

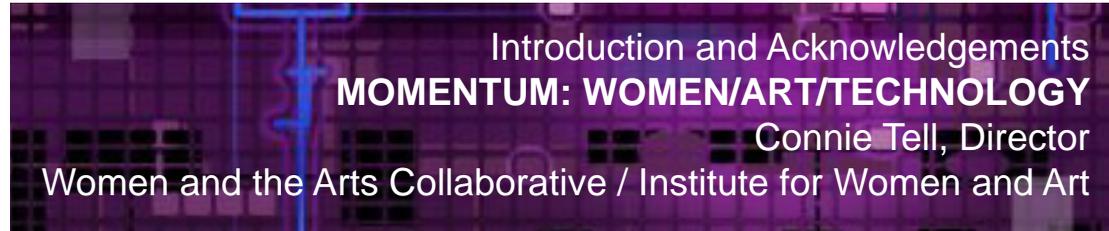
Momentum: Women/Art/Technology

An exploration into the intersection of technology, art practice, and feminism

2014 -15 Exhibitions / Mary H. Dana Women Artists Series

Contents

Introduction and Acknowledgements / Connie Tell	4
MOMENTUM: WOMEN/ART/TECHNOLOGY	
Essay / Anne Swartz	7
GRIMANESA AMORÓS	
Essay / Anne Swartz	11
DIGITAL ART AND FEMINISM: A SURREAL RELATIONSHIP	
<u>2014 - 15 MARY H. DANA WOMEN ARTISTS SERIES / Exhibition Artists</u>	
GRIMANESA AMORÓS / Statement & Images	29
EMILIA FORSTREUTER / Statement & Images	34
JENNIFER HALL / Statement & Images	36
CLAUDIA HART / Statement & Images	39
Yael KANAREK / Statement & Images	41
JEANNETTE LOUIE / Statement & Images	43
RANU MUKHERJEE / Statement & Images	45
MARY BATES NEUBAUER / Statement & Images	48
MARIE SIVAK / Statement & Images	51
CAMILLE UTTERBACK / Statement & Images	54
ADRIANNE WORTZEL / Statement & Images	56
JANET ZWEIG / Statement & Images	61
2014 - 15 Exhibition Artists CVs	64
2014 - 15 Exhibition Checklists	77
<i>Momentum Calendar</i> / Summer 2014 - Spring 2015	81
<i>Momentum Calendar</i> / Spring 2014 - Spring 2011	83



Introduction and Acknowledgements

MOMENTUM: WOMEN/ART/TECHNOLOGY

Connie Tell, Director

Women and the Arts Collaborative / Institute for Women and Art

MOMENTUM: WOMEN/ART/TECHNOLOGY

Introduction and Acknowledgements

Feminist art content explored during the previous Wave is now re-examined and re-invented in an era of artists that are technologically and electronically connected globally, 24/7. Easier access to tech-education and equipment allows artists to adapt and transform feminist conceptually driven work beyond the scope of traditional art media. Efforts to promote feminist art and the discourse around important content have been greatly widened by the employment of the internet as a means of dissemination and connectivity. Women artists are no longer held back by their limited access to the traditional gallery spaces whose small percentage of exhibition spots are mostly occupied by male artists. Technology has given society an unprecedented amplification of the feminist voice.

We are pleased to present *Momentum: Women/Art/Technology*, a multi-year exploration into the intersection of technology, feminism, and art practice. *Momentum* focuses on innovative uses of technology utilized and advanced by women and transgender artists through exhibitions, symposia, an online video festival and directory, and numerous public discussions. Since 2011, *Momentum* artists and scholars have challenged gender-biased notions of who employs technology, and showcased these artists' sustained ability to break new ground in uncharted artistic realms. To date, *Momentum* has generated multiple events at the College Art Association Annual Conference, Tribeca Performing Arts Center, Elizabeth A. Sackler Center for Feminist Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and an exhibition and full day symposium entitled *Trans Technology: Circuits of Culture, Self, Belonging* at Rutgers University.

The final phase of this seminal project is a year-long series of programs that began in the summer of 2014 with the launch of the *Momentum Directory*. The directory is a networking gateway linking the public to women and transgender artists who embrace diverse technologies in their artistic production, and other arts professionals who engage in critical study in the field of gender, feminism, art, and technology across geographic, economic, and generational boundaries.

