppertal-Elberfeld. Menorahs and tabernacles from the turn of the twentieth century are what remains of a thriving Jewish community. Left to the City Museum, these objects of the dead present a memorial to a segment of Wuppertal culture that was erased. Spero's installation, *Marie Sanders*, is now experienced in relationship to these cultural/religious objects representing the dead. In Chapter 4, a discussion of this memorializing, yet dialogic aspect of Spero's installations is presented.

[51] Thanks to Susanne Altmann for her email comments to the author concerning the literary implications of printing in lower case letters in German experimental modernist and postmodernist writing, 12/4/02.

[52] Kunce interview, 3/29/00.

[53] Nancy Spero, "Artist's Statement," Xeroxed exhibition hand out, April 23, 1991, n.p.

[54] For an examination of events surrounding the death of Mendieta see Robert Katz, *Naked by the Window: The Fatal Marriage of Carl Andre and Ana Mendieta* (New York: Atlantic Monthly, 1990). Spero and Golub had introduced Mendieta and Andre in the mid-1970s.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[55] John Perreault and Peter Barreras del Rio quote Mendieta in *Ana Mendieta: A Retrospective* (New York: New museum of Contemporary Art, 1987), 28. See also, Michael D. Schwartz, *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). Schwartz describes Jewish magical texts of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, defining the ancient roots of magic as bridging gap between internal experience and external behavior in ritual, and functioning to transmit the message of culture. Scribal activity was defined as an act of interpretation; oral performance or incantation texts were reserved for evoking healing, prosperity, invisibility, virility, wisdom, love and hate. Ritual served to trigger memory, and magic was tied to authority, according to Schwartz.

[56]Kunce interview, 3/29/00.

[57] Robert Storr, *Devil on the Stairs: Looking Back on the Eighties*, exh. cat.(Philadelphia: ICA, University if Pennsylvania, 1991).

[58] Robert Storr, "Nancy Spero: Central Issues – Peripheral Visions," *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950*, 45-60.

[59] See Susan Goodman, "Eight Artists: A Cultural Context," *From the Inside Out: Eight Contemporary Artists*, exh. cat. (New York: Jewish Museum, 1993), 34-35, 44.

[60] Jon Bird quotes Spero in his essay, "Dancing to a Different Tune," *Nancy Spero*, 82.

[61] Nelly Sachs, *O the Chimneys* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970).

[62] Author's taped interview with Shari Zolla in New York, 3/7/00. Zola also noted that the installation took five days to complete, which was the average length of time for an installation of this size. She commented that the use of natural light to spark compositional structure and bright, bold color would signal new formal directions in Spero's installations as well as in cut-out collage scolls. Zolla said that there were many passers-by who commented on the installation as it progressed, and that Spero was always congenial to conversation, questions, and comments. Spero was curious about multiple, individual reactions to her installations. She had also developed the longstanding habit of bringing food into the site to feed assistants and staff, spending time getting to know the guards and custodians, and generally talking to everyone on site. This pattern is worth noting because Spero integrates the dialogic process not only into the installation performance with her assistants, but also within the institutional framework on site, in the studio, and in her research, on all levels of production.

[63] Spero is well aware of the issues surrounding the critique of aestheticizing suffering and violence, especially in figurative visual art. Between Pygmalion's power to shape and enliven (life) and Medusa's power to freeze and stay the moment for eternity (death), lies an aesthetic distance between the artist and model/other; as one of Giovan Battista Marino's character's cries out to the Baroque painter, Caravaggio, in his Renaissance ekphrastic poem, "Medusa": "Do you not see that while you are revivifying the bloody throng of infants you are giving them a new death? O compassionate even in cruelty, gentle artificer, well you know that often horror goes with delight." See Marino's poem translated and a discussion of this subject of the word/image conjunction in the depiction of the horrific in human experience in Elizabeth Cropper, "The Petrifying Art: Marino's Poetry and Caravaggio," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 26 (June 1991): 193-212, 207. Spero's artistic choice has been to eschew naturalism and literalism, preferring instead to embody discursive texts and images obliquely.

[64] Spero's mix of perceptual orientations alludes to layouts in newspaper and tabloid media, to her own studio floors and long tables where she works on composition and arrangement, and to her early exposure to flatbed printing press technique, including her father's letterpress alphabets. As Leo Steinberg first theorized in his important article, "Reflections on the State of Criticism," published originally in *Artforum* [10, no. 7 (March 1972): 37-49], this orientation is confrontational as "psychic address." It refers to work done on writing table tops and flat documentary surfaces and archives. Expanding the reductive critique of Greenbergian Modernism, flatness versus illusionism, Steinberg coined the term "flatbed" picture plane to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

indicate images energing from flatbed printing press beds, as exemplified in the early by 1950s by Robert Rauschenberg and Jean Dubuffet, who made pictures which no longer simulated vertical fields but opaque "flatbed" horizontals, 44. Spero imbricates the flatbed media-billboard fragment within a weaving of axial, isometric, heraldic, and floating perspectives.

[65] Spero is quoted by Marjorie Welish, "Word into Image: Interview with Nancy Spero," *Bomb* (Spring, 1994), 42.

[66] The poem, as printed in Spero's installation at the Whitney, is reproduced in detail in Jon Bird, Phaidon, 84.

[67] Ibid., 44.

[68] Interesting to note here is that Daniel Libeskind's design of the recently opened Jewish Museum in Berlin (1998) engages in just this type of bodily knowing and phenomenological cognition in walking the visitor through his intentionally disorienting and inhospitable labyrinth. Libeskind explicitly thematized and integrated bodily experience as a way of approaching one aspect of the Holocaust.

[69] See the discussion of ladder symbolism in multiple cultures in Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, trans. John Buchanan-Brown, *A Dictionary of Symbols* (New York: Penguin, 1996), 580-581.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Spero is among those who negate Theodore Adorno's famous dictum against the writing of poetry after the Shoah. Spero is philosophically closer to Hannah Arendt's position in re-valuing political meaning as a commitment to showing, observing, remembering, and recounting. Rather than withdrawing into the isolation of abstraction and academia, Arendt championed a life fully engaged with other people in the 'polis' of action and intensive dialogue. Julia Kristeva has written with reference to Arendt's position against Adorno's despairing for narrative and poetry in the expression of culture; "For Arendt, in fact [in contrast to Adorno], it is only by summoning the imaginary, including through the poetic deployment of narrative, that we are capable of thinking about horror." See Julia Kristeva, *Hannah Arendt*, trans. Ross Guberman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 96. Arendt saw the necessity to transform hubris and morbid obsession into the practical wisdom of "narrated action: an action constantly renewed and strange, and for those very reasons resurrecting." Ibid.

[72] Klepfisz has written on the feminist history of Eastern Europe and on the Jewish lesbian community; Irene Klepfisz, *A Few Words in the Mother Tongue: Poems Selected and New (1971-1990)* (Portland , OR: Eight Mountain Press, 1990).

[73] Irene Klepfisz's poem, "Death Camp," from Spero archives, unmarked file with typed Klepfisz poem.

[74] Paul Arnold quotes Artaud, "The Artaud Experiment," *TDR* 8, no. 2 (Winter 1963): 15-29, 21.

[75] Ibid, 24.

[76] See Kathleen Campbell, "Notes on the English mystery play," Austin College, TX, http://artemis.austincollege.edu/acad/hwc22/Medieval/english_mystery_plays.html. See also for links: http://library.marist.edu/diglib/english/englishliterature/medieval-lit/medieval-drama.htm.

[77] Richard Wollheim, "Painting, Drawing and Sculpture in the Reagan Years," Modern Painters, v. 5, no. 3, Autumn 1992, 49-53, 52-53. Wollheim discusses Spero's *Notes in Time on Women II* installed in Storr's exhibition at the ICA in Philadelphia, *Devil on the Stairs*. Florilegium is Latin, meaning to collect little flowers of composition, choice poems or epigrams by various authors, such as in an anthology. Nowadays it usually refers to a literal collection of flower illustrations, but its older meaning is a collection of writings, which relates to Spero's practices with archives of texts and images as discursive signs.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[78] Spero is quoted by Kate McQuaid, "Boys Keep Out," *The Boston Phoenix*, February 10, 1995, Sec. 3, 11. Spero continued to use repetition as a strategic reengagement by reinterpreting *Marie Sanders* for group show in Amsterdam in 1994, *Ik = Deander, Dignity for All: Reflections of Humanity*, Stichting Artimo, Beurs van Berlage, curated by Ine Gevers and Jeanne van Heeswijk. In addition, from October 1994 through March 1995, Vienna's daily newspaper, *Der Standard*, ran fragmented and close-up images from *Marie Sanders*, entitled *Woman/War/Victimage/Resistance*, curated by Vienna's Museum in Progress to integrate contemporary art into everyday venues such as newspapers. At first sight, the reader might not notice this shocking full-page image as an artist's project. For a discussion of the *Der Standard* project, see Sylvere Lotringer, "Explicit Material," *Nancy Spero*, exh. cat. (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), 100-109. See also, Stella Rollig, "Conversation with Nancy Spero," unpublished interview in Spero Studio archives, 3/11/1994, n.p. See also, Marcia Vetrocq's article on Spero's reinstallation of *Marie Sanders* at the American Center in Paris in 1995, in "Spero and Golub at the American Center," *Art in America* 83, no. 5 (May 1995): 44-45. Vetrocq stressed, "Spero's art requires an inwardness and persuades us that a private moral compass directs even the most public of her efforts," 45. Golub and Spero's works, including *Marie Sanders*, were featured in the exhibition, *War and Memory*, at the American Center, during the inaugural exhibition of Frank Gehry's newly designed building. The exhibition *War and Memory* traveled to MIT's List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, in 1995. See Katy Kline and Helene Posner, *War and Memory: Leon Golub/Nancy Spero Retrospective Exhibition, 1950-1994* (Paris: The American Center and Cambridge, MA: MIT List Visual Arts Center, 1994-1995).

[79] Elizabeth Sussman, "Coming Together in Parts: Positive Power in the Art of the Nineties," *1993 Whitney Biennial Exhibition*, with curators Thelma Golden, John Hanhardt, Lisa Phillips, exh. cat. (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993), 20.

[80] Nancy Spero, "The Whitney and Women," *Art Gallery Magazine*, January, 1971, 26-27. See Schlegel, 1-89.

[81] Ross is quoted by Deborah Gimelson (art and design critic for *Architectural Digest*), "The Show the Art World Loves to Hate," *Mirabella* (March 1993), 83. Gimelson's article in the women's fashion magazine had a reproduction of Spero's *Homage to Ana Mendieta* (1991) on page 83.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Author's taped interview with Shari Zolla, 3/7/00. Spero studio archive files, "1987 News" file, Bill Keller, "Was the Partisan a Jew? Echo of '41, Minsk U.S.S.R.," *The New York Times*, September 15, 1987.

[84] See Nechama Tec and Daniel Weiss, "A Historical Injustice: The Case of Masha Bruskina," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 11, no. 3 (Winter 1997), 366-377. See also the web site: http://www.ushmm.org/research/center/resistance/awards/minsk.php. Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, The Miles Lerman Center for the Study of Jewish Resistance, U.S. Holocaust Museum, Washington, D.C. A summary of Bruskina's fate described on the web site is as follows: Masha Bruskina was born into a Jewish family in Minsk, the Soviet Union, in 1924. She was forced to live in the Minsk ghetto with her mother after the arrival of the German Army in July 1941. Bruskina was an member of the Communist Party and joined the Minsk resistance movement. As a nurse at the hospital in the Polytechnic Institute, she cared for wounded members of the Red Army and helped the Red Army soldiers to escape by smuggling in civilian clothing and false identity papers. One of these patients informed on Bruskina and on October 14, 1941, she was arrested by the German authorities. She was tortured for several days but refused to give the names of partisan members. In order to terrorize the people of Minsk, the Nazi commander of the 707th Infantry Division, ordered a public hanging of the partisans without blindfolds or hoods. On October 26, 1941, Bruskina and two male partisans, 16 year old Volodia Shcherbatsevich and First World War veteran, Kiril Trus, were executed in front of a local yeast factory. The captured partisans had first been led through the streets with Bruskina wearing a sign stating that they were partisans. The Nazis filmed the proceedings.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[85] See a discussion of the 'doubling' exclusion of Jewish women's history in Andrea Liss, "(Im)possible Evidence," *Impossible Evidence: Contemporary Artists View the Holocaust*, exh. cat. (Reading, PA: Freedman Gallery, Center for the Arts, Albright College, 1994), 14.

[86] Author's taped interview with David Reynolds, 3/7/00.

[87] Author's taped interview with Shari Zolla, 3/7/00 and a taped interview with Samm Kunce, 3/29/00.

[88] Interview with David Reynolds, 3/7/00.

[89] Spero performed another version of *Homage to Ana Mendieta* at the Aldridge Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT, in May of 1995. The installation performance was documented by Irene Sosa, Spero's documentarian. Spero was invited by Richard Klein, curator and acting director of the contemporary Museum, to participate in *Drawn on the Museum*, an invitational exhibition of fifteen artists working in situ, including Sol LeWitt, Dorothea Rockburne, Vincent Desiderio, and Karen Finley.

[90] Dena Shottenkirk quotes Spero in "Dialogue: An Exchange of Ideas Between Dena Shottenkirk and Nancy Spero," *Arts Magazine* 61, no. 9 (May 1987): 35. Note also that Spero positions her work as within the genre of history painting, while stretching its boundaries: "But if my work is 'history painting,' which is how I consider it, it is equally immediate." Spero is quoted in "Nancy Spero/Leon Golub in Conversation with John Hutchinson," *Circa*, no. 36 (September-October, 1987): 30.

[91] Author's interview with Beatrix Pecha in Vienna, Ronacher Establishment, 5/3/02.

[92] See Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, ed., *Jewish Museum Vienna* (Vienna: Jewish Museum of the City of Vienna, 1993); Werner Hanak and Mechtild Widrich, *Wien II Leopoldstadt, Die andere Heimatkunde* (Vienna: Verlag Christian Brandstaetter, 1999); *Juden in Oesterreich/Jewish Austria*, special issue, *Past Presence* (St. Poelten: Institute for Jewish History in Austria, 2001). Spero read and used images from Rachel Salamander, ed. *The Jewish World of Yesterday, 1860-1938*, translation and essays by Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New York: Rizzoli, 1990).

[93] Author's taped interview with Shari Zolla, 3/7/00.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Gottfired Semper, "Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts or Practical Aesthetics," *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 181-263. See also for a discussion of Semper's theories and their influence on theories of modern architecture, Mark Wigley, *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995) and Beatriz Colomina, *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

[96] See Michael Muecke, "Mobile Foundations: A Reading of Complex Surfaces in Gottfried Semper's Treichler Laundry Ship," *Aurora, The Journal of the History of Art* 2 (2001): 72-113.

[97] According to Muecke, 106.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Frederick Hartt's definition of "contrapposto," from his "Glossary," *Art: A History of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture*, second edition (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1985), 979.

[100] Spero had read and photographed images from Bryan Hammond and Patrick O'Connor, *Josephine Baker* (Boston, Toronto, London: Bullfinch Press Book and Little Brown and Co., 1988). From this book,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Spero used two images of Baker in her "cast of characters": on page 118, a famous photograph of a cross-eyed Baker by Hoyningen-Huene taken in 1927 for Conde Nast and on page 29, Baker in short-shorts.

[101] See Jill Lloyd, *German Expressionism, Primitivism and Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991); LuLen Walker, "Le Tumult Noir," *The Black Craze*, exh. cat. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, National Portrait Gallery, 2000); Ean Wood, *The Josephine Baker Story* (London: Sanctuary, 2000); Petrine Archer-Straw, *Negrophilia: Avant-Garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s* (London: thames and Hudson, 2000).

[102] The contemporary filmmaker Spike Lee deploys similar tactics in his films, such as *Bamboozled.*

[103] Beatrix Pecha, 5/3/02.

[104] Ibid. Spero repainted and interpreted an illustration of a gouache by Toulouse-Lautrec, *Yvette Guilbert Taking a Curtain Call,* 1894, gouache on paper, 16 3/8 x 9 inches, The Rhode Island School of Design Museum.

[105] See Peter Jelavich's discussion of women's kickline dancing and notions of the Modern, *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 154-186. Kickline dances came to signify the modern metropolis and machine age precision, embodied in Taylorism ("scientific management" and time-efficiency studies) and Henry Ford's assembly lines. As a concept depicted by women kickline dancers -- the asexual, mechanical, cog within a system – the dismembered body parts move; the abstract configurations move as one single unit, representing energy, efficiency, and productivity. The kickline also has obvious militaristic overtones of discipline and replicability. Jelavich identifies in women's kickline dancing the depersonalization and fragmentation of modern life. On the other hand, the modern progress of women in the workplace, representing the "New Woman," employed as a typist, secretary, department store clerk, or other white-collar job, threatened male dominance and the status quo. The modern "New Woman's" bobbed hair and male attire, cross-dressing androgyny and burgeoning sexual freedom, caused anxiety in European and American societies, and thus gave rise to controlling mechanisms evinced in such cultural representations as kickline dancing.

[106] Ibid. Marlene Dietrich, the cross-dressing film star and Berlin cabaret performer, would soon appear in conjunction with Josephine Baker in Spero's installations; as a symbol during Weimar era of the "New Woman," Spero reworked a photograph of Dietrich in a white suit and beret: the phallic clothing of authority masculine. See Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes* (New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1983), 244. Valeska Gert was another German Cabaret performer who savagely parodied the mass media's images of mechanized or alternately feminized ideals of womanhood. Hannah Hoch, the Berlin Dadaist and collage artist, planned an "antirevue" for production in 1925, but it was never realized. Hoch wrote a characterization of one Berlin revue: "one of the kitsch-presentations that is geared only to sexual impact by brutal means," in Jalevich, 183. See also *Hannah Hoch, 1889-1978,* exh. cat. (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1989), 174-175, 215.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Chapter Four: Wall Paintings In Museums and Elsewhere, 1995-2001

Black and the Red

During 1993 and 1994, Spero had extended, within the paper scroll format, the theatrical and masking themes she had developed in the permanent wall painting in Vienna at the Ronacher Theater, *Premiere.* Calibrating her formal and compositional strategies within horizontally and vertically scaled scroll frameworks, she combined saturated hue areas to define both her figures and their geometric backgrounds. By further complicating the interplay among intensities of color relations in a structural and symbolic way – a strategy first fully developed at the Whitney Museum in 1993 -- Spero examined the implications of color without text and within the enveloping framework of her Heaven/Hell tableaux printed on paper scrolls. Oscillating between the "terribilita," a nether territory of the medieval world, with the flickerings of ecstatic possibility and cyclical rhythms, Spero produced the four paneled scroll, *Cabaret II* (1993, 20 x 440 inches), and a huge, twenty-two paneled scroll installation at Malmo Konsthall, Sweden, *Black and the Red III* (1994, 2120 in., Figure 64). The formal structures and layered content of these important scroll works would inform Spero's architectural wall paintings throughout the 1990s.[1]

In her bawdy and raucous scroll, *Cabaret II* (1993), Spero unleashed a parade of taunting and irreverent re-presentations of women which could be assembled and push-pinned to the wall in either a horizontal or vertical scroll format – as space opening simultaneously upward and downward in four stacked rows or as space unfurling from arm's length and extending along a horizon.[2] The artist's cabaret figures perform, mimic, and parody in a hieratic, iconic manner, rather than on multiple axes in sync with

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

architectural elements as in the case of the wall paintings. Continuing the performative themes of *Premiere*, Spero chose the cabaret to highlight its underground roots as well as the freedoms of cabaret as social critique, and its historical link to the Cabaret Voltaire, the birthplace of Dada (Zurich, 1915). An incendiary lipstick-red and ashen black define the figures of Thai "hospitality" women, whose bodies morph into those of nude body builders in high heels. Flexing their muscles, clenching their fists, and aggressively exposing their sex (like the Celtic Sheela-Na-Gigs), the subtly varying but rhymed, mutant images invert the stereotypes of "passive" or "exotic" Asian women. Defiantly, the Thai/body builder appears to shift her weight, kick-box, squat, and rock from side to side. The figures, with their stylized vulvas, are a mocking assault on Marcel Duchamp's fabricated representation of an exposed, supine female nude in his tableau, *Etant donnes* (1946-1966) at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the quintessential voyeuristic peep show designed from a masculinist point of view: a male sexual fantasy projecting the mythology of a passive female sexuality which is continually available, emerging from the backdrop of nature, symbolically associated with the female. In contrast to Duchamp's use of the simulated naked female as a vehicle for male desire, Spero's fully-frontal printed images defy the viewer's gaze with fearsome countenances and antagonistic gestures, daring the viewer's psychological and visceral engagement with an aggressive female sexuality. Spero counterpoints the arrhythmic, marauding contemporary Thai women in a visual dialogue with her striding and ferocious Gorgon figure, who dons the Egyptian Vulture Goddess's multiple, fluttering wings like Shiva's all-encompassing arms. The artist literally lifts these images to the horizonless foreground to secure them against oblivion and to project them toward the viewer's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

space; Spero foregrounds women of history and myth, masking and dancing on the paper's foreground edge.[3]

At the Malmo Konsthalle installation of the long paper scrolls, *Black and the Red III* (1994), Spero merged themes and figures from *Cabaret II* (1994, and *Cabaret,* 1991) as well as from the previous multi-paneled paper works, *Black and the Red* (1983) and *Black and the Red II* (1985). The title of the scroll, *Black and the Red,* has several references. One reference alludes to ancient Greek Black-Figure and Red-Figure vase paintings which depict both mythological and everyday scenes. Spero culled many of her most outrageous and provocative female figures from Red- and Black- Figure vases, such as her Greek Dildo Dancer, who grasps two huge dildos as she satisfies herself, printed in staccato rhythms across the panels of *Black and the Red III.* Spero ironically parodies the classically balanced, beautifully proportioned and silhouetted examples of Greek stylistic representation decorating everyday objects.[4] Another reference in the title is to Stendhal's novel, *The Red and the Black* (1830), written just after the July Revolution in Paris, when a red and black flag flew on Vendome Column, signifying a fight to the death. The novel was considered shocking and uncomfortably topical, politically and socially -- with murder at High Mass and cross-class adultery and treachery. Stendhal depicted the inexorable interweaving of the political and personal -- power relations in societal, religious, and military institutions – all themes consistently addressed by Spero. In Stendhal's novel, red was symbolized by a ribbon of the Cross of the Legion of Honor contrasted against the black of the protagonist's clerical robes, metaphors for life and death. Spero incorporated this deeply embedded literary symbolism into her densely allusive imagery.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

In addition, Spero integrates predominantly red and black silhouetted figures within heraldic, banner-like designs of varying striped and checkerboard patterns. The artist alludes to the history and associations of heraldic form via her mutant, often grotesque, images printed on the scroll format, structured by geometric color-patterning. Although prehistoric tribes and clans had designed symbols on shields and seals for identification, it was during the Christian crusades in the twelfth century that warrior-leaders (princes, knights, nobles) established heraldry as a permanent system for elaboration and application of insignias, solidifying hereditary patriarchal power.[5] Spero echoes and disrupts this historically masculinist, authoritative display of combat by weaving her non-hierarchical, irreverent procession of mythic and contemporary images of women seemingly "over and under" the banner-ground, unpredictably zigzagging and tumbling through the horizontal band of space causing a chaos of staccato time frames. Her irregularly printed, stylized, gesturing, and often simplified figures act as feminist "Heralds" or messengers, careening front-and-center as protagonists emanating from the fringes of canonical history.

By combining flat heraldic and geometric abstraction with figurative friezes in profile and en face in *Black and the Red III*, Spero continued to explore the permeable boundaries of figure/ground and abstraction/representation. She "quotes" her own version of the signature abstraction of Color Field Painting as well as the ubiquitous grid form of minimal art, but she reframes, manipulates, and punctures their conceptual underpinnings by running her geometric fragments through with emotional, metaphysical, and political figurative content. While the grid and the stripe have become modernist clichés, Spero's variously printed figures joust with geometry's symbolic purity and predictability -- its

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

implied logic and refinement -- in a reshuffling of axes.[6] An ancient Hindu tomb deity modeled with light and shadow emerges from a vivid red-and-black chessboard pattern, appearing to float; she is flanked by a scratched crotch-shot graffito, repeated, and scrawled upside down in silhouette, unrecognizable. A broad white caesura issues a schematic sketchy Aboriginal figure, followed by a syncopated line of pre-historic female goddesses. Bevies of the Thai/body builder emerge, their images alternately overprinted or under-printed, ghostly or solid, dancing across squares of red, black, and gold. A multi-colored, profiled Egyptian Acrobat (from the Temple at Karnak) stretches to protect scattered images on a horizontal, landscape-like field of color. A stylized bondage figure from a French pornographic magazine performs as though in a scene from The Passion, with paper panels unfolding the stations of suffering and transformation. Profiled Egyptian flute and lyre players assume their role as guides for the soul from *The Egyptian Book of the Dead,* while the Phrygian Goddess, Cybele presides, solidly relief-like, over another cycle of suggested movement in repeated silhouettes.[7]

Black and the Red III, installed with push pins around the meandering perimeter of the Malmo gallery at about eye level, alludes to the horizon or the junction of earth and sky meeting at their transitional point, a theme recurring in Spero's wall paintings (i.e., in Frankfurt and Madrid). The gallery space mediates the scroll and the scroll alters the perception of gallery space due especially to the architectural scaling of the installation, despite its restriction to the scroll confines. Vibrantly colored, with patterns of saturated primary reds, blues, and yellows, the panels are punctuated by the silent space of white, gray, and black passages. The dynamism of the rhythmic and arrhythmic conjunction of figures set in motion on the flow of bold geometric abstraction and white caesuras in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

space condenses cinematic time frames within the linear format wound completely around the space. The viewer is encircled, as in the vast scroll installations of 1970s and 1980s, but here, the color is rampant and the text is expunged. In the context of Malmo's architectural scaling, the geometric passages of solid color on which figures emerge and recede are informed as well by the Pompeian Villa of Mystery's bright Roman walls, studied years earlier by Spero when she and her family lived in Italy. These sacred-erotic murals were catalysts not only for an extension of the artist's "cast of characters" but also for pictorial and graphic strategies impacting the meanings and the experiences of architectural space; rites of passage depicted on the Villa's wall surfaces are represented within ambiguous, dream-like spatial levels divided by geometric frameworks painted with "Pompeian Red," black, and yellow. Thus, the interplay of Spero's themes and formal strategies in her scrolls installed at Malmo informed the conceptual expansion of her wall installations and the formal experimentation with fabric or banner installations to follow.

A Cycle in Time

In 1995, Spero translated the intense coloration and heraldic pictorial format of *Black and the Red III* in her first textile banner installation, *A Cycle in Time* (Figure 65), at the Residenzgalerie in Salzburg, Austria. During the summer of 1994, Roswitha Juffinger, Director of the Residenzgalerie, had invited both Spero and Golub to create contemporary artwork inspired by the museum's collection of European paintings, spaning the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Since 1992, Spero and Golub had been Visiting Artists and Professors at the renowned International Summer Academy of Fine Arts in Salzburg, directed by Barbara Wally, and during their summer stays, they became

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

familiar with Museum's collection displayed within the fifteen renovated period rooms designed in the neoclassical-style as the former residence of Salzburg's Prince-Archbishops.[8] Spero was eager to peruse the collection for possible additions to her "cast" members and to engage new materials in architectural contexts.

For the installation, *A Cycle in Time,* installed in the Residenzgalerie's white-walled exhibitions gallery, Spero printed her figures with textile inks on a sewn multi-paneled, multi-colored silk banner 168 feet long by 30 inches in height. From the recessed ceiling with its simple neo-classical moldings, Spero's crew hung the banner by clear threads. Dipping and gliding rhythmically above the viewers' heads, the elegant, rippling banner imitated the fluttery display of ornamental accents defining Salzburg's Baroque and Rococo architectural bounty, while contrasting the austerity of the neo-classical-cum-modernist white interior. Spero's banner surrounded the viewer on three sides, following the configuration of the stucco ceiling and sweeping into a horseshoe-like flow of dynamic movement set against the white walls. Printed with colorful figures contrasting the solid red, black, blue, yellow, and white silk backgrounds, the images seem to break away from the colliding color planes, appearing to swirl toward the viewer in a reference to Baroque pictorial illusionism and use of intense contrasting coloration as well as to that period's signature curvilinear sensuality.

Amplifying the Baroque/Rococo theme, Spero added to her repertoire a hovering Rococo celestial figure from the Museum's collection: Bartholomaus Altomonte's (1702-1779) *The Four Seasons Paying Homage to Chronos,* a small-scale painting for a ceiling fresco from Schloss Neuwartenburg, Upper Austria (ca. 1730, oil on canvas, 74.5 x 95 cm.). A second figure recruited from the Residenzgalerie collection was the more

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

volumetric Baroque figure of a helmeted Pallas Athene, enthroned on a cloud projecting from a pilaster in Charles Alphonse Dufresnoy's (1611-1668) *Nausicaa's Vision* (n. d., oil on canvas, 117.5 x 148 cm.).[9] By choosing Altomonte's peripheral allegorical figure in the sky and not Chronos, the primary, enthroned subject, Spero snubs the god, and instead plucks an unnamed, weightless attendant, an anonymous wreathed being to accompany the mythic, allegorical Athena.[10] The artist creates "a cycle in time" to add to her epic notes on historic-mythological women within a non-chronological timeframe, disrupting Chronos's power. Employing a linear banner format, but then, crucially undermining linearity itself by fragmentation and disunity of time, Spero establishes cyclical movement "inside" the banner with her gesturing representations, and "outside," in the viewer's pathway around the horseshoe: a version of Aristotelian time as physicality unfolding or unfurling.[11] With her figures gathered primarily on the "interior" side of the horseshoe and with the "outer" banner side predominantly black but incorporating a trio of active figures in procession, Spero's induced cyclical motion repeats endlessly -- with the banner format circling back on itself. Through this strategy the artist sustains the themes of rebirth and reinvention -- the necessity of the flip side or the black void -- as a space of possibility and reentry. Spero's doubling format, merging the two 'sides' of one banner by folding and sewing, acts as a curious twist on the paradoxes of the Mobius strip, flipping the viewer's path back and forth in time and space within the gallery.

Spero and her crew printed and assembled the banner in the artist's New York studio (Figure 66). Arranging and rearranging the printed silk panels secured by clothespins on a clothesline stretching the length of the studio, the artist was able to

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

compose the ensemble of panels and to view the entirety. Once Spero determined the final composition and circling format, the panels were stitched together as a contiguous banner ready to be hung from the Salzburg ceiling just above eye level. Spero's process of draping silk panels on a clothesline to make her banner as well as her literal use of figured textile demarcations of space intuitively reflects ideas expressed by the German architect and theorist, Gottfried Semper, concerning the role of textiles at the origin of domestic architecture -- in the draping of textiles (cladding, clothing, carpets, mats) over mobile armatures.[12] According to Semper (and obliquely referenced by Luigi Blau in Vienna), the true representations of the "spatial idea" were nomadic textile structures emerging before the appearance of stable and grounded architecture; these textile origins are alluded to symbolically through ornamentation in the architecture of the Greeks and Romans.[13] In an attempt to obliterate the conceptual separation between structure and ornament predominant in the art historical hierarchies of the nineteenth century, and to establish color as an integral part of textile/architecture, Semper related spatial differentiation in the textile arts to the concept of a fence (a flexible demarcation, a protective fold). In a recent article on Semper's theory, the art historian Michael Muecke writes that the etymology of the word "fence," especially in the German language, is "related to the seam and sewing. *Saum* (seam) in German means border, edge, margin, and outskirts, or fringe, of a town. In Semper's theory the seam occupied the middleground between weld, suture or joint (*Naht*), and the band. 'Fold' and 'Fence' mark the simultaneous separation and joining of exterior and interior, wall and roof."[14]

Thus, Spero's German speaking audience had an added appreciation for her banner's symbolism and construction, its evocation of the fringes or margins and its

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

sutured doubling; the banner hangs slightly above eye level and a few feet away from the wall, encircling the viewer only to fold around to its "other" side. Spero folds and seams the joins of her figured silk panels to occupy a micro-thin middle-ground, embodying an infinitesimal boundary, paradoxically separating and conjoining perceived oppositions: inner/outer, private/public, mythic/historical.[15] Spero's banner, as a "cycle in time," constitutes in its material construction and installation an indeterminate realm of possibility, a materialization of a symbolic imaginary space.[16] Evolving simultaneously as structure and ornament on the artist's studio clothesline -- implying Semper's oscillation of vertical/figure/wall and horizontal/ground/carpet -- Spero's banner undermines the dichotomy of these binary paradigms even as it illustrates them. The artist reveals the seaming, cutting, and folding of her scroll/banner while highlighting the self-reflexivity of hand-printing techniques on silk (cropping, overprinting, under-printing, and skewing registration) and playing on architectural punning themes as in her wall paintings (countering the rectilinear moldings of the neo-classical stucco ceiling by forming a curving and dipping textile swathe). Her images and clothesline practice reference the symbols of dressing-up and masking as well as the intersection of the sacred (temple of art) and the profane (laundry on a clothesline in the studio), opening up a rift to further permeate boundaries.[17] In addition, the mobility of Spero's banner (and her scrolls, which can be rolled up and carried under the arm) alludes to nomadic decorated surfaces, historically linked by Semper back through prehistory to ancient festivals and processions.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Do It

Soon after Spero installed the textile banner in Salzburg during the first week of August, 1995, she further explored the territory of the draped clothesline in a video, *Do It* (1996), made by Hans-Ulrich Obrist, the Swiss curator. The video's title, *Do It,* references the revolutionary Yippie manifesto, *Do It: Scenarios of the Revolution,* published in 1970 during the height of the Vietnam War, written by Yippie co-founder Jerry Rubin, the prominent anti-war activist.[18] Obrist's brief but pungently ironic video, shows Spero in the process of clipping to a clothesline her cut-out Sheela-na-gigs alongside her underwear. As printed images, the artist's "paper dolls" are drying on the line with an array of varied bras, panties, and undershirts. Once the last pieces are hung, Spero turns to the camera and states, "A woman's work is never done. This is the ancient Celtic goddess Sheela-na-gig. I also have to hang my laundry up, too; I don't have a dryer; Well, I have to do the dishes now." Rather than a formally taped interview with the artist, Obrist's video presents a performance of a-slice-of-the-artist's-life-at-home, complete with Spero's parody of a polite, clichéd response as a stylized, sardonic masking. In *Do It,* the artist refuses to build a narrative or declare a manifesto for the interviewer, a la Jerry Rubin's *Do It.* Instead, she mundanely pins her laundry next to her prints on the line, mingling the worlds of domestic work and artistic work. Spero's repeated, cut-out image of the double-edged Sheela, as a dramatis persona and talisman, is joined with her washed undergarments, a form of the artist's absent body (a second skin) *and* the female artist's sexual, reproductive body. Spero makes public not only intimate, domestic, gendered "woman's work," consisting of repetition, production, and reproduction, but also the artist's/mother's bodily performance of art-making at seventy-

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

years of age. Spero fuses activities -- printmaking and washing clothes, production and reproduction -- normally perceived as separate, if not antithetical actions, and, by doing so, she mocks the male persona of the singularly focused, self-consumed, heroic artist.[19]

Spero's performance in *Do It* may be viewed as a veteran feminist's dry send-up of Rubin's misogynous political writings cloaked in revolutionary cant as well as a counterpoint-dialogue to portrayals of the hero-artist, especially Hans Namuth's film of 1951, *Jackson Pollock*, the authoritative representation of Pollock's 'unique' technique of dripping paint on glass in order to show his signature "drip" action from a transparent, worm's-eye view.[20] Spero "performs" – does it -- staying at "home" and doing "laundry," while directing her printing crew and "playing" with "paper dolls" in the studio. Spero's studio space, marked on one side by a free-standing wall dividing her studio from Golub's, segues into the kitchen/dining/sitting room. The artist positions her studio at the intersection of multiple-activity spaces. Her studio clothesline hinges the domesticity of the house and the activities of the studio with the theme of installation in the temple of art -- the Museum, set within the public sphere.[21] In fact, Obrist's video, *Do It*, was an integral part of Spero's installation at Jack Tilton Gallery in 1996, *Sheela at Home* (Figure 67), featuring the printed cut-out Sheela-na-gigs and the artist's underwear installed on a clothesline.[22]

At the time of *Do It* and *A Cycle in Time*, Spero told Hans-Ulrich Obrist that her "cast of characters," once printed in relationship to each other and assembled in new contexts in the museum, and elsewhere in real space, had become "like squatters," the images becoming active "characters" only when they "go into space."[23] Spero reiterated her transient, contextual, and seam-like or hinge-like conception of figure/ground

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

relations to Obrist: "You can't catch these figures. They're just running beyond one's reach."[24] The artist activates and shifts her characters' gestures in tension between the phenomenological experience in architectural space and an imaginary, symbolic space carrying metaphysical associations.

L'envol

Spero took another literal 'leap' with her figures in 1995 by moving them onto the Parisian skyline at a juncture within the Musee National d'Art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou. Spero's temporary installation, *L'envol* (1995, Figures 68 and 69), printed on the Pompidou's cylindrically shaped glass escalator, was part of a large, sprawling international group exhibition, *Feminin-Masculin: le sex de l'art,* dealing broadly and variously with gender issues, and including works by Spero, Marina Abramovic & Ulay, Vito Acconci, Mona Hatoum, Allan Kaprow and Robert Wilson, among others. Spero's crew included Shari Zolla, Alexa Kreissl, and Daniel Kerber, who were experienced installation printers. At the Pompidou, they tackled many logistical and technical problems on site amidst a crowd of artists, assistants, and staff.[25] For the first time, Spero and her assistants were printing with water-based inks on curved glass sections forming the arches of the cylindrical escalator tube. The rapid variations in condensation, sunlight, and shade on the slick working surface posed new challenges. The crew had to coordinate the movement and storage of supplies within a labyrinthine structure, transport polymer plates and communicate with headphones and walkie-talkies, in addition to problem-solving on an oftentimes unexpectedly "moving" escalator surface.

Designed by Renzo Piano (b. 1933) and Richard Rogers (b. 1937), the Pompidou Museum of Modern Art had opened in 1977, to much fanfare, as a colorful, multi-level

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

arts showcase: a structural metaphor for the marriage of contemporary technology with international culture. The building's structure is identified by its pre-fabricated expressionist lattice of exposed girders and pipes, its color-coded service elements, and the transparency of its inside-out fluidity.

Spero chose to emphasize the qualities of color and transparency by working in the glass enclosed escalator at the Pompidou, with its views of the City, including the Eiffel Tower in the distance. As the juncture point of the building's outer edge and the City, Spero envisioned her figures engaging with the escalator's inside-out transparency, its quality of natural light, and its continuous movement up and down, signaling a transition from one level to the next and back again. The glass support of Spero's installation, *L 'envol,* the French term for "flight" or "soaring," became the artist's ground from which she could send her figures soaring upward or descending downward. The inside-out transparency, so characteristic of the polychrome and glass Pompidou, would serve as a hinge or seam for an expansion of the artist's exploration of figure/ground relations. The escalator's diagonal up/down and cyclical movement as well as its opening onto subtly framed (arches of grey metal braces holding the glass) urban landscape views, offered the visitor a spectacular experience of moving panoramas of the City, while standing "still," but being carried silently along by the rotating belt of stairs. Spero sought to create the thinnest scrim of cinematic freeze-frames illuminated by the City's contrasting day and evening light, positioning the viewers within a kind of enlarged, circulating light box.

As in *Minerva, Sky Goddess, Madrid* and *Rebirth of Venus,* the transitional or dynamic point of meeting is a theme to which Spero returns conceptually and manifests

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

physically by responding to, and integrating, image, surface or support, architecture, sky and light. In *L'envol,* the artist combined a fluidity of "transcendent scale" (O'Connor's term) – the awesome or cosmic sky elements -- with the "architectural scale" of the Pompidou and the backdrop of Parisian historical and vernacular architecture. Spero's figures appear to fly into real space or alight on Mansard rooftops when they are overprinted and under-printed on an airy curve of glass, giving them a odd torque or spin, as in anamorphic figures seen at raking angles. The multi-colored images are printed as though emerging from different axes, varying in scale and orientation, coupled with the sky's atmospheric changes throughout day and against the lights of Paris at night. Spero compounds a feeling of vertigo in the cylindrical glass escalator by her occasional use of framing or background rectangles on which figures hover, leap, and sit; mysteriously bending checkerboards, stripes, and transparent black frames seem to arch and warp, holding a sprinting black-outlined Gorgon walking over vertical red stripes, while an opaque black silhouette of a cronish Yvette Gilbert holds the corner of a transparent plane framed by three black lines and one fuzzy red stripe: a "window" printed on a window for the viewer look through. Like a play within a play, Spero's characters pun and mime the conventions of art and its themes within a new framework: the glass walls of a modern art museum set in a City familiar to Spero, her former home and one of the world's great living art museums. Having studied objects spanning many eras and cultures displayed in Paris's museums, informing her ongoing "cast of characters," the artist assembled her polymer plates of images of all shapes and sizes in order to choose an appropriate chorus: Egyptian Sky and Vulture Goddess, prehistoric African cave figures, Aboriginal figures, Greek Dildo Dancers and Egyptian acrobats. A rhythmic dance of contemporary Olympic

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

runners and a reprise of Spero's earlier tongue-spitting heads from her *Codex Artaud* as well as a Speroesque version of a medieval woodcut image of Eve encountering the Serpent in the Garden form vignettes within an arching framework of darting images in pairs, trios, and constellations.

Spero enters the exhibition's general theme, *Feminin-Masculin: le sex de l'art,* via her female cast's embrace of the City and, in particular, her vignette of Eve holding a freshly plucked apple, addressing the winged serpent. The female serpent sports a wavy hairdo and fruitful breasts, fluttering wings, and curlicue scales morphing from a slithery tail, which projects her upright. Eve, with a smiling face and long, flowing red hair, has an awkward and ungainly body, as though newly discovering her grounding and physicality. A skein of snakes -- their S-shape rhythmically repeated -- move in sync behind Eve, entering a slice of landscape with vegetation on which the two females meet face-to-face. Spero seldom represents a contextual piece of earth/nature/ground to denote a fixed, traditional horizon, since her shifting "ground" is usually the wall or paper scrolls. But here, against the backdrop of Paris and sky, she "points" to a Garden representing an all-female creation -- as the ground of being manifest in the world. On the escalator's "invisible" glass surface, a slippery ground containing multiple perspectives through its transparency, Spero presents a singular panel of Eve and the Serpent in a Garden, a contextual fragment from the familiar Biblical story of Genesis.

The artist alludes to the Old Testament Eve in the moments after Adam and Eve have been created. Eve has already picked the apple from the tree, exhibiting curiosity and desire, as she speaks to the serpent. But while the Biblical Eve is generally characterized in patriarchal culture as "naturally" disobedient, weak-willed, seductive,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

cunning, and predisposed toward evil, Spero pictures her as actively seeking knowledge and allies her with the serpent as an archetypal complex linked to the wellsprings of life and imagination. As in her scrolls, Spero foregrounds the ancient symbolism of the serpent/snake as an embodiment of seemingly contradictory powers of life and death, seasonal creation and destruction, and rebirth and regeneration. Representing primordial formlessness, the snake has an ambiguous sexuality -- the reptile's body is phallic overall but its coiling is womb-like and encompassing, an *ouroboros.* The artist draws on these shifting serpent-attributes from archaic and classical mother goddesses, such as the Babylonian Tiamat, dragon goddess of the waters, as well as the from "lineage" of Ishtar, Isis, Cybele, Athena, Demeter, and the Cretan Serpent-Goddess, who have chthonian attributes.[26] In one of Spero's most important sources, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead,* the S-curved snakes depicted in the belly of the earth sometimes sprout wings and have hissing heads; as they swallow and expel, they signify immortality by facilitating the transformation of the dead on their journey to rebirth.[27] The serpent/snake as metaphor evades time, measurable space, and the rationalities of logic, escaping to the lower reaches and rising up unpredictably.[28]

Spero's Eve, who seems to have shed her old skin on the ground, is accompanied by her procession of "talking" snakes with tongues wagging, the same snakes who inhabited her *Artaud Paintings, Codex Artaud,* and subsequent scrolls. The artist thus pays tribute to the French poet, Antonin Artaud, Spero's first ventriloquized voice, which she transcribed, disrupted, and refigured into her *own* form of speech and graphic hieroglyphs. In addition, Spero quotes images from her earlier Artaud paintings and scrolls in a nearby glass panel: a chorus of phallic tongues issuing from blood-red and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

silhouetted-black faces (recalling the *Black and the Red* series, the themes of death and life) congregating on a semi-transparent rectangle of red. Spero revives her chorus of faces, signaling phallic speech among her gestural, soaring images. As Jon Bird wrote of Spero's application of the primordial associations of the tongue-as-phallus snake images in *Codex Artaud*, "the tongue-as-phallus is a repetitive hieroglyph... [Erich] Neumann remarks upon the universality of the phallic tongue as a symbol of power through the body (sexual, instinctive, unconscious), and the mind (the word, language, consciousness)."[29] In Paris, Spero nods to the discursive voices and masks that she usurped from Artaud, thereafter allowing her to "soar" with her "cast of characters."

L'envol literally and symbolically ascends and descends, joining light and darkness as complementary qualities within evolutionary cycles. The diffusion of light, atmosphere, and luminescence on the escalator's glass arches becomes a formal part of the installation and one of its metaphors. Light, as a primordial symbol, is often regarded as an attribute of the numinous as well as a transfiguring agent of enlightenment and knowledge.[30] Spero's retrieval and lifting of images into the light reflected on and filtering through glass rekindles a Gothic architectural theme of transparency, represented in the City's churches. Notre Dame, in particular, with its stained glass windows depicting Biblical scenes, classical prefigurations, and symbols, represents a diaphanous compendium for the formal and metaphorical use of light in structure and storytelling. Metaphysical ideas are given material reality and stories are taught through the stained glass windows, acting as memory aids within an ensemble of tightly woven parts in relation to the whole. Stained glass freed the Bible from its pages, allowing its stories to become visual tapestries, comprehensible to both the illiterate and the scholar. The

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

natural light falling on Spero's colorfully tinted images illuminates them from within, alluding to the translucency of stained glass, imparting an overall glow and an evanescence, a weightlessness accentuating the theme of flight. Light surrounds Spero's figures, giving them a seemingly infinite ground in the firmament, depending on the viewer's position and the City's weather conditions.

The reflective or doubling qualities of glass and light -- light being a significant structural/metaphorical feature of Spero's installations -- accentuate the shifting affective bipolarities -- both benign and malign -- of the psyche. In addition, the vehicle of the escalator's glass, in French "glace," signifies not only a glass panel or vitrine but also frozen ice, a reflective mirror, or a window.[31] These multiple aspects embedded idiomatically suggest an oscillation between the physical states of glass and water, further emphasizing reflective doubling (as in Tarot cards). Thus the mirror, as an ancient symbol of reciprocal awareness and self-knowledge, is a potent metaphor into the present, as in Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytical theory of the "mirror stage" in identity development.[32] Spero's *L'envol* keeps in oscillation these multiple allusions via her figures' outward reach beyond the boundaries of paper and toward, "limitless space as if some of the figures might jump from the wall to the sky or the city."[33]

Raise/Time

Earlier in February 1995, Spero had explored mirroring and doubling in quite a different museum site: the Arthur M. Sackler Museum of the Harvard University Art Museums. The artist and her assistant, Shari Zolla, traveled to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in February to install *Raise/Time* (Figures 70 and 71) in the Sackler's classical Greek and Roman galleries. One of the unique aspects of this installation was that all of the classical

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

objects remained in the skylight galleries on display while Spero, Zolla, and student assistants worked.[34] The artist was allowed the freedom to move carefully among the Greek and Roman objects as she intervened directly on museum pedestals, walls, skylight ceilings, and formal architectural elements. While in awe of the remarkable liberties given to her within the classical galleries, surrounded by precious objects from antiquity, Spero nevertheless boldly printed her figures onto an otherwise staid and linear, "monophonic" production display of "The Genesis of Western Civilization." To contrast the museum's apparently seamless story of classical art, Spero mined, formally and conceptually, the contradictions inherent in fragmented and echoing multiple perspectives.

Spero loosed her many-voiced female characters, sometimes as doubles or as figures lifted from near oblivion in order to deny the authority, solemnity, balance, and grace of the limbless statues and bodiless busts, elegantly and mutely lining the white walls of the museum galleries. More than a "friendly subversion," Spero's impinging performers in *Raise/Time* sporadically mocked and taunted in a critique operating on many levels: aesthetically, intellectually, socially and politically, mythologically and symbolically. [35] While at the same time, her figure's antics buoyed and extended the possibilities for "reading" and "appreciating" the classical objects in fresh, updated contexts. As Roberta Smith wrote of Spero's recontextualized images, "These animated silhouettes often suggest a slightly ragtag classical frieze that has broken formation to reveal its inner life, its hidden strengths and its darkest secrets."[36] Highlighting the double-edged qualities of the seaming/suturing of representation and display, Spero transformed the classical frieze, the oldest form of narrative painting, into "polyphonic"

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

terms via montage-like techniques and non-linearity -- eschewing teleological trajectories or hierarchies indicating a stylistic or narrative "beginning, middle, and end." Spero's architecturally scaled history/anti-history wall painting flaunted classical grammar and syntax, while simultaneously referencing the grave and the humorous. Her figures-in-relation to the gallery's "story of classicism" becomes a play of doubles-in-transit, transforming and acting on the classical objects.

How did such a conservative, scholarly institution as Harvard's Arthur M. Sackler Museum come to invite Spero to trespass on their permanent installation of Classical Art? James Cuno, the Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director of the Sackler, perhaps taking a cue from the Boston Museum of Fine Art's *Connections* series, asked New York based sculptor and Harvard College graduate (1981), Peter Soriano, to invite an artist to create an installation in the galleries.[37] Cuno had been a graduate student at Harvard while Soriano was an undergraduate, and he had known Soriano's sculpture as well as his curated exhibitions of contemporary art in the Fogg Museum's "Courtyard." Thus, while the Sackler galleries were undergoing painting renovations, Cuno decided to use the interval to focus on contemporary interpretations of the classical collections, and Soriano came to mind as curator.[38] Soriano had happened upon Spero's work at Soho's cooperative A.I.R. Gallery in 1979 (seeing her *Notes in Time on Women*).[39] Knowing that Spero's approach would recognize layers of history and time, "while avoiding their crushing weight," Soriano asked Spero to first visit the Sackler to decide on which galleries and objects she would engage in a dialogue.[40]

The Sackler houses not only Ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman art but also Pre-Columbian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, South and Southeast Asian, Near Eastern, and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Islamic art. Spero, in fact, found some new characters for her "cast" among these galleries, including a Cambodian dancing Apsaras (celestial musicians and dancers winged and bejeweled, in procession around Buddha), a Greek statuette of Aphrodite holding a dove, a Gorgon head from the handle of a bronze *Hydria*, and a Mexican Day of the Dead figure.[41] Keeping the eclecticism of the collections in mind, the British architect James Stirling had designed the building by drawing on the severity and complicated spatial relations of ancient temple complexes, while integrating streamlined neoclassical elements. The decorative qualities are overt in the historicism of the post and lintel detailing inside the galleries, where paraphrase and self-conscious referencing are apparent in the monumental entrance stairway, which attempts to reenact the awesome sense of scale associated with ascending the interior of an Egyptian pyramid. Looking from the perspective of a single gallery threshold, a vista of linked interiors is visible -- a changing cultural landscape. Sensitive to the cadences and allusions, scale and proportion of the architecture, Spero arrived on the scene with her crew, after having selected her "cast of characters" from her expanded repertoire.

Using the empty white walls of the two galleries as caesuras structuring her hieroglyphic notes, Spero engaged in a dialogue with the tactility of space and light, the objects and architecture. Like a Greek epic tale of remembrance, Spero's rhymed, "and then," caesuras enclose multiple timeframes as well as an eclectic architectural space. Her re-representations of female characters insinuate themselves at times by stealth, as ghost images or, alternately, charge straight ahead, fully frontal or in profile, toward the classically perfected and idealized images on display. While the Greek and Roman statues are the cultural embodiment of composure, discretion, and self-control, presented

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

in a monotone range, Spero's variously printed color images re-present the flawed body, the sometimes monstrous body, and the fluid body. Her images' "specificity and their refusal of closure," never allowing "a fixed or stable identity," encroach historically and intellectually on the cultural meaning and interpretation -- the authority -- of the surrounding statues and objects.[42] An orange-yellow version of the dancer Josephine Baker in black short-shorts, originally from the Ronacher Theater, heckles and mocks with upraised arms and flung-out hip, flying out from behind and at the tunic-level of an armless and noseless *Statue of Trajan* (ca. A.D. 120). Though the great emperor is regally frozen in marmoreal splendor in his military gear, he is nevertheless decaying and impotent, as Baker's lithe representation cavorts on the periphery near one of Spero's pink Greek Dildo Dancers sans-dildo, rotating athletically around the silhouette of Trajan's tunic hem. These "bad girls" are taking full advantage of Trajan's stasis and status by their jiggling movements and derisive gestures. Above Trajan's head, rhymed repetitions of the Dildo Dancer sans-dildo take flight and ascend, pointing to the space above the lintel of the room's threshold. There, a blue draped Aphrodite, the majestic goddess inhabiting the sky, leans toward an enlarged Celtic Sheela-na-gig, the twelfth century goddess of both fertility and destruction, who "frightens the frightful" and wards off evil.[43] Just as Sheela grins atop the entrances of old churches in England, so too here, she races like a crab, in duplicate, over Stirling's lintel, smirking gleefully, printed in yellows and lavenders, displaying her oversized vulva. She and the inverted Egyptian Vulture Goddesses, mirrored in black over the other lintel, occupy places of power and prestige, the thresholds of transformation and the point of contact between inside and outside, between the past and present. Spero points to this paradox by irreverently rhyming

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Sheela-na-gig's vulva with the black hole in the decorative lintel: "classical -- whole -- how can woman be universal if she has a hole?"[44] While creating a feminist subjectivity pushing the boundaries of decorum, Spero echoes Artaud's anti-classical stance favoring the un-unified: "All these gestures, these angular and abruptly broken attitudes, these syncopated modulations ... [create] the sense of a new physical language based on signs rather than words ... animated hieroglyphs."[45]

In the adjoining gallery, the Greek Dildo Dancer romps on a lintel near a dancing Cambodian Apsaras figure, while a stately Artemis, the goddess who heals women's pain, stands atop the lintel itself, an honorific protectress. Hugging the floor molding, a Roman Mourning figure in opaque black heads out through the doorway. She echoes a more diaphanous form of herself nearby, printed toward the bottom of a pedestal supporting a Roman *Amazon Sarcophagus* (late 2nd century A.D.), depicting the defeat of the Amazons by the Greeks. The draped mourning figures of differing scales and textures cling together as if for comfort and chanting. Near the fragmented, headless and armless nude Venus statue perched on a pedestal, Spero's Aboriginal acrobats fly, tumbling and lifting toward and into the skylight. The spare, fluid lines of the pale-colored but muscular acrobats complement the Venus nude, and seem to beckon her earthbound marble presence upward. Above a marble carving of a sleeping child, the sinewy and determined Olympic running figure has become androgynous, charging straight toward the viewer's direction, head-on. Constant optical, aesthetic, and conceptual readjustments add to the ambiguity of readings and feelings of displacement, calling on the viewer to physically "shift gears," to observe, for example, the differences between the scale and texture -- the presence -- of actual objects, and the Museum's photographs of objects in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

its collection, pointing to the distortions of photography which graft a sameness in coloring, scaling, and flattening of the objects. Spero thus reveals the varied discursive qualities manipulated by the artist in printing, photographing, carving, or painting.

