

Printed Matter, Inc.

Digital Exhibition Guide

Sarah Charlesworth: IMAGE LANGUAGE

Image Language presents the work of American artist Sarah Charlesworth (1947–2013), tracing her creative output over the course of forty years across her formative involvement in art publications to her later camera-based projects. Charlesworth worked serially throughout her career—in the sequenced format of magazines, in her production of photographs, and in her methodical and thematic organization of reference images. Bringing together publications, ephemeral materials, and photographic works from the artist's archive, the exhibition focuses on Charlesworth's early formal and conceptual strategies, exploring how she utilized photography and appropriation to investigate the cultural influence of images.

Associated with the Pictures Generation of the late 1970s, Charlesworth adhered to a regimented process of gathering and archiving images from newspapers, press clippings, advertisements, and cultural magazines ranging in type from fashion to lifestyle to pornography. As one of the first of the postmodern artists to re-purpose found images, Charlesworth's work was shaped by the idea that an image contained references to a history of other images, and that this quotational gesture could offer a strategy of access and communal language.

Sarah Charlesworth: Image Language is organized by Christine Robinson and will be on view for approximately 6–8 weeks upon Printed Matter's reopening.

This program is supported, in part, by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with City Council, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.



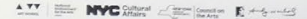
Sarah Charlesworth: IMAGE LANGUAGE

image Language presents the work of New York artist Sarah Charlesworth (1947–2013), tracing elements of her creative output over the course of forty years, across her formative involvement in art publications, to her later camera-based projects. Charlesworth worked serially throughout her career—in the sequenced format of magazines, in her production of photographs, and in her multimedial and thematic organization of reference images. Bringing together publications, ephemeral materials, and photographic works from the artist's archive, the exhibition focuses on Charlesworth's early formal and conceptual strategies, exploring how she utilized photography and appropriation to investigate the cultural influence of images.

Associated with the Pictures Generation of the late 1970s and 1980s, Charlesworth's art production comprised numerous investigations that challenged and exposed forms of representation. As one of the first of the postmodernist artists to purpose found images, Charlesworth adhered to a regimented practice of gathering and archiving images from newspapers, press clippings, advertisements, and cultural magazines ranging in type from fashion to lifestyle to pornography. Charlesworth's work was shaped by the idea that an image contained references to a history of other images, and that this quotational gesture functioned as a strategy of access and communal language.

Sarah Charlesworth: image Language is organized by Christine Robinson and is on view from February 27–April 29, 2020.

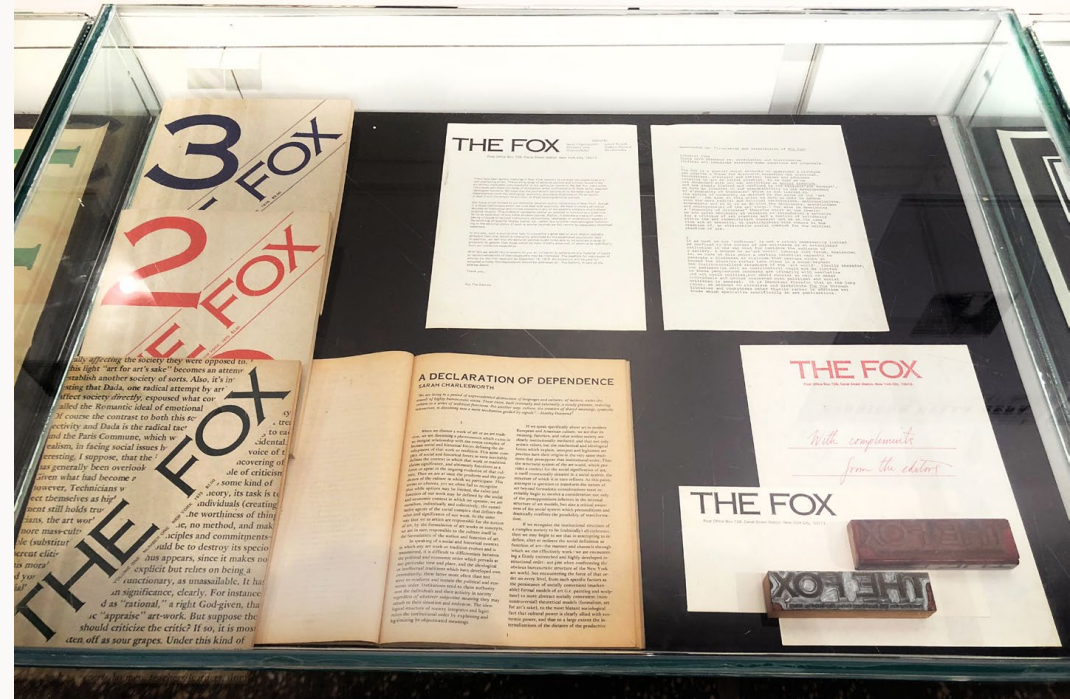
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The Fox (1975–76)