In July, *Grimanesa Amorós - Momentum: Women/Art/Technology*, the Estelle Lebowitz Visiting Artist in Residence exhibition opened in the Dana Women Artist Series Galleries at Douglass Library, followed by her campus visit and public lecture in October. On view from October to April was *MTV: Momentum Technology Videos*, an online, 101-minute video exhibition highlighting screen-works by twenty-one artists selected for their creative transformation of technology to art. Concluding the *Momentum* project this spring, we presented an extraordinary group exhibition of eleven artists from the U.S. and Europe in the Dana Women Artists Series Galleries and *Solace and Perpetuity: a life story*, a book project exhibit by Adrienne Wortzel at the Rutgers Art Library.

This catalog explores the work of the twelve remarkable women artists who exhibited in the Dana Women Artist Series Galleries 2014-15, all of whom use forms of technology and scientific thinking combined with tremendous creativity to bring their ideas to realization.

I would like to acknowledge the Institute for Women and Art Founding Co-directors Judith K. Brodsky and Ferris Olin, and Muriel Magenta, Professor of Art, Arizona State University, who originated the concept of *Momentum: Women/Art/Technology* and organized many of the programs. Special recognition goes to Anne Swartz, Professor of Art History, Savannah College of Art and Design, for her advice and insightful catalog essay. In addition, thanks goes to Megan Lotts, Art Librarian, Rutgers University Art Library and Kelly Worth, Administrative Assistant, Rutgers University Libraries. My deep gratitude goes to the outstanding Women and the Arts Collaborative staff, Nicole Ianuzelli and Leigh Passamano, without whose creative solutions, good humor, and hard work, *Momentum* would not have come to light.

Connie Tell

Director

Women and the Arts Collaborative / Institute for Women and Art

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The Estelle Lebowitz Memorial Fund
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The National Endowment for the Arts
The New Jersey State Council on the Arts

Thank you to the 2014-15 *Momentum: Women/Art/Technology* co-sponsors and supporters:

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Center for Cultural Analysis
The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art
Department of Art History
Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Department of Women's and Gender Studies
Douglass Residential College
Fine Arts Department - Rutgers Camden
Institute for Research on Women
Institute for Women's Leadership

Margery Somers Foster Center
Visual Arts Department - Mason Gross School of the Arts
Office for the Promotion of Women in Science, Technology,
Engineering, and Mathematics
Paul Robeson Galleries – Rutgers Newark
Rutgers Center for Digital Filmmaking
Rutgers University Art Library
Rutgers University Libraries
School of Communication and Information
Zimmerli Art Museum



GRIMANESA AMORÓS
Anne Swartz

GRIMANESA AMORÓS

Anne Swartz

Grimanesa Amorós's works felt like the stuff of science fiction the first time I encountered them, bursting with light in a nearly dark room. The artist intends for her viewers to have a visceral experience with her art; she's creating a sublime effect, "an immersive environment" she says, involving the sculptures and the light around them.¹ She wants the viewer to have a complete tangible experience. While the artist layers her installations with numerous references to the physicality of light and to her Peruvian home, they also invoke her reverence for natural events and spaces, like the aurora borealis she had seen in Iceland and tidal flows reminiscent of the oceans and lakes in her native Peru.

In *Light Between the Islands*, Amorós combines solid bubble forms on the floor in groupings, like islands surrounded by water in the space between them. Here those gaps allow the viewer to ambulate the bubble forms. The bubbles are animated with LEDs, light programming, and video animation partially illuminating the gallery space. Her sculptures are often layered with her drawings, as is the case with this installation, where they have been silkscreened onto the surface of the mounds. Making the connection between the artist's memories and fantasies of Peru, she's added *MIRANDA*, a video work. It is a hybrid film, merging and uniting images of the artist's face. On her face, she's rendered Incan sun masks and ancient Incan monuments. She's also added views of sea foam percolating along the Peruvian coast.