Downstairs in the entryway, Spero's women occupy two tall square columns. Lithe rope jumpers skip around and up one column, flanked by the ascending repeated wing patterns of the Egyptian Vulture Goddess. The wing-beats give the illusion of lifting the columns toward the skylight above as their feathery forms arch upwards. The figure of a draped Aphrodite is repeated rhythmically as she climbs the column and winds around it; appearing mobile, delicately printed, and with a shimmering texture, she is the antithesis of a weighty and burdened caryatid. Visual, architectural puns abound. Spero's heraldic checkerboard squares of red and black support a bevy of interlocking Egyptian mourning women standing on the straight, blue line of the Nile, weeping and with arms raised toward heaven. The red and black squares are painted "expressively" with abundant "gesture," while the vertical and horizontal cobalt blue lines are coolly "straight-edged." Although some of the column-bound images defy gravity, other images, like the mourning women printed near the bottom of the columns, pull the visual weight downward by their dense compositional coloring, alluding to both Egyptian temple relief and Abstract Expressionist painting compressed into a single sequence.

Installed in relation to the Sackler's objects, Spero's images of women heighten the apprehension of the historically variable nature of the body-image as "pose," the social constructs solidified in different epochs, and collective forms of identity established by the dominant manipulations of representation. As Spero reiterated: "I believe I'm directly contradicting the way human beings are represented in our society. I

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

think the universal is the male. And so in my deliberately turning this around and trying to universalize the female -- the rites of passage for the women -- birth, puberty, childbirth, death would become the universal."[46] Her expanded "cast of characters" in the architectural context of Museum surveys and critiques representational styles, questioning the accepted image-reading as received experience and expression.[47] Spero's multiple sources of repeated images, not originated by the artist's hand in a single process, upset tenets of authorship and instigate further viewer questioning. Her anti-hierarchical, non-linear, and unpredictable approach enacted in and dependent upon site, floats a matrix of correspondences across time and space, whose meanings are left open-ended and whose vectors can go in any direction: "I wanted to depict women finding their voices, which partly reflected my own developing dialogue with the art world, that somehow I had a tongue and at least a part of the language of the world, there was an interchange. I'm speaking of equality, and about a certain kind of power of movement in the world, and yet I'm not offering any systematic solutions."[48]

By a kind of cumulative subversion, clothed in a variety of styles, scaling, and formal devices, Spero undermines the normative interpretations of the "classics" and of periodization generally. Within a cultural narrative representing the cradle of Western culture, where the gravitas of the idealized image of the body is the embodiment of that culture, Spero injects the changeable body of woman, jousting, assailing, and laughing irreverently. Like the medieval folk humor of the carnivalesque, Spero's female images deride the static, hierarchical, class and gender based societies of patriarchal culture, as Jo-Anna Isaak has noted: "She [woman] represents in person the undoing of pretentiousness, of all that is finished, completed, and exhausted."[49] In the midst of a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

scholarly display of marble "classics" (without their original coating of paint), designed as a highly aestheticized, self-conscious projection of power linked to beauty, Spero's women turn-the-tables on these preconceived notions and take flight within an intricate space of changing axes, scaling, tone, and texture. While Spero chose not to physically rearrange the classical objects or to reconfigure the gallery's format, her re-presentations nevertheless alter the "reading" of space by undermining the unity of the white walls as the object's "boxed" context, fracturing this context by her printed figure's nuanced or outrageous gestures within the Museum's architectural framework. The double-edged concept of leaving the permanent objects within their museological framework, all the while incrementally weaving on the walls a non-didactic, expansive, and fluid "framework" doubles the subversive strength of the installation. Spero's *Raise/Time* condenses a complex visual/gestural dialogue with classicism's tenets, and by extension, questions the ethical and moral assumptions attributed to period styles, especially in the case of classicism, where Enlightenment values and democratic ideals are often 'read' as analogies of the classical style:

> Formal balance, grace and composure combine to create an image that expresses the status of the individual in Greek thought, free to take charge of one's destiny but also morally subject to the needs of the community. ... Greeks everywhere believed in the cultivation of discretion and self-control as the key to right-living; personal freedom was limited by civic responsibility. Hubris, or pride, considered the most serious of character flaws, revealed itself in rash, unrestrained actions that defied standards of conduct set by the community. *The Greek Miracle*[50]

Spero's critique of the classically and Biblically rooted construction of a closed, deterministic representation of "Woman" found a useful model early on in the poetry of H.D., particularly her *Helen in Egypt* (1961), a retelling of the Homeric epic of the Trojan

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

wars.[51] H.D. chose to wear the impersonal, classical masks of the epic narrator, characters, and chorus in order to bring the force of myth into present tense on her own terms, a strategy Spero translated into printed, epic scrolls uttered in her own visual/discursive terms. Spero's hand-printed collage, *H.D. Fragments* (1979, shown at Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art in 1988), contained graphic dialogues with H.D.'s lines and poetic images as did the artist's epic scroll, *Notes in Time* (1979). Spero's copy of H.D.'s *Helen in Egypt* manifests a close reading of the poem and its technique of using classical allusions within unfamiliar contexts and within new forms, questioning the origins and assumptions of mythic narratives. Spero underlined and bracketed the poet's prose commentary sections on the myth of Helen, which H.D. 'collaged' with repeated choral stanzas ("I will count the tread of my feet, as a dancer counts, faster or slower"), poetic changes of voice, and brief lyrical movements within her larger epic structure: "Helen achieves the difficult task of translating a symbol in time, into the timeless-time or hieroglyph or ancient Egyptian time."[52] Spero's strategy is to translate ancient symbols "in time" ("Cycles in Time") as circulating, contemporary hieroglyphs, while making them "strange" by refashioning, fracturing, and recombining these masks within the present cultural conditions.

Spero as well as H.D. distinguish between the traditional allegorical use of "Woman" as symbol and the historical lives and voices of individual women; both the artist and the poet acknowledge the restrictive aspects of patriarchal narrative and representational traditions which turn women to "stone"; the Helen of myth is immobilized and silenced as an object, hated by the Greeks, and then worshiped by them after her death. When she is represented as an allegorical statue or symbol, she is "under

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

control" (like Medusa's severed head on Athena's shield), defined by the strictures of traditional culture. By breaking free of this marmoreal opacity and immobility (for Spero, freed by means of printed transparency, multiplicity, and movement into space), the capacity to speak and to commemorate emerges within a new idiom, built out of the shards of old words/images: "Troy's end became the center of a galaxy of myths, a cycle in which the present tense is in a continual process of becoming (which is the language of poetry), in which the past becomes the future."[53]

Improvisations

The artist next carried the complex and often paradoxical themes of *Raise/Time* into the unlikely tradition-bound environment of a military base. Returning to Austria in April of 1996, Spero installed *Improvisations* (Figures 72 and 73), a permanent wall painting commissioned through her Viennese dealer, Christina Koenig, who had arranged for the Ronacher Theater installation in Vienna. At the Heeresspital Innsbruck, in the Tyrolean Alps, Spero accepted the challenges of creating an installation in the 'belly of the beast,' as it were, at a military hospital base in Austria. The artist agreed to the installation project at Innsbruck, in part, because the Austrian Army's Hospital Base was not a combat unit but a training center specializing in medical intervention in the world's 'hot spots,' such as Bosnia, with its doctors often working as part of the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces, or at the scenes of natural disasters, such as in Mexico City, after the destruction of an earthquake.

While Spero was eager to engage her "cast of characters" in another historically layered Austrian site, she was concerned about both integrating the all-female cast within the military hospital's environment, as a site of healing, and finding the appropriate tone

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and means to subvert the military's patriarchal imperatives, which exclude a female voice altogether. Spero's paradoxical, double-edged approach to the meanings engendered by the architectural sites in which she works proves to be a catalyzing force for the performative, spontaneous nature of the artist's installations. The German art historian, Susanne Altmann, has recently described Spero's strategies and themes expanded on site at Innsbruck:

> With this piece Nancy Spero provided entry for her anarchistic hoard of women into a barred area, in which human formations are generally dictated by military 'rank and file.' Here, she could embrace this unmistakable act of infiltration and could dismiss earlier literal gestures of protest. Two major directions in Spero's work come together in Innsbruck: On the one hand the unmasking and penetration of male power structures through accusation or with subtle irony and on the other hand the powerful, celebratory display of female self-understanding and female creativity, although here the latter of these two aspects takes on more significance.[54]

When Spero and her assistants Zolla, Kreissl, and Kerber arrived at the Military Base, the hospital's renovation was still underway.[55] Spero had received beforehand, in her New York studio, photographs of the site under construction. The Hospital was built during the early 1900s and continued to be used as a hospital during both World Wars. The Hospital's main two-story structure has a vernacular design, with its high-pitched, red ceramic tile roof and clock pediment; symmetrical single-story wings extending on either side are topped by low-pitched roofs, creating the impression of connecting rural buildings as opposed to an urban, institutionally designed hospital.[56] Spero and crew worked in the modernized main foyer linking the officer's cafeteria, administrative offices, and hallways leading to examining centers for recruits. The all-white foyer space was at first problematic for Spero because it was dark, boxy, and uninspiring. But the small lobby leading to the larger foyer area had a glass-paneled double doorway through

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

which light streamed, illuminating the interior. Once again, Spero and crew observed the fluctuating patterns of light and shadow on the walls. Innsbruck's geographic location is in the valley of the Inn River between the Tyrolean hills and surrounded by the mountainous peaks of the Alps. The changing weather patterns and crisp, relatively unpolluted skies allow the sunlight to cast dramatic shadows and shimmering light on the town's reconstructed historical center, which includes Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, and modern buildings. Spero noted the patterns of peaks and valleys projected onto the foyer walls by fluctuating natural light, relating the inside of the space to the outside topography. The activation points of light and shadow gave impetus to the overall compositional vision of an installation inextricably tied to both the architectural elements and the unpredictability of nature. As a major formal element in Spero's installations, light plays multiple roles; light is literal illumination, luminous energy, and a shifting manifestation of the ephemeral and the cyclical.

Improvisations, the title of the installation, is an open-ended term with musical connotations. To improvise music or any of the ecstatic arts is to compose on the spur of the moment, which is an apt description of Spero's modus operandi for her installation process. The artist transports to the site her lexicon of characters, her "notes in time," and she works with her assistants to bring these "notes" to life in a collaborative performance on site. At the Military Hospital, Spero emphasized the making of music and dance in her repeated printing of ancient Egyptian tomb figures, musicians playing lyres and flutes and dancing in a procession across the foyer space.[57] The lyre, coincidentally, is the insignia of the Army's Musical Corps, displayed on a plaque identifying their building within the Innsbruck complex and on their uniform's epaulets.[58] Orpheus' lyre, famous

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

for enchanting even the trees and rocks, was the mythic poet's spirit-healing and creative instrument, capable of joining heaven and earth by its very vibrations. The lyre's song was purported to reveal an inner life in harmony with the celestial spheres in their orbits. As an attribute of the Muses, Urania and Erato, the lyre symbolized poetic and musical inspiration. The flute, mythically invented by Athena but then discarded by her, was the instrument of Pan as well as Marsyas, the tragic satyr defeated and flayed by Apollo, whose instrument was the lyre. By embodying these highly allusive but double-edged symbols of creative forces, Spero's female Egyptian musicians integrate an improvisational, ecstatic energy into the military environment.

Employing the smaller entryway lobby as a prelude or a hinge to the main foyer in one direction and a pathway to the outer garden courtyard, in the other direction, Spero's figures begin their invasion. The first images printed on the lobby walls are reflected on the glass panels, doubled by their transparent vehicle and setting the stage for the ensemble within the foyer. Thus Spero's threshold to *Improvisations* highlights transparency, multiplicity, and movement in space. Disrupting any sense of military order or rationalization, Spero begins to undermine the rigid symmetrical structuring of the box by fragmenting and condensing timeframes. Rather than invoking Mars, the Roman god of war, for example, or Athena, Spero prints a female deity, a *Horned Goddess* (ca. 8000-6000 BCE), floating at eye-level. Originating from a pre-historic African rock painting from Aounrhet in a Tassili cave in the Sahara, Algeria, the figure is arrayed in a headdress of ritual horns and fringes.[59] With her red tattooed breasts and torso, the Amazon-like figure is agile and striding as she replicates a legion of tiny shadow images. Spero "lifts" the female cave deity into the light, where she seems to float, resuscitated on

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the white wall's surface. On the opposite wall, the procession of rainbow-colored Egyptian lyre and flute players trickles in and leaps to the other side of the glass. Evoking both regenerative pre-history and ancient cultural roots, Spero focuses on layered images suggesting rites of passage, rituals taking the form of dance and music in which initiates are guided while "crossing over" metaphysically and within the daily cycles of life and nature.

Moving inside the main foyer on the right, the visitor encounters an image of a slender female painter emerging from the floor's molding. She is about fifteen inches tall with bobbed red-orange hair and dressed in a blue and red frock. Standing erect in her formal dress shoes, she holds a palette and elegantly extends her other arm to flourish a paint brush with bristles that sprout green Aboriginal figures, leaping up and arching to meet the S-curves made by Egyptian acrobats. Spero's late-1920s, "modern woman" figure, originating from a magazine advertisement of that era, has the attenuated grace of a classical Greek vase figure, accentuating contours in profile and a linear, stylized form. As a vivid dramatis persona, standing on a literal ground of painted red and grey stripes hugging the molding, the "painter" begins her direction of the unfolding historical/mythological play by the activity of her brush in a whiplash of energy, from which the players take flight in relation to each other. The "players" take direction from the earthbound "painter," seeming to burst forth, animated in sync, and propelled into an ambiguous, borderless space. Spero declares in an economy of image and gesture, the "painter's" literal relationship to surface, gravity, and architectural elements as she defines the imaginative quality of the installation, issuing from her conductor's/director's wand/brush. Jostling Egyptian acrobats and Nut figures glide upwards into arcs and

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Aboriginals tumble and swoop. At the peak of the swirling brigade is the Baroque Pallas Athene, printed in blues, from Charles Alphonse Dufrenoy's Salzburg painting. The helmeted Athene is riding on the Egyptian Vulture Goddess, the protector of souls. Down below, hovering on the floor molding, is Toulouse-Lautrec's nubile, young Yvette Gilbert with black gloves, flirting at the passers-by. Injecting humor and irony, Spero reinforces lyrical passages within circling trajectories and a Baroque sense of movement, changing the perception of the box space from a flat regularity to an unpredictable, weightless "infinity" rippling with undulating and mirrored forms.

The officer's mess, located at the intersection of the main foyer, is centered by two doors. Spero perceptually de-centers the doors by asymmetrically printing several colorfully opaque, angelic figures flying above one door, while flanking the other door with two dancers in sync: a lavender-robed Hanne Wassermann, the 1920s Viennese dancer, and a classically draped, Roman woman with rhythmically flowing arms.[60] Nearby, the Rococo celestial figure by Bartholomaus Altomonte tumbles downward, and then, soars upward in a different incarnation -- both images printed with polymer plates of varying scale as distinctive echoes, one to the other. The improvisations continue overhead, on the "firmament" of the supporting beam, where Spero's crew printed a subtly rhyming Artemis figure with upraised arm, the artist's signature image. Breaking formation on the beam's underside is a boisterous throng of Greek Maenads, the ecstatic women in the retinue of Dionysus (whose male counterparts are satyrs); it was raving Maenads who eventually ripped the mythic poet Orpheus to pieces. Spero's rainbow Maenads celebrate as they don patterned fawn skins and frolic in the company of serpents and leopards. The Maenads are graceful but fearsome, carrying their deadly thyrsos

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

stalks, which they employ to dismember their prey before consuming them. These airborne women are easily recognizable as generalized "classical" figures, but they are "made strange" by the artist's reshaping of their original form, variations of ink tonalities, textures, and printing pressures. Completing the centrifugal movement outward and circling around toward the Egyptian Musicians in the smaller lobby are crests and valleys of Athenian Hetaeras rhythmically beating the air as well as an assembly of Egyptian Mourning Women from tomb walls in Thebes and a golden Nut spinning overhead, "protecting" images of contemporary athletes and rope jumpers.

While disrupting a military aesthetic of machine-like precision and clarity, order and discipline, Spero's *Improvisations* injects an almost iridescent, weightless confluence of female figures in motion, assembling an ebb and flow of lyrical passages inflected with both humor and passion. By weaving visual metaphors of transformation and soaring into the historical/mythological ensemble, Spero escapes the binary structuring of oppositions or a hectoring didacticism. Nevertheless, her all-female cast reconfigures space and linear timeframes to invade and circulate within the environment. The artist's wild legions and off-beat processions, issuing directly from the artist's "stand-in" image of a 1920s female "painter," express a range of Dionysian desires, suggesting darker underworlds and celestial passages in flux and mutation. Initially emerging from patterns of shadow and luminescence, projecting the exterior onto the interior walls, Spero's permanent installation builds a female improvisatory presence as 'notes in time' within a masculinist, military fabric.[61]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Remembrance in the Museum

Earlier in 1995, the Austrian curator Werner Hanak had observed of Spero's installation tactics: "Her protagonists consistently reconquer the terrain which has been refused to them historically."[62] To re-conquer the terrain of history in the formation of collective memory and to reinsert erased individual stories with a plurality of imprinted experiences, Spero accepted Hanak's invitation to create a permanent wall installation, *Installation der Erinnerung (Installation of Remembrance,* Figures 74 and 75), at Vienna's Jewish Museum for its inauguration in February 1996. By using place to stimulate remembrance, Spero linked her visual poetics to the cyclical, to the Museum's objects, and to ancient notions of architecture as a "house of memory" – alluding to the artificially trained memory of the classical poets, which was based on visualizing images and objects within specific architectural spaces as mnemonic devices.[63] Through the vehicle of architecture, remembered and imagined, the epic poets envisioned loci extending outwards through which they mentally moved in order to recite their odes. Spero usurps the literal, physical space of the Museum as a house of memory (ground) in which to weave an allusive text/image installation as a contemporary commemorative form.

Hanak, the Jewish Museum's curator, was familiar with Spero's scrolls and her installations at New York's Jewish Museum, *The Ballad of Marie Sanders* and *Voices: Jewish Women in Time* (1993), which his colleague Mechtild Widrich had studied.[64] After meeting with Spero to discuss the possibility of a project, during the artist's teaching residency in Salzburg at the Summer Academy in 1994, Hanak revisited her while she was installing her printed banner *A Cycle in Time* at the Residenzgalerie in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

1995. Intrigued by Hanak's concept of integrating a permanent wall painting into the Museum's main hall, Spero next met with the design team, Eichinger and Knechtl, during the planning stages of the Museum's renovation. The design team had worked closely with the Museum staff to envision continuous spaces of encounter, emphasizing an open central hall linking the adjoining galleries on the second and third floors. The three story central hall, where Spero's wall painting would be printed, was the fulcrum of the whole design, topped by a diagonally arching sky cover made of an armature of metal and glass to which a translucent textile structure would be hung. By removing the roof and breaking the space open, a striking illumination would encompass the central hall and filter into the galleries. The circulation around the periphery of the huge central hall, perforated by large openings on its inner façade, would allow visitors to look down into the hall, giving them multiple views of the installation from above and below. These architectural design elements structuring the Museum's expansive hall would be suggestive of transitions and change, and the hall itself would be a multi-purpose area for concerts and lectures as well as the gathering point in which to introduce the Museum to visitors and student groups.[65] Spero reveled in the design concepts integrating the central hall with the adjoining galleries housing the historical and contemporary exhibitions and the permanent collections' viewable storage areas. She set about studying aspects of the Museum's collections and the history of the Jewish community in Vienna. Hanak sent the artist back to New York with books on the Museum and the City's history, and with photographs of objects in Museum's collections from which to draw.[66] The curator and the artist were in constant contact over several months as Hanak researched further for the traces of Jewish life in the City documented in Austrian archives and libraries.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Vienna Jewish Museum is housed within a block of reconstructed historical buildings in the Dorotheergasse, which had been a sixteenth century monetary and church complex.[67] Renovated many times over the centuries, the main structure of the Museum had been an art gallery at the beginning of the twentieth century, exhibiting works by Egon Schiele, Auguste Renoir, Vincent van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Picasso. In 1936, the building was purchased by the auction house of the Dorotheum, which demolished and reconstructed large parts of the structure. The Dorotheum vacated the building in 1993, and in November of that year, the Jewish Museum moved into the building and made plans for its renovation. The original concept of establishing a Jewish Museum for the City was announced in 1986, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, during the opening reception of Kirk Varnedoe's exhibition, "Vienna 1900 – Art, Architecture, and Design."

The founders' primary goal was to design a Museum to highlight Jewish culture, especially in Vienna, at turn of twentieth century. Cataloguing, preserving, and maintaining the Max Berger Collection along with other important collections which the City had acquired, the Museum was dedicated to Jewish culture and religion, and to integrating this history into Vienna's history. As the Museum's Chief Curator, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, has written of the substantial erasures in Austro-Jewish history, "In this connection, it is of no small importance that in non-Jewish historical consciousness there is no awareness of the influence of the Austrian Jews on Austrian History."[68] The Museum therefore undertook a project of vast importance in order to manifest a significant intellectual and documentary presence, to be a vehicle for remembrance and reflection, and to rectify this historical 'absence' in the consciousness of the nation.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The core of the Museum is comprised of the Max Berger Collection of over ten-thousand objects for worship, ritual, and everyday use as well as works of graphic art, paintings, sculptures, medals, and coins primarily from Austria and Austro-Hungary.[69] Max Berger (1924-1988) was a Holocaust survivor whose entire family died in Nazi concentration camps. His commemorative statement for the dedication of the collection to his family's memory is printed on the walls of the central hall: "In memory of my father Roman, my mother Anastasia, my sister Lace, and my brothers Salomon and Jehoshua, who were murdered in Auschwitz and Treblinka." In 1950, Berger returned to Vienna and began collecting objects in his search for traces of his murdered family and his youth in the City. His collection includes many ritual objects, torah crowns, kiddush cups, besamin boxes, mohel knives, and an array of everyday objects. An important part of his collection is on view in the central hall, where groups of objects are displayed in glass cases set against the pale grey walls.

At one end of the central hall, where the textile scrim descends overhead from its third-floor height to the main floor, the Berger Collection's objects are arranged in groups on irregularly spaced glass tiers representing cycles from the calendar of religious observances. Floating on the surface of the glass protecting the display, and partially breaking up this surface, are excerpts from biblical texts; these inscriptions are printed in varying scales and letter types. The entirety of the wall-sized installation is presented as a transparent and reflective three-dimensional collage composed of hovering text fragments, silver, gold, and glass objects, and embroidered religious banners and vestments, all lit from above and flickering on the glass tiers. The first cycle of objects gathered together references the Torah as "guidance," and its ritual accessories for the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

synagogue. The second cycle features the Sabbath and its direct relation to Creation. Passover, represented in the third cycle of objects, memorializes the collective liberation of the Jews and the experience of God. Sukkoth, or the Feast of Tabernacles, is the fourth cycle, a reminder of the liberation from servitude and the consequent journeys of a life lived in desert huts. The fifth cycle, Rosh ha-Shanah or the Feast of the New Year, implies God's ultimate judgement over all individuals. Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement is the sixth of the cycles and the highest feast day. Purim, memorializing the defeat of the plan to annihilate the Persian Jews, is the seventh cycle. The eighth cycle, Hanukkah, marks the preservation of Jewish belief and the re-consecration of Temple of Jerusalem. The ninth cycle represents individual, religious life phases such as circumcision, Bar/Bat Mitzvahs or the religious coming of age, marriage, domestic life, prayer, and death rites. The tenth cycle completes a return to the Torah, represented by such objects as Torah pointers. Hence, the cyclical nature of the display reflecting the Jewish religious calendar is represented by objects and texts, pointing to rituals that permit individuals to symbolically experience the ontology of creation, revelation, and redemption. The ensemble of ritual objects/texts reveals the simultaneous and dependent aspects of collective religious and individual life cycles during the year (that is, the public and the private).[70] They represent as well an endurance through the darkest hours of historical persecution and loss, and cycles of regeneration and the celebration of a thriving of culture, all of which Spero sought to reference in her wall painting.

The emphasis of the Museum's presentation of the Berger Collection mounted in the central hall highlights the dramas embedded in ritual, such as the structuring of the Sabbath day, family festivals from Pesach to Sukkoth, and the communal holidays from

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur. Entire cycles comprising life, death, and regeneration are symbolized during the calendar year of Jewish life, and these cycles are represented in clusters of related objects and text fragments. In addition, the three festivals designated by the Hebrew word for "festival" (hag) are calendrical rituals associated with ancient agricultural activities in the Near East and Southeast Europe: Tabernacles is the gathering festival as well as the time for plowing and sewing for the next agricultural cycle. Passover coincides with the beginning of the barley harvest, and Pentecost, with the beginning of the wheat harvest.[71] These symbolic manifestations of nature's cycles were ritualized in Jewish tradition with dance, song, food, and celebrations as well as prayer and meditation.

While Spero aims to undermine the patriarchal exclusivity of voice and the power to represent by her insertion of women's voices and re-presentations, her wall painting *Installation der Erinnerung (Installation of Remembrance),* focuses on remembering as a central theme in her oeuvre and as a principle concept of Jewish religion and culture. The language of the Bible and liturgy stresses the significance of acts of commemoration and remembering, and Spero focused on "retellings" from women's experiences as well as men's. Individual and collective memory of religious and historical experiences are key constituents of Judaism. Although Spero is not a religious or a practicing Jew, nevertheless, historical, cultural, and spiritual memory are essential themes in both her wall paintings and scrolls. Spero explained her historically inflected perspective to Hanak: "As a secular Jew I have never been very involved with religious objects. But people like me are more aware of this crisis of identity that came with the Holocaust."[72]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Spero's formative years of transition into young adulthood (1936-1946) were predominantly characterized by knowledge of the Shoah, and the consequent moral and existential crises manifest in the artistic culture of 1940s and 1950s in America and Europe. The dynamic forces of solitary questioning and the link to a broader, public community of judgment were integral to both Spero and Golub from their student years in art school onwards. Emerging from an era of the twentieth century in which individuals and entire communities were subsumed and overwhelmed by the enormity of the disasters of History, Spero recognized that individual and collective stories, interspersed with a masking of the narrator's personal story, were valid artistic means to reconnect aspects of the universal with the particular. To evaluate and choose from many histories and to infuse multiple dialogues into the artistic sphere, meant engaging a public, political space in which visual representation was crucial. For Spero, Jewishness as a fact of birth and femaleness as a fact of birth, allowed critical passages for understanding the construction of "otherness" and the power of representation in defining identity. The artist had learned from her participation in the anti-war and women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s that politics as a process governs the world of nature and all humans via discourses of representation.

In the Vienna Jewish Museum, Spero sought to resonate images in relationship to the Berger Collection's often anonymous voices of personal experience, remembering and memorializing both individuals and broader communities within the architecture of a "house of memory." While the Chief Curator, Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, emphasizes the significance of the Museum as ideational in a Platonic sense -- "ultimately it is not the form but the content which is essential" -- for Spero, form is an embodiment of meaning

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

contingent on process, interaction, and bodily experience.[73] Spero suggests and evokes the metaphysical and spiritual by opening up associative spaces of the lyric with facets of history beyond the masculinist logos or the stereotypical heroic. Insisting on palpable encounter and phenomenological experience, on visceral, gestural references, Spero's integrative, ecstatic-arts approach does not acknowledge a bifurcation of visceral/physical cognition and intellectual/spiritual knowing.[74]

Spero and her printing crew -- Zolla, Kerber, and Kreissl, and Barbara Ambrosz, on site – began the wall painting installation at the start of February 1996. The artist brought new characters culled from books and photographs of Museum objects for an expanded repertory company, and she orchestrated the crew via head-phones and walkie-talkies. The wall printing took about a week to complete and many factors had to be considered in structuring the Museum project: the complex of spaces and windows extending from the focal point of the central hall to the second and third floors and the concurrent multiple views, the technical considerations including scaffolding and lifts, the objects and display of the Berger collection, the changing light emanating from the textile scrim/skylight and the Museum lighting fixtures, and the unique configuration and scale of the architectural unit designed to facilitate the Museum's goals.

Eichinger and Knechtl's interior design embodies the theme of symbolic and literal light by the use of a sloping, translucent textile scrim over glass, which opens up and illuminates of the space of remembrance. The metaphors of divine or transcendent light, of human enlightenment through knowledge, and of a past retrieved from darkness and brought back into the light are all echoed in the reflection of the scrim. In addition, Gottfried Semper's theory of the origins of architecture from the ancient practice of

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

draping of textiles over armatures or scaffoldings recurs, once again, as an allusion in the architects' design and in the intuitive response to space for Spero. A suturing or seaming of an infinitesimal middle ground between inside and outside marks the simultaneous separation and joining of wall and roof, structure and ornament, and the vertical and horizontal.[75] Borders, edges, and outskirts are referenced physically and metaphorically as politically and socially symbolic.

Spero's wall printing technique integrates actual light and its movements with the ground/wall surface, partitions, ceilings, and beams, regardless of the viewer's orientation. On a parallel plane a few feet away from Max Berger's commemoration printed in golden typeface flanking his Collection's display, the artist printed a ragged image of a rippling piece of cloth from the late 1930s discovered recently in the Museum's archives: a swatch of the notorious yellow cloth on which was printed the repeated pattern of the word "Jude" ("Jew") within the Star of David, to be mass produced, cut, and sold to Jews as armbands in accordance with laws regulating easy identification in the streets.[76] Spero shows the viewer the naked industrialization of extermination in the repetition of its horror via a synecdoche of cloth. The printed yellow cloth had operated as a boundary, a mark, and an insignia; it was a prelude to the tattoo.

On adjoining walls, Spero interspersed printed fragments of images and texts originating from Shofaroth and Torah mantles and vestments from synagogues in the Museum's Collection, evoking the sacred uses of hanging textiles. Images of Tabernacles, as symbols of liberation from slavery and the establishment of shelter and community (as well as reminders of the ancient cyclical rhythms of gathering, plowing and sowing) are printed to appear either flat or dimensional, receding or projecting in an

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

echo of the cyclical. The rhythmic repetition of Tabernacles in sequence, as extensions of the "house of memory," suggests a simultaneity of events in space. For example, the artist reinterpreted a fifteenth century illumination of a man and woman reading their texts of the Haggadah -- the Order of Service for the Seder dinner – together at table and under the decorated archway of a Tabernacle.[77] Spero gives equal weight to both the man's and woman's interpretive reading and integrates the image with a fourteenth century illustration of two women baking mazzoth, sheltered under a similar Tabernacle threshold.[78] In vibrant colors, Spero repeats and reconfigures the two images, stacking the threshold patterns vertically as in a ladder's steps, sheltering and protecting, leading upward to the second floor archway on which a horizontal line of Tabernacles encloses the same figures reading. Conjoining an image depicting the act of reading as spiritual sustenance and as knowledge passed down generationally, with an image of making unleavened Passover bread in a seasonal, nourishing, ritual action, Spero unites the physical/spiritual as inhabiting one 'house.' Further, the artist printed nearby an image of a gold-colored Passover Seder plate used in private celebration at home with family and friends. The Seder plate (from the Berger Collection) is a religious/domestic object of great symbolic importance in the ritual remembrance of a collective Jewish history which had been brutally erased in Austria. For the majority of objects discovered and purchased by Max Berger had been stolen by the Nazis and their sympathizers from synagogues and private homes, bearing witness to the destruction following the Anschluss of 1938.[79]

Spero's overall vision in the central hall reflects intervals of absence – caesuras of pale grey walls – and the sudden, arrhythmic illumination of fragmented histories, images, and poetic text dispersed on the walls, as though appearing out of oblivion, only

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to congregate or huddle around the next corner. The themes of persecution and destruction appear most often in the format of cinematic freeze-like frames, under-printed, with ghostly figures emerging and disappearing, and overprinted with clotted blotches obscuring any light. These flickering rectilinear formats repeat the grid of documentary film stills, flipped pages of books, and verse lines; they echo the hall's many rectilinear windows, the thresholds to the upper floors, and the gridded textile armature. The metaphorical implications of the grid in this context resonate in multiple layers, suggesting timeframe collapse, transition, imprisonment, borders, or industrial structuring. Overlapping, contiguous planes of images and texts unite a tautology of non-sequential historical periods: an image originating from a fifteenth century wood-cut from Nuremberg, *Burning of Jews*; the verse lines printed in blocks of yellow, "The moon is perhaps a Jew. It has the yellow stain in its blood...," from contemporary poet Albert Drach's (1902-1995) notoriously anti-Semitic poem, "Ballad of the Race of the Moon"; an arched, stained glass window-like motif from a seventeenth century print, *Bird's Perspective View of Jewish Ghetto*; an ashen image made from a newspaper photograph of a Nazi raid in the Jewish Community of Vienna on March 18, 1938; a photograph of "Jew Baiting" on a display window of a Jewish-owned clothing store, 1938; a photograph of Nazi SS terror tactics and the public, sexualized humiliation of Jews made to wear signs reading, "I am the greatest pig in town and only have affairs with Jews" and "As a Jew-boy I always take only German girls up to my room."[80] Around the corner is an attenuated poem, "Herr Ich will zuruech," by the exiled Viennese writer Karl Wolfskehl (1869-1948), who fled to Australia, and the repeated motif of ruins originating from a photograph of the destroyed Leopoldstadt Temple from 1941.[81]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Printed nearby is a text from the confession of faith, "Shma Israel" (Harken Israel!), translated by the Leopoldstadt Temple's preacher Adolf Jellinek. Hanak and Widrich write in the Museum's catalogue that this text/image "emphasizes the significance of remembrance, the repetition and transmission of the word of God," and is a manifestation, in its Hebrew-German execution, of a "written picture" design.[82]

Spero had painted and printed "written pictures" since her earliest scrolls, with the visual passages as discursive signs no less than the characters in the verbal passages.[83] And these "written pictures" became a structural part of the wall painting installations by responding to the architectural context, which, in the case of the Vienna Jewish Museum, was planned to reflect continuous spaces of encounter and remembrance. Spero's interpretation of these goals within the central hall created the possibility of visual dialogues via images allied with the incantatory as well as graphic properties of texts and poems. By reaching toward a synaesthetic experience and by employing the technique of repetition, Spero alludes to ritual as triggering memory and to Jewish magical texts of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, especially Hekhalot literature.[84] Ritual, in this light, does not represent obsessive concern with repetitive acts but "an immense orchestration of genres in all available sensory codes: speech, music, singing, the presentation of elaborately worked objects, such as masks..."[85] The activities of transcribing, printing, and oral performance as acts of interpretation are once again Spero's references. Midrash, or allegorical interpretation, places the interpretive focus on the reader and the personal struggle of the reader to determine applications of the text to life, allowing the reader/viewer to project her inner struggle into the text in an open-ended and relational, living dialogue.[86]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Thus Spero engages in the paradoxical weaving of the ecstatic and the horrific, the sacred and the profane in an orchestration of historically related images seeming to emerge from both heaven and hell. Woven into the *Installation of Remembrance* are political realities and historical documentation oscillating with the ecstatic arts of poetry, music, dance, and theater -- as rituals originating from festivals marking cycles within the year. Flying above in the transition to the second floor galleries in the central hall is the subtly repeated and rhymed figure of the Viennese dancer Hanne Wassermann (1893-1938), swaying and careening with her deeply arched back into a freeze-frame of centripetal motion.[87] Spero learned from Hanak that Wasserman, born in Vienna, had been a gymnastic teacher and dancer, until she was forced to emigrate to England in 1938. Wasserman was one of many modern dancers who had to flee Austria under the Nazi regime, including Gertrud Kraus (1901-1977), and Gertrud Bodenweiser (1980-1959). Spero depicts Wassermann in an opisthotonos posture, nearly performing a back flip, a pose which symbolizes an archaic, 'hysteric' gesture -- an ecstatic, acrobatic trance -- a motif which Spero had first encountered in Egyptian tomb paintings.[88] At the opposite end of the wall is a soaring, ethereal Isadora Duncan (1878-1927), the visionary high priestess of a revolutionary modern dance; she appears with arms extended and raised over her head, forming a nimbus. Just below Duncan, around the corner, is a chorus line of colorful women athletes dressed in their green and blue uniforms, the Maccabee Champions, proudly smiling and linking arms for the photographer, Abraham Pisarek, in a 1935 photograph.[89] Reflected on the window panes and hovering on the third floor window ledge, Spero's contextualization of the Maccabee athletes becomes elegiac.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The artist merges song and music with heraldic presentations of Jewish religious objects from the Berger Collection when she pairs the popular operetta diva, Fritzi Massary (1882-1969), with a golden Menorah.[90] Massary, elegantly robed from head to foot in gold lame, poses next to a tall candelabrum (from the Berger Collection) and occupies the highest peak in the central hall. Born Friederike Massaryk, the German diva was a celebrated singer who performed throughout Europe, until 1933, when, because of her Jewish heritage, she fled Germany, eventually retiring to Hollywood in 1938. Rudolf Kastner wrote of her savvy, politically inflected interpretations: "She also possessed the secret of animating spoken or sung dialogue with an astonishing variety of mimetic-gestural details, often with a virtually imperceptible undertone of sarcasm, irony or satire."[91] The German critic and satirical writer, Kurt Tucholsky, reiterated Massary's knowing, parodistic approach to understanding the layered meanings of song, style, and context: "If one thinks of Massary, one immediately hears a low, guttural sound that can mean so many things: above all abundant irony... She lifts and drops her shoulders once, and sways along with the song a little – a delightful parody on all the operetta dancing in the world."[92] Spero represents these inflections by posing Massary with a slyly coy expression and shoulders slightly raised, arms at her side and hands pertly gesturing, palms downward. The artist captures in these dramatic passages the tone and spirit of 1920s middle European culture, which owed so much to the contributions of Jews, like Massary, who had assimilated into the predominant culture but who were nevertheless expelled or murdered because of their Jewish heritage.

Massary's image is flanked by Wassermann's, who tumbles through and circulates into the space presided over by the composer Gustav Mahler (1860-1911),

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

whose image originated from a 1902 etching by Emil Orlick.[93] Mahler is one of only a handful of male 'stars' who appear briefly in Spero's repertory company; he is represented in conjunction with the few male figures printed exclusively within the Jewish Museum's wall installation, or in related works on paper. Spero poses Mahler, spectacled and hands on hips, surveying the choreography the 'performers.' Issuing from his image are smaller, mini-Mahlers, printed as red silhouettes in conducting poses. These "shadow" Mahlers are self-reproducing doubles, relating to Spero's printed repetitions -- the rhyming or mirroring of selected images reappearing in different guises and contexts. As doubles, they resonate as psychic doubles or complements, suggesting a consciousness dividing in order to observe itself. The shadow-play of Mahler's image brings to mind the drama of the theater as well as cinematic timeframes or a flow of creative energies outward. Doubling may also allude to the crises of identity that came with being a Jew in a predominantly Christian society. In order to advance his career and to become Director of Vienna's famed Hofoper, Mahler, a Jew, was forced to convert, at least superficially, to Catholicism. Once Director, he revitalized the Austrian opera scene, mounting and conducting new productions, composing ten symphonies and song cycles, and introducing his audience to modern music. Mahler's doubles, like Spero's dramatis personae, conduct the creative imagination via their "orchestral" performers.

In Vienna, Spero pursued an allegorical recovery of irrevocable loss and mourning, while at the same time representing a continuity of life and celebration. She re-conquered the terrain of history, which informs collective memory, in order to reinsert erased individual stories with a plurality of imprinted experiences, both female and male. Spero had not mingled female and male representation to such an extent since beginning

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

her research, in 1974, for her scroll *Torture of Women.* The task of envisioning a contemporary commemorative wall painting at Vienna's Jewish Museum, a place specifically designed to stimulate remembrance, linked Spero to her heritage and triggered an expansion of her lexicon.

Hellerau, Dresden

In the summer of 1998, Spero was invited to Hellerau, Germany, by the art historian, Susanne Altmann, to paint an installation of remembrance at a site haunted by layers of historical memory, *Ballade von der 'Judenhure' Marie Sanders III* (Figures 76 and 77).[94] Unlike Spero's previous venues, Hellerau is not a museum, theater, or library. Hellerau was founded as a utopian Garden City complex for workers and artists, the first on the European continent. Tragically, this vital, experimental project was overtaken by the catastrophes and dystopias marking the history of the twentieth century.

Hellerau, a suburb of Dresden, was conceived and created by Karl Schmidt (1873-1948), founder of the Deutsche Werkstatten, the manufacturing firm which employed industrial techniques to produce finely designed, standardized furniture.[95] Hellerau's predecessors in the late nineteenth century were communities established by an intelligentia seeking to return to an intimate contact with the land in response to the fragmentation of industrialization. Hellerau was built between 1909 and 1914 as the first German Garden City, inspired by Schmidt's visits to the workshops of the English Arts and Crafts Movement. Schmidt sought to bring artists, workers, and artisans together to learn their craft and to produce unique works of art as well as furniture and decorative arts for the masses. Like the English Arts and Crafts Movement, the German version of this progressive philosophy held the utopian belief that society would improve via a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

higher quality of design and architecture, a theme reinterpreted later at the Bauhaus in Weimar. Schmidt's brother-in-law, Richard Riemerschmid, drew up the overall plans and house designs, with additional house designs by Hermann Muthesius, Heinrich Tessenow, and Le Corbusier, among others. Linked to Schmidt's Deutsche Werkstatten, Riemerschmid's factory complex was designed with low profiles and high-pitched roofs to simulate the overall impression of a group of farm buildings, adorned with charming gables and mini-Doric columns on the porches.

As a rural ideal, Hellerau was conceived to emphasize artistic production, labor, leisure, and education mingled into a harmonious, equitable community. The primary building and community's social focus (where Spero's would install her wall paintings) is the two story Festspielhaus or Festival Hall, completed in 1912, with its massive performance hall. Designed by Tessenow in a starkly simplified neo-classical style, with a severe square-columned porch, this 'Temple of Art' was crowned by a large Yin-Yang symbol etched into the apex of its pediment. Built on a hilltop (Hellerau translates as "on a high plateau"), it housed, in addition to the playhouse and rehearsal rooms, sixteen classrooms and a school for music and eurhythmic dance directed by Emile Jaques-Dalcroze (1865-1960), a Swiss musician and teacher. Dancers, musicians, writers, and actors from all over the world came to Hellerau to work and teach. Among those who visited were Paul Claudel, Rudolf von Laban, Max Reinhardt, Konstantin Stanislavsky, George Bernard Shaw, Darius Milhaud, Hanya Holm, and Mary Wigman.

Jacques-Dalcroze's revolutionary eurhythmic dance was keyed to the body's response to musical rhythms.[96] He believed that the body was naturally disposed to release spiritual and creative potential by responding to music, while moving intuitively

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

to its rhythm. Musically inflected group movements releasing the body's sense of intrinsic rhythm, Jacques-Dalcroze taught, would translate musical rhythms into whole-body rhythms as a kind of primal language (a similar theme articulated in Spero's scroll, *The First Language*). Jacques-Dalcroze's holistic approach to dance/music eschewed the normative, Western rationalization of a binary separation of mind/body in favor of the Eastern philosophy of yin-yang and the animistic traditions of tribal cultures. In the summer of 1912, a like-minded colleague, Rudolf von Laban, the choreographer, arrived at Hellerau. He had recently traveled to study the practices of Near Eastern whirling dervishes and Muslim lay-brothers performing prayers with wordless, trance-inducing body movements.[97] In these meditative/ecstatic practices of centrifugal movement, Laban saw a concept of dance as magic ritual. He incorporated Dalcroze's eurhythmics and choral dance into a new ecstatic art form, "Tanzformer," emphasizing group movement and collective ritual. In addition, Laban's expressive, movement choirs and dance pageants were linked to harmonize with the cycles of nature, such as the rising and setting sun and to mark the four seasons.

The utopian goals of a mystic encounter with nature were cut short at Hellerau during the devastation of World War I, and exploited during the crisis years of the Weimar Republic.[98] The most creative years at Hellerau had ended and the complex was no longer a magnet for innovators. By 1936, the Nazis took over the complex and turned it into a police, army, and SA academy.[99] The Nazis then mythologized the Festspielhaus architecture as representing a 'pure' German interpretation of a Greek Temple. In 1945, after the defeat of the Nazis, the Soviet Army arrived in Dresden and used the complex as a military hospital, turning the theater hall into a gymnasium, which still retains

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

fragments of Soviet Olympic symbols. The buildings deteriorated during the following decades, and five years after reunification, in 1993, the buildings were transferred into the care of a Dresden cultural organization, which has been slowly renovating and modernizing many of the structures with the plan to make Hellerau a cultural arts center. Thus Hellerau symbolizes an embodiment of a whole range of twentieth century ideologies: a modernist, creative arts 'Garden City'; a Nazi training academy; and a military hospital for the occupying Soviet regime's army.

The condensed layering on-site of the manifestations of dreams for a utopian, universalist-driven creativity and the nightmarish perversion and destruction of two powerful, militarist cultures echo in Spero's major ecstatic/apocalyptic themes. Altmann, the German art historian, understood the artistic, historical, and personal resonances that Hellerau represented for Spero. To prepare her for the installation project, Altmann sent Spero texts, videos, and photographs regarding the history of Hellerau. Spero chose to work primarily in the Festspielhaus's large dance studio as well as on peripheral and sometimes hidden surfaces inside and outside on the parade grounds. Dance, in sync with the building's first habitation, would be a central ecstatic force harnessed by Spero to articulate her themes and the structure of her overall vision.[100]

Spero and her crew – Zolla, Kerber, Kreissl, and Kunce – spent several days absorbing the history and atmosphere of the complex, while planning logistics and printing techniques. The deteriorating plaster and peeling paint made for intricate and irregular wall textures, revealing preserved wallpapers, signage, and remnants of painted symbols and graffiti, pentimenti from Nazi and Soviet histories which Spero chose for the most part to leave untouched. These surfaces absorbed the water based ink readily so that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the printed images 'held' to these surface textures, giving them the appearance of fresco, as though fused with the wall. At regular, gridded intervals, rusted iron bars from old exercise gear poked out several inches from the walls, while holes remained from removed apparatus, such as dance barres and mirrors; a disturbing, implied violence permeated some passages, while a poignant delicacy resonated in other passages as light suffused the dance floor.

The skylight ceiling activated the stained, ruptured, and tattooed surfaces as well as the remnants and rhythmic grids of past remodelings, achieving a palpability of space. Shari Zolla recalled Spero's remarking at the time that at various times of the day the walls took on the appearance of mouldering or desiccating skin, or mummified skin, recording the marks of the past and its transformations.[101] Spero both preserved and added visual commentary in relation to this layered skin, emphasizing that which the body "knows": the flux of time in space as a changing, palpable "thing." Assistant Daniel Kerber described his experience on-site to Altmann: "It was as if the figures and symbols had always been there, as if we had simply uncovered them."[102] Zolla and Kerber's combined analogies refer variously to synecdochal traces of the living, of bodily scarring and decay, of marks as cultural evidence and architectural ruins as metaphor. Their comments point as well to the phenomenological process of "uncovering" within particular contexts, as in an archaeological dig: retrieving, recording, restoring, and re-interpreting, all within the perspective of the present historical situation. The atmosphere evoked in their descriptive language is that of an archaeological site, a sacred memorial or an elegiac experience. In addition, Spero and her assistants were well aware that most probably the printed images would be torn down with the remodeling of the walls -- that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

their actions and traces at Hellerau would evaporate, existing only as photographs and in videotaped segments.[103]

Dance, as perhaps the "First Language" and as the unifying theme of the original arts and crafts complex, is the rhythmic, structural undercurrent in which Spero embeds the poetics of Brecht's *Ballade of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore,* the ritual processions of characters in motion, and their hieroglyphic gestures activating the forces of creation/destruction. Spero updates and refigures Laban's notions regarding ancient ecstatic practices of ritual movement and dance, engaging a profound synaesthetic response: "The power of dance in religious practice lies in its multisensory, emotional and symbolic capacity to communicate. It can create moods and a sense of situation in attention-riveting patterns by framing, prolonging, or discontinuing communication. Dance is a vehicle that incorporates inchoate ideas in visible human form and modifies inner experience as well as social action."[104] As the German critic Karin Bettina Muller wrote of Spero's installations, her very repetition of motifs "signifies a rhythmic impulse and the score of her dance across walls changes with every new place."[105] At Hellerau, Spero coalesced affective, symbolic, and social realms to trigger memories and multiple histories within a dance studio twice transformed by totalitarian regimes. Muller elaborated on the specifics of Spero's Hellerau project for a German audience:

> Her wall images almost take on the feeling of an elegy. The light from above and the proportions of the wall areas make the room seem like a temple where goddesses and female guards have now returned, and the mourning and persecuted find protection. The uncovered bricks and the porous plaster almost swallow the colours used for these figures, and the history of the place fuses with the procession brought from elsewhere.[106]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Muller went on to describe the affective qualities of cognition precipitated by Spero's techniques of representation as, "coming perceptibly closer here to the history of the second world war and the isolation of the German Democratic Republic."[107]

Before entering the Festspielhaus, the visitor must first walk between the walls of the forecourt pavilions. Here the artist printed a chorus line of alternately earthen striped and riotously colored Sheela-na-gigs locking arms at the elbows and infiltrating the layers of chipped Soviet grey and blue paint, obscuring under-layers of bright designs in yellow and sienna. Images of dancers, acrobats, and athletes punctuate crackling surfaces, scattering and picking up the textures of background as though emerging from various historical periods into a condensed simultaneity. As the "origin of origins," resonating with the checkered histories of the site which wrought both creation and destruction, Sheela mingles with graffiti lingering on the walls from wartime and occupation; her bodily structure is defined by these messages from the past. On the building's pillared entryway porch, Gorgons and insect-like Aboriginal figures scale the stairs, giving an unexpected fright to visitors. Inside, off the main lobby, a half-hidden wainscoted corridor, with its horizon of Soviet ochre and faded green paint, contains vanishing fragments of contemporary tattooed bodies, Egyptian mourning women, Greek Dildo Dancers, a winged Gorgon, a Cretan bull jumper and the South American dancer, Otero.[108] Spero references European modernism with an interpretation of Lyubov Popova's abstract constructivist design, *Costume Design for Actor No. 7,* from "The Magnanimous Cuckold" of 1921. The cape of Popova's actor becomes wing-like, so that her figure is a complement to Otero and the Gorgon. Tilted toward Popova's actor is a Japanese Geisha, moving the procession further eastward. Spero symbolizes in gestures

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the ritual acts of mourning, scarification, sex, costuming, and dancing. Making a fractured, suggestive narrative winding around the walls, the images gain meaning and momentum primarily from their interrelationships, orientation, pairings and doublings, all choreographed in relation to each other and the wall's proportions, or in isolation within a caesura. The methods of printing and inking vary, forming boldly linear, opaquely flat, transparent or heavily textured representations. As in Etruscan tomb paintings, where images of ritual celebration, sexual expression, transitions and the cycles of life, death, and rebirth circulate, Spero interlocks metaphysical and physical realms into a dreamscape, incorporating layers of history encrusted on the walls.

Images printed inside the spacious dance studio, with its parquet floors, are sparse, emerging only intermittently from the silence. The skylight room itself carried such weight in its historical layering and physical presence that Spero decided to imprint the space with delicacy, in low-pitched "utterances." Many images, barely visible or seeming to lightly vibrate, are under-printed in muted colors corresponding to the faded hues of the leftover wall paint. The long room extends with an image of a blue, winged Lillith, outlined in brown, and printed centrally on the right-hand wall; she is mirrored upside down, and then, trailed by white-painted chevrons on the teal-colored vertical stripes, rhythmically framing the wall sections. On the opposite wall is a stream of overlapping, Roman mourning women who fade into a sporadic procession, eventually disappearing into the decaying layers. Occasionally an athlete or runner approaches, or the figure of the attenuated, four-breasted Egyptian Sky Goddess from *The First Language* (1981), a pale blue apparition doubling, and tripling, and then, walking on a blue horizon line. Architectural elements are quietly punned or framed. Printed on a high

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

lintel, Scylla, the mythical Greek sea monster with a dolphin's tail and a girdle of hideous dogs, replicates and writhes, while a rainbow Medusa scampers across the room near the floor.