Influenced by Conceptualism and the dematerialization of art through other means like writing, Charlesworth began to study and write about contemporary art toward the end of the 1960s, and became affiliated with the New York division of Art & Language. In 1975, she and Joseph Kosuth co-founded *The Fox*, an art theory magazine emphasizing artistic collaboration, and political and theoretical debate.

Charlesworth was a central figure of *The Fox*, editing and writing several texts for its three issues, before disagreements between its editors caused them to disband. Her texts for the magazine became urgent proposals for an end to the problems associated with the commodification of art and for artists to hold a greater sense of cultural responsibility, writing in the first issue: "We have lost touch—not only with ourselves and with each other but with the culture of which we are a part. It is only by confronting the problem of our alienation, making this the subject of our work, that our ideals take on new meaning. We move to become one again with culture in our sense of shared concern."



IT IS THE PURPOSE OF OUR JOURNAL TO TRY TO ESTABLISH SOME KIND OF COMMUNITY PRACTICE. THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED, CURIOUS, OR HAVE SOMETHING TO ADD (BE IT PRO OR CON) TO THE EDITORIAL THRUST...THE REVALUATION OF IDEOLOGY...OF THIS FIRST ISSUE ARE ENCOURAGED, EVEN URGED, TO CONTRIBUTE TO FOLLOWING ISSUES. ALL OTHER CORRESPONDENCES ARE WELCOME. CONTRIBUTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO: THE EDITORS, POST OFFICE BOX 728, CANAL STREET STATION, NEW YORK CITY, 10013.

From *The Fox* Issue 1, 1975

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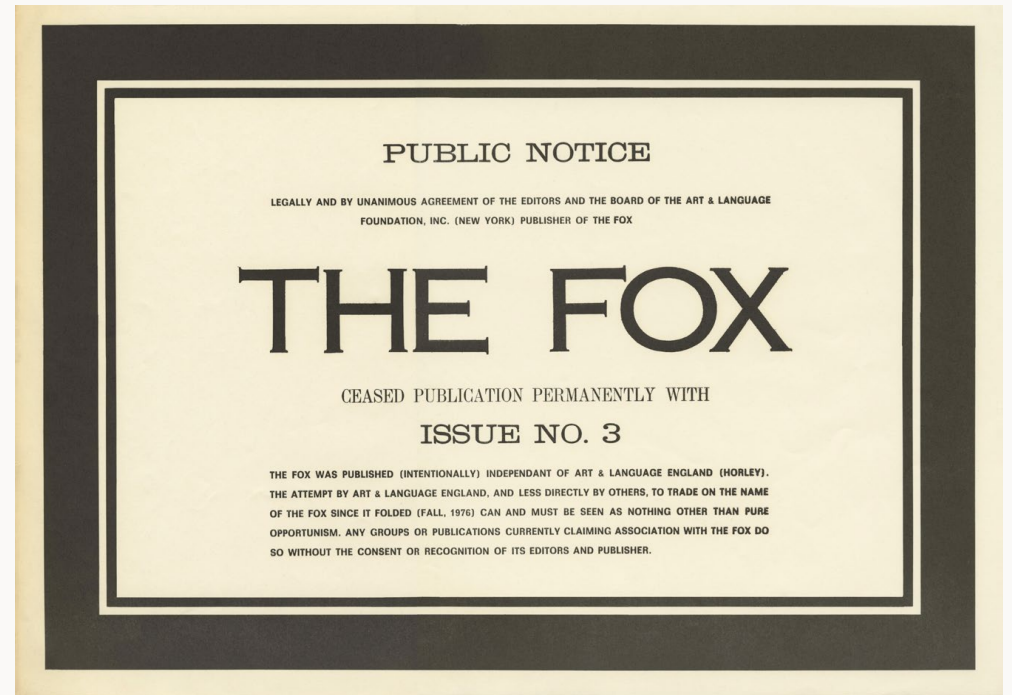
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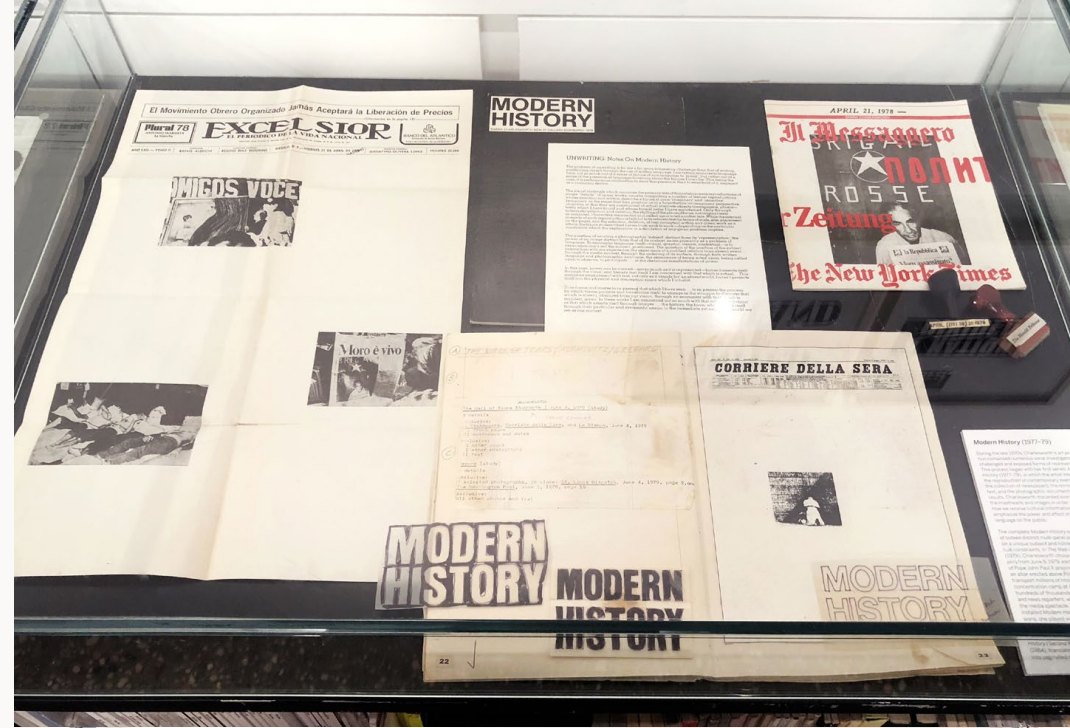
Left: Announcement poster, *The Fox* Issue 1, 1975