Amorós's material is nature's light, which she mentions repeatedly in interviews and in her writings, acknowledging how important it has been as an artistic influence. Fauve painter André Derain famously remarked, "*The substance of painting is light.*" Light for Amorós is both a tool and a subject. It has certain specific references to her Peruvian homeland where she was mesmerized by the bioluminescent sea foam she could easily view a short distance from her home in coastal Lima. Hers is a light emanating from nature, which she crafted with technology, which, as she says, "brings the magic I was looking for [in my art]."² Light in its range of forms appeals to Amorós. By combining nature and technology, she engages with it in its reflected,

¹ Grimanesa Amorós, e-mail message to author, June 3, 2014.

² Ibid.

projected, refracted, substance-less, visible, atmospheric, glowing, and shining forms.

Amorós often uses water forms and symbols as a way to embody the light. Light moves in waves, much like the ocean. Water has within it the “source and origin” of life, according to renowned religion historian Mircea Eliade, a similar feature in all the cultures he examined. Sea foam, or *espuma del mar*, has a significant role in Peruvian history, as Viracocha the great creator deity of the Incan cosmology, emerged from the ocean. Sea foam is a reference to this god. Almost in a divine guise, Amorós plays with solidity/materiality and ethereality/spirituality in her sculptures, making the individual elements defy conventional expectations about form. The unfolding light sequence of the sculptures diffuses their solidity, while also defining the linear progression of the narrative within her work.

Others have similarly perceived Peru as a source of psychic power. Literary historian Verónica Salles-Reese notes that there are perceived geographic sites of energy: “these spots are imaginatively endowed with a numinous essence. Lake Titicaca is such a place.”³ Amorós draws upon this sense of the sacred as a way to add a layer of ethereality and the intangible to her art—the unseen yet known, much like the energy and heat of unseen light. Another layer is a reference to water symbolism in Amorós’s art are references to the highly eccentric Uros practice of weaving homes, structures, and even the ground on which they live from *titora* which are local reeds. The Uros, a pre-Incan civilization of Lake Titicaca, crafted these floating islands, structures, and boats, a defensive practice to escape the invading Incans. Islands have a special place in the imagination; Eliade remarked that one of the strongest images of creation “is the island that suddenly manifests itself in the midst of the waves.”⁴ Amorós’s works engage the archetype of fabricating, embodying the mystery of creation resembling plant or geological clusters. Additionally, they also engage with the archetype of water; the emergence of the sea foam carries within it the alchemical transition of elusive water into a physical substance with form.

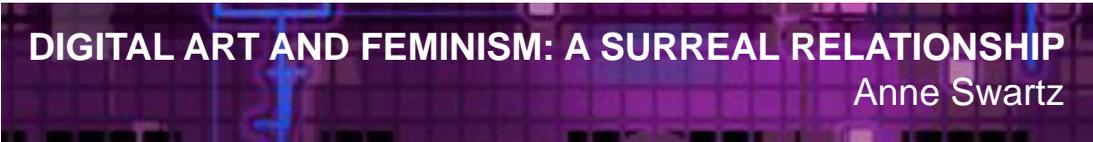
All these references to nature have within them the idea of abundance. It is this expansiveness which is, perhaps, the most compelling feature of Amorós’s art. While the physical situation in the gallery space is fixed and finite, the variety of light images she creates make the surface of her works into a seemingly infinite number of appearances. Though produced through careful study and meticulous production, the cellular and atomized forms remind us of the plentifulness of bubbles and reeds, as well as suggesting the flow of matter through veins and arteries. In thinking about abundance in Amorós’s art, I am reminded of philosophy professor Rosalyn Diprose’s estimation that generosity is a life force, noting that passion animates and energizes

³ Verónica Salles-Reese, *From Viracocha to the Virgin of Copacabana: History of the Representation of the Sacred* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1997), 5.

⁴ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Inc., 1987), 134.

our interactions, such as the exchange of the artist creating an experience for the viewer.⁵ Diprose takes a line from German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as her defining feature of generosity in corporeal terms: "I love most what is written in blood." She then notes that even metaphorically, "We do not have to write *about* the body, its gestures, cells, and fluids, to write *in* blood." This idea relates to Amorós's art in the way that a life force like blood seems to emanate from within them, even though the artist has not "written" about flesh or innards. As a defiance of the separation between each of us, through the technological apparatus of her use of light and its affect, her work presents a sense of sublime plentitude that is always welcomed.