At the end of the room, Spero printed a centrally located, evanescent version of Brecht's *Ballade von der Judenhure Marie Sanders III*, floating on the wall's condensed layers and framed by a slim, teal-colored rectangle remaining from the Soviet years. The image/text is the flickering center of gravity for the room. Printed with a light touch are two parallel text columns comprising Brecht's four stanzas, enclosing from both sides the outline of the naked and bound figure overprinted in yellow. Contrasting Spero's earlier interpretations emphasizing the urgent, shouting rhythms embodied by Brecht's ballad and its onomatopoetic sounding of drum beats, the artist here created an entirely different, low-key and intimate lyric in an elegiac tone and pitch. Impinging on one verse-column and flaking into disappearance is a flat schematic painting of a building drawn in isometric perspective, a fragment left by the Russians which imparts a sacred, iconic dimensionality. Spero uses 'found' architectural symbols, graffiti, and her printed imagistic puns in relation to architectural elements in order to stimulate the palpability of memory. In addition, the artist's purposeful oscillation of the sign systems of text and image recalls the original use of the Greek word, "grapho," as embodying both writing and drawing.[109]

Precipitating the reenactment of *Marie Sanders,* printed as though emerging from beneath the depths, are Spero's ubiquitous serpents trailing on a diagonal path upwards toward the figure of Sanders.[110] Their self-replicating and curving green presence marks the point of origin of the composition and invokes the theme of resurrection or rebirth.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Writhing near the floor and ascending upward onto the margins -- coiling singly, in pairs, and in threes -- the snakes' pictorial paths echo those depicted in the *Egyptian Book of the Dead.* Within the *Book of the Dead's* stacked horizontal framework, where the action takes place as interlocking image/text, the snakes arise from the horizon line as vehicles of transformation.[111] Spero traces the edge, fold, or seam of creation/destruction with the snakes' activity in relation to the figures. The historical resonance of the snake's pre-Judeo-Christian symbolism is referenced as a mythic power which moves the entire cosmos from night to day, season to season, from death to resurrection.[112] In ancient Egypt, serpents represented primordial formlessness at the wellsprings of all life, transmuting at will into a phallus, a boat, a sea creature, or a coiled womb. In the Middle Ages, alchemists resuscitated the earlier serpent symbolism, codified in the ancient spells of the *Egyptian Book of the Dead,* as an alchemical emblem, an *ouroboros.*[113] With its tail in its mouth, the *ouroboros* represented the earthly condition of life as flesh eating flesh, while also symbolizing transformation, the continuous recirculation of death and rebirth, denoting eternity. Serpents thus came to reflect a disquieting doubleness, a contradiction and precariousness.[114] Spero's Lilith wears a coiling serpent headdress as both the ancient Sumerian Goddess of Death and as demon queen of the night in the Jewish and Christian traditions. As a caduceus (two serpents wound around a staff designed to be handled), emblematic of the medical profession, the rites of healing and divination were evoked by the serpents. The Greeks had spiritualized the serpent/phallus of Hermes, as the conductor of souls through the changes of being. In addition, Antonin Artaud's writings about theater and the actor's and audience's reception to, and projection of, gestures and vibrations acting on the human body are informed by ancient

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

serpent symbolism. Artaud used the metaphor of snakes being charmed by a mysterious music as they wound their bodies around the earth to feel the earth's vibrations and to respond with their own synchronous movement: "I propose acting upon spectators as music upon snakes, causing them to return to the subtlest ideas through their entire body."[115] Artaud linked the communicative powers of the ecstatic arts, alchemy, magic, and myth as the spell binding agents of mystical communication in the theater.

Spero refers to the entire Hellerau installation as *The Rebirth of Euridice*, the title inspired by Altmann's recollection for her of the Festspielhaus's modernist production of Christoph Willibald Gluck's opera, *Orpheus and Euridice* (1762), which was presented in July of 1913.[116] Euridice traditionally symbolizes the passive, mute female muse occupying the dark underworld, an allegorical figure of inspiration following the poet/musician Orpheus like a shadow. Spero sought to reawaken Euridice in Hellerau as an active protagonist with a creative voice of her own, possessing powerful dancing movements and gestures, a theme amplified earlier in Spero's Frankfurt installation, *Rebirth of Venus* (1989). Euridice, as part of the avant-garde performance lore of the Festspielhaus, is resurrected on the level of the imaginary. With the integration of ballad verses and printed images in a 're-conquered' space, Spero transforms Euridice into a female Orpheus, capable of weaving stories and lyrics triggering the imaginary. It is by summoning the imaginary in a dance studio once subsumed by military might that Spero recounts its histories, both horrific and celebratory. Her characters' active gestures, constantly renewed, reassembled, and "made strange" by printing techniques – and for those reasons "resurrecting" – place the imaginary within a sensory realm. Spero condenses the action of the cycles of birth, destruction, and rebirth into an exemplary

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

space by removing it from the general flow of events and by drawing attention to the protagonists. This web of human/mythological relationships exposes itself in the public sphere as gestural theater, as an enacted narrative broken by the passage of time. In this sense, *Rebirth of Euridice* embodies 'political' theater, as Hannah Arendt discussed its historical roots in ancient Greece and its contemporary application: "[T]he Theater is the political art *par excellence*; only there is the political sphere of human life transposed into art. By the same token, it is the only art whose sole subject is man [sic] in his relationship to others."[117]

Hellerau's innovative years of nurturing modernist dance theater, especially its early expressionism associated with northern European drama – with Brecht, Mary Wigman, Kurt Jooss and Rudolf von Laban – introduced dramatic and compelling visceral dance forms which informed the stream of late-twentieth century dance concerned with expressive content and social commentary. German Expressionist dance, "Ausdruckstanz," had combined movement, music, and dramatic elements; Mary Wigman, a student of Jacques-Dalcroze, and later, Laban, performed her celebrated "Witch Dance" ("Hexentaz," 1914) at Hellerau, a modernist model for many dancers, including Martha Graham.[118] Kurt Jooss, another gifted student of Laban who was influenced as well by Jacques-Dalcroze, was forced to emigrate by the Nazis in the 1930s, relocating his internationally recognized school of expressionist dance to Dartington Hall in England, where he was soon joined by Laban. After 1933, the Nazis appropriated dramatic aspects of Ausdruckstanz to serve Fascist ideological ends. The opening night spectacle for the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games was staged by Wigman, among others. After the War, Ausdruckstanz was tainted by its association with Fascist

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

ideology, and as a result, the trajectory of European as well as American dance veered toward an apolitical and anti-narrative formalism, or took refuge in traditional ballet.[119]

Resurrecting and reformulating modernist expressionist themes into the post-modern, post-war world, the Wuppertal-based choreographer, Pina Bausch (b. 1940), a student of Jooss, developed her own dance theater or Tanztheater in 1973 (at a time when Spero was exhibiting *Codex Artaud* and researching *Torture of Women*).[120] Dance theater combines natural movements and a choreography of geometric patterning with classical dance techniques and recognizable movements appropriated from a broad spectrum of dance and everyday life. Bausch added to this mix 'collaged' fragments of popular song, film, revue, circus, and social dance, establishing movement and gesture as a self-sufficient means for expression tied always to a profound critique and subversion of dominant social values. Like Spero, the choreographer refused to comply with the predominant postwar split in the arts between social commentary and notions of pure, self-reflexive abstract form.[121] Critic Susan Allene Manning described Bausch's artistic ancestral roots: "Like her contemporaries in theater, Bausch combines a visually rich production style with techniques drawn from Stanislavski and Brecht, and the result approaches Artaud's idea of a theater of cruelty."[122]

Bausch's choreographic layering and themes form significant parallels to Spero's primary language of bodily gesture and movement in the expression of contemporary apocalyptic/ecstatic themes linked to historical elements. While there has been no direct exchange between the two artists, there are particular similarities of artistic temperament, visual languages, and themes. Spero had become familiar with Bausch's choreography from performances at the Brooklyn Academy of Music's "Next Wave" Festivals in 1984

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

and 1985, and the artist had recognized certain overlapping thematic concerns: both emphasized dance movement as a primal social practice and as ritual theater. In fact, after Spero installed *Ballade von der Judenhure Marie Sanders* and *Homage to Ana Mendieta* at the Von der Heydt-Museum in Wuppertal, Bausch came to see the installation.[123]

Both artists employ fractured, non-narrative body language in rhythmic repetitions, exploring the historical/mythological origins of social and sexual patterning in the relations between sexes from feminist perspectives. Imbrications of the political and personal, the problematic issues of depicting violence, and the representation of women's bodies reflecting women's subjective experience, figured prominently in the work of these two artists during the 1970s. In 1975, Bausch premiered *The Rite of Spring* and in 1977, *Bluebeard,* with both productions graphically articulating the conflicted passions and exaggerated patterns of stereotypical gender construction, and the accompanying conditions of isolation or alienation.[124] In starkly choreographed images, both Spero and Bausch configure assemblages of collage-like fragments, exhibiting multi-layered, often chaotic-seeming qualities transcribed in gesture and body-language. Bausch choreographed *Bluebeard* in Germany at a time when Spero composed *Torture of Women* and *Notes in Time on Women* in New York. Neither artist supplied in these works the reassuring reference points of plot, character, or a coherent narrative meaning. Neither spelled out a linear plot, unified character or singular meaning. Using the distorted movements of the body to create the grotesque, Bausch parodied the theater's ability to perform as a double of reality. Similarly, Spero mimicked and punned the doubling of re-presentation in theatrical, sometimes grotesque, figurative gestures. Death,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

grief, sex, humor, violence, and anger permeate Spero's scrolls of the early 1970s, as they dominate Bausch's choreography of the same period.

By the 1980s, Spero had moved on to oscillate the boundaries between the apocalyptic and the ecstatic, while offering architecture's "stage" as a vast, resonant dreamscape. And although their individual thematic emphases subsequently diverged, both the choreographer and the artist continued to improvise in gestural dialogues with their assistants. Spero orchestrated her wall paintings in improvisational sessions with her assistants in the studio and on site, and Bausch employed gestural improvisation with her dancers. Via responsive interaction and dialogue, the dancers/characters mark and are marked by the site-specific environment. Spero, in her spatial wall paintings, and Bausch, in her temporal stage performances, establish absorbing, enveloping spaces -- ambiguous spaces where the audience becomes a participant in deciphering a hieroglyphic language of body movement.[125] In addition, the tradition of modernist expressionism in Germany, representing the emotional extremes of human response within landscapes of both ecstasy and horror, was a language readily understood by a variety of audiences in post-war Europe, laying the groundwork for that audience's reception of Spero's visual language composed of gesturing bodies and historical/mythological imagery.[126]

Dancers and Divas in the Subway

Spero's dance/performance themes coalesced from 1999 to 2001 with a major commission to create an underground mosaic for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's Arts for Transit project at the 66 St. – Lincoln Center Subway Station (lines 1 and 9).[127] On Manhattan's upper West Side, the busy subway station serves Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, which houses Alice Tully Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Metropolitan Opera House, New York State Theater, and the Julliard School. Spero's design proposal was chosen from among those of several other artist finalists by the Artist Selection Panel of the MTA, whose members were: Sandra Bloodworth, Director, Arts for Transit (Chair); Amy Newman, art consultant and critic; June Larkin, Director, Edward John Noble Foundation; Lee Harris Pomeroy, architect for the project; and Elaine Reichek, artist.[128]

Reichek, a text/image artist known for her ethnographically based imagery and her use of many media, including needlework and craft materials, had known Spero through their mutual affiliation with A.I.R. Gallery and the two artists had been linked by curator, Jill Medvedow, to exhibit together in *A View From the Outside: The Art of Nancy Spero and Elaine Reichek* at the Seattle Arts Commission in 1985.[129] Pomeroy, the project architect, was also enthusiastic about Spero's mosaic design proposal and was instrumental in securing both the uptown and downtown platform walls for the artist's project. In addition, he understood Spero's conceptual approach to "empty" architectural wall space as a continuous structural "ground" and, thus, he made sure that the entire swathe of both platform walls would accommodate an uninterrupted "ground" for the artist's mosaic.[130]

Located on the walls of both North and South stations are Spero's series of twenty-two colored glass and ceramic mosaic panels comprising the ninety-two figures in *Artemis, Acrobats, Divas, and Dancers* (Figures 78 ad 79). Spero directed the mosaic artisan, Peter Columbo, who fabricated the artist's designs from hand-blown and hand-cut Italian glass at his studio, Peter Columbo Mosaics Artwork, in South Hackensack, New Jersey, over the period of two years. Incorporated into the overall design are tile

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

medallions indicating the identity of the City's most significant cultural crossroads as well as many of the restored fiancé tiles from the 1904 station, with new matching cream-colored tiles added.

Spero designed her mosaic proposal with the aid of her assistant, Samm Kunce, who digitized the artist's compositions for each panel, including the "cast of characters" chosen to "perform." Kunce became the primary organizer of the project, working with both the artist and Columbo, whose task it was to closely interpret Spero's original designs with the tiny mosaic glass pieces comprising their forms. Kunce enlarged-to-scale the artist's digitized panel compositions, which Columbo used as the cartoon, or underlying detailed color design, which he followed meticulously as his guide to fill-in the image with cubes of glass adhered to a flexible backing. Spero, with Kunce's help, oversaw the production of each figure and made adjustments and corrections weekly. The panels comprising the figures and backgrounds were then individually brought to the site, once they had been refined and approved by Spero, where they were matched to the appropriate wall panel and adhered on the prepared bed of cement.

An apotheosis of the ecstatic arts, Spero's mosaic celebrates the performing arts ensconced at Lincoln Center as well as the teaming life of the City's surrounding streets and nearby Central Park. Activated by inlaid, glittering, colored glass, the figures contrast with the background range of cream-colored ceramic tiles, setting in motion the artist's mythic images of goddesses, historical performers, roving musicians, park roller bladers, and Aboriginal figures-cum-Hip-Hop dancers. Spero's figures congregate in rhythmic sequences, ceremonial processions, and scattered bands, contoured against a tactile landscape of opaque tiles tinged with a warm-glazed aura. A yellow-gold horizon line

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

travels into and disappears out of the cropped paneled framework, continuously moving, angling suddenly upward to form a perpendicular threshold and, then, horizontally across another panel to form a lintel or a flat ribbon. This linear device unites the continuity of the twenty-two panels like a golden thread, while disrupting the viewer's sense of grounding and orientation by seeming to "fold" and "unfold" different perspectives: flat, upright, decorative spaces, deep spaces with horizon lines, and ambiguous dream-like spaces. Reinforcing this other-worldly aspect is the quality of light. The ambient artificial light source imparts to the figures a glow; they are lit from within by tesserae, the many small cubes of brilliant glass making up the images. The light-catching quality of the luminescent tesserae reflects and refracts the artificial light in the underground space. The fractured light sources, including the subway trains' interior light, further disseminate the luminosity. The quality of light within the architectural space, key to the articulation of Spero's themes and compositional structure, is made manifest in the medium of mosaic itself, the tesserae. The light emanating from within is thematic of a numinous light or the light of knowledge. As the poet, Marianne Moore writes, "Light is Speech."[131]

Stylistically, Spero was cognizant of the Byzantine mosaic tradition, especially the mosaics of the Empress Theodora and Emperor Justinian (ca. 547 CE) at San Vitale, in Ravenna, Italy. She had frequently referenced in her previous work a similar frontal, hieratic stance for the representation of her figures as well as the stylized contouring and use of gold leaf, characteristic of Byzantium. Spero had also encountered Gustav Klimt's "faux antique" resonances in his mixed media mural, *Beethoven Frieze* (1902), at Joseph Maria Olbrich's Vienna Secession building, a few blocks away from the Ronacher Theater.[132] Working in a Viennese Art Nouveau style, Klimt had represented muses,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

genies, allegorical figures, and Gorgons within rhythmic caesuras.[133] Spero reformulated elements of a "faux antique" stylization within the framework of historical and contemporary figures.

The term mosaic, originating from the Latin, musaicum, means "mosaic work" or "work of the Muses." Medieval mosaics were often dedicated to the Muses. Spero's mosaic inserts the Muse at the center of the process of creation. In *Artemis, Acrobats, Divas, and Dancers,* the Muses become performers, active creators, instead of passive vessels or silent Euridices. Spero's title alliterates and rhymes the title characters from her troupe: goddesses and historical performers; contemporary athletes; Artemis, the protector of women; the sacred and profane of the past and present. Spero's years of research on the history of women's representation culminates in her achievement of symbolically inserting women at center of myth and history within the landscape of her mosaic. Women as protagonists, representing all of humanity, usurp the normative male role in the New York City underground, the netherworld. As Spero stated recently to the Canadian critic Robert Enright, the subway project emphasizes, "not just that we endure but that we're powerhouses. To reaffirm the female presence from antiquity until now... But who can tell what it means to have my female images surviving through time? What does this mean in terms of entering the consciousness of society or of women's consciousness of themselves and their place in society? What does it mean to bring a feminine protagonist into the subway environment?"[134]

The largest and most striking character in the mosaic is the shimmering red and gold robed Diva, who is a reincarnation of the Ronacher Theater's star, Fritzi Massary (1882-1969), the great German singer. Spero's Fritzi is regaled as a golden goddess (from

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

the Italian for "diva") who occupies heaven and earth. The Diva's placement in front of the trailing golden line and attired in her gilt drapery imparts an iconic reverse perspective, a kind of Byzantine perspective in which the pictorial space is meant to extend forward from the picture plane to the eye of the beholder and which includes the real space in front of the viewer. Within this Byzantine perspective, the viewer's eye and image are conjoined in an inverse of Western classical perspective. The iconic Diva, Fritzi, is repeated in different poses nine times within the freeze frame panels as she raises and lowers her arms in time. Like sequential friezes from a flip book, which creates the illusion of movement when the pages are flipped rapidly, the Diva lifts her arms up and presses them downward within sequential panels, so that when a train passes, the viewers inside of the moving train glimpse a parody of the illusion of movement. Samm Kunce developed the idea of repeated movements for the Diva, Fritzi, from a Betty Boop flip book.[135] A cinematic quality is also experienced while standing on the subway platform as trains pass by due to the window frames of the trains in motion, which make staccato rhythms of freeze frames projected onto the opposite wall. In the underground belly of the beast, with subways rumbling, the heat, and the fumes, Spero installed an inversion of *L'envol's* translucent, soaring figures printed on the escalator windows in Paris.

Time is symbolized and highly condensed in the trains' traveling over distances and in the breadth of time periods represented by Spero's figures. The artist sought to capture and to oscillate both the frozen, stately silence of mosaic structure resonating from Byzantium and the modern conditions of train travel within the subway's architectural structure. Spero commented on the mosaic's relation to time and space: "It's

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

quite transient. I like the fluid contrast of attention and transience."[136] The figures are abstracted and frozen in mosaic tesserae, but Spero unfreezes their orientations and sets them floating and spinning within inlaid ceramic tile rectangles: bevies of Egyptian flute and lyre players, solemn processions of Roman matrons, boisterous running figures, Greek Hetaeras frolicking, joyous dancers from Etruscan Tarquinia (originating from the Tomb of the Lionesses, c. 480-470 BCE.), and Aboriginal figures. The tesserae allow for either gradual transitions of color, implying modeled forms, or a wealth of suffused color, indicating sharply contoured outlines. And the tactile, uneven surfaces of tesserae, which waiting subway riders may touch, contribute the sensation of the phenomenal experience.

Figures of performers who might have stepped into the 'Temple' of Performing Arts at Lincoln Center are mingled with the profane on the North Uptown platform. Nine panels suggesting abstracted geometric forms from urban spaces -- steps, windows, the architecture of the City and subway -- pun the context of the site. Central Park roller bladers, runners, Hip-hop dancers, athletes, and musicians, all in the midst of movement and deriving from contemporary media, congregate and scatter on these panels.

In the democratized spaces of public transportation, Spero emphasizes and echoes thresholds, entries and exits, arrivals and departures. Kinesthetic and acoustic, the motion and clamor of trains becomes the fragmented background stage. At the end of North platform, a cobalt blue background appears in the paneled framework. The ceramic sky-blue field, like Central Park's sky or ponds, relieves the tension and presents another dimension to the panoramic aspects of the installation. Flat and infinite, the sky-blue resembles the Ronacher Theater's faux sky walls and the Frankfurt Schirn Kunsthalle's domed skylight. Spero has inserted yet another 'fold' or 'seam' into the multiple

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

perspective frameworks, blurring the boundaries of interior and exterior. As if a window to the outside, or the symbolic window onto the world of Western perspectival convention, athletes and roller bladers sprint and glide out of the blue picture plane. What is present instantaneously becomes the past. The cyclical is once again referenced as a theme and manifest by Spero's process and structuring. As Spero has said: "What was on the other side of the mirror, the sense of possibility on the other side of the mirror... To reach the other side of the mirror, to reach the celebratory, I had to exorcise Vietnam, the *Torture of Women* and, through Artaud, the artist's tortured silencing."[137]

Conclusions

Nancy Spero's inquisitive sense of what may be on the other side of the metaphorical mirror and of what might constitute an artistic space of possibility has been a catalyzing conceptual force in her exploration of the parameters of wall painting installation. Her epic-scale scrolls, unfurling in space, led her to expand the complexity of an evolving visual poetics into a tightly woven relationship with the surrounding architectural environment. Spero's development of a distinctive lexicon of representation within her scroll format, influenced by her early study of museum objects as well as contemporary media -- including her experiments with image/text and figure/ground conjunctions allied with collage and printmaking techniques -- precipitated the artist's visual dialogues within a variety of site-specific contexts, especially within the museum as a site of history, memory, and identity. Spero's intensely profound engagement with history, mythology, and contemporary political, social, and cultural issues, manifest in her scroll works, coalesced within architectural spaces, where a sense of "place" predominated and became the "ground" for thematic and formal discovery. As the art

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

historian, Erika Suderberg, has recently discussed in her historiography of site-specific installation art and its conceptual bases, this multifaceted genre foregrounds artistic processes and actions, inhabiting and integrating the perimeters of space in order to reconfigure perceptions of architecture and space.[138] By collaging and printing her stylized and discursive, cross-cultural figures in relationship to layers of historical resonance, the artist depicts the extremes of human experience from the horrific to the transcendent tied to dramatic and performative spaces.[139] Spero's oscillating, cyclical themes of the celebratory embodied in dance and the commemorative reenacted in a form of epic theater, require adaptive recreation in her deployment of a growing 'cast of characters' acting in concert with specific architectural spaces.

Spero's primary themes range from the ontological, identifying the cyclical and transformative, to examinations of power relations, unraveling the political as a manifestation of individual landscapes and tracing the psycho-topography of individual memory and collective witness, ritual and myth. While her primary center of gravity led Spero to critically re-present allegories, mythologies, and histories of women from pre-history to the present, the artist's "cast of characters," activated by an archaeology of particular sites, have engaged in a variety of dialogues with Jewish history, religious and social conflicts, museum objects and art history, contemporary and historical dance and theater, and general humanist themes: birth, decay, death, regeneration or rebirth. Spero's strategies variously employ mythic figures to examine cases of historical martyrdom or resistance, or picture apocalyptic violence and destruction in relation to metaphysical anxiety, or physical suffering linked to specific political realities. Her formats and artistic strategies transform personal anger or pleasure into broadly resonating visual/poetic

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

structures, recording the passage of a living force from one (personal) level to another, more public level. As an activist, critical of "givens" and dominant authoritative voices, Spero has interpreted new sets of symbols and allegories of transformation from ancient as well as contemporary representations, juxtaposed, altered, and recontextualized, depicting female figures as metaphorical and gestural embodiments interacting with architectural elements. Thus, Spero's work has been historisized within Holocaust art by art historian Matthew Baigell in his 1997 study, *Jewish-American Artists and the Holocaust,* and in exhibitions such as Jill Snyder's *Impossible Evidence: Contemporary Artists View the Holocaust* (1994) and the Jewish Museum's *From the Inside Out: Eight Contemporary Artists* (1993), curated by Susan Goodman (which included Spero's installation, *Ballad of Marie Sanders & Voices: Jewish Women in Time,* and installations by Eleanor Antin, Christian Boltanski, Clegg and Guttmann, Moshe Gershuni, Ilya Kabakov, Barbara Steinman and Lawrence Weiner).[140] While at the same time, the artist's works have been historisized within the contexts of symbolism and allegorical art, and within broad, political art-making and printmaking contexts, such as in Linda Tyler and Barry Walker's anthology of essays on twentieth century political printmaking, *Hot Off the Press: Prints and Politics* (1994, Tamarind Institute).[141]

Spero's figurative, visual epics composed on site are ambitious in scope, depth, and poetic vision, interweaving accretions of rhythmic figures in motion, while reconceiving traditional genres such as history and mural painting. The artist plucks the anonymous and vanquished from the margins and inserts their multiple voices and images as an archaeology of shards in relationship to a recontextualized space in the present. As an active process of recovery, digging for fragments and puzzling out

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

meanings, imaginative recreation is required in these new architectural contexts, activating viewer participation in an encompassing experience of architecture and history. In her wall installations, Spero emphasizes both the organic bases of emotion and the physicality of ideas; she highlights phenomenological "knowing," an unfolding of bodily movement through actual space. In addition, Spero's wall paintings demonstrate that actively engaged, figurative painting/collage can move outside the strictures of commercialized art objects and into the dialogic arena of the "polis" via an embodiment of space. Employing the themes of "dance" as metaphorical release and "soaring" as freedom, Spero links these themes to remembrance and commemoration rather than synthesizing or bifurcating seemingly paradoxical concepts. Most important, Spero highlights the temporality of wall paintings by emphasizing their emergence from architectural space and their disappearance in a wash of white paint or in their decay over time. Thus, Spero's installations, such as *Past/Present* (1998), a temporary frisket paper installation at the 7th International Biennale in Cairo, Egypt, and *Koptos Gateway* (2003), a silk banner installation hanging from the threshold of the ancient Egyptian gateway in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, create doubly historisized environments in which the artist reconfigures and reinterprets the past on site via the "present tense" of her figures and their gestural commentary.[142]

The artist's formal and technical means transform the viewer's perceptions of the gallery/museum space, integrating rhythmic and arrhythmic swaths of white space as structural caesuras, suggesting space as transitional, as having a cyclical dynamics. Framed by architectural elements, sightlines, and scaling, Spero's image/texts reference fractured narratives, bodily hieroglyphics, and theatrical performance, commingling a

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

synesthetic mix of the incantatory, ritual and magic as well as mime and parody in freeze-frames of implied motion or stasis. She conceives and orchestrates her images as dramatis personae, repeated in rhythmical intervals, transparent or opaque, and in centrifugal motion expanding outward toward the periphery, often surrounding an empty central space. Spero integrates space and light as real "materials," corporeal and metaphorical, used as formal, compositional tools in sync with thematic development. Light as a temporal, unpredictable element, complements Spero's larger themes of contingency and emphemerality. By translating the formal qualities of the ecstatic arts of poetry, dance, theater, or music into visual coefficients, Spero mimes and yet disrupts the formal qualities of architecture and decoration. Marking borders as porous, as inextricably woven together, Spero merges public spaces and private lives, lyric and epic passages. Viewers of Spero's wall installations move in real, historical, and imaginative timeframes within varied mural scalings, orientations, and architectural elements.

Via these formal, technical and thematic inventions, Spero has contributed significantly to the evolution of installation art, especially in her on-going visual/textual dialogues with museums and their collections, though her contributions have not been acknowledged in the major surveys of this genre; she is absent from Suderberg's site-specific historiography as well as *Installation Art* (Oliveira, Oxley, and Petry, 1994) and *The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect* (Kynaston McShine's 1999 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art).[143] Nevertheless, as is made abundantly clear in this dissertation on the artist's installations, Spero deploys critical interventions and reanimations of archaeological surfaces, offering alternative "readings" of museums as artistic resources and as institutional narratives *against which* her critical re-presentations shape new

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

narrative possibilities. With these strategies and perspectives, Spero transcribes aspects of studio practice, collaboration, and dialogue into the museum by orchestrating her printing assistants as a nomadic atelier. Encouraging viewer participation within a total environment, Spero creates opportunities for open-ended phenomenological, cognitive, and affective experiences. The viewer has the opportunity to become a participant with her entry into an installation which offers no linear narrative, no suspension of disbelief, no unity of timeframes, place, or action (as in classical tragedy or comedy). Instead, a Brechtian "making strange" of these elements confounds expectations. Spero's formal and thematic strategies destabilize implied order, hierarchies, borders, chronologies, and notions of authorship and the normative. Her wall paintings, even the permanent installations, are subject to decay, overpainting, and renovation, countering the museum's mission to house and preserve objects, allying her project with performative, ritual, and ephemeral embodiment. Finally, Spero's wall installations suggest a form of redemption in the acts of recovering and recording historical witness, reenacting these voices/images within communal, civic spaces, and transcribing a living recreation of these stories.

Spero's oeuvre and its significant contributions within the history of postwar art are now included and discussed in art history survey texts on twentieth- and late-twentieth century art, such as Irving Sandler's *Art of the Postmodern Era: From the Late 1960s to the Early 1990s*, in which Sandler examines the artist's work in the historical context of "First Generation Feminism."[144] He analyzes her works on paper in tandem with the concerns, themes and formal strategies of colleagues and peers, Louise Bourgeois, Faith Wilding, Eleanor Antin, Hannah Wilke, Lynda Benglis, Suzanne Lacy, Carolee Schneemann, and Judy Chicago. Sandler's historicization of Spero's paper

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

scrolls within the "first generation" of feminism and the Women's Art Movement is most typical of the way her work has been and continues to be contextualized. Jo Anna Isaak, curator of *The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter* (1983) and *Laughter Ten Years After* (1995), explores the often carnivalesque subversion embodied in Spero's works on paper as, "an extended examination of our origins, of the license and lawlessness of laughter and of women," in her book, *Feminism and Contemporary Art: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter* (1996), in which she situates Spero's themes and strategies in context with those of feminist word/image artists, Jenny Holzer, Barbara Kruger and Ilona Granet, as well as Dotty Attie and Elaine Reichek.[145]

The curator, Catherine de Zegher, has also focused on Spero's scrolls within a theoretical feminist context in her historical overview exhibition and accompanying book, *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art In. Of, and From the Feminine* (1994), in which she discusses thematically the works of Spero, Charlotte Salomon, Hanne Darboven, Susan Hiller, Avis Newman, Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger, and others, characterizing "their acceptance of the inaugural artistic act of marking the blank surface as a refiguring or *coming-into-language* from a space of uncertainty."[146] This feminist theoretical notion (via Kristeva's concepts of a realm which is pre-linguistic and pre-symbolic, prior to the patriarchal symbolic) echos Isaak's characterization of Spero's scrolls and Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* (1973): "generally speaking, Kelly and Spero explore the realm of language prior to the construction of meaning, or, more accurately, where meaning occurs but has not yet become closure – the language of the child, the gesture, the maternal body – the realm of nonsense and desire."[147] Elizabeth Mansfield, curator of the exhibition at the Fogg Art Museum, *Power, Pleasure, Pain:*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Contemporary Women Artists and the Female Body (1994), also posed questions concerning the multiple meanings lodged in the theoretical feminine, or in difference, by addressing related types of feminist art practice in works by Spero, Ida Applebroog, Dotty Attie, Denise Marika, Ana Mendieta, Kiki Smith, and Hannah Wilke, among others.[148] While the diversity of these theorizations and contextualizations is often helpful in placing Spero's oeuvre historically, these approaches also point to the difficulty of categorizing Spero's work, especially her wall paintings, within specific feminist practices or ideological themes. As I argue in this dissertation, Spero's strategies always shift, especially within the multi-layered, site-specific environment. Her formal tactics change constantly and represent a kind of intuitive guerilla warfare, fighting *against* what is newly "naturalized," in her own work as well as in fashionable, contemporary art styles and trends. The critic, Holland Cotter has recently written, while reviewing Galerie Lelong's timely installation of her early *War Series* (1966-1970): "Ms. Spero has never, in fact, been fashion-conscious. At some early point she seems to have figured out that the old-fashioned form vs. content debate was academic wheel-spinning."[149]

Recent comprehensive exhibitions and catalogues historisizing Spero's work legitimately within the feminist "first generation" have been the following: *Personal and Political: The Women's Art Movement, 1969-1975* (2002), *Gloria: Another Feminist Art of the 1970s* (2003), and *True Grit: Lee Bontecou, Louise Bourgeois, Jay DeFeo, Claire Falkstein, Nancy Grossman, Louise Nevelson, and Nancy Spero* (2000).[150] However, as Michael Duncan has written, while formulating the contexts in which Ana Mendieta's oeuvre may be studied, the "first generation" of artists associated with the feminist movement can be more broadly historicized and contextualized:

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

> One of the most fascinating trends of the past few years has been the rediscovery of artists associated with the early years of the feminist movement. Works by such figures as Carolee Schneemann, Ree Morton, Hannah Wilke, Faith Ringgold, Mary Beth Edelson, Eleanor Antin, Harmony Hammnond and Nancy Spero clearly offer a kind of heritage for much of today's formally experimental art focusing on gender and the body. With an inexorable rush, feminist art from the past seems at last to be entering the mainstream art world.[151]

The language of the body as gendered, as subjective experience filtered through the individual and socio-historical circumstances of the body, is another context through which Spero's work has been historicized. Amy Schlegel, curator at the Philadelphia Art Alliance, has emphasized Spero's attempts to depict women's alleged "otherness" as a source of strength: "It is the capacity of the human body to signify, to do the work of language, as a generalized system rather than a specific mode of communication, that Spero has found most useful over the years."[152] In Robert Storr's 1991 exhibition, *Devil on the Stairs: Looking Back on the Eighties*, the curator considered Spero as a major influence on 1980s art, positioning her primary themes within a cluster of artists in the show's "Body" section who exposed the inside/outside body experience: Spero, Louise Bourgeois, Ana Mendieta and Francesco Clemente.[153] In 1993, Dominique Nahas curated an exhibition on the subject of the gendered body of the artist, with the photographer, Abe Frajndlich, collaborating with Spero to depict the body of the artist as performer.[154] Against a black backdrop, Frajndlich photographed Spero performing friezes in her white leotards and shoes, miming her paper dolls or cast of characters, becoming variously, the dancer, the clown, the jester, the martyr, the outsider, the heroine. Spero then exits the stage, in the manner of the exhibition's title, *Gone Beyond Gone*, leaving her work clothes behind on a platform as "the remains." She – Spero -- is finally never captured by

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Frajndlich, who is able to photograph only the stylized performance; Spero is too slippery in her disguise and getaway (Figure 80).

Another historicization of Spero's work has been in the context of the figurative, expressively raw, large-scale paintings of her husband, Leon Golub, who is an equally significant and distinctive painter, important to any discussion of painting from the second-half of the twentieth century. In Jon Bird's monograph on Golub, *Leon Golub: Echoes of the Real,* the art historian intersperses discussions of Golub's artistic concerns with analyses comparing and contrasting his and Spero's handling of related themes, materials, and formats over time.[155] Exhibitions examining the connections and distinctions between the two artists' activist-oriented, humanist-centered works have been sporadically featured. More recently, the Roth Horowitz Gallery exhibition, *Leon Golub/Nancy Spero; the Fighting is the Dance, Too* (2000), featured both early and recent works on paper by the pair, emphasizing their profound engagement with historical, political, and social concerns as well as their dialogues with the history of art.[156] *Nancy Spero – Leon Golub: Contemporaries* (1997), displayed their works grouped within common themes in which their different approaches, formats and processes were evident: authority, hybridity, ferocity, obscenity, and alterity. *War and Memory, Leon Golub/Nancy Spero Retrospective Exhibition, 1950-1994* (1994-1995), a large thematically organized exhibition focusing on Spero and Golub's representations of the body and its manifestation of the relationships of power and the structures of power, conceived by the director of MIT's List Visual Arts Center, Katy Kline and its curator, Helaine Posner, included Spero's wall painting installation, *Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore* and a skylight wall installation, *To the Revolution* (1995), in the Paris

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

American Center to inaugurate the opening of the Frank Gehry-designed building.[157] All three of these exhibitions offered ample evidence to conclude that by tracking closely Spero and Golub's unique artistic relationship, spanning over fifty years, a rich vein of complex and subtle artistic and intellectual dialogues would be available for further research and analysis.

Thus, I argue that Spero's oeuvre and, especially, her site-specific wall paintings, interconnect the categories of genres (installation art, history painting and mural painting) and permeate the borders of multiple contexts, such as Holocaust, feminist and activist art. The real tribute to Spero's effectiveness and inventiveness as an artist who marries historical, mythical, and contemporary critical engagement is found in the works of younger artists whose themes and socio-cultural concerns, pictorial vocabularies, and formats are nearly unimaginable without the precedents set by her oeuvre. The British art historian, Jon Bird, has recently curated a retrospective-scale exhibition of the scroll works of Spero and the sculpture of Kiki Smith, *Other Worlds: The Art of Nancy Spero and Kiki Smith* (2003) at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead, England.[158] He paired their works and documented Spero's acknowledged influence on Smith by analyzing their thematic connections and differences, their approaches and formats for understanding space and the body, mythology and identity, decoration and structure, and the sacred and the profane.

Spero's groundbreaking work continues to be a significant catalyst for new generations of artists. Kara Walker's remarkable body of cut-silhouettes that expand the notion of drawing also use this means to deconstruct racial and gender stereotypes through a reinvention of history painting. Walker turns the minstrel tradition inside out,

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

eviscerates it and re-forms it, as Spero does pornography and misogynous invective -- with seductive artistry, shocking juxtapositions, stylization and poetics, parody and graphic contortions of visceral rage. By wielding the grotesque as a deadly weapon, both artists bring the viewer face-to-face with contemporary myths and historical realities via often controversial craft-related or marginalized media as well as drawing and text, while their repertory characters role play in the baring of hidden histories and desires.

South African artist, William Kentridge's "drawings for projection" likewise mine power relations, the political as personal landscape, and the psycho-topography of memory and witness. His erasure-ghosts of animated charcoal drawings move through cinematic and historico-psychological time on the momentum of associations and metaphor, gesture and surreal mutations. Like Spero, and Walker, he moves from the lyric to the epic, from chronicle to hymns of the divided self. His graphic means also deal in transmutation and flux, a constant "becoming," which necessitates both doing and undoing, resistance and emotional urgency. His shape-shifting dramatis personae, like Spero's (and Walker's), form "shadow processions" enacting unscripted, fractured narratives. The seemingly rudimentary but fluid body languages of Spero's "paper dolls," Kentridge's marionettes, and Walker's silhouetted puppets convey the subtleties of thought and feeling which establish recognizable characters and relationships. As "doubles," puppets blur the lines between animate and inanimate, psychological space and outward action; they ignite both identification and imagination.[159]

It is equally difficult to experience Shirin Neshat's stylized, highly symbolic films and calligraphic photographs on Islamic culture, women, myth, and everyday life, without calling to mind Spero's *First Language* (1979-1981) as an antecedent in

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

validating a subjectivity of female experience, giving it a critical yet visionary vocabulary by re-presenting the body as manifesting spirit and energy. Through analyses of the iconic structure of violent martyrdom in ritual and metaphor, Spero and Neshat seek and deploy new graphic languages of possibility.

In her blending of hybrid cultural imagery pointing to the ambiguities of identity, Shahzia Sikander seeks another kind of subjectivity for women's voices within culture related to Spero's long-standing themes. Refashioning the ancient Mughal miniature form in a mix of styles (abstract, stylized, and painterly) with works on paper, such as *The Scroll* (1992, 20 x 71 inches), Sikander depicts simultaneous views of multiple activities, dispenses with the boundaries between history and the present, and pictures the predicament of identity in symbols and magically interwoven relationships. Spero's development of the scroll as a contemporary vehicle of transformation and critical inquiry set the parameters for the reception of Sikander's reinterpretations of the miniature -- her transformative genre of Muslim/Hindu tales and her own fantastical mythologies -- allowing the language of the miniature into the arena of contemporary discourse. In addition, other New York-based artists working in diverse media, such as Leslie Dill, Debra Pearlman, and Duston Spear, share an acknowledged lineage with Spero's figurative, word-image strategies (*Codex Artaud*, 1972) in their integration of the words of poets, contemporary and historical, into drawing-collage formats as complementary sign systems to be deciphered: a visual, hybrid hieroglyphics. Lifting the poetic lines from their context and translating them into another (graphic) language in paint, artists such as Dill and Spear attempt to conjure an encounter with history, with the words of the dead addressed to the living.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

It is time to rethink and reevaluate not only the impact of Spero's oeuvre on the first, second and third generation feminist and activist artists but to consider as well her many conceptual and formal contributions to contemporary artists generally. As Tim Rollins emphasized during a panel discussion on "Amplifying Artists' Voices," chaired by Ellen Levy at the 2001 College Art Association conference in Philadelphia, among the primary influences on his and other activist-artists' work has been the long career and prolific output of Nancy Spero. Artists on the same panel, as diverse as Levy, Nato Thompson, Suzanne Anker, and Krzysztof Wodiczko, agreed.[160]

The primary aims of this dissertation have been to fully document and analyze Nancy Spero's wall painting installations, to highlight these installations within the context of her entire oeuvre, and to fully foreground the artist's themes and imagery, processes and formats, strategies and techniques by reaching back to trace her artistic training and the nascent experiments of the early years of her career. In order to expand the discourse surrounding the artist's oeuvre, I have incorporated many different methodologies, including formal, visual analysis, studio practice, critical reception, feminist theory, iconography, and biography. In addition, Spero's important expansions of the mural and installation genres, especially within the museum environment, have been analyzed within specific, local contexts. By positing multiple contexts within which her work might be considered in greater detail in the future, my goal has been to demonstrate Spero's significance to any art historical dialogue examining and characterizing the important streams of post-World War II art. As the critic Holland Cotter has recently written of Spero's considerable contributions:

> Without a signature image or outsize scale, Nancy Spero has ended up being one of the distinctive artists of American postwar years... It [her

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

oeuvre] also gives Ms. Spero a place in the big picture of 20th-century art, one that will emerge after big-gun institutions like the Museum of Modern Art and the Whitney have cleaned all the bulky canonical junk out of their overstuffed closets, and told the story a new way.[161]

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Notes

[1] Spero continued to reinterpret the dark themes articulated in her installations *Homage to Ana Mendieta* (1991, Wuppertal; 1993, Whitney Biennial; 1995, Aldrich Museum) and *Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore* (1990, Smith; 1991, Wuppertal; 1993, Jewish Museum, NYC; 1994, Amsterdam; 1994-1995, invited by the Museum in Progress Directors, Josef Ortner and Kathrin Messner, to run a version of this image in the newspaper *Der Standard*, Vienna; 1998, invited by Curator, Susanne Altmann, to install a version of this image in Hellerau, Dresden). In addition, Spero and Golub exhibited together in an important exhibition, *War and Memory*, a thematic exhibition focusing on the representation of the body and its manifestation of the relationships of power and the structures of power, conceived by MIT's List Visual Arts Center Director, Katy Kline and Curator, Helaine Posner. *War and Memory* had two venues: in September 1994, it opened at the American Center in Paris and in 1995, the exhibition opened at MIT's List Center. Spero and crew printed a version of *Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore* and a skylight wall installation, *To the Revolution* (1995) at the Paris American Center to inaugurate the opening of the Frank Gehry-designed building. Spero's *To the Revolution*, so titled to honor of Isadora Duncan's revolutionary dance in which she created a new, modernist dance lexicon related to Greek friezes in motion, was first a series on paper, printed and collaged in 1983, featuring a female goddess-figure holding a snake above her head; *To the Revolution* in the 1983 paper series is a provocative frenzy of the representational language of pornography and myth. But in the Paris skylight installation, Spero mingled both celebratory and healing properties with horrific echoes from the *War Series*, oscillating myth and ritual with contemporary and historical figures: Francois Rude's *La Marseillaise* (1833-1836) from the Arc de Triomphe, Eugene Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830), Egyptian Vulture Goddess, Vietnamese women refugees, Thai dancers, Aboriginal figures, Egyptian Goddess Nut, Warrior Athena, and Josephine Baker, among others. At MIT, Spero re-choreographed and added figures, printing her installation on a deep blue ground, entitled *To the Revolution*.

[2] See Susan Harris's essay "Dancing in Space," *Nancy Spero*, exh. cat. (Malmo, Sweden: Malmo Konsthall, 1994), 9-42.

[3] See Hanne Weskott's discussion of Spero's technique of literally lifting images to the foreground by her cut-collage and printmaking methods, differing greatly from her earlier figure/ground painting techniques which merged figures with murky contours melting into an ambiguous, consuming background, in Hanne Weskott, "Differing Realities," *Détente*, exh. cat. (Brunn, Czech Republic: Dum Umeni Mesta Brna and Vienna: VereinAuustellungsorganization, 1991), 78-80.

[4] Spero's Greek Dildo Dancer, Greek Flute and Harp Players, Greek Gorgon (ill. 153), and her Female carrying a large phallus (ill. 342, Column Crater Pan Painter) all originated from objects illustrated in John Boardman, *Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Archaic Period* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

[5] See Carl Alexander von Volborth, *Heraldry of the World* (London: Blanford Press, 1973). See also Guy Cadogan Rothery, *Concise Encyclopedia of Heraldry* (London: Senate, 1994), especially his discussion of English heraldry and the use of monster images such as versions of Tiamat (as a four-legged, scaly she-dragon) and Marduk (the winged solar-god who slew Tiamat), 65. Spero had been impressed by displays of heraldic flags when she visited museums in Spain, while she and Golub lived in Europe during the 1950s and early 1960s. Spero was attracted by the bold geometric patterns and color of heraldic flags, and by the fabulous creatures, such as dragons, griffins, harpies, mermaids and centaurs, adorning the fields of color, as well as the emblems of beasts sticking out their tongues in aggressive stances. Author's conversations with Spero in her studio, 3/26/03.

[6] See a condensed, historical overview of "grids" as a cultural theme in Rosalind Krauss's "Grids, You Say," *Grids: format and image in 20th century art*, exh. cat. (New York: The Pace Gallery, 1978-1979), n. p. See also Jon Bird's discussion of *Black and the Red III* in "Dancing to a Different Tune," *Nancy Spero* (London: Phaidon Press, 1996), especially, 87-95.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[7] See Ann Snitow and Christine Stansell's discussion of "master/slave" fantasies of erotic domination as represented in pornographic media images in *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality* (New York: New Feminist Library, Monthly Review Press, 1983), especially, 280-299.

[8] Roswitha Juffinger and Barbara Wally, *Nancy Spero and Leon Golub at the Residenzgalerie Salzburg*, exh. cat. (Salzburg: Residenzgalerie and the International Summer Academy of Fine Arts, 1995).

[9] Ibid., see Roswitha Juffinger, "Baroque Allegory: Theme With Variations," 9-10, and Barabara Wally, "Of the Violence of Men and the Strength of Women: Nancy Spero and Leon Golub at the Residenzgalerie Salzburg," 11-34.

[10] See Susanne Altmann's interpretation of Spero's inversion of this celestial figure: "Nancy Spero extracted this image as a quote, added it into her repertoire of figures, and used its body language of weightlessness in order to reuse it in Innsbruck [in a later installation]. However, by inverting the print template the motif becomes that of a falling angel, and despite the joyous, dance-like organization of the ensemble, this could subliminally refer to a loss of innocence or misplaced ambition." Susanne Altmann, "Nancy Spero—Site-Specific Military Hospital of the Innsbruck Garrison—Festspielhaus, Dresden-Hellerau--Subway Station, New York," *Nancy Spero: A Continuous Present* (Kiel, Germany: Kunsthalle zu Kiel and Düsseldorf, Germany: Richter Verlag, 2002), 88.

[11] See the classicist art historian Jocelyn Penny Small's article, "Time *in* Space: Narrative in Classical Art," *Art Bulletin* 81, no. 4 (December 1999): 562-575.

[12] See Gottfried Semper, "Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts or Practical Aesthetics," *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 181-263.

[13] Michael Muecke, "Mobile Foundations: A Reading of Complex Surfaces in Gottfried Semper's Treichler Laundry Ship," *Aurora: The Journal of the History of Art* 2 (2001) 95. Semper *Wissenschaft, Industrie und Kunst, und andere Schriften uber Architektur, Kunsthandwerk und Kunstunterricht* (1851) (Mainz and Berlin), 77.

[14] Ibid., 92.

[15] See Marcel Duchamp's discussion of the "infrathin" as a related concept of the infinitesimal screen or scrim both dividing and seaming as a hinge in *Marcel Duchamp, Notes*, Paul Matisse, ed (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1983), 9.

[16] See the author's discussion of Luce Irigaray's feminist psychoanalytical analysis of the formation of a symbolic space in the development of girls and their relationship to language in Chapter Two, on Spero's installation at the Schirn Kunsthalle, *Re-Birth of Venus*.

[17] See Muecke's discussion of Semper's joining of the scared and profane in his designs for the "Treichler Laundry Ship," 72-113.

[18] Jerry Rubin, *Do It: Scenarios of the Revolution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).

[19] During 1996, Spero created an interesting continuity and variation on the Sheela sacred/profane themes by installing in a lavatory, converted into a contemporary gallery space in Salzburg, a work speaking to the themes of creation/destruction, *Sheela-Na-Gig, ile Commencement du Monde* (1996). Stephen Matthewson invited Spero to install a work in his unconventional lavatory/gallery and the artist chose as her medium Post-its. The German curator, Susanne Altmann described the installation: "Tiny yellow Post-its were tacked to shabby walls at eye level, and a series of drawings spanning from the creation of the world out of the lap of the Celtic fertility goddess, *Sheela-na-gig*, to the *fin du monde* were displayed. These works begin with a minimal red point that gradually becomes the vagina of the wild goddess, which she rips open with both hands." See Susanne Altmann, "She(ela) Gets the Last Word," *Nancy Spero: Sheela Does*

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Ramapo, exh. cat. (Mahwah, NJ: Kresge and Pascal Galleries, Ramapo College of New Jersey, 2001), 3. Spero's installation of Post-its in Salzburg took place at Stehpen Matthewson Gallery, Galerie im Alcatraz Alte Saline, Perner insel, Hallein, Salzberg, 1996. Lavatory walls as the scenes of graffiti, sexual, and pornographic images have yielded figures and texts for Spero's repertoire of images. And the ephemerality of cheap, throw-away Post-its, filled with jottings serving as reminders before becoming waste paper, appealed to Spero's aesthetics.

[20] There are many ironies suggested by Spero's performance in relation to Namuth's film of Pollock, including the overlapping themes of husband/wife artists: Pollock/Krasner, Spero/Golob; Pollock's performative painting drips/Spero's printmaking/laundry process; the status of the heroic, maverick insider/the marginalized, feminist, activist outsider; Pollock's Modernist aesthetic 'purity'/Spero's postmodernist blending of political/historical/mythic imagery, emphasizing devalued printmaking processes and 'minor' media.

[21] Spero's studio opens up from the doorway of an office area where assistants perform clerical tasks, and it links on the other end to the kitchen eating area, where guests and family visit around the kitchen table. In the Spero/Golub studio layout, there is circulation around the long, open-ended wall in the middle, which separates the Spero/Golub studio areas. Spero and Golub have tiny bedrooms off the kitchen area, while the vast majority of the floor space is studio/work space or communal space.

[22] Spero's installation at Jack Tilton Gallery, New York, *Sheela at Home*, was part of the three venue solo exhibition in 1996 in New York City, including an installation, *Rehearsal* (1996), consisting of wall printings and a reconfiguration of the banner, *A Cycle in Time*, at New York's Kunsthalle; and an installation at P.P.O.W. Gallery of paper scrolls, such as, *Black and the Red III*. Ten years earlier, Spero had her first retrospective in the U.S. and in Great Britain.

[23] Hans-Ulrich Obrist quotes Spero in "Nancy Spero Interview with Hans-Ulrich Obrist," Edelbert Koeb, ed. *KunstlerInnen: 50 Positionen*, exh. cat. (Vienna: Kunsthaus Bregenz, 1997), 210-217, 216.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Author's taped interview with Shari Zolla, 3/7/00.

[26] See in Spero's library, Marija Gimbutas, *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe: 6500-3500B.C. Myths and Cult Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). Spero has underlined many passages and illustrations, including a discussion of serpent/snake imagery in the Neolithic period and in Minoan culture and Archaic Greece: coiled pottery with snakes, decorative patterns of snakes symbolizing vitality, rebirth, and mythological powers to move the cosmos, 93-101. The Minoan Crete Snake Goddess from Knossos (c. 160 BCE, made of faience, in the Archaeological Museum, Herkleion) is used as an image by Spero, 145. Spero notes that in Ancient Greece, Snake and Bird goddesses were depicted as women with wings, or snake-like, 147-148. Athena, depicted in Black- and Red-Figure vases, is an intimate with birds and snakes, and thus has a snake depicted on her shield, 152. Spero marked the passage regarding the serpent in the illustrated Agathodaimon Fresco, the House of Vetti, Pompeii, in *Pompeii and Herculaneum* (London: Spring Books, 1966), 97.

[27] See in Spero's library, E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians or Studies in Egyptian Mythology*, v. 1 (New York: Dover Publications, 1969). Illustrations of the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* are featured and Spero notes the details of explanatory text and the visual format, use of repetition, and formal elements as well as symbols and their meanings. The Serpent/Snake sprouting feet and wings and heads is noted, 233-235.

[28] See Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, "Serpent," *A Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. John Buchanan-Brown, 1969 (New York: Penguin Books, 1996), 844-858. With her knowledge of the layered symbolism of *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Spero resonates the themes of regeneration by printing on the escalator space with its specific movements and cylindrical shape echoing the journey of Ra in Egyptian tale: the

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

viewers enact in the escalator the journey, detailed in the Egyptian text, through the belly of the beast. Ra is carried by boat through the underworld to emerge in daylight; his boat skirts shoals inhabited by serpents and the boat turns into a serpent itself; the boat/serpent is dragged through a serpent and it emerges from the mouth of the serpent (the serpent consumes itself and gives birth to itself). The swallower-swallowed complex is depicted in the Bible, as in Jonah's fate inside the whale. The serpent is thus the great regenerator, womb/phallus. Spero purposefully carries the visitor at the Pompidou through this cyclical movement within the transparent 'guts' or serpent-like form of the escalator.

[29] Jon Bird, "Part II: 'Codex Artaud' – the phallic tongue," *Nancy Spero* (London: ICA, 1987), 27. See in Spero's library, Erich Neumann, *The GreatMother: An Analysis of the Archetype*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series XLVII, 1955).

[30] See in Spero's library, Thomas B. Hess and John Ashbery, eds., *Light: From Aten to Laser* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1969), especially, Florens Deuchler, "Gothic Glass," 34-43.

[31] See Krauss's discussion of the multiple implications of the French, "glace," in "Grids, You Say," *Grids: format and image in 20th century art*, exh. cat. (New York: The Pace Gallery, 1978-1979), n. p.

[32] See Jacques Lacan's discussion of the infant's psychological and linguistic development in its separation from the mother's identity during the "mirror phase," "The Mirror-Phase as Formative of the Function of I," *Ecrits: A Selection* (New York: Norton, 1977), 1-7.

[33] Susan Harris quotes Spero in "Dancing in Space," *Nancy Spero*, exh. cat. (Malmo, Sweden: Malmon Konstahalle, 1994): 22.

[34] Author's taped interview with Shari Zolla, 3/7/00.

[35] Peter Soriano, *Raise/Time; An Installation by Nancy Spero*, exhibition brochure (Cambridge, MA: Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums Gallery Series, Number 15, 1995), n.p.

[36] Roberta Smith, "Nancy Spero at Josh Baer," *The New York Times*, March 8, 1991, C. 26.

[37] Author's interview notes with Spero, April 1, 1996, and a telephone interview with Soriano, October 9, 1996.

[38] Soriano noted, in the October 9 interview, that the original plan was to have a series of exhibitions by contemporary artists, but the idea fizzled-out after Spero's installation came down and repainting of galleries was complete. Soriano also alluded to the fact that a contemporary curator would be needed to mediate between the director, other curators and the public, and that the Fogg already had laid claim to the contemporary territory; the politics of territorial power disrupted further explorations.

