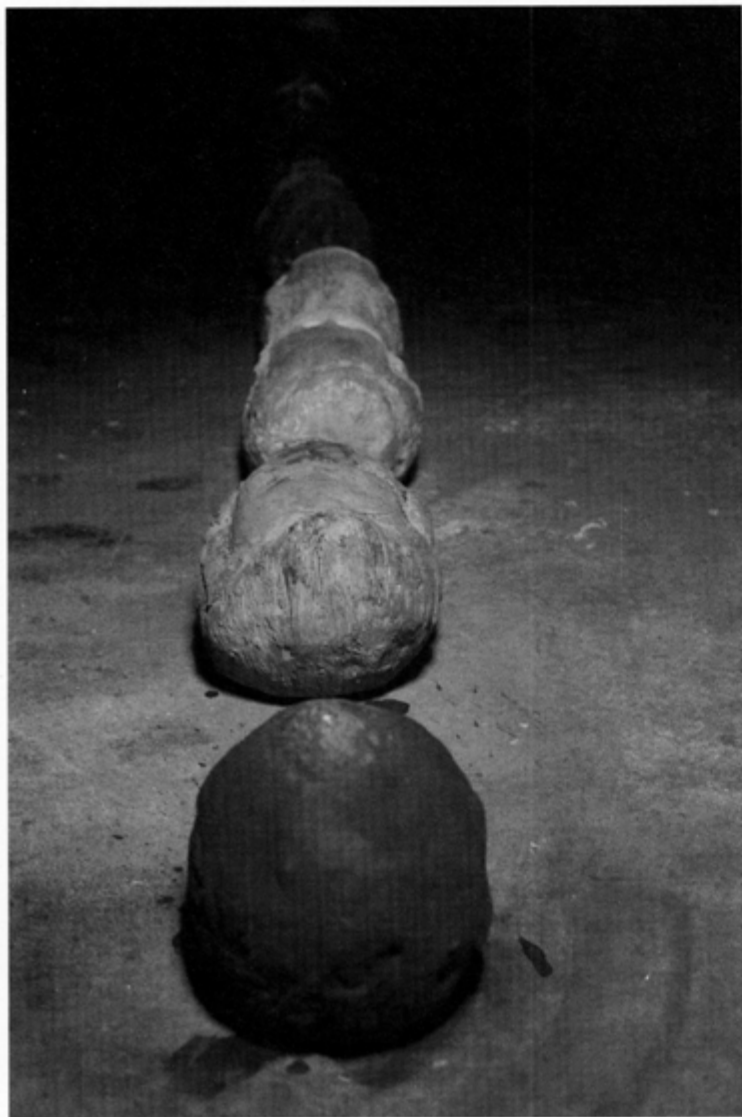


MFA THESIS
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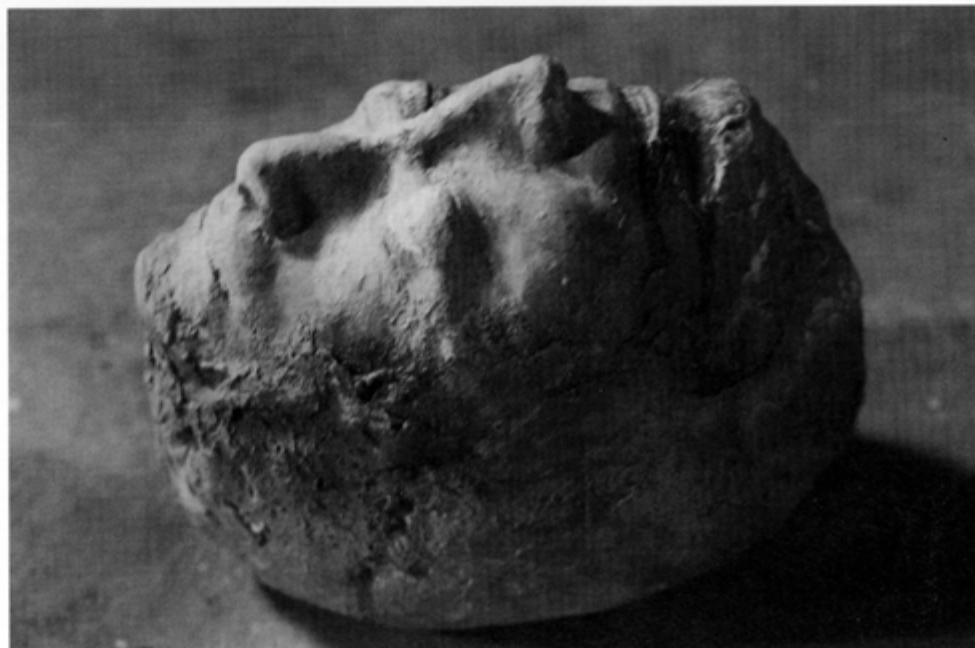
University Art Gallery
Staller Center for the Arts
University at Stony Brook