⁵ See "Conclusion" of Diprose's book. [Rosalyn Diprose, *Corporeal Generosity: On Giving with Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty, and Levinas* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2002), 189-196].



DIGITAL ART AND FEMINISM: A SURREAL RELATIONSHIP

Anne Swartz

DIGITAL ART AND FEMINISM: A SURREAL RELATIONSHIP

Anne Swartz

Many of the images in this exhibition reveal similar interests, themes, and aesthetics to those seen in feminist Art.¹ The artists—Emilia Forstreuter, Jennifer Hall, Claudia Hart, Yael Kanarek, Jeanette Louie, Ranu Mukherjee, Mary Bates Neubauer, Marie Sivak, Camille Utterback, Adrienne Wortzel, and Janet Zweig—rely on technology as a tool to explore geopolitics, geological phenomenon, obsolete media, data streams and sets, illusion, shifting identities, phantasmagorias, eroticism, bodies, landscapes, geography, and memory. They are not afraid to confront assumptions or propaganda, even challenging conventions and traditions. They show us diverse, alternate domains and generate narratives of augmented worlds.

Common to their artworks is the surreal, employed innovatively and underscored by the radical politics of feminism to change society in order to advance it. It is a kind of new romanticism where the real is meshed with fantasy so that the boundaries between the two dissolve. These artists have created pieces that require the viewer's time; scanning and experiencing the entirety of their respective works over time transports one to their wild and imagined realms. It is easy to lose one's bearings with these works because they rely upon mysterious disorientation to the viewer's prosaic and commonplace experiences. It is a situation that is wholly based on the personal, which has been one of the cornerstone themes of feminist art.

Digital art has an inherent feminist issues to it. Artist Mary Bates Neubauer termed the “new macho challenge for this generation of women [is] digital technology. . . . [because] the field is still dominated by men.”² Utilizing technology to make art is, interestingly enough, one of the aspects of the programming world's fascination with digital art.³ For the artists in this exhibition, digital technologies are ways to express content that is gender related. And they approach technological innovation differently than men, which is significant because it is associated with men rather than women.⁴ The focal point of this exhibition is that

¹ I must acknowledge the kind assistance of the artists in this project. I am grateful for the support I received from Connie Tell, Director, Women and the Arts Collaborative and The Feminist Art Project, both housed at Rutgers University and Nicole Ianuzelli, Manager of Programs & Exhibitions, Women and the Arts Collaborative. I especially appreciate Claudia Hart who helped me evolve my thinking about the relationship between women, art, and technology.

² E-mail to author from artist, August 11, 2014.

³ Janet Abbate, *Recoding Gender: Women's Changing Participation in Computing* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012), 69 and 98.



**2014 - 15 MARY H. DANA WOMEN ARTISTS SERIES
EXHIBITION ARTISTS
Statements and Images**

GRIMANESA AMORÓS / Statement

grimanesaamoros.com

2014 -15 Estelle Lebowitz Visiting Artist in Residence

Grimanesa Amorós is a multidisciplinary artist with diverse interests in the fields of social history, scientific research, and critical theory, which have greatly influenced her work. Amorós is the recipient of several grants, which include the National Endowment for the Arts Visual Artist Fellowship - Washington DC, The Travel Grant Fund for Artists, and the NEA Arts International - New York, NY. She has exhibited, created public works, and participated in film festivals in the United States, Europe, Asia, and Latin America; among some of the recent are 125 Maiden Lane, New York, NY; La Fragua Tabacalera, Madrid, Spain; Georgian National Museum's National Gallery, Tbilisi, Georgia; CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China, Harper's Bazaar Art / Art Basel HK, Hong Kong, China; CASAmerica, Madrid, Spain; INNOV8 Festival, Lafayette, LA.

Since childhood Amorós has been attracted to the abstract visual quality of landscapes – whether it is the procession of the terraced steps of such places as Machu Picchu or the patchwork patterns of the farmlands that she encountered while flying over Israel. The pure aesthetic of these manmade vistas stand out in stark contrast to the untouched quality of their environs. Seen from above, the individual circular fields reveal intricate and unique designs. The vastness of these landscapes move her, and Amorós found herself astounded by the amount of technology necessary for the creation of these landscape marvels.