[39] Soriano's "Afterward" in *Raise/Time*, n.p.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Nancy Spero, "Sky Goddess," *Artforum* 26, no. 7 (March 1988): 105.

[43] Pamela Wye, "Freedom of Movement," *Arts Magazine* 65, no. 2 (October 1990): 57.

[44] Nancy Spero writes, "For me as a feminist artist, to depict the female body is to depict ranges of difference. Not to set up an ideal or universal (classical -- whole-- how can woman be universal if she has a hole?), but particulars, a kind of naming," in "Sky Goddess," 105.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[45] Antonin Artaud, "On Balinese Theater," *Selected Writings* (New York, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1976), 216.

[46] Jo-Anna Isaak quotes Spero in "Spero: A Work in Comic Courage," *Nancy Spero" Works Since 1950,* (Syracuse, NY: Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse University, 1987), 28.

[47] See Thomas McEvilley, "Nancy Spero," *Artforum* 24 (Summer 1986): 123.

[48] Isaak quotes Spero, "Nancy Spero," 34.

[49] Isaak quotes Mikhail Bakhtin's study of Rabelais and humor in the medieval carnivalesque, 27.

[50] *The Greek Miracle,* exhibition brochure (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1993), n.p. See also Garry Wills's review of *The Greek Miracle,* exhibition and catalogue at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (1993), and his discussion of the mistakes in attributing a link or an 'inevitability' between Greek classical style and the roots of democracy and Enlightenment values, "Athena's Magic," *The New York Review of Books,* December 17, 1992, 47-51.

[51] See in Spero' library, H.D., *Helen in Egypt,* Intro., Horace Gregory (New York: New Directions, 1961).

[52] Ibid, 64 and 13.

[53] Ibid, Horace Gregory's "Introduction," viii. See also Alan Jones, "The Writing on the Wall," *Arts Magazine* 63, no. 2 (October 1988), 21. Jones's review of the exhibition, *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950,* at List Visual Arts Center at MIT, allies H.D.'s and Spero's similar aims to redefine the force of myth in contemporary culture. The author discusses H.D.'s trip down the Nile in 1923, as a lifelong dream realized, and her subsequent preoccupation with hieroglyphics. He notes H.D.'s sessions and study with Sigmund Freud in Vienna in order to decipher "hieroglyphs of the unconscious," or dreams. Both H.D. and Spero strive, according to Jones, to reconcile the personal and impersonal, autobiographical and communal impulses. See also, Kathleen Fraser, "Letter From Rome: H.D., Spero and the Reconstruction of Gender," *MEANING* 10 (November 1991): 40-43. Fraser discusses visiting Spero's exhibition, *Sky Goddess/Egyptian Acrobat,* in Rome at Galleria Stefania Miscetti, and the shared techniques of H.D. and Spero in activating a neglected female presence in a re-speaking of myth.

[54] Susanne Altmann, "Nancy Spero – Site-Specific, Military Hospital of the Garrission; Festspielhaus, Dresden-Hellerau; Subway Station, New York," Dirk Luckow and Ingeborg Kaehler, eds., *Nancy Spero: A Continuous Present,* exh. cat. (Kiel, Germany: Kunsthalle zu Kiel and Dusseldorf: Richter Verlag, 2002), 88. See also, Susanne Altmann, "Re-birth of Eruidice or She(ela) Got the Last Word," *Nancy Spero: Sheela Does Ramapo* exh. cat. (Mahwah, NJ: Kresge and Pascal Galeries, Ramapo College of New Jersey, 2001), 3-7.

[55] Author's taped interview with Shari Zolla, 3/7/00.

[56] Author's taped interview at the Military Base in Innsbruck with Colonel Friedrich Scheibler of the Austrian Army, May 10, 2002.

[57] See in Spero's library, Carol Andrews, ed., *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead,* trans. Raymond O. Faulkner (London: British Museum Press, 1972). Ancient Egyptian lyre and flute players from the *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* are also illustrated in Spero's copy of Albert Champdor, ed., *Le Livre des Morts,* (Paris, Editions Albin, 1963) and E.A.W. Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians.* See also in Spero's library, Eva C. Keuls, *The Reign of the Phallus; Sexual Politics in Ancient Egypt* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[58] Thanks to Susanne Altmann who discovered the Musical Corps building next to the Hospital, and identified the insignia of the lyre.

[59] See in Spero's library, Pierre Grimal, ed., *Larousse World Mythology* (1965) (Secaucus, NJ: Chartwell Books, Inc., 1976), 16. Also in Spero's library, Ivan van Sertima, ed., *Black Women in Antiquity* (New Brunswick and London: Tranaction Books, 1985), 106.

[60] Hanne Wassermann's photograph was taken by Trudi Fleischmann, ca. 1930, in Rachel Salamander, ed., *The Jewish World of Yesterday, 1860-1938*, trans., Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New York: Rizzoli, 1991).

[61] In the author's taped interview with Colonel Friedrich Scheibler at the Innsbruck Military Base, May 10, 2002, Colonel Scheibler noted that Spero's installation has been well received by most soldiers and doctors, who have remarked on its airborne, "soaring" qualities, its recognizably classical and mythological figures, and its mix of styles representing female images. While the specifics of the precise art historical allusions, representational puns, and printing techniques might not be recognizable to everyone, the installation's figures are generally recognizable to the soldiers; and the figural ensemble has communicated the qualities of celebration, transformation, motion, and soaring. Visitors seem eager to learn more about specific images, where they came from, and their relationships within historical frameworks, their ancient meanings and how Spero has reinterpreted them, and how she selects and prints her images.

[62] Werner Hanak and Mechtild Widrich, "Nancy Spero - Remembrance/Renewal," *Jewish Museum Vienna*, ed., Dr. Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, (Vienna, Jewish Museum of the City of Vienna, 1995), 46.

[63] See Francis A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, 3rd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974); Mary J Carruthers, *A Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990). See also Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek's quote from Cicero on this subject in her essay, "On the Historical Exhibition at the Jewish Museum of the City of Vienna," *Jewish Museum Vienna*: "Whoever wants to exercise his memory must choose certain places and create mental images of those things which he wants to store in his memory and bind them to these places," 61.

[64] Author's notes from conversations with Werner Hanak at the Vienna Jewish Museum, 5/6/02. See also Matthew Baigell's discussion of Spero's *Marie Sanders* and *Masha Bruskina* in *Jewish-American Artists and the Holocaust* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 103.

[65] Spero's wall installation at the Vienna Jewish Museum is a central focus of the visitors' orientation to the Museum. Student and group tours begin their exploration of the Museum with discussions of Spero's wall painting in relation to the collections and an audio tour explains the references, techniques and imagery of Spero's installation.

[66] These books included: Elena Romero Castello and Uriel Macias Kapon, *The Jews and Europe: 2,000 Years of History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1994) and Judith C.E. Belinfante, Christine Fischer-Defoy, Ad Petersen, eds., *Charlotte Salomon: Life? or Theater?A Play with Music, 1940-1942* (Amsterdam: Joods Historische Museum and Waanders Vitgevers, Zwolle, 1992).

[67] Ibid.; see also Bernhard Purin, "The 'Prince Kaunitz' – now Arnstein's House," in *Jewish Museum Vienna*, 55-58.

[68] Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, "Memoria, Intelligentia, Providentia," in *Jewish Museum Vienna*, 130.

[69] Karl Albrecht-Weinberger, "As If It Were a Part of Himself," *Jewish Museum Vienna*, 52.

[70] Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, "... and I Will Praise His Magnificence," *Jewish Museum Vienna*, 21-23.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[71] See Yosef Garfinkel, "Dancing and the Beginning of Art Scenes in the Early Village Communities of the Near East and Southeast Europe," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 8, no. 2 (October 1998): 222-223.

[72] Hanak and Widrich quote Spero in "Nancy Spero – Remembrance/Renewal," 47.

[73] Felicitas Heimann-Jelinek, "... and I Will Praise His Magnificence," 23.

[74] It is interesting to note that Rachel Whiteread's gestalt, metaphorical monument, *Holocaust Memorial* (2000, installed four years after Spero's wall printing at Vienna's Jewish Museum), located at Vienna's Judenplatz, adjacent to the New Jewish Museum, an underground archaeological site of a medieval temple, references most strongly a unifying concept signifying the "People of the Book." Her cast inside-out library in the Judenplatz square employs a mute, minimalist opacity as commemoration and as absence. A meditative silence surrounds the non-reflective rectangular, ghostly bulk. Impenetrability is stressed in its physical presence, despite its suggestion of narrative. A viewer may walk around the periphery and imagine but not enter the barrier of closed pages facing outward. An unknowability and incomprehension is stressed in the face of the magnitude of the historical horror.

[75] See Michael Muecke, "Mobile Foundations: A Reading of Complex Surfaces in Gottfried Semper's Treichler Laundry Ship," *Aurora: The Journal of the History of Art* 2 (2001). See also Gottfried Semper *Wissenschaft, Industrie und Kunst, und andere Schriften uber Architektur, Kunsthandwerk und Kunstunterricht* (1851) (Mainz and Berlin).

[76] Author's notes from conversations with Werner Hanak at the Vienna Jewish Museum, 5/6/02.

[77] The image originated from a photograph of *Reading the Haggadah*, a print from *Maschal ha-Kadmoni*, by Isaak ibn Sahula, Germany, 1450, at the Bodleian Library, Oxford. See Hanak and Widrich, 45, 47.

[78] The image originated from a photograph of *Baking Mazzoth*, by Machsor, Hammelburg, 1348, from Hochschul-Bibliothek, Darmstadt. See Hanak and Widrich, 45, 47.

[79] See Gabriele Kohlbauer-Fritz, "A Viewable Storage Area," *Jewish Museum Vienna*, 119-123. Kohlbauer-Fritz writes that the majority of objects in the Museum's collections were torn from their owners, seized and transferred as impounded stock to the Ethnological Museum in Vienna, where some of the items were displayed in a special anti-Semitic exhibition, "The Physical and Psychical Appearance of the Jews," in 1939, at the Museum of Natural History.

[80] *Burning of Jews*, by Wohlgemuth from Hartmann Schedel, Weltchronik, Nuremberg, 1493, in Hanak and Widrich, 48; *Bird's Perspective View of Jewish Ghetto*, ca. 1670, block print, in Hanak and Widrich, 48; photograph of a raid in the Jewish Community of Vienna on March 18, 1938, from Dokumentationsarchiv des osterreichischen Widerstandes, Vienna; a photograph of "Jew Baiting" on display window of a Jewish clothing store, 1938, by Heinrich Hoffmann, in Salamander, 292; a photograph of SS terror tactics and the public humiliation of Jews made to wear signs reading, "I am the greatest pig in town and only have affairs with Jews" and "As a Jew-boy I always take only German girls up to my room," in Salamander, 294-295.

[81] Photograph of the destroyed Leopoldstadt Temple by Peter Merz, 1941, from the Vienna Jewish Museum collection, in Hanak and Widrich, 49.

[82] Hanak and Widrich, 47.

[83] See Lawrence Alloway's review of Spero's scrolls in, "Art," *The Nation*, September 25, 1976, 282.

[84] These mystical texts are discussed in Michael D. Schwartz, *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996). According to Schwartz, the Hekhalot documents claim to detail actual practices used to reach trance states; a candidate would gain Shamanic powers during a visionary experience, undergoing some form of psychic death or personal

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

destruction and disintegration, followed by a corresponding resurrection or reintegration that would purge and give a qualitatively different life to the initiate.

[85] Garfinkel quotes archaeologist V.W. Turner, in "Dancing and the Beginning of Art Scenes in the Early Village Communities of the Near East and Southeast Europe," 221.

[86] Ibid.

[87] The origin of Spero's figure is a photograph by Trude Fleischmann, ca. 1930, in Hanak and Widrich, 46.

[88] Spero's "Egyptain Acrobat" from Karnak is an example which the Egyptian art historian, Nazli Madkour, discusses in "Spero's Hieroglyphs," *Nancy Spero, 7th International Cairo Biennale 1998* (Cairo: Egypt: Seventh International Cairo Biennale, December 1998-February 1999), 16.

[89] Spero's source for the Maccabee Championships is a photograph by Abraham Pisarek, Berlin, 1935, illustrated in Salamander, 144.

[90] Spero reworked a photograph of Fritzi Massary illustrated in Rachel Salamander, ed. *The Jewish World of Yesterday, 1860-1938*, translation and essays by Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 222.

[91] Rudolf Kastner is quoted from his writings, "Nachschaffende Musiker," ("Performing Musicians"), in *Juden im deutschen Kulturbereich (Jews in German Cultural Context)*, Salamander, 222.

[92] Tucholsky is quoted in Salamander, 222.

[93] The origin of Spero's image is taken from an etching by Emil Orlick, Veinna, 1902, in a private collection, Vienna, illustrated in *Judenfragen, Jewish Attitudes from Assimilation to Zionism*, exh. cat. (Vienna, Wien Judishen Museum, 1997), 65.

[94] In March, 1998, Spero installed a solo exhibition of her work in a commercial gallery in England, the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, *Let the Priests Tremble*. Spero took the title from Helen Cixous' well known feminist essay on developing a subjectivity of women in the creation of a feminist language. See in Spero's library, Helene Cixous, "La Jeune nee: an excerpt," *Diacritics: A Review of Contemporary Criticism* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1977): 64-69. Spero has marked the text and underlined Cixous' passages on the domination of logocentrisim and phallocentrisim in Western culture, creating a degrading and stereotyping "Woman." Cixous challenges the patriarchal Law of the Father: "Let the priests tremble. Let them tremble, the priests, we are going to show them our sexts," 68. Cixous is discussing the myth of the terrible Medusa, and offers an alternate vision of her as beautiful and laughing, a vision which Spero materializes in her Gorgon figures. Cixous notes that, historically, the two un-representable entities in Western culture are women's genitals and death. She proposes as an antidote, "ecriture feminine," in which women would write from their own experience of the body, departing from rules that govern syntax of thought, and write with "jouissance," a disorderly pleasure of the diffused eroticism of female body experience. See also in Spero's library, Helene Cixous, *The Newly Born Woman* (1975), trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). The exhibition at the Ikon Gallery featured Spero's paper scroll, *Black and the Red III* and a wall painting in two galleries, *Let the Priests Tremble*. In a taped interview with Spero's assistant, Shari Zolla, on 3/7/00, Zolla noted that natural light had again inspired the Ikon Gallery installation in its placement and composition. The two galleries, with neo-gothic ceilings and arches made of wood and painted pure white, were printed with colorful, running, and leapfrogging dancers and acrobats, rhyming with the arches. Spero's cross-cultural cast of characters made its way to the end wall, where Spero printed in various red inks the quote from Cixous, "Let the Priests Tremble." David Lister, in an article on the exhibition, noted that the G8 Summit leader's dinner scheduled to be held in the Ikon Gallery was abruptly cancelled, after the Foreign Office received photographs of a sampling of Spero's scrolls. The excuse used by the Labour Government was that the public Lottery funded space and that

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

sensibilities might be offended by her installation, in Lister's, "Arts Diary," *The Independent* (London), May 23, 1998.

[95] For a history of Hellerau, see Carsten Ludwig, Claudia Reichardt, and Detlev Schneider, *Festspielhaus Hellerau* (Dresden: WDS Pertermann, 1996).

[96] See Peter Wollen, "Tales of Total Art and Dreams of The Total Museum," *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearances*, ed. Lynne Cooke and Peter Wollen (New York: DIA Center for the Arts and New Press, 1998), 155-177.

[97] Laban wrote after his travels, "The European has lost the habit and capacity to pray with movement... The ritual movements of other races are much richer in range and expressiveness," in Rudolf van Laban, *The Mastery of Movement* (1950), 3rd edition revised and enlarged, Lisa Ollmann (London: Macdonald and Evans, 1971), 5.

[98] See Wollen, 155-177. After the traumas of World War I, modernist expressionism was sometimes interpreted as utopianist and as too emotionally centered. See G.F. Hartlaub's preface to the catalogue of the Neue Sachlichkeit exhibition, Mannheim, 1925, translated, annotated and reprinted in Rose-Carol Washton Long, ed. *German Expressionism: Documents from the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism* (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1993), 290-292. The "culture of the body" was a concept manipulated by the Nazis in the 1936 Olympics. Leni Riefenstahl's first mentor had been Mary Wigman. Wigman had stayed at Hellerau and was influenced by Laban and Jacques-Dalcroze. Laban was eventually denounced by Nazis and emigrated to England, joining Kurt Jooss at Dartington Hall.

[99] See Altmann, Kiel, 87-94.

[100] Author's taped conversation with Shari Zolla, 2/7/00.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Altmann, Kiel, quotes Kerber, 91.

[103] Susanne Altmann and Regine Hempel have directed a film which chronicles Spero's Hellerau project, *Nancy Spero & Leon Golub; The Rhythm of Time*, 2000.

[104] Archaeologist Yosef Garfinkel, quotes from J.L. Hanna's *Encyclopedia of Religion* vol. 4, ed. (New York: MacMillan, 1987), 203, in Garfinkel's essay, "Dancing and the Beginning of Art Scenes in the Early village communities of the Near East and Southeast Europe," 222.

[105] Karin Bettina Muller, "Nancy Spero and Leon Golub at the Hellerau Festspielhaus near Dresden," *Kulturchronik* 5 (1998): 9.

[106] Ibid., 10-11.

[107] Ibid., 10.

[108] Spero had seen the Cretan Bull Jumper (Knossos, Crete, c. 1700-1550 BCE) at the Archaeological Museum, Crete, while she and Golub lived in Europe.

[109] See Jocelyn Penny Small, "Time *in* Space: Narrative in Classical Art," *Art Bulletin* 81, no. 4 (December 1999): 562-575, especially. 562. Small reminds the reader (on the same page) of Aristotle's dictum (*Poetics*, 1451b): "The real difference [between history and poetry] is this, that one tells what happened and the other what might happen."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[110] Snakes also play the same role in Spero's winding and fractured installation in the Festspielhaus's hidden corridor off the lobby area, where they frolic with Greek Dildo Dancers in a sexualized dance, printed on the lower reaches of the walls.

[111] In Spero's library, the artist has marked for special attention the serpent in the Agathodaimon fresco, House of Vetti, Pompeii, in *Pompeii and Herculaneum* (London: Spring Books, 1966), 97. See also in Spero's library, E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians or Studies in Egyptian Mythology*, v. 1 (New York: Dover Publications, 1969); Fred Gettings, *The Book of Tarot* (London: Triune Books, 1973), 90, illustrating the Tarot card which represents a snake eating its own tail, symbolizing the oscillating light/dark, cosmic forces. Also referenced in Spero's library are Carol Andrews, ed., Raymond O. Faulkner, trans., *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead* (London: British Museum Press, 1985); Lucie Lamy, *Egyptian Mysteries* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981); Elemire Zolla, *The Androgyny: Reconciliation of Male and Female* (New York: Crossroads, 1981).

[112] See in Spero's library, Marija Gimbutas, *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe: 6500-3500B.C. Myths and Cult Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

[113] James Elkins, *What Painting Is: How to Think About Oil Painting Using the Language of Alchemy* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 48.

[114] In December, 1998, Spero and her crew installed a unique wall printing project *Past/Present* at the Palace of Arts for the 7th Annual International Biennale, Cairo, Egypt. Egypt was the perfect venue for the artist's themes and a challenging context for Spero to work in because the walls would not allow paint to adhere. She therefore used Frisket paper, a transparent adhesive paper on which she printed her characters and then cut them out. Like paper dolls, she could arrange them on her long studio tables, according to the dimensions of the gallery in Cairo. She planned her installation for the first time as a complete entity, using scaled, cutout images. On site, changes were made. The theme of *Past/Present* echoes Spero's cross-cultural collage methods in which she not only transferred ancient Egyptian figures but Aboriginals, Greek and Etruscan, Roman and Hindu Goddesses. Employing centrifugal and spiral patterns, stacked arches of repeated, scalloping Nuts, and running peripheral circles of Etruscan Hetaeras, sprinting like Olympic relay racers, Spero concentrated on the cycles of birth, death, and rebirth in a transcendent, light filled installation. As Spero told Lois Tarlow, "I think about the Egyptians a lot in whose tombs there are these wonderful, dancing, ritualistic figures. It's a celebration as they carry the souls into the afterlife," in Lois Tarlow, "Profile: Nancy Spero; Fierce and Savage Imagery," *Art New England* (March 1990): 38. In Cairo, Spero printed Dance as immanence and transcendence in a never ending circulation (past/present) of matter and energy in motion, as "a release, an escape from the heaviness and gravity of one's own body," as she had told Pamela Wye earlier in, "Freedom of Movement: NS's Site Paintings," *Arts Magazine* 65, no. 2 (October 1990): 56.

[115] Paul Arnold, "The Artaud Experiment," *Tulane Drama Review* 8, no. 2 (Winter 1963): 24.

[116] See Altmann, Kiel, 92.

[117] Julia Kristeva, *Hannah Arendt*, trans. Ross Guberman, 1999, as *Le Genie feminin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 76-77.

[118] See Wollen, 160. Wigman became celebrated at Hellerau and in Europe, introducing Expressionist Dance, or "Ausdruckstanz." Her pupils were Harold Kreutzberg and Kurt Jooss.

[119] See Susan Allene Manning, "An American Perspective on Tanztheater," *TDR The Drama Review* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 57-79.

[120] See RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art From Futurism to the Present*, (New York and London: World of Art, Thames and Hudson, 1988), esp. 202-210. See also Philippa Wehl, "Pina Bausch's Tanztheater – A Place of Difficult Encounter," *Women and Performance* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1984): 25-36;

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Norbert Servos, "Pina Bausch," *Ballet International* 7, no. 11 (November 1984): 14-18; *TDR The Drama Review*, special issue on Pina Bausch, 30, no. 2 (Summer 1986).

[121] Author's telephone conversation with Erica Hoffmann Koenige, 1/7/00, regarding Spero's Wuppertal installation of *Marie Sanders, the Jew's Whore*, and the choreography of Wuppertal-based Pina Bausch.

[122] Manning, "An American Perspective on Tanztheater," 61.

[123] Author's conversations with Spero in New York, 1/17/03, 1/20/03, 2/8/03, 2/19/03, 3/26/03.

[124] See Susan Allene Manning and Melissa Benson, "Tanztheater; Interrupted Continuities: Modern Dance in Germany," *TDR, The Drama Review* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 30-45; in the same issue of *TDR* see Ann Daly, ed., ""Tanztheater: The Thrill of the Lynch Mob or the Rage of a Women?" 46-56 and Johannes Birringer, "Pina Bausch: Dancing Across Borders," 85-97. For a critical reading of Bausch see Jay L. Kaplan, "Pina Bausch: Dancing Around the Issue," *Ballet Review* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 74-77. See also, Philippa Wehle, "Pina Bausch's Tanztheater – A Place of difficult Encounter," *Women and Performance* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1984): 25-36.

[125] For more recent reviews of Bausch's work see Rita Felciano, "Pina Bausch: The voice From Germany," *Dance Magazine* 70, no. 10 (October 1996): 68-71; Barbara Newman, "Pina Bausch in Frankfurt and Paris," *Dancing Times* (London) 87, no. 1044 (Spetmber 1997): 1069-1071; Judith Macrell, "The Agony and the Ecstasy," *The Guardian* (London), January 21, 1999; Judith Macrell, "Hurts So Good," *The Guardian*, January 23, 2002; John O'Mahony, "Dancing in the Dark," *The Guardian*, January 26, 2002.

[126] It is interesting, and perhaps telling, to note that Spero has completed more wall paintings, especially of a permanent nature, in Europe than in America. Her work is also represented by numerous prestigious commercial galleries in Europe, indicating that the audience for her work there is quite extensive in scope and deep in understanding.

[127] Spero submitted her design for the MTA's Arts for Transit Competition, and was awarded the commission. Erica Barons worked with Spero and her assistants throughout 1999-2001.

[128] For this information, thanks go to Kelly Pajek, Manager, Arts Program, MTA Arts for Transit, in her email, 11/20/03, and to Harriet Senie for putting me in touch with Kelly and for her suggestions and questions regarding this project during my dissertation defense on 10/31/03.

[129] See Jill Medvedow, "A View From the Outside: The Art of Nancy Spero and Elaine Reichek," *Coca Folio*, exh. cat. (Seattle: Seattle Arts Commission, 1985-1986), n.p. See also Elaine Reichek, *When This You See ...* , essay by David Frankel (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 2000).

[130] Pomperoy is interviewed in Irene Sosa's film about Spero's MTA subway project, *Nancy Spero: New York Subway Mosaic*, 2003. In Sosa's film, Pomeroy stated that both he and Spero wanted her mosaic "to be a part *of* the subway and not merely placed *on* the subway platform."

[131] Marianne Moore, "Light is Speech" (1941), *What Are Years*, and in *The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore* (New York: Penguin, 1987), 97-98.

[132] Robert Enright, , "On the Other Side of the Mirror: A Conversation With NS," *Border Crossings* 19, no. 4, issue no. 76 (November 2000): 21.

[133] See Barbel Holaus, ed., *Secession*, trans. David P. Gogarty (Vienna: Oesterreichischer Kunst-Und Kulturverlag, 1997).

[134] Enright, Ibid., 33.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[135] Ibid., 21.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid., 31.

[138] Erika Suderberg, ed., "Introduction: On Installation and Site Specificity," *Space, Site, Installation: Situating Installation Art* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 1-22.

[139] See Robert Storr's discussion of the performative aspects of installation art in "No Stage, No Actors, But It's Theater (and Art)," *The New York Times*, November 28, 1999, section 2, 1, 43.

[140] Matthew Baigell, *Jewish-American Artists and the Holocaust* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 103. Jill Snyder, *Impossible Evidence: Contemporary Artists View the Holocaust*, exh. cat. (Reading, PA: Albright College, 1994). Susan Tumarkin Goodman, "Eight Artists: A Cultural Context," *From the Inside Out: Eight Contemporary Artists*, exh. cat. (New York: The Jewish Museum, 1993), 34-35, 44; with an essay by Arthur Danto, "Postmodern Art & Concrete Selves: The Model of the Jewish Museum," 11-21.

[141] See Lynn Allen, "The Skin of the World: Leon Golub and Nancy Spero," in *Hot Off the Press: Prints and Politics*, eds., Linda Tyler and Barry Walker (Albuquerque, NM: Tamarind Institute and University of New Mexico Press, 1994), 57-69. See Lenore Malen, *Symbolism*, exh. cat. (New York: The Cooper Union School of Art, 1989), in which Spero's works were exhibited with those of Dotty Attie, John Baldessari, Marcel Broodthaers, Francisco Clemente, Thom Cooney Crawford, Jim Dine, Ellen Lanyon, Ann McCoy, Irving Petlin, Daniel Weiner, Faith Wilding, and Christopher Wilmarth. See also by Malen, *The Politics of Gender*, exh. cat. (Bayside, New York: Queensborough Community College of the City University of New York, 1988) and "Symbolism: contemporary Manifestations," *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* 8 (November 1990): 3-10.

[142] See Marilu Knode, "Nancy Spero: A Presence Through Time," *7th International Cairo Biennale 1988*, exh. cat. (Cairo, Egypt: Seventh International Cairo Biennale, 1999), 6-10, and in the same catalogue, Nazli Madkour, "Spero's Hieroglyphs," 14-17. For the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Spero was asked by the Curator of Ancient Egyptian Art, Rita Freed, to create a silk banner installation in the threshold of the Koptos Gateway, a Ptolemaic Dynasty (170-116 B.C.E.), painted sandstone gateway.

[143] Nicolas de Oliveira, Nicola Oxley, and Michael Petry, eds., *Installation Art, with texts by Michael Archer* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994) and Kynaston McShine, *The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect*, exh. cat. (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999).

[144] Irving Sandler, "First Generation Feminism," *Art of the Postmodern Era: From the Late 1960s to the Early 1990s* (New York: Icon Editions, Harper Collins, 1996), 114-140.

[145] See Jo Anna Isaak's, *Feminism and Contemporary Art: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 20, and especially her discussion, 11-76. See also Isaak's *The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter*, exh. cat. (New York: Protetch-McNeil Gallery, 1983) and "Nancy Spero," *Laughter Ten Years After*, exh. cat. (Geneva, NY: Hobart and William Smith College, 1995), 56-57.

[146] Catherine de Zegher, *Inside the Visible*, exh. brochure (Boston: ICA, 1996), n.p. See also Catherine de Zegher, "Inside the Visible," *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art In, Of, and From the Feminine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 19-41. In the same text see Benjamin H.D. Buchloh's essay, "Spero's Other Traditions," 239-245, for a discussion of Spero's early work in the historical context of Paris, allying her graffitied works with Cy Twombly's paintings, and both artists' marginalization in the canonical history of modern art. See also in the same text, Griselda Pollock's essay, "Inscriptions in the Feminine," 67-87, especially, 83, in reference to Helene Cixous's call for an *ecrit feminine* or a writing of the body.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

[147] Jo Anna Isaak, *The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter*, exh. cat, reprinted in *Laughter Ten Years After*.

[148] Elizabeth Mansfield, *Power, Pleasure, Pain: Contemporary Women Artists and the Female Body*, exh. cat. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Art Museums, Fogg Art Museum, 1994), 2-7.

[149] Holland Cotter reviews Spero's exhibition, *War Series*, at Galerie Lelong, in "Nancy Spero," *The New York Times*, November 21, 2003.

[150] *Personal and Political: The Women's Art Movement, 1969-1975*, exh. cat., curated by Simon Taylor and Natalie Ng (East Hampton, New York: Guild Hall Museum, 2002); *Gloria: Another Look at Feminist Art of the 1970s*, exh. cat., curated by Catherine Morris and Ingrid Schaffner (New York: White Columns, 2002); Arlene Raven, *True Grit: Lee Bontecou, Louise Bourgeois, Jay DeFeo, Claire Falkstein, Nancy Grossman, Louise Nevelson*, exh. cat. (New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 2000), in which Raven writes a poetic tribute to Spero, "Spero has true grit./True: to be exactly as it appears./Grit: to press with a grating noise," 3. See also Amy Schlegel's discussion of Spero's activism and painting in relation to Sylvia Sleigh's in *"An Unnerving Romanticism": The Art of Sylvia Sleigh & Lawrence Alloway*, exh. cat. (Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Art Alliance, 2001).

[151] Michael Duncan, "Tracing Mendieta. (performance artist Ana Mendieta)," *Art in America* 87, no. 4 (April 1999), 75-79.

[152] Amy Schlegel, "Codex Spero: Feminist Art and Activist Practices in New York Since the Late 1960s," Ph.D. dissertation (New York: Columbia University in the City of New York, 1997), 279.

[153] See Robert Storr, "The Devil on the Stairs: Looking Back on the Eighties," *Devil on the Stairs: Looking Back on the Eighties*, exh. cat. (Philadelphia, PA: ICA, 1991), 21.

[154] See Dominique Nahas, "The Photographer Finds His Subject," *Gone Beyond Gone*, exh. cat. (New York: Thread Waxing Space, 1993), 10-15.

[155] See Jon Bird, *Leon Golub: Echoes of the Real*, exh. cat. (London: Reaktion Books, 2000), especially, 55-57, 80-85, 147, and 173.

[156] See David Levy Strauss, "Leon Golub – Nancy Spero: The Fighting is the Dance, Too," *Leon Golub – Nancy Spero: The Fighting is the Dance*, limited edition (New York: Roth Horowitz Gallery, 2000), 9-31.

[157] Katy Kline and Helaine Posner, *War and Memory, Leon Golub/Nancy Spero Retrospective Exhibition, 1950-1994*, exh. cat. (Paris and Cambridge, MA: The American Center and MIT List Visual Arts Center, 1994-1995). *War and Memory* had two venues; in September 1994, it opened at the American Center in Paris, and in 1995, at the exhibition opened at MIT's List Center.

[158] Jon Bird, *Other Worlds: The Art of Nancy Spero and Kiki Smith* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004).

[159] See Kentridge's "Ubu and the Truth Commission" (1997), a conceptual parallel to Alfred Jarry's Ubu plays for marionettes.

[160] In 2003, Spero was awarded a National Lifetime Achievement Award in the Visual Arts by the Women's Caucus for Art and, in 2004, she will be awarded a Distinguished Artist Lifetime Achievement Award at the College Art Association's Annual Conference in Seattle.

[161] Cotter, "Nancy Spero," *The New York Times*, November 21, 2003.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

NANCY SPERO'S
INSTALLATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL INCURSIONS, 1987-2001: DIALOGUES WITHIN THE MUSEUM, AND ELSEWHERE

By

DEBORAH FRIZZELL

VOLUME II

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Art History
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2004

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Appendix A

Chronology of Nancy Spero's Installations, 1988-2003

*Unless otherwise stipulated, all installations are temporary. Documentation of the wall printing installations and existing fabric banners are located in Nancy Spero's studio archives, LaGuardia Place, NYC.

2003

Coptos Gateway, a permanent * banner installation for the Ancient Egyptian Galleries, curated by Rita E. Freed, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts.

1999 - 2001

Artemis, Acrobats, Divas, and Dancers, a permanent * tesserae and ceramic tile mosaic commissioned by the New York Metropolitan Transit Authority Arts for Transit at the 66th Street / Lincoln Center Subway Station, 1, 2 Line.

1998

Past/Present, a cutout, frisket paper installation adhered to gallery walls and removed after the conclusion of the 7th International Biennale of Cairo, Egypt (American Representative).

Ballad von der Judenhure Marie Sanders III (Brecht), a wall printing conceived as temporary, curated by Susanne Altmann, to coincide with an adjoining exhibition of Leon Golub's paintings, *Image Violence*; primary segments of Spero's installation remain untouched, while scattered passages were destroyed by an ongoing renovation project at the site of the Festpielhaus Hellerau, Dresden, Germany. The fate of the installation is uncertain.

Let The Priests Tremble, a wall printing installation for the inaugural exhibition *Nancy Spero*, painted over for the next exhibition, at the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, England

1996

Installation der Erinnerung, a permanent * wall printing installation, curated by Werner Hanak and Mechtild Widrich, for the inauguration of the renovated and redesigned Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien, Austria. The installation remains in good condition.

Improvisations, a permanent * wall printing installation, organized by Christine Koenig and the Austrian Army military hospital, inaugurating the renovation of the Heeresspital Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria. The installation remains in good condition.

Sacred & Profane II, a temporary banner installation for the exhibition, *Leon Golub and Nancy Spero*, a retrospective exhibition at the Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima City, Japan. The silk banner was rolled up and returned to the Spero studio.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Rehearsal, a temporary, silk banner installation for the exhibition *A Cycle in Time: Nancy Spero* at the New York Kunsthalle, New York. The silk banner was rolled up and returned to the Spero studio.

1995

L'envol, a temporary printing installation on a glass escalator for the group exhibition, *Féminin-Masculin: le sexe de l'art*, removed after the exhibition, at the Musee national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France.

A Cycle in Time, a temporary, silk banner installation for the exhibition, *Nancy Spero and Leon Golub*, curated by Roswitha Juffinger and Barbara Wally at the Residenzgalerie, Salzburg. The silk banner was rolled up and returned to the Spero studio.

To The Revolution, a temporary wall printing installation for the retrospective exhibition, *War and Memory, Nancy Spero and Leon Golub*, curated by Katy Kline and Helene Posner at MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts. The installation was painted over at the conclusion of the exhibition.

Raise/Time, a wall printing installation, curated by Peter Soriano, for the interim period before renovation and repainting of the galleries at the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Homage to Ana Mendieta, a wall printing installation for the group exhibition, curated by Richard Klein, *Drawn on the Museum*, painted over at the conclusion of the exhibition at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut.

1994

To The Revolution, a temporary wall printing installation for the retrospective exhibition, *War and Memory, Nancy Spero and Leon Golub*, curated by Katy Kline and Helene Posner at The American Center, Paris, France. The installation was painted over at the conclusion of the exhibition.

Black and The Red III, an unframed, push-pinned paper scroll installation at the Malmö Konsthall, Malmö, Sweden. The scroll was removed to Spero's studio archive at the conclusion of the exhibition.

The Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore, a temporary wall printing installation for the exhibition, *IK + Deander, Dignity for all: reflections on humanity*, curated by Ine Gevers and Jeanne van Heeswijk, at Stichting Artimo, Beurs van Berlage, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. The installation was painted over at the conclusion of the exhibition.

1993

Premiere, a permanent * wall printing installation, organized by Christine Koenig, for the lobby of the Ronacher Theatre, Vienna, Austria. The installation remains in good condition.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Ballad of Marie Sanders & Voices: Jewish Women In Time, two temporary wall printing installations for the exhibition, *From Inside Out: Eight Contemporary Artists*, curated by Susan Tamarkin Goodman at The Jewish Museum, New York. The walls were painted over when the exhibition concluded.

Masha Bruskina & Homage to Ana Mendietta, two temporary wall printing installations for the 1993 Whitney Biennial, curated by Elizabeth Sussman at Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. The walls were painted over when the exhibition concluded.

1991

Vulture Goddess and *Chorus Line*, a temporary wall printing on ceiling I-beams as part of the exhibition, *Devil On The Stairs: Looking Back on the Eighties*, curated by Robert Storr for the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA,

To Soar III, a permanent wall printing installation on the ceiling of the main hallway in the Harold Washington Library Center, Chicago, IL, is part of that city's Public Art Program.

Ballad von der <<Judenhure>> Marie Sanders (Brecht), a permanent * wall printing installation, and a temporary wall printing, *Hommage to Ana Mendieta, eine Nachschaffung von <<Body Tracks>> Von der Heydt-Museum*, as part of *Buchstäblich, Bild und Wort in der Kunst heute*, a group exhibition, curated by Erika Hoffmann Koenige at the Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, Germany. *Hommage to Ana Mendieta* was painted over after the exhibition ended; *Ballad von der <<Judenhure>> Marie Sanders (Brecht)* is part of the permanent Museum collection and remains in good condition.

The Crowd and *Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore (Brecht)*, a partial, temporary wall printing installation, painted over after the exhibition concluded at Josh Baer Gallery, New York.

Minerva, Sky Goddess, Madrid, a permanent * wall and rooftop terrace printing installation (now disintegrated because of weather and wear), as part of the exhibition *El Sueño Imperativo*, curated by Mar Villaespesa, at the Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain.

1990

Well Woman Centre & Westland/Blucher Street Junction, an interior wall printing (Well Woman Center) and an exterior wall installation (Westland/Blucher Street Junction), curated by Declan McGonagle as part of the *Four Cities Project*, organized by Sinead McSheffrey for the Derry City Council and TSWA in Derry, Northern Ireland. The walls were painted over at the conclusion of the project to make way for the next project.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

To Soar II and *Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore*, two temporary wall printing installations, curated by Mimi Hellman and Barbara Kellum at Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Massachusetts. The walls were cleaned of asbestos at the conclusion of the exhibition; *Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore* was pealed off the wall as it adhered to the old wallpaper surface and is currently rolled up in Spero's studio.

1989

Rebirth of Venus, a temporary wall printing installation in the cupola as part of the exhibition, *Prospect 89*, curated by Peter Weiermair at the Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany. The wall printing was painted over for the next exhibition.

1988

Waterworks, a temporary wall printing installation in the hallway of water filtration plant, presented by Visual Arts Ontario, The Filter Gallery, at the RC Harris Water Filtration Plant, Toronto, Canada. The wall printing was painted over after the exhibition concluded.

To Soar, a wall printing installation for a solo exhibition, *Nancy Spero*, curated by Mary Jane Jacob at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA. The wall printing was painted over at the conclusion of the exhibition for the next exhibition.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Appendix B

Chronology of Films and Videos on Nancy Spero, 1971-2002

2003
Nancy Spero: New York Subway Mosaic, Irene Sosa. Music by Daniel Sonenberg.

2002
Nancy Spero & Leon Golub. The Rhythm of Time, directed by Regine Hempel and Susanne Altmann. Includes footage of Spero's wall printing installation, *Ballad von der Judenhure Marie Sanders III (Brecht); Rebirth of Euridice*, Hellerau, Dresden, Germany.

1994
War and Memory, Nancy Spero and Leon Golub: Retrospective at the American Center in Paris, video documentary by Irene Sosa, music by A.E. McClelland. Includes footage of Spero's wall printing installation, *To the Revolution,* curated by Katie Kline and Helene Posner.

1992
Woman As Protagonist, The Art of Nancy Spero, by Irene Sosa. Includes footage of site-specific installations: *Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore* and *To Soar II,* Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA; *Vulture Goddess* and *Chorus Line* in the exhibition *Devil on the Stairs, Looking Back on the Eighties,* curated by Robert Storr, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA; *Minerva, Sky Goddess, Madrid,* in the exhibition *El Sueño Imperativo,* curated by Mar Villaespesa at the Circulo de Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain; *Westland/Blucher Street Junction & Well Woman Centre,* in the *Four Cities Project,* Derry, Northern Ireland).

1991
Nancy Spero in Her New York Studio, video by Jacqueline Kaess-Farquet, Munich, Germany, April (German version, *Nancy Spero in ihrem New Yorker Studio*).

Art Today, commentary by Jo Anna Isaak, Vol. 3, Number 1, February 1991.

1989
Responses to 'Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950', The New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York.

People Are Talking, Channel 9 (New Jersey) TV talk show on the theme of Contemporary Art, with panel of artists & historians.

1988
Interview with Rebecca Keller, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL.

1987
Interview with Jon Bird, London: Institute of Contemporary Art Video Productions.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Everything you wanted to know about contemporary art but were afraid to ask, interviews with artists at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York.

Interview with Skye Holland, Audio Arts Magazine, Vol.8, nos. 2 & 3, tape 1.

1986
Messages to the Public, documenting the 'censored' Spero project proposal, *Certainly Childbirth is Our Mortality*, for Spectacolor board project sponsored by Public Art Fund, Times Square, New York.

1984
The Business of Being an Artist, film directed by Dieter Froese and Kay Hines, produced by Just Above Midtown Gallery.

Art Against Apartheid, video directed by Pamela and Dennis Degnan.

1982
Interview with Kate Horsfield, Videotape for Data Bank, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL.

Videotape for Ramapo College, New Jersey.

1980
Videotape for the 1979 Spero exhibition *Notes in Time on Women* at Picker Art Gallery, Colgate University, New York.

1977
Women Working, interview with Victoria Schultz for Finnish Television.

1973
Videotape interview with Hermine Freed.

Women in Art, videotape by Art World Video Project, Earl Rowland Foundation: moderator, panel discussion.

The Art of Nancy Spero, film on *Codex Artaud* by Patsy and Joe Scala. For Feminist Conference on the Arts, Cornell University, New York.

1971
The End of the Art World, film by Alexis Krasilovsky.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

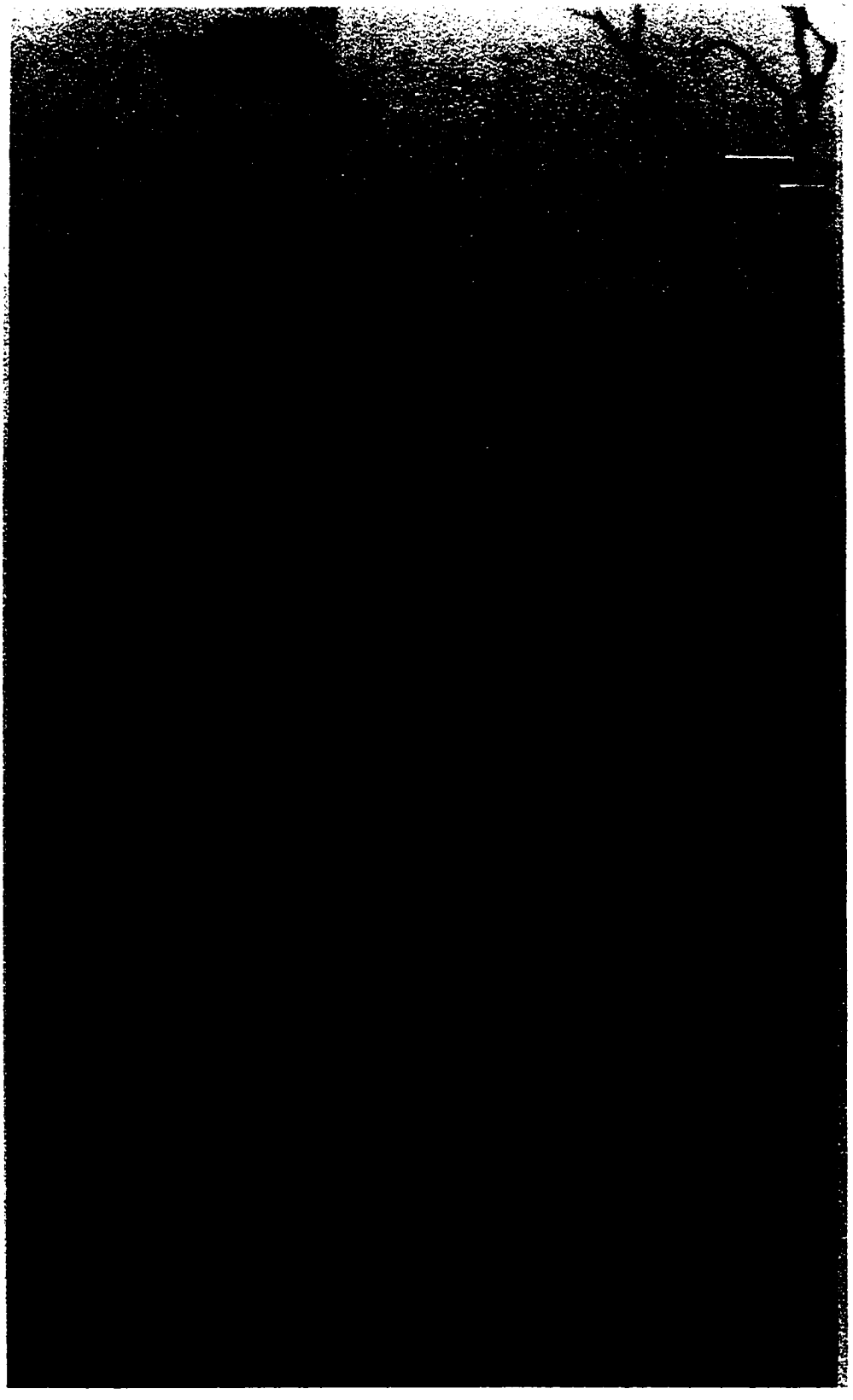

Fig. 1 Photograph of Henry Spero and Polly Susselman Spero, Pennsylvania, 1925.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 2 Nancy Spero, *Dancing Figure*, 1948, lithograph, 9.75 x 7.75 in. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 3 Nancy Spero, *(Great) Mother and Child (3)*, 1954, o/c, 48.5 x 27 in. Photograph: David Reynolds. Collection: Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Keith Westergaard and Cordell Couillard, VAG 94.76.1.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 4 Leon Golub, *Thwarted*, 1953, o/c, lacquer on canvas, 48.5 x 32 in. Collection: Nancy Spero.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

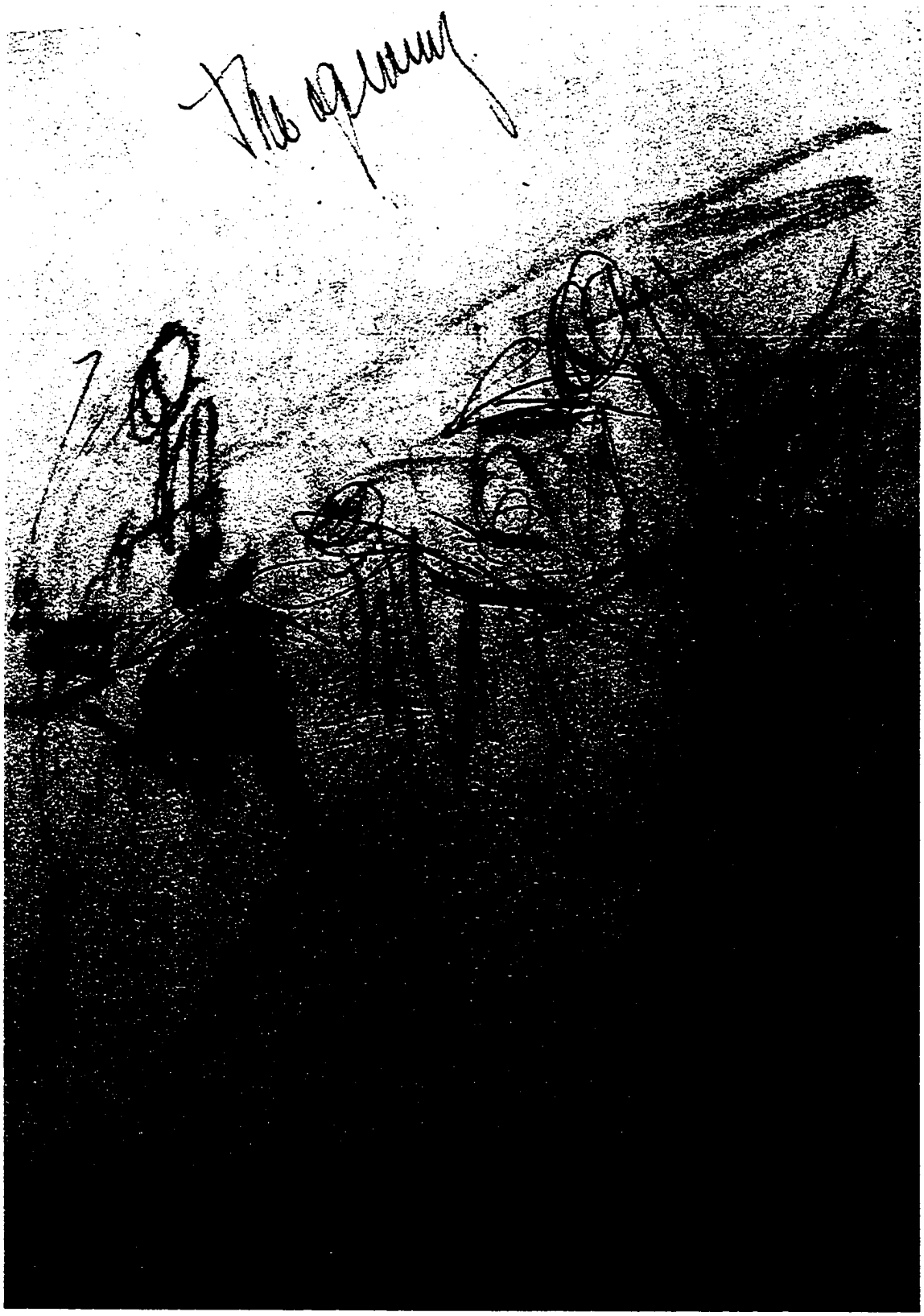

Fig. 5 Nancy Spero, *The Opening*, 1949 sketchbook, charcoal & pastel, 7.5 x 10 in.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 6 Nancy Spero, *Portrait of My Mother,* 1949, sketchbook, charcoal, 10 x 7.5 in.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 7 Photograph of Nancy Spero in her Chicago studio, 1952.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 8 Nancy Spero, *Four Figures,* ca. 1954-1955, lithograph, 15.5 x 13. 75 in.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 9 Nancy Spero, *Mummified*, 1950, plaster, nylon stocking, string, paint and paper, 15 x 4.5 x 4.5 in. Collection: Leon Golub.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 10 Nancy Spero, *Lovers III*, 1962-1965, o/c, 54 x 80 in. Collection: Lee Jaffe.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

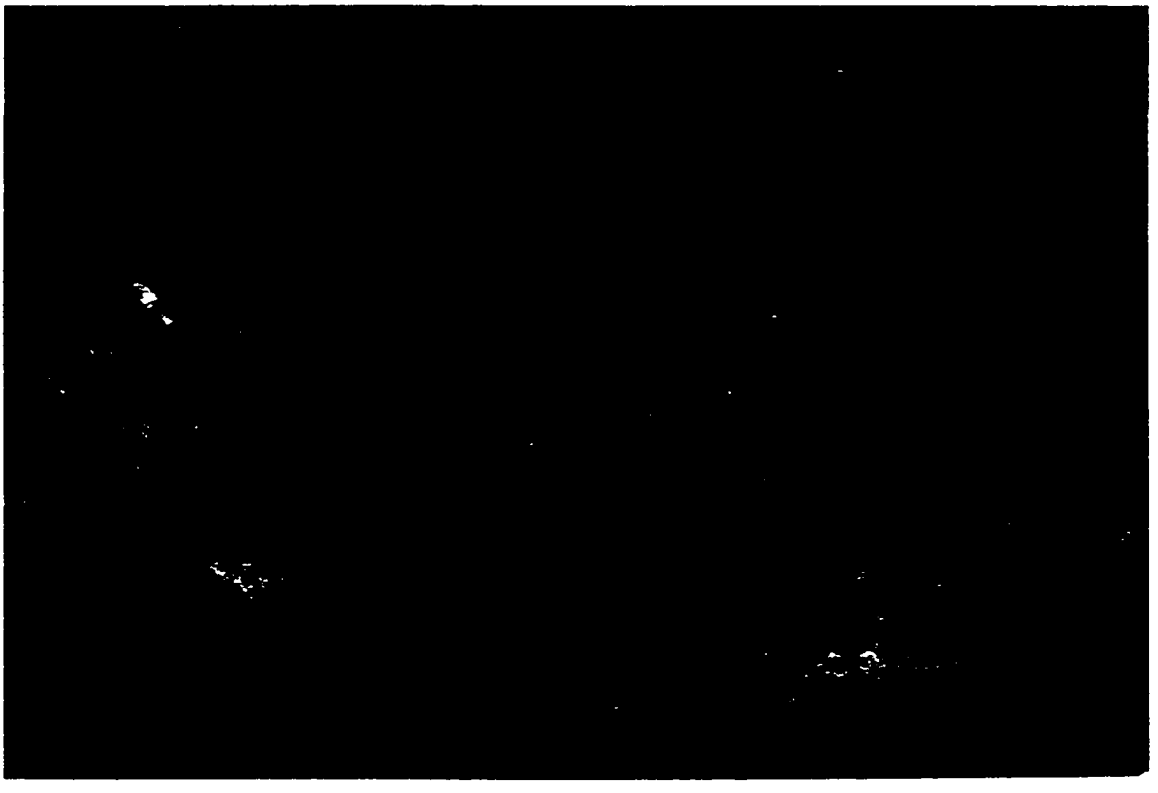

Fig. 11 Nancy Spero, *Le Couple (Lovers XIII)*, 1962, o/c, 54 x 78.5 in.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