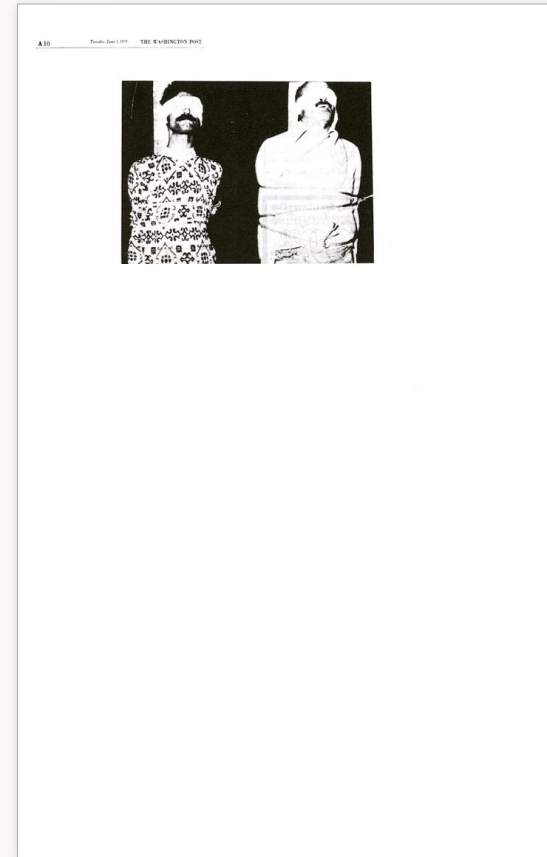
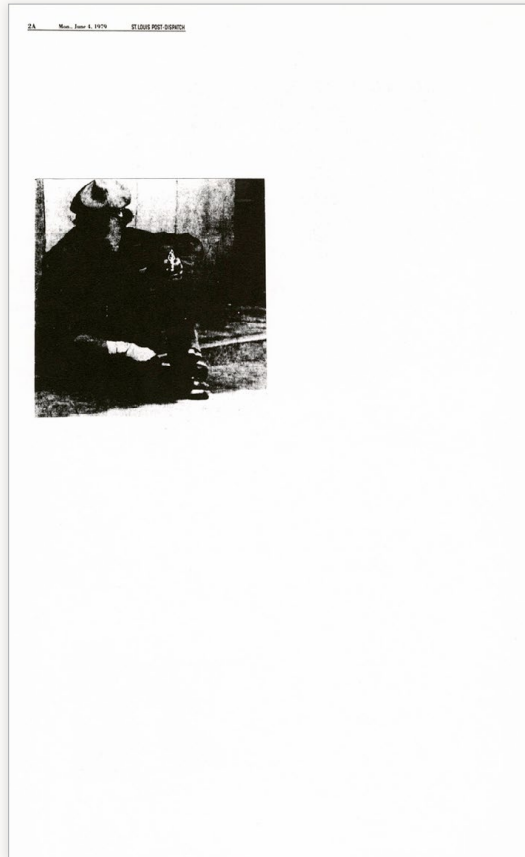
Right: *The Fox* notice of ceased publication, 1976