Amorós researches the locations, histories, and communities of the installation sites of her public works and is inspired by Peru's history for her art but she does not hold an essentialist or nostalgic view of her subject. Her process remains organic and instinctive. This intuitive relationship to technology is a distinctive feature of her practice. Amorós's work incorporates elements from sculpture, video, lighting, and cutting edge technology to create site-specific installations that engage architecture and create community.

GRIMANESA AMORÓS / Images



Light Between the Islands #2, 2013

LEDs, diffusive material, custom lighting sequence, electrical hardware

6' 7" x 9' 6" x 1"

Images courtesy of the artist



Detail

Amorós uses innovative materials, LEDs, lighting programs, and video animation to illuminate the gallery space. The sculptural islands of shimmering white bubbles, rise upward and outward from the floor of the gallery to convey a sense of wonder and playfulness. The bubbles that form the islands are part of modular units and layers. Amorós multiplies and arranges the units into structures that can become monumental in scale and appear to be a solid mass; while at the same time appearing to be weightless, buoyant, and ethereal. As visitors walk around, they will encounter and react to its presence and magic of her beloved Uros Islands in Lake Titicaca.

GRIMANESA AMORÓS / Images

Miranda mixes imagery of circuit boards, ancient Incan monuments, Incan sun masks, and an animation of the artist's face transformed by the lines of totora reeds. These images are then combined with video footage of waves forming seafoam washed up onto the Peruvian coastline, filmed between sunset and moonrise – for seven consecutive days, by the artist. Amoros shares with us the impressive and miraculous change in light from day to day, creating a sense of wonder. The name, 'Miranda' is a female given name derived from a Latin word meaning "to be admired".

Miranda demonstrates how the striving for resources has led us not only to the abyss of the social and political climate in regions such as the Middle East but also to impressive and innovative new technological environmental solutions. This work encourages viewers to reflect on the inestimable impact natural environments have on human history, underlining fundamental sources of conflict in many sparse outposts of civilization. It compels us to question what is "natural" by allowing a glimpse of the cryptic yet conspicuous signature we leave on the landscape of our planet.