Shakti, 1999

Ceramic with holi powder, pigment
tempera, and watercolor

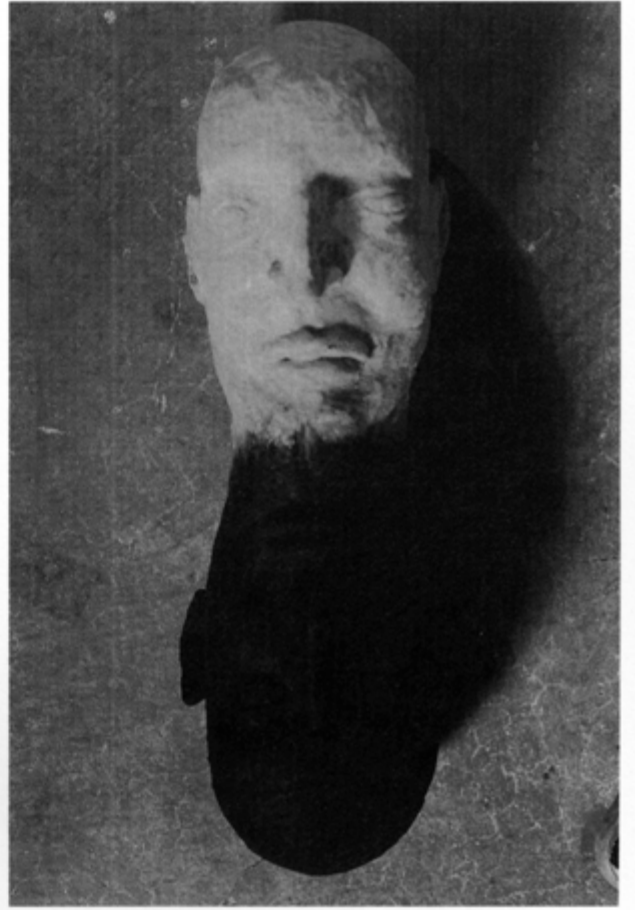
In my *One* body of work, ideas of “high art” and “naive folk art,” ancient and contemporary man, the sexual and the spiritual, culture, gender, and the notion of sexual identity are reconsidered. The art I have created consists of a visual narrative which is about the evolution of people from extreme dependency to a more utopian semi-independent state. As the “Janis head” spheres stretch into separate bodies, their psychological state of sexual dependency is transmuted into an inter-dependent and almost mystical love. The head spheres change into bodies becoming separate entities but again merge as two whole figures, in *One* intertwined yet independent union.



Janis Head, 1999

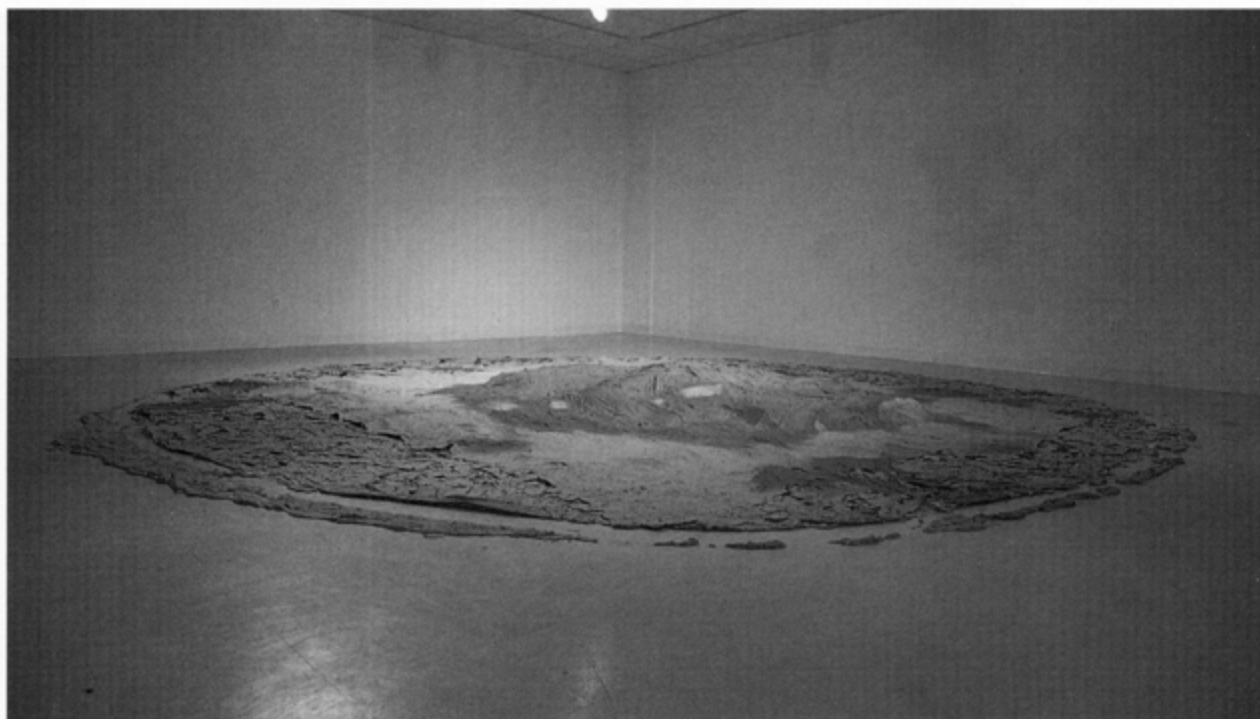
Ceramic with holi powder, pigment, tempera, and watercolor

