Mark Prent -- Horror in Canadian Art

by

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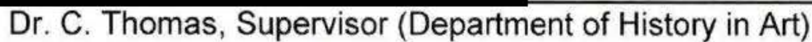
A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of History in Art

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard



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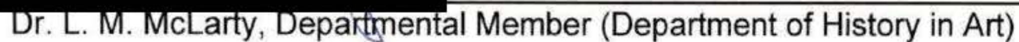

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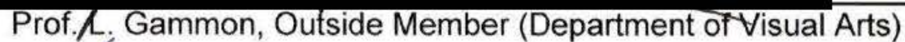

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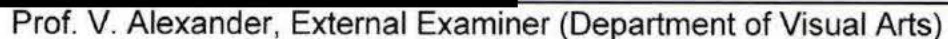

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Abstract

The work and career of Canadian artist Mark Prent have been overshadowed by controversy stemming from his use of horror as a genre and his refusal to provide any explanation for his mutilations and distortions of the human body. This study outlines how controversy has affected Prent as a Canadian artist, while drawing some comparisons between his work and that of American artist Edward Kienholz. This emphasizes how Prent's sculptures, like those of Kienholz, go beyond the limits of major Twentieth Century art movements. A summary of the main trends in contemporary Canadian sculpture is provided to aid an understanding of Prent in the context of contemporary Canadian art. Through his consistent use of horror, he has opened the door for later Canadian artists, such as Jana Sterbak, to explore humanity in this genre. To examine Prent's work specifically, postmodern theory, particularly of Michel Foucault and Rosi Braidotti, is adopted to show how the artist's work responds to the functioning of contemporary social discourses. Finally, as the first Canadian sculptor to be recognized for using horror in his work, this study concludes that the name Mark Prent deserves acknowledgment in the History of Canadian Art.

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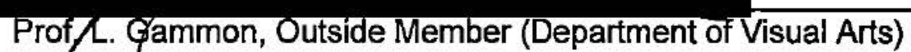

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I look back on my last few years at the University of Victoria with much appreciation. The faculty members of the Department of History in Art have consistently proven to be kind, resourceful, and very often, inspiring. Likewise, my fellow graduate students have been sincere and supportive. Combined, these people help make the study of History in Art at UVic a wonderful experience. I would like to thank them and wish them all the best for the future. A thesis is a long and arduous project, but how smoothly a student can move through this work may have a lot to do with the nature of his or her committee. The members of my committee, Dr. McLarty, Prof. Gammon, and Prof. Alexander, have been very considerate and helpful, and I am grateful to them. I would especially like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Christopher Thomas, who has, for as long as I have known him, offered encouragement and support. I have great respect for Dr. Thomas and I feel fortunate to have been his student.

Introduction

Why does the name "Prent" alone generate immediate horror or even stimulate intense anger? True, Mark Prent has explored unspeakable and odious subjects, dredged from our darkest and most primal fears. It is often difficult simply to look at his work. We shiver when we hear his name, and we wince at the sight, or even the description, of his work. Perhaps this explains why any serious investigation of his work has yet to occur. Yet, it is not as if the human body is a new subject in the history of art. In fact, the human body, particularly the female nude, has been a popular theme for artists and art patrons for centuries. Nor is it a novelty for art to present aspects of the human condition or social anxieties. Mark Prent's work is visually centered on various contortions and fragmentations of the human body, and metaphorically centered on human fears and serious social problems. He is not the first artist to combine these particular visual and metaphorical realms. Both Francis Bacon and Edward Kienholz did this as early as the 1950s. Their work, like that of Prent, is at once shocking and brutal. Even earlier, in Weimar Germany, *Lustmord*, or images of sexual murder, by artists such as George Grosz and Otto Dix, were popular.[1] These artists, and others, made countless paintings and drawings of

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[1] For an analysis of Lustmord images, particularly by Otto Dix and George Grosz, see: Maria Tatar, Lustmord - Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995); and Beth Irwin Lewis, "Lustmord: Inside the Windows of the Metropolis," in Charles W. Haxthausen and Heidrun Suhr, eds., Berlin - Culture and Metropolis (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), pp. 45-66. On a comparison between the two artists see Matthias Eberle, World War I and the Weimar Artists: Dix, Grosz, Beckmann, Schlemmer, trans. John Gabriel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 59-60.

mutilated women, often portraying themselves as the murderer, such as Otto Dix's Sex Murderer: Self-Portrait.[2] Moreover, the carnage of World War I became the subject of numerous visual and literary art forms as artists strained to present the grim battle scenes.[3] And many of these artists have received certain respect for their artistic achievements, but what about Prent?[4] Has this artist gone too far? Is there a boundary that Prent has crossed which accounts for the frequent outright rejection of his work?

To be fair, his work has not been completely rejected. He has, in fact, won prestigious national and international awards for sculpture.[5] But these institutional merits have not changed the overall attitude of the Canadian art community toward Prent's professional accomplishments. Although he has been accused of creating sensationalism for its own sake, thereby insulting other artists and undermining the integrity of "Art," a few individuals and groups have taken Prent and his work seriously. For these people, the artist's work has content beyond pure sensationalism and is worthy of investigation. Obviously, this study sides with the latter group. Both sides of this debate are, however, presented in Chapter One: "Why Study Prent?"

Chapter One is necessary because, during the course of this research, that very question was repeatedly posed. It became evident that many people have a strong conviction that there is something inherently

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[2] Tatar, Lustmord 16.
[3] For an in-depth analysis, see: Eberle, World War I and the Weimar Artists.
[4] Unlike the Weimar artists, Prent does not visually mutilate primarily the bodies of women. The acceptance of these former artists' work, and the rejection of Prent's non-gender specific work may suggest tolerance for violence against women.
[5] See Appendix I.

wrong with choosing to study the work of Mark Prent. Chapter One is not specifically organized to be a defense of this enterprise, although it does introduce arguments that Prent is an important Canadian artist. Included in this chapter is a brief biographical sketch of the artist, along with an explanation of a lawsuit that occurred in connection with the exhibition of some of his work.

Prent's work can be seen in relation to the Pop Art of the 1960s, when avant-garde artists turned away from Abstract Expressionism and again adopted recognizable subject matter, but in such a way as to consciously restate and affirm their distrust for traditional standards of iconography.[6] Like Pop Art, Prent's sculptures embrace everyday subject matter and frame it in an entirely new and startling manner with the use of unconventional art materials and artistic means. But this is where the connection with Pop Art ends because Prent's ordinary subject matter conveys political content related to human subjectivity.

In this way, Prent can be compared with American assemblage artist Edward Kienholz, who began working in California in the 1950s. Like Prent, Kienholz took objects and incorporated them with the human figure, often in shocking and brutal ways, to convey new meanings. It must be stressed, however, that both the *similarities* and the *differences* between these two artists are important in order to understand Prent's work in the wider historical context of North American art. Kienholz's work blatantly examines

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[6] Willemiem Ippel, ed., Pop Art (Rotterdam: Kunsthal Rotterdam, 1995) pp. 15-20.

how Prent broke new ground in Canadian art history through his use of horror in sculpture. Although the artist openly denies that his work carries specific meaning, and in fact, hardly talks about his work at all, it is legitimate to read from a postmodern vantage-point. For that matter, the artist was creating his sculpture before the postmodern theories applied here were fully realized. It is essential, however, to stress that the interpretations of Prent's work given in this thesis are the readings of this author and not those of the artist, who, as I have said, will not attribute meanings to it. Included in this chapter are some comparative studies between Prent and other Canadian sculptors to emphasize how he fits (or does not fit) the scope of Canadian art. Also discussed is the vision of postwar British figurative artist Francis Bacon, whose work has been influential to Prent, particularly earlier in his career. A more in-depth comparison is made between Prent and later Canadian artist Jana Sterbak, whose work, although very different from Prent's, raises similar "disturbing" themes. The horror aspects in their work are defined through a comparative analysis, employing the theories of Michel Foucault on *disciplinary power* and *bio-power.* Like Prent, Sterbak challenges contemporary social and political ideology in wholly fantastic representations that relate to the human body and flesh. Unlike Prent, however, Sterbak has made clear connections between her work and postmodern ideas about discourse. But, after all, these artists come from very different backgrounds. Prent is a reserved male modernist, while Sterbak is an outspoken postmodern

feminist. Since Prent began his work on the body in the early Seventies, theorizing of the body and art of the body have become more prevalent. The purpose of this comparison is not to draw connections between these two artists and their work: certainly they are more dissimilar than similar. Nonetheless, there is congruence in the way Sterbak invites her work to be theorized, and the way that Prent's work is theorized in this thesis. This comparison, therefore, assists a comprehension of the analysis of Prent's work, which is more specifically addressed in the following chapter. It also illustrates how horror and the human body have been used, simultaneously and separately, by later generations of Canadian artists (since Prent) to convey meaning.

Chapter Four: "The Horror - Getting To Know The Monster," deals with Mark Prent's consistent use of horror as a genre. How do Prent's sculptures collapse the traditional boundaries of *us* and *them*? And for that matter (because it is not always clear in the artist's work), who or what constitutes *us* and *them*? This chapter examines how Prent's displays of the mutilation and decay of the human body -- incarnations of monsters -- respond to the functioning of contemporary social discourses. In addition, postmodern ideas about the dematerialization and fragmentation of the unitary sense of self are probed as they correlate with the physical dismemberment of Prent's figures.

The conclusion serves to connect and assess the main arguments of the previous chapters: that we need to reconsider our traditional

definitions of "Art;" that we need to broaden our academic study of Canadian art to include art that does not necessarily portray an idealized nature, and a perfected human form; that it is time to acknowledge that contemporary artists in North America have been critically examining society on various levels through the horror genre. Finally, this segment illustrates that Mark Prent is an especially important Canadian artist because he, like Edward Kienholz in the United States, was the first sculptor to put his artistic career up for harsh scrutiny in his own country by daring to explore serious social issues of our day and age through horror. Prent was a forerunner in a genre which has increasingly moved from being marginalized toward becoming a convention of contemporary art.

Chapter One:

Why Study Prent?

"There are only two ways in which one can dislike art. One is to simply not like it; the other is to like it rationally." - Oscar Wilde[8]

Human experience, in all its diversity, including the individual, social, and cultural levels in which it persists, has been investigated by artists throughout the centuries. Likewise, the human body, serving as a vessel for these experiences, pervades the work of artists, both past and present. Not surprisingly, artistic investigation of what constitutes *human*, including the body, gender attributes, and identity, has been far reaching. Society has frequently revered artists who portray the ideal. After all, their work perpetuates dominant ideology through manifestations of tranquility and perfected human forms. Simultaneously, traditional morals, which demonstrate that the fulfillment of social and cultural norms will enable a virtuous society to transpire, are reinstated. On the contrary, artists who probe the somber realms of human nature, and the dismay of the natural or constructed surroundings, must set forth with caution. In other words, if these artists aspire to be tolerated in their own time, they must confine their work to the boundaries of dominant discourse.[9]

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[8] In a letter to Kim Reinhardt on March 19, 2001, Mark Prent provided this quotation as one of his favourite's.

[9] The German Die Brücke artists' group, which formed in 1905, for example, did explore the despondency of human nature, particularly by restricting women to the role of objects of male desire. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner's *Street, Berlin* (1913), for instance, aligned prostitutes with the degeneracy of city life. By establishing this analogy between

What happens, however, when artists do venture beyond these limits? Certainly they are not immediately venerated. Inversely, the nature of their work puts them at risk of dismissal or outright rejection. Such is the case with Mark Prent, who has repeatedly put his credibility as a *serious* artist in jeopardy through his decision (conscious or unconscious) to probe the ineffable and the unthinkable.[10] Yet underlying the dire appearance which predominates in his work exists a consistent disclosure of how individual subjectivity is constructed in and through the body, and in and through those social and psychological processes that shape us.[11] Prent does not acknowledge this issue specifically in his work as one of his intentions in the creative process.[12] Nonetheless, examination of Prent's work points to the functioning of interrelated discourses that make the individual both subject to and subject of what Michel Foucault terms "disciplinary power."[13] When we begin to understand Prent's work as an appropriation of Foucault's conception of disciplinary power, it is no longer

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female sexuality and the decline of society, the Die Brücke artists did not completely abandon the traditional conventions of art and were therefore tolerated as artists, see Tatar, Lustmord 173-75.

[10] For example, artists such as Edvard Munch, whose psychologically dark work steps beyond traditional boundaries in its extremely frank treatments of sex and death, could not be tolerated in his own time. Munch was rejected as an artist by the general public, by progressive artists, and by art critics. See Patricia Berman, "Edvard Munch's *Self-Portrait with Cigarette*: Smoking and the Bohemian Persona," The Art Bulletin, December, 1993, p. 627; and G. Culverwell, Edvard Munch: The Man and His Art (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1979), p. 123.

[11] Foucault discusses systems of discipline and domination that manipulate the body as "bio-power." For a full explanation, see Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, vol. 1, An Introduction (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), pp. 135-57.

[12] Prent often claims, "The most important thing to establish is that I don't have a message." He does not deny that the work carries meaning, just that the value of the meaning is dependant on the viewer. White *Excursions into Darkness* 35.

the visual representation that is so unsettling but, rather, the understanding that we are each as constructed as Prent's sculpture.

The theme of social and cultural criticism operating in Mark Prent's work invites contemplation of the self, especially when the work is perceived coupled with an understanding of disciplinary power. Prent's plastic resin sculptures and environments, which at first appear as nothing more than sensational horror, ultimately press us to examine the darkest of our imaginings. His work demonstrates that the realities that we believe in are, and have always been, constructed products. We are not under our own control; our individual identities, thoughts, and physical beings are products in our equally constructed realities. Through this dismal focus, Prent makes our worst fears manifest, and thus the intensity of the reaction to his work has been profound. But to allow controversy to prevail over serious debate would be a significant snub, not only to Prent, but to contemporary Canadian art in general.

Before a more comprehensive examination of Prent's work, it is imperative to provide a brief biographical sketch of Mark Prent, who is, after all, not a widely recognized Canadian artist. Prent was born in Lodz, Poland, in 1947. The following year, Prent's father, immigrated with his family to Canada.[14] Prent grew up in Montreal, where he attended Sir

[13] For a more in-depth discussion of Foucault see below, Chapter Three, beginning on page 46.
[14] Prent's father is commonly called "a Jewish survivor of the Nazi invasion and Russian labour camps." Colin Macdonald, A Dictionary of Canadian Artists vol. 6 (Ottawa: Canadian Paperbacks, 1982), p. 1825. In a letter to Kim Reinhardt on March 19, 2001, Mark Prent clarified his father's situation: "He was, in fact, held prisoner in a Russian

George Williams University (predecessor to today's Concordia University). He earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1970, studying Visual Art under painter and printmaker Yves Gaucher and sculptor John Ivor Smith. In an interview with Michael White in 1971, Prent attributed the development of his sense of formal aesthetic relationships to Gaucher, and his respect for form and shape, as the key meaning of sculpture, to Smith.[15] White elaborated on this observation, noting that Prent's relationship to his mentors' work does not go beyond those parameters.[16] Indeed, Prent's work produced in the early 1970s not only established the unusual amalgamation of Fine Art and Horror, but also adverted to many traditional ideals of art -- heroism, sentimentality, beauty, and so on.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Prent received numerous honours and awards, including the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship (1977) and several Canada Council grants. This federal support was necessary, especially early in his career, because most of his work was not sellable to the average collector, although a few individuals, including Edward Keinholz, and prominent institutions have purchased pieces by him. The Canada Council Art Bank, for instance, acquired his Death in the Chair (1973) and Hanging is Very Important (1973).[17] By the mid 1970s, Prent was gaining international recognition as an artist. In 1975, for example, he

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work camp (not German!). Stalin didn't trust the Poles - Jewish or otherwise, and so many were sent to Russian work camps."

[15] Michael White, "Art - Mark Prent - Power Through Horror," The Gazette (Montreal), April 3, 1971, p. 46.

[16] Ibid.

received an invitation from the Deutsches Akademischer Austauschdienst Guest Artist in Berlin Program (DAAD), an honour awarded to artists of international merit. With that fellowship Prent was able to live and work in West Berlin for a year. Since then, his work has been exhibited around the world, and he has had solo exhibitions at renowned institutions, such as the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam (1978), the Akademie der Kunst in Berlin (1975), and the Musée d'art contemporain in Montreal (1979).[18]

These accomplishments, although impressive, have been overshadowed by political controversy arising from Canadian reaction to the horrific subject matter of his work. The paramount conflict occurred early in the artist's career, when he exhibited at the Isaacs Gallery in Toronto. It was Prent's first solo exhibition at the gallery, in 1972, and reaction to the show led to a criminal charge against the gallery owner, Av Isaacs, for exhibiting "a disgusting object" -- parts of the human anatomy.[19] The complaint came from a private citizen in sympathy with the Western Guard, a group formerly known as the Edmund Burke Society which protested the show.[20] The charge was laid by activating a law which had been on the books since 1892, but seldom if ever invoked.[21] Eventually the charge was withdrawn. Another show at the Isaacs Gallery in 1974 again brought charges, which

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[17]---------------. Canadian Artists in Exhibition 1973-44, vol. 2 of The National Artists' Survey of Canada (Toronto: The Roundstone Council for the Arts, 1974), p. 146.
[18] See Appendix 2, exhibition list. The Stedelijk Museum is considered to be one of the most prestigious contemporary museums in Europe. The last Canadian invited to exhibit there was Paul-Emile Borduas in the early 1950s.
[19] Geoffrey James, "Justice – What is Disgusting?," Time Magazine March 13, 1972, p. 18.
[20] Ibid.

were also later withdrawn. Both exhibitions attracted widespread attention.[22]

On February 26, 1974, "The Isaacs Defense Conference" was held at York University, Toronto, where a showing of the Prent's sculptures opened for one week.[23] The panelists of the symposium were journalist Barry Callaghan; Joe Green, York's Dean of Fine Arts; artist Edward Kienholz; Rev. Bruce Mcleod, Moderator of the United Church of Canada; Peter Sepp, Visual Arts Officer of the Ontario Arts Council; and Michael Greenwood, Curator of the York University Art Gallery.[24] Letters and telegrams from art authorities around the world expressing astonishment that the Canadian law (not being the traditional charge of obscenity) could carry such a provision to be used for this purpose came to the attention of the symposium panelists: "Appalled... a shame that in a democratic countries censorship is used against creations of artists ... in a democratic country it must be impossible to forbid artistic events... the news I heard especially alarmed me as Canada is a liberal constitutional state where things like this should be impossible... we are shocked."[25] Overall, the message was clear: the exhibition of art is a matter of freedom of expression and consequently vital and important to everyone. Not all the panelists, however,

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[21] Ibid.
[22] Glisserman, "Mark Prent, Av Isaacs and 'Disgusting Objects'," Artscanada Spring 1974, p. 92-94.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Response came from Berlin, Amsterdam, Paris, Switzerland, USA, and Canada. Ibid 93.

necessarily agreed as to the application of limits then imposed by law.[26] For that matter, it is noteworthy that the parameters of the right of expression are constituents of one of the most consistently debated topics in the history of art.

