



Artworks from the Orange County Museum of Art examine a dramatic shift in how women artists in the 1990s redefined the 'self' in their art practices

Forms of Identity: Women Artists in the 90s

January 7 – April 2, 2017

NEWPORT BEACH, CA—The last decade of the twentieth century marked a brief, but significant moment of intense, rapid sociopolitical, economic and cultural transformation, particularly for women. *Forms of Identity: Women Artists in the 90s*, opening January 7, 2017, at the Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA) presents a selection of artworks from the museum's permanent collection created by sixteen significant women artists working in this time period whose artistic practice shifted from the political to personal. The exhibition is on view through April 2, 2017

Whereas feminist movements prior to the 90s primarily addressed issues between the two genders, postmodernism and women artists in the 90s expanded the critique of being 'the other' *within* womanhood, examining race, age, and gender politics. Women artists began to shift from more radical direct approaches to more covert poetic gestures. The exhibition includes eighteen works, eight of which are recent donations to the permanent collection, including a recently acquired, room-size installation by Los Angeles artist Liz Craft.

Artists featured: China Adams, Laura Aguilar, Polly Apfelbaum, Leslie Brack, Jessica Bronson, Liz Craft, Meg Cranston, Jacci Den Hartog, Dawn Fryling, Diane Gamboa, Rachel Lachowicz, Helen Pashgian, Erika Rothenberg, Alexis Smith, Linda Stark, and Millie Wilson.

The artists in this exhibition all worked in the 1990s and addressed topics surrounding the self. Disassociated from the politics of feminism, artists **Jacci Den Hartog**, **Dawn Fryling**, **Helen Pashgian**, and **Linda Stark** asserted their individuality by creating works with unconventional materials, deliberately emphasizing the art object's formal properties. **China Adams**, **Polly Apfelbaum**, **Liz Craft**, and **Meg Cranston** explored their own personal, interior worlds of thought, place and memory. At the same time, **Laura Aguilar**, **Jessica Bronson**, and **Diane Gamboa** directly addressed culture, race, and gender identity politics, and **Leslie Brack**, **Rachel Lachowicz**, **Erika Rothenberg**, **Alexis Smith**, and **Millie Wilson** investigated female identities within the context of popular culture and the art world.

Women artists working in the last decade of the twentieth century owe a debt to earlier feminist activism. Feminist Revolution activists in the 1960s and direct action artist groups like WAC (Women's Action Coalition), through protest and performance, publicly confronted barriers to women's rights in a male-dominated art market. By the 90s, feminists expanded their critique to subcategories of marginalization *within* womanhood. Building on early efforts by these politically active feminist groups, women artists gained new freedom to create art through a more familiar and personal shape: their own identity.

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Forms of Identity: Women Artists in the 90s is organized by the Orange County Museum of Art and curated by Alyssa Cordova.

Images, from left: **Alexis Smith**, *Valedictorian*, 1994, mixed media, collage on paper, 33 x 27 x 3 inches, Collection OCMA, Gift of Tracy and Gary Mezzatesta. **Meg Cranston**, *Snus*, 1990, paint on cardboard, 23 x 12-3/4 inches, Collection OCMA, Gift of Peter and Eileen Norton. **Linda Stark**, *Candy Corn Weave*, 1994, oil on canvas on panel, 7 x 7 inches, Collection OCMA, Gift of Tracy and Gary Mezzatesta

OCMA INFORMATION

Wednesday – Sunday, 11 am – 5 pm; with extended hours Friday, 11 am – 8 pm. Admission: Adults \$10, seniors and students \$7.50, children 12 and under are free. Fridays are free to the public and parking is always free. Orange County Museum of Art is located at 850 San Clemente Drive in Newport Beach, CA. For additional information, call 949.759.1122 or visit www.ocma.net.