



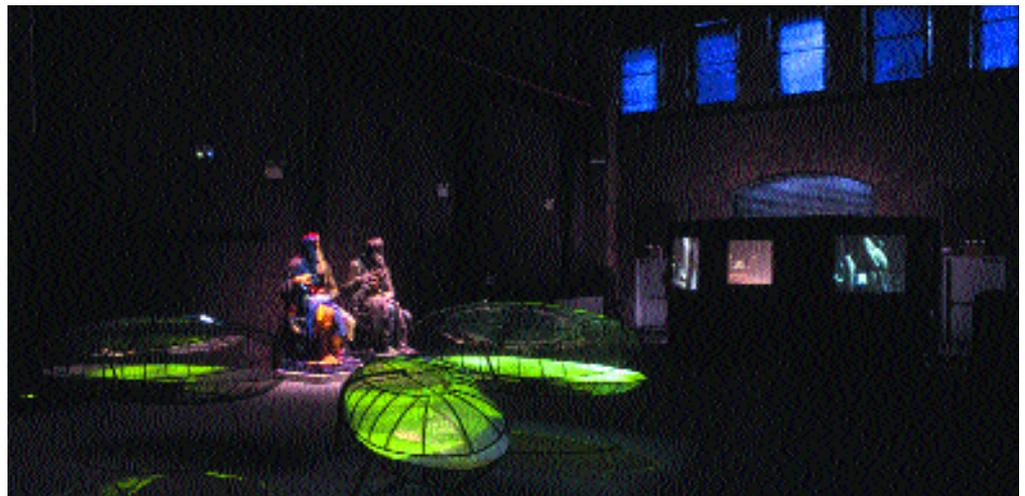
Above: Jason Middlebrook, *Guggenheim Bilbao, Part II*, 2002. Wood, paint, and polystyrene, 34.25 x 52 x 39 in. Work included in "Paradise/Paradox." **Below:** Installation view of "Architectures of Gender," 2003, at the SculptureCenter, New York.

the foibles of 20th-century urban planning. On the inner surfaces of this partial Dyson sphere, living space in the form of hundreds of densely clustered high-rise buildings is segregated on two of the rings while the third is empty greenbelt. A drawing by Keefe shows a series of walled enclaves separating city-dwellers from what appears to be unoccupied land. Yet if it's truly empty, why have walls? Finally, Jason Middlebrook mocks present-day notions of heaven on earth with an entropic, post-apocalyptic re-envisioning of Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao design. The artist gets revenge on a pretentious architect by imagining the building partially collapsed, surrounded by weeds and rubble, and festooned with graffiti.

A recurring theme of the show is how the totalizing impulse shades over into the totalitarian. In Justine Kurland's photo of the residents of Zendik Farm, an actual commune in upstate New York, several dozen happy, centered-looking people pose for a group portrait, but in Lenore Malen's installation *The New Society for Universal Harmony* (2002), which elaborately documents a fictional therapy center (also upstate),

visitors are hooked to weird electrical meters and elaborately profiled, uncomfortably reminding us of a religion founded by a certain best-selling science fiction writer who shall remain nameless. Fred Tomaselli's *Utopia Mountains* (1998), a kind of psychedelic topographical map, imagines a host of famous communes all located within a few miles of each other. Tellingly, the list includes, in addition to Shakers, Perfectionists, and Harmonists, less noble sects such as the Manson Family and that famous colony of one, the "Kaczynski Cabin."

—Tom Moody



New York "Architectures of Gender: Contemporary Women's Art in Poland"

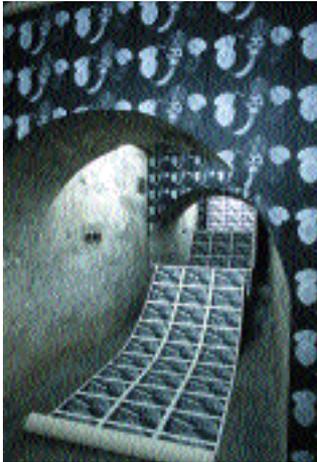
SculptureCenter

Curated by Aneta Szylak, "Architectures of Gender: Contemporary Women's Art in Poland" explored the diverse attitudes and interests of Polish women artists. The works reflected the politics and social dynamics in Poland, while involving the spectator's body in spatial games and metaphoric ideas of place and body.

Zofia Kulik's *The World as War and Adornment* consists of two full-sized replicas of Michelangelo's Moses. One is attired in flowery patterns, and the other in camouflage, referring to cross dressing, family roles, and art school copying of old masters. In Izabella Gustowska's *Passions and Other Cases*, translucent shells supported on iron legs looked like three giant insects. Radiating a green light and operating on heat sensors, the shells slowly opened and closed when approached. Projections onto the mollusks revealed kissing couples, homosexual and heterosexual. The work purported to conjure attitudes toward gender, but a good deal of the focus was on the technical drama. Paulina Ołowska's homage to Charlotte Perriand, the wife of Le Corbusier, may have been more understated, but its subtlety was no less significant. Perriand, who helped

design the famous deck chair attributed to her husband, was a renowned performance artist. Ołowska's constructed white cube was decorated with Modernist furniture and hung with posters from Perriand's performances.