Miranda, 2013

Video, 4:41 minutes

Soundtrack by Ivri Lider of the Young Professionals

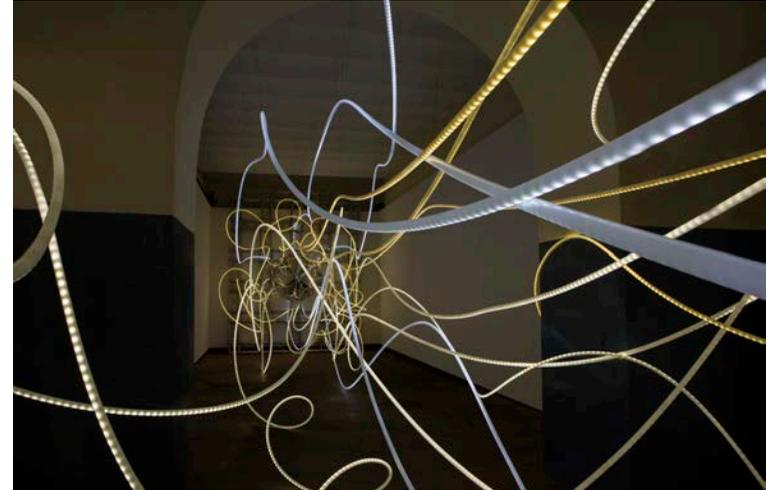
Images courtesy of the artist

GRIMANESA AMORÓS / Images

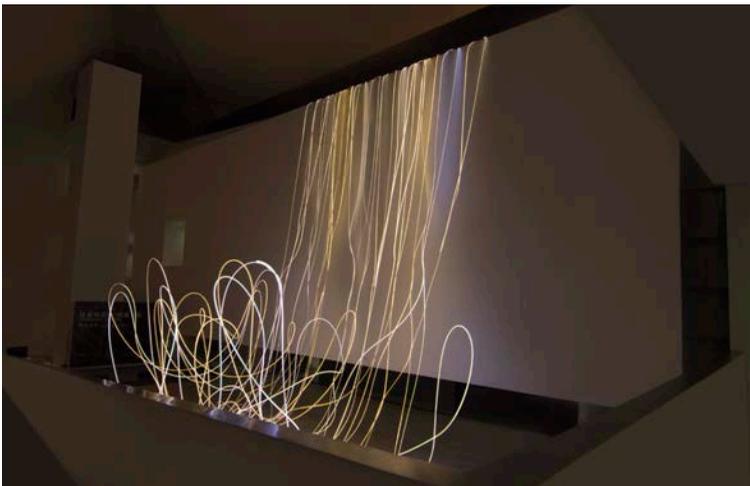
Installation documentations - Video and photographs



Breathless Maiden Lane, New York, NY, 2014



Fortuna, Madrid, Spain, 2013



The Mirror Connection, Beijing, China, 2013
Images courtesy of the artist

GRIMANESA AMORÓS / Images

Installation documentations - Video and photographs



Racimo, Turku, Finland, 2010



Uros House, Times Square, NY, 2014
Images courtesy of the artist



Detail



MOMENTUM: WOMEN/ART/TECHNOLOGY
2014 - 15 Exhibition Artists / CVs

GRIMANESA AMORÓS / CV

grimanesaamoros.com

Represented by Nina Menocal Gallery, Roma, Mexico; Epodium Gallery, Munich, Germany; Galerie Vernon, Prague, Czech Republic.

EDUCATION

1985-88 The Art Students League (New York, NY)

1981-84 Private Ateliers (Lima, Peru)

1980-84 University of Peru, UNIFE (Lima, Peru)

SELECTED PUBLIC WORK

2014 *Breathless Maiden Lane*, 125 Maiden Lane (New York, NY)

2013 *Fortuna*, Art Center Tabacalera (Madrid, Spain)

The Mirror Connection, Museum of China Central Academy of Fine Arts (Beijing, China)

Golden Connection, Harper's BAZAAR Art Night (Hong Kong, China)

Uros House, The Lite Center (Lafayette, LA)

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2013 *Light Between The Islands*, The Litvak Gallery (Tel Aviv, Israel)

2012 *Voyager Video Retrospective*, YUAN Space (Beijing, China)

A-part, Contemporary Art Festival (Alpilles-Provence, France)

MoA Video Exhibition, Seoul National University Museum of Art (Seoul, Korea)

2011 Paul and Lulu Hilliard Art Museum, University of Louisiana (Lafayette, Louisiana)

SELECTED AWARDS / GRANTS

2011 Newark Municipal Council Cultural Award (Newark, NJ)

2005 X Tumi USA Award (Miami, FL)

2004 Centrum Arts, Residency (Port Townsend, WA)

ARTspace Summer Artist-in-Residence (Raleigh, NC)

SELECTED GUEST LECTURER

2014 TEDGlobal 2014, Speaker (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

2013 Washington University, Keynote speaker (St. Louis, MO)

CASAmerica, Keynote speaker (Madrid, Spain)

Georgian National Museum's National Gallery, "Miranda" (Tbilisi, Georgia)

China Central Academy of Fine Arts, "The Mirror Connection" (Beijing, China)

Sotheby's Institute of Art, (New York, NY)

INNOV8 Festival, The Lite Center (Lafayette, Louisiana)



MOMENTUM: WOMEN/ART/TECHNOLOGY
Summer 2014 - Spring 2015
Calendar of Events

MOMENTUM: WOMEN/ART/TECHNOLOGY

Summer 2014 - Spring 2015 Calendar of Events

MOMENTUM DIRECTORY - Launch

July 1, 2014

iwa.rutgers.edu/programs/momentum/directory/

MOMENTUM: WOMEN/ART/TECHNOLOGY - Solo Exhibition, Campus Visit, and Public Lecture

Grimanesa Amorós

July 28 - December 10, 2014

2014 - 15 Estelle Lebowitz Visiting Artist in Residence

Mary H. Dana Women Artists Series Galleries / Douglass Library, Rutgers University, 8 Chapel Drive, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