Janis Head, 1999
Ceramic with holi powder, pigment,
tempera, and watercolor



Janis Body, 1999
Ceramic with holi powder, pigment, tempera, and watercolor





The Medial Circle, 1998
Unfired stoneware, 13 ft. diameter

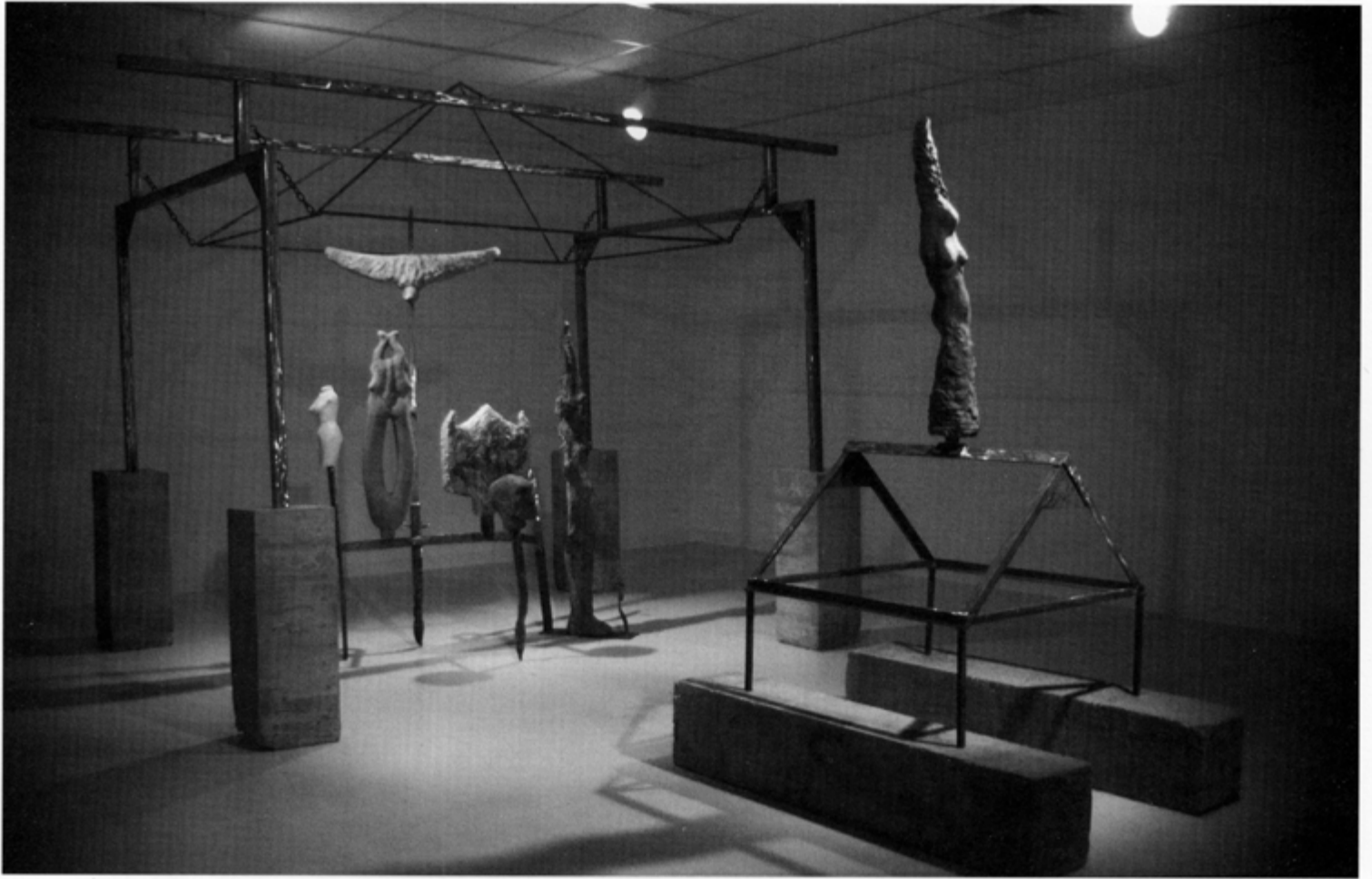


The Medial Circle I, 1998
Unfired stoneware, 10 ft. diameter