In the once damp and odiferous cellar, a catacomb-like maze of alleys, niches, and arches, what is usually hidden in buildings was metamorphosed into a Minimalist presence with Dominika Skutnik's *The Field*. Like a beehive of balled cable, its unassuming appearance masked its energy. Squeezed into a long, narrow passageway, the work seemed to contain the metaphoric energy of a womb. Katarzyna Józefowicz constructed *Habitat*, a corner space of miniature dressers, with drawers like hiding places for thousands of secrets. *Omnipotence, Gender Male*, by Dorota Nieznalska, was a room lit by red fluorescent lamps in which the sounds of men lifting weights were confused with moans of sexual climax. The work could be read as a fitness club interior, the new pop culture embodiment of consumer values. Natalia LL, the first Polish artist to join the international feminist art movement, was represented in one of the basement's blind alleys. Transforming this narrow space, her scroll-like wall paper referenced vanitas. Hanna Nowicka-Grochal's *The Pleasure out of Reach*, also sited in a blind alley, contained rubber



hammocks. Filled loosely with air, their forms hovered between body and object. The hammock offers a suspension that we associate with intimacy, relaxation, sleep, and dreaming, and in their repetition and materiality these examples referred to the works of Eva Hesse. The woven paper streamers in Agnieszka Kalinowska's *Just a little bit more* referenced "consumption, becoming impotent and weak."

Karolina Wysocka's two parallel doors created an aisle cordoned off by glass ropes and glass poles (mimicking velvet rope). The poles were topped with vulva shapes on one side and penis shapes on the other. Wysocka did her own research for the male member, and her (male) glass fabricator informed the shapes of the vulvas. Recalling sacred and secular separation of men and women, *Cautiously* was well made, poignant, funny, and one of the best installations in the show.

Jadwiga Sawicka's *Numbers* was installed outside, within the pebbled courtyard. A four-centimeter-wide strip of pink paper printed with front-page headlines from all parts of the world followed the course of the gray concrete wall, recalling our geography of violence.

In Communist Poland, women's experiences understandably differed from those of '60s and '70s American women. Although they could successfully train as doctors,

lawyers, or engineers, Polish women had only limited entry to politics. After the fall of the regime, the Catholic Church regained power, once again enforcing its inherent restraints. Thus, women in Poland maintain a limited access to the power structure, and this could explain the interesting gender investigations undertaken by these artists. But the show was not only about Polish feminism—as installation it formed a stunning dialogue with the architecture. Typically employed as a simple envelope for exhibitions, it is rare to see architecture so successfully involved as foil and partner for the artistic concept.

—Carolee Thea

New York

Newton Harrison and Helen Mayer Harrison

Ronald Feldman Gallery

As artists who work with real-world issues of urban planning, ecology, and habitat restoration, Helen Mayer Harrison and Newton Harrison raise many questions about the nature of art. How is their process different from that of the scientists, planners, and civic organizers with whom they work? How does their vision interact with all of these forces?

Better known in Europe than in the U.S., the Harrisons have long been engaged in visionary dialogues about land use, watershed restoration, and the re-envisioning of our interactions with nature. This densely packed exhibition documented projects completed or begun in Holland, England, Germany, and Yugoslavia over the past 15 years. These include smaller-scale studies of specific watershed regions, as well as visions of Europe as a unified ecosystem where "the poetry of the whole" is considered.

The current Peninsula Europe project, documented in the main gallery, was initiated by Expo 2000 and the Schweisfurth-Stiftung in Germany. Coinciding with the emergence of an economically unified Europe, the Harrisons were

asked to consider the future of its landscape. Examining the geography of the entire European peninsula, they traced an abstract pattern created by the region's distinctive mountain chains, thus creating the "first unifying trans-European form that was not about commerce." They also created the first unified rainfall map of Europe and studied the potential impact of global warming on high mountain ecosystems. This focus on the ecological interrelationship of the European community evolved into a vision of "biodiversity bands" that would

be mediated? Who will look at the high ground as a whole?"

This is an extraordinary role for artists to play. The Harrisons are engaged in generating a dialogue about key development issues and creating a vision of an alternative that is not driven by economics or limited by national boundaries but instead reflects a determination to consider the whole as a living, breathing entity. Theirs is an art of engagement with political, economic, and social realities, which holds stubbornly to a vision of sustainable land use. The



Above left: Natalia LL, *Hortus Eroticus*, 1995. Photographic installation, dimensions variable. Work included in "Architectures of Gender." Above: Newton Harrison and Helen Mayer Harrison, *A Vision for the Green Heart of Holland*, 1995–96. Mixed media, installation view.

protect the high ground, the source of the rivers so crucial to the ecology of Europe, and now so threatened. Confronting the economics of their proposed remediation strategies, they suggested a modest tax, which would be used to create a "self-sustaining, self-nourishing, self-paying system" once established.

In dialogues played by sound columns in the exhibition, the Harrisons discuss their process, always linked to local arts and governmental organizations. Among the questions that they feel are central to the work, they ask: "How can the process of fragmentation

Harrisons' iconic forms and abstractions are used to help visualize a possible reality, such as a "green net," which can help to protect the natural world from some of the excesses of human activity.

Previous projects documented in the show also involve specific river basins, such as the Mulde in East Germany and the Sava in Yugoslavia. The Harrisons' proposals, along with the complex responses they engendered, are discussed in the exhibition and accompanying book. They consider this navigation of opportunity and resistance as part of their artistic