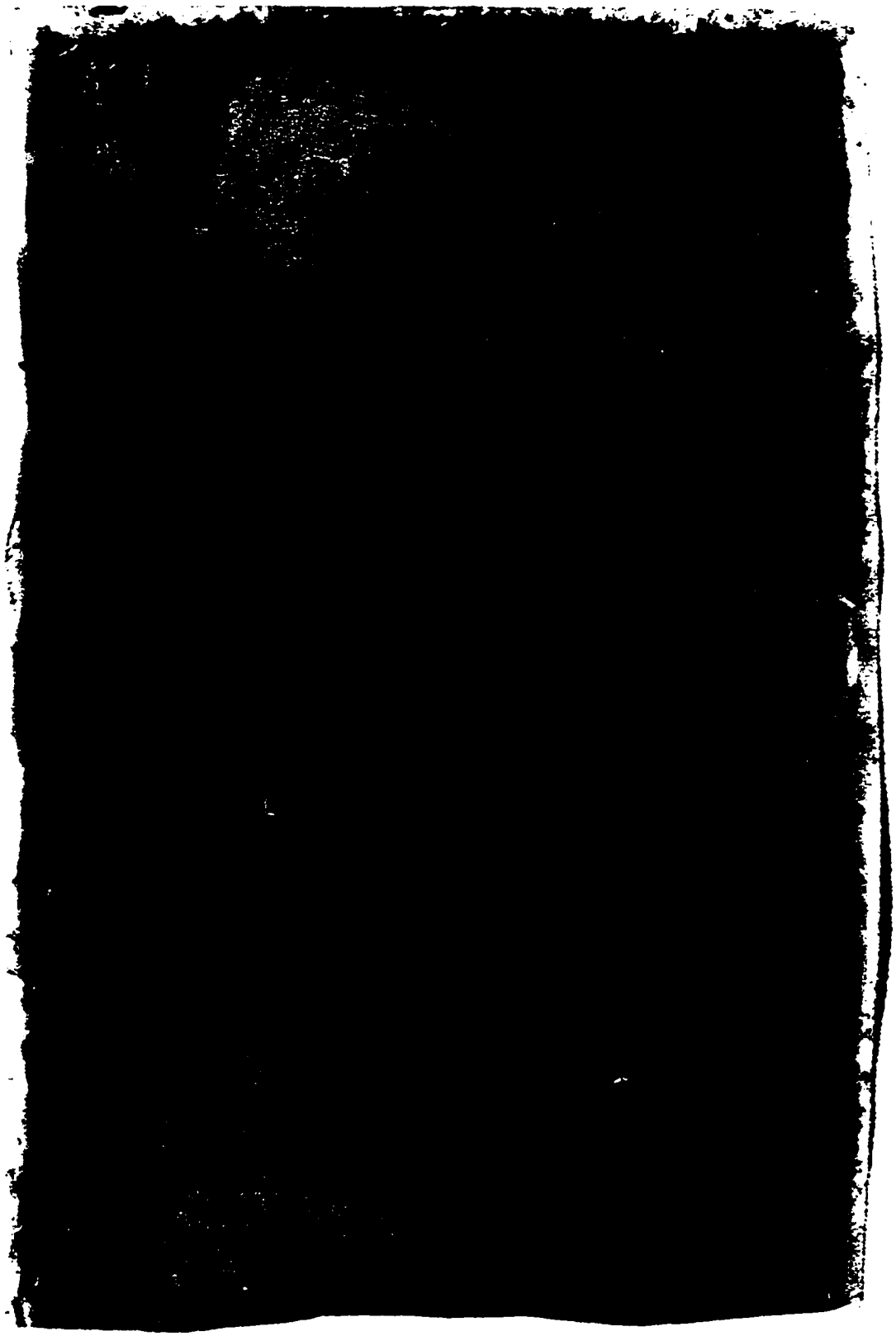

Fig. 12 Nancy Spero, *At Their Word The Sick Woman*, 1957-1958, o/c, 63 x 40.5 in. Photograph: David Reynolds. Collection: Stephen Golub.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 13 Nancy Spero, *Mother and Children (2),* 1956, o/c, 55 x 48 in. Collection: Paul Golub.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 14 Nancy Spero, *Great Mother Birth,* 1962, o/c, 68 x 44 in. Collection: Leon Golub.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

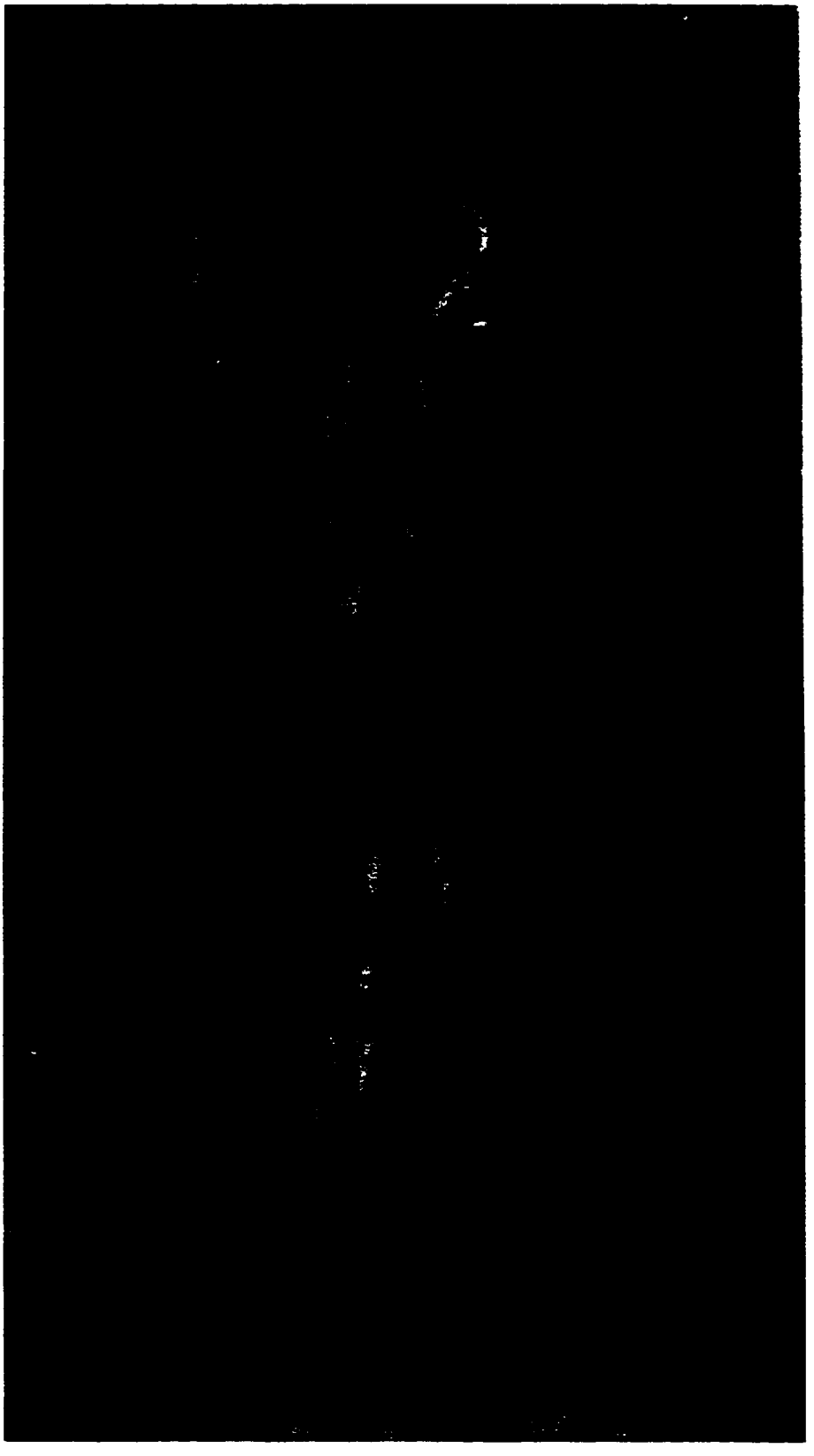

Fig. 15 Nancy Spero, *Hangman,* 1958, o/c, 81 x 44.5 in. Collection: Stephen Golub.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 16 Nancy Spero, *Il Mondo,* 1958, o/c, 82 x 37 in. Photograph: David Reynolds. Collection: Vancouver Art Gallery, Gift of Keith Westergaard and Cordell Couillard, VAG 94.76.3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 17 Nancy Spero, *Homage to New York (I Do Not Challenge)*, 1958, o/c, 47 x 31 in. Photograph: Diana Church. Collection: Philip Golub.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 18 Photograph of *Nancy Spero in her Paris Studio*, 1962. Photograph: Andre Morain.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 19 Nancy Spero, *Mother and Children,* 1962, o/c, 76.75 x 43.5 in. Photo: Augustin Dumage. Collection: Leon Golub.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 20 Nancy Spero, *Lovers V*, 1962-1965, o/c, 50.5 x 63.5 in. Collection: Leon Golub.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 21 Nancy Spero, *Les Anges, Merde, Fuck You,* 1960, gouache and ink on paper, 17.25 x 22 in. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 22 Nancy Spero, *Nightmare Figures II,* 1961, o/c, o/c, 51 x 63 in. Photograph: David Reynolds. Collection: Leon Golub.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 23 Nancy Spero, *Poem I: Fuck You,* 1960, gouache and ink on paper, 17 x 22 in. Photograph: Diana Church. Collection: halley k harrisburg and Michael Rosenfeld, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 24 Nancy Spero, *Victim, Eagle, and Medusa Head,* 1969, gouache, ink and collage on paper, 24.5 x 39 in. Collection: Leon Golub.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

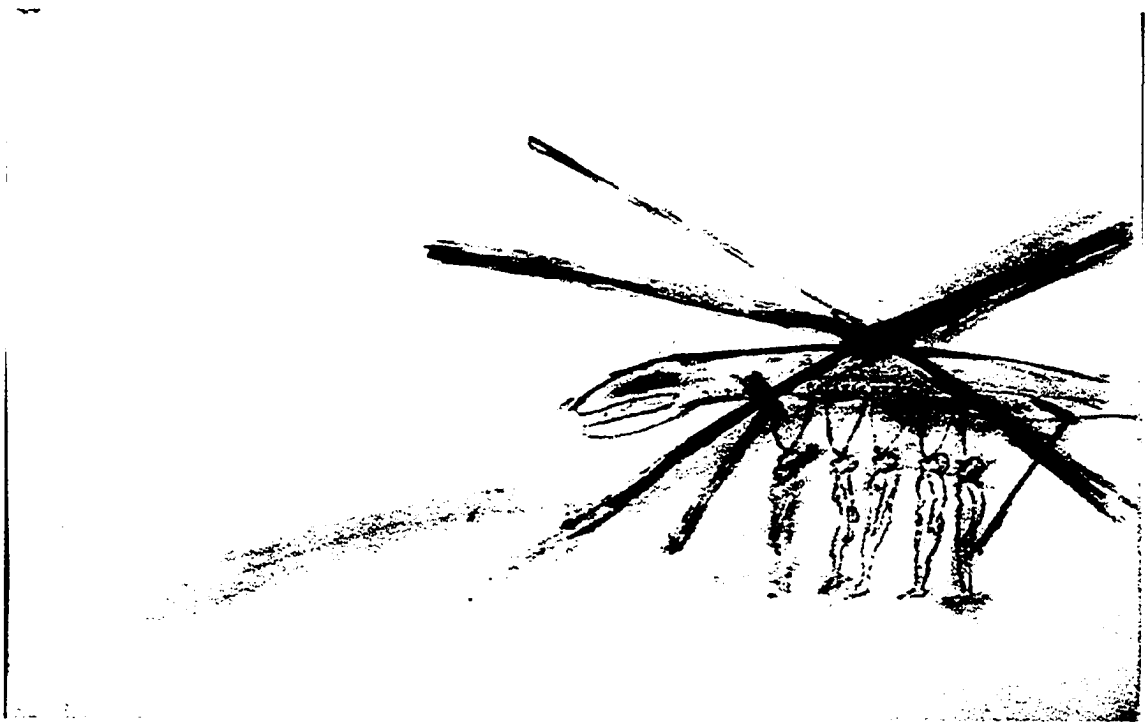

Fig. 25 Nancy Spero, *S.U.P.E.R.P.A.C.I.F.I.C.A.T.I.O.N.*, 1967, gouache and ink on paper, 24 x 36 in.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 26 Nancy Spero, *Artaud Painting Untitled (I also preach...)*, 1969, gouache, charcoal on paper, 21 x 25 in. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

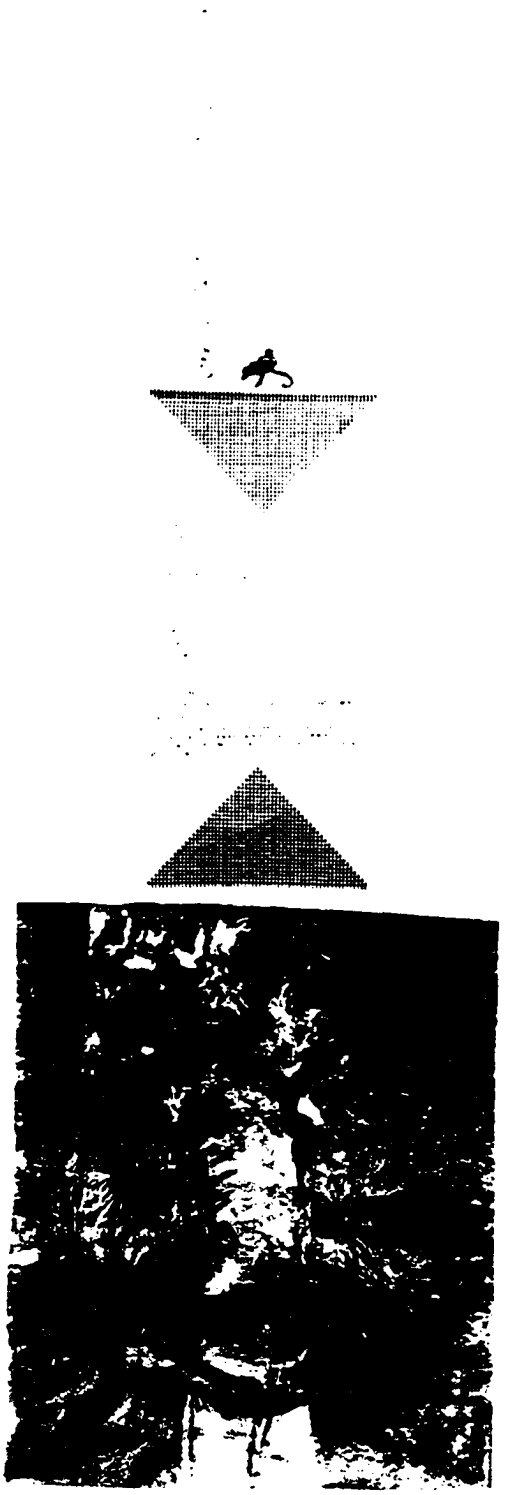

Fig. 27 Nancy Spero, *Codex Artaud XXI,* 1972, detail, typewriter and painted collage/p, 71 x 24 in. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 28 Nancy Spero, *Codex Artaud I,* 1971, detail, typewriter and gouache collage/p, 23 x 89 in. Collection of the French Government.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

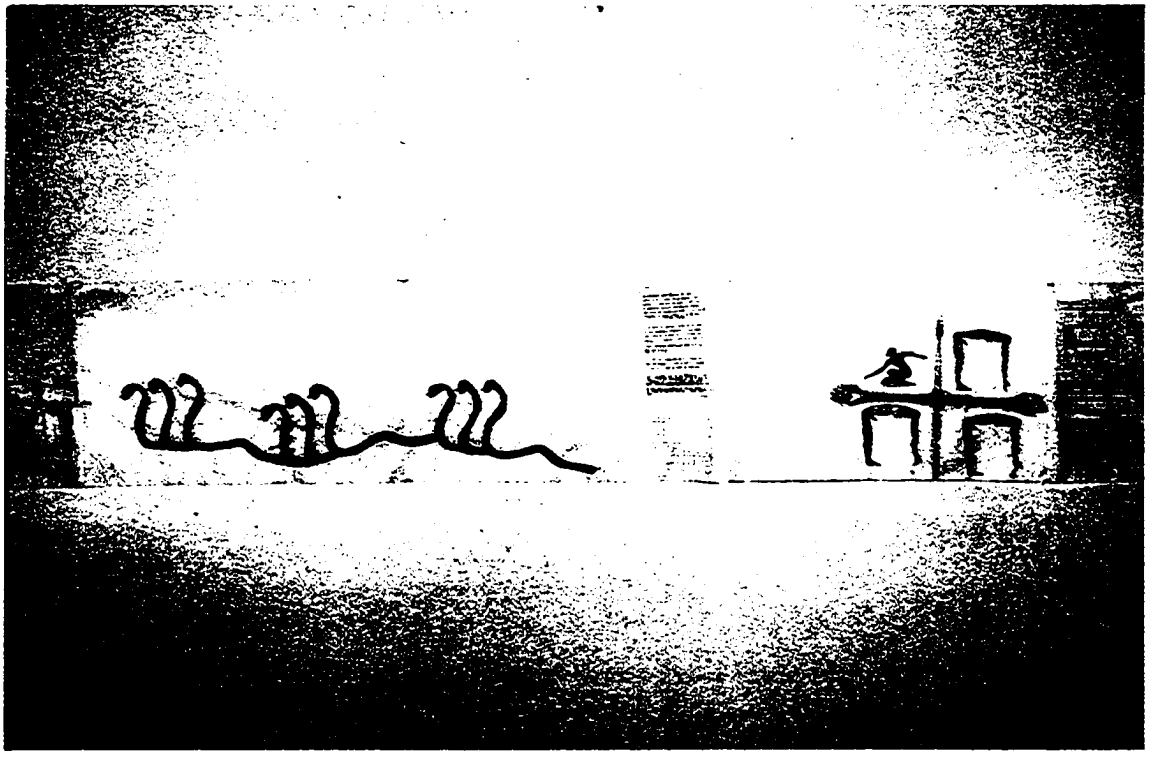

Fig. 29 Nancy Spero, *Codex Artaud XXV,* 1972, detail, typewriter and painted collage/p., 24 x 193 in. Collection: Williams College Museum of Art, Museum purchase, Kathryn Hurd Fund 97.4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

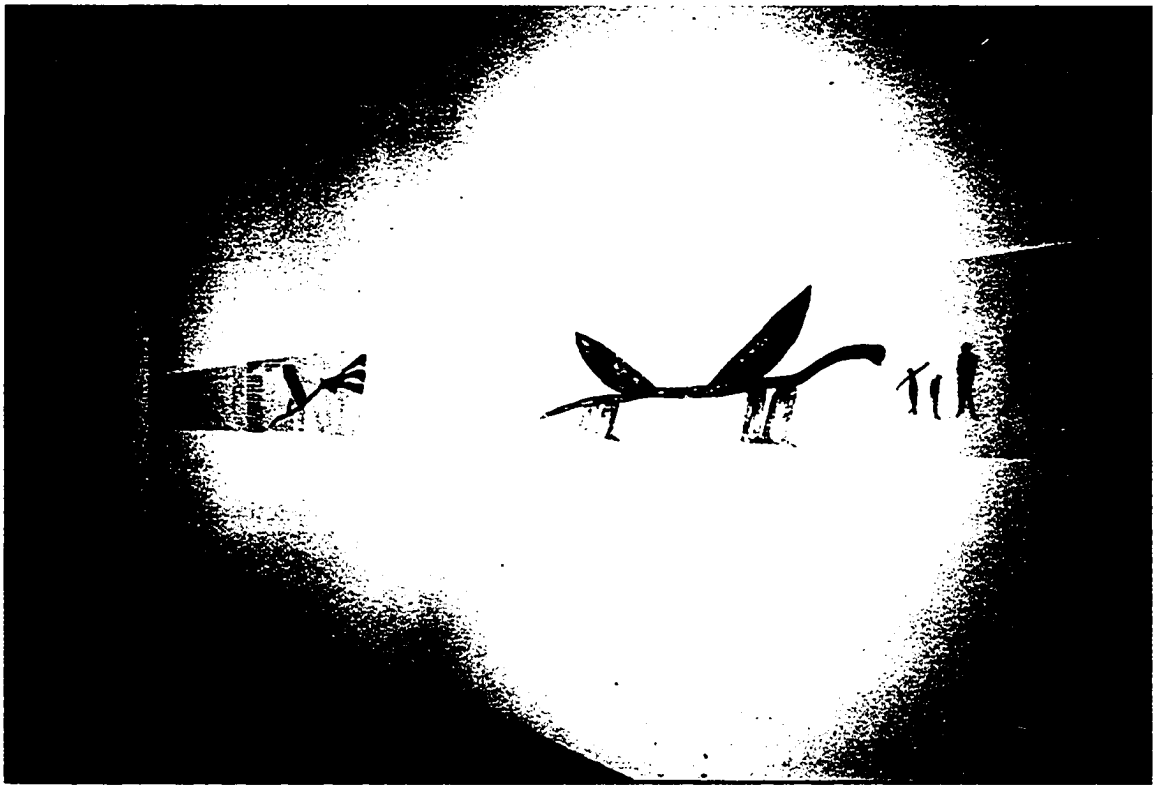

Fig. 30 Nancy Spero, *Torture of Women*, 1976 installation at A.I.R., handprinting and typewriter collage/paper, 20 in. x 125 feet. Collection: The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 31 Nancy Spero, *Torture of Women*, panel 10, 1976, handprinting & typewriter coll./paper, 20 in. x 125 feet. Photograph: David Reynolds. Collection: The National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 32 Nancy Spero, *Notes in Time on Women,* 1979, panel 21, handprinting, gouache, typewriting, collage/p., 20 in. x 210 feet. (24 panels). Photograph: Diana Church. Collection: The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Harriet and Rick Meyer.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

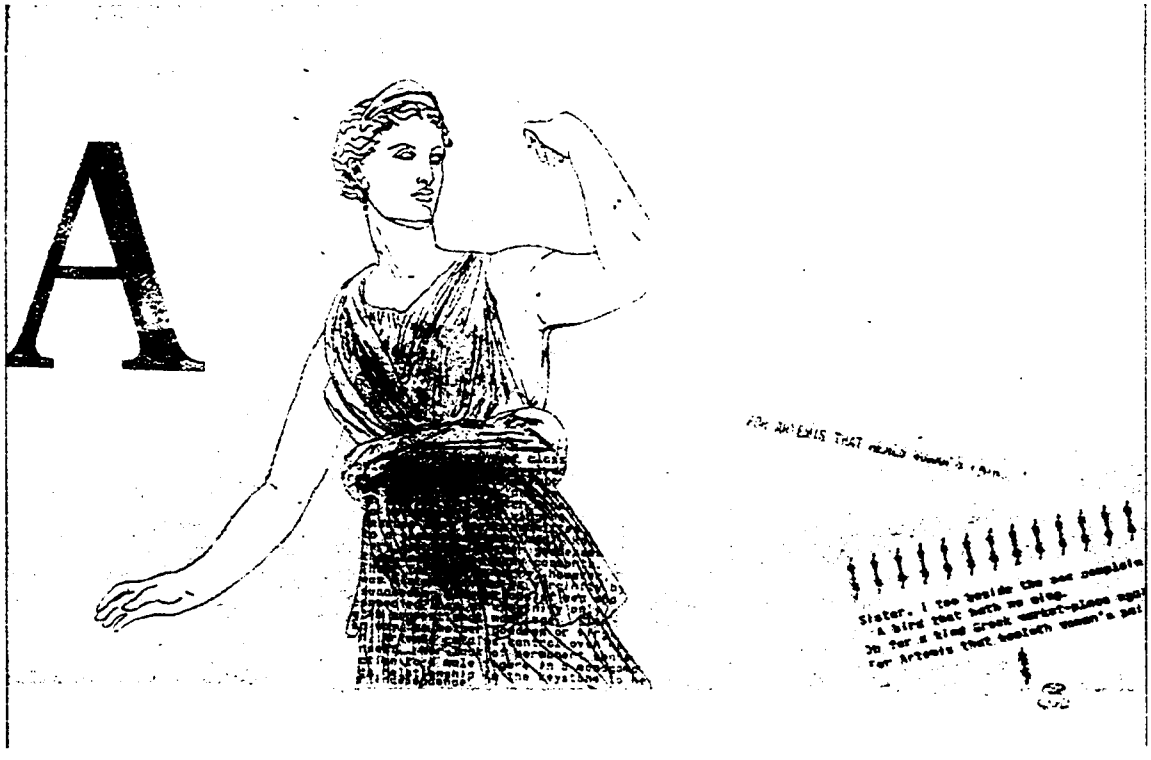

Fig. 33 Nancy Spero, *Notes in Time on Women*, 1979, panel 6, handprinting, gouache, typewriting, collage/p., 20 in. x 210 feet. (24 panels). Collection: The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Harriet and Rick Meyer.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

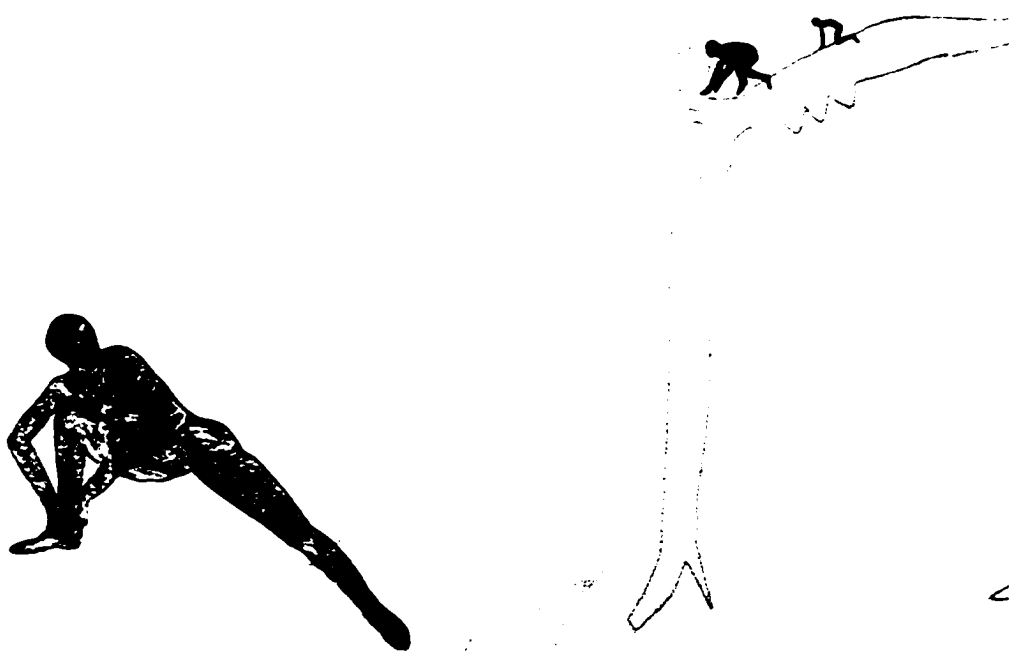

Fig. 34 Nancy Spero, *The First Language*, 1981, panel 15, handprinting, printed and painted collage/p., 20 in. x 190 ft. (22 panels). Photograph: Diana Church. Collection: The Golubs.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

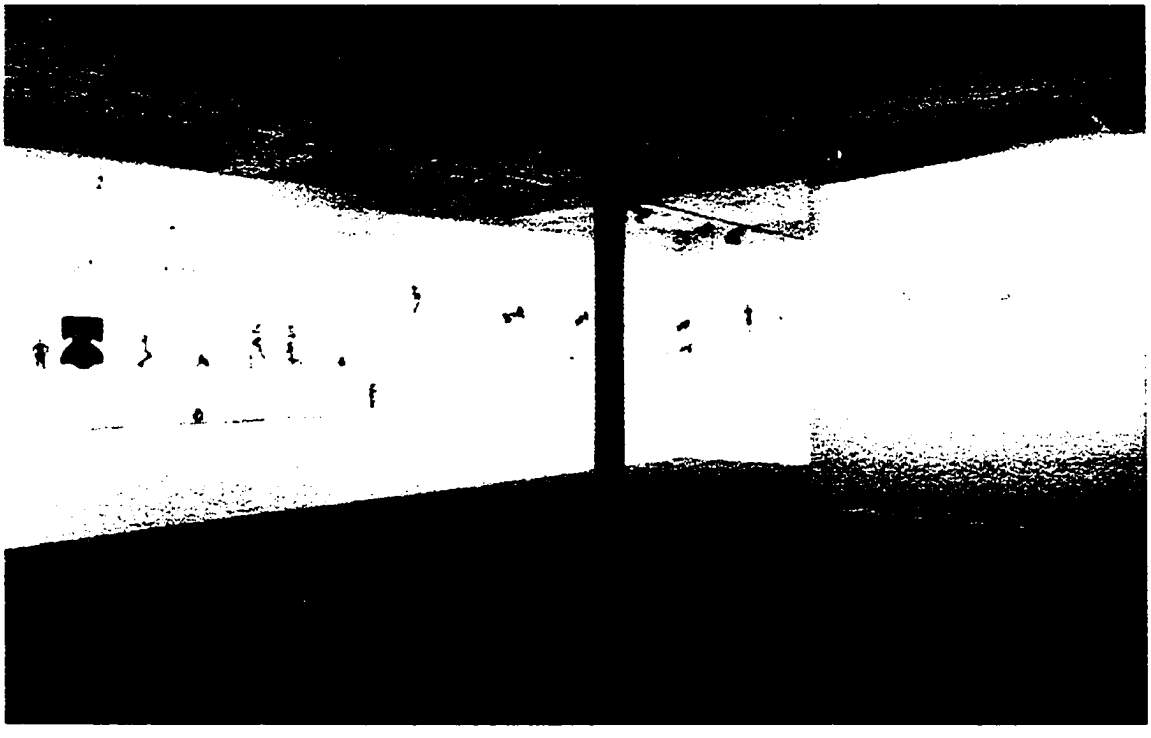

Fig. 35 Nancy Spero, *The First Language*, Installation View, 1981, Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London. Collection: The Golubs.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 36 Nancy Spero, *Sky Goddess,* 1985, detail, handprinting and printed collage/p., 20.47 x 111.02 in (6 panels). Collection: Barbara Gross, Munich.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 37 Nancy Spero, *Sheela and the Dildo Dancer,* Installation View at Josh Baer Gallery, New York, 1987, handprinting, collage/hand and wall painting, 24 in. x 880 in.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 38 Nancy Spero, Photograph of zinc plate of Sheela-na-gig from Spero studio, 1986. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 39 Nancy Spero, *Chorus Line 1*, 1985, detail, handprinting and printed collage/p., 20 x 110 in. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 40 Nancy Spero, *Sheela and the Dildo Dancer,* Installation View at S.L. Simpson Gallery, Toronto, Canada, 1987, handprinting, collage/hand and wall painting, 24 in. x 880 in. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

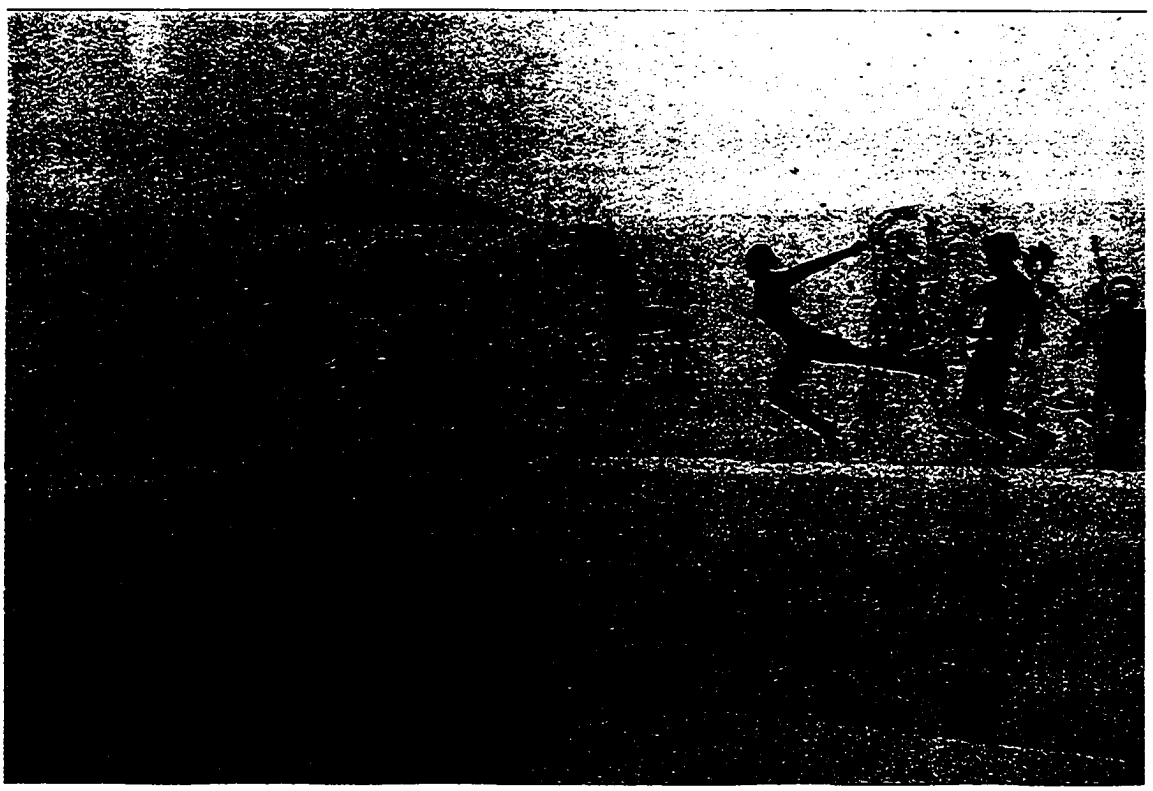

Fig. 41 Nancy Spero, *Re-Birth of Venus*, detail, panel 6, 1984, handprinting and printed collage/p., 20 inches x 63 feet. Photograph: David Reynolds. Collection: Sandra Simpson, Toronto.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 42 Nancy Spero, *Waterworks*, Wall Painting Installation, 1988, R.C. Harris Water Filtration Plant, Toronto, Canada.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

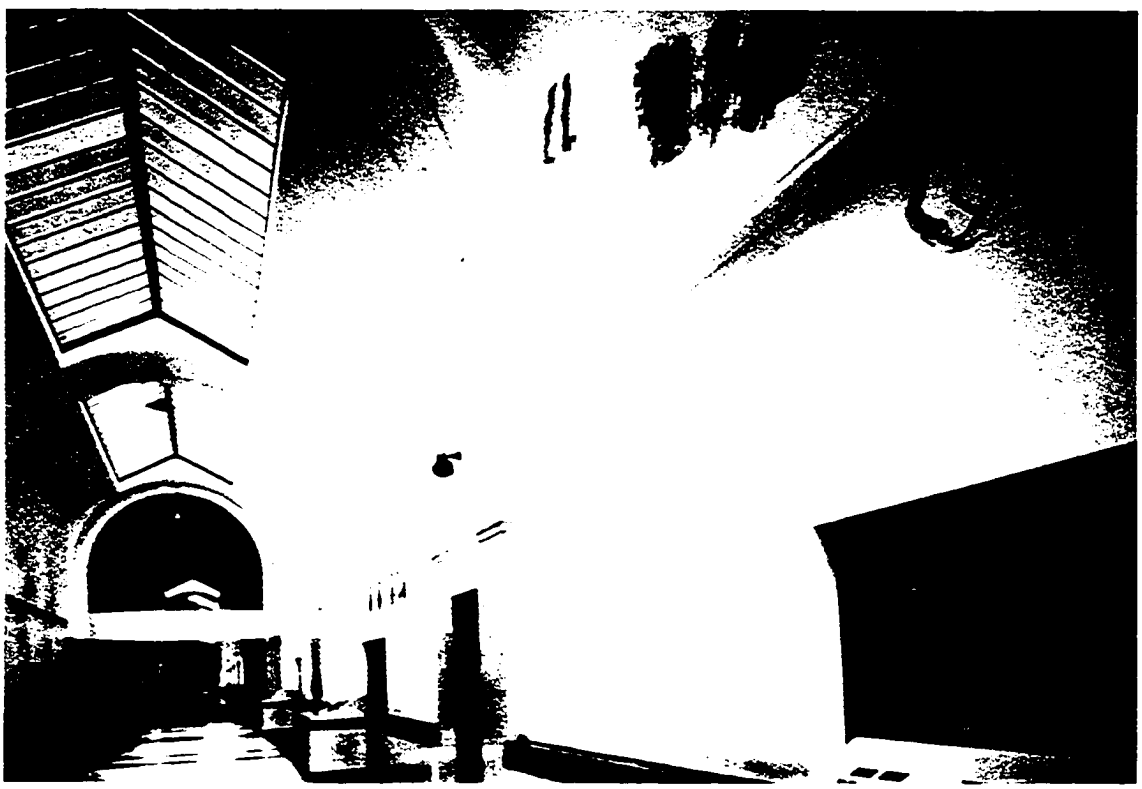

Fig. 43 Nancy Spero, *Waterworks*, Wall Painting Installation, 1988, R.C. Harris Water Filtration Plant, Toronto, Canada.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 44, Photograph of Nancy Spero in her studio with printed figures, New York, 1993. Photograph: Susan Unterberg.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 45 Photograph of Nancy Spero in her studio with printed figures, New York, 2003. Photograph: Abe Frajndlich.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 46 Photograph of Nancy Spero in her studio with printed figures, New York, 1993. Photograph: Abe Frajndlich.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

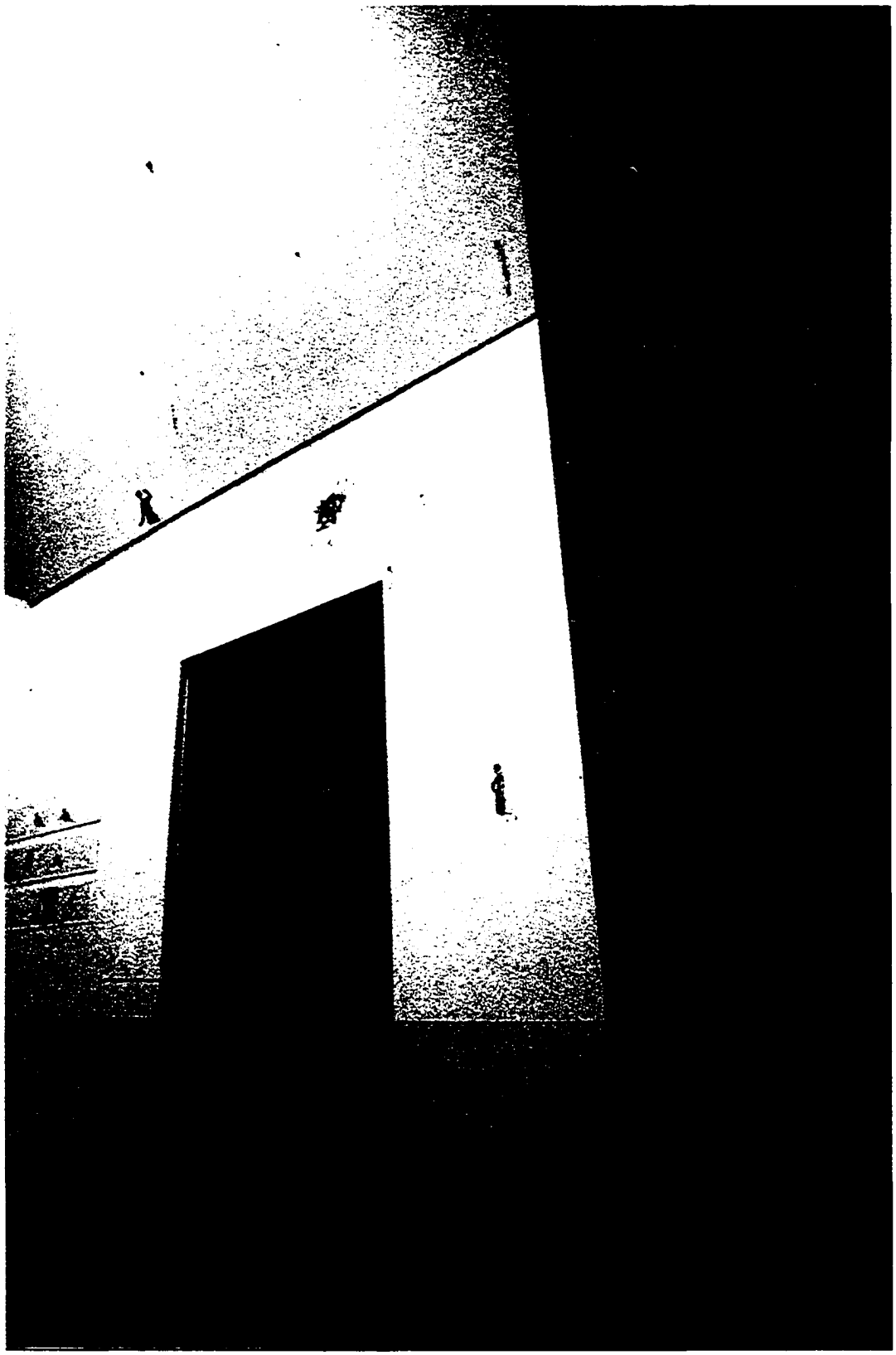

Fig. 47 Nancy Spero, *To Soar,* Wall Painting Installation, detail, 1988, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

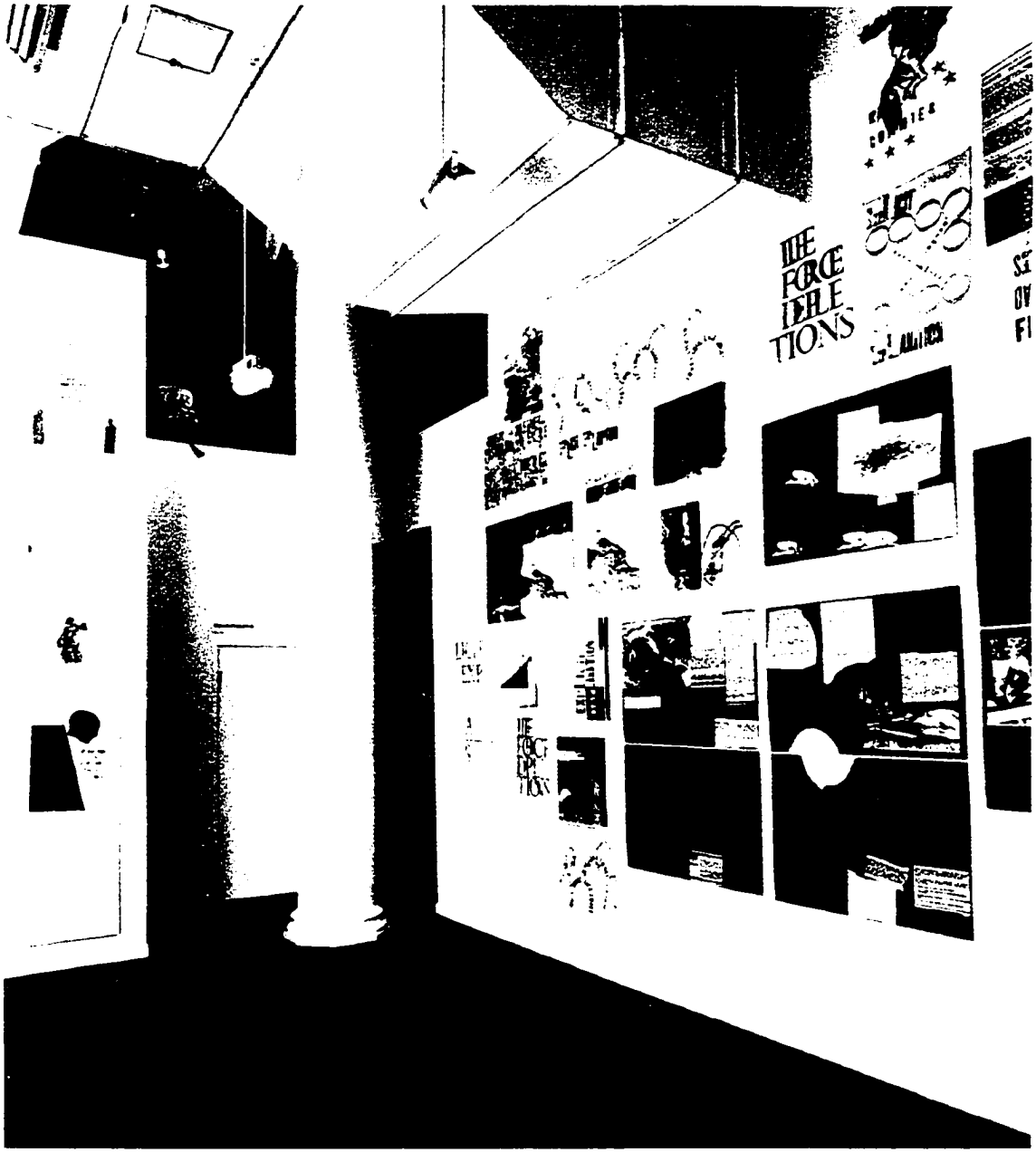

Fig. 48 Nancy Spero, *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950,* Installation detail, 1987, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

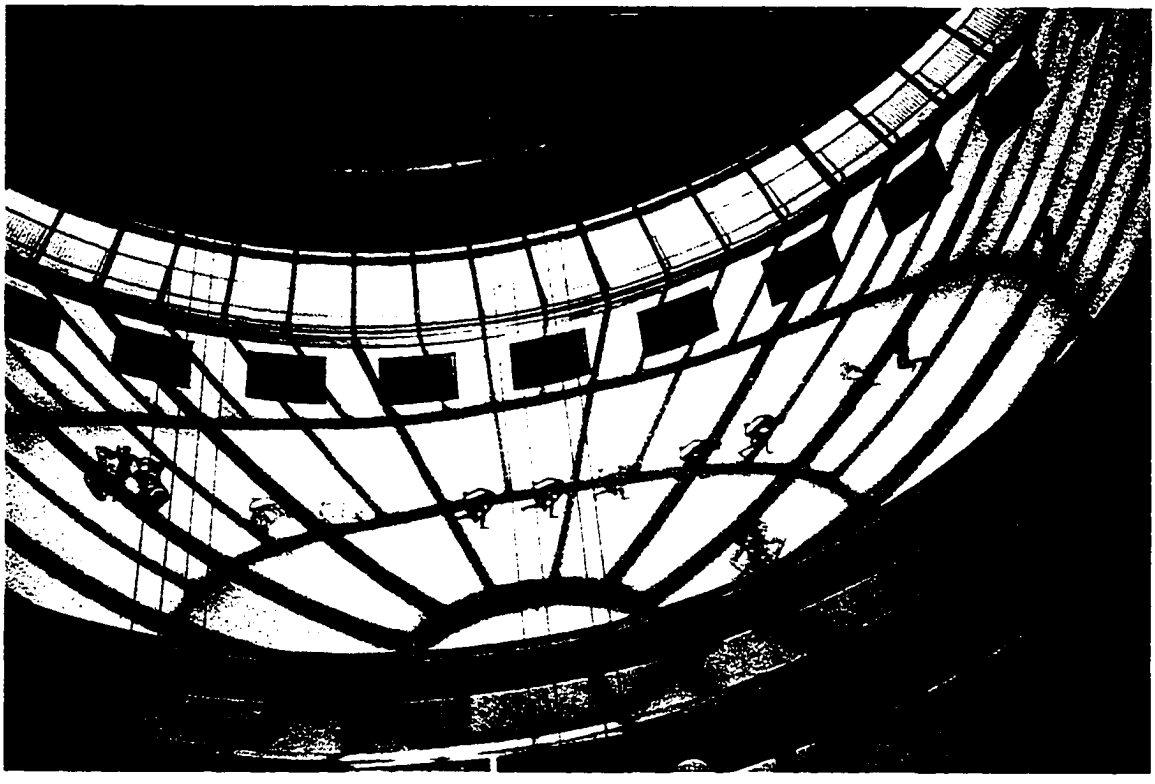

Fig. 49 Nancy Spero, *Rebirth of Venus*, Wall Painting Installation detail, 1989, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 50 Nancy Spero, *Rebirth of Venus,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1989, Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 51 Nancy Spero, *To Soar II,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1990, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA. Photograph: Sheila Pepe.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

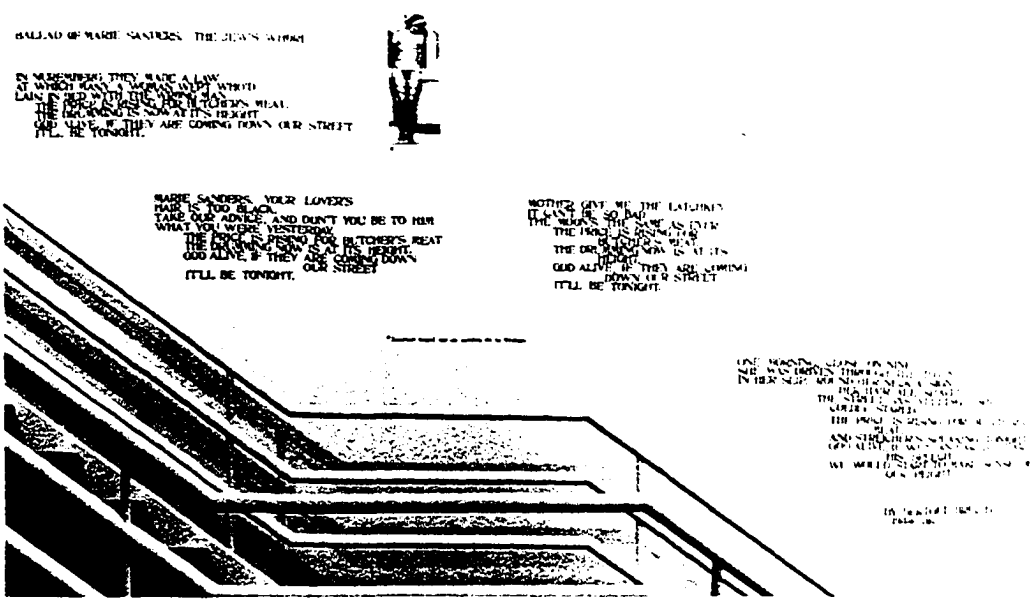

Fig. 52 Nancy Spero, *Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1990, Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA. Photograph: Sheila Pepe.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 53 Nancy Spero, *Four Cities Project,* Wall Painting Installation, 1990, Westland/Blucher Street Junction, Orchard Gallery, Bogside, Derry, Northern Ireland.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 54 Nancy Spero, *Minerva, Sky Goddess, Madrid,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1991, Circulo des Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain. Photographer: Miquel Bargallo.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

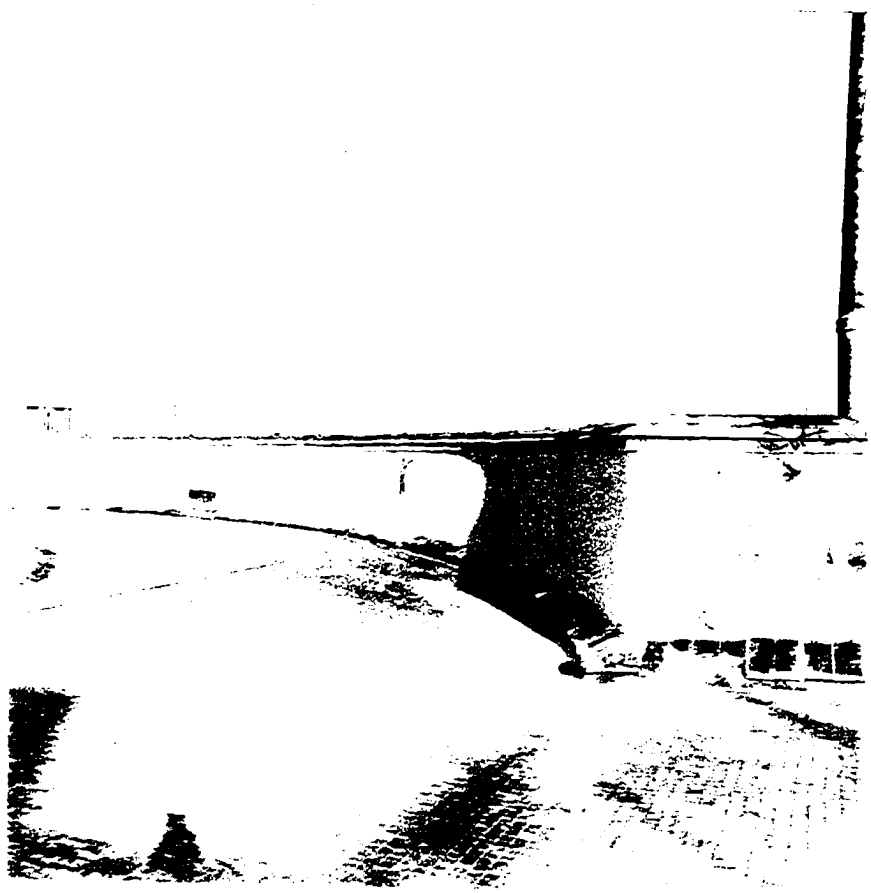

Fig. 55 Nancy Spero, *Minerva, Sky Goddess, Madrid,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1991, Circulo des Bellas Artes, Madrid, Spain. Miquel Bargallo.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