Modern History (1977–79)

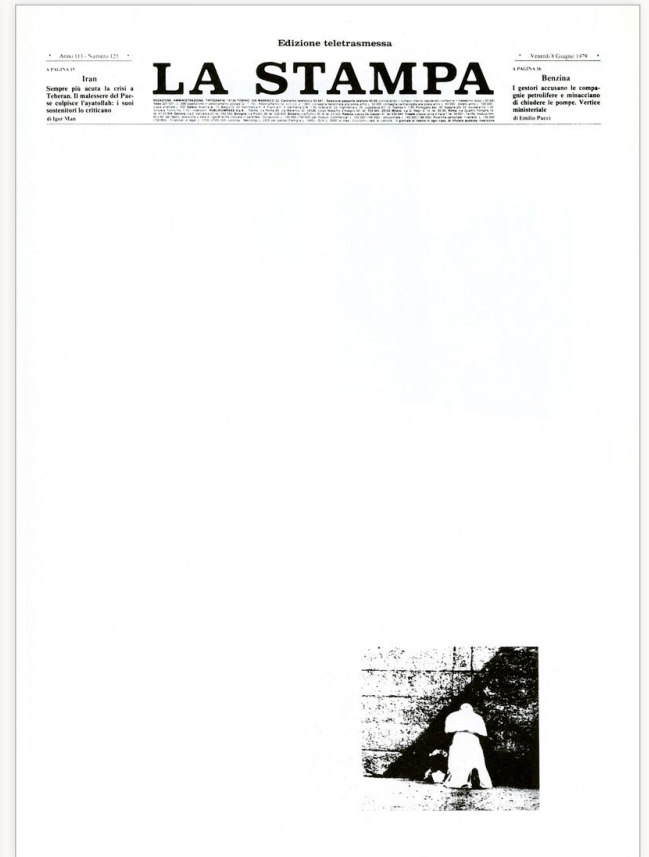
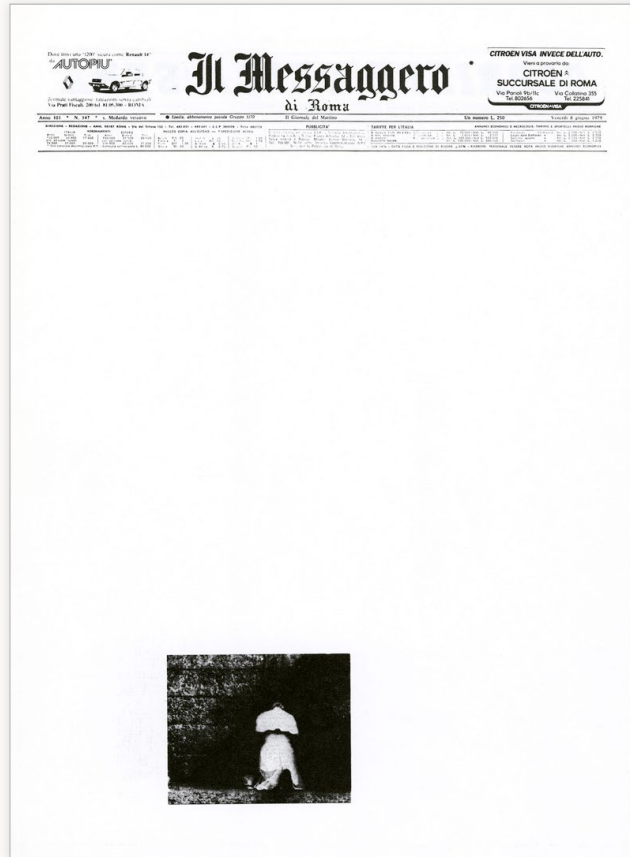
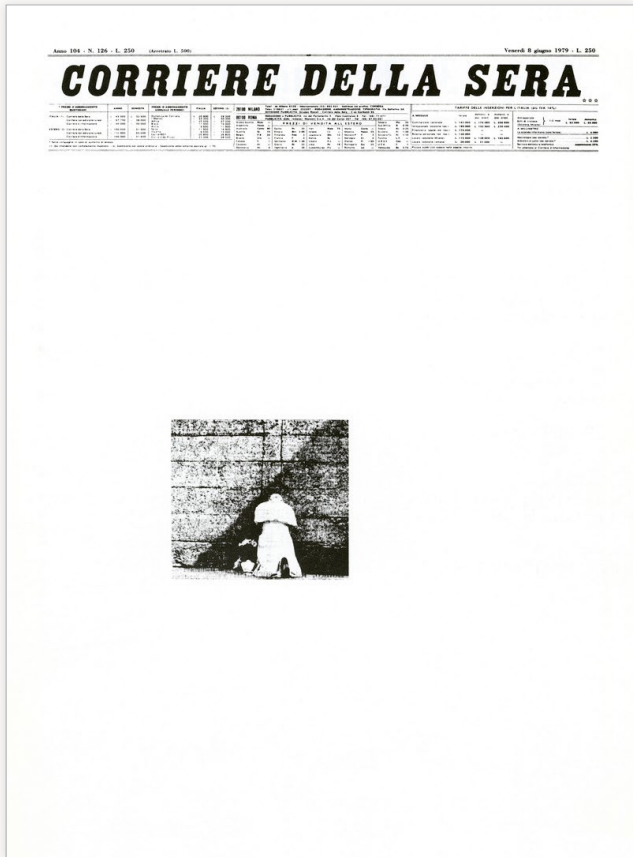
During the late 1970s, Charlesworth's art production comprised numerous serial investigations that challenged and exposed forms of representation. This process began with her first series, *Modern History* (1977–79), in which the artist interrogates the reproduction of contemporary events through the collection of newspapers, the removal of their text, and the photographic documentation of the results. Charlesworth discarded everything but the mastheads and images in order to investigate how we receive cultural information, and to emphasize the power and effect of photographic language on the public.