In 1966 Edward Kienholz had gone through a similar experience to Prent's when an exhibit of his at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art was attacked on moral grounds by two politicians. In this instance, however, it was the complainants, Warren Dorn and Kenneth Hahn, not the artist, who sustained a humiliating defeat at the hands of the press (fig. 1).[27] Furthermore, unlike Prent's career, Kienholz's flourished after his controversy.[28] Nonetheless, the public continues to associate the work of both artists with the particular incidents and "objects" involved. Ironically, the work by Prent accused by the press of "sensationalism," literally became sensational in the hands of the press. Although the outcome of Prent's experience at the Isaacs's Gallery was not good, the artist did receive some "fringe benefits" from the scrutiny of the critics. Specifically, Prent's exhibit got publicity, which in turn attracted record numbers of

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Dorn and Hahn tried to lead the County Board of Supervisors to close the exhibition because of objections to Back Seat Dodge (fig. 5), and ROXY'S (fig. 8). Kienholz gained overwhelming support of the media when he justified his work at a major press conference soon after the out break of controversy. Robert L. Pincus, On a Scale That Competes with the World: The Art of Edward and Nancy Reddin Kienholz. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), p. 108.

[28] Walter Hopps, ed., Kienholz - A Retrospective (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art in association with Distributive Art Publisher, 1996), p. 255.

curious gallery visitors.[29] And Prent has welcomed publicity, of any kind: "The only kind of bad publicity is no publicity."[30]

Indeed, Prent's work forces its viewers to contemplate the definition and function of art in our society. For many people at the time, Prent's work was simply blasphemous, designed for sensationalism. For them, Prent's work represented a kind of anti-art, a cynical slap in the face of integrity. And indeed, Prent's work is sensational, but this is only its immediate effect. Others could see artistic merit in Prent's work in its ability to make them think critically. Nonetheless, the gap between these two groups caused conflict, which encumbered the rise of the artist's career.

After returning from Germany, Prent resumed working on his sculptures in one of Concordia University's art annexes until the early 1980s, when he relocated to St. Albans, Vermont.[31] In 1992 Prent and his wife, Susan Real, set up a new business, *Pink House Studios Inc.*, to market life-molding products and Prent's technical expertise.[32] Today, Prent is occupied with the business in Vermont but still manages to sculpt and exhibit his work. In addition, he presents life-molding workshops regularly at the bi-annual Sculpture Conferences of the International Sculpture Center, which has its headquarters in Washington, D.C.[33]

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[29] Glisserman, *Mark Prent, Av Isaacs* 93.
[30] Mark Prent comments as a symposium panelist: "Figurative Sculpture - Realism Today," Sculpture Today - 10th International Sculpture Centre - 31 May-4 June 1978, Toronto. (Toronto: 10th International Sculpture Conference, 1980), p. 50.
[31] Kimberly Reinhardt telephone interview with Mark Prent, January 27, 2000.
[32] For more about Pink House Studios, Inc., see: http://www.pinkhouse.com/index.html
[33] http://www.pinkhouse.com/index.html

Mark Prent provides the opportunity to view the human form and the human condition in mutilation. To what extent are we able to forget this experience is a question which lies at the heart of the significance of his work. A group of four Montreal filmmakers, of Saint Cloud Films, considered exactly that matter in 1974, when they made a half-hour film about Prent.[34] For the majority of the film, Prent is diligently constructing his installation, If Brains Were Dynamite, You Wouldn't Have Enough to Blow Your Nose (1974), from which the film receives its name. This is a life-like sculpture of a naked male quadruple amputee, wearing a leather harness equipped with a hearing aid, sitting in a wheelchair. There is an unsettling ambiguity to the figure as he sits back, tilted to one side, staring blankly through glasses with his tongue sticking out. Is the figure taunting us, or is he completely out of his own control?

The documentary introduces Prent without the contemptuous bias that usually surrounds him. We learn that he is diligent, careful about detail, and good-humoured. We see how each mold is made directly from Prent's own body, a process that requires him to lie still, often for hours, while heavy plaster hardens about him. We also learn that Prent is not only committed to the supervision of all necessary packaging and shipping, but that he personally prepares each environment for display.

Mark Prent's range of subjects over the last thirty years is broad: from narrative scenes in butcher shops and photo booths, to representations of

[34] For a review of this film see, Mark Lipson, "Environments, Instant and Otherwise,"

athletic figures and humans affected by illness and genetic defects. Prent embraces everyday activities, places, and paraphernalia, and presents them in entirely new ways through the genre of horror. The outcome conveys powerful ongoing concerns, particularly with the essential frailty of the human body and the subjectivity of human existence. Herein lies the fundamental importance of a study of the work of Mark Prent. It is serious and critical art that has the power to awaken us; to foster an awareness of the shifting patterns of power within society, and of how they relate to the self. Prent has made a marked contribution to Canadian art and to art in general, which is more thoroughly discussed in the following chapters -- a contribution that has been largely underrated.

Artmagazine October/ November 1976, pp. 34-35.

Chapter Two:

Mark Prent and Edward Kienholz – Finding A Place in North American Art

At the 1974 *Isaacs Defense Conference,* held at York University, artist Edward Kienholz was asked the fundamental question: What is art? He replied: "Art is what the artist considers art."[35] His sincere yet brief statement was certainly too ambiguous to satisfy the primary concern of the other conference panelists: the freedom to expose art without unreasonable restraint ("if it is art").[36] Nonetheless, the enigmatic nature of Kienholz's response points to other issues: Are there, or should there be, limits on what constitutes art? And, does an object carry, create, or adjust meanings more if it is art, than if it is something else (assuming these are requirements of art)? The intention of this thesis is not to establish a concrete, universally accepted definition of "art," an obviously impossible endeavour. There is no consensus on this issue, and, therefore, tolerance of various expressions is necessary. The limitation of tolerance, however, is another issue in itself.

Given the focus of *the Isaacs Defense Conference*, it is not surprising that Edward Kienholz, representing the point of view of a contemporary figurative artist, was asked to join the group of distinguished panelists. He, like Prent, dealt with the subjectivity of human existence, and centered much

[35] Glisserman, *Mark Prent, Av Isaacs* 92.

of his work on the body. Furthermore, Kienholz's work, frequently described as an "art of actuality," has been attacked on moral grounds and has also met accusations of being nothing more than sensationalism.[37] This chapter provides a comparison between Prent and Kienholz, and their career experiences with an emphasis on their important influential relationship which developed early in Prent's career. Although his work was in fact very different from Prent's, Kienholz became a mentor for the young Canadian artist who had endured his own share of hostile criticism.

In an interview with Joyce Zemans, Prent stated that the work of Edward Kienholz influenced him, but "...just in the sense of giving me a certain confidence in myself and in the type of work that I was doing."[38] Evidently, Prent was, in fact, in search of support for the type of work he was doing. In 1972, upon numerous suggestions, Prent looked up the work of Edward Kienholz.[39] At the time, Prent was not familiar with Kienholz's work and had difficulty finding sources on it. He did, however, find literature and photographic reproductions of Kienholz's work, which prompted him to contact Kienholz personally.[40] That year, Prent arranged to visit the artist at

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Nievers, *Ed Kienholz and the Actuality of Art* 6-7.

[38] Joyce Zemans, "An Interview With Controversial Artist Mark Prent," The Canadian Forum August 1974, p. 5.

[39] In an interview Prent explained how he came to know Kienholz personally, and the nature of their friendship: Reinhardt, *Interview with Mark Prent.*

[40] It should be understood that in 1981 Edward Kienholz declared in writing that all work, from 1972 onward, would be co-signed by his wife, Nancy Reddin Kienholz. See Robert L. Pincus, On a Scale That Competes with the World: The Art of Edward and Nancy Reddin Kienholz. (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), p. 108. Edward also publicly announced this collaboration at "The Kienholz Women" exhibition at Galerie Maeght, Zurich, in 1981: "My life and my art have been enriched and incredibly fulfilled by Nancy's presence, and I wish to belatedly acknowledge that fact here. I

his home in Los Angeles, where he stayed for about three weeks. Kienholz (also impressed with Prent's work) purchased several of Prent's sculptures during the visit.[41] This friendship gave Prent assurance for the type of sculpture he made and led to Prent's introduction to the European art scene. During his visit to Los Angeles, Prent was encouraged and guided by Kienholz to apply for the status of Deutsches Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) Artist in Berlin.[42] It would provide a chance for Prent to emerge on the European scene, and for further contact between the two artists. And in 1975, with the support of separate German art grants, both Prent and Edward Kienholz (who was by that time working in collaboration with Nancy Reddin Kienholz) traveled to live and work in Berlin.[43] It is clear that the two artists were close.

Like Prent's sculptures, Kienholz's pieces are rooted in human fears and social concerns. Both artists have probed these issues through various displays of the human figure, incorporated with found objects. But their individual processes of creation, and the extent of intentional meaning that each artist has attributed to his work, are vastly different. In fact, Kienholz's approach is nearly the opposite of Prent's; yet, thematically their work shows considerable congruence.

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further feel I no longer have a man's right to sign only my name to these efforts which have been produced by both of us....," see Walter Hopps, ed., Kienholz - A Retrospective (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art in association with Distributive Art Publisher, 1996), p. 256.

[41] Reinhardt, *Interview with Mark Prent.*

[42] Ibid.

Kienholz's The State Hospital, (fig. 2), conceived in 1964 but realized in 1966, reflects the artist's direct approach to the subject at hand. This assemblage exists in three parts: the title-plaque and description, 'The Drawing,' and finally the actual sculpture. It was patterned after Kienholz's experience of a mental institution where he had been employed in 1948.[44] He was horrified by the inhumane treatment of patients of the hospital, and, in retrospect, Kienholz noted that he created this work as an angry indictment of all such places.[45] An abstract from his blueprint of the work, dated two years before its realization, reveals Kienholz's process of working out his concept to the smallest detail:

> This is a tableau about an old man who is a patient in a state mental hospital. He is in an arm restraint on a bed in a bare room. (This piece will have to include an actual room consisting of walls, ceiling, barren door, etc.) There will be only a bedpan and a hospital table (just out of reach). The man is naked. He hurts. He has been beaten on the stomach with a bar of soap wrapped in a towel (to hide tell-tale bruises). His head is a lighted fish bowl with water that contains two live black fish. He lies very still on his side. There is no sound in the room.
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> Above the old man in the bed is his exact duplicate, including the bed (beds will be stacked liked bunks). The upper figure will also have the fish bowl head, two black fish, etc. But, additionally, it will be encased in some kind of lucite or plastic bubble (perhaps similar to a cartoon balloon), representing the man's thoughts.

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[43] Kienholz received a Guggenheim grant: see "Biography," in Edward Kienholz - ROXYS and other works (exhibition catalogue), (Berlin: Sammlung Reinhard Onnasch, 1982), p. 99.

[44] David Scott, ed., Edward Kienholz: Tableaux 1961-1979 (Dublin: David Scott, Cahill Printers, 1981), p. 27.

[45] --------------------, "Edward Kienholz," Art and Artists Vol. 6, no. 3, June 1971, p. 17.

> His mind can't think for him past the present moment. He is committed there for the rest of his life."[46]

Prent's work, although equally meticulous in detail, does not begin with a preconceived idea of the final product[47] Instead, each of his sculptures originates from a particular industrially designed and manufactured object, to which Prent had been drawn, often simply for its own intrinsic qualities - be it attractiveness, material, colour, or shape.[48] He has openly discussed his fascination with objects and his use of them as starting-points: "I create objects because that is what satisfies me personally. In building up an object, a lot of the ideas develop from just seeing it.... Therefore the object is a very important thing to me and the end product, which is an object, only on a larger scale, becomes very important to me."[49] The artist has a whole collection of objects for art, such as antiques, nostalgia articles, novelty items, assorted mechanical pieces, and so on, which he stores in his studio in Vermont. Those objects, he explained, "give [him] ideas for sculptures that are always a play between the human figure and the object, or an integration of the human figure with the object."[50] He sees himself basically as an "intuitive artist" because he purposely leaves things as open-ended as possible during the creative process. With this technique, Prent finds himself "going down a road that is

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[46] Scott, Edward Kienholz 27.
[47] Reinhardt, *Interview with Mark Prent.*
[48] Ibid.
[49] Zemans, *Interview With Controversial Artist* 6.
[50] Reinhardt, *Interview with Mark Prent.*

unknown, in some sense," which "makes the creative process exciting and interesting throughout the entire development of the work."[51]

From the outset, Prent and Kienholz worked using different methods: Kienholz's was extremely premeditated, often based upon facets of his own experiences; Prent's process operates as a combination of stream of conscious and unconscious events. Yet each artist includes found objects as integral components of his work. For Kienholz, however, the fascination of objects was their ability to reveal to him ideological aspects of the society from which they came. Kienholz explained, "I really begin to understand any society by going through its junk stores and flea markets. It is a form of education and historical orientation for me. I can see the results of ideas in what is thrown away by culture."[52] For Prent, the object simply represents an item that appeals to him, an object with the potential to become the basis of a thought-provoking sculpture.[53]

The art of the *object trouvé* (or found object) has its origins in Dada and Surrealism, and later in Pop Art. The relationship between these movements and the art of Mark Prent and Edward Kienholz, however, is problematic and requires clarification. To begin, both Prent and Kienholz have taken themselves as artists, and their work as *art*, far too seriously to be considered as simply extensions of the Dada movement. These artists have envisioned possibilities for found objects in a very different way from,

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Robert Helm, ed., Edward Kienholz: Sculpture 1976- 1979 (Catalogue of exhibition in Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle, Nov. 3 - Dec. 16, 1979).

say, that of Dada artist Marcel Duchamp. Duchamp's celebrated ready-mades, such as a snow shovel exhibited under the title In Advance of the Broken Arm (1915), demonstrate the true spirit of Dada. Duchamp presented his ready-mades as pure and unadulterated objects, and their meaning or meaninglessness as self-contained. Duchamp's use of the store-bought shovel in this way implied that the object had not been defined and that it could therefore be used in any way at all.[54] But in Prent's and Kienholz's use of objects there is a sense that the items have already defined themselves. The placement of these *defined* found objects in the art of Prent and Kienholz with other objects, and/or with sculpted elements, however, creates new meanings. Thus, although the found object is often the point of departure for their sculptures, something which to an extent relates to methods of certain Dada artists, the final sculpture created by Prent or Kienholz is intended to carry meaning in and through itself.[55]

Prent's Imagine Me (1981), (fig. 3), consists of an actual vintage photo-booth, commonly found in shopping centres in the 1970s and 1980s. The booth is culturally understood as an inexpensive, instant portrait dispenser. Like that of Duchamp, and of Kienholz, Prent's use of the found object does not involve altering its physical appearance. In other words, we see Prent's object for what it is, a photo-booth. Its relationship with sculpted

[53] In interview, Prent explained that he believes good art should stimulate the mind, raise questions, make you think. Reinhardt *Interview with Mark Prent.*
[54] For a study on the work of Marcel Duchamp, see Dawn Ades, Neil Cox, and David Hopkins, Marcel Duchamp (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1999).
[55] For an elaboration on Kienholz related to Dadaism see John Coplans, "Assemblage: the Savage Eye of Edward Kienholz," Studio International September, 1965, p. 112.

elements, in this case, a constructed female figure, and its dependence on viewer's participation, however, separate this work from Duchamp's Dada ready-mades.

This treatment of the object creates a context for multiple meanings to manifest themselves. In Imagine Me, the photo-booth is presented to the viewer as being occupied by a (presumably) beautiful woman. The woman is represented only by the display of her slender, stocking-clad legs and red high-heel shoes beneath the closed curtain, which iconographically allude to her feminine attractiveness. Both mental and physical participation of the viewer are crucial in this piece. We are tempted to anticipate the woman's appearance first by the title, then by the physical hint of idealized female sexuality. Motivated by desire, the viewer inserts coins into the booth to obtain an actual photo strip depicting the woman concealed inside.[56] Immediately, the sculpture becomes a metaphor for the commodification of the woman - whereby the woman is the product, the booth is her venue, and the viewer is the consumer. Upon receiving the greatly anticipated photo strip of the woman inside, the viewer, who was once attracted, is suddenly repulsed.[57] The photographs, a sequence of four, reveal the figure's transformation from woman to beast, or, to use Rosi Braidotti's terminology,

[56] The visual signifying systems, such as the red high-heels and French-net stockings, construct the female body as a docile object of male desire. In Foucault terms, however, this work presents seduction as an exercise of power in which the one wielding the power of seduction controls both the attraction and repulsion of the one being seduced.
[57] Rosi Braidotti discusses the dynamics of attraction and repulsion, noting that psychoanalytical theory takes it as the fundamental structure of the mechanism of desire. Rosi Braidotti, Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 81.

a *monster*.[58] By participating in the process, the viewer has changed from a role of passive reception to active production. In this instance, the viewer plays a key role in the commodification of women as docile subjects for the male gaze. By depicting the opposite to what we had expected, Prent exposes the way gender identities are constructed through contemporary discourse. It is this type of meaning development through the use of found objects that vastly separates the work of Mark Prent and Edward Kienholz from that of the Dada artists. The overall effect of the work by Prent and Kienholz is calculated to transcend a purely anti-art, Dada stance.

The Surrealist techniques of juxtaposing images or objects not normally associated, of collage, of mixing genres and media, and of shunning self-conscious aestheticism, can be identified, to a certain extent, in the work of both Prent and Kienholz. But their relationship with the movement really begins and ends with matters of technique. Neither artist has expressed or, revealed through his work a deep spiritual affiliation with Surrealism. For that matter, most, if not all, of these features have been widely drawn on by many other Western artists and so have become largely absorbed into our artistic tradition. What *is* Surrealist about the work of Prent and Kienholz, however, is its sense of uncomfortable drama and its ability to engage images and objects. Their work, not unlike the paintings of

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[58] Braidotti defines *monster* as part of the discourse of the "history and philosophy of the biological sciences, and their relation to difference and to different bodies." She adds, "Monsters are human beings who are born with congential malformations of their bodily organism. They represent the in between, the mix, the ambivalent as implied in the ancient Greek root of the word *monsters, teras,* which means both horrible and wonderful, object of aberration and adoration." Braidotti, Nomadic Subjects 77.