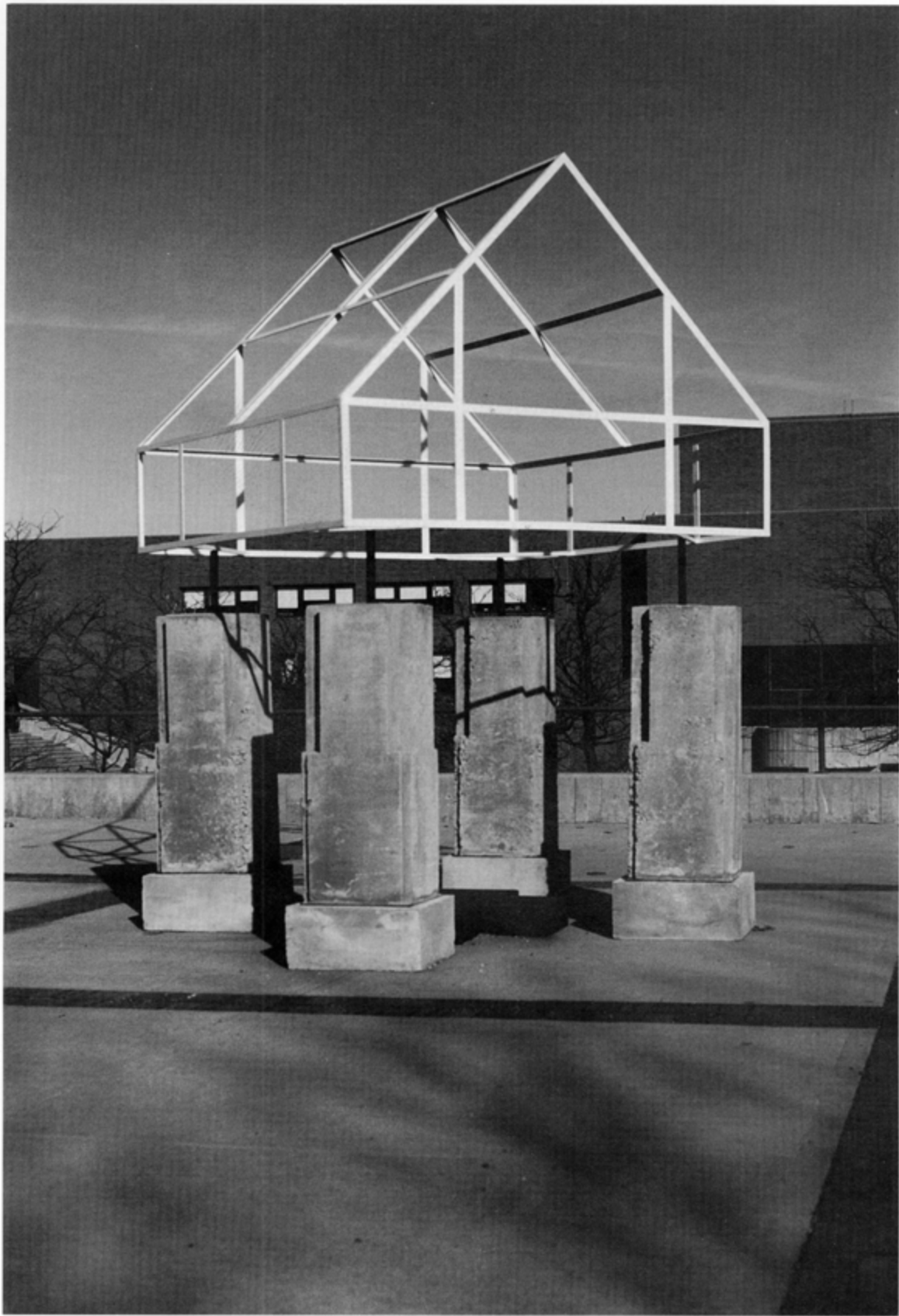
Untitled, 1998
Stoneware, oxides, 50 x 14"

I see that I have an obligation to fulfill a vision: to balance and to distill that vision to its crucial elements. The quality that emerges is an energy that lies both within and beyond the physical work itself.