The complete *Modern History* series consists of sixteen distinct multi-panel pieces, each focusing on a unique subject and following a set of conceptual constraints. In *The Wall of Tears (Study)* (1979), Charlesworth chose three Italian newspapers from June 8, 1979, each featuring an image of Pope John Paul II praying. He kneels before an altar erected above Polish train tracks used to transport millions of Holocaust victims to the concentration camp at Auschwitz. Out of view are hundreds of thousands of visitors, photographers, and news reporters, witnessing and recording the media spectacle. While Charlesworth typically installed *Modern History* pieces as linear progressions, she played with their visual formations in two published catalogues of the series, *Modern History (Second Reading)* (1979) and *April 21, 1978* (1984), translating their original configurations into paginated sequences.

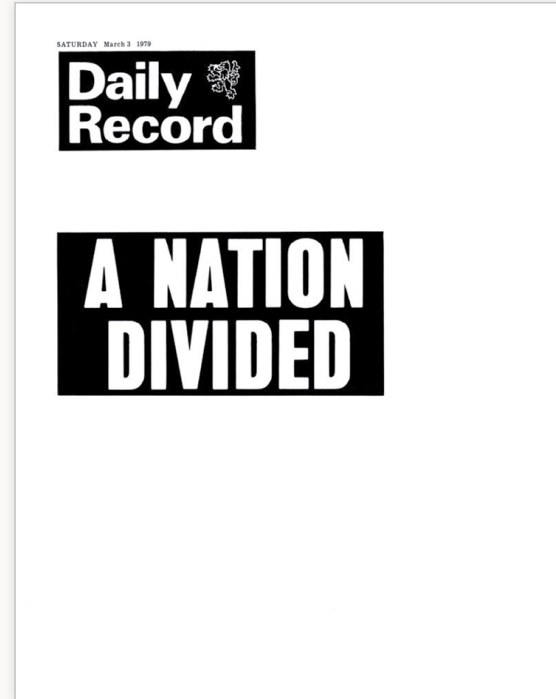




Regard (Study), 1979
From the series "Modern History"
Black and white prints



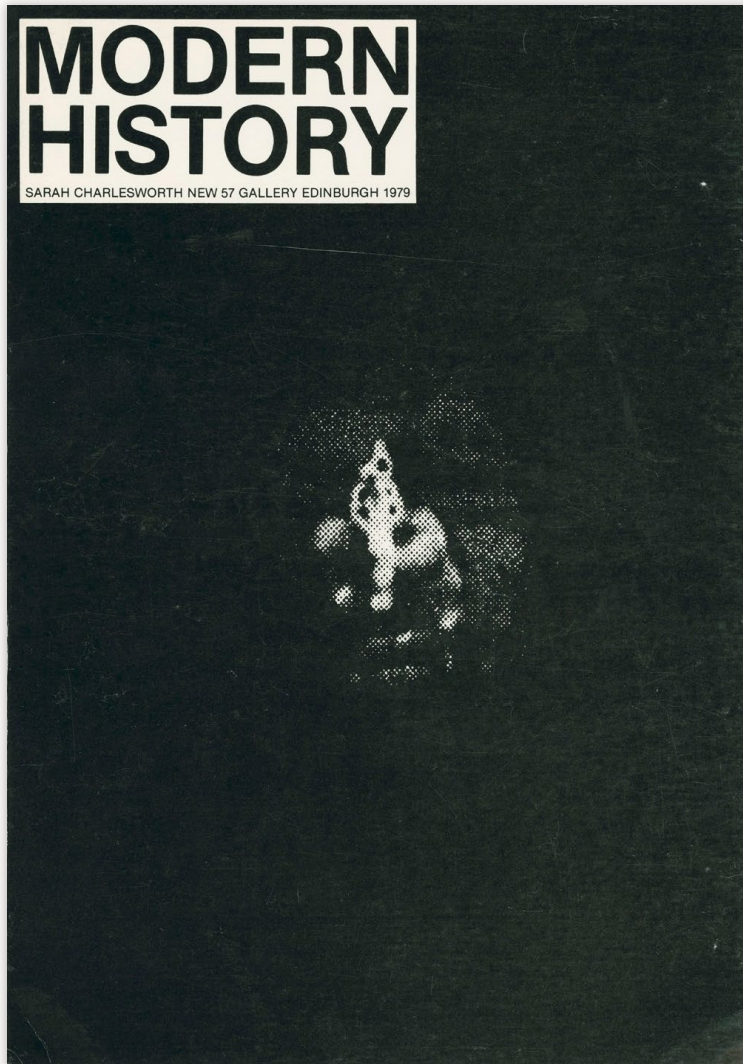
The Wall of Tears (Study), 1979
 From the series "Modern History"
 Black and white prints



United We Stand / A Nation Divided, 1979/2003

From the series "Modern History"

Black and white prints



Modern History (Second Reading), published by New 57 Gallery,
Edinburgh, 1979

UNWRITING: Notes On Modern History

The problem of unwriting is for me a far more interesting challenge than that of writing, positioning myself through the use of written language. I am taking recourse to language here, not so much out of a sense of failure of non-language to 'speak', but rather out of a sense of the presence of language hovering about the figures I inscribe. This being the case, it is perhaps more misleading to deny that presence, than to seize hold of it, engage it as a conjuring device...