Salvador Dali, presents hallucinogenatory qualities, emerging from true-to-life decor and human figures. In Edward and Nancy Reddin Kienholz's first collaboration, The Middle Islands (1972), (fig. 4), the growth of monstrous heads from what appear to be human torsos recalls the kind of controlled horror that characterized Dali's early work and the Surrealist films of Luis Bunuel, especially *Un Chien andalou* (1929).[59] Likewise, Prent's athletic figures of the early 1980s, such as Drosophila (1984), (fig. 5), which is frozen in mid-movement and has fin-like limbs in place of legs and feet, have an undeniably Surrealist stillness.

Prent's and Kienholz's use of actual objects and everyday settings constitute their most immediate link with the Pop Art of the Sixties. While many of Kienholz's tableaux pieces of this period suggest the isolation and alienation of the consumer in a capitalist society, his work offers a depth of significance that Pop artists like Lichtenstein, Warhol, or Jasper Johns refused.[60] At a talk given in 1964, Roy Lichtenstein summarized his

[59] Nancy Reddin Kienholz gives an interpretation of The Middle Islands in the Denmark exhibition catalogue in 1979, which David Scott summarizes as follows: "*The Middle Islands* in fact represent the *Middle Years* of a married couple, the chromed roof racks which separate their beds symbolizing the distance that has developed between them. The wife's passively expectant or aggressively sexual stance reflects the crisis of the menopause, a crisis mocked by the lusicious red lips which as a relic of her youth in its blossom. Simultaneously together and separate, the couple give nourishment to each other's despair." In Bunuel's *Un Chien andalou*, a skinned and severed donkey's head, resembling the heads of the Kienholzes' creatures, rolled into a room on a grand piano. Scott, Edward Kienholz 13.

[60] In the early Sixties, Kienholz created the "Concept Tableaux" which was a set of ideas for proposed tableaux. The Concept Tableaux, consisting of a brass title plaque and a document describing the work, could be purchased by a buyer who then had the opportunity to finance the work's realization. Four of the Concept Tableaux were eventually realized: The State Hospital, The Commercial #2, The Portable War Memorial, and The Art Show. See Hopps Kienholz - A Retrospective 254.

understanding of the intentions of Pop Art and the significance of commercial objects, of "things":

> Pop may be seen as a product of two twentieth century tendencies: one from the outside - the subject matter; and the other from within - an esthetic sensibility. The subject matter, of course, is commercialism and commercial art; but its contribution is the isolation and glorification of the "Thing." Commercial art is not our art, it is our subject matter and in that sense it is nature; but it is considered completely at odds with the major direction of art during and since the Renaissance and particularly at odds with our directly preceding movement- Abstract Expressionism. Commercial art runs contrary to a major art current in the sense that it concentrates on *thing* rather than *environment*; on *figure* rather than *ground*.[61]

Thus, whereas the Pop artist, such as Andy Warhol in his repeated tins of Campbell's soup, took great care to preserve the maximum banality of his commercial object Kienholz in his objects stressed specific significance in different contexts. This was true even when Kienholz's objects were attached to commercial brand names. His controversial Back Seat Dodge '38 (1966), (fig. 6), for example, incorporates *Olympia* brand beer bottles, which litter the ground and the floor of the car. In this tableau, the brand name of the object alludes to the plain in the Peleponnese on which the Olympic Games took place.[62] It was also the site where the statue of Hermes by Praxiteles was found.[63] Thus, through the use of the *Olympia* beer bottles, Kienholz invites comparison between the athletic ability of the

[61] Ellen H. Johnson, ed., American Artists on Art - From 1940 to 1980 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1982), p. 103.
[62] Scott, Edward Kienholz 13.

chicken wire "Hermes" seen in the back seat, and his classical antecedents of ancient Greece. The name *Olympia* also impels comparison between the sexual availability of Manet's Olympia and Kienholz's crudely plastered female figure. As this example illustrates, Kienholz's interest in objects was much different from that of Pop artists and of Dada artists before them. Artists of these movements valued the objects purely as objects, whereas Kienholz was more interested in objects for the way they encoded meanings. Also, while the Pop artists were basically in sympathy with contemporary commercial culture, Kienholz and Prent seem to be horrified by its banality.

Prent, who was just starting his artistic education in the late Sixties, emerged as a practising artist just as the Pop Art movement was winding to an end. He inherited the turn to representation Pop Art had once again made respectable; on the other hand, this may explain why Prent's sculptures seem to have even less to do with Pop Art than did Kienholz's. The hyper-reality of Prent's sculptures may indeed link them more to Super-Realist sculpture of the "New Realism" movement. Compare, for example, Imagine Me with the New Realist sculpture by Duane Hanson (b. 1925). The coloured sculptures by Hanson, such as Dishwasher (1973), (fig. 7), are so extreme in their verisimilitude that they can unnerve the viewer who comes upon them unknowingly. Like Prent's work, Hanson's life-like sculptures were cast from living models with flesh-coloured polyester or

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[63] Ibid.

plastic resins.[64] Unlike Prent's work, however, Hanson's demonstrates trompe-l'oeil illusionism with the intention of representing the actual appearance of the model. After his mold was broken, Hanson would paint the figure and apply actual clothing and real accessories that would relate to the style and personality of the model.[65] Thus, Hanson's figures provide a much more reserved reflection of everyday life than work of the Pop Art movement. They appear almost as three-dimensional snapshots of life, and in this way give the illusion of being objective, making them seem to fit Ivan Karp's definition of New Realism as an art that "does not make a comment, that is objective."[66] To an extent, Hanson's sculptures of everyday people in their everyday situations are objective; they represent real likenesses. The process of immortalizing these individuals as works of art, however, challenges us to consider the social fabric of our culture and the values we assign to it. Hanson's technique embellished his subject with a sense of importance, thereby detracting from its potential to be completely objective.

While Hanson's work fits Karp's classification of New Realism, Prent's life-size figures certainly do not. Unlike Hanson's sculptures, Prent's are not intended to represent a particular person drawn from everyday life. Moreover, Prent's figures are rarely dressed in contemporary clothing, or in any clothing for that matter. Often, it is Prent's placement of

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[64] For a detailed explanation of Hanson's sculpture process, see Kirk Varnedoe, Duane Hanson (New York: Abrams, 1985), pp. 37-41.
[65] Ibid.

the figure in usual situations or with particular objects, such as in Thawing Out (1972), (fig. 8), that moves the content from the real to the surreal. Although Thawing Out uses an actual industrial freezer and an extremely life-like figure, it is not a scene from real life. Unlike Hanson's work, this sculpture evokes the metaphysical. It horrifies us by evoking human fears of being buried alive, of suffering from hypothermia, and of becoming completely helpless. We immediately wonder how this could have happened to the figure, and consider it happening to ourselves.

While Hanson's figures appear to occupy their own space in that they do not directly engage the viewer, the wide eyes and open mouth of Prent's thawing man are very confrontational. We see the anguish in the man's face, and we anticipate the moment when he will finally break free from the suffocating ice that engulfs him. It is this potential in Prent's work to evoke multiple commentaries on our existence that ultimately distinguishes him from Hanson or any other New Realist. Nonetheless, the realistic appearance of Prent's figures points to the verisimilitude of this style that emerged in the late Sixties.

Like Prent's sculptures, Kienholz's early tableaux, and those he later produced with Nancy, are dependent on the viewer's presence. A photographic reproduction simply cannot convey the impact of these artists' work. Nor can a photograph permit a viewer to literally participate in the work, as so many of Prent's and the Kienholzes' work require. Physical

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[66] Johnson, "American Artists" 167.

attendance and participation in these works change the viewer's role from passive reception to active involvement in the drama at hand. Edward Kienholz's first tableaux, ROXY'S (1960-61), (fig. 9), represents a turning point in the artist's oeuvre, which would become characteristic of his work. The necessary involvement of the viewer was part of this new development.[67] The original showing of the exhibition, in 1962, at the Ferus Gallery in Los Angeles, was also a landmark event for the city because it established Kienholz as one of three major postwar assemblage artists (along with Rauschenberg and Joseph Cornell).[68] When assembled, ROXY'S recreated the interior of what Kienholz imagined a particular brothel (that once actually existed in Las Vegas) to be like.[69] Out of respect for "the girls" in the brothel tableau, Kienholz enforced a strict dress code of formal attire on visitors attending the opening.[70] He clearly noted that he "...wanted people to be on their very best behaviour. No one should look down on the girls or feel superior to them."[71] Thus, from the privacy of their own dressing rooms, gallery guests began to participate in the tableaux drama. As they literally prepared their appearance to meet the girls, the visitors also anticipated the experience that they would have at the brothel.

Upon entering the "brothel," the viewer took on the role of its patron. But Kienholz's "girls" were obviously not like the sexually available women

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[67] Hopps Kienholz – A Retrospective 90, and Edward Kienholz – ROXY'S and other works exhibition catalogue (Berlin: Sammlung Reinhard Onnasch, 1982).
[68] Pincus, 30.
[69] Hopps Kienholz – A Retrospective 90
[70] Pincus, 30.
[71] --------------- "Edward Kienholz," Art and Artists Vol. 6, no. 3, June 1971, p. 15.

one might expect to find in such places. In this way, Kienholz subverted our constructed expectations, much as Prent subverted our ideas about the woman in Imagine Me. But, unlike Prent, Kienholz made many of his pieces, including this tableau, significantly narrative. Here, each grossly deformed or mutilated prostitute was assigned her own story and personality, which the viewer uncovered as he or she became more "intimate" with each female figure.[72] Moving through the brothel and discovering the human stories behind the hideous images of the girls, the viewer's interpretation of the subject would transform from "low life" to "home life." The emphasis on the contrast between the repulsive appearance of the women and the commonplace domestic setting of the brothel establishes sordid contradictions in society, especially contradictions between appearances and reality. The work, however, does not moralize nor make cynical commentary on the economy. In fact, it is its lack of these characteristics which seems to evoke the metaphysical, thereby leaving the viewer with a sense of unease.

Like ROXY'S and other tableaux pieces by the Kienholzes, Prent's sculptures and environments often incorporate kinetic properties, which emphasize the need for the viewer's participation. In Prent's Ovibos Moschatus: Dream of a Woman (1986), (fig. 10), which is discussed further in Chapter Four, a coin-operated mechanism raises a blind to allow viewing through a window into a small environment. Much as in ROXY'S, the viewer

[72] For a story example see, ROXY'S and other works 34.

here takes on the role of the prostitute's patron and anticipates the appearance of the (presumably) sexually available woman inside. Again, the viewer is shocked by the unexpected. Behind the blind, an animated anthropomorphic figure is giving birth. It is a grotesque image that, like ROXY'S, also points to contradictions in society -- in this case, the psychological underpinnings of society's paradoxical attitudes, especially toward women's roles.[73] Finally, like so many of Kienholz's tableaux, this environment, and others by Prent, are neither a moral accusation nor a display of cynicism. It leaves the viewer with a sense of void, as if something has been removed that cannot be determined. This empty ambiguity leads to the dread that is later felt. These types of environments created by Prent and the Kienholzes recall miniature film sets and, like many films, manage to involve the viewer directly because they appear to relate closely to actual experiences. The strategic elements employed by these artists tend to be unexpected and therefore take the viewer by surprise, increasing the horrific quality of what is depicted.

Kienholz's work was ground-breaking in the history of American art, which may explain why even today people have trouble assigning his art to a specific category. He was probing the more somber realms of human existence as ealy as the 1950s and throughout the Cold War, and also during the rebellious years of the Vietnam War -- a socially and politically

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[73] Specifically, Ovibos Moschatus: Dream of a Woman illustrates Rosi Braidotti's theorectical model of woman/mother as monster, which is discussed in Chapter Four. Braidotti Nomadic Subjects 79-83.

sensitive time in the US. This climate combined with his open and well articulated approach to creating work, most specifically separates Kienholz from Prent. Nonetheless, Kienholz's use of horror and the human body, and the controversy that stemmed from it, attracted Prent. As an influence on his career and as a source of inspiration, Kienholz is an important figure in the study of the work and career of Mark Prent. An analytical comparison of their work, emphasizing how these two artists diverge from major movements of the Twentieth century, and are also distinct from each other, aids an understanding Prent in the context of North American art.

In comprehending Prent in the context of Canadian art, the difference in the overall acceptance of these two artists within their own countries is noteworthy. In this development, however, it is essential not to confuse *understanding Prent in a Canadian context* with *fitting him into such a context*. It is not necessary for Prent, or any artist, to be categorically slotted in order to be interpreted. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to consider the social, economic and political conditions and various influences present during the rise of an artist's career. The intention of the comparison in this chapter between Prent and Kienholz, and their career experiences has been to emphasize the important influential relationship that developed. Comprehending Prent, therefore, requires this general discussion of Kienholz. Furthermore, although Kienholz's work is similar to Prent's, in that it delves into the darkness of humanity and exposes the body as the site of horror, Kienholz's work is widely celebrated, while Prent's is still

rarely given serious consideration, despite the success he has had in Europe. This difference points more to variation between the societies of Canada and the United States, than to a distinction between what these two artists were doing in their own work. That variation is the subject of Chapter Three, "Understanding Prent in Canada."

Chapter Three:

Understanding Prent in Canada

Perhaps a niche will never exist for Mark Prent in Canadian art. Nonetheless, interpreting and comprehending him as a Canadian artist requires an examination of the major trends and events in this country that coincided with his early career. Although the most prominent art movements occurring in the United States in the second half of the twentieth century were echoed in Canada's largest cultural centres, additional factors distinctive to Canada should be highlighted. Specifically, the development of sculpture in Canada has been especially gradual; it was not a substantial genre in this country until after 1960.[74] At that time, many more Canadian artists than formerly began to express themselves in three-dimensional forms, as resources and venues to exhibit sculpture increased. Writing for Maclean's in 1963 about the rise of sculpture, Robert Fulford noted: "Whether they like it or not, Canadians will see a great deal more sculpture in the next few years than they've seen in the last few years."[75]

Several factors led to the new attitudes toward sculpture in the Sixties, beginning with the organization of the Canadian Arts Council in 1957. In 1958 the federal government's Department of Public Works

[74] Efforts were made, however, to encourage a substantial range and depth in Canadian sculpture through the contribution of Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Clark, who founded *The Guild* in 1932.
[75] Robert Fulford. Maclean's vol. 76, no. 16, August 24, 1963, p. 23.

established a program to commission works of art, including sculpture, to be put on display at building projects across the country.[76] In 1962 the National Gallery began to organize juried sculpture exhibitions, which would showcase the work of leading new Canadian sculptors. Dorothy Cameron was also highly influential in the promotion of contemporary Canadian sculpture. A 1964 exhibition, *Canadian Sculpture Today,* organized by Cameron at her Toronto gallery, *Here and Now*, and her organization of the *Sculpture '67* exhibition at the National Gallery in 1967 brought considerable attention to the rise of Canadian sculpture.[77] In the catalogue for the *Canadian Sculpture Today* exhibit, Robert Fulford argued that sculpture has a humanizing value: "...sculptors are slowly convincing Canadian society of their value – indeed, they are proving that we need them as much as they need us. Without the grace and humanity of sculpture, our cities and our buildings can be coldly inhuman; with sculpture . . . they can be infused with life, passion, adventure, and challenge."[78] Expo '67, hosted in Montreal, also brought the public's attention to the quality and variety of Canadian sculpture, as numerous pieces were commissioned and put on display.[79]

Indeed, by 1967 "new sculpture," largely abstract and showing concern for the major issues in international sculpture, was becoming

[76] Joe Bodolai, ed., "Sculpture: a rebirth of humanism – an artscanada symposium," Artscanada Autumn 1974, p. 44.
[77] Cameron, however, blamed the closing of her gallery on the fact that it showed sculpture, "It [the closing] was because I was showing sculpture, and believe me, that was difficult...." See, Bodolai, *Sculpture: a rebirth of humanism* 43.
[78] Ibid 41.

apparent in Canadian cities.[80] For the first time, a major public showing of sculpture, consisting of fifty-four Canadian artists' work, was exhibited on the plaza of the new Toronto City Hall.[81] This time, both the venue and the work itself reflected attitudes of innovation and rejuvenation which were rising in the city.

It was still not typical for the artists of this period to have started their careers as sculptors. Painting was the dominant medium taught in art schools, and was easier to market than sculpture. Hence, many artists began as painters and continued later to work in both sculpture and painting.[82] It is not surprising, therefore, that a close relationship obtains between the sculpture and painting of that period. To be sure, figurative sculpture continued to be an important genre for many, especially older, artists in the 1950s and 1960s, including Mark Prent's university sculpture instructor, John Ivor Smith. Smith, and many of his contemporaries, like Anne Kahane, Elizabeth Frink, William McElcheran, George Wallace, and John Fillion, expressed in figurative work a desire to maintain the long

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[79] For an overview of Expo '67, see Robert Fulford, This was Expo (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968). For the section on the sculpture displays, see pp. 193-200.
[80] Only eight of all the exhibiting artists dealt with the human figure. See, Ann K. Morrison, "Humanism in Sculpture," Artmagazine June 1978, p. 23.
[81] David Burnett and Marilyn Schiff, Contemporary Canadian Art (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1983), p. 142.
[82] Including, for example, Walter Yarwood, David Partridge, Henry Saxe, Ulysse Comtois, Gerald Gladstone, Peter Kolisnyk, Francoise Sullivan, David Smith. In addition, Molinari, Tousignant, Bloore, and Town, known most for their paintings, have all made sculpture. Burnett and Schiff, Contemporary Canadian Art 142.

traditions of sculpture and the humanist or religious terms inherent in those traditions.[83]

While Prent shares the genre of figurative sculpture with his former teacher, few would compare the work of these two artists in terms of their adherence to long traditions of sculpture. In fact, Prent's divergence from these traditions has often brought the seriousness of his work into question. Prent, however, credits Smith for the development of his respect for form and shape as key to reaching the meaning of sculpture.[84]

Prent, like many Canadian artists before him, started as a painter before moving into sculpture. He told Joyce Zemans in 1974 that he felt his paintings were very much influenced by the work of British postwar painter Francis Bacon. When he started to do sculpture, however, he never felt in any way that Bacon had an influence on him.[85] Yet, in retrospect, Prent commented: "...there are paintings that Bacon has done that relate very strongly to things I have done and things I'm doing even now."[86] A relationship between the work of Mark Prent and Francis Bacon is not difficult to find. On the most obvious level, both artists have explored themes of horror and damnation, angst and violence.[87] Bacon's paintings depict the

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[83] Sandra Shaul, "Tradition and Anti-Tradition, An Historical Perspective of Canadian Sculpture," Artmagazine Vol. 9, no. 38/39, June 1978, pp. 10-15.
[84] Michael White, "Art – Mark Prent – Power Through Horror," The Gazette (Montreal) April 3, 1971, p. 14.
[85] Zemans, *Interview With Controversial Artist* 5.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Herbert Read, Contemporary British Art (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964), pp. 34-35.

human body, particularly the male body, at moments of crisis.[88] His images of human despair and decay are dreadful and haunting. Like many of Prent's sculptures, Bacon's paintings appear to be caricatures of mankind -- not humorous images, but great cries of despair that may never find comfort. Bacon himself said about his art:

> [M]an now realizes that he is an accident, that he is a completely futile being, that he has to play out the game without reason. I think that even when Velasques was painting, even when Rembrandt was painting, they were still, whatever their attitude to life, slightly conditioned by certain types of religious possibilities, which man now, you could say, has canceled out for him. Man now can only attempt to beguile himself for a time, by prolonging his life - by buying a kind of immortality through the doctors. You see, painting has become - all art has become - a game by which man distracts himself. And you may say that it always has been like that, but now it's an entirely different game. What is fascinating is that it's going to become much more difficult for the artist, because he must really deepen the game to be any good at all, so that he can make life a bit more exciting."[89]

Unlike Francis Bacon, and even Edward Kienholz, Prent has never explained nor justified his work in social, cultural, or psychological terms. "That," he explained, "is the job of the art historian."[90] Nonetheless, he has been asked repeatedly to provide explanation. Perhaps in part it is Prent's

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[88] John Russell, Francis Bacon (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1964), p. 3.