Installation view of Forces and Desires, 1998
Mixed media

My art pieces are personal spiritual expressions.
They are memorials of the euphoric energy of humanity and
the tragic drama of mortality.
The structure and formal qualities are metaphorical of the
condition of being.



Edifice Postmodern, 1997

Steel and concrete

Permanent installation at University at Stony Brook



CENTER FOR THE ARTS

State University of New York at Stony Brook
Stony Brook, NY 11794-5425
UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY



INTRODUCTION

This exhibition is the eleventh in a tradition of shows by students graduating from the Stony Brook Art Department's Master of Fine Arts Program. Only in its thirteenth year, the program has already attracted top students from across the country and around the world. Of course, the location near the excitement of New York City is one factor in this early success. That proximity (and a direct train connection), without the daily pressures of study in the City, make Long Island's North Shore the best of all geographical worlds for artists. Our outstanding, internationally-known faculty has undoubtedly been attracted by similar features, as well as by the opportunity to teach highly qualified and motivated advanced students. Any graduate program is a partnership of professionals – some younger and less experienced who have come to learn, and others, older and more practiced, who engage them in a dialogue from which all emerge strengthened.

Any MFA curriculum combines rigor with freedom, but Stony Brook's is unique in several ways. First, it is connected with the Art Department's slightly older and also unique program in the history of art, theory and criticism. Nowhere else are advanced studio and art history and criticism students able to benefit from each others' courses and ideas. Second, proximity to New York City makes it possible for our students to do internships in practically any area of the art world and to immerse themselves in it during their course of study. Finally, Stony Brook's MFA offers opportunities for students themselves to be teachers. That experience requires a level of articulateness and sharing that can only sharpen communicative skills which by definition underlie the artistic enterprise.

The students in this year's exhibition exemplify the range and quality of the Stony Brook MFA program. They are from different backgrounds and different parts of the country. Their artistic concerns differ just as widely. They have succeeded in a rigorous program, yet each presents a clear direction and a strong personal consistency and presence. It is almost hard to imagine that they all pursued the same course of study. Yet the point is precisely that Stony Brook's MFA can foster and strengthen remarkably diverse and distinct individuals. Within its framework, students are able to grow to a level of maturity, and their work reaches toward a quality that poises them on the threshold of the professional art world. It is here that they develop the coherence and resilience so necessary to compete in that world, qualities they build upon the talent and interests that are their own. The purpose of an MFA program is thus no better embodied than by the first success an exhibition such as this one reveals. For where else can an ambitious young artist be both challenged by demanding teachers,

discussion, and projects, and yet obtain the extended period (two to three years) for the intellectual concentration and protracted artistic effort necessary to pursue one's own artistic path effectively? Thus, while congratulating our students who are graduating, we may also take pride in Stony Brook's contribution. The success of that partnership can be witnessed in this year's show. May it prosper!

James Rubin
Chairman
Department of Art

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank Professor James Rubin, Chairman of the Department of Art, and Professor Barbara Frank, Director of Graduate Studies, for their assistance with this exhibition.

Special thanks are extended to members of the Staller Center for the Arts staff: Pauline Cullen, Peter Kaufman, Brian McKenzie, Dennis Montoya, Coyette Perkins, and Karyn Valerius, Gallery Assistants; Nuray Celebi, Darryl Chan, Chris Cooke, and Elizabeth Fragoso, Gallery Interns; Patrick Kelly, Production Manager, Liz Silver, Technical Director, Neil Creedon, ATD, and the Staller Center Technical Crew, for exhibition lighting; and Marge Debowy, Assistant to the Gallery Director.

Special thanks are extended to the Friends of the Staller Center for their generous donation, which has helped to fund this exhibition.

Most of all, I wish to thank Bluewater Avery, Kristen Mara Brown, and Jeffrey Corbett for an inspiring MFA exhibition.

Rhonda Cooper
Director

Cover design: Kristin Mara Brown

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