The visual materials which comprise the primary text of this catalogue are reproductions of single "details" of larger works, usually comprising a number of textual reproductions whose selection and edition describe a figure at once 'imaginary' and 'objective'. Imaginary, in the sense that they position us in a hypothetical or imaginary perspective; objective, in that they are constructed of actual concrete objects (newspapers, photos—texts) which I have found and whose formal order I have maintained. Only through systematic selection and deletion, the shifting of the plane of focus, are original texts re-animated, characters resurrected and called upon to tell another tale. While the internal integrity of each reproduction is faithful to its referent text (in terms of scale, size, placement on the page), and the selection, deletion, of text consistent within any given work as a whole, the figure so described varies from work to work—depending on the particular constraints which the exploration or articulation of any given problem implies.

The question of locating a photographic 'subject' distinct from its 'representation', the power of an image distinct from that of its context, exists primarily as a problem of language. To encounter language itself—visual, graphic, literate, contextual—is to experience one's self the subject, positioned. The question of the position of the subject begins then with my experience, the experience of a codified relation to an absent event... through the media context, through the ordering of its surface, through both written language and photographic analogue, the experience of being acted upon, being called upon to observe, to participate... in the rhetorical manifestations of power.

In this case, power can be viewed—not so much as it is represented—but as it asserts itself through the visual and literary text itself. I am concerned with that which is actual... This means an engagement with text, not only as it 'stands for' an absent world, but as it projects itself into the physical and conceptual space which I inhabit.