[89] Cited in H. R. Rookmaaker, Modern Art and the Death of a Culture (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), p. 174. Originally appeared in Notes by Bacon in "The new decade," exhibition catalogue, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1955. See also, Excerpts from a conversation between Francis Bacon and David Sylvester, published under the title, "The art of the impossible," The Sunday Times Colour Magazine July 14, 1963.

[90] Reinhardt, interview.

refusal that has continued to generate distrust of the sincerity of his work, while Kienholz and Bacon have gained recognition.

In 1964, John Russell described Bacon as a "pioneer of the human consciousness."[91] Russell saw Bacon's paintings of hysterical and deformed human figures as having parallels with the postwar psyche.[92] The use of the human figure as an instrument of revelation of the human condition represents the essential similarity between the works of Prent and Bacon. Evidently, we are still not accustomed to coping with this use of the human figure.

An underlying difference between the work of Francis Bacon and that of Mark Prent rests in degrees of realism. Although pieces like Bacon's Painting (1946), (fig. 11), which depicts a figure surrounded by sides of beef, visually correspond to various sculptures by Prent, such as Hanging is Very Important (1973), (fig. 12), Bacon's work does not engage the viewer to the same extent that Prent's does. This difference is due mainly to the life-like quality of Prent's work, attained largely through his use of plastic resins. There is a separation between the viewer and Bacon's figures that Prent's three-dimensional, realistic figures do not allow. The combination of intense realism and viewer participation establishes Prent's figures as *our* surrogates, heightening the horror.

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[91] Russell, Francis Bacon 4.
[92] Ibid.

As Chapter Two outlines, Prent started to exhibit his work in the midst of the New Realist movement. Michael White reveals, however, that the artist had an early attraction to realism:

> Mark Prent's own particular quality is for the things that create realism. It appears in drawings of horses done in high school. At first glance they seem the usual adolescent's work, semi-romantic, semi-realistic - 'nice.' But in each, one or more details give these little sketches an uncanny vivacity, the bulge of an eye, hairs about the horse's mouth, that draw your eyes back again and again." [93]

While Prent's work of the early 1970s relates stylistically to a rebirth of Realism, the subject of his work does not fit so neatly with the subsequent rebirth of Humanism, discussed below. In 1972 John Noel Chandler, writing for Artscanada, compared the work of Mark Prent with that of Canadian sculptor Colette Whiten in degrees of realism and humanism.[94] Chandler denounced Prent as a "master of illusion," who could not come near the realism reached in the more "cathartic" work of Whiten:[95]

> Finally, the more local controversy, about the use of terror and horror in art, is placed in a better perspective by Whiten's work. Prent's use of horror I would call Roman, anti-humanist, misanthropic, degenerate. Whiten's is Greek, humanist, erotic. Prent burlesques pathos, celebrates depravity, and belongs in the tradition of the Petronius and Kubrick; his work has the fascination that the lions eating the Christians must have had, but it has absolutely no cathartic value, and for me, results in boredom at best and anger at worst.

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[93] White, *Power Through Horror* 14.
[94] John Noel Chandler, "Colette Whiten: her working and work," Artscanada Spring 1972, pp. 42-43.
[95] Ibid.

> Whiten's work is essentially cathartic and redemptive."[96]

In an essay for the Musée d'Art Contemporain's exhibition, *Mark Prent*, Michael Greenwood wrote what may be seen as inadvertent rebuttal to Chandler's condemning commentary on Prent.[97] Greenwood found that the reality in Prent's work was directly associated with the fantasies buried deep in the collective unconscious of mankind.[98] Perhaps this explains the odd sense of familiarity we experience when we see the human body presented as meat, or frozen in ice, or when we see athletic figures whose limbs have deformed from excessive use. "Indeed, so compelling is their physical and psychological reality," Greewood explains, "that we seem to be confronted with a literal incarnation of our most dreaded nightmares."[99] After we move from the understandable initial reaction of psychological resistance and begin to confront these psychological truths, we may begin the process of reconciliation. The effect, Greenwood described, "is unexpectedly cathartic."[100]

Although not all critics and historians in the Seventies agreed on the relationship between Prent's work and notions of humanism, it seems clear that his sculptures were raising questions at the same time that people began to reconsider the meaning of the traditional term "humanism" in contemporary times. Ann Morrison, for example, outlined numerous

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[96] Ibid.
[97] Michael Greenwood, "Mark Prent - Catharsis and the Incarnate Nightmare," Vanguard, Vol. 8, no. 2, March 1979, pp. 17-20.
[98] Ibid 17.

overlapping discourses, such as the psychological aftermath of two world wars, environmental activism, and news media, which were now relevant in the definition of humanity.[101] Morrison concluded that it was necessary to begin looking at "symbols of humanity" (sculpture) in a new way, "for the symbol must be valid to signify meaning."[102] Morrison asked: "How can the human as he is now perceived be depicted in sculptural form? Are perhaps his presence and his energy more important to convey than his appearance?"[103] How, then, were Canadian sculptors choosing to depict the human figure in sculptural form in the late Seventies and early Eighties? It seems the whole of figurative sculpture being produced at this time can be classified as eclectic, both in style and technique.

Artists like Joe Fafard, Gathie Falk, Russell Yuristy, and Glen Lewis were approaching the figure with traditional, organic materials, such as clay and wood.[104] Yet, aside from materials, these artists' work reflect very individualistic interests and influences. Fafard's work, for example, reflects folk art traditions, while Gathie Falk's work seems more closely related to her personal memories and understanding of everyday life.[105] Meanwhile,

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[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid 18.
[101] Ann K. Morrison, "Humanism in Sculpture," Artmagazine June 1978, p. 24.
[102] Ibid 23.
[103] Ibid 24.
[104] Burnett & Schiff, Contemporary Canadian Art 235, and Glenn Lewis: Utopiary, Metaforest & Bewilderness: Works From 1967-1993 (Burnaby: Burnaby Art Gallery, 1993), Matthew Teitelbaum and Peter White, Joe Fafard. Cow and Other Luminaries, 1977-1987 (Regina: Dunlop Art Gallery-Saskatoon: Mendel Art Gallery, 1987).
[105] As quoted from the Gathie Falk exhibition catalogue, (Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art, New York, 1987): "Falk's work defies categorization. Everything she has

Sherry Grauer was working at this time with unconventional materials, such as wire mesh and styrofoam, in her groups of figures that made strong reference to various aspects of the animal world and its cross-over with human behaviour. In terms of style, Grauer's work seems to have ties with Minimalism.[106] The technique of body-casting, and the use of new materials, such as fiberglass, explored by Prent, were also being practised by other artists at this time, including Colette Whiten and Richard Prince.[107] There are, however, stark differences in the overall effect of these artists' final creations.

To begin, Colette Whiten's "symbols of humanity," as Morrison calls them, focus on the presence and the absence of people. September 1975 (1975), (fig. 13), which represents the first of Whiten's "mummy case" figures, draws our attention to the literal and figurative impression of the human body.[108] Whiten would cast a whole figure in two moulds, one for the front, the other for the back. When complete, the moulds were hinged together creating the "mummy case." The final effect may be described as

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done, whether in performance, sculpture, or painting, is wholly her own, a personal mixture of fantasy and memory bound into an acute sensitivity to everyday life."

[106] Mayo Graham, Some Canadian Women Artists (Ottawa: The National Gallery of Canada, 1975), pp. 41-52.

[107] A group exhibition of these three artists was held at Queen's University in 1981, Prince, Prent, Whiten: Figurative Sculpture (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1981).

[108] Whiten explained her interest in negative images: "Stephen is a good friend [Stephen Hutchings]. After one of our winter camping trips, I first began thinking of negative images. You're out in the middle of nowhere; it's very cold, and there's untouched snow everywhere. You feel that you are doing something for the first time, something that's never been done before. You look behind you and see the impressions you have left. The mummies and the shell-like shapes were a result of this train of thought and led to September 1975." in Joan Murray, "Dialogue with Six Contemporary Sculptors," Artmagazine June 1978, p. 53.

an unsettling position between a double negative and a double positive. In other words, the viewer becomes aware of both the absent figure and the recessed mould, and conversely, the physical structure and the illusion of a human presence.[109] There is no comparison, however, between the discomfort felt in Whiten's work and the response of revulsion Prent's raises.

Richard Prince's figures are abstracted by using only fragments of the body, generalizing forms, and simplifying details. This process, illustrated in his Casting the Constellations: Monoceros (1980), (fig, 14), has the opposite effect of Whiten's September 1975 in that it detracts from our awareness of a particular person's presence. Furthermore, Prince's work does not have the psychological nor the emotional impact of Whiten's work, nor certainly of Prent's. Instead, Prince's work, through its consistent generalization of the human form, relates to the classical tradition of figurative sculpture.[110]

Perhaps the subsequent Canadian sculptor whose work most closely relates to that of Prent, at least in terms of its potential to manifest the underlying workings of our individual and social psyche, is Czechoslovakian-born Jana Sterbak. Sterbak, however, is part of a later, postmodern, generation of artists who have theorized the body in art. She exemplifies a generation of Canadian artists, who have, since Prent, addressed humanity in shocking methods focusing on the body. Sterbak's

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[109] Burnett & Schiff, Contemporary Canadian Art 235.

work, like Prent's, explores how individual subjectivity is constructed in and through the body, and in and through the social and psychological processes that shape us.[111] While Sterbak explores the workings of social discourses on the subjectivity of both genders, her emphasis is on the female subject. Prent, however, does not tend to emphasize the subjectivity of one gender, but stresses the functions and effects of social discourse in more general terms. Although the visual effect they create and their personal philosophies as artists are vastly different, similar postmodern readings can be done of the work of Sterbak and Prent. Prent , however, is a male, modernist artist, who has always refused to explain the meaning of his work, while Sterbak, conversely, is a postmodern, feminist artist, who openly articulates the meaning of her work. Despite Prent's different position, it is still legitimate to employ postmodern theory to develop an understanding of his work. A comparison between the work of these two artists, serves to strengthen an understanding of the theory used here to discuss Prent's work. It also illustrates how theoretical work of the body and art of the body have become more common since Prent began work.

Sterbak began to exhibit her work in the late Seventies, and her oeuvre coincides with the rising postmoderm trend to approach the theme of humanity in new ways that would more critically reflect the actuality of contemporary times. In particular, Sterbak's work seems to explore the

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[110]Ibid, and Prince, Prent, Whiten: Figurative Sculpture.

[111] The term "subjectivity" is used throughout this thesis in Foucaultian terms: as an understanding of the individual as being constituted more through discourse, rather than as a unique, self-controlled thinking being.

question put by Ann Morrison on how to depict the human in contemporary times: "Are perhaps his [humanity] presence and his energy more important to convey than his appearance?"[112] . Sterbak's work, for example, draws attention to the human body, even when she does not specifically depict it. In this way, Sterbak's "symbols of humanity," to use Morrison's phrase, are often more metaphorical than Prent's, addressing simultaneously the subject and the network of discourses shaping that subject. This is not to imply that Prent does not allude to multiple systems, or discourses, affecting our subjectivity; certainly he does. But the literal human element is always most apparent in his work, even when the figure is severely mutilated, or has partially been distorted to animal form, as in Ovibos Moschatus: Dream of a Woman (fig. 10). Not until the viewer can move beyond the initial shock caused by the appearance of Prent's figures, as Greenwood explained, are the workings of discourse exposed.[113]

Neither Prent nor Sterbak pinpoint one particular oppressive force imposing itself on our individual subjectity, but they each examine various connected forces and attempt to show how they work to shape us.[114] With Sterbak, this direction is entirely intentional and reflects the early influence of such writers as Franz Kafka, Karel Capek, Milan Kundera, and Jaroslav Hasek.[115] Desa Philippi points out that these writers share with Sterbak a

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[112] Morrison, *Humanism in Sculpture* 24.
[113] Greenwood, *Catharsis* 18.
[114] Although it should be stressed that Prent insists that he has no intention to preach to, or reform the world.
[115] Karel Capek (1890-1923), a novelist and playwright, wrote the absurdist *R.U.R.*, a play about robots who proceed to exterminate humanity after being given souls by their

concern with "a particular form of power, both modern, in that it is technological and bureaucratic, and timeless in its arbitrariness and despotism."[116] Sterbak's position as an artist, however, should not be understood as activist. There are no overtly moralizing aspects to her work, nor does it point to concerns of inhumanity of people. In this respect, serving simply to reveal the processes at work, Prent and Sterbak are closely linked. Since Sterbak's artistic decisions are so deliberate, and in this way contrast with Prent's, it is important to highlight some features of the context in which Sterbak's work has been made before a comparative analysis occurs.

Sterbak was born in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in 1955, and came to Canada with her family at age thirteen.[117] In Canada, Sterbak encountered a new language and culture, and a political system that was the ideological opposite to that with which she had grown up. Moreover, in Canada, Sterbak and her family switched from their native Catholic traditions to

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maker. By then, however, they have become "human" themselves. Jaroslav Hasek (1883-1923) wrote the novel The Good Soldier Svejk, whose simpleton hero, Svejk, proves to be more intelligent than he first appeared. Both Hasek and Franz Kafka anticipated the totalitarian state some feared years before it was realized on either side of Czech lands. In their writing, the subject is the alienated citizen versus the blind force of an anonymous state. Despite the gloom, their is satirical humour in their work. In his speech at the Fourth Congress of the Czechoslovak Writers' Union in June 1967, Milan Kundera made the influential statement that, "there has never been anything self-evident about the existence of the Czech nation, and one of its most distinctive traits, in fact, has been the *unobviousness* of that existence." Cited in R. C. Porter, Milan Kundera (Aarhus, Denmark: Arkona, 1981), p. 5.

[116] Desa Philippi, "Scenes of Seduction: Reflections on the Work of Jana Sterbak," in Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of Twentieth-Century Art in, of, and from the Feminine, ed. M. Catherine de Zegher (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1996), 188.

[117] Steingrim Laursen and Anneli Fuchs, eds., Jana Sterbak, exhibition catalogue, (Louisiana: Louisiana Sarkatalog 3, 1993), p. 17.

Protestantism.[118] Essentially, the foundations of all their social norms were reversed when they came to Canada. Sterbak's awareness of the opposite ideological practices and values in these two countries probably strengthened the sense of ironic distance which is apparent in her work. In an artist's statement, Sterbak expressed her awareness of separate sets of ideology existing in these two countries: "Growing up in Czechoslovakia, our school curriculum included Marxism and Leninism. When I came to live in the West, it was amusing to watch the complete reversal of the values which were the foundations of my childhood."[119]

Although Prent does not discuss his cultural background as a factor in the development of his work, as Sterbak does, it is not unreasonable to assume that it has had an effect. Likely, thoughts of his father's experiences as a prisoner in a Russian work camp would be involved in Prent's mental process. When asked about this possibility, however, Prent expressed doubt:

> I do not believe that, even subconsciously, my father's wartime experiences had any impact on my development as an artist or the images I chose to represent.... In the Russian work camps, the prisoners often died of exhaustion or malnutrition; however, there is no body of evidence that I am aware of that suggests that they were systematically tortured and killed, as they were in German camps.... My father always maintained that 'there are no bad people, just bad leaders.'"[120]

[118] The interview with Sterbak by Milena Kalinovska discusses the significance of the artist's Czechoslovakian background to her work. Diana Nemiroff, Jana Sterbak: States of Being (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1991), pp. 46-53.

[119] Jana Sterbak, "Artist Text," in the catalogue for the exhibition The Impossible Self, (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1988), p. 70.

[120] Discussed in a letter from Mark Prent to Kim Reinhardt, March 19, 2001.

Despite the artist's skepticism about the effect in his work of his family's history, it must undoubtedly affect his subconscious to some degree. Likewise, the Montreal culture, in which Prent developed into a professional artist, had a more intense, almost gothic character relative to other regions of the country. That city's art and poetry have, for several generations, focused more intensely on individual and collective psychological experiences than that of other centres.[121] These cultural factors have certainly affected the psyche of the artist, if not in a conscious awareness only on an subconscious level. To what extent do these factors relate to the horror in his work is debatable. Although Prent denies there is a connection, the contrary is possible.

Sterbak's understanding of culturally constructed subjectivity is connected to how she perceives both Canada and Czechoslovakia as characterized by a "colonized identity."[122] This involves an awareness that the social norms of both are constructed, and that they can exist differently in different places as separate "colonized identities." Sterbak, for example, defined the colonized identity in Czechoslovakia as essentially *political.* In other words, she sees Czech ideology as shaped by that country's long history of being under the domination of one or another foreign power. Conversely, the artist described Canada's identity as guided largely by

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[121] For example, see the work of Mordechar Richler, A. M. Klein and Leonard Cohen.
[122] Diana Nemiroff, Jana Sterbak: States of Being (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1991), p. 15.

cultural and *economic* factors.[123] Sterbak's understanding and experience of these colonized identities fostered the development of her keen sense of the struggle between dependency and self-determination.[124] How, for example, do we distinguish between what we are and need, and what we have learned to be and desire? These questions are a preoccupation in Sterbak's work, but they also relate significantly to Prent's work.