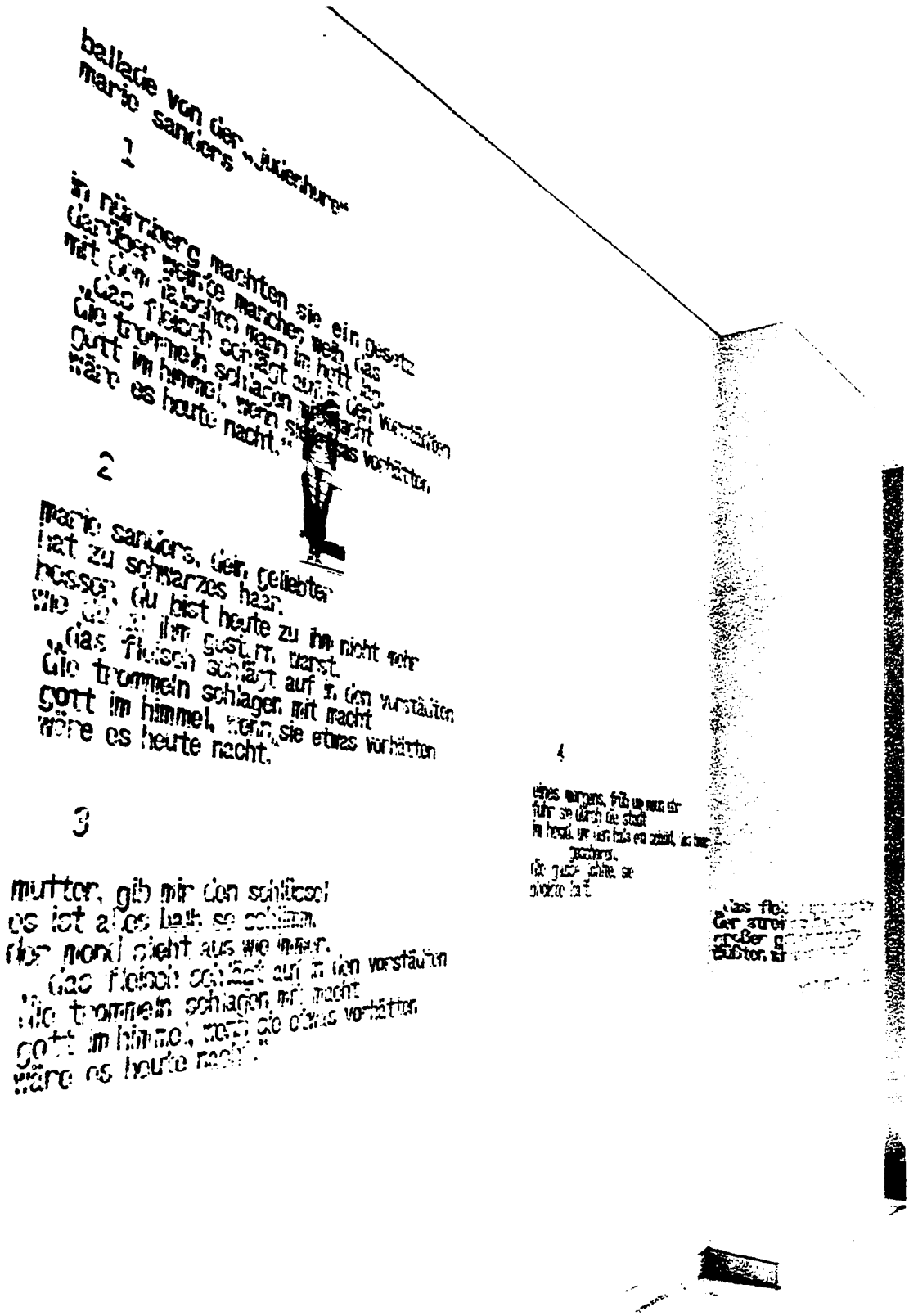

Fig. 56 Nancy Spero, *Ballade von der Judenhure Marie Sanders,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1991, Collection: Von der Heydt-Museum, Wuppertal, Germany. Photograph: Antie Zeis-Loi.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

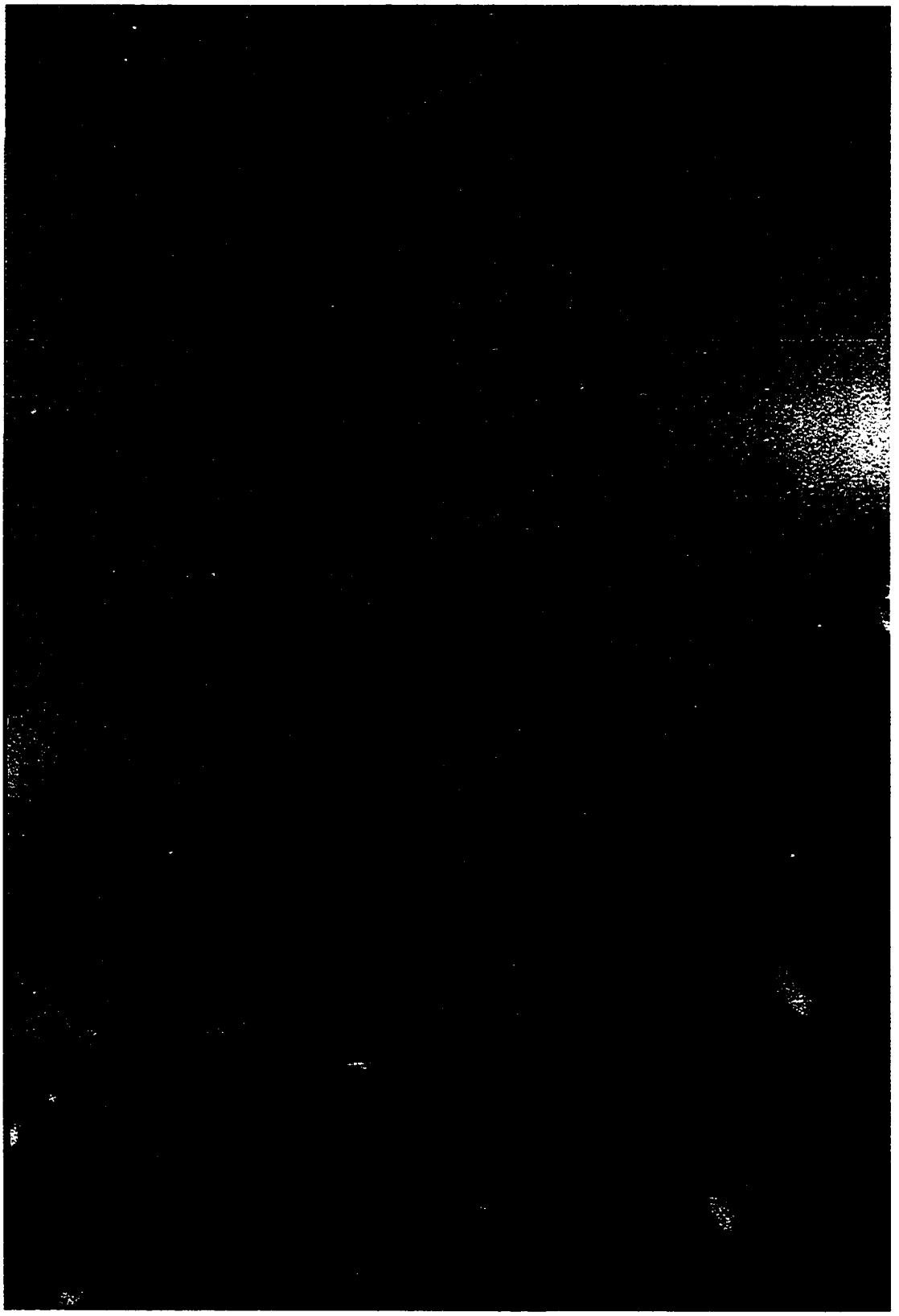

Fig. 57 Nancy Spero, *To Soar III,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1991, Harold Washington Library, Chicago. Property of the Chicago Public Art Program.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

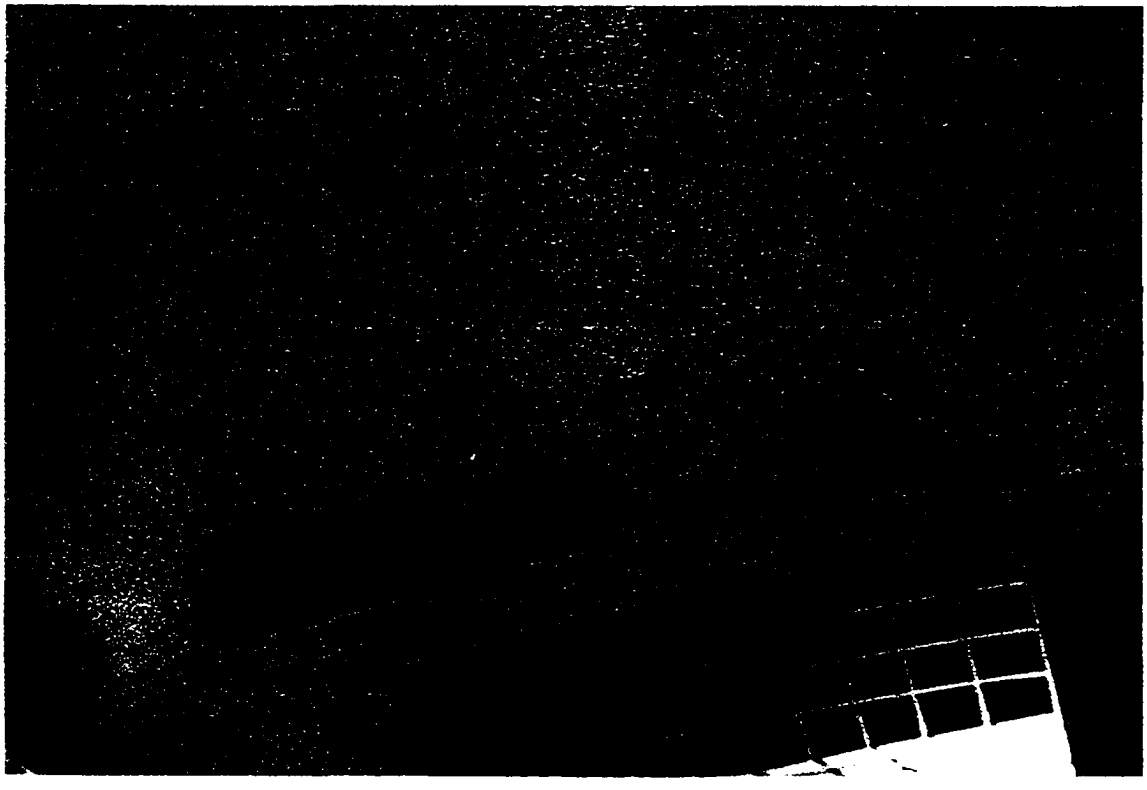

Fig. 58 Nancy Spero, *To Soar III,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1991, Harold Washington Library, Chicago. Property of the Chicago Public Art Program.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

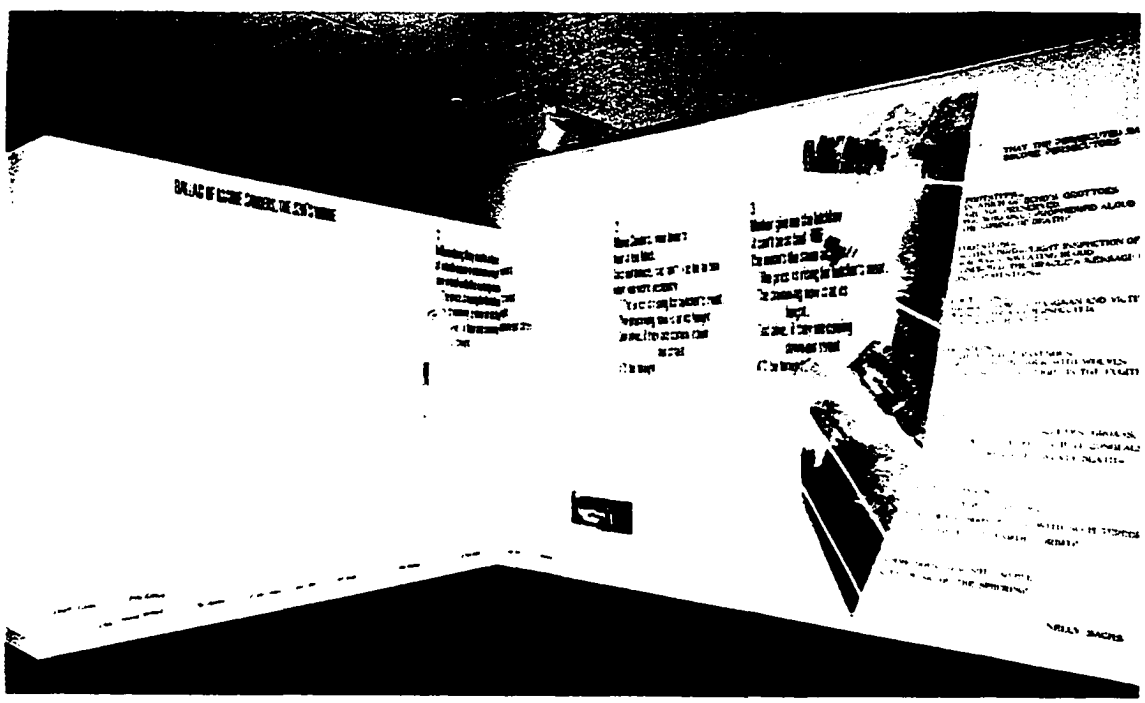

Fig. 59 Nancy Spero, *The Ballad of Marie Sanders, The Jew's Whore* and *Voices: Jewish Women in Time*, Wall Painting Installation, 1993, The Jewish Museum, New York. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

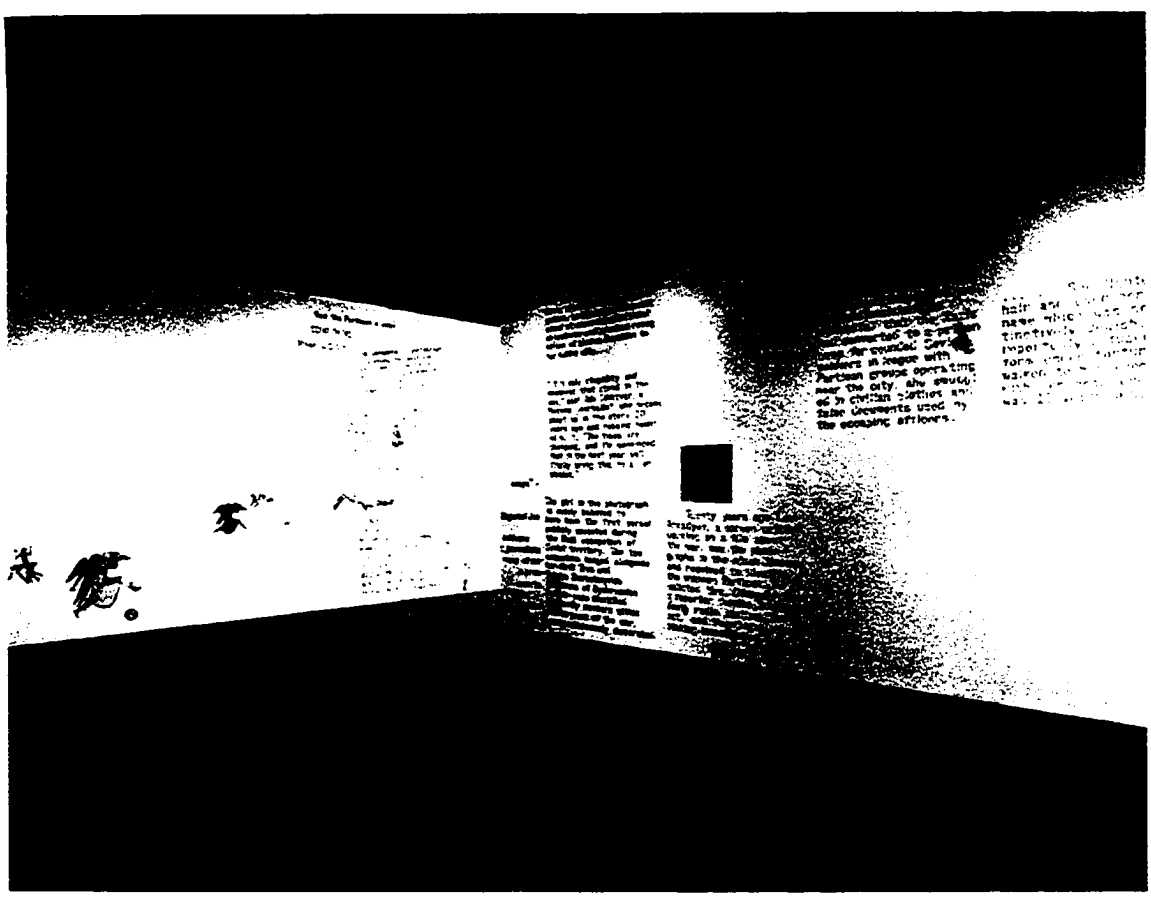

Fig. 60 Nancy Spero, *Masha Bruskina*, Wall Painting Installation detail, 1993, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 61 Photograph of Nancy Spero performing *Homage to Ana Mendieta* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993. Photograph: Abe Frajndlich.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

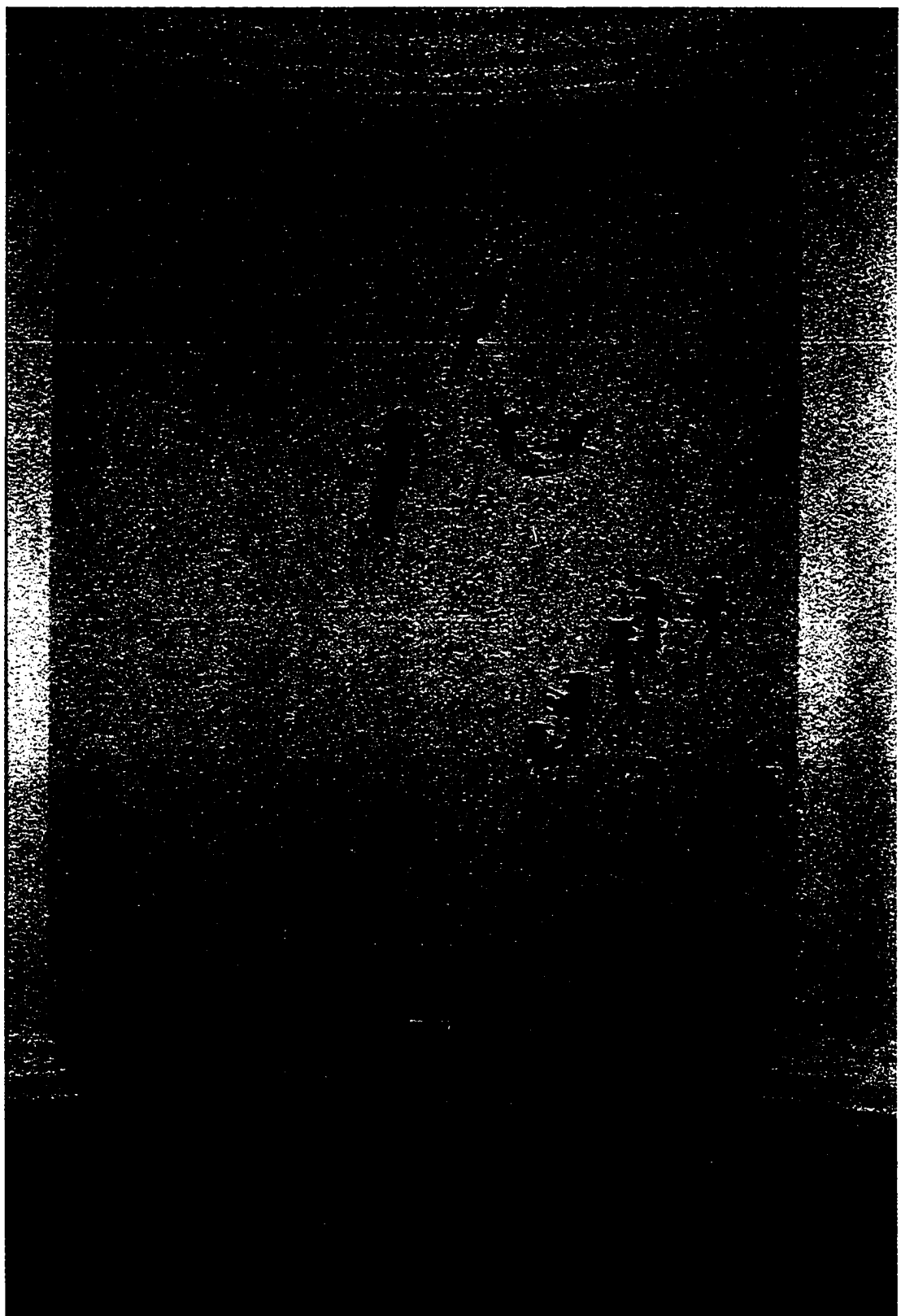

Fig. 62 Nancy Spero, *Premiere*, Wall Painting Installation detail, 1993, Ronacher Theater, Vienna. Courtesy Ronacher Theater, Vereinigte Bühnen Wien GesmbH, and Christine Koenig Galerie, Vienna.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 63 Nancy Spero, *Premiere*, Wall Painting Installation detail, 1993, Ronacher Theater, Vienna. Courtesy Ronacher Theater, Vereinigte Bühnen Wien GesmbH, and Christine Koenig Galerie, Vienna.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 64 Nancy Spero, *Black and the Red III,* Detail, 22 Panel Scroll Installation, 1994, 19.69 in. x 96.5 feet.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

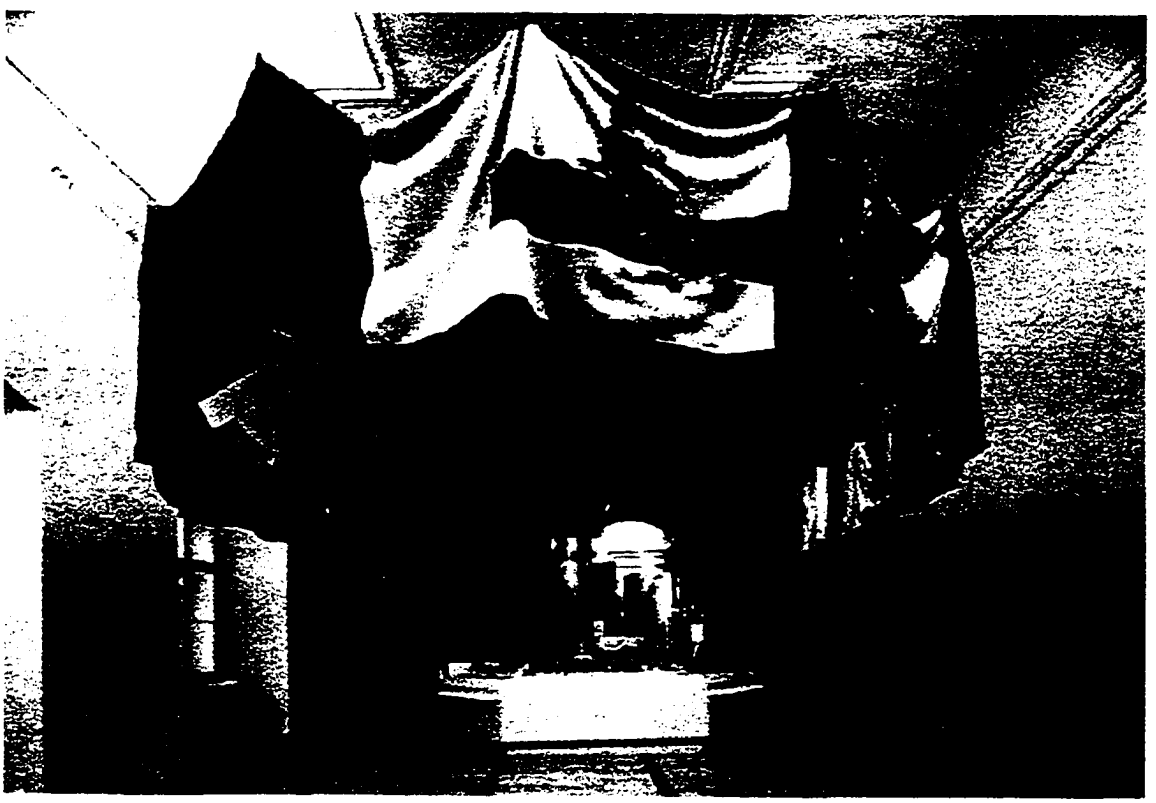

Fig. 65 Nancy Spero, *A Cycle in Time*, Banner Installation, 1995, 30 in. x 168 feet, Residenzgalerie, Salzburg, Austria. Photograph: Ulrich Ghezzi.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

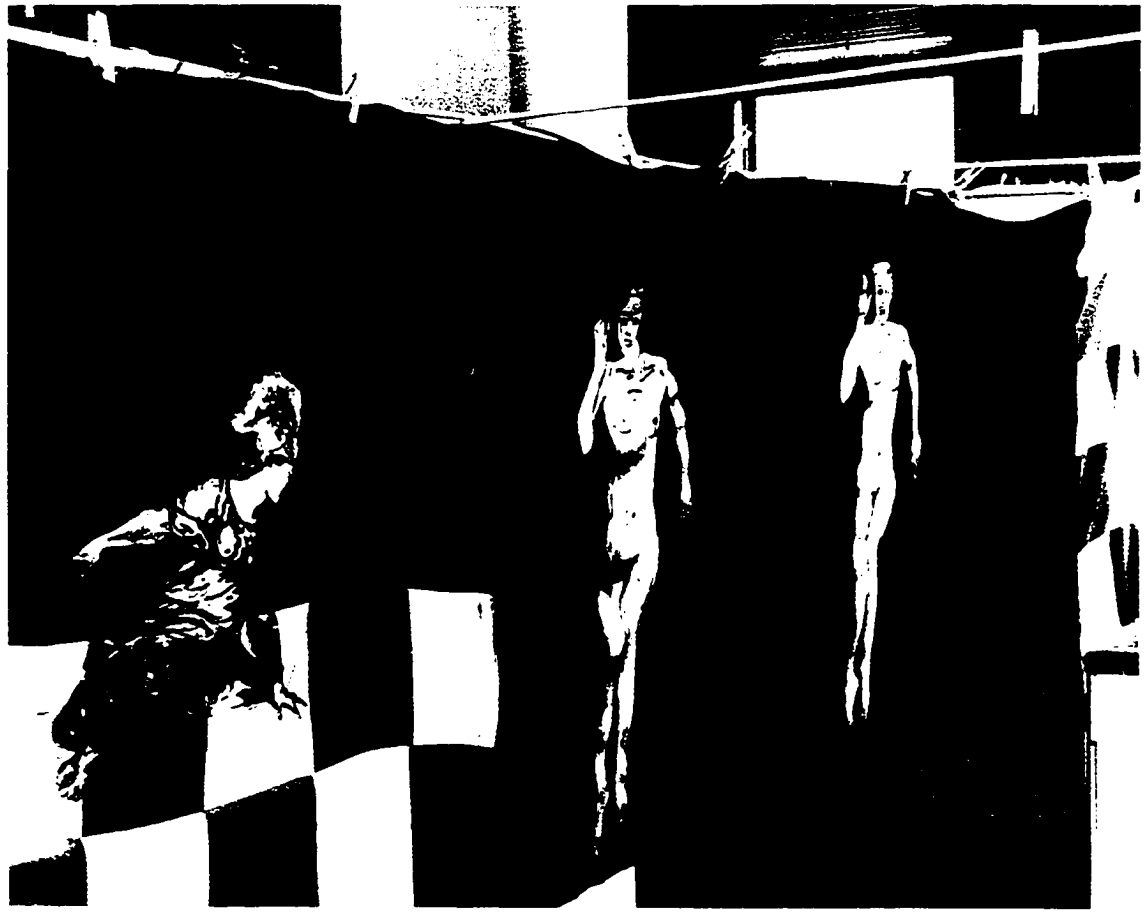

Fig. 66 Nancy Spero, *A Cycle in Time* in progress detail at Nancy Spero's New York Studio, 1995, Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 67 Nancy Spero, *Sheela-Na-Gig at Home,* Installation at Jack Tilton Gallery, New York, 1996, handprinting on paper and underwear on clothesline, dimensions variable. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

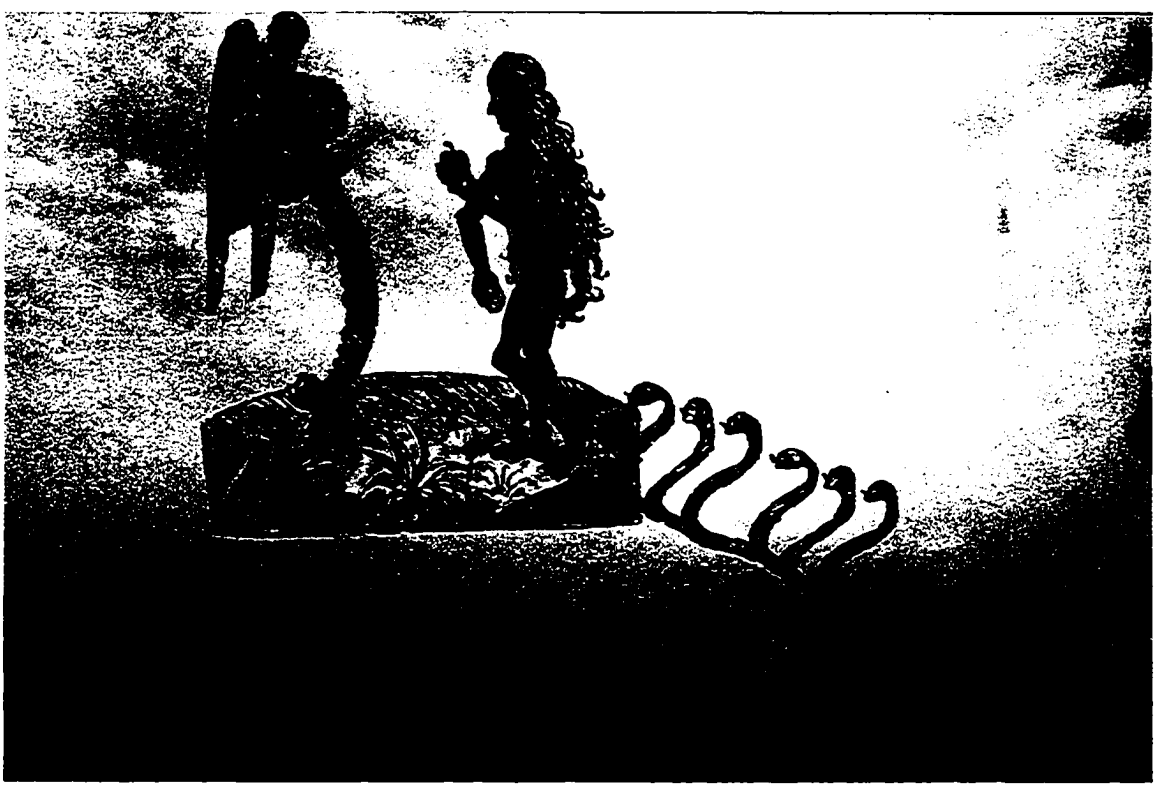

Fig. 68 Nancy Spero, *L'envol,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1995, Musee National d'art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

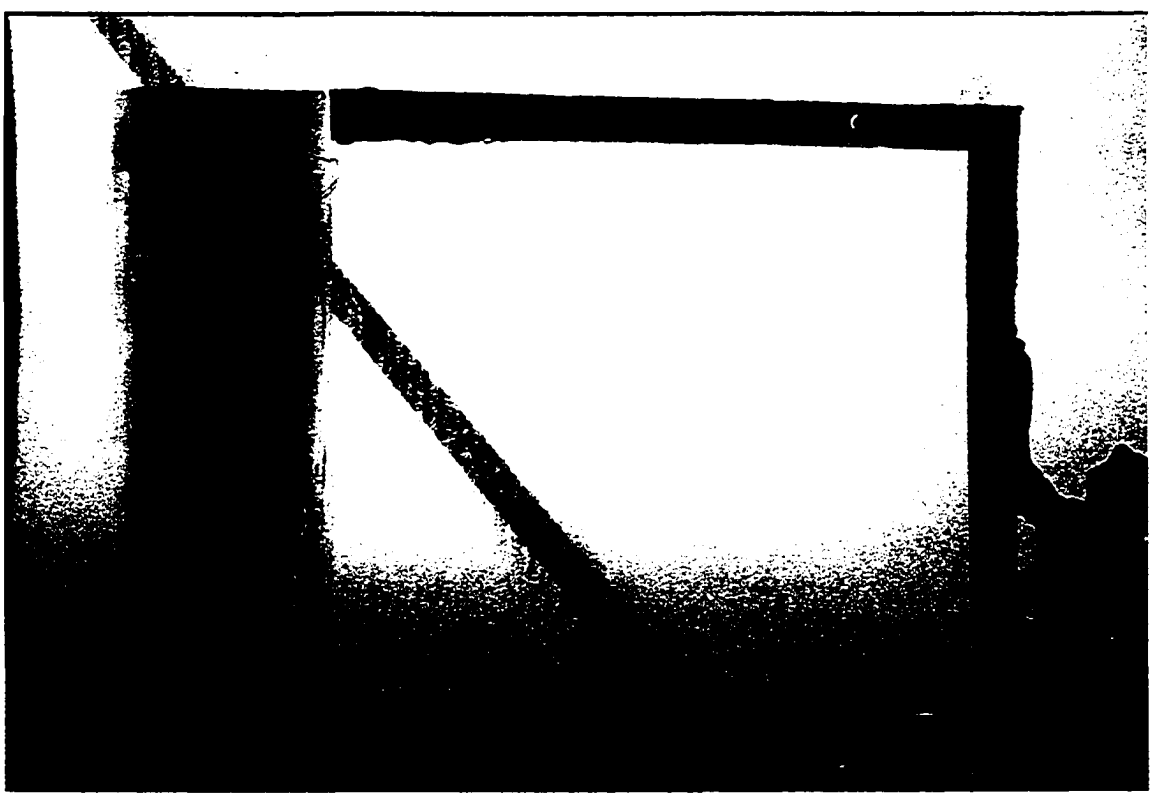

Fig. 69 Nancy Spero, *L'envol,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1995, Musee National d'art Moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 70 Nancy Spero, *Raise/Time,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1995, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 71, Nancy Spero, *Raise/Time*, Wall Painting Installation detail, 1995, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Photograph: David Reynolds.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

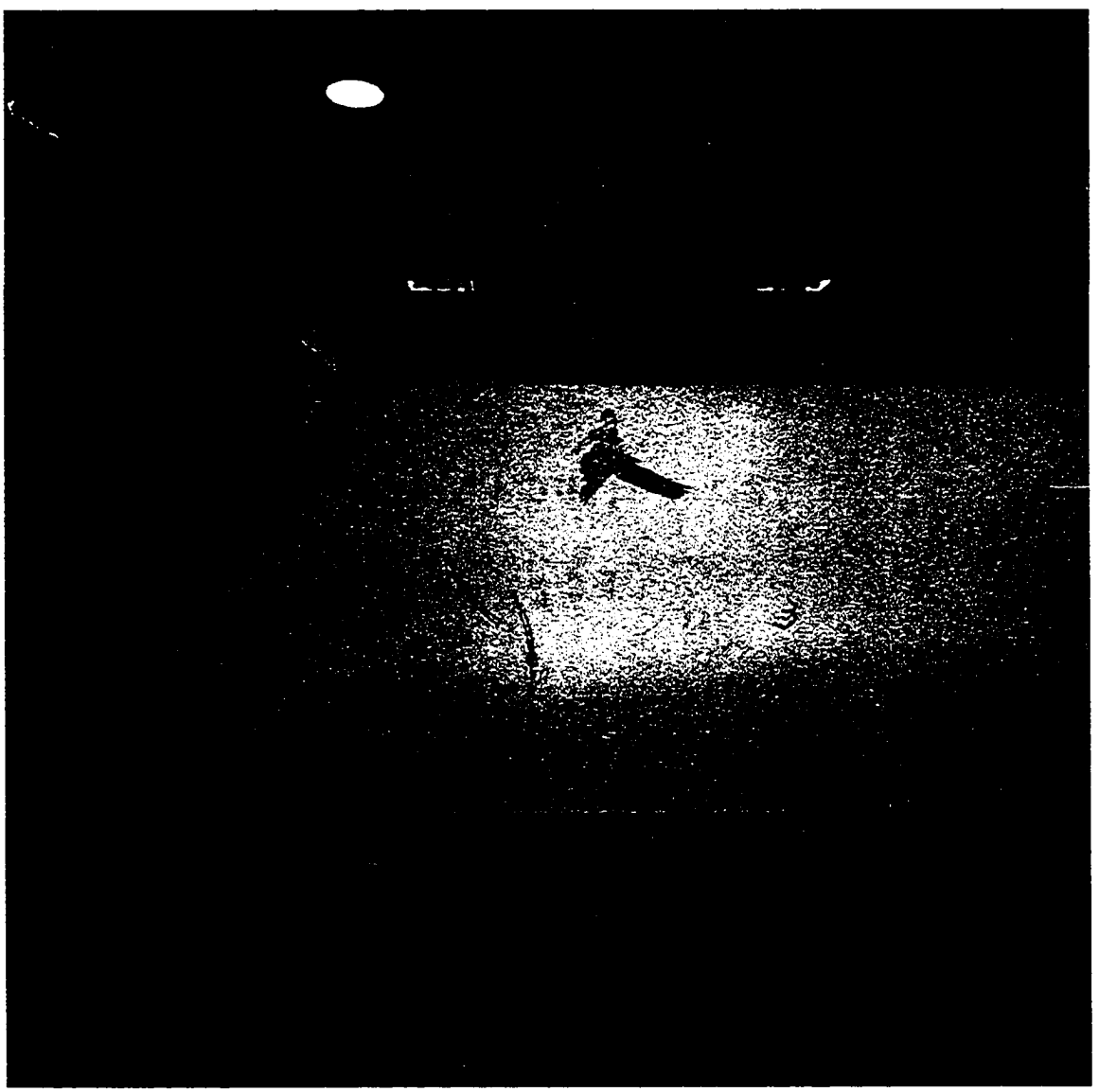

Fig. 72 Nancy Spero, *Improvisations,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1996, Heeresspital, Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria. Courtesy of AG FM CONRAD and Christine Koenig Galerie, Vienna.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 73 Nancy Spero, *Improvisations*, Wall Painting Installation detail, 1996, Heeresspital, Innsbruck, Tyrol, Austria. Courtesy of AG FM CONRAD and Christine Koenig Galerie, Vienna.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

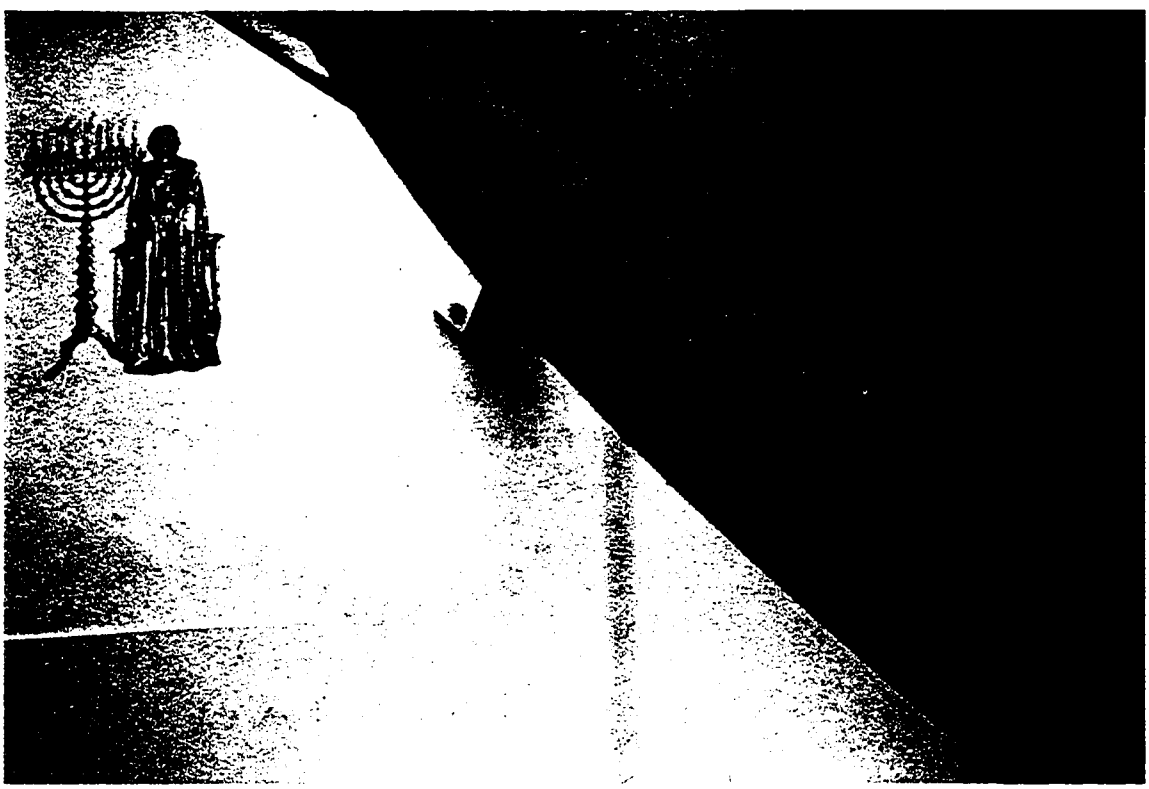

Fig. 74 Nancy Spero, *Installation der Erinnerung*, Wall Painting Installation detail, 1996, Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien, Austria. Courtesy The Jewish Museum Vienna and Christine Koenig Galerie, Vienna.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 75 Nancy Spero, *Installation der Erinnerung*, Wall Painting Installation detail, 1996, Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien, Austria. Courtesy The Jewish Museum Vienna and Christine Koenig Galerie, Vienna.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

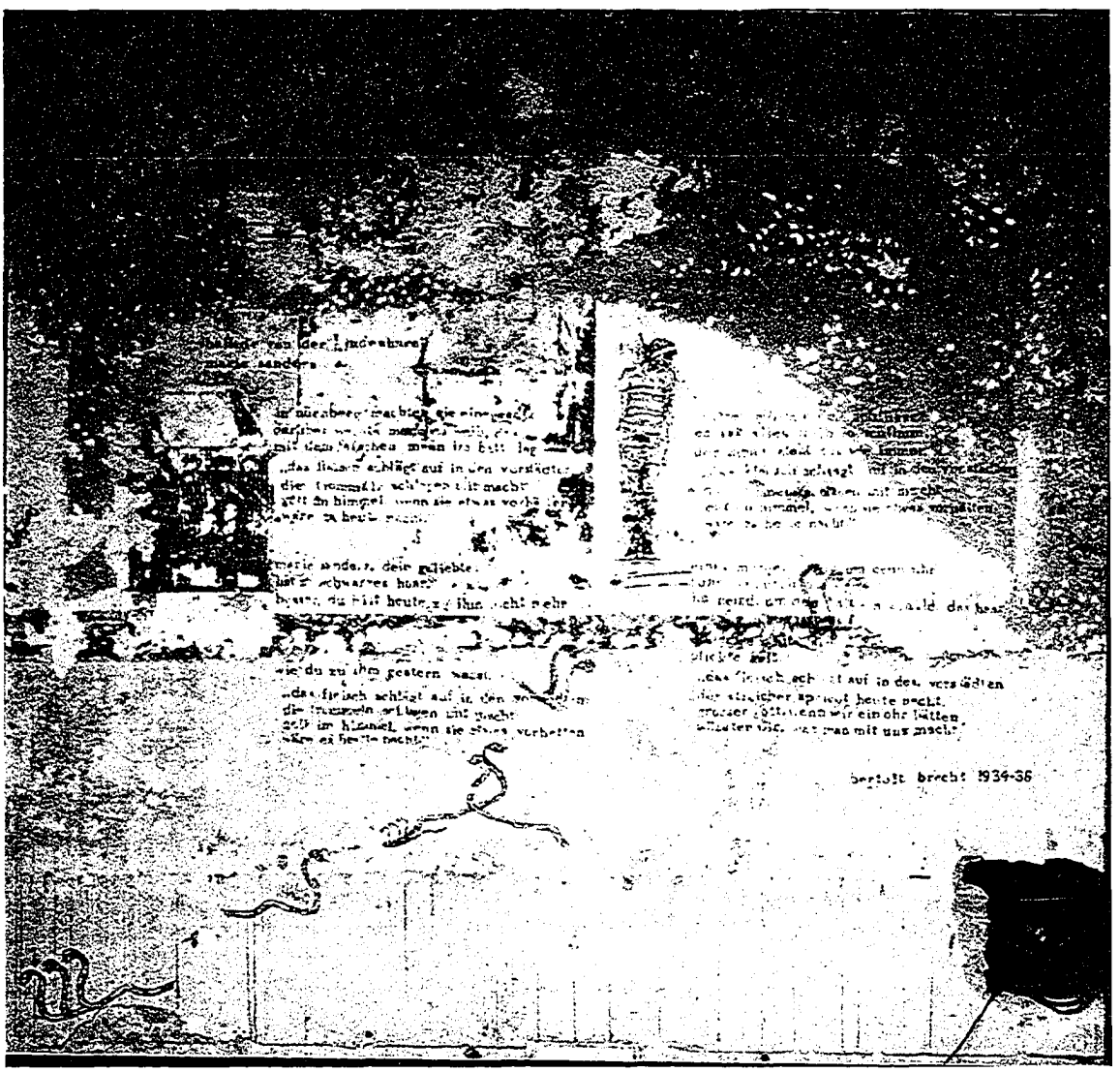

Fig. 76 Nancy Spero, *Ballade von der Judenhure Marie Sanders III,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1998, Festspielhaus Hellerau, Dresden, Germany. Courtesy Europaische Werkstatt fur Kunst und Kultur Hellerau e.V. Photographer: Lothar Sprenger.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Fig. 77 Nancy Spero, *Ballade von der Judenhure Marie Sanders III,* Wall Painting Installation detail, 1998, Festspielhaus Hellerau, Dresden, Germany. Courtesy Europaische Werkstatt fur Kunst und Kultur Hellerau e.V. Photographer: Lothar Sprenger.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

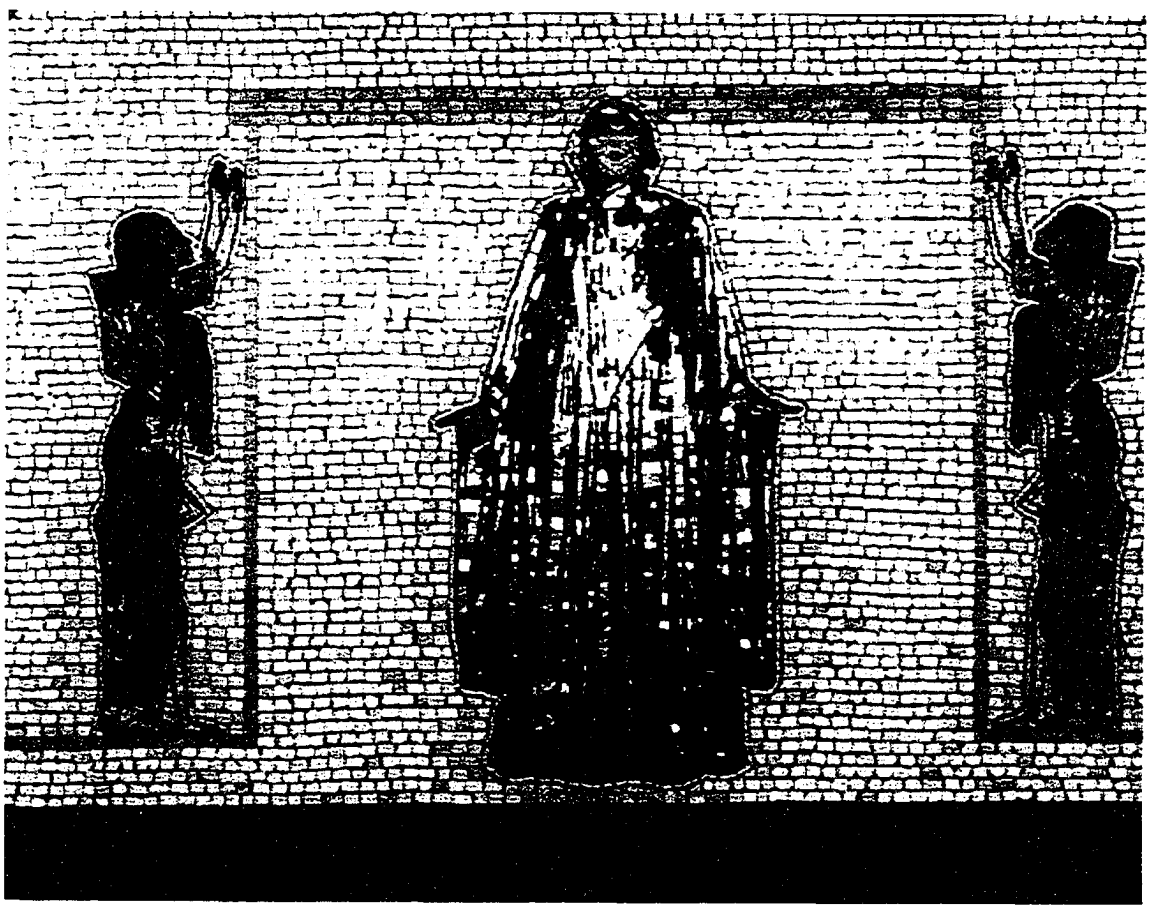

Fig. 78 Nancy Spero, *Artemis, Acrobats, Divas and Dancers,* Mosaic Installation detail, 2001, tesserae glass and ceramic mosaic. 66th Street-Lincoln Center Subway Station, 1, 2 line. Commissioned and owned by Metropolitan Transit Authority Arts in Transit, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

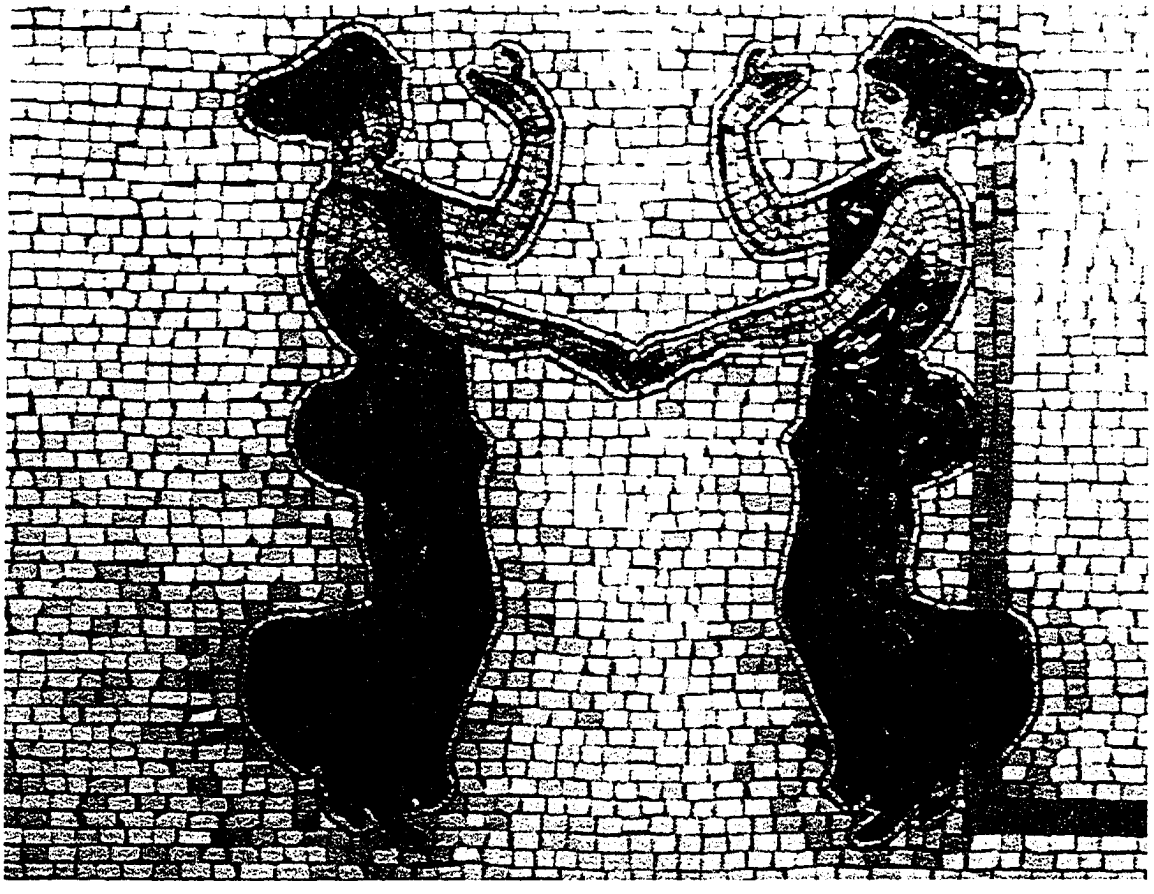

Fig. 79 Nancy Spero, *Artemis, Acrobats, Divas and Dancers,* Mosaic Installation detail, 2001, tesserae glass and ceramic mosaic. 66th Street-Lincoln Center Subway Station, 1, 2 line. Commissioned and owned by Metropolitan Transit Authority Arts in Transit, New York.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

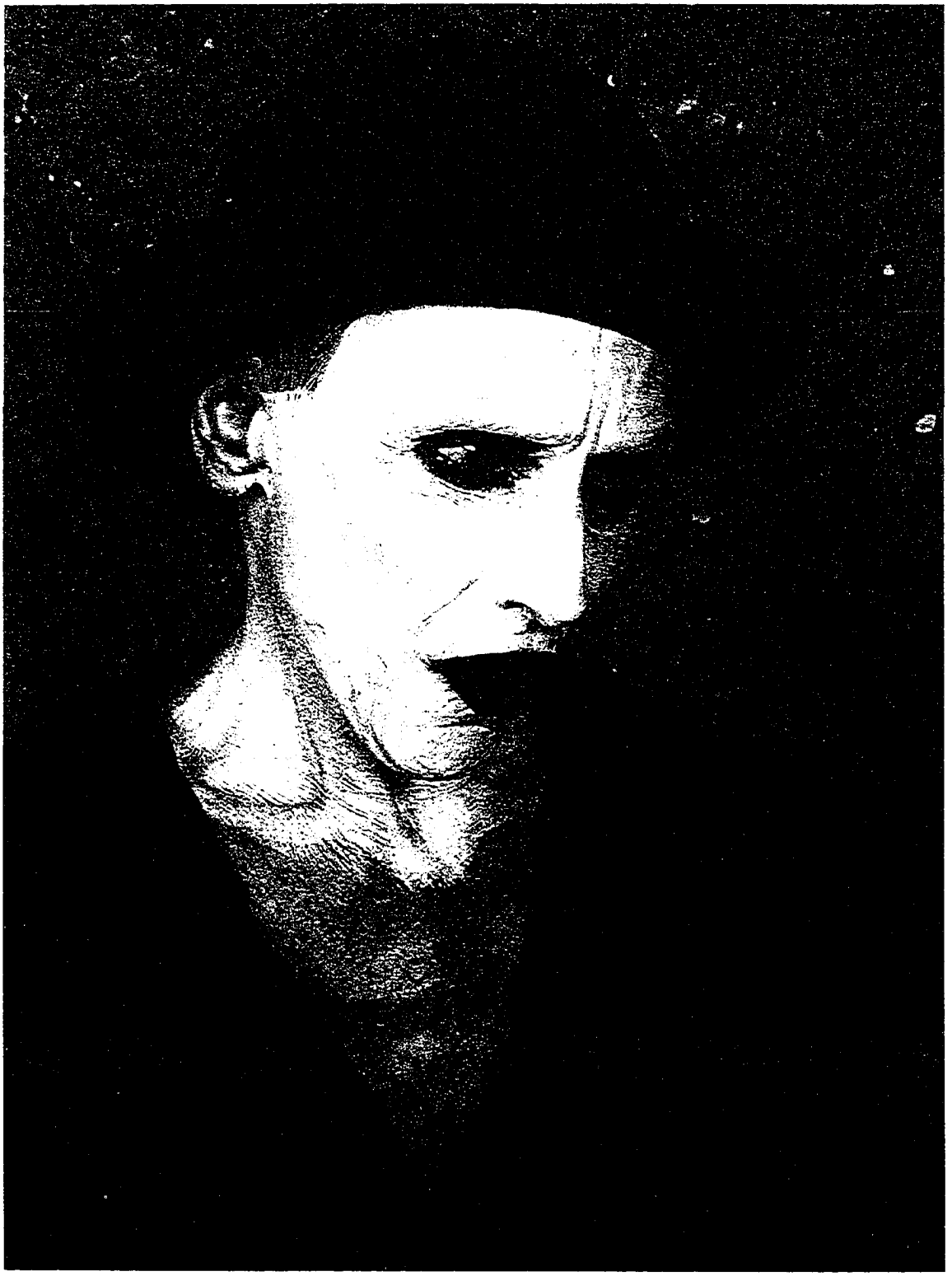

Fig. 80 Photograph of Nancy Spero by Abe Frajndlich, 1998.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Bibliography on Nancy Spero

Ackley, Clifford S. *The Unique Print/70s Into 90s.* Exh. Cat. Boston, MA: Museum of Fine Arts, 1990.

