

MAJOR EXHIBITION EXPLORES ASPECTS OF SEXUAL DIFFERENCE
AT THE NEW MUSEUM

For Freud, with an emphasis that has been picked up and extended in the work of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, our sexual identities as male or female, our confidence in language as true or false, and our security in the image we judge as perfect or flawed, are fantasies.

-- Jacqueline Rose
"Sexuality in the Field of Vision"*

Recent interest in the issue of representation has prompted many artists to explore the cultural formation of our notions of sexuality. On December 8, 1984, The New Museum of Contemporary Art will present Difference: On Representation and Sexuality, the first serious exhibition devoted to the concept of gender in relation to language and society. Organized by Guest Curator Kate Linker, with Guest Film and Video Curator Jane Weinstock, the exhibition diverges from previous endeavors that have tended, instead, to address the sensationalistic topics of sex and sexual imagery. Through approximately 150 photographs and works on paper, 10 videotapes, and 16 films, American and European artists critically examine sexual stereotypes through a reiteration and re-use of extremely familiar images found in the media, advertising, books, photography, and film. The exhibition will remain on view through February 10, 1985.

Artists whose works are represented in the exhibition are Hans Haacke, Silvia Kolbowski, Barbara Kruger, and Sherrie Levine (New York); Ray Barrie, Victor Burgin, Mary Kelly, Yve Lomax, and Marie Yates (London); and Jeff Wall (Vancouver). Designed to include older as well

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as younger, less well-known artists, the choice also indicates the reach of these concerns to both sides of the Atlantic and the influence of certain British artists on their American peers.

In the catalogue foreword Linker writes,* "As the title suggests, this exhibition pertains to recent interest in representation and, particularly, in the powers inherent in representation." In the works on view -- photographic images mostly borrowed from the media and often accompanied by text -- the artists investigate the simultaneous formation of language and sexual identity. In Mary Kelly's Post-Partum Document (1973-79), for example, her son's development is recorded through written texts, charts, graphs, diagrams, drawings, plaster casts, and found objects. In the photography of Burgin, Wall, and Barrie, carefully posed images explore the fantasies that shape male sexuality. In like manner, Kolbowski, Levine, and Kruger juxtapose images found in high fashion, the history of art, or in the home to question the assumed postures of femininity. Haacke's project, which traces the provenance of Seurat's Les Poseuses (1975), documents a patriarchal legacy as a work of art is handed down from father to son.

The videotape program, which will be shown at The New Museum throughout the exhibition, includes works by Max Almy, Judith Barry, Raymond Bellour and Philippe Venault, Dara Birnbaum, Theresa Cha, Cecilia Condit, Jean-Luc Godard, Stuart Marshall, and Martha Rosler.

Joseph Papp's Public Theater will present the film portion of the exhibition from January 25 to February 3, 1985. Included will be 8 feature-length films by Bette Gordon, Sheila McLaughlin and Lynne Tillman, and Yvonne Rainer (United States); Chantal Akerman and Marguerite Duras (France); Valie Export (Austria); Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, and Robina Rose

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(Great Britain). Eight short films will also be included. For a complete list of videotapes and films, please call the Museum.

The catalogue* accompanying the exhibition includes essays by prominent art historians and critics, who address the relationship between sexual difference and representation as well as the influence on this work of psychoanalytic theory. Contributors are Craig Owens, Senior Editor at Art in America; Lisa Tickner, instructor at Middlesex Polytechnic, England, and editorial board member of Block and Art History; Jacqueline Rose, instructor at the University of Sussex, England, and co-author (with Juliet Mitchell) of Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne (1983); Peter Wollen, filmmaker and author of Signs and Meaning in the Cinema (1972); and Jane Weinstock, film critic and Guest Film and Video Curator.

After its New Museum showing, the presentation will travel to The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago (March 3 - April 7) and to the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (July 19 - September 1).

In conjunction with the exhibition, Kate Linker will lead a panel discussion on Wednesday, December 12, at 7 p.m. Please call the Museum at (212) 219-1222 for further details.

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*Catalogue: Difference: On Representation and Sexuality. Preface by Marcia Tucker, Director, The New Museum. Foreword and acknowledgments by Kate Linker, art critic and Guest Curator. Essays by Craig Owens, Lisa Tickner, Jacqueline Rose, Peter Wollen, and Jane Weinstock. 30 b/w illustrations. 60 pages. Published by The New Museum of Contemporary Art. \$7.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Jessica Schwartz or Lisa Wyant (212) 219-1222