Michel Foucault's conception of *disciplinary power* can aid an understanding of the relationship between Prent's and Sterbak's work.[125] The principle behind Foucault's "disciplinary power" is, essentially, that power should be understood as a *network* of discourses that produce positions of domination and subordination within specific contexts. He did not see power as a form of repression imposed by one group onto another. Instead, Foucault viewed power as productive, in that it produces realities and truths.[126] Jana Sterbak's work may be seen as a feminist appropriation of Michel Foucault's conception of disciplinary power. Her literary influences, and her perception of colonized identity, deepen this analogy. An analysis of Sterbak's most publicized work, Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an

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[123] Ibid.

[124] Jennifer McLerran, "Disciplined Subjects and Docile Bodies in the Work of Contemporary Artist Jana Sterbak," Feminist Studies vol. 24, no. 3, Fall 1998, pp. 535-551.

[125] In his concepts of disciplinary power, which are appropriated in this study, Foucault recognized power as a network of discourses, that produce positions of domination and subordination within specific contexts. Rather than seeing power as a form of oppression imposed by one group onto another, Foucault viewed power as productive. To him, power produced realities and what he called *rituals of truths.* See, Deborah Cook, The Subject Finds a Voice - Foucault's Turn Toward Subjectivity (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1993), chapter VII; and Hinrich Fin-Eitel, (translated by Edward Dixon), Foucault: An Introduction (Philadelphia: Pennbridge Books, 1992), pp. 47-53.

Albino Anorectic (1987), (fig. 15), reveals the artist's technique of exposing how feminine subjectivity is constructed by various discourses on the body.

The controversial Flesh Dress has been recreated for several different exhibitions, which is necessary since it is a perishable object.[127] The piece is made out of sixty pounds of raw flank steak, which is sewn together to form a dress and then left hanging in galleries slowly to rot. In the early stages, the dress gets photographed worn by a slim female model, emphasizing the depraved affinity between the dress and the world of haute couture. With this work, Sterbak alludes specifically to disciplinary discourses that involve strict self-surveillance.[128] By photographing the dress on a young woman, who is attractive by accepted standards, and printing the image in various magazines, the work clearly evokes the disciplinary power of fashion. It alludes to how the female body is offered as an object of the male gaze. The sharp contrast between the youthful,

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[126] Deborah Cook, The Subject Finds a Voice - Foucault's Turn Toward Subjectivity (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1993), pp. 112-113.

[127] When it was exhibited in Ottawa, Flex Holtman - a member of Canadian Parliament, denounced the work as an extravagant waste of food. Holtman was angry that the National Gallery had spent $250 on steak for the dress and had allowed it to rot. Holtman threatened to cut off funds to the National Gallery and was able to get the Ottawa Food banks to join his protest. This all brought a lot of publicity to Jana Sterbak's work, which can be view as beneficial, it has also, nonetheless, stigmatized her as a producer of ugly and wasteful objects.
Sterbak replied on this food issue, "What is lacking is political and social desire to distribute the necessary economic means for everybody to purchase [meat]," cited in Roger Matuz, ed., Contemporary Canadian Artists (Toronto: Gale Canada, 1997), p. 557.

[128] Susan Bordo discusses how the dictates of femininity have been increasingly communicated through images rather than through the written word: "We are no longer told what 'a lady' is or of what femininity consists. Rather, we learn the rules directly through a bodily discourse: through images which tell us what clothes, body shape, facial expression, movements, and behavior is required." Susan R. Bordo, "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity: A Feminist Appropriation of Foucault," in Alison M. Jaggar and Susan R. Bordo, eds., Gender/ Body/ Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing (London: Rutgers University Press, 1989), p. 17.

attractive model and the associations of aging, death, and decay inherent in the dress, uncovers the workings of fashion discourse.

The full title Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic is very important in the interpretation of this work. Its conciseness points to Sterbak's deliberate intentions behind the work. It also illustrates another characteristic of Sterbak's work, which is to connect contemporary discourses with past discourses. The title begins with "Vanitas," a medieval convention of the *memento mori,* which carried the idea of both death and rebirth. The *memento mori* constitutes one of the ways in which individual subjectivity was produced through the Christian doctrine of salvation. Vanitas also recalls early Flemish paintings, in which the iconography of vanity warned of the brevity of mortal life and the uselessness of worldly preoccupations, thus encouraging spiritual aspirations instead. Sterbak's decaying flesh dress, making veiled reference to the ancient division between body and soul, also signifies the transcendence of the body and its ascent to a spiritual realm.

The reference to anorexia nervosa, at the end of Sterbak's title, brings us from the past to more contemporary constructions of subjectivity, especially of women. Susan Bordo has written extensively on the female body and feminism. In her book Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body[129] Bordo argues that the bodies of women suffering

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[129] Susan Bordo, Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); "Anorexia Nervosa: Psychopathology as the Crystallization of Culture," in Mary M. Geren and Sara N. Davis, eds., Toward a

from disorders such as anorexia nervosa can be read as texts testifying to the extreme, contemporary standard constructions of femininity.[130] By taking the contemporary feminine ideal of slimness to the extreme, the anorectic literally embodies the ideal of woman as unobtrusive and lacking physical presence. Conversely, in this process, the anorectic comes to feel that she has high self-control. When others battle her to end her self-destructive behaviour, the woman sees that she has a strong impact on others, giving her the illusion of power and control. The anorectic seeks a type of spiritual ecstasy through a radical denial of the body through self-imposed starvation.[131] In other words, she seeks metaphorically to transcend the body, with disastrous results.

Anorexia, "the female disease," is known to afflict almost exclusively, middle-class women in advanced societies.[132] As a social issue, the disease points to the destabilization of women's roles. Culturally, it points to the embodiment of women as a commodity, the result of extensive objectification.[133] Furthermore, the analogy Sterbak raises between the female body and meat stresses the commodification of the female body, and at the same time, highlights the destructive impulse displayed by the anorectic.

New Psychology of Gender (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 423-54; and "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity: A Feminist Appropriation of Foucault," in Jaggar and Bordo, Gender/ Body/ Knowledge.

[130] Bordo, Unbearable Weight 18.

[131] McLerran, *Disciplined Subjects and Docile Bodies* 539-40.

[132] Leslie Heywood, Dedication to Hunger: The Anorexic Aesthetic in Modern Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), pp. 2-8.

The analogy between the body and meat has been a point of several other interpretations. One prevalent interpretation (related to the Vanitas theme) is the inevitable aging and deterioration of the human body.[134] By equating the human body to meat, its most rudimentary physical aspect, we actually think of the opposite: the self or soul that we understand as existing within that fleshy material.[135] In other words, while the dress seems to reduce the human to meat, it in fact acts as a signifier for the self, which relies upon the physical body for its signification. Consider the body being literally turned inside out: what was once a contained unit, thought of a whole, is suddenly opened up, making the division of body and soul very apparent.

In several sculptures, such as Hanging is Very Important (1972), (fig.12), Mark Prent also creates analogies between meat and the human body, thereby evoking the metaphysical.[136] Like Sterbak in her Flesh Dress, Prent signifies the susceptibility of the human body to deterioration and decay by reducing human existence to meat. Thus, Prent also forces a division of the concept of self into *flesh* and *spirit*. The analysis of Sterbak's work should support an understanding of how Prent's work is theorized in the following paragraphs, as well as in Chapter Four. Again, Prent's and

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[133] Nancy Spector discusses the commodification of the female body in relation to anorexia nervosa in "Flesh and Bones," Artforum vol. 30, March 1992, pp. 95-99.
[134] Ibid 96-97.
[135] Judith Butler, "Foucault and the Paradox of Bodily Inscriptions," Journal of Philosophy Vol. 86, November 1989, pp. 605-6.
[136] The interpretations of Prent's work given in the following section are of this author. The artist maintains that he has never intended for his sculptures to carry any specific meaning.

Sterbak's postions as artists are very different, but, nonetheless, similar readings can come out of their work.

In Prent's Hanging is Very Important, the viewer is immediately shocked to see human carcasses hung on butcher's hooks in a refrigerated compartment. It is a gory scene, without a doubt, but, when we look beyond the surface, the work can be seen as a metaphor for the process of constructing a soul through the body. Judith Butler explains in her analysis of Foucault's History of Sexuality:

> The figure of the interior soul understood as 'within' the body is produced through its inscription on the body; indeed, the soul is inscribed on the surface, a signification that produces on the flesh the illusion of an ineffable depth.... Indeed, the soul requires the body for its signification, and requires also that the body signify its own limit and depth through corporeal means."[137]

Hanging is Very Important forms a trilogy with And Is There Anything Else You'd Like Madam? (1971) (fig. 16), and The Last Supper (1971), (fig. 17). Combined, the group represents the whole process of consumption, from the act of appropriation, its promotion and to its celebration. On the most basic level, these works expose the irony of our yet unsolved dilemma of having to destroy to maintain life. By relating human existence to the process of consumption, however, other interpretations begin to manifest themselves.

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[137] Ibid.

And Is There Anything Else You'd Like Madam?, which emphasizes the sales and promotion aspect of consumerism, appears at first glance to be an average deli counter. As a viewer approaches it, however, he or she is shocked to discover parts of the human body being presented as edible merchandise. There is a human torso on the scale, pickled penises in a jar (satirically called "prickles"), slices of female breast, and many other selections of human deli-fare. The work conjures up some of our deepest fears, particularly of mutilation, or of having to eat one another for survival. Metaphorically, the sale of the human body alludes to the commodification of people in contemporary culture through various discourses, such as fashion, medicine, and athletics. But Prent has taken apart the bodies of men and women differently, isolating particular parts and assigning different values to the various items. Each item has, therefore, its own worth for different reasons, and relates specifically to how individual subjectivity is constructed in and through discourses on the body.

The most prominent item in the piece is the male head and torso on the scale. Traditionally, an emphasis on the head of a man represents intellect and reason. Furthermore, the torso contains all the vital organs, symbolizing life. Women, however, are traditionally defined as mentally inferior to men and, as the binary opposite of men, are associated with death. It appears appropriate, therefore, that the implied customer in the process of buying this masculine head and torso, "Madam," is a woman. She is, after all, inherently lacking the qualities that these items contain.

Unlike most of the other available products, there is no apparent price assigned to the masculine intellect and life. Thus, there is a sense that although the woman attempts to obtain these things, she will inevitably be unsuccessful.

Pickled penises evoke the immediate thought of castration, the loss of masculine authority. The process of pickling, conversely, suggests the preservation of this authority and acts as an emblem of anti-castration. Supporting this symbolic association, Prent assigns no price to the penises, thereby making them completely non-transferable.

Female breasts, however, are dismembered and come in a variety, priced according to the social status of the body from which each came. Unlike the penises that sit on top of the deli-counter, symbolic of masculine hierarchy in society, the breasts are contained within the meat counter, alluding to their traditional domestic space. The refrigeration requirement of the feminine "meat" alludes to the regulation of the female body in contemporary society, which operates through disciplinary power. Likening the female body to meat also emphasizes the association of this body with death. Prent has priced the black breast higher than the white breast, indicating that the black breast is exotic, a delight for limited consumption, unlike the white breast, which is priced for more regular consumption. The interpretation suggests itself that, though all women are obtainable to white middle class men, a socially acceptable wife is a member of the dominant race, not considered erotically appealing.

The Last Supper, the pendant piece of the trilogy, represents the ritualistic celebration aspect of consumption. Although the work recalls the Christian story of the Last Supper (painted by Leonardo da Vinci), Prent's table is set up very differently and does not appear to have any other Christian references. There are seven place settings at the table, which is the most apparent indication that intended guests are not Christ and his twelve Apostles. A sense of urgency is felt because the food is already on the table, and, aside from being parts of the human body, the meal has a certain appeal: it is inviting. Unlike the gender-specific merchandise at the deli, here the food is more androgynous. The main course, which is waiting to be carved, is a human rump roast. Since the roast represents *human* more than a specific gender, it can be assumed that the table is open to both men and women. In this way, Prent invites society as a whole to "devour" a disassembled (literally and theoretically) individual. By reducing this individual to meat, as in the previous two works, and as in Sterbak's Flesh Dress, Prent calls to mind the *self,* understood to reside *within* the physical material. In this final piece of the trilogy, however, Prent essentially concludes the process of consumption while emphasizing the process in which our individual subjectivity is constructed in and through contemporary discourse.

First, since a non-gendered body part is presented as meat, our ability to evoke the metaphysical "self" of the meat, as we had been doing in the other work, comes askew. Because the individual's subjectivity is

dependent on discourse, which constructs men and women as the binary opposites of each other, conceiving a soul for this essentially anonymous roast is impossible. In realizing this, we understand that our own subjectivity is constructed, which relates to the ritual reference of the feast. Finally -- back to the *last act* of consumption, manifested in The Last Supper -- we realize that we are not only consumers in society, but that we are also products.

Through an exploration of postmodern ideas of the fragmentation of the unitary sense of self, the work of Prent and Sterbak bears significant similarities. Yet their artistic approaches, particularly Sterbak's more consistent reference specifically to feminine subjectivity, and Prent's unremitting use of the genre of horror to reference individual subjectivity in general, are markedly different. Their artistic intentions also separate them greatly. These variances are largely related to the different contexts and periods from which they have developed. What a comparison of their work does point out is a shift in Canadian art toward more theorizing of the body, and of art of the body. Prent was distinct from Canadian figurative artists of his generation, but, compared with Canadian artists of the last couple of decades, his work has more congruity even though he is a modernist thinker.

In 1977 Prent summarized the difficulty emerging artists face working in Canada, alluding to his personal experiences in the face of Canadian conservatism:

> Now I know why so many Canadians have to leave. The attitude of Canadian museums is let us wait and see. Instead of supporting Canadian artists, the Art Gallery of Ontario has dealt with Henry Moore. It has a great Moore collection but what about Canadian artists?... We're still living in the days of the Group of Seven. It's not that there is anything wrong with Molinari. He's a friend. It's that he has had to wait 25 years for this to happen."[138]

While American and especially European art has, for several decades, explored humanity in shocking, often vulgar methods, horror is a relatively new genre in Canadian art. Understanding Prent in a Canadian context, therefore, raises awareness of our own cultural history.

[138] Peter White, "Prent's Excursions into Darkness Find A Haven in Germany," Globe and Mail July 13, 1977, p. 14.

Chapter Four:

The Horror - Getting To Know The Monster

The human body is consistently the site of the horror in Mark Prent's work. Specifically, his manipulation and objectification of the body evoke an association with the *monstrous.*[139] Rosi Braidotti relates the term *monster* to supernatural beings, understood as devalued variations on the model of normality. Although Braidotti stresses specifically how women's bodies are defined as monstrous through masculinist biological, medical, and scientific discourses, her theory can be appropriated to study more general representations of deviance in Prent's work.[140] Close scrutiny, however, does reveal a biological, or gender connection to what is monstrous in Prent's subjects. Prent's female subjects, for example, are monstrous evidently as a result of their biological deviance from the masculine norm. Conversely, the artist's male subjects are not monstrous by virtue of their biology, rather, by failings of society. This connection, although clear when analyzed, is not at first a conspicuous characteristic of Prent's work. It may, therefore, indicate a degree of subconscious creation. If the artist's work is a result of loosely unconscious decisions, as he claims it is, then this gender/monster observation emphasizes the effect of dominant ideological discourse.

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[139] Braidotti, Nomadic Subjects 77.
[140] Ibid.

Braidotti's notions of the monstrous are especially helpful in understanding how Prent's severely distorted and infected bodies represent the incarnation of difference from the human norm. They are monstrous in their anomalies -- whether biological or as a result of social conditions. This chapter explores exactly how, and by what means, the human body becomes monstrous in Prent's work. Within this study, two functions of Prent's work are brought to the forefront. First is an inquiry into how Prent's sculptures collapse traditional boundaries of *us* and *them*. Second -- and related to the first function -- is how his work fragments a unitary sense of self.

To begin, it must be emphasized, again, that Prent's consistent use of the marginalized genre of horror is not intended to either perpetuate, or resist, a particular ideology. That would imply conscious deliberation on his part. Instead, the effect of horror in his work seems to operate at various levels, exposing multiple discourses, which shape individual subjectivities. Essentially, Prent's use of horror helps demonstrate ways in which subjects collude in their own oppression.[141] Therefore, at times it appears there is a distinction between *us* and *them*, but in fact Prent ultimately erases this distinction by presenting us *as* them. This, in turn, leads to the process of deconstructing the notion of self as an autonomous being. Again, the ideas of Michel Foucault, particularly on what he termed "bio-power," can be applied to Prent's work. In The History of Sexuality, Foucault discussed

[141] For a full discussion, see Foucault The History of Sexuality 135-57.

technologies of discipline and domination that operate upon the body as "bio-power." He defined bio-power as a system of power that focused upon the body as an object to be manipulated.[142] Evidently, Prent's manipulation of the human body illustrates how subjectivity is constructed through systems of power, which can be understood as the functioning of bio-power.

The horror in Prent's work is certainly linked to violence. This violence, however, should not be understood as sadistic. The artist has explored the workings of his own subconscious, exposing thoughts and ideas suppressed deep in human mentality. His work points to the unacknowledged violence we constantly do to ourselves and to others. Prent's Death in the Chair (1973), (fig. 18), for example, forces the viewer to re-valuate their established concept of humanity and their position within that structure. The work invites the viewer to participate in the electrocution of a figure strapped in a chair. It is really a ritualistic performance that has been played out in numerous Hollywood films and television dramas. By playing a key role in the macabre ritual (that of flicking the fatal switch), the viewer is compelled to establish a closer relationship to the real theme of the work. In other words, the viewer, no longer able to remain a neutral spectator, may become engrossed in the inner content and significance.

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[142] Ibid.

The theme here is one of Prent's most basic -- the sacrificial offering and simultaneous preservation of a suitable victim.[143] Upon flicking the electrocution switch, the viewer initiates the spectacle of the victim convulsing to death. But in taking the life of another, the viewer has essentially forfeited their own. The ceremony, which is discussed below, is designed to transfer the identity of the victim from the figure in the chair to the viewer pulling the switch. In terms of the monstrous, the male figure in the chair has been crafted to appear completely deviant. He is attired in a uniform and helmet that not only makes him personally anonymous, but also makes him appear literally alien-like. He is assumed to be abjected, punishable by virtue of his "otherness." Viewers confront this monster with a mix of fascination and horror. Prent explained a situation that arose at Isaacs Gallery involving the electric chair:

> ...[A gallery visitor] came into the gallery with her family and at that particular time the chair wasn't working. She was really upset and indignant about the whole thing that it wasn't working and she demanded to see Av and asked him when it would be working. He said in about a half-hour, and in an hour she came back with her family and everybody pulled the switch (which would send a current through the body) and everybody walked out very happy. It's really strange to see, other people will stand back and wait for other people to pull it. Others will stand back and think about pulling it."[144]

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[143] Greenwood, *Incarnate Nightmares* 17.