Adams, Brooks. "Spero's Muse: The Printed Paintings." *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 17, no. 1 (March-April, 1986): 10-11.

Adrian, Dennis. "Modern Art With a Moral." *Chicago Daily News,* March 7, 1977.

Allen, Felicity. "When did we start, again?" *Make* 81 (September/November 1998): 2-3.

Allen, Lynn. "The Skin of The World: Leon Golub and Nancy Spero." *Prints & Politics.* Albuquerque, NM: Tamarind Institute, The University of New Mexico Press, 1994, 57-69.

_____. "Skin Deep: Leon Golub & Nancy Spero." *American Print Alliance* 2, no. 2 (Fall, 1994): 2-5.

Alloway, Lawrence. "Art." *The Nation,* April 2, 1973, 445-446.

_____. "Art." *The Nation,* January 12, 1974, 60-61.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *Artforum* 14, no. 9 (May 1976): 52-53.

_____. "Women's Art in the 70's." *Art in America* 64 (May/June 1976): 64-72.

_____. "Art." *The Nation,* September 25, 1976, 282-283.

_____. "Feminist Collage." *Women's Art in the 70's.* Ed. Judy Loeb. New York: Teacher's College Press, Columbia University, 1979.

Altmann, Susanne. "Wilder die Scham: Nancy Spero: eine amerikanische Malerin in der Galerie der Gebr. Lehmann." *Die Union* (Dresden, Germany), January 9, 1992.

_____. "Meine Kunst ist nicht cool genug, Ein Gespräch mit Nancy Spero." *Neue Bildende Kunst* 3 (June – July, 1996): 80-81.

_____. "Sturm auf die Festung." *Dresdener Kutlurmagazin,* June 1998, 14.

_____. "Mysterien? Weiblich/mannlich...Nancy Spero und Leon Golub" *leipzigart Kunstfuhrer,* July 22, 1998.

_____. "She(ela) Gets the Last Word: Reflections on Nancy Spero's Work." *Sheela Does Ramapo.* Exh. Cat. Mahwah, NJ: Kresge and Pascal Galleries, Berrie Center for the Performing and Visual Arts, 2001, 3-7.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "Nancy Spero – Site-Specific, Military Hospital of the Innsbruck Garrison – Festspielhaus, Dresden-Hellerau – Subway Station, New York." *Nancy Spero: A Continuous Present.* Kiel, Germany: Kunsthalle zu Kiel, University of Kiel and Dusseldorf: Richter Verlag, 2002, 87-94.

Andersen, Wayne. *American Sculpture in Process 1930-1980.* New York: New York Graphic Society, 1975.

Archer, Michael. *Art Since 1960.* London: Thames and Hudson, 1997.

Arnault, Martine. "Nancy Spero." *Cimaise.* 38, no. 210 (January-February !991): 109-110.

Artner, Alan G. "Art Galleries: Spero's Showing Gets Top Vote as Political Art." *Chicago Tribune*, October 14, 1983, 12.

Ashbery, John. "Paris Notes." *Art International* 6, no. 9 (November 1962): 58.

Avgikos, Jan. "Nancy Spero at LeLong." *Artforum* 90 (April 2002): 135.

Babias, Marius. "Nancy Spero." *Kunstforum* (June/July 1990): 294-296.

Baigell, Matthew. *A Concise History of American Painting and Sculpture.* New York: Harper & Row, 1984.

_____. *Jewish-American Artists and the Holocaust.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997.

Ball, Edward. "Nancy Spero," *7 Days*, January 25, 1989.

Barasch, Amy. "Nancy Spero," *7 Days*, June 14, 1989.

Barber, Fiona. "TSWA in Derry." *Circa Art Magazine* (Belfast, N Ireland) 56 (March-April 1991): 22-26.

Bartley, Tony and Mary Ann Waden. "New York Conversation." *gls/the big spoon* (Belfast) no.3 (Spring 1995): 17-19.

Bedford, Emma. "The Cairo Biennale: A Prize for SA." *Artthrob* (South Africa), February 4, 1999.

Bee, Susan. *Fresh From New York.* Exh. Cat. Auckland, New Zealand: ARTSPACE, 1988.

Bell, J. "Drawing Now." *Arts Magazine* 50, no. 10 (June 1976): 6.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Bellemare, Roger. *Stations: Les Cent Jours D'Art Contemporain de Montréal.* Exh. Cat. Montreal: Centre International D'Art Contemporain de Montréal, 1987.

Beltz, GMBH & Co. KG. *Feministische Studien*, No. 2/3 (November 1984): 89.

Berger, Maurice. *Representing Vietnam 1965-1973: The Antiwar Movement in America.* Exh. Cat. New York: Hunter College of the City University of New York, 1988.

_____. "She is Silent When She Sews." *Athena & Arachne.* Exh. Cat. New York: Apex Art, 1994, n.p.

_____. "Notes in Time: Leon Golub and Nancy Spero." *Notes in Time: Leon Golub and Nancy Spero.* Baltimore, MD: Fine Arts Gallery, University of Maryland and New York: Art Publishers, 1995.

Bertrand, Jean-Pierre. "L'Art des Autres et la magie des uns," *Art Press*, No. 136, May 1989, 34.

Bird, Jon. "Culture and Control: Art and Politics in New York," *Art Monthly* 78 (July/August 1984): 9-12.

_____. "Nancy Spero: Inscribing Woman—Between the Lines," *Nancy Spero* London: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1987, 20-38.

_____. "Nancy Spero: Zwischen den Zeiel - Die Frau." *Nancy Spero: Bilder 1958 bis 1990.* Berlin: Haus am Waldsee, Bonner Kunstverein, 1990.

_____. "Dancing to a Different Tune." *Nancy Spero.* Exh. Cat. London: Phaidon Press, 1996.

_____. *Leon Golub: Echoes of the Real.* London: Reaktion Books, 2000.

_____. *Other Worlds: The Art of Nancy Spero and Kiki Smith.* London: Reaktion Books, 2004.

Birne, Torsten. "Weibliche Zeichen, brandneu und steinalt." *Sächsische Zeitung,* (Dresden) July 9, 1998

Birthälmar, Antje. "Mehr als schöne worte," "Bildwelten aus Buchstaben." *Buchstäblich: Bild und Wort in der Kunst heute*, Exh. Cat. Wuppertal, Germany: Von der Heydt-Museum, 1991.

Blocker, Jane. *Nancy Spero - Leon Golub: Contemporaries.* Exh. Cat. Detroit, MI: Elaine L. Jacob Gallery, Wayne State University, 1997.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Blumenthal, Lyn & Horsfield, Kate. "Interview with Nancy Spero," *Profile*, 3, no. 1 (January 1983): 2-24.

Board, Marilyn Lincoln. "To the Revolution: Nancy Spero's Art as a Site of Transformation in the Context of French Feminist Theory," *Selected Essays, International Conference on Representing Revolution*, Ed. John Michael Crafton. GA: West Georgia College International Conference, 1991, 151-162.

Bobek, Susanne. "An die Wand gestempelt," *Kurier*, Vienna, March 3, 1996.

Boetti, Anne Marie. "L'Altra Creativita," *Data*, July/August 1975.

Bohm-Duchen, Monica, ed. "After Auschwitz: Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art." *After Auschwitz*. Exh. Cat. London: Northern Center For Contemporary Art; Sunderland, Lund Humphries, 1995, 122, 156.

Bonetti, David. "'Hieroglyphs' Better Than Words," *San Francisco Examiner*, March 20, 1992, D-2.

_____. "It's Their Turn Now: Feminism and Anti-Communism at MIT," *The Boston Phoenix*, October 28, 1988, Sec. 3, 9, 26.

Bonito Oliva, Achille. "Art Is A Gynaeceum of Images." *Sky Goddess, Egyptian Acrobat*. Exh. Cat. Rome: Galleria Stefania Miscetti, May 1991.

_____. *Artae*. Exh. Cat. Rome: Circulo Degli Artisti, 1991.

Bosetti, Petra. "Grosse Mutter und Hure." *Art: Das Kunstmagazin* (Hamburg) No. 4 (April 1990): 139.

Bourdon, David . "Art." *The Village Voice*, September 27, 1976, 94.

Bowen, Lisa Balfour. "A Feminist Force," *The Sunday Sun* (Toronto), January 15, 1989.

Bradley, Laurel. *Tragic and Timeless Today*. Exh. Cat. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987.

Brenson, Michael. "Can Political Passion Inspire Great Art?" *The New York Times*, April 29, 1984, Sec. 2, 1, 22.

_____. "Art: Sculpture- Figure as Image of the Psyche." *The New York Times*, November 8, 1985, C 24.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *The New York Times*, March 28, 1986, C 30.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "Why Asian Culture Answers the Needs of Western Artists." *The New York Times*, April 20, 1986, 31, 34.

Brett, Guy. "Kunst mit eigen-sinn." *Studio International* 198 (1985): 31-35.

Brooks, Rosetta . "Nancy Spero: Archetypes and Architecture." *1993 Emrys Journal*. Exh. Cat. Greenville, SC: Greenville County Museum of Art and Emrys Foundation, 1993, 34-39..

_____. *Nancy Spero*. Exh. Cat. Philadelphia: Lawrence Oliver Gallery, 1987.

Brown, Michelle. "Artist Creates Exhibit Within Museum Confines." *The Sophian*, March 12, 1990, 3, 5.

Brunet-Weinmann, Monique. "L'Impression du déjà-vu." *Vie des Arts* (Montreal) 30, no. 120 (September 1985): 70.

Bryant, Edward. "Reviews." *Artspace*, Spring 1983, 80-81.

Buchloh, Benjamin H.D. "Spero's Other Traditions." Catherine de Zegher, ed. *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art In, Of, and From the Feminine.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994, 239-245.

_____. *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, An OCTOBER Book, 2000.

Buhles, Günter. "Entschieden feministische Bildnerei." *Schwäbische Zeitung* (Germany), April 8, 1992.

Burleigh, Nina. "Artist Fills in the Blanks Left by Historians," *Chicago Tribune*, July 31, 1988, Sec. 6, 2.

Burnside, Madeleine. "Raw Material." *Soho Weekly News*, March 24, 1977, 20.

Buskirk, Martha. "Art Around the Hub." *Art in America* 87, no. 6 (June 1999): 56-63.
Caley, Shaun. "Nancy Spero." *Flash Art* 140 (May/June 1988): 104.

Camhi, Leslie. "An Iconoclastic Artist's Lyrical Feminist Lexicon." *The Forward*, November 29, 1996, 9, 10.

Carr, C. "What is Political Art...Now?" (Interview) *Village Voice*, October 15, 1985, 79.

Cavaliere, Barbara. "Drawing Now." *Womanart*, Fall 1976.

Cebulski, Frank. "Images of the First Language." *Artweek* 15, no. 14 (April 7, 1984): 4.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Cembalest, Robin. "What is Pornography?" *ArtNews* 88, no. 8 (October 1989): 138-143.

Chayat, Sherry. "Beyond Symbolism: Spero's work defies assumptions." *Syracuse Herald American Stars Magazine*, January 3, 1988, 13-14.

Clearwater, Bonnie. "Nancy Spero." *Artemis II.* Exh. Cat. Mexico City: Centro Cultural Arte Contemporaneo, 1990.

Cockcroft, Eva. "Heros & Villains: The Latin American View." *Art in America* 17 (May 1984): 15-19.

Cooke, Lynn. "Neo-Primitivism: a regression to the domain of the 'night mind' or adolescent persiflage?" *Artscribe*, No. 51 (March-April 1985): 61-62.

Cotter, Holland. "Nancy Spero." *The New York Times,* November 21, 2003.

Craven, David. "Nancy Spero." *Arts Magazine* 61 (October 1986): 113.

Currah, M. "Nancy Spero." *City Limits* (London), March 1987.

Cushing Freeman, Keller. *just like a woman.* Exh. Cat. Greenville, SC: Greenville County Museum of Art, 1988.

_____. "Portrait of the Artist." *1993 Emrys Journal.* Exh. Cat. Greenville, SC: Greenville County Museum of Art and Emrys Foundation, 1993, 9-33.

Cuvelier, Eugene. "Nancy Spero Everywhere." *New York Magazine*, October 21, 1996, 95.

Czöppan, Gabi. "Nancy Spero: Galerie Barbara Gross, München." *NIKE* No. 25 (October/November 1988): 46.

D'Arcy, David. "The Art Frontier." *Vanity Fair,* February 1999.

Dallier, Anne. "L'Image de la violence l'art des femmes." *Les Cahiers du Grif,* No.14/15, December 1976.

_____. "Des Plasticiennes Americaines." *Peinture Cahiers Theoriques* No. 10-11 (March 1975): 178-183.

Daniel, Jamie. "Nancy Spero/Leon Golub: A Commitment to the Human Spirit." *Art Muscle* (Milwaukee) 5, no. 5 (May-July, 1991): 7.

Davidson, Sara. "The Politically Incorrect Orgasm." *Mirabella*, January/February, 1997, 84 – 92.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Décary, Marie. "Quand Artemis Harnache le Centaure." *Le Devoir*, April 27, 1985.

De Pasquale, Carol. "Dialogues with Nancy Spero." *WomanArt* 1, no. 3 (Winter-Spring 1977): 8-11.

_____. "The Art Work of Nancy Spero." Master's Thesis, Hunter College, CUNY, 1977.

Decter, Joshua. "Nancy Spero." *Arts Magazine* 60 (Summer 1986): 112.

Dempsey, Terrence. "Myths as Celebration and Healing." *Shift 5* 3, no. 1, 1989, n. p.

Dennis, Kelly. "Dirty War: Nancy Spero connects sexual and public politics." *L.A. Weekly*, October 14-20, 1988.

Desmett, Don. *American Policy*. Exh. Cat. Cleveland, OH: Cleveland State University, 1987.

de Zegher, Catherine. *Inside the Visible - Begin the Beguine in Flanders*. Exh. Cat. Kortijk, Belgium: Kunststichting - Kanaal-Art Foundation, 1994.

_____. "Tongue, Torture, and Free Rein in Spero's Explicit Series of Paintings." *Nancy Spero*. Birmingham, England: Ikon Gallery, 1998, 4 -15.

Dobie, Elizabeth Ann. "Interweaving Feminist Frameworks." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 48, no. 4 (Fall 1990): 381-394.

Dudek, Cheryl K. "The Pictorial Narrative in Contemporary Art." Ph. D. dissertation. New York: School of Education, New York University, 1995.

Duncan, Michael. "Tracing Mendieta. (performance artist Ana Mendieta)." *Art in America* 87, no. 4 (April 1999), 75-79.

Edelman, Robert G. "Report From Washington, DC: The Figure Returns." *Art in America* 83, no. 3 (March 1994): 39-43.

Edelson, Mary Beth and Ameilia M. Trevelyan, eds. *The Art of Mary Beth Edelson*. New York: Seven Cycles, 2002.

Engler, Brigitte. "Woman of Motion." *PAPER* (New York), March 1987.

Enright, Robert. "Matisse: Bourgeois Delectation." *Border Crossings* 12, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 38-40.

_____. "On the Other side of the Mirror: a Conversation with Nancy Spero." *Border Crossings* 19, no. 4 (November 2000): 18-33.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Falcon, Sylvia. "Nancy Spero Sees the Light." *East Village Eye*, August 1985, 41.

Farmer, Jane M. *Crossing Over/Changing Places.* Exh. Cat. Riverdale, MD: Pyramid Atlantic, 1992, 34, 131.

Faust, Gretchen. "New York in Review." *Arts Magazine* 65 (May 1991): 97.

Fehlemann, Sabine. "Bildwelten aus Buchstaben." *Buchstäblich: Bild und Wort in der Kunst heute.* Wuppertal, Germany: Von der Heydt-Museum, 1991.

Feldman, Caryn. "Nancy Spero, Interviews with Women in the Arts, Part 2." *Women in the Arts.* New York: Tower Press and School of Visual Arts, 1976, 28-29.

Felshin, Nina. *Disarming Images: Art for Nuclear Disarmament.* New York: Adama Books, 1984.

Fischer, Barbara. *She Writes in White Ink.* Exh. Cat. Alberta, CA: Walter Phillips Gallery, Baniff Center, 1985.

Fisher, Jennifer and Seaton, Beth. "Waterworks." *Parachute* 51 (September-November 1988): 52.

Flood, Richard. *Memento Mori.* Exh. Cat. Philadelphia: Moore College of Art and Mexico City: Centro Cultural del Arte Contemporaneo, 1986.

Flynn, Barbara. "Interview with Nancy Spero." *Nancy Spero: 43 Works on Paper, Excerpts From the Writings of Antonin Artaud.* Exh. Cat. Cologne, Germany: Galerie Rudolf Zwirner, 1987, 1-4.

Francblin, Catherine. "L'art des autres et la magie des uns." (Jean-Hubert Marin interviewed by Catherine Francblin) *Art Press,* no. 136, 1989, 34-38.

Francia, Luisa. "Ich bin kein Bestseller." *die tageszeitung,* May 15, 1991.

Frascina, Francis. *Modernism In Dispute: Art Since the Forties, Modern Art Practices and Debates.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press and the Open University, 1993, 109, 112, 165.

Francois, Alain-Henri. "Golub et Spero, War and Memory." *Voir* (Lausanne) no. 103-111 (December 1994/January 1995): 10-11.

Fraser, Kathleen. "Letter From Rome: H.D., Spero and the Reconstruction of Gender." *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* 10 (November 1991): 40-43.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Frizzell, Deborah. "Leon Golub and Nancy Spero: The Fighting Is The Dance." *New York Arts Magazine* 5, no. 6 (June 2000): 14-16.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *New Britain Museum of American Art: Highlights of the Collection,* Vol. II. New York: Prestel, 2001.

_____. "Nancy Spero," *New York Arts Magazine* 7, no.4 (April 2002): 26.

_____. "Alchemical Secrets: Spero's Fragmentation and Recreation." *Nancy Spero: A Continuous Present.* Kiel, Germany: Kunsthalle zu Kiel, University of Kiel and Dusseldorf: Richter Verlag, 2002, 43-53.

_____. "Nancy Spero's Cabaret." *Unfolding Perspectives.* Exh. Cat. Helsinki, Finland: Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, 2002, 229-230.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *Women's Caucus for Art: Honor Awards for Outstanding Achievement in the Visual Arts.* New York: National Lifetime Achievement Awards, Women's Caucus for Art, 2003, 26-29.

_____. "Committee on Women in the Arts Award Winners: Nancy Spero." *CAA Newsletter* 28, no. 6 (November 2003): 3-4.

Frueh, Joanna. "Towards a Feminist Theory of Art Criticism." *New Art Examiner,* January 1985, 41.

Fulton, Jean. "A Feminist Resolution: The Art of Nancy Spero." *New Art Examiner* 16, no. 6 (February 1989): 32-35.

Gampert, Christian. "Welt ohne Manner: 'Woman Breathing': Nancy Spero Schablonenfiguren im Ulm." *Die Zeit,* May 22, 1992, 66.

Garb, Tamar. "Nancy Spero." *Artscribe International* 64 (Summer 1987): 58-62.

Gardner, Paul. "Do Titles Really Matter?" *Art News* 91 (February 1992): 92-97.

Garlake, Margaret. "Nancy Spero." *Art Monthly* 137 (June 1990): 18-19.

Gaudelius, Yvonne M. "Art-Iculating Women's Voices: An Exploration of Women's Subjectivity in Contemporary Women's Visual Art, Feminist Pedagogy and French Feminist Theory." Ph. D. dissertation. College Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1993.

Gevers, Ine and van Heeswijk, Jeanne. *Ike + De Ander, Dignity for All: Reflections on Humanity.* Exh. Cat. Amsterdan: Stichting Artimo, Beurs van Berlage, 1994.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Gibson, Elise. "Artist Brings Her Feminist Vision to Smith." *Daily Hampshire Gazette,* February 26, 1990, 15.

Giloy-Hirtz, Petra. "Imaginationen von Weiblichkeit." *Künstler: Kritisches Lexikon der Gegenwartskunst,* Eine Edition der Verlage Weltkunst und Bruckmann, 31, no. 22 (1995): 3.

Gimelson, Deborah. "The Show the Art World Loves to Hate." *Mirabella,* March 1993, 82-85.

Glueck, Grace. "Nancy Spero." *The New York Times,* October 18, 1996.

Golub, Leon. "Bombs and Helicopters: The Art of Nancy Spero." *Caterpillar I,* 1967, 52.

_____. "Dancing to a Different Tune." *Nancy Spero.* London: Phaidon Press, 1996.

Gómez Reus, Teresa. "Nancy Spero." *Canelobre* 23/24 (Winter/Spring 1992): 126-137.

Gooding, Mel. "Nancy Spero at Riverside." *Artscribe,* September/October 1984, 54-55.

Goodman, Susan, "Eight Artists: A Cultural Context." *From the Inside Out.* Exh. Cat. New York: The Jewish Museum, 1993, 34-35, 44.

Goodstein, Barbara. "Nancy Spero." *Arts and Antiques* 7 (January 1990) 32.

Götz, Stephan. *American Artists In Their New York Studios (Conversations about the creation of contemporary art).* Ed. Craigen W. Bowen and Katherine Olivier. Cambridge, MA: Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, Harvard University Art Museum and Daco-Verlag, Günther Bläse, 1992, 149-151.

Govier, Katherine. "Venus as Victim." *Canadian Art,* Fall 1985, 68-69.

Grabosky, Tom. "Images Overdue." *Bay Windows* 6, no. 42 (October 20-26, 1988).

Grahn-Hinnfors, Gunilla. "Godhet, grymhet och fortryck." *Goteborgs-Posten* (Sweden), September 10, 1994.

Greenberg, Blue. "Artist Shows Change in Center/Gallery Exhibit." *Durham Morning Herald* (N.C), June 20, 1986, 4D.

Greenberg, Reesa. "Critical Couplings." *Vanguard* 14, no. 7 (September 1985): 17-19.

Group Material. *The New York Times* (inserts), Sunday, May 22, 1988.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Gumpert, Lynn. *The End of the World: Contemporary Visions of the Apocalypse.* Exh. Cat. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1983 - 1984, 11.

Gunther, Bruce. *Three Decades: The Oliver Hoffman Collection,* Exh. Cat. Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art Press, 1988, 100.

Guthrie, Derek. "Art, Politics, and Ethics; An Interview With Nancy Spero and Leon Golub." *New Art Examiner* 4, no. 7 (April 1977): 6-7.

Hackett, Regina. "Scroll Drawings Celebrate the Female Form." *Seattle Post-Intelligencer,* June 24, 1985, C5.

Haggart, Robert R. "The Everson Paints A Portrait of Courage Over Censorship." *The Post Standard* (Syracuse, NY) January 20, 1988.

Hague, Libby. "Review: Nancy Spero *Works Since 1950* The Power Plant, Jan. 20 - Feb. 26; Nancy Spero S.L. Simpson Gallery." *Newsletter of the Print and Drawing Council of Canada* (Toronto) 2, no. 2 (March/April 1989): 15-20.

Hall, James. "Nancy Spero." *Art International* 12 (Autumn 1990): 65.

Hamm, Nancy. "Art Facts: Nancy Spero arrives from the periphery." *Reader,* July 1, 1988, 7.

Hammer, Klaus. "Rendezvous von Mars und Venus." *Der Tagesspiegel* (Berlin), August 1, 1998.

Hammond, Harmony. *Wrappings: Essays on Feminism, Art and the Martial Arts.* New York: Mussman Bruce Publishers, 1984, 71.

Hamza, Mohamed. "Spero's Work is Feminist Not Only for its Subject Matter but also for its Sensibility." *The Egyptian Gazette,* January 29, 1999.

Hanak, Werner & Widrich, Mechtild. *Nancy Spero- Installation der Erinnerung.* Exh. Cat. Vienna: Jüdisches Museum der Stadt Wien, 1996, 44-49.

Händler, Ruth. "Austellung: Radikales Bekenntnis zum Feminismus." *Annabelle* 9 (1992).

Handy, Ellen. "Nancy Spero." *Arts Magazine* 61 (May 1987): 105.

Hanna, Deirdre. "Spero's transcendent imprint." *NOW* (Toronto), January 26-February 1, 1989, 46.

Harris, Susan. "Reality and Revelation." *Golub/Spero 60's/70's & 90's/50's* Exh. Cat. New York: Josh Baer Gallery, 1993.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "Dancing in Space." *Nancy Spero*. Exh. Cat. Malmö, Sweden: Malmö Konsthall, 1994, 9-43.

_____. "Skowhegan Medal for Works on Paper: Nancy Spero." Skowhegan, ME: Skowhegan Awards, 1995, 7.

_____. *Of Joy and Despair*. Exh. Cat. Hiroshima, Japan: Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996.

Haus, Mary. "Journey to the Center of the Art World." *Elle*, November 1993, 66.

Hawkins, Margaret. "True 'Outsiders' Are In At Golub, Spero Exhibit." *Chicago Sun Times*, December 9, 1994, 36.

_____. "An Inside Look at Outsider Artists," *Chicago Sun Times*, December 16, 1994, p. 35.

Heartney, Eleanor. "Nancy Spero at LeLong." *Art in America* 90, no. 9 (September 2002): 138.

Heinmann, Susan. "Nancy Spero." *Artforum* 13, no. 6 (February 1975): 68-69.

Heit, Janet. "Nancy Spero." *Arts Magazine* 58 (November 1983): 5.

_____. "Spero's Appraisals of Women: A Lot to See, A Lot to Read," *The Villager*, January 29, 1979.

Hellman, Mimi. *To Soar II*. Exh. Cat. Northampton, MA: Smith College Museum of Art, 1990.

Hendrickson, Janis. *ALIVE/SURVIVE: Amerikanische Kunst in K3*. Hamburg: Kampnagelgelände, 1988.

Hess, Elizabeth. "Art Apocalypse." *The Village Voice*, October 26, 1986, 94.

_____. "Bodywork." *New York Woman* 3 (June/July 1989): 51.

_____. "Collateral Damage." *The Village Voice*, March 12, 1991, 81.

Hirsh, Linda Blaker. "A Chanting of Terrible Events." *Hartford Advocate*, November 19, 1979, 28.

Hirschman, Jack. "Classicism in Modern Art Theme of Two-Man Show." *Indiana University Newspaper*, March 1958, 3.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Hoffmann Koenige, Erika. "Interview with Nancy Spero." *Buchstäblich: Bild und Wort in der Kunst heute*, Wuppertal, Germany: Von der Heydt-Museum, 1991, 98-101.

Holert, Tom. "Kunst Weiblichkeit im Widerstand." (German) *Vogue*, April 1992, 116-118.

Holland, Frank. "U of C Group Holds Exhibit." *Chicago Sun Times*, June 8, 1952, 10.

Horodner, Stuart. "You See You Know - Leon Golub and Nancy Spero." *Dazed and Confused*, 23 (August 1996): 116 – 118.

Horsfield, Kate, "Interview With Nancy Spero." *Profile* 3, no. 1 (January 1983): 2-24.

Hume, Christopher. "Pioneer feminist Spero wins overdue recognition." *The Toronto Star*, February 10, 1989, E7.

Hutchinson, John. "Nancy Spero/Leon Golub in Conversation with John Hutchinson." *CIRCA Art Magazine* 36 (September/October 1987): 29-33.

_____. "Major Show Opens in Douglas Hyde," *Sunday Press* Derry, N. Ireland), February 28, 1988.

Hymowitz, Carol. "Nurturing the Muse." *The Wall Street Journal*, March 19, 2001.

Indiana, Gary. "Nerve Meter Revisited." *The Village Voice*, March 8, 1988, 91.

Isaak, Jo Anna . *The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter*. New York: Protetch-McNeil Gallery, 1983.

_____. "Seduction Without Desire." *Vanguard* 16, no. 3 (Summer 1987): 10-14.

_____. "A Work in Comic Courage." *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950*. Exh. Cat. Syracuse, New York: Everson Museum of Art, 1987, 25-36.

_____. "A Work in Comic Courage." *Parachute* 51 (June-August 1988): 11-15.

_____ . "The Comfy Chair: Matisse: A Symposium." *Art In America* (May 1993): 84.

_____. "Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction: Nancy Spero's *Notes In Time On Women.*" *Notes In Time, Nancy Spero and Leon Golub*. Exh. Cat. Catonsville, MD: Fine Arts Gallery, University of Maryland Baltimore County, 1995, 30-43.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *Laughter Ten Years After*. Geneva, NY: Hobart and William Smith College, 1995, 56-57.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "In Conversation with Nancy Spero." *Nancy Spero.* London: Phaidon Press, 1996.

_____. *Feminism and Contemporary Art: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter.* London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

Jaeckel, Claudia. "Der Zug der Frauen." *Dienstag,* May 1, 1991.

Januszczak, Waldemar. "Unknown Goddesses," *Arts Guardian* (Manchester, England), March 18, 1987, 11.

Jenkins, Susan L. "An Interview with Nancy Spero." *Nancy Spero.* Exh. Cat. Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 1988.

Jennings, Rose. "Spero graphic." *City Limits Magazine* (London) April 19-26, 1990.

Jolicoeur, Nicole and Nell Tenhaaf. "Defying the Death Machine." *Parachute* 39 (June-August 1985): 50-55.

Jones, Alan. "The Writing on the Wall." *Arts Magazine* 63, no. 2 (October 1988): 21-22.

Juffinger, Roswitha. "Barocke Allegorie - Thema mit Variationen; Über die Gewalt der Manner und die Starke der Frauen und Nancy Spero Und Leon Golub in der Residenzgalerie." *Nancy Spero and Leon Golub at the Residenzgalerie Salzburg.* Exh. Cat. Salzburg, Austria: Internationale Sommerakademie fur Bildende Kunst and Residenzgalerie, 1995.

Kangas, Matthew. *Forbidden Objects: Art and Taboo.* Exh. Cat. Seattle Washington: Greg Kucera Gallery, 1989.

Kandel, Susan. "Nancy Spero." *Arts Magazine* 64 (October 1989): 108.

Kandeler-Frit, Martina. "Premiere." *Mobel Raum Design* 4 (1993): 15.

Kaplan, Steven. *Totem: Language, Myth and Figure.* Exh. Cat. New York: Bonnier Gallery, Charles Cowles Gallery, Germans Van Eck Gallery, 1984.

Kempas, Thomas. "Zur Ausstellung." *Nancy Spero: Bilder 1958 bis 1990.* Exh. Cat. Berlin: Haus am Waldsee, Bonner Kunstverein, 1990.

Kent, Sarah. "Frieze Fame." *Time Out,* London, April 1987, 39.

Kimmelman, Michael. "At The Met With Leon Golub and Nancy Spero," *The New York Times,* January 5, 1996, C 1, 5.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

King, Elaine. *Nancy Spero: The Paris Black Paintings.* Exh. Cat. Pittsburgh, PA: Hewlett Gallery, Carnegie-Mellon University, April 1985.

Kingsley, April. "Women Choose Women," *Art International* 17, no. 6 (Summer 1973): 66-67.

_____. *The Figure as an Image of the Psyche.* Exh. Cat. New York: Sculpture Center, 1985.

Kirshner, Judith . "The Possibility of an Avant-Garde." *Formations*, 2, no. 2 (Fall 1985): 81-103.

_____. "Chicago: Nancy Spero, The Renaissance Society." *Artforum* 23 (April 1985): 98-99.

_____. "A Narrative of Women's Experience." *Art Criticism* 6, no. 1 (1990): 20-31.

Klein, Mason. "Leon Golub and Nancy Spero, Roth Horowitz Gallery, New York" *Artforum* 88 (September 2000): 178-9.

Klekner, L. and Miller, D. "Spero/Golub: Art at the Speed of Life." *Grey City Journal*, (Chicago Maroon), October 28, 1983, 1.

Kline, Katy and Helaine Posner. "The Good Fight." *War and Memory, Leon Golub/Nancy Spero Retrospective Exhibition 1950-1994.* Paris: The American Center; Cambridge, MA: MIT List Visual Arts Center, 1994-95.

Knode, Marilu. "Nancy Spero: A Presence Through Time." *7th International Cairo Biennale 1988.* Exh. Cat. Cairo, Egypt: Seventh International Cairo Biennale, 1999.

Koshalek, Richard and Jacobs, Mary Jane. *Nancy Spero.* Exh. Cat. Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, 1988).

Kruse, Hannah. "A Shift in Strategies: Depicting Rape in Feminist Art." *The Subject of Rape.* Exh. Cat. New York: The Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993, 44-49.

Kuder, Ulrich. "Nancy Spero's 'War series' (1966-70) und das 'Vietnam Women's Memorial' (1993). *Kunst und Sozialgeshichte.* Essays, Martin Papenbrock, Gisela Schirmer, Anette Sohn und Rosemarie Sprute, Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft Pfaffenweiler, 1995, 235-246.

Kuspit, Donald. "Nancy Spero at A.I.R." *Art in America* 63, no. 4 (July/August 1975): 99-100.

_____. "Nancy Spero at A.I.R. and Miriam Schapiro at Andre Emmerich Downtown" *Art Journal* 36, no. 2 (Winter 1976-7): 144-146.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "Interview with Nancy Spero." *Art in America* 65 (September/October 1977): 84.

_____. *Notes in Time on Women Part II, Spero's Apocalypse*. Exh. Cat. Hamilton, NY: Picker Art Gallery, Colgate University, 1979.

_____. *Art of Conscience: The Last Decade*. Exh. Cat. Dayton, OH: Wright State University, 1980, 19.

_____. "Spero's Apocalypse." *Artforum* 18, no. 8 (April 1980): 34-35.

_____. "Gallery Leftism." *Vanguard Magazine* 12, no. 9 (November 1983): 22-25.

_____. *Art Couples III*. Exh. Cat. Long Island City, NY: P.S.1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, 1983.

_____. "Symptoms of Critique: Nancy Spero and Francesco Torres." *Art and Ideology*. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984, 21-28.

_____. "From Existence to Essence." *Art in America* 72, no. 1 (January 1984): 88-96.

_____. "From Existence to Essence: Nancy Spero." *The New Subjectivism: Art in the 1980s*. Ann Arbor/London: U.M.I. Research Press, 1988, 261-270.

Laing, Carol. "Nancy Spero." *Parachute* 48 (September/October/November 1987): 63.

Landry, Pierre. "Nancy Spero." *Parachute* 28 (September/October/November 1982): 36.

Lange, Jörg. "Nancy Spero stepelt Brecht." *Wuppertaler Rundschau*, April 25, 1991.

Langer, Cassandra. "Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950." *Woman Artists News* 14, no. 3 (Fall 1989): 13.

Larson, Kay. "Autumn Reveries." *New York Magazine* 16 (November 7, 1983), 86, 88.

Lee, Jonathan Scott. "Bodily Transcendence." *PsychCritique*, 2 no.3 (1987): 271-291.

Levin, Kim. "Art in the Anchorage." *The Village Voice*, June 18, 1985, 105.

_____. "Mastery Exposed." *The Village Voice*, June 6, 1989, 88.

_____. "Short List." *The Village Voice*, October 22, 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Lewallen, Constance. *Nancy Spero.* Exh. Cat. Berkeley, CA: Matrix Gallery, University Art Museum, University of California, 1984.

Lieberman, Paul. "The Hue and Cry of Art." *Los Angeles Times,* October 10, 2001.

Liebmann, Lisa. "Nancy Spero." *Artforum* 22 (March 1984): 94-95.

Lind, Maria. "Spel mellan konstraster." *Svenska Dagbladet* (Stockholm), September 9, 1994.

Linder, Ines. "Mehr als Bilder - Nancy Spero." *Bildende Kunst, Herausgeber: Verband Bildender Kunstler der DDR,* 38, no. 8 (1990): 38-39.

Lineker, Bruce. "Civil Rights Now: A Timeline 1950-1995." *Civil Rights Now.* Exh. Cat. Winston-Salem, North Carolina: Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, 1995.

Lingwood, James, ed. *TSWA Four Cities Project/New Works for Different Places: Derry, Glasgow, Newcastle, Plymouth,* Derry, Northern Ireland: TSWA Ltd., 1990.

Lippard, Lucy. "Alcuni Manifesti Politici." *Data,* November/December 1975.

_____. *From the Center.* New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1976.

_____. "Torture of Women." Exh. Cat. New York: A.I.R. 1976.

_____. "Caring: Five Political Artists." *Studio International* 193, no. 987 (1977): 197-207.

_____. "Issue and Taboo." *Issue: Social Strategies by Women Artists.* Exh. Cat. London: Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), 1980.

_____. *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1983.

_____. "Nancy Spero's 30 Years War." *Village Voice,* April 19, 1983, 101.

_____. *Get the Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change.* New York: E.P. Dutton, 1984.

_____. *Por Encima del Bloqueo.* Exh. Cat. Havana, Cuba: Segunda Bienal de la Habana, November 1986.

_____. *A Different War: Vietnam and Art.* Exh. Cat. Seattle, WA: Whatcom Museum of History and Art, The Real Comet Press, 1990.

_____. *The Pink Glass Swan.* New York: The New Press, 1995.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Liss, Andrea. "(Im)Possible Evidence." *Impossible Evidence: Contemporary Artists View the Holocaust.* Exh. Cat. Reading, PA: Freedman Gallery, Albright College, 1994.

Lister, Ardele. "Edge Junction: Words in Art." *Criteria* 4, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 22-23.

Lister, David. "Arts Diary." *The Independent,* May 23, 1998.

Littman, Robert R. *El Sueño de Egipto.* Exh. Cat. Polanco, Mexico: El Centro Cultural/Arte Contemporaneo, 1991.

Lorber, Richard. "Women Artists on Women in Art." *Portfolio* 2, no. 1 (February/March 1989): 68-73.

Lotringer, Sylvére, "Explicit Material." *Nancy Spero.* London: Phaidon Press, 1996.

_____. "Artaud a New York: l'anxiete de l'influence." *Vice Versa* 42 (Montreal) (June-August 1993): 49-52.

Loughery, John. "Nancy Spero." *Woman's Art Journal* 12, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 1991/1992): 49-50.

Lubbock, Tom. "Women rescued and released from history." *The Independent on Sunday,* (London), May 27, 1990.

Lubell, Ellen. "Notes on Women." *The Soho Weekly News,* January 25, 1974, 42-43.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *Arts Magazine* 49, no. 5 (January 1975): 9.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *Arts Magazine* 51, no. 3 (November 1976): 16-17.

_____. "The Women Artists' Movement." *Womanart* (Spring 1977), 3.

_____. "Spectacolor Short-Circuits." *The Village Voice,* February 10, 1987, 81.

Lyon, Christopher. "Art According to Gender Gives Fragmented View of Women."" *Sunday Sun-Times* (Chicago), October 16, 1983, 25.

_____. "An Ambiguous and Changing Terrain ... Nancy Spero and Leon Golub Talk about Art and Political Commitment," *The Museum of Modern Art Members Quarterly* (Winter 1988), n.p.

_____. "Nancy Spero: Barbara Gladstone, Josh Baer." *Artnews* 87, no. 5 (May 1988): 162.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "The Handless Eye: Bernice Rose on *Allegories of Modernism: Contemporary Drawing.*" *The Museum of Modern Art Members Quarterly* (Winter 1992) : 6-12.

Mack, Gerhard. "Ulm: Nancy Spero im Kunstmuseum. *Das Kunstbulletin* (June 1992): 85.

Madill, Shirley. *Identity/Identities: An Exploration of the Concept of Female Identity in Contemporary Society.* Exh. Cat. Winnipeg, Canada: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1988.

Madkour, Nazli. "Spero's Hieroglyphs." *Nancy Spero, 7th International Cairo Biennale 1998.* Cairo: Egypt: Seventh International Cairo Biennale, 1999).

Malen, Lenore. *The Politics of Gender.* Exh. Cat. Bayside, New York: Queensborough Community College of the City of New York, 1988.

_____. "Symbolism Now." *Symbolism.* Exh. Cat. New York: The Cooper Union School of Art, 1989, n. p.

_____. "Symbolism: Contemporary Manifestations." *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* 8 (November 1990): 3-10.

Mammi, Allessandra. "Dialogue Between Nancy Spero and Allessandra Mammi." *Sky Goddess, Egyptian Acrobat.* Exh. Cat. Rome, Italy: Galleria Stefania Miscetti, 1991.

Mania, Patrizia. "Nancy Spero: Galleria Stefania Miscetti." *Tema Celeste* no. 32-33 (Autumn 1991): 122.

Mansfield, Elizabeth. *Power, Pleasure, Pain: Contemporary Women Artists and the Female Body.* Exh. Cat. Cambridge, MA: Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, 1994.

Manso, Susan. "M.O.M.A. Revisited." *Women Artists Newsletter.* 1, no. 10 (March 1976): 1, 3.

Manuel, Susan. "Nancy Spero Unflagging in Her Utopian Vision for Women." *Sunday Star-Bulletin* (Honolulu, HA), September 9, 1990, F12.

Marincola, Paula. "Notes on Words and Images." *Words and Images.* Exh. Cat. Philadelphia: Philadelphia College of Art, 1979, 12-13.

Martin, Jean-Hubert and Mark Francis. *Magiciens de la Terre.* Exh. Cat. Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, Musee Nationale d'Art Moderne, La Villette, 1989.

Matilsky, Barbara C. *Classical Myth and Imagery in Contemporary Art.* Exh. Cat. Queens, New York: The Queens Museum, 1988.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Mays, John Bentley. "Art Galleries." *Toronto Globe and Mail*, November 29, 1984.

_____. "Spero elevates woman to 'protagonist' status." *Toronto Globe and Mail*, May 4, 1985.

_____. "Art Galleries." Toronto Globe and Mail, January 15, 1989.

McEvilley, Thomas. "Nancy Spero, Josh Baer Gallery." *Artforum* 24 (Summer 1986): 123-124.

_____. "Nancy Spero: Everson Museum of Art." *Artforum* 26 (May 1988): 152-153.

McGreevy, Linda F. "Chiliastic Reflections on the Old Adage 'Three's the Charm.'" *Arts Magazine* 59, no. 5 (January 1985): 93-102.

McQuaid, Cate. "Boys Keep Out: Nancy Spero Brings Her Elegant Feminist Subversion to Harvard." *Boston Phoenix*, February 10, 1995, 11.

Medvedow, Jill. "A View From the Outside: the Art of Nancy Spero and Elaine Reichek." *Coca Folio.* Seattle, Washington: Seattle Arts Commission, 1985-1986, n.p.

Meinhardt, Johannes. "Bilder-Sprache des Weiblichen." *Stuttgarter Nachrichten* (Germany), April 23, 1992.

Miles, Malcolm. "Nancy Spero." *Alba* (Scotland) 4 (Summer 1987): 8.

Miller, Earl. "Nancy Spero." *C Magazine* 15 (September/October 1987): 52-53.

Miller, Lynn and Swenson, Sally. *Lives and Works, Talks with Women Artists.* New Jersey & London: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1981.

Miller, Tyrus. "Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950 Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago." *SULFUR* 24 (Spring 1989): 183-187.

Mills, Dan and Maureen Sherlock. *The Whole World is Still Watching.* Exh. Cat. Chicago: Randolph Street Gallery, 1988.

Mocci, Grit. "Die Wieder geburt der Venus." *Sächische Zeitung* (Dresden), June 26, 1998.

Monk, Philip. "The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter." *Parachute* 35 (June-August 1984): 37-38.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Morgan, Anne Barclay. "From Victim to Power: An Interview With Nancy Spero." *Art Papers.* (November/December 2001): 32-35.

Morris, Catherine and Ingrid Schaffner. *Gloria: Another Look at Feminist Art of the 1970s.* Exh. Cat. New York: White Columns, 2002.

Muchnic, Suzanne. "The Art Galleries." *Los Angeles Times*, June 14, 1985, 14.

_____. "Together Again, on the Battlefield," *Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 1994, 59-60, 86.

Müller, Christaine. "Künstler suchen nach ordnendem System." *Wuppertaler* (Germany), May 25, 1991.

Müller, Elisabeth. "Notizen aus Münchner Galerien: Ein Aufschrei gegen Diskriminierung." *Abendzeitung* (Munich), October 21, 1988.

Müller, Karin Bettina. "Nancy Spero and Leon Golub at Hellerau Festspielhaus Near Dresden." *Kulturchronik* 5 (1998): 9-11.

Nahas, Dominique. "An Iconographic Analysis of Nancy Spero's Torture of Women (1976)." Master of Arts Thesis, New York: Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, July 1985.

_____. *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950.* Exh. Cat. Syracuse, New York: Everson Museum of Art, 1987, 11-20.

_____. "The Photographer Finds His Subject." *Gone Beyond Gone.* Exh. Cat. New York: Thread Waxing Space, 1993, 10-14.

Nanne-Brahammer, Marianne. "Gatumuseum och kvinnokronika." *Arbetet* (Malmö, Sweden), September 18, 1994.

Naylor, Colin. *Contemporary Artists.* London: St. Martin's Press, 1977.

Nelson, Lin. "An Interview with Nancy Spero." *Dialogue: An Art Journal* (Chicago) (March/April 1980): 45.

Nemser, Cindy. "Another Panel, Another Pie." *SoHo Weekly News,* November 20, 1975.

_____. "In Her Own Image." *Feminist Art Journal* (Spring 1974), n. p.

Newman, Michael. "Nancy Spero." *Art Monthly 79* (September 1984): 19-20.

_____. "'Primitivism' and Modern Art." *Art Monthly* 86 (May 1985): 6-9.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Ng, Natalie. "Embodying Feminism." *Personal and Political: The Women's Art Movement, 1969-1975.* Exh. Cat. East Hampton, New York: Guild Hall Museum, 2002, 33-43.

Nicolaus, Frank. "Frauen Wagen Mehr." *Brigitte*, 17/96 (May 7.8.96): 160, 163.

Nilsson, Torgny. "Kvinnor dansar I Det forsta spraket." *Norrkopings Tidningar* (Sweden), September 19, 1994.

Nittenberg, Joanna. "Die Stimmen der vernunft." *Illustrierte Neue Welt* (Vienna) no. 3, March 1996.

Nordgren, Sune. *Nancy Spero.* Exh. Cat. Malmo, Sweden: Malmö Konsthal, 1994.

Norman, Sally. "The Spero Spark." *Fort Collins Coloradoan*, March 22, 1990.

_____. "CSU Show Celebrates Strength of Women." *Fort Collins Coloradoan*, March 22, 1990, B1, 6.

Obrist, Hans-Ulrich, ed. *Hotel Carlton Palace, Chambre 763.* Exh. Cat. Paris: Hôtel Carlton Palace, 1993.

_____. *Cloaca Maxima.* Exh. Cat. Zurich: Museum Der Stadtentwässerung, 1994.

_____. *Do It.* Reykjavkur, Iceland: Kjarvalsstadir, 1996.

_____. *Trialogue At The Cut-Off.* Exh. Cat. Hiroshima, Japan: Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, 1996.

_____. "Nancy Spero Interview with Hans-Ulrich Obrist," Edelbert Koeb, ed. *Kunstlerlnnen: 50 Positionen*, Exh. Cat. (Vienna: Kunsthaus Bregenz, 1997), 210-217.

Olschki, Leo S. *Risarcimento: Artisti contemporanei per gli Uffizi.* Exh. Cat. Florence, Italy: Uffizi Gallery, 1995, 118-119.

Oliva, Achille Bonito and Brigitte Reinhardt, Noemi Smolik, Robert Storr, Klaus Vierneisel. *Nancy Spero: Woman Breathing.* Exh. Cat. (Ostfildern, Germany: Ulmer Museum and Edition Cantz, 1992).

Pabinger, Daniele. "Die Welt Durch das Frau-Sein Beschreiben." *Salzburger Nachrichten* (Austria), August 29, 1992, 5.

Paine, Janice T. "Artists Married to Same Spirit." *Milwaukee Sentinel*, April 12, 1991, 15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Palmer, Laurie. "Nancy Spero at the Rhona Hoffman Gallery." *New Art Examiner* 13, no. 8 (April 1986): 56-57.

Pepe, Sheila. "To Soar: Interview with Nancy Spero." *Trivia* 16/17 (1990): 119-127.

Perl, Jeffrey M., ed. "Symposium: The Unfinished Project of Humanism, Minerva/Artaud, Nancy Spero." *Common Knowledge* 3, no. 1 (Spring, 1994): 77-87.

Perreault, John. "Women Ain't Losers." *Soho Weekly News*, September 23, 1976, 7.

Philippi, Desa. "The Conjunction of Race and Gender in Anthropology and Art History: A Critical Study of Nancy Spero's Work." *Third Text: Third World Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture* 1 (Autumn 1987): 34-54.

Phillips, Patricia C. "Infiltrations: Complicated Clarity." *ArtViews* (Canada) 14, pt. 2-3 (Spring-Summer 1988): 24-28.

Pincus-Witten, Robert. "Entries: Post Epistemic Dilemma." *Arts Magazine* 58, no. 1 (September 1983): 110-113.

Pindell, Howardena. *The War Show.* Exh. Cat. Stony Brook, New York: Art Gallery, Fine Arts Center, State University of New York, 1983.

Pohlen, Annelie. "Die Schmerzliche Sinnlichkeit der Nacht: Nancy Spero." *Nancy Spero: Bilder 1958 bis 1990.* Exh. Cat. Berlin: Haus am Waldsee; Bonn: Bonner Kunstverein; Arnheim, The Netherlands: Gemeentemuseum, 1990.

Pollock, Griselda. "Inscriptions in the Feminine." *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th Century Art In, Of, and From the Feminine.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994.

Pommier, Claudine. *Fear of Others/ Art Against Racism.* Exh. Cat. Vancouver, BC: Arts in Action Society, 1989.

Pratesi, Ludovico. "Squadra d'Achille." *Panorama* (Italy) No. 1329 (October 6, 1991): 18-19.

Princenthal, Nancy. "Political Prints: An Opinion Poll." *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 19, no. 2 (May-June 1988): 45-47.

Ratcliff, Carter. *Pressures of the Hand: Expressionist Impulses in Recent American Art.* Exh. Cat. Potsdam, New York: Brainerd Art Gallery, State University College of Arts and Science, 1984.

Raven, Arlene. "No Exile 'New York: Artists Call Against Intervention in Central America'." *High Performance* Issue 25. 7, no. 1 (1984).

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. *Rape*. Exh. Cat. Columbus, Ohio: University Gallery, Ohio State University, 1985, 7.

_____. "Not a Pretty Picture: Can Violent Art Heal?" *The Village Voice*, June 17, 1986, 85.

_____. "In Tongues." *The Village Voice*, May 30, 1989, 89.

_____. *True Grit: Lee Bontecou, Louise Bourgeois, Jay DeFeo, Claire Falkstein, Nancy Grossman, Louise Nevelson, Nancy Spero*. Exh. Cat. New York: Michael Rosenfeld Gallery, 2000.

Reid, Calvin. "Nancy Spero: A Stream of Female Consciousness." *Downtown*, No. 157, August 23, 1989, 10A-11A.

Reinhardt, Brigitte. "Woman Breathing, About the Exhibition." *Nancy Spero - Woman Breathing*. Exh. Cat. Ulm, Germany: Ulmer Museum, 1992, 10-16.

Reus, Teresa Gomez. "A Conversation With Nancy Spero." Unpublished Manuscript, 1991; Nancy Spero Archives, New York.

Richard, Frances. "Leon Golub/Nancy Spero." *Artforum* 38 (September 2000)

Richardson-Moore, Deb. "Looking at the Big Picture." *Greenville Piedmont* (NC), March 27, 1986, 1B.

Richardson, Trevor. *The Critical Image*. Exh. Cat. Greenboro, NC: Weatherspoon Art Gallery, University of North Carolina, 1991.

Rickey, Carrie. "Mapping Autogeography: Six Routes for Navigating the Body Politic." *Nude, Naked, Stripped*. Exh. Cat. Cambridge, MA: Hayden Gallery, List Visual Arts Center, MIT, 1985, 22.

Rive, David. "Portfolio," *Red Bass* (New Orleans, LA), No. 13, 1988, 29-33.

Rivera, Sophie. "Gender in Art: An Ongoing Dialogue." *Women Artists Newsletter* 1, no. 8 (July 1976): 1, 4.

Robb, Marilyn. "Nancy Spero." *ArtNews* (Summer 1953): 40.

Roberts, John. "Say It At A Slant: Nancy Spero + Leon Golub." *Everything Magazine* (London), Issue 3.3 (2000): 2 - 6.

Robins, Corinne. "The Woman Artist – 1973." *Christian Science Monitor*, September 24, 1973.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "Licit Exp." Exh. Cat. New York: A.I.R. Gallery, 1974.

_____. "Nancy Spero, 'Political' Artist of Poetry and Nightmare." *Feminist Art Journal* 4, no. 1 (Spring, 1975): 19-22, 48.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *Arts Magazine* 51, no. 3 (November 1976): 11.