To re-frame is of course to re-present that which I have seen... to re-present the process by which vision projects and transforms itself: to engage in the struggle to discover that which is absent, obscured from our vision, through an encounter with that which is manifest, given. In these works I am concerned not so much with that which lies behind as that which asserts itself through images... the history, the force, which exerts itself through their particular and systematic usage, in the immediate yet expanded world we see as our context.

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PUBLISHED BY THE NEW 57 GALLERY
29 MARKET STREET,
EDINBURGH
EDITION 500
The New 57 Gallery acknowledges
the financial assistance
of the Scottish Arts Council
PRINTED BY IVANNOE PRINTING CO. LTD
MUSSELBURGH

THE WALL OF TEARS (AUSCHWITZ) AND REGARD

While we observe the ritual, we might likewise transform it as a metaphor. All we need to begin with is a description—all else remains (formally) intact. Here the image of a Pope is kneeling on our page. He is praying at the Wall of Lamentation; the scene of human tragedy—DEPICTED ALWAYS IN THE PAST. If this metaphor harbours implications for the present, let's un-write this story and bring them up to date. For a moment—while we have a choice—let's assume the position of our story's subject interacting with other subjects which, together, compose the social body of our text. These others we might imagine to be REAL—figures made to stand for the positions which they take. Here it seems we face ourselves, a contradiction: armed we frequently play the victim, eyes masked we continue to attack.

THE WALL OF TEARS (AUSCHWITZ) JUNE 8, 1979 (STUDY)

3 details

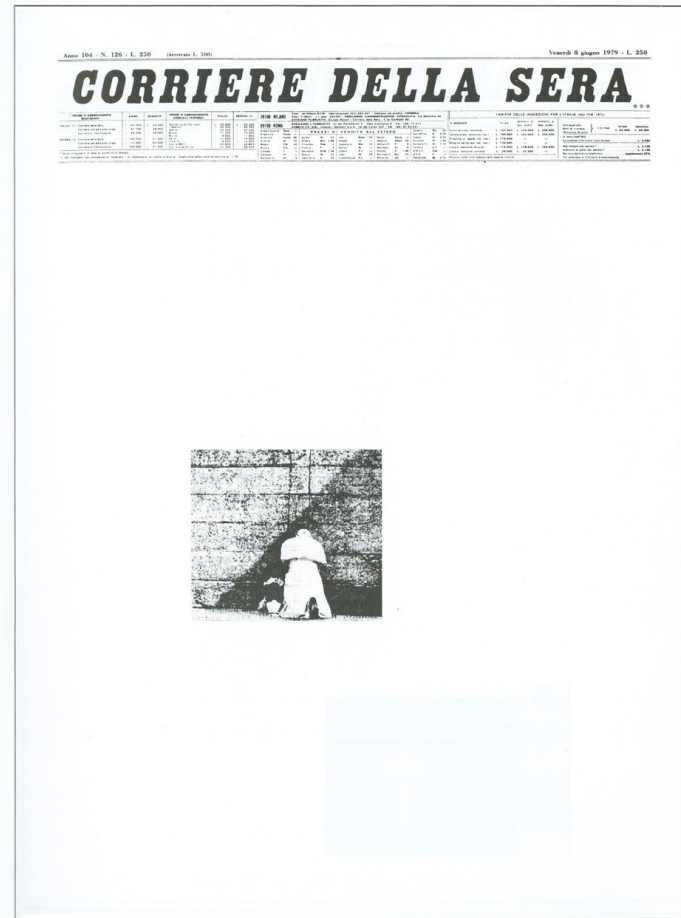
inclusive:
IL MESSAGGERO, CORRIERE DELLA SERA, and LA STAMPA, June 8, 1979
all front pages
all mastheads and dates

exclusive:
all other pages
all other photographs
all text

REGARD (study)
2 details

inclusive:
2 selected photographs, in place: ST. LOUIS DISPATCH, June 4, 1979, page 2,
and THE WASHINGTON POST, June 5, 1979, page 10

exclusive:
all other photos and text



Stills (1980)

Charlesworth's series, *Stills*, from 1980, began with the artist's own image research at newspaper stands and the New York Public Library; pulling images from a variety of sources including press images, Hollywood production photos, news and lifestyle magazines, and art history textbooks. The images are from suicides, fire escapes, and movie stunts. The life-size black-and-white photographs that make up *Stills* depict falling and jumping bodies, individually suspended in air while plummeting toward unknown fates. In this work she refrained from identifying sources or contexts in their titles, other than the names of the individuals and sites photographed, if known.