[144] With the exception of Prent's Death in the Chair, Joyce Zemans points out the immediate reaction of horror that people have when encountering his work. She notes that when people came to the electric chair (while it was on exhibit at Isaacs Gallery), they were busy pulling the lever. She asked if Prent was making a statement about the way in which humanity treats other people. Prent responded: "Right - but that would be a very unconscious concern of mine, in the sense that it is not the final statement that indicates me to work on a piece. Except perhaps for the electric chair which is taken from all kinds of research and is exact in every way to one particular prison that I did

But when the process of electrocution is finished, there is no sense of accomplishment or even finality. The figure in the chair is unaffected and appears as it had before. Ironically, it is the individual who pulled the switch who is affected by the event. It is also, consequently, the figure in the chair who seems empowered, thereby transferring the state of being monstrous to the viewer. Furthermore, no signs of guilt are displayed by the executioner/viewer, perhaps because we know it is "only" sculpture. Nonetheless, our desire to "play" in this violent role points to darkness within our own subconscious.

In several other works, Prent evokes professional athletics as a discourse that produces norms to which people constrain themselves to conform. These also allude to ideals of physical beauty for men and women that are constructed through contemporary disciplinary powers of health and fashion. Prent's various restrained and deformed athletic figures, including Ringturner (1975), (fig. 19); Bondage (1975), (fig. 20); For Harry (1984); Drosophila (1984), (fig. 5); Saturn (1986); and Mercury (1986), all allude in various ways to the perennial human need to push the abilities of the body to their fullest. Prent, however, transforms certain limbs into abstracted forms, as in Drosophila, demonstrating how within these activities certain areas of the body are excessively stressed. By isolating and distorting body parts which have been emphasized through exercise,

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visit and photograph. The other pieces are very imaginary. Many times I would just start off with an idea and play it by ear, working purely intuitively all the way along and

Prent alludes to the process of constructing an identity through the body. Athletic professionals are defined by their physical abilities, which are commodified through entertainment media and advertising. Prent's emphasis on isolated body parts draws attention to such human commodification through fashion, medical, and scientific discourses.

Most of the exercises depicted are risky and may, if not performed properly, be harmful or even fatal. These works refer to our desire to experience danger, which, as a discourse, we are both subject to, and also, perpetuate as observers. A current example of this behaviour is the rising popularity of both the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) and of "Extreme" adventure television and movie programs. Prent displays his athletic performers as monsters; freakish and supernatural. They are seductive in that they physically attract and repel us simultaneously. This seduction is amplified by our underlying desire to witness or be a part of danger.[145] This is most evident in Ringturner, in which a bald, deformed, naked man with bound legs is suspended just out of safe reach of the ring he attempts to grasp. The sculpture fills us with anticipation as we mentally visualize the helpless figure falling to peril. Here, concern for the figure's safety gives way to curiosity of the situation. The bound figure's unusual, and therefore, monstrous appearance makes him seem more like an intriguing object

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quite often the piece would change very much from its initial idea when it was finished." Zemans, *Interview With Controversial Artist* 6.

[145] In Foucault terms, seduction may be understood as an exercise of power in which the one wielding the power of seduction directs both the attraction and repulsion of the one being seduced. It is the seductiveness of Prent's work that stimulates the viewer's need to know, or desire to be a part of the situation in one way or another.

than a human in crisis. Likewise, the absurdity of WWF wrestlers, who are often named after inanimate objects like *The Rock*, or *The Hammer*, creates the illusion of immunity to violence. Popular culture accepts and demands brutality in this wrestling because it is not "real" and the people involved are not average. Prent has presented his athletic figures unmistakably as *monstrous* supernatural beings. Drosophila, for example, with exaggerated malformed legs, is physically unusual. Yet, at the same time, this figure, like the artist's other athletic figures, signifies real-life athletic superstars. These sculptures are, therefore, oddly familiar to us. We see in their physical divergence the manifestation of our expectations of super-athletes. Comprehending this, we might reconsider their influence upon us. This process becomes immediately introspective because we realize that we have also been shaped, to various degrees by these discourses, and through participation we shape others.

Mark Prent often draws upon medical and scientific discourses as sources of horror, which manifest themselves upon the body. In these works, such as Ovibos Moschatus: Dream of A Woman (1986), (fig. 10); Parasitic Twin (1983), (fig. 21); and Operating Room (1973), (fig. 22), Prent explores the ways in which dominant discourses have dealt with the idea of difference, and how, especially, difference has been positioned as a devalued variation on the model of normality, conceived as masculine. In Ovibos Moschatus: Dream of A Woman, for example, the female figure depicted in the process of childbirth is literally constructed as a monster;

however, in order to view this scene contained in a coin-operated peep-show box, we must insert money. The woman revealed inside has an animal skull with horns for a head, and her vagina, which is pushed right up against the viewing glass, is violently torn apart to reveal the screaming child who is emerging from her. It is a truly horrific scene, and a blatant association of woman with degeneracy, which we realize we have perpetuated through the act of paying to see the woman in this way.

The association of women with monsters goes as far back as Aristotle, who pointed to women as a sign of abnormality, in opposition to the male model of perfection.[146] Woman as inferior has remained a constant in Western scientific discourse, which has filtered into other discourses creating various misogynist byproducts. In psychoanalytical theory, femaleness is consistently associated with death, evil, disorder, the sub-human -- characteristics that are implicitly the binary opposites of those of men.[147] It is, therefore, her "otherness" that has defined her as monstrous.

Ovibos Moschatus: Dream of A Woman stresses the ability of the woman's body to change shape in pregnancy and childbearing as a mark of monstrosity. Rosi Braidotti defines this endowment as making woman "capable of defeating the notion of fixed *bodily form,* of visible, recognizable, clear, and distinct shapes as that which marks the contour of the body. She

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[146] W. W. Fortenbaugh, "Women and their subordinate role," in Aristotle on Emotion (London: Gerald Duckworth & Company Ltd., 1975), pp. 57-61.

is morphologically dubious." Braidotti further explains, " The fact that the female body can change shape so drastically is troublesome in the eyes of the logocentric economy within which to see is the primary act of knowledge and *the gaze* the basis of all epistemic awareness."[148] Prent structures the gaze upon this figure to deliberately evoke the masculine economy of desire. One expects, therefore, the curtains to open and reveal a figure resembling something to the effect of Titian's Venus of Urbino, or Ingres' Grande Odalisque. Prent subverts this anticipation through the display of the overtly monstrous woman in labour. Like the athletic figures discussed before, this work exposes how individual subjectivity is defined in and through the body.

Parasitic Twin is horrific especially because it merges the binary opposites of what Braidotti terms the " phallogocentric discursive order." The work consists of a naked male, in obvious pain, lying inside a coffin-like padded box. Attached to the figure's abdomen is a deformed, hideous infant. This work evokes the biological process of childbirth by displaying the anguish of the parent figure as the infant separates from its body. Although the figure who appears in labour is a male, the work draws particular attention to the role of women's bodies in reproduction because this is a *normal* association. Moreover, at the same time, the work alludes to how biotechnology displaces women by making procreation a high-tech

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[147] Charlotte Witt, "Form, Normativity, and Gender in Aristotle – A Feminist Perspective," in Cynthia A. Freeland, ed., Feminist Interpretations of Aristotle (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), pp. 118-137.

affair. In this way, the male figure appears as an "artificial" monster. He represents contemporary reproductive technologies, particularly artificial procreation, which has extended the power of science over the maternal body of women. The work can therefore be understood as a metaphor for the regulation of the female body through medical and scientific discourses.

It is a disturbing scene particularly owing to its ambiguity, which leads to another interpretation. All the immediate associations the work evokes -- death, chaos, the demonic, the irrational, disorder -- are all traditionally connected, through the working of dominant discourses, with the female body. Yet Prent subverts these relationships by injecting a male body. Ultimately, our ability to decipher the situation is obscured by this "unnatural" amalgamation. Instead, the reverse comes to mind as we reconstruct our socially imposed gender associations. In other words, we automatically imagine a woman in the place of the male figure and, thus, woman is seen as monster and the man is seen as victim. A man should not, by the virtues of normality, be suffering from the pain of childbirth, which is the biological role of woman. The process of having to reconstruct what Prent has deconstructed, heightens our awareness of how gender subjectivities are produced from contemporary discourses.

Operating Room (fig. 22) is one of Prent's most disconcerting works, partly because it brings forth reference to the animal world and to its crossover into the human world. The tableau resembles, as the title

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[148] Braidotti, Nomadic Subjects 80.

suggests, an operating room. A figure restrained on a table is opened-up to reveal a pulsating organ. A closer examination of the work forces the question of whether we are viewing a woman with a sow-like head and feet, or a sow with a female torso. The relationship here between a sow and a woman is in itself profoundly troubling. The figure is extremely vulnerable and completely exposed. Tools are laid out, to be utilized upon her, the environment is sterile, an intense light is aimed on her torso, and her head is turned to direct her gaze straight at the viewer. She does not appear to be under anesthetic, and we can assume, therefore, she is aware of her dire situation. This may cause us to wonder if we are more disturbed by looking at her, or by being looked at by her. After all, as Michael Ann Holly states, "The person who does the looking is the person with the power."[149]

The deformed female figure in this work is clearly monstrous, and an object of display, subjected to public gaze. Again, concern for this figure's well being gives way to curiosity of her appearance and predicament. Furthermore, the lack of anesthetic signifies that this operation is not about making the woman feel better, but rather a sort of scientific dissection to understand how she functions. She can be understood as a *freak*, exploited for entertainment purposes. Leslie Fiedler and Robert Bogdan stress that the exhibition of freaks, since the beginning of the twentieth century, has displayed racist and orientalist undertones. They explain how malformed

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[149] Michael Ann Holly, "Past Looking," in Stephen Melville and Bill Readings, eds., Vision & Textuality (London: MacMillian Press Ltd., 1995), p. 72. For more on the

people were exhibited beside tribal people and exotic animals.[150] Fiedler and Bogdan also emphasize how the medical profession benefited considerably by examining freaks and writing scientific reports about them.[151]

Prent's Operating Room fits well the formula of a freak show. Not only is the woman deformed, and thus inherently entertaining, but she is likened to an animal (as earlier freaks were also likened to animals), and she is exploited by science. Specifically, this tableau alludes to how discourses establish the body with difference (varying from the white masculine norm) as the site of domination. Prent engages the viewer by directing the gaze of the woman on the table outward, which, as previously mentioned, gives the figure limited power -- enough to disturb the viewer. The viewer thus becomes an aware participant, realizing his active production of a docile subject, which establishes a distance between *us* and *them* (any form of freak). The use of the sterile medical room evokes science as one of the disciplinary forces that produces norms to which we not only constrain ourselves to fit, but from which we also greatly fear to diverge. The fear we recall is what we experience when we see actual people in real life who physically differ from the norm. We try to sneak a look

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politics of looking see Griselda Pollock, "Beholding Art History: Vision, Place and Power," also in Melville and Readings Vision & Textuality, pp. 38-66.

[150] Braidotti notes that, "Significantly, totalitarian regimes such as Hitler's Germany or the Stalinist Soviet Union prohibited the exhibition of freaks as being degenerate specimens of the human species. They also dealt with them in their campaigns for eugenics and race or ethnic hygiene, by preventing them from breeding." Nomadic Subjects 92.

at these individuals, who are both fascinating and repulsive, hoping that they will not catch us in the act of looking. But in Prent's work, being caught looking is unavoidable, and as a result he produces a system that reveals how subjects collude in their own oppression.[152] When we look at the monstrous figure on the table, looking back at us, we not only fear what we see, but we also fear ourselves.

In 1987, Louise Dompierre, Chief Curator of the Power Plant art gallery in Toronto, organized an exhibition exploring the use of horror genre in the work of Mark Prent and of Canadian film maker David Cronenberg. The exhibition, entitled "Crimes Against Nature," juxtaposed Prent's sculptures with clips from Cronenberg's films. Dompierre was aware of numerous visual parallels in these artists' work, particularly from their use of the human body as the site of horror and the various representations of horror within the body itself.[153] In the exhibition catalogue, Dompierre noted a recent renaissance of the horror movie. This was also remarked on earlier in Film Quarterly: "Whereas the Western and the crime film were the dominant genres of the late sixties and early seventies, horror and science fiction are the reigning popular forms of the late seventies and early eighties."[154] Perhaps it is the marginalization of film as an "art" that has tolerated a place for horror. Until recently, mainstream visual arts,

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[151] See Leslie Fiedler, Freaks (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978), and Robert Bogdan, Freak Show (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988).
[152] See Foucault's discussion on bio-power in The History of Sexuality 138-52.
[153] Dompierre, Crimes Against Nature 5.
[154] Noel Carroll, "Nightmare and the Horror Film: The Symbolic Biology of Fantastic Beings," Film Quarterly Vol. 34, Spring 1981, p. 16.

particularly painting and sculpture, have been very much guided by traditional canons. Horror, therefore, is generally not discussed as a genre within these areas, despite the numerous artists who have and still do explore this mode. Instead, terms like surreal, social realism, humanism, and even sublime, are applied to representations of unsettling events threatening the self and humanity. But today, with additional fears of disease, such as AIDS; the threat of chemical disasters; the effects of global warming; ethnic cleansing; and the uncertainty of genetic engineering, horror is very much an undercurrent to daily life. Hence, in referring to and reflecting life, Prent's work does fit into the traditional canon of Art History, even if the horror genre does not.

The most significant horror present in Prent's work is not the visible gore or chaos, although these are the most immediate. When we look at these terrifying sculptures we instantly see monstrous beings -- individuals who appear as deviants of nature. Yet we are compelled to look, accepting these figures as freaks. No remorse is felt because we do not associate ourselves with them. Thus, an unquestionable degree of sensationalism is inherent in Prent's work. There seems to be a clear separation between *us* and *them,* but closer examination inevitably causes these boundaries to dissolve. As we come to grips with our desire to witness or take part in violent or life-threatening activities, or our willingness to exploit human differences, personal dread sets in. The reality that we have shaped these people and that our own subjectivity has likewise been shaped, erodes our

unitary sense of self. Suddenly *we* are *them*, and that is the paramount cause of horror that stems from Prent's work. Getting to know the monster, therefore, is getting to know ourselves.

Conclusion

Mark Prent's sculptures are metaphorical images, exposing deep-seated human fears, especially of death and the loss of our own physical ability. Upon viewing his contortions and mutilations of the human body, we realize that our own body is beyond our control. The reality that disease and other forces can damage and destroy our physical being, and that death and decay are inevitable, becomes paramount. Adding to this tremendous apprehension which encumbers us as viewers is the depravity we feel when we are repelled by the deformities and handicaps of others. Prent's work also points to the functioning of social discourses, revealing how our individual subjectivities are constructed and how we collude with others in our own oppression. After the initial shock of his horrid depictions, the immediate sensationalism of his work, we begin to understand how individual subjectivities are constructed in and through our physical being, and also in and through social and psychological processes. The reality presented to us is dark and humiliating, a realm where technology, nature, and humanity have become debased. But, this kind of introspection, achieved through horror, can also be liberating, as it forces us to confront issues which we generally tend to suppress.

Understanding the connection between Mark Prent and Edward Kienholz is important, because it helps place Prent's work in the context of North American art. While it is impossible comfortably to situate either

Prent's or Kienholz's work into a distinct movement or particular style of Twentieth Century Canadian or American Art, there are significant similarities within their own work to warrant an association. In particular, their use of human body as the site of horror conveys the process through which individual subjectivities are shaped. Furthermore, both artists have created figurative tableaux, alluding to everyday events and activities, incorporating found objects for the purpose of creating meaning. On the other hand, the differences between their intentions as artists, and the social and political climate in which they worked, also distinguishes these two artists from each other. Nonetheless, Prent found, in Kienholz's work and career, inspiration for his own use of horror. Understanding the basis of their relationship is, therefore, an imperative element in the study of Prent's work . Moreover, although they were in fact considerably distinct from each other, on various levels, in the early Seventies these two artists still had more to do with each other than with any other contemporary art movement in North America. The scrutiny they have faced stems from the ways their work consistently represents disturbing events threatening the self and humanity, which can ultimately be defined as horror. It was their faithful reliance on horror as a genre and their incessant investigation of its possibilities that set them apart from any other North American sculptors during this time. Prent and Kienholz can thus be understood as the leading Horror sculptors in Canada and the United States, respectively.

The difference in the reaction of their respective audiences to their work point to variance in the social and political factors, or the cultural ideology, that surrounded each artist. Kienholz, for example, was critiquing the social fabric of American culture in the years of the Cold War, and during the Sixties, which saw a convergence of domestic upheaval and the protracted Vietnam War. He worked during a politically charged period in American historyand, besides, was living and working in Los Angeles – a relatively broad-minded region of the US. Prent, of course, began his career in a completely different social and political climate. In understanding Prent's position in the context of contemporary Canadian art, therefore, it is imperative to look more specifically at the factors which had an impact on his work and career. One significant element was this country's relatively short history of non-traditional sculpture.[155] As outlined in Chapter Three, the development of this form of production has been quite gradual, and has only started to become substantial since 1960, when various forms of institutional support began to take effect. Still, even then, horror was not a recognizable genre in Canadian sculpture. Unlike their European counterparts, Canadian audiences had not developed an association between this genre and sculpture.

By the time Prent emerged on the scene, there was already enthusiasm for new approaches in Canadian sculpture. But few people were as supportive of Prent's disturbing subject matter as Michael

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[155] Here, "non-traditional" sculpture refers to any Canadian sculpture that is not in the

Greenwood or Av Isaacs. Largely, Canadian audiences were shocked and disgusted at the sight of Prent's distressed figures. Although his work had significant links with rising trends in "new sculpture," particularly with figurative work and with New Realism, it was clearly as dissimilar as it was comparable. Many critics, particularly John Noel Chandler, were quick to disassociate Prent's work from that of other Canadian artists who were considered more commendable. It seems that these critics feared some sort of cultural pollution. Ironically, Chandler's comparison of Mark Prent and Colette Whiten utilized the method of the horror genre, which Chandler condemns, to establish difference between the two artists' work. In other words, Chandler defined Prent's work as monstrous, to affirm the acceptability of Whiten's work. By denouncing horror with its own means, Chandler took the horror genre full circle. Individuals like Chandler could not see Prent's work on a metaphorical level, examining and exposing a mesh of social discourses that produce multiple positions of domination and subordination. Many early critics were, of course, angered by the artist's refusal to provide an explanation for his unorthodox work. But we must not forget that Prent was a modernist artist, and postmodern theory, applied to his work in this thesis, had not yet developed.