_____. *Drawing Now.* Exh. Cat. New York: Soho Center for Visual Arts, 1976.

_____. "Artists in Residence: The First Five Years." *Womanart* 1, no. 3 (Winter 1977-78): 26-37.

_____. "Words and Images Through Time: The Art of Nancy Spero." *Arts Magazine* 54, no. 4 (December 1979): 103-105.

_____. *The Pluralist Era: American Art 1968-1981.* New York: Harper & Row, 1984.

Rochon, Lisa. "Nancy Spero." *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), June 11, 1987.

Rohrer, Judith . *Nancy Spero.* Exh. Cat. Hartford, CT: Matrix Gallery, Wadsworth Atheneum, 1983.

Rollig, Stella. "Nancy Spero: Woman/War/Victimage." *Der Standard* (Vienna) Resistance Project of the Museum in Progress, October 1994 - March 1995

_____. "Gewichtsverschiebung durch Bilder." *Der Standard* (Vienna), December 1994.

Romare, Kristian. "Nancy Spero and Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger Inside the Visible." *Artefactum* (Belgium) 11, no. 53 (Autumn 1994): 28-29.

Romero, Rubel. "Breast Beating." *Spectator* (Raleigh, NC), June 19, 1986, 26.

Rose, Bernice. *Allegories of Modernism: Contemporary Drawing.* Exh. Cat. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1992.

Rosen, Miriam. "Est-ce vraiment de l'art?" *Liberation,* November 1, 1994, 25.

Rosen, Randy. *Making Their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream 1970-85.* New York: Abbeville Press, 1989.

Rosser, Phyllis. "Artist's Work Reclaims the Female Body." *New Directions for Women* 19, no. 1 (January/February 1990): 10,12.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Rowell, Margit and Lotringer, Sylvére. "A Conversation with Nancy Spero," *Antonin Artaud: Works on Paper.* New York: Museum of Modern Art, 136 - 139 .

Ruhe, Barnaby. "Nancy Spero." *Art/World* 13, no. 9 (July-August 1989).

Sachs, Brita. "Weiblicher Olymp: Gottinnen, Idole, Mythenwesch: Nancy Spero im Ulm." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* May 13, 1992, 36.

Salisbury, Stephan. "At Long Last, Success Comes to Two Artists." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, February 11, 1985, D 1, 5.

Saltrese, Danielle. "A Journey with Nancy Spero." *Artsy* 1 (May 2001): 3.

Samaras, Connie. "Nancy Spero and Leon Golub: An Interview." *Detroit Focus Quarterly* 2, no.4 (December 1983): 4-5.

Samuels, Philip. "Leon Golub and Nancy Spero." *Asia Times,* May 21, 1996

Sandler, Irving. *Art of the Postmodern Era from the late 1960's to the Early 1990's.* New York: Icon Editions, An Imprint of Harper - Collins Publishers, 1996.

Schaechterle, Beatrice. "Geschichtsschreibung: Emanzipierte Frankenkunst von Nancy Spero im Ulm." *Suddeuetsche Zeitung,* May 16-17, 15.

Schaffner, Ingrid. "In Anger." *ACT UP/ART BOX,* Act Up/New York: A Limited Edition Box of Objects, March, 1994.

Schels, Evelyn. "Wilde Ehe: Zu Zweit alle: Nancy Spero und Leon Golub." *Elle* (German), February 2, 1996.

Schjeldahl, Peter. "Opposites Attract." *The Village Voice,* April 15-21, 1981, 83-84.

_____. *Rediscovered Spero.* Exh. Cat. New York: Josh Baer Gallery, 1989.

_____. "Speromania." *The Village Voice*, October 29, 1996.

Schlegel, Amy. "Codex Spero: Feminist Art and Activist Practices in New York Since the Late 1960s." Ph.D. diss., Columbia University in the City of New York, 1997.

_____. Schlegel, Amy. *"An Unnerving Romanticism": The Art of Sylvia Sleigh & Lawrence Alloway.* Exh. Cat. Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Art Alliance, 2001.

Schmitter, Elke. "Der Barthes ist ab." *die tageszeitung,* May 15, 1991.

Schor, Mira. "Nancy Spero: New Museum of Contemporary Art." *Tema Celeste* 22-23 (October/November 1989): 72.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Schwabsky, Barry. "Leon Golub/Nancy Spero." *Artforum* 32 (November, 1993): 106.

Schwartzman, Allan. "Committed To Print." *The Print Collector's Newsletter*, 19, no. 2 (May-June 1988): 41-47.

Searle, Adrian. "Leon Golub and Nancy Spero in Conversation with Adrian Searle." *Talking Art I.* London: ICA Documents 12, 1993, 43-52.

Sedaitis, Judith. "Nancy Spero." *East Village Eye*, June 1983, 32.

Seidel, Miriam. "Work With a Feminist Point of View." *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 15, 1989, 46.

Sherlock, Maureen P. "Nancy Spero." *Arts Magazine* 63 (October 1988): 87.

_____. "A Dangerous Age: The Mid-life Crisis in Postmodern Feminism." *Arts Magazine* 66 (September 1990): 70-74.

Shottenkirk, Dena. "Nancy Spero: Josh Baer Gallery." *Artforum* 29 (May 1991): 143.

_____. "Dialogue: An Exchange of Ideas between Dena Shottenkirk and Nancy Spero." *Arts Magazine* 61, no. 9 (May 1987): 34-35.

Siegel, Jeanne. "Nancy Spero: Woman as Protagonist." *Arts Magazine* 62, no. 1 (September 1987): 10-13.

_____. "Nancy Spero: Woman As Protagonist." *Art Talk: The Early Eighties.* New York: DaCapo Press, Inc., 1988, 257-266.

Siegel, Judy and Stevens, May. "Radical Change or a Piece of Pie." *Women Artists Newsletter* 1, no. 7 (December 1975): 1, 6.

Sims, Lowery Stokes. "Nancy Spero." *43rd Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting.* Exh. Cat. Washington, D.C.: The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1993, 78-79.

Sleigh, Sylvia. "Nancy Spero." *Visual Dialog* 2, no.2 (December 1976-February 1977): 22.

Smith, Roberta. "Reviews." *Artforum* 11, no. 10 (June 1973): 89.

_____. "Greene Street." *The New York Times*, February 26, 1988.

_____. "Collages That Seek to Fuse Beauty and Feminism." *The New York Times*, May 26, 1989, C 24.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950, Part II." *The New York Times*, July 7, 1989, C 27.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *The New York Times*, March 8, 1991, C 26.

_____. "Golub/Spero, Part II - '90's/50's." *The New York Times*, May 7, 1993, C 24.

Smolik, Noemi. "One Who Went Out To Find Her Lost Language." *Nancy Spero - Woman Breathing.* Exh. Cat. Ulm, Germany: Ulmer Museum, 1992.

Snyder, Jill. *Impossible Evidence: Contemporary Artists View the Holocaust.* Exh. Cat. Reading, PA: Freedman Gallery, Albright College, 1994.

Soriano, Peter. *Raise/Time; An Installation by Nancy Spero.* Exh. Cat. Cambridge, MA: Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Art Museums Gallery Series, Number 15, 1995.

Sosa, Ana Teresa. *Nancy Spero/Leon Golub.* Exh. Cat. Caracas, Venezuela: Museo Jacobo Borges, 1998.

Spero, Nancy. "The Whitney Museum and Women." *Art Gallery Magazine,* January 1971, 26-27.

_____. "Women's Speakout." *New York Element*, February/March 1972.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *Art Rite* 9 (Spring 1975): 18.

_____. "Ongoing Dialogue Goes On." *Women Artists Newsletter* 1, no. 9 (February 1976), n. p.

_____. "Nancy Spero (A.I.R.)" *WomenArt* 1, no. 3 (Winter/Spring 1977): 31, 36.

_____. "Ende." *Women's Studies, An Interdisciplinary Journal* 6, no. 1 (1978): 3-11.

_____. "The Discovered Uncovered." *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* 2 (November 1987): 32-33.

_____. "Sky Goddess - Egyptian Acrobat." *Artforum* 26, no. 7 (March 1988): 103-105.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *Gallerie* 1 (June 1988): 128-131.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *Art Views, A Special Art in Architecture Issue* 14, pt. 2-3 (Spring/Summer 1988): 67.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "Twelve Artists on the Year's Books." *Artforum* 27 (December 1989): 131.

_____. "Issues and Symbolism." *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* 8 (November 1990): 7-8.

_____. "Hommage to Ana Mendieta." *Buchstäblich: Bild und Wort in der Kunst heute.* Wuppertal, Germany: Von der Heydt-Museum, 1991, 113-114.

_____. "Tracing Ana Mendieta." *Artforum* 30 (April 1992): 75-77.

_____. "Creation and Pro-creation. Forum: On Motherhood, Art and Apple Pie." *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* 12 (November 1992): 38, 39, 40.

_____. "Sue Williams' Interview with Nancy Spero." *Bomb* No. 32 (Winter 1993): 22-27.

_____. "Bourgeois Delectation: An Interview With Nancy Spero." *Border Crossings* 12, no. 1 (February 1993): 1993, 38-40.

_____. "Minerva/Artaud." *Common Knowledge* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 77-87.

_____. "Louise Bourgeois: A Living Legacy." *Sculpture* 13, pt. 5 (September-October 1994): 32-34.

Stapen, Nancy. "Spero's Art Explores Human Condition." *The Boston Herald*, October 19, 1988, 35.

_____. "The Medium Has a Message." *Elle*, March 1989, 226-230.

_____. "A Pair of Opposites, Bound by Ideals." *The Boston Globe*, May 23, 1995, 73, 78.

Steiner, Bertram Karl. "Lichte Denkmale." *Observer* (Vienna), March 5, 1996.

Steininger, Carla. "Rebellion gegen Unterdrückung Frauen verschiedener Epochen." *Salzburger Nachrichten* (Germany), July 10, 1991, 7.

Stevens, Mark. "Brushes with Politics." *The New Republic*, November 10, 1987.

Storck, Christine. "Nancy Spero's Installation.." Exh. Brochure. Wuppertal, Germany: Von der Heydt-Museum, 1991.

Storr, Robert. "Nancy Spero: Central Issues: Peripheral Visions." *Nancy Spero: Works Since 1950.* Exh. Cat. Syracuse, New York: Everson Museum of Art, 1987, 45-60.

_____. "Peripheral Visions," *Parkett*, No. 14 (November 1987): 6-15.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. *Nancy Spero: Rebirth of Venus*, ed. Edit deAk, Kyoto Shoin, Japan: Art Random, 1989.

_____. *Devil On The Stairs: Looking Back on the Eighties.* Exh. Cat. Philadelphia, PA: Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, 1991, 11-23.

_____. "When This You See..." *Nancy Spero - Woman Breathing*, Exh. Cat. Ulm, Germany: Ulmer Museum, 1992, 17-22.

Strauss, David Levi. "Leon Golub-Nancy Spero: The Fighting is the Dance, Too." *Leon Golub-Nancy Spero: The Fighting is the Dance.* New York: Roth Horowitz Gallery, 2000, 9-31.

Stull, Richard. "Commentary." *Dialogue*, July/August 1985, 5.

Sundell, Nina Castelli. *The Turning Point: Art and Politics in 1968.* Exh. Cat. Cleveland, Ohio: Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art, 1988.

Sultan, Terrie. "The Themes That Reflect Us." *43rd Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting*, Exh. Cat. Washington D.C.: The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1993, 19.

Sussler, Betsy, ed. *Bomb: Speak Art: Nancy Spero interviews Sue Williams.* New York: New Art Publications, Inc., 1997.

Sussman, Elisabeth. "Coming Together in Parts: Positive Power in the Art of the Nineties." *1993 Biennial Exhibition.* Exh. Cat. New York: The Whitney Museum of American Art and Harry N. Abrams Inc, Publishers, 1993.

Syring, Marie Luise. "Der Traum der herrschaftslosen Sprache," *um 1968 konkrete utopien in kunst und gesellschaft*, Exh. Cat. Düsseldorf, West Germany: Stadtische Kunsthalle, 1990, 65, 108.

Sztullman, Paul. "Short Guide/Kunzführer." *Documenta X*, Exh. Cat. Kassel, Germany: Cantz, 1997, 214-215.

Tannenbaum, Barbara. "Nancy Spero." *Akron Art Museum: Art Since 1850.* Akron, OH: Akron Art Museum, 2001, 230-231.

Tarlow, Lois. "Nancy Spero." *Art New England* 11, no. 3 (March 1990): 8-9, 38.

Tanaka, Hiroko. "Nancy Spero." *Hi Fashion* (Tokyo, Japan) No. 195, July 1990.

Taylor, Robert. "Nancy Spero's Work Filled with Liberating Strength." *Boston Sunday Globe*, October 23, 1988.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Taylor, Simon. "The Women Artists' Movement: From Radical to Cultural Feminism, 1969-1975. *Personal and Political: The Women's Art Movement, 1969-1975.* Exh. Cat. East Hampton, NY: Guild Hall Museum, 2002, 9-32.

Taylor, Sue. "Artist Gives Upstanding View of Women." *Chicago Sun-Times*, February 27, 1986, 59.

Temin, Christine. "Bearing Witness." *The Boston Globe Magazine*, April 16, 1995, 18-19, 22-26.

Thomas, David, ed. *As Seen By Both Sides (American and Vietnamese Artists Look at the War).* Exh. Cat. Boston: Indochina Arts Project and the William Joiner Foundation, distributed by the University of Massachusetts Press, 1991, 112-113.

Tickner, Lisa . "Images of women and la peinture feminine." *Nancy Spero.* Exh. Cat. London: Institute of Contemporary Art, 1987.

Tousley, Nancy. "Show based on female experience." *Calgary Herald* (Canada), May 17, 1985.

Trachtenberg, Nancy. "Moma Guga." *World Trade Community News,* April 13-27, 1976.

Tredra, Roger. "Wives Spared Thrust of Nancy's Image." *The Observer,* March 29, 1998.

Tsuruoka, Doug. "The Politics of Art." *Asia Times*, May 21, 1996.

Tufts, Eleanor. *Women and the U.S. Constitution.* Exh. Cat. Atlanta, Georgia: The Atlanta College of Art, 1988.

Unsigned. "Nancy Spero." *The Contemporary* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art) 3, no. 4 (Fall 1988): 4-5.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *ArtViews, Special WaterWorks Issue* (Toronto: Visual Arts Ontario), Spring/Summer 1988, 66-69.

_____. "New Acquisitions Form Nucleus of Contemporary American Drawings." *Bi-Monthly Newsletter.* Toledo, OH: The Toledo Museum of Art, April/May 1989, 6-7.

_____. "Previews: Painterly Partners Leon Golub and Nancy Spero." *Interview*, May, 1989, 40.

_____. "Interview with Jean-Hubert Martin." *Liberation* (Paris), May 27-28, 1989, 33-35.

_____. "Going Out to Galleries." *The Independent* (London), April 10, 1990.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "Derry is the Canvas for International Artists." *Derry Journal,* September 4, 1990.

_____. "Museum zeight Nancy Spero." *Südwest Presse* (Germany), April 3, 1992.

_____. "Einst eine Außenseiterin." *Südwest Presse* (Germany), April 30, 1992.

_____. "Vienna, Nancy Spero's Theater Installation." *Flash Art,* November/December 1993, 38.

Vetrocq, Marcia E. "Spero and Golub at the American Center, Paris." *Art in America* 83, no. 5 (May 1995): 45.

Vierneisel, Klaus. "Nancy Spero in der Glyptothek." *Nancy Spero in der Glyptothek, Arbeiten auf Papier 1981-1991.* Exh. Cat. Munich, Germany: Glyptothek am Köngsplatz, 1991, 34-39.

Villaespesa, Mar, ed. *El Sueño Imperativo.* Exh. Cat. Madrid, Spain: Circulo de Bellas Artes, 1991.

Vogel, Thomas. "Spurensuche nach den Frauen." *Neu-Ulmer Beitung* (Ulm, Germany), April 14, 1992.

Walinga, Ingeborg. *Nancy Spero - Gemeentemuseum Arnhem 8 December 1990/January 1991.* Exh. Cat. Arnhem, The Netherlands, UIT, 1990.

Wallach, Amei. "Hysterical Men, Castrated Women: Nancy Spero's Exquisite Corps." *Nancy Spero Selected Works from Codex Artaud 1971-72, Nancy Spero Selected Works from Codex Artaud 1971-72.* Exh. Cat. New Bedford, MA: University Art Gallery, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, 2001, n. p.

Waller, Susan. *AT ISSUE: Art & Advocacy.* Exh. Cat. St. Louis, Missouri: Saint Louis Gallery of Contemporary Art, 1987.

Warner, Marina. "Ravishing the Image," *The Independent* (London), March 16, 1987.

Warren, Lynne. *Art in Chicago 1945 – 1995.* Exh. Cat. Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995.

Weinstock, Jane "Issues and Commentary: A Lass, A Laugh, A Lad." *Art in America* 71, no. 6 (Summer 1983): 7-10.

_____. Reply, "Letters." *Art in America* (November 1983):.7.

Weiss, Allen S. "Outside In Some New Improved Anxieties of Influence." *Art & Text* No. 35 (Summer 1990): 98.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Welish, Marjorie. "Word into Image: Robert Barry, Martha Rosler and Nancy Spero." *Bomb*, 37 (Spring 1994): 36-44.

Werner, Lisa. "Eurydike und Militarstiefel." *Dresdener Neueste Nachrichten*, July 7, 1998.

Weskott, Hanne. "Nancy Spero," *Kunstforum International*, Bd. 97, 1988, 310-311.

_____. "Poesie der Grausamkeit: Die Frauenbilder der Nancy Spero," *Suddentsche Zeitung*, October 4, 1988, 10.

_____. "Nancy Spero und Leon Golub: Ars Sine Scientia Nihil Est." *Artis Das Aktuelle Kunstmagazin*, 1988, 30-35.

_____. "Nancy Spero." *Noema* 32 (September/October 1990): 66-73.

_____. "Vorbild-Abbild-Bild." *Nancy Spero in der Glyptothek: Arbeiten auf Papier 1981-1991*. Munich, Germany: Glyptothek am Köngsplatz, 1991.

_____. "Differing Realities: Adriene Simotová and Nancy Spero." *Détente*. Exh. Cat. Brunn, Czech Republic: Dum Umeni Mesta Brna and Vienna: Verein Ausstellungsorganization, 1991, 74-80, 85-87.

Wester, Miriam. "De vlijmscherpe kunst van Nancy Spero." *OPZIJ*, Feministisch Maandblad, December 1990, 84-85.

Widrich, Mechtild. "Nancy Spero: Art Against Architecture." M.A. Thesis. Vienna: University of Vienna, 1995.

Wiesel, Miraim and Morgan, Susan. "ARS Dolorosa: A Parkett Inquiry." *Parkett* 18 (December 1988): 145-151.

Wisniewski, Jana. "Malerei, politisch relevant: Nancy Spero und Leon Golub im American Center in Paris," *Salzburger Nachrichten*, December 14, 1994, 8.

Withers, Josephine. "No More War: Art Essay." *Feminist Studies* 7, no.1 (Spring 1981): 76-88.

_____. "Nancy Spero's American-Born Sheela-na-gig." *Feminist Studies* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 51-56.

Withers, R. L. "Nancy Spero." *Women Artists Slide Library Journal* 35 (July/Aug. 1990): 23-24.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Wollheim, Richard. "Painting, Drawing and Sculpture in the Reagan Years." *Modern Painters* 5, no. 3 (Autumn 1992): 49-53.

Wosk, Julie H. "The Aeroplane in Art." *Art and Artists* 219 (December 1984): 23-28.

_____. "The Distancing Effect of Technology in Twentieth Century Poetry & Painting." *San Jose Studies* 11, no. 2 (Spring 1985): 22-41.

_____. *Women and the Machine: Representations from the Spinning Wheel to the Electronic Age.* Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

Wright, Patricia. "Spero Art Literally Off the Wall." *Daily Hampshire Gazette,* March 7, 1990.

Wye, Deborah. *Committed To Print: Social and Political Themes in Recent American Printed Art.* New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1988.

_____. *Thinking Print: Books to Billboards, 1980 - 95,* New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1996.

Wye, Pamela. *Odd and Intense* Exh. Cat. New York: Pictogram Gallery, 1986.

_____. "Nancy Spero: Speaking in Tongues," *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* 4 (November 1988): 33-41.

_____. *Nancy Spero.* Exh. Cat. Philadelphia: Lawrence Oliver Gallery, 1989.

_____. "Freedom of Movement: Nancy Spero's Site Paintings." *Arts Magazine,* 65, no. 2 (October 1990): 55-58.

Yard, Sally "The Shadow of the Bomb." *Arts Magazine* 58, no. 8 (April 1984): 73-82.

Yood, James. "Collaborations 1998," *Artforum* 37, no. 6 (February 1999): 101.

Zeitlin, Wendy and Marilyn A. *All The News That's Fit For Prints: A parallel of social concerns in graphic art of the 1930's/1980's.* Exh. Cat. Houston: Contemporary Arts Museum, 1988.

Zelevansky, Lynn "Art the Corporations Can't Buy." *Art & Auction* October 1984, 145.

Zetterstrom, Jelena. "Genom morker och ljus." *Sydsueuska Dagbladet* (Sweden), September 11, 1994.

Zeylon, Hakan. "Reducerat manniskovarde." *Skanska Dagbladet* (Malmö, Sweden), October 7, 1994.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Zimmer, William. "Nancy Spero A.I.R." *Soho News,* April 15-21, 1981.

_____. "Dreams, Landscapes and Wall Paintings." *The New York Times,* March 19, 1995, C 26.

Zucker, Barbara "New York Reviews," *Artnews* 75 (November 1976): 143.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Bibliography of Sources Cited and Consulted

Adrian, Dennis. "The Artistic Presence of Jean Dubuffet in Chicago and the Midwest." *Jean Dubuffet: Forty Years of His Art.* Exh. Cat. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984, 27-30.

Allen, Jeffner and Young, Iris Marion, eds. *The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French Philosophy.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.

Alloway, Lawrence. *Leon Golub, Paintings from 1956 and 1957.* Chicago: Allan Frumkin Gallery, 1957.

_____. *Topics in American Art Since 1945.* New York: W. W. Norton, 1975.

_____. "Women's Art in the 70s." *Art in America* 64, no. 3 (May-June 1976): 64-72.

_____. "Notes in the First Person." *Womanart* 1, no. 1 (Summer 1976): 22-23.

_____. "Post-Masculine Art: Women Artists 1970-80." *Art Journal* 39, no. 4 (Summer 1980): 295-297.

Arnold, Paul. "The Artaud Experiment." *TDR: The Drama Review* 8, no. 2 (Winter 1963): 15-29.

Art d' Aujourd' Hui 2, no. 2 (November 1950).

Artaud, Antonin. *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings.* Introduction by Susan Sontag. New York, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1976).

Artner, Alan G. "Jean Dubuffet's lasting influence in Chicago." *Chicago Tribune,* July 31, 2001.

Ashton, Dore. *Out of the Whirlwind: Three Decades of Artistic Commentary.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987.

_____. *A Rebours: the Informal Rebellion.* Exh. Cat. Madrid: Museum National Centre de Arte Reina Sophia, 1999.

_____. "Cobra In Context." *Arts Magazine* 53 (February 1978): 106-109.

Baigell, Matthew. *Jewish-American Artists and the Holocaust.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997.

Barber, Stephen. "A Foundry of the Figure: Antonin Artaud." *Artforum* 26 (September 1987): 88-95.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Benjamin, Walter. *Understanding Brecht.* Translated by Anna Bostock. Introduction by Stephen Mitchell. London: New Left Books, 1973.

Bildfuhrer, Eine Auswahl neuer Gemalde des Von der Heydt-Museums, Wuppertal. Bonn: VG Bild-Kunst, 1996.

Bird, Jon. *Leon Golub, Echoes of the Real.* London: Reaktion Books, Ltd., 2000.

Birringer, Johannes. "Pina Bausch: Dancing Across Borders." *TDR, The Drama Review* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 85-97.

Bonfante, Larissa. *Etruscan Life and Afterlife.* Warminster, Wiltshire: Aris and Phillips, 1986.

_____. "Excursus, Etruscan Women." *Women in the Classical World.* Edited by E. Fantham, H.P. Foley, N.B. Kampen, S.B. Pomeroy and H.A. Shapiro. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, 243-259.

_____. "Etruscan Sexuality and Funerary Art." *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy.* Ed. N. Kampen. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Brilliant, Richard. "The Bayeux Tapestry: A Stripped Narrative for Their Eyes and Ears." *Word and Image* 7, no. 2 (April/June 1991): 98-119.

Broude, Norma and Garrard, Mary D, eds. *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s,Hhistory and Impact.* New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994.

Buckley, Anthony, ed. *Symbols in Northern Ireland.* Belfast, NI: Institute of Irish Studies, Queens University, 1998.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* London and New York: Routledge, 1990.

Cabanas, Kaira M. "Ana Mendieta, 'Pain of Cuba, body I am.'" *Woman's Art Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1999): 12-17.

Campbell, Kathleen. "Notes on the English Mystery Play." Austin College, TX. http://artemis.austincollege.edu/acad/hwc22/Medieval/english_mystery_plays.html.

Carr, C. *On Edge: Performance Art at the End of the Twentieth Century.* Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1993.

Carruthers, Mary J. *A Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "The Poet as Master Builder: Composition and Locational Memory in the Middle Ages." *New Literary History*, no. 4 (Autumn 1993): 881-904.

_____. *Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Castro, Jan Garden. "Richard Hunt; Freeing the Human Soul." *Sculpture Magazine* 17, no. 5 (May/June 1998): 8-10.

Chave, Anna. "Minimalism and the Rhetoric of Power." *Arts Magazine* 64, no. 5 (January 1990): 44-63.

Chevalier, Jean and Alain Gheerbrant. *A Dictionary of Symbols.* Translated by John Buchanan-Brown. (1969) New York: Penguin Books, 1996.

Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage.* Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1979.

_____. *Embroidering Our Heritage: The Dinner Party Needlework.* Garden City, New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1980.

Cixous, Hélène. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Signs: A Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 1, no. 4 (Summer 1976). Reprinted in *A Reader in Feminist Knowledge.* Sneja Gunew (London: Routledge, 1991), 224-230.

_____. *The Newly Born Woman* (1975). Translated by Betsy Wing. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

The Collected Dialogues of Plato. Edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961.

Colomina, Beatriz. *Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994.

Corn, Alfred. "Henri Michaux at the Drawing Center, Michael Werner, and Zabriskie." *Art in America* 89, no. 4 (April 2001): 136.

Crimp, Douglas. *On the Museum's Ruins.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993.

Cropper, Elizabeth. "The Petrifying Art: Marino's Poetry and Caravaggio." *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 26 (June 1991): 193-212.

Daly, Ann, ed. ""Tanztheater: The Thrill of the Lynch Mob or the Rage of a Women?" *TDR, The Drama Review* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 46-56.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Dane, Gabrielle. "Hysteria as Feminist Protest." *Women's Studies* 23, no. 3 (1994): 231-256.

Danto, Arthur. "Postmodern Art & Concrete Selves: The Model of the Jewish Museum." *From the Inside Out: Eight Contemporary Artists,* Exh. Cat. New York: The Jewish Museum, 1993.

De Lauretis, Teresa. "The Essence of the Triangle, or Taking the Risk of Essentialism Seriously: Feminist Theory in Italy, the U.S., and Britain." *Differences* 1 (Summer 1989): 3-37.

de Oliveira, Nicolas, Nicola Oxley and Michael Petry, eds. *Installation Art, with texts by Michael Archer.* London: Thames and Hudson, 1994.

de Zegher, Catherine, ed. *Untitled Passages by Henri Michaux.* Exh. Cat. London: Merill; New York: The Drawing Center, 2000.

"Dore Ashton File." Museum of Modern Art. PAD/D Archive.

Drucker, Johanna. "Visual Pleasrue: A Feminist Perspective." *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* 11 (May 1992): 3-11.

Dubuffet, Jean. "Dubuffet and Anti-Culture." *Arts Magazine* 43 (December 1969/Januray 1970): 36-38.

Dubuffet, Jean. "Anti-Cultural Positions." *Arts Magazine,* 53, no. 8 (April 1979): 156-157.

Duchamp, Marcel. *Marcel Duchamp, Note.* Edited by Paul Matisse. Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1983.

Duncan, Carol. *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums.* New York: Routledge, 1995.

Edelson, Mary Beth. *Seven Cycles: Public Rituals.* Exh. Cat. New York: A.I.R., 1980.

Elkins, James. *What Painting Is: How to Think About Oil Painting Using the Language of Alchemy.* New York: Routledge, 1999.

Enright, Robert. "The Ambiguous Witness: An Interview with Leon Golub." *Border Crossings* 9, no. 1, issue 73 (February 2000): 18-37.

Enstice, Wayne and Melody Peters. *Drawing: Space, Form, Expression.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Frascina, Francis. *Art, Politics and Dissent: Aspects of the art left in sixties America.* Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press: 1999.

Feigen, Richard. *Dubuffet and Anti-Culture.* Exh. Cat. New York: Richard L. Feigen, 1969.

Felciano, Rita. "Pina Bausch: The Voice From Germany." *Dance Magazine* 70, no. 10 (October 1996): 68-71.

Fried, Michael. "Art and Objecthood." *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (June 1967): 12-23.

Freud, Sigmund. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.* Translated by James Strachey. Vol. 18. London: Hogarth Press, 1950.

Friel, Brian. "Foreward." *Murals: The Bogside Artists.* Edited by William Kelly. Derry, Northern Ireland: Guildhall Press, 2001, 4-6.

Fuller, Peter. "Chicago for Real: Leon Golub." *New Society,* July 26, 1979.

Garfinkel, Yosef. "Dancing and the Beginning of Art Scenes in the Early Village Communities of the Near East and Southeast Europe," *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 8, no. 2 (October 1998): 207-237.

Giedion, Sigfried. *Space, Time, and Architecture; The Growth of a New Tradition.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962.

Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979.

Goldberg, RoseLee. *Performance Art From Futurism to the Present.* New York and London: World of Art, Thames and Hudson, 1988.

Golub, Leon. "Exhibition Momentum," *Exhibition Momentum,* exh. cat. (Chicago: The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1950).

_____. "A Critique of Abstract Expressionism." *College Art Journal,* 14, no. 2 (Winter 1955): 142-147.

_____. "Letters." *Artforum* 7, no. 1 (March 1969): 3-4.

_____. *Do Paintings Bite: Selected Texts, 1948-1996.* Edited by Hans-Ulrich Obrist. Germany: Cantz Verlag, 1997.

Grape, Wolfgang. *The Bayeux Tapestry: Monument to a Norman Conquest.* Translated by David Britt. New York and Munich: Ptrestel-Verlag, 1994.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

The Greek Miracle. Exh. Cat. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1993.

Greeley, Robin. *Afro-Cuban, 'Woman,' and History in the Works of Ana Mendieta, Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons and Marta Maria Perez Bravo.* Exh. Cat. Storrs, CT: William Benton Museum of Art, 2000.

Hammond, Bryan and O'Connor, Patrick. *Josephine Baker.* Boston, Toronto, London: Bullfinch Press Book and Little Brown and Co., 1988.

Hanna J.L. *Encyclopedia of Religion.* Vol. 4. New York: MacMillan, 1987.

Hannah Hoch, 1889-1978. Exh. Cat. Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1989.

Hartt, Frederick. "Glossary." *Art: A History of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture.* Second Edition. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1985.

Hess, Thomas and Elizabeth Baker, eds. *Art and Sexual Politics.* New York: MacMillan, 1973.

Harris, Helen and Eileen Healy, eds. *'Strong About It All... ' Rural and Urban Women's Experiences of the Security Forces in Northern Ireland.* Derry, NI: North West Women's/Human Rights Project Publications, 2001.

Henri Michaux. Exh. Cat. New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1978.

Holaus, Barbel, ed. *Secession.* Translated by David P. Gogarty. Vienna: Oesterreichischer Kunst-Und Kulturverlag, 1997.

Irigaray, Luce. "Kore: Young Virgin, Pupil of the Eye." *Speculum of the Other Woman.* Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1985, 147-151.

_____. "Gesture in Psychoanalysis." *Sexes and Genealogies.* Translated by Gillian C. Gillian. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993: 89-104.

Isaak, Jo Anna. *Feminism and Contemporary Art: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter.* London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

Jarman, Neil. "Violent Men, Violent Land: Dramatizing the Troubles and the Landscape of Ulster." *Journal of Material Culture* 1 (1996): 39-61.

_____. "Painting Landscapes: The Place of Murals in the Symbolic Construction of Urban Space," *Symbols in Northern Ireland,* Belfast, Northern Ireland: Queens University, Institute of Irish Studies, 1998.

Jelavich, Peter. *Berlin Cabaret.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Johnson, Galen A., ed. *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting.* Everson, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1993.

Jones, Ann Rosalind. "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of l'Ecriture feminine." *New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory.* Ed. Elaine Showalter. New York: Pantheon, 1985, 361-375.

Juden in Oesterreich/Jewish Austria, Past Presence. St. Poelten: Institute for Jewish History in Austria, 2001.

Kaplan, Jay L. "Pina Bausch: Dancing Around the Issue." *Ballet Review* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 74-77.

Katz, Robert. *Naked by the Window: The Fatal Marriage of Carl Andre and Ana Mendieta.* New York: Atlantic Monthly, 1990.

Keller, Bill. "Was the Partisan a Jew? Echo of '41, Minsk U.S.S.R." *The New York Times,* September 15, 1987.

Klepfisz, Irene. *A Few Words in the Mother Tongue: Poems Selected and New (1971-1990).* Portland , OR: Eight Mountain Press, 1990.

Krauss, Rosalind. "Grids, You Say." *Grids: format and image in 20th century art.* Exh. Cat. New York: The Pace Gallery, 1978-1979.

Kristeva, Julia. *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholic.* Translated by Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.

_____. *Hannah Arendt.* Translated by Ross Guberman (1999, as *Le Genie feminine*). New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

Kuspit, Donald. "Concerning the Spiritual in Contemporary Art." *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985.* Exh. Cat. Los Angeles and New York: Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Abbeville Press, 1986, 321-322.

van Laban, Rudolf. *The Mastery of Movement* (1950). 3rd Edition revised and enlarged by Lisa Ollmann. London: Macdonald and Evans, 1971.

Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror-Phase as Formative of the Function of I." *Ecrits: A Selection.* New York: Norton, 1977, 1-7.

LeWitt, Sol. "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art." *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (June 1967): 80.

Lippard, Lucy. *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art.* New York: E.P. Dutton, 1976.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

_____. "Sweeping Exchanges: The Contribution of Feminism to the Art of the 1970s." *Art Journal* 40, no. 1 (Winter 1980): 362-365.

_____. *Get the Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change.* New York: E.P. Dutton, 1984.

_____. *Pink Glass Swan: Selected Feminist Essays on Art.* New York: New Press, 1995.

Lloyd, Jill. *German Expressionism, Primitivism and Modernity.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

Long, Rose-Carol Washton, ed. *German Expressionism: Documents From the End of the Wilhelmine Empire to the Rise of National Socialism.* New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1993.

Liss, Andrea. *Impossible Evidence: Contemporary Artists View the Holocaust.* Exh. Cat. Reading, PA: Freedman Gallery, Center for the Arts, Albright College, 1994.

Lyon, Christopher. "Kiki Smith: Body and Soul." *Artforum* 28 (February 1990): 102-106.

Lurie, Alison. *The Language of Clothes.* New York: Vintage Books/Random House, 1983.

Macrell, Judith. "The Agony and the Ecstasy." *The Guardian* (London), January 21, 1999.

_____. "Hurts So Good." *The Guardian,* January 23, 2002.

Malone, Patrick and Peter Selz. "Is There a New Chicago School?" *Art News* 54 (October 1955): 36-37.

Manning, Susan Allene. "An American Perspective on Tanztheater." *TDR: The Drama Review* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 57-79.

_____, and Melissa Benson. "Tanztheater; Interrupted Continuities: Modern Dance in Germany," *TDR, The Drama Review* 30, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 30-45.

Maxwell, Robert A. "Sealing Signs and the Art of Transcribing in the Vierzon Cartulary." *Art Bulletin* 81, no. 4 (December 1999): 576-597.

McDougall, Iain. "Livy and Etruscan Women." *The Ancient History Bulletin* 4, no. 2 (1990): 24-30.

McEvilley, Thomas. *Leon Golub.* Exh. Cat. Malmo, Sweden: Malmo Konsthalle, 1994.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

McShine, Kynaston. *The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect.* Exh. Cat. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999.

Moore, Marianne. "Light is Speech." (1941, *What Are Years*) *The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore.* New York: Penguin, 1987, 97-98.

Morgan, Valerie. *Peacemakers? Peacekeepers? Women in Northern Ireland 1969-1995.* Londonderry, NI: INCORE, 1996.

Muecke, Michael. "Mobile Foundations: A Reading of Complex Surfaces in Gottfried Semper's Treichler Laundry Ship." *Aurora: The Journal of the History of Art* 2 (2001): 72-113.

Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation.* Edited by Brian Wallis. New York: New museum of Contemporary Art; Boston: David R. Godine, 1984), 361-374.

Newman, Barbara. "Pina Bausch in Frankfurt and Paris." *Dancing Times* (London) 87, no. 1044 (September 1997): 1069-1071.

Nochlin, Linda. "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" *Art News* 69, no. 9 (January 1971): 22-39, 67-71.

Nussbaum, Martha. *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

O'Connor, Francis V. "Introduction to the Mural as an Art Form." Unpublished lectures. "The Mural in America." National Academy of Design, 2002. http://members.aol.com/FVOC.

O'Doherty, Brian. "Inside the White Cube, Part I: Notes on the Gallery Space." *Artforum* 14 (March 1976): 24-30.

_____. "Inside the White Cube, Part II: The Eye and the Spectator." *Artforum* 14 (April 1976): 26-34.

_____. "Inside the White Cube III: Context as Content." *Artforum* 15 (November-December 1977): 38-44.

O'Mahony, John. "Dancing in the Dark." *The Guardian,* January 26, 2002.

Owens, Craig. "The Discourse of Others: Feminism and Postmodernism." *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture.* Edited by Hall Foster. Seattle: Bay Press, 1983.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Perreault, John and Petra Barreras del Rio. *Ana Mendieta: A Retrospective.* New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1987.

Peterson, L.H. "Divided Consciousness and Female Companionship: Reconstructing Female Subjectivity on Greek Vases." *Arethusa* 30, no. 1 (1997): 35-74.

Phelan, Peggy. "Feminist Theory, Poststructuralism, and Performance." *TDR, The Drama Review* 32, no. 1 (Spring 1988): 107-127.

Phillies-Howe, Thalia. "The Origin and Function of the Gorgon Head," *American Journal of Archaeology* 58 (1954): 221-235.

Polcari, Stephen. *Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Experience.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Pollock, Griselda. "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity." *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art.* London: Routledge, 1988, 50-90.

Prendeville, Brendan. "Merleau-Ponty, Realism and Painting: Psychophysical Space and the Space of Exchange." *Art History*, 22, no. 3 (September 1999): 364-388.

Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics. Edited by Alex Preminger. Enlarged Edition. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974.

Rago, Carmela. "Chicago Performance." *Art in Chicago: 1945-1995.* Exh. Cat. New York and Chicago: Thames and Hudson and the Museum of Contemporary Art, 1977, 129-130.

Raven, Arlene, Cassandra Langer and Joanna Frueh, eds. *Feminist Art Criticism: An Anthology.* Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1988.

Robb, Marilyn. "Art News From Chicago." *Art News*, 52, no. 8 (December 1953): 51.

Robbins, Daniel. *Andre Lhote, 1885-1962: Cubism.* Exh. Cat. New York: Leonard Hutton Gallery, 1976.

Robins, Corinne. *The Pluralist Era: American Art 1968-1981.* New York: Harper and Row, 1984.

Robinson, Hilary, ed. *Visibly Female: Feminism and Art Today.* London: Camben Press, 1987.

Rose, Bernice. *Drawing Now.* Exh. Cat. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1976.

Rosen, Randy and Catherine C. Brawer, eds. *Making Their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970-1985.* New York: Abbeville Press, 1989.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Rosenberg, Harold. "The American Action Painters," *Art News* 51, no. 8 (December 1952): 22-23, 48-50.

Rosenblum, Naomi. *A World History of Photography.* Third Edition. New York and London: Abbeville Press, 1997.

Rosenthal, Mark and Marshall, Richard. *Jonathan Borofsky.* Exh. Cat. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art; New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1984.

Rothery, Guy Cadogan. *Concise Encyclopedia of Heraldry.* London: Senate, 1994.

Rubin, Jerry. *Do It: Scenarios of the Revolution.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970.

Nelly Sachs, *O the Chimneys* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1970).

Sandstrom, Sven. *Levels of Unreality: Studies in Structure and Construction in Italian Mural Painting During the Renaissance.* Upsala, Sweden: University of Upsala, 1963.

Sayre, Henry. *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde Since 1970.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

_____. "Introduction." *Eleanora Antinova Plays.* Los Angeles: Sum and Moon Press, 1994.

Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World.* Oxford University Press, 1985.

Schapiro, Meyer. "On Some Problems in the Semiotics of Visual Art: Field and Vehicle in Image-Signs." (1969) *Theory and Philosophy of Art: Style, Artist and Society.* New York: Braziller, 1994, 12-22.

_____. "The Beatus Aplocalypse of Gerona (1963)." *Late Antique, Early Christian and Mediaeval Art: Selected Papers.* New York: George Braziller, 1979, 319-328.

_____. "Frontal and Profile as Symbolic Forms." *Words and Pictures: On the Literal and the Symbolic in the Illustration of a Text.* Paris and The Hague: Mouton, 1973: 37-49.

Schor, Naomi. *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine.* New York: Methuen, 1987.

Schulz, Franz. "Here Come the Monsters." *Time*, September 7, 1959, 62.

_____. *Fantastic Images: Chicago Art Since 1945.* Chicago: Follett, 1972.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Schwartz, Michael D. *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Seaford, R.A.S. "The Mysteries of Dionysus at Pompeii," *Diotima,* www.stoa.org/diotima/, 2/11/00.

Seigel, Judy, ed. *Mutiny and the Mainstream: Talk that Changed Art, 1975-1990.* New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 1992.

Seitz, William. *Art in the Age of Aquarius, 1955-1970.* Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992.

Selz, Peter. "A New Imagery in American Painting." *College Art Journal* 15, no. 4 (Summer 1956): 292-293.

_____. "Surrealism and the Chicago Imagists of the 1950s: A Comparison and Contrast." *Art Journal* 45, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 303-306.

Semper, Gottfried. "Style in the Technical and Tectonic Arts or Practical Aesthetics." *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 181-263.

Senie, Harriet and Sally Webster. *Critcal Issues in Public Art: Content, Context, and Controversy.* Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998.

Sennett, Richard. "In the Presence of Difference." *El Sueno Imperativo.* Exh. Cat. Madrid: Circulo de Bellas Artes, 1991, 16-45.

Servos, Norbert . "Pina Bausch." *Ballet International* 7, no. 11 (November 1984): 14-18.

Shklovsky, Victor. "Form and Material in Art" (1923). Translated and posted by the Center for Book Culture. *Context, A Forum for Literary Arts and Culture.* No. 2 Online Edition. Illinois State University, at wysiwyg://221/http://www.centerforbookculture.org/context/no2/shklovsky.html.

Siren, Osvald. *The Chinese on the Art of Painting.* New York: Schocken Books and Hong Kong University Press, 1963.

Small, Jocelyn Penny. "Time *in* Space: Narrative in Classical Art." *Art Bulletin* 81, no. 4 (December 1999): 562-575

Soussloff, Catherine M. ed. *Jewish Identity on Modern Art History.* Los Angeles: University of California, Berkeley, 1999.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Steinberg, Leo. *Other Criteria: Confrontations in Twentieth Century Art.* London: Oxford University Press, 1972.

_____. "Reflections on the State of Criticism." *Artforum* 10, no. 7 (March 1972): 37-49.

Stella, Frank. *Working Space.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Storr, Robert. "No Stage, No Actors, But It's Theater (and Art)." *The New York Times,* November 28, 1999, section 2, 1, 43.

Stubbs, H.W., ed. *Pegasus: Classical Essays from the University of Exeter.* Exeter: University of Exeter, 1981.

Suderberg, Erika, ed. *Space, Site, Installation: Situating Installation Art.* Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

TDR The Drama Review. Special Issue on Pina Bausch, 30, no. 2 (Summer 1986).

Tapisserie de Bayeux. Bayeux, France: Edit. Ville de Bayeux, n.d.

Taylor, Sam and Natalie Ng. *Personal and Political: The Women's Art Movement, 1969-1975.* Exh. Cat. New York, East Hampton: Guild Hall Museum, 2002.

Tec, Nechama and Weiss, Daniel. "A Historical Injustice: The Case of Masha Bruskina." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 11, no. 3 (Winter 1997), 366-377.

Tickner, Lisa. "The Body Politic: Female Sexuality and Women Artists Since 1970." *Art History* 1, no. 2 (June 1978): 236-251.

Tucker, Marcia. "The New Museum: A Forum for Dialogue, Controversy, and Visual Provocation." *Art Journal* 37 (Spring 1978): 241-244.

_____, ed. *Bad Girls.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994.

_____. "From Theory to Practice: Correcting Inequalities." *Gender Perspectives: Essays by Women in Museums.* Edited by Jane R. Glaser and Artemis A. Zeneton. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1994.

Vine, Richard. "Where the Wild Things Are." *Art in America* 85 (May 1997): 98-111.

Warren, Lynn. *Art In Chicago: 1945-1995.* Exh. Cat. New York and Chicago: Thames and Hudson and the Museum of Contemporary Art, 1977.

_____. *Who Chicago? An Exhibition of Contemporary Imagists.*, Exh. Cat. Sunderland, England: Ceolfrith Gallery, Sunderland Arts Centre, 1981.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Walker, LuLen. "Le Tumult Noir." *The Black Craze*. Exh. Cat. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, National Portrait Gallery, 2000.

Wehl, Philippa. "Pina Bausch's Tanztheater – A Place of Difficult Encounter." *Women and Performance* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1984): 25-36.

Wigley, Mark. *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995.

Wilford, John Noble. "In the Dawn of Society, Dance was Center Stage." *The New York Times*, February 27, 2001, F1-F2.

Wills, Garry. "Athena's Magic." *The New York Review of Books*, December 17, 1992, 47-51.

Wollen, Peter. "Tales of Total Art and Dreams of The Total Museum." *Visual Display: Culture Beyond Appearance.* Edited by Lynne Cooke and Peter Wollen. New York: DIA Center for the Arts and New Press, 1998, 155-177.

Women Artists in Revolution. *A Documentary Herstory of Women Artists in Revolution.* Pittsburgh, PA: KNOW Press, 1971.

Women in the Arts. *Women Choose Women.* Exh. Cat. New York: New York Cultural Center, 1973.

Yates, Francis A. *The Art of Memory.* 3rd Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Selected Bibliography of Nancy Spero's Studio Library

Andrews, Carol, ed. *The Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead.* Translated by Raymond O. Faulkner. London: British Museum Press, 1972.

Antonin Artaud: Anthology. Translated by Jack Hirschman. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 1965.

Artaud, Antonin. *The Theater and Its Double.* Translated by M.C. Richards. New York: Grove Press, 1958.

_____. *Oeuvre Completes d'Antonin Artaud.* Vol. 1, 4, 8, 9. Paris: Gallimard, 1971.

Barbeau, Marius. *Totem Poles: Anthropological Series, No. 30.* Ottawa, Canada: National Museum of Canada, 1950.

Baring, Anne and Cashford, Jules. *The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image.* New York: Viking Arkana, 1991.

Beauvoir, Simone De. *The Second Sex.* (1952) Translated by H.M. Parshley. Introduction by Deirdre Bair. New York: Vintage, Random House, 1954.

Belinfante, Judith C.E., Christine Fischer-Defoy, and Ad Petersen, eds. *Charlotte Salomon: Life? or Theater?A Play with Music, 1940-1942.* Amsterdam: Joods Historische Museum and Waanders Vitgevers, Zwolle, 1992.

Bell, Susan Groag, ed. *Women: From Greece to the French Revolution.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1973.

Bersani, Leo. "Artaud, Birth, and Defecation." *Partisan Review* 43, no. 3 (1976): 439-452.

Bessy, Maurice. *A Pictorial History of Magic and the Supernatural.* New York: Spring Books, 1970.

Boardman, John. *Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Archaic Period.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Brecht, Bertold. "Ballad of Marie Sanders: The Jew's Whore." *Bertold Brecht: Bad Time for Poetry?* Edited and translated by John Willet. London: Methuen, 1995, 67-68.

Brendel, Otto F. *Etruscan Art.* New York: Penguin Books, 1978.

Brilliant, Richard. *Arts of the Ancient Greeks.* New York: McGraw Hill Books, 1972.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Budge, E.A. Wallis. *The Gods of the Egyptians or Studies in Egyptian Mythology.* v. 1. New York: Dover Publications, 1969.

_____. *Egyptian Magic.* New York: Dover Publications, 1971.

Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero With a Thousand Faces.* New York: Meridian Books, 1956.

Castello, Elena Romero and Uriel Macias Kapon. *The Jews and Europe: 2,000 Years of History.* New York: Henry Holt, 1994.

Cavendish, Richard, ed. *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Mythology.* New York: Crescent Books, 1980.

Champdor, Albert, ed. *Le Livre des Morts.* Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1963.

Cherry, Stella. *A Guide to Sheela-na-gigs.* Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, 1992.

Cixous, Hélène. "La Jeune nee: an excerpt." *Diacritics: A Review of Contemporary Criticism* 7, no. 2 (Summer 1977): 64-69.

Dubuffet, Jean. *Mirobolus, Macadam et Cie.* Paris: Galerie Drouin, 1946.

Edwards, Robert, ed. *The Preservation of Australia's Aboriginal Heritage, Australian Aboriginal Studies* no. 54 (Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1975).

Freud, Sigmund. *Civilization and its Discontents.* Translated and edited by James Strachey. New York: Norton, 1962.

Geertz, Clifford, ed. *Myth, Symbol, and Culture.* New York: Norton and Co., 1971.

Gettings, Fred. *The Book of Tarot* London: Triune Books, 1973.

Gimbutas, Marija. *The Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe: 6500-3500B.C. Myths and Cult Images.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

Goldwater, Robert. *Primitivism in Modern Art.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Graves, Robert. *The Greek Myths.* v. 1 London: Penguin Books, 1960.

Green, William Chase. *Moira: Fate, Good and Evil in Greek Thought.* (1944) New York: Harper and Row, 1963.

_____, ed. *New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology.* New York: Prometheus Press, 1959.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Grimal, Pierre, ed. *Larousse World Mythology* (1965). Secaucus, NJ: Chartwell Books, Inc., 1976.

Guirand, Felix. *Greek Mythology.* Translated by Delano Ames. London: Paul Hamlyn Ltd., 1963.

Gunther, Edna. *Art in the Life of the Northwest Coast Indians.* Portland, OR: Portland Art Museum, 1996.

H.D. *Helen in Egypt.* Introduction by Horace Gregory. New York: New Directions, 1961.

Hamilton, Edith. *Mythology.* Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1940.

Hamlyn, Paul. *Greek Mythology.* London: Batchworth Press, 1963.

_____. *Egyptian Mythology.* London: Paul Hamlyn, 1965.

Hanak, Werner and Widrich, Mechtild. *Wien II Leopoldstadt, Die andere Heimatkunde.* Vienna: Verlag Christian Brandstaetter, 1999.

Harrison, Jane Ellen. *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion.* New York: Meridian Books, 1962.

Ions, Veronica. *World's Mythology in Color.* London: Chartwell Books, 1974.

Judenfragen, Jewish Attitudes from Assimilation to Zionism. Exh. Cat. Vienna, Wien Judishen Museum, 1997.

Kelly, Eamonn P. *Sheela-na-gigs: Origins and Functions.* Dublin: Country House and National Museum of Ireland, 1996.

Keuls, Eva C. *The Reign of the Phallus; Sexual Politics in Ancient Egypt.* New York: Harper and Row, 1985.

Kramer, Samuel Noah. *The Sumerians, Their History, Culture and Character.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.

Lamy, Lucie. *Egyptian Mysteries.* London: Thames and Hudson, 1981.

Light: From Aten to Laser. Edited by Thomas B. Hess and John Ashbery. New York: Macmillan Company, 1969.

Ludwig, Carsten, Claudia Reichardt and Detlev Schneider. *Festspielhaus Hellerau.* Dresden: WDS Pertermann, 1996.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Neumann, Erich. *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype.* Translated by Ralph Manheim. New York: Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series XLVII, 1955.

Pomeroy, Sarah B. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity.* New York: Shocken Books, 1975.

Pompeii and Herculaneum. London: Spring Books, 1966.

Radice, Betty, ed. *Who's Who in the Ancient World; A Handbook to the Survivors of the Greek and Roman Classics.* New York: Penguin, 1973.

Richardson, E.H. *The Etruscans: Their Art and Civilization.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

Rosen, Trix. *Strong and Sexy: The New Body Beautiful.* New York: Delihah Books distributed by Putnam Publishing Group, 1983.

Rudolfsky, Bernard. *The Unfashionable Human Body.* New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1971.

Salamander, Rachel, ed. *The Jewish World of Yesterday, 1860-1938.* Translated by Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart. New York: Rizzoli, 1991.

Selz, Peter. *New Images of Man.* Exh. Cat. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959.

van Sertima, Ivan, ed. *Black Women in Antiquity.* New Brunswick and London: Transaction Books, 1985.

Sharman-Burke, Juliet. *The Complete Book of Tarot.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985.

Sheelas in Cultures of Contention. Edited by Douglas Kahn and Diane Neumaier. Seattle: Real Comet Press, 1985.

Snitow, Ann and Christine Stansell. *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality.* New York: New Feminist Library, Monthly Review Press, 1983.

Stenico, Arturo. *Roman and Etruscan Painting.* New York: Viking Press, 1963.

Stone, Merlin. *When God Was a Woman.* New York: Harvest Books, 1976.

_____. *Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood: Our Goddesses and Heroine Heritage.* New York: Sibylline Books, 1979.

Suleiman, Susan Rubin, ed. *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

Tuchman, Maurice and Gail Scott. *Fifty Tantric Mystical Diagrams.* Los Angeles: Ahmanson Gallery, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1969.

von Volborth, Carl Alexander. *Heraldry of the World.* London: Blanford Press, 1973.

Zolla, Elemire. *The Androgyny: Reconciliation of Male and Female.* New York: Crossroads, 1981.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.