The subject matter and formal composition of *Stills*—figures frozen in motion, descending from one point to another—refers back to a lineage of art historical images. Works by Henri Cartier-Bresson, Yves Klein, Andy Warhol, Bas Jan Ader, and Jack Goldstein all factor into this history. Charlesworth's project, on the other hand, emphasized unknown outcomes. But perhaps more than their art historical lineages, the images in *Stills*, post-9/11, are now inextricably linked to the media images from the World Trade Center.





Sarah C
and in 2011
New York City
and the artist
the study of
the body
the body
the body



The Pictures Generation

Charlesworth is often associated with the Pictures Generation, a moniker originating from Douglas Crimp's 1977 landmark exhibition *Pictures*. In the late 1970s, the artists of the so-called Pictures Generation radically transformed art in the aftermath of Minimalism and Conceptual art. Charlesworth and peers such as Laurie Simmons, Barbara Kruger, Cindy Sherman, Sherrie Levine, Louise Lawler, and Richard Prince began utilizing appropriated images from newspapers, magazines, film, and other media in their work in order to address problems of representation and the dominance of mass media. These artists became known for seeing the photographic image as serial and simulacral, or as Jean Baudrillard declared, "a copy without an original"—pointing to the image's representation as a construction rather than reality itself.

The ascendance of the Pictures Generation put into question the modernist view of the photograph as a unique and authentic product of the artist. Roland Barthes' text "The Death of the Author," and its idea that one text (or image) in actuality contains references to multiple texts (or images) that came before it, were influential to many of these artists.


Charlesworth maintained a regimented practice of gathering and archiving—exclusively incorporating appropriated images into her work from 1977 through 1991. She collected images from various sources—newspapers, press clippings, advertisements, photography and film books, as well as cultural magazines ranging in type from fashion to lifestyle to pornography—and archived them thematically in labeled files and folders for later access.



In-Photography (1982)

Published in 1982 with CEPA Gallery in Buffalo, the artists' publication *In-Photography* predominantly features works from the 1981–82 series of the same name. For the first time with these photographs, Charlesworth drastically altered her source images—splicing, exploding, and reorienting images to form new compositions, collaged on monochromatic backgrounds to be re-photographed and printed as seamless photographic works. *In-Photography* opens with an essay by Charlesworth in which she considers her theoretical views on photography, the objectivity of the image, and the role of the photographer. She concludes the text, articulating the visual strategy explored in the photos to follow and inserts herself as a crucial figure in the process: “Sometimes I open an image in order to make room for myself, to disrupt the closure of an intensified unknown.”



SPECIFICATIONS	
	<p>p4 EXPLOSION photo mural print, 64" x 50" exhibited Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York, December 1981</p> <p>p6 STILLS installation photo Tony Shafrazi Gallery, February 1980 photo shows 4 of 7 pieces, each depicts 1 person in mid-air, each photo is 28" x 42"</p> <p>p7 UNIDENTIFIED MAN, OMTANI HOTEL, LOS ANGELES from STILLS photo mural print, 78" x 42" exhibited Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York, February, 1980</p> <p>p8 VENUS from THE WHITE LADY photo mural print, 84" x 48" exhibited Gallerie Micheline Schwajzer, Antwerp, September, 1981</p> <p>p9 THE WHITE LADY photo mural print, 84" x 48" exhibited Gallerie Micheline Schwajzer, Antwerp, September 1981</p> <p>p8 LIGHT BREAK from THE WHITE LADY photo mural print, 84" x 48" exhibited Gallerie Micheline Schwajzer, Antwerp, September 1981</p> <p>p10 STONE TABLET photo mural print, 66" x 50" exhibited Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York, December 1981</p> <p>p11 SPIRAL GALAXY MGC 488 photo mural print, 62" x 63" exhibited Metro Picture, New York, September 1981</p> <p>p12 LIGHTNING photo mural print, 70" x 43" exhibited Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York, December 1981</p> <p>p13 SAMURAI photo mural print, 68" x 50" exhibited Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York, December 1981</p> <p>p14 BRETVELT CHAIR photo mural print with yellow rotatable gish, red and blue lacquer frames, 66" x 50" exhibited Tony Shafrazi Gallery, New York, December, 1981</p> <p>p14 HAYASHI YASE photo mural print, 50" x 50"</p> <p>p15 JAPANESE HOUSE photo mural print, 50" x 63"</p>

IN - PHOTOGRAPHY

SARAH CHARLESWORTH

In-Photography, table of contents [left] and cover [right], published by CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, NY, 1982



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IN-PHOTOGRAPHY