As an appropriation of Michel Foucault's conception of disciplinary power and bio-power, Prent's introspective work has similarities with the work of Jana Sterbak, even if he will not see it. Examining her work, which

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traditional style of Native North American work.

is an example of that of a later a generation of Canadian artists who have based their work on the human body, aids an understanding of the theory used here to discuss Prent's work. Jana Sterbak sees the introspective aspects in her work, which are often conveyed through horror, as being particularly European. She argues that because of their history Europeans are prepared to deal with their past, including their personal past. In comparison, Sterbak notes that: "In North America dealing with one's past, especially if it is unpleasant, is regarded as self-indulgent, as something that should be gotten over with quickly. There is an insistence on the positive aspects of life, to the complete negation, almost, of things that are painful or not particularly pleasant or attractive."[156] Prent, like Sterbak, has also found European audiences more receptive to unsettling topics in art. After all, as he points out, "European Art has a long history of this type of subject matter."[157]

There are numerous differences between Prent and Sterbak : he is a male modernist, who refuses to discuss the meaning behind his work; she is a postmodern feminist, who is very articulate about her work. They also began working more than ten years apart , with distinct personal and ethnic histories. Yet, similar readings can be done of their work. Furthermore, a comparison between these two artists highlights the idea that explorations of the body in art were not only being done in the early Seventies by Prent, but have also become a theme of more recent Canadian artists. What most

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[156] Quoted in Nemiroff, Jana Sterbak: States of Being 51.

separates Prent from Sterbak is his consistent use of horror as a genre. It is his unremitting reliance on this genre to signify the construction of individual subjectivity in and through contemporary social discourse which sets him apart in the history of Canadian art.

Mark Prent has virtually nothing to say about the meaning of his work, other than that it has no meaning. He has, however, described the process through which he creates as a stream of undeliberated artistic decisions. The resultant sculpture is thus always somewhat of a surprise for the artist. Yet, perhaps there is a direct link between his nearly unconscious process of creation and the meaning found in his work relating to the effects of discourse on human subjectivity. Discourse, after all, operates on a subliminal, even cellular level, affecting our thoughts, behaviours, and beliefs of ourselves, others, and the world. It is not impossible to see, therefore, that the artist would uncover suppressed anxieties through such an imprudent process. Prent's work is shocking because it exposes deep-set human fears -- uncertainties that are uncomfortably familiar to us. But, beyond the initial shock, his work raises awareness of how subjectivity is shaped in and through discourse, and how we all collude in our own oppression. Finally, from a postmodern perspective, whether the artist intended his work to have this significance, or not, is really irrelevant.

Nearly thirty years ago, charges were laid in Canada for exhibiting Prent's work. At that time our society decided on a mutual fate for both

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[157] Reinhardt interview.

Prent's sculptures of diseased and deformed figures and their actual counterparts in real life. As we begin to take our first steps into the twenty-first century, perhaps we should take time to reassess our surroundings, our relationships, and ourselves. We might discover that behind much of what we have attempted to suppress, including the work of important national artists, like Mark Prent, are worthy and beneficial qualities. Examining Prent's work reveals much about ourselves as individuals, and collectively as a Canadian society. Perhaps most is the idea that we consist of multiple layers of ideas, desires, beliefs, and values, all shaped by previous layers of discourse. We can see the effect of this on a society when we compare Canadian and European audience's reactions to Prent's work. When it comes to art, we have developed different cultural values and expectations based on precedents. As the first Canadian sculptor to be recognized on account of the horror in his work, Mark Prent deserves a place in the history of Canadian art. His use of horror has been called sensationalism, which is not untrue. Yet, beneath this surface is a depth of meaning related to the body, humanity and individual subjectivity – themes that have become prevalent in Canadian art in the last couple of decades.

On an individual level, Prent's work points to ways we see ourselves in comparison to others. The most shocking discovery we may make within this realm is our own underlying darkness. This darkness gives us peculiar pleasure in the face of horror because it establishes difference between us, and that which we fear. Understanding this side of ourselves can become

horror in itself as we realize that our individual being is not autonomous, but an ideological construction. Furthermore, we may begin to understand that we are all intricately involved in the ongoing process of establishing positions of power and subordination. It is beneath the surface horror of Mark Prent's work, therefore, that we may find individual enlightenment.

"It's awful! . . . Close the door!!"

1. Paul Conrad, editorial cartoon in the Los Angeles Times about the reaction of the Board of Supervisors to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art 1966 Edward Kienholz retrospective.

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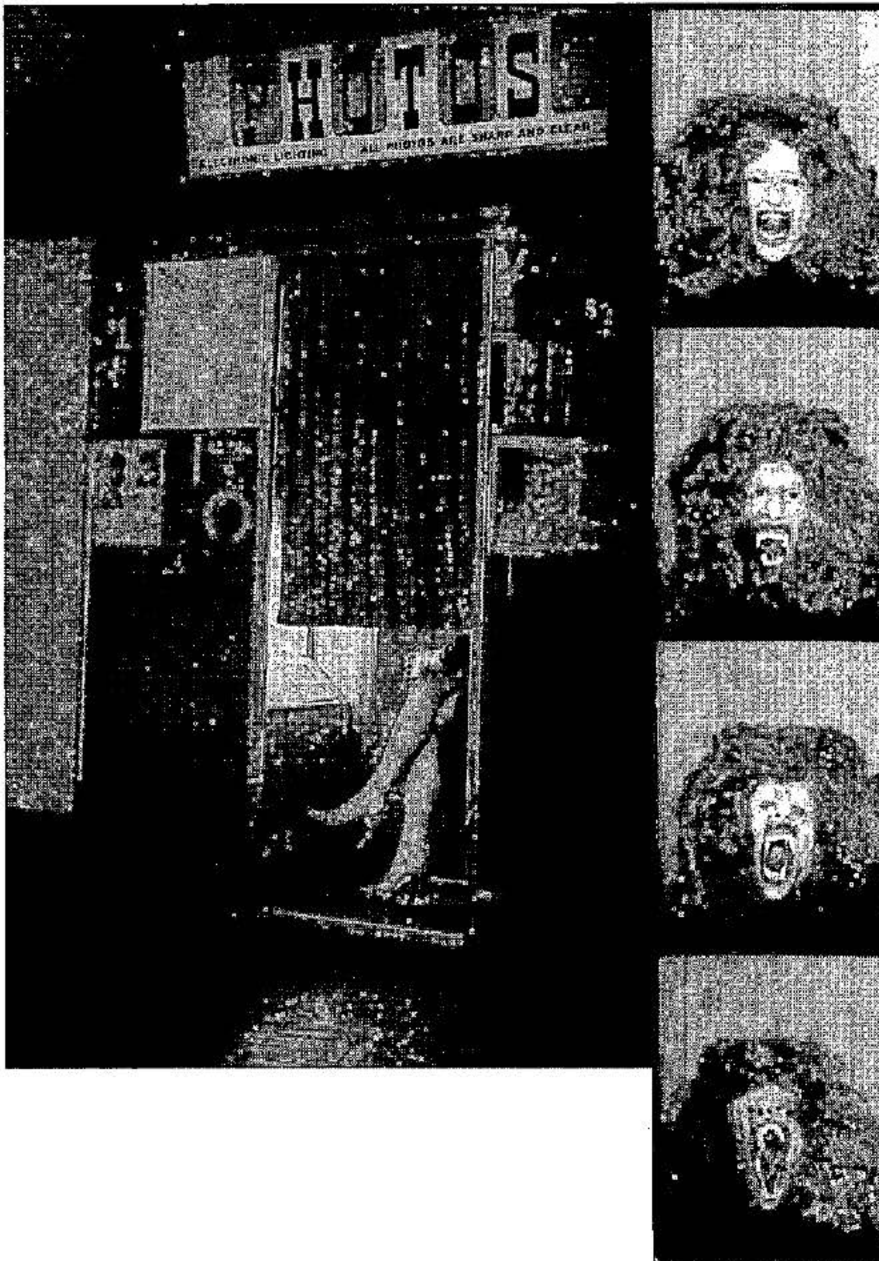
Permission to reprint not obtained.

2. Edward Kienholz, State Hospital, 1966, mixed media, 244 x 366 x 294 I inches. Collection of the Moderna Museet, Stockholm.



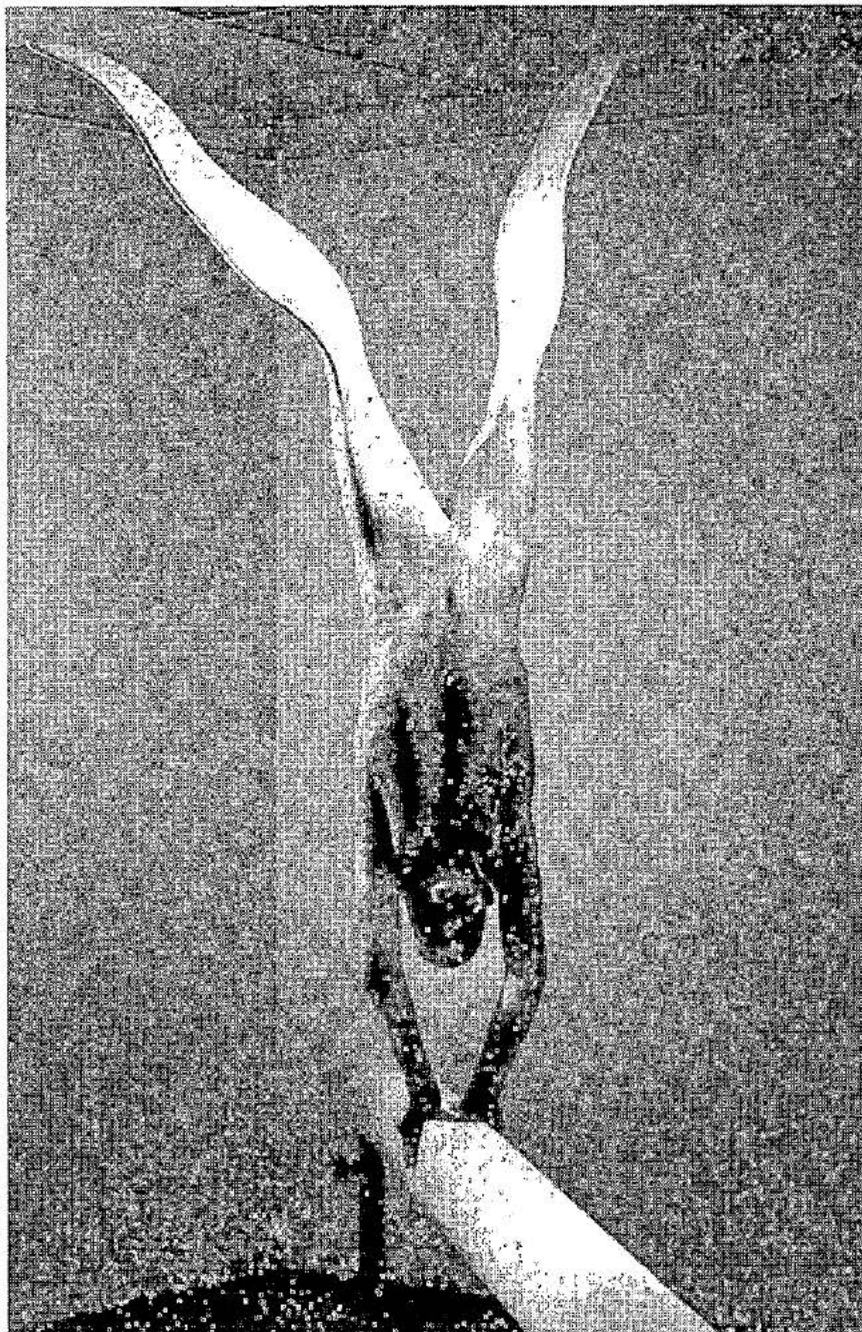
3. Mark Prent, Imagine Me, 1981, kinetic mixed media, polyester resin and fiberglass, 213.4 x 167.6 x 76.2.

Viewers deposit quarters into photo-booth to obtain a photo strip of the figure inside.

Reprinted with the artist's permission.

Permission to reprint not obtained.

4. Edward and Nancy Reddin Kienholz, The Middle Islands, 1972, mixed media, dimensions of the three main pieces: 74 x 107 x 128; 160 x 128 x 128; 20 x 52 x 26, dimensions of the six chromium frames, each: 150 x 128 x 8. Collection of the Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark. Purchased from the artists in 1979.



5. Mark Prent, Drosophila, 1984, mixed media, polyester resin and fiberglass lifesize figure, 274.3 x 115 x 487.7.

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Permission to reprint not obtained.

6. Edward Kienholz, Back Seat Dodge '38, 1964, mixed media: polyester resin, paint, fiberglass truncated 1938 Dodge, clothing, chicken wire, beer bottles, artificial grass, and plaster cast, 167.4 x 609.6 x 365.8 cm. Collection of Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Purchased with funds provided by the Art Museum Council.

Permission to reprint not obtained.

7. Duane Hanson, Dishwasher, 1973, polyester resin and fiberglass, polychromed in oil, lifesize.

8. Mark Prent, Thawing Out, 1972, mixed media, polyester resin and fiberglass, 121.9 x 198.1 x 76.2 cm. Collection of the Isaacs Gallery, Toronto.

Reprinted with the artist's permission.

10. Mark Prent, Ovibos Moschatus: Dream of a Woman, 1986, kinetic mixed media, polyester resin and fiberglass, 243.8 x 106.7 x 182.9 cm.

Coin-operated mechanism raises a blind to allow viewing through window into the environment. Inside, an anthropomorphic figure is animated to give birth.

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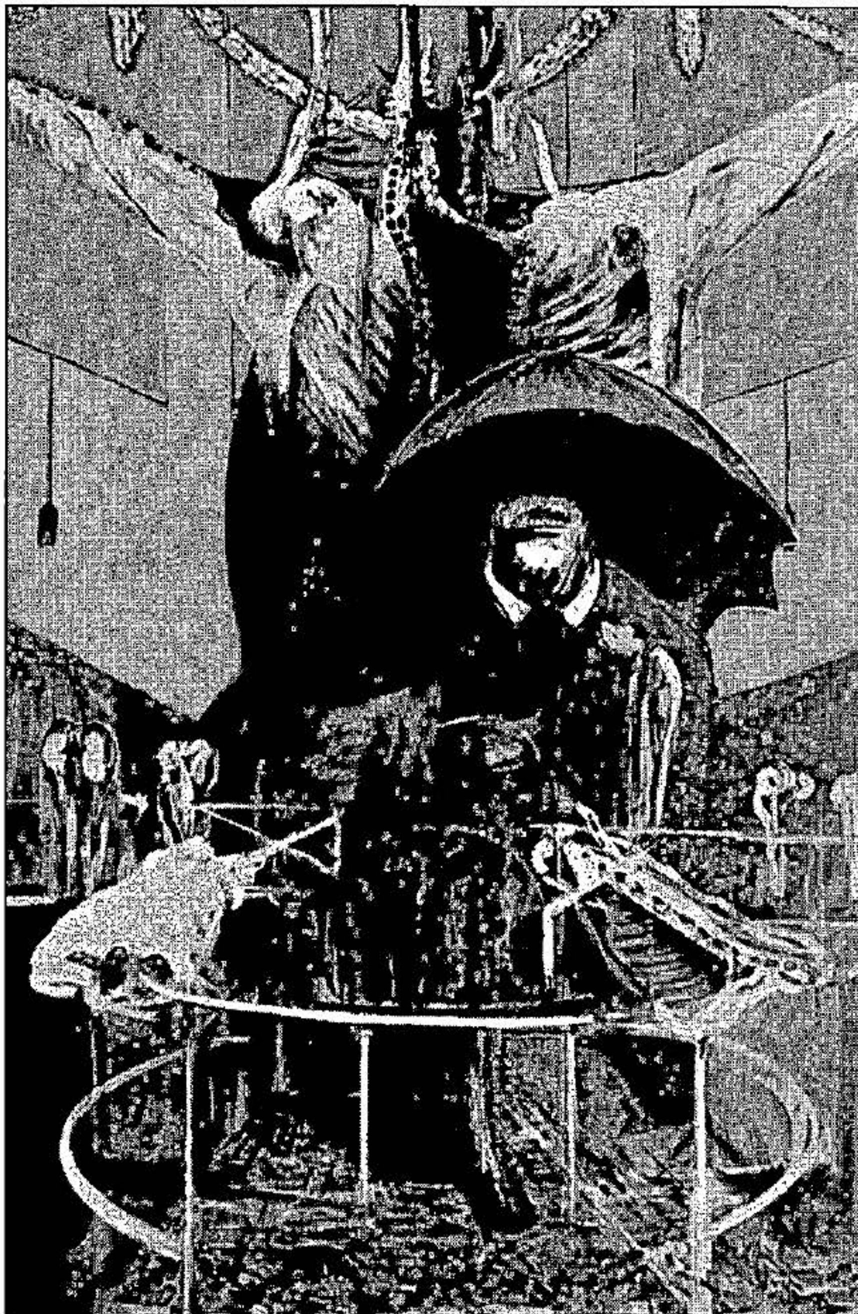
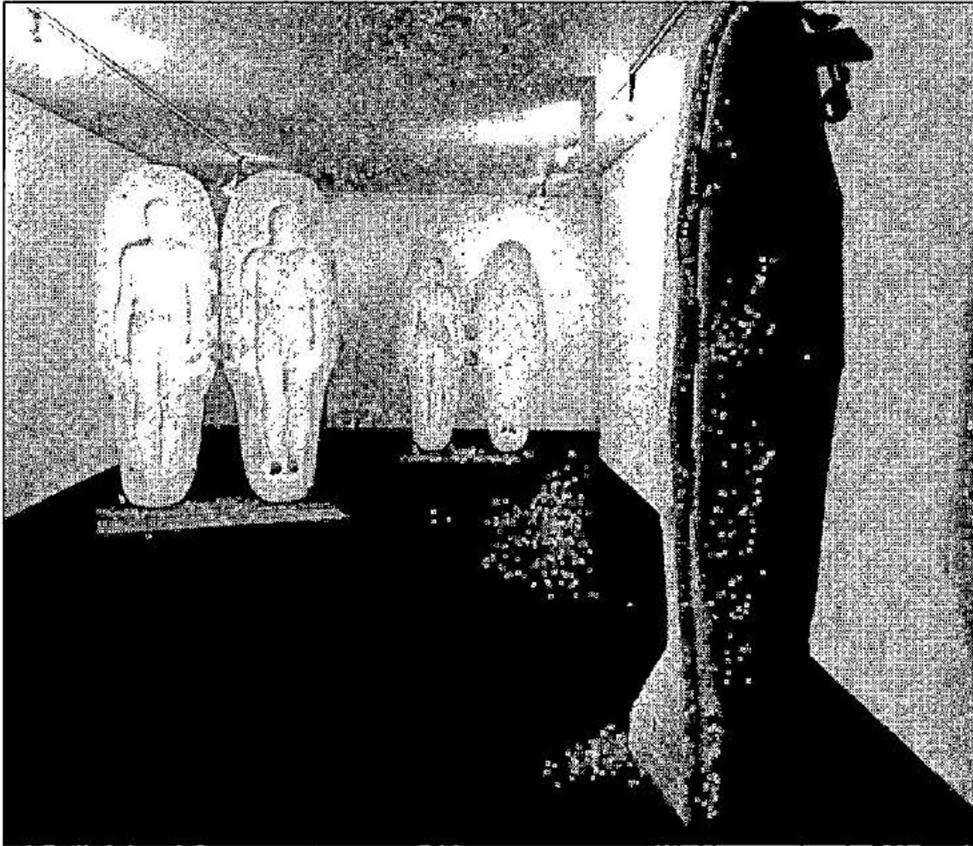


11. Francis Bacon, Painting, 1946, oil and tempera on canvas, 154 x 104 cm. Museum of Modern Art, New York.

12. Mark Prent, Hanging is Very Important, 1972, mixed media, polyester resin and fiberglass, 243.8 x 243.8 x 243.8 cm. Interior and exterior view.