EVENT: October 27 - 29, 2014 / Campus Visit and Public Lecture

MTV: MOMENTUM TECHNOLOGY VIDEOS - Online Film Festival

Joeun Aatchim, Hiba Ali, Renae Barnard, Sarah Berkeley, Sheri Cornett, Sam DeMonte, Simone Doing, Lacie Garnes, Julie Harrison, Hästköttskandalen, Sarah Hill, Alex Hovet, Claire Jervert, Kathleen Kelley and Sarah Rose Nordgren, Elizabeth Leister, Christie Neptune, Sarah Oneschuk, Roberta Orlando, Cindy Rehm, Ela Shah, Loren Siems, Julia Kim Smith, and Jing Zhou

October 1, 2014 - April 1, 2015

iwa.rutgers.edu/programs/momentum/mtv

MOMENTUM: WOMEN/ART/TECHNOLOGY - Group Exhibition and Artists' Conversation

Emilia Forstreuter, Jennifer Hall, Claudia Hart, Yael Kanarek, Jeannette Louie, Ranu Mukherjee, Mary Bates Neubauer, Marie Sivak, Camille Utterback, Adrienne Wortzel, and Janet Zweig

January 20 - April 17, 2015

Mary H. Dana Women Artists Series Galleries / Douglass Library, Rutgers University, 8 Chapel Drive, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

EVENT: March 26, 2015 / Reception and Artists' Conversation moderated by Anne Swartz

MOMENTUM: WOMEN/ART/TECHNOLOGY - Solo Exhibition

Adrienne Wortzel

January 20 - April 17, 2015

Art Library, Rutgers University, 71 Hamilton Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

MOMENTUM: WOMEN/ART/TECHNOLOGY is a program of the Women and the Arts Collaborative / Institute for Women and Art, a unit of the Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion at Rutgers University, and funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. The Mary H. Dana Women Artists Series is a program of the Women and the Arts Collaborative / Institute for Women and Art in partnership with Rutgers University Libraries.

Rutgers co-sponsors include: Art Library, Rutgers University Libraries; Center for Cultural Analysis; Department of Art History; Department of Women's and Gender Studies; Douglass Residential College; Fine Arts Department-Camden; Institute for Research on Women; Institute for Women's Leadership; Margery Somers Foster Center, Rutgers University Libraries; Mason Gross School of the Arts, Visual Arts Department; Office of Institutional Diversity and Inclusion; Office for the Promotion of Women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; Paul Robeson Galleries-Newark; Rutgers Center for Digital Filmmaking; School of Communication and Information; Zimmerli Art Museum. Other co-sponsors: Career Opportunity Grant from the Oregon Arts Commission and The Ford Family Foundation; The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art; New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Amorós' exhibition and lecture were sponsored by the Estelle Lebowitz Memorial Fund, and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, Rutgers University. *Momentum: Women/Art/Technology* was originated by Judith K. Brodsky, Muriel Magenta, and Ferris Olin. *Momentum* programs (2014 -15) are curated and organized by the Women and the Arts Collaborative / Institute for Women and Art at Rutgers University.



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WOMEN AND THE ARTS COLLABORATIVE / INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN AND ART

The mission of the Women and the Arts Collaborative (WAC) is to recognize, advance, and document the intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural contributions of diverse women in the visual, literary, performing, and digital arts. To accomplish this goal, WAC engages in university and community partnerships to present exhibitions, classes, public programs, and interdisciplinary projects focused on gender and art topics, and the creative production of women in all art fields across geographic, cultural, economic, and generational boundaries. Women and the Arts Collaborative serves university, local, national, and global audiences.

WAC Programs:

Estelle Lebowitz Visiting Artist in Residence Lectureship

The Feminist Art Project

Mary H. Dana Women Artists Series

Miriam Schapiro Archives

Online Education

VGames: Gender, Art, and the Virtual World

Women Artists Archive National Directory

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Deborah Lee, Work-Study Assistant

Dianna Shypailo, Intern

Gabriella Syhpula, Intern

Institute for Women and Art Founding Co-directors:

Judith K. Brodsky

Ferris Olin

To learn more about our programs, please visit our website: iwa.rutgers.edu