Reprinted with the artist's permission.

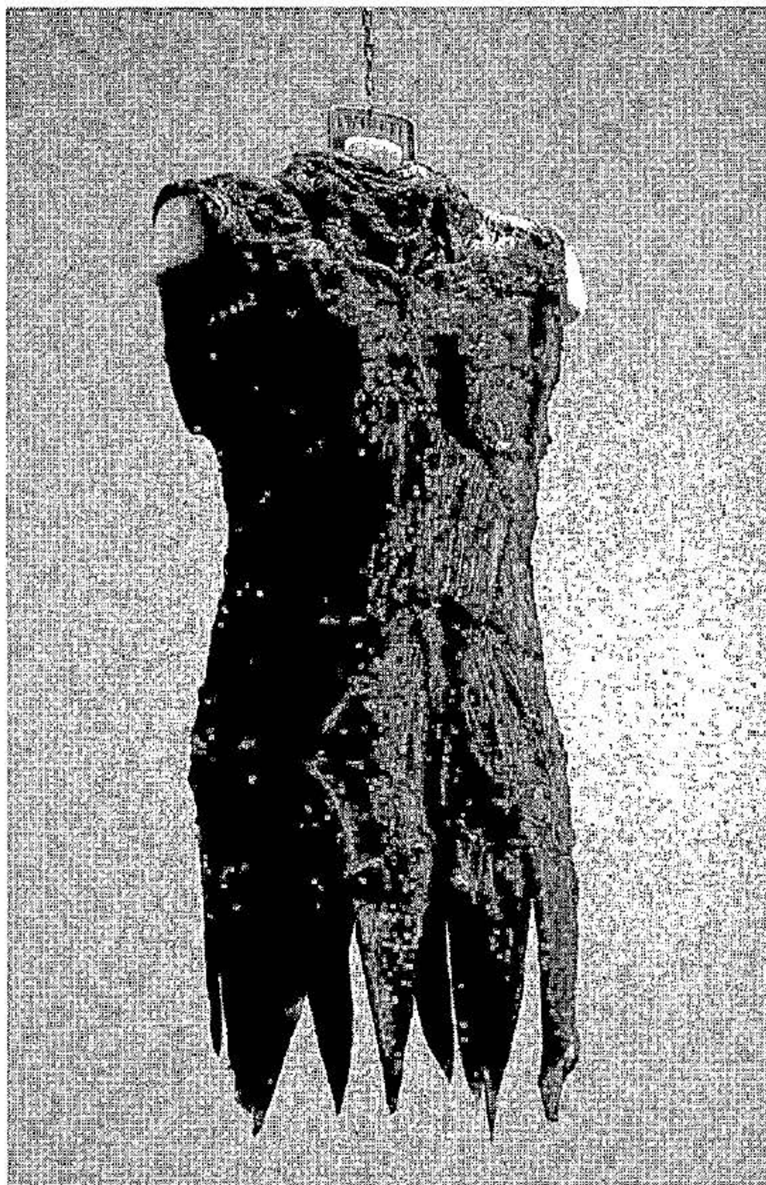


13. Colette Whiten, September 1975, 1975, plaster moulds, fiberglass, wood, metal. Three units, each 86.2 x 58.5 x 33.7 cm. The National Gallery of Canada.

Reprinted with the artist's permission.

Permission to reprint not obtained.

14. Richard Prince, Casting the Constellations, 1980, fiberglass, reinforced plastic, steel, aluminum, 222.0 x 104.0 x 31.0 cm. Collection of the artist.

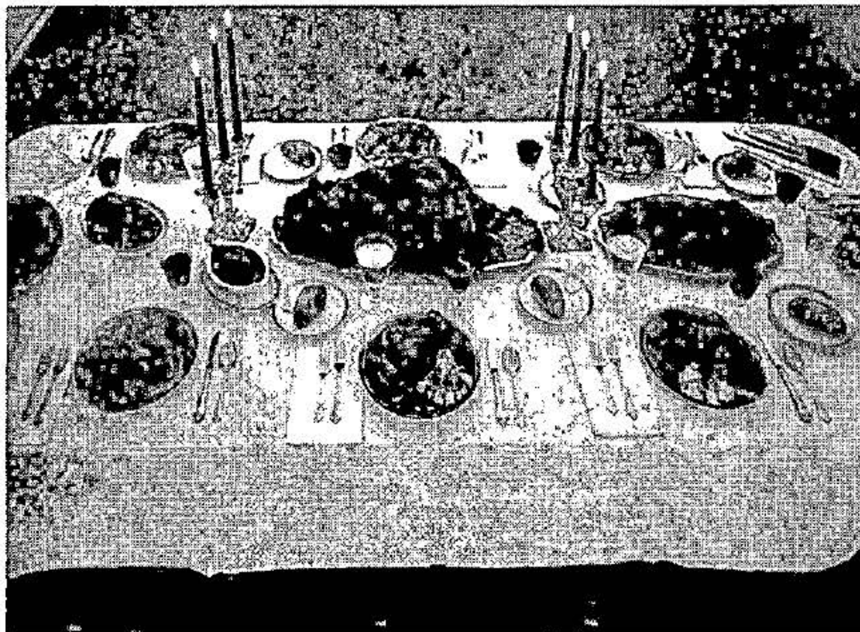


15. Jana Sterbak, Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic, 1987, flank steak, dimensions vary daily.

Reprinted with the artist's permission.

16. Mark Prent, <u>And Is There Anything Else You'd Like Madam?</u>, 1971, kinetic mixed media, polyester resin and fiberglass, deli counter: 182.9 x 185.4 x 76.2 cm, rotisserie: 165.1 x 50.8 x 30.5 cm.

Reprinted with the artist's permission.



17. Mark Prent, Last Supper, 1971, mixed media, polyester resin and fiberglass, 76.2 x 289.6 x 106.7 cm.

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18. Mark Prent, <u>Death in the Chair</u>, 1973, mixed media, polyester resin and fiberglass, 336 x 432 x 300 cm.

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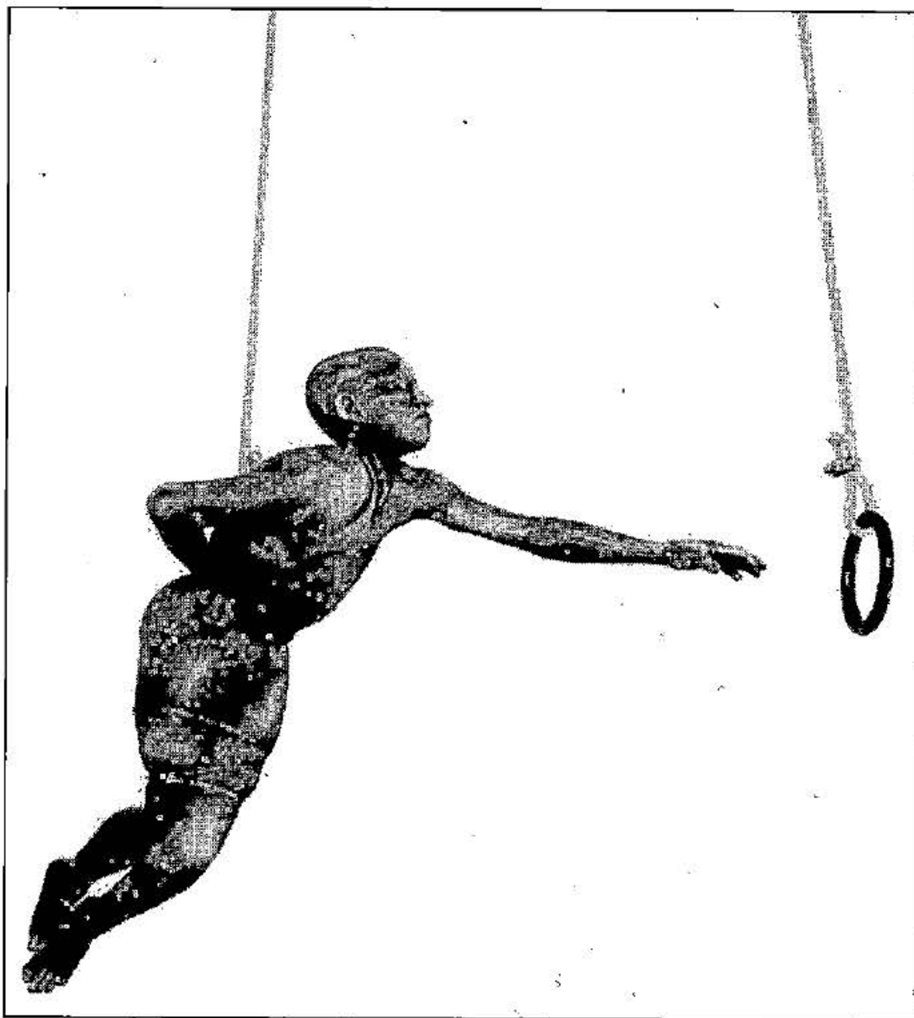

19. Mark Prent, Ringturner, 1975, mixed media, polyester resin and fiberglass, lifesize figure.

Reprinted with the artist's permission.

20. Mark Prent, For Harry, 1984, mixed media, polyester resin and fiberglass, 120 x 45 x 45 cm.

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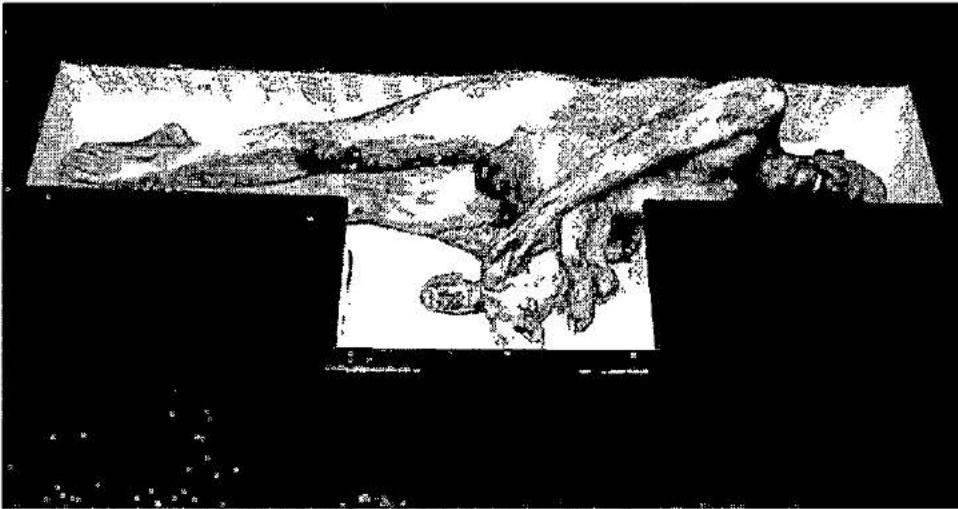

21. Mark Prent, Parasitic Twin, 1983, mixed media, polyester resin and fiberglass, 104.1 x 182.9 x 71.5 cm.

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22. Mark Prent, Operating Room, 1973, kinetic mixed media, polyester resin and fiberglass, 243.8 x 426.7 x 304.8 cm.

The figure that lies upon the table is opened-up to reveal a pulsating organ, suggesting a lung. The environmental piece is accompanied by the sound of heavy breathing.

Reprinted with the artist's permission.

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Mark Prent: Overmood. 1/2 hour colour, 16 mm documentary filmed by Brian McNeil, Montreal, 1980.

Appendix I

Grants and Awards:[1]

1996	Canada Council Senior Arts Award
1993	Art Matters Inc. Canada Council Project Cost Grant
1992	Canada Council Project Cost Grant, Japan-Canada Fund
1991	Canada Council Senior Arts Award, Japan-Canada Fund
1990	Canada Council Project Cost Grant, Japan-Canada Fund
1988	Art Matters Inc.
1987	Canada Council Senior Arts Award Art Matters Inc.
1985	Ludwig Vogelstein Foundation Fellowship Canada Council Senior Arts Award
1984	Canada Council Short-Term Grant
1983	Canada Council Short-Term Grant
1981	Canada Council Senior Arts Award
1980	Canada Council Senior Arts Award
1979	Canada Council Senior Arts Award
1978	Victor M. Lynch-Stauton Award Canada Council Arts Award
1977	Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship
1975	Canada Council Arts Award Guest of The Deutsches Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) Artist in Berlin Program
1973	Canada Council Arts Award

[1] Data obtained from correspondence with Mark Prent in February 2000.

1972	Canada Council Arts Award
1971	Canada Council Arts Award

Appendix II

Solo Exhibitions:[2]

2000	Pink Eye; St. Albans, Vermont, U.S.A
1993	Centre d'Exposition Circa; Montreal, Canada
	Galerie de la Tour; Basel, Switzerland
1991	Glendon Gallery; Toronto, Canada
	Galerie Experanza; Montreal, Canada
1990	The Isaacs Gallery; Toronto, Ontario, Canada
	Galerie Experanza; Montreal, Quebec, Canada
1987	Powerplant Gallery; Toronto, Ontario, Canada
	Chaffee Gallery; Rutland, Vermont, U.S.A
	Saw Gallery; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
1986	Galerie Esperanza; Montreal, Quebec, Canada
	The Isaacs Gallery; Toronto, Ontario, Canada
1985	Forest City Gallery; London, Ontario, Canada
1984	The Isaacs Gallery; Toronto, Ontario, Canada
	Galerie Fucito; Montreal, Quebec, Canada
1983	Galerie Matane; Matane, Quebec, Canada
1982	Salle Tremble; Alma, Quebec, Canada
1981	The Isaacs Gallery; Toronto, Ontario, Canada
1979	Musee d'art contemporain; Montreal, Quebec, Canada
	Saw Gallery; Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

[2] Ibid.

	Art Space; Peterborough, Ontario, Canada
1978	Stedelijk Museum; Amsterdam, Holland
	Sir George Williams Art Gallery; Montreal, Quebec, Canada
	The Isaacs Gallery; Toronto, Ontario, Canada
1976	Kunsthalle Nurnberg; Nurberg, Germany
1975	Akademie der Kunste; Berlin, Germany
1974	York University; Toronto, Ontario, Canada
	The Isaacs Gallery; Toronto, Ontario, Canada
1972	Warren Benedek Gallery; New York, New York, U.S.A.
	The Isaacs Gallery; Toronto, Ontario, Canada
1971	Sir George Williams Art Gallery; Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Group Exhibitions:

1999	"De la Montuosite," Galerie Espace D. Rene Harrison; Montreal, Quebec, Canada
1999	"L'etat des Chose Photographique," Galerie Espace D. Rene Harrison; Montreal, Quebec, Canada
1992	"Miniatuur-Museum," Reflex Modern Art Gallery; Amsterdam, Holland
	"Small Villages-Isaacs Retrospective," Art Gallery of Hamilton; Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
1989	"Artluminium," a joint initiative of Alcan and Lavalin, (contemporary art featuring the use of aluminum); Montreal, Quebec, Canada
1986-87	"The Human Touch," Le Botanique Centre Culturelle Bruxelles, Belgium, touring Liege, Knokke and Paris
	"Repulsion: Aesthetics of the Grotesque," Alternative Museum; New York, New York, U.S.A.

1985	"East-West Visual Arts Encounter" Bombay, India
1983	Art Bank Exhibit, Galerie UQAM; Montreal, Quebec, Canada
1982	"Art Against Repression," Artspace, Peterborough, Ontario, Canada
	"The First International Shoebox Sculpture Exhibition," The University of Hawaii Art Gallery, Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A. (traveling through the U.S.A. and Japan)
1981	"Prince, Prent, Whiten," The Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, Ontario, Canada
	University of Hawaii at Manoa, Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A.
	"Panic Internationale," Maison de la Culture Rennes, Rennes, France
1980	"Quebec Sculpture 1970-80," Chicoutimi, Quebec and Musee d'art contemporain, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
	"Sculpture 1980," Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.
	"11th International Sculpture Conference," Dupont Centre (Cochran Gallery)' Washington, D.C., U.S.A.
1979	"The Birming Festival of the Arts," Birmingham, Alabama, U.S.A.
	"Festival of the Performing and Visual Arts," Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada
1978	"Canadian Contemporary Sculpture," Centre Saidye Bronfman, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Ontario College of Art,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

"Performance," Harbourfront Art Gallery,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

The Isaacs Gallery,
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

1975 "9 Out of 10: A Survey of Contemporary Canadian Art," (traveling exhibit), Art Gallery of Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, and The Stratford Gallery - Ontario, Canada

1974 "The Isaacs Gallery at the Owens Art Gallery,"
Mount Allison University
Sackville, New Brunswick, Canada

Gallery Rebecca Cooper,
Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

1973 "8th Biennale de Paris," Muses national d'art moderne,
Paris, France

1972 ""Realism: Emulsion and Omission,"
Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University and
The Art Gallery of the University of Guelph,
Ontario, Canada

1971 "Royal Canadian Academy Traveling Exhibition,"
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and
Confederation Art Gallery and Museum,
Charlottetown, P.E.I., Canada

1970 "Winnipeg Biennial," Winnipeg Art Gallery,
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

"Survey '70," Montreal Museum of Fine Arts,
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Vita

Surname: Reinhardt Given Names: Kimberly Anne

Place of Birth: Barrie, Ontario

Educational Institutions Attended:

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Acadia University	1992 to 1997
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Mark Prent -- Horror in Canadian Art

Autho

Kimberly Reinhardt
March 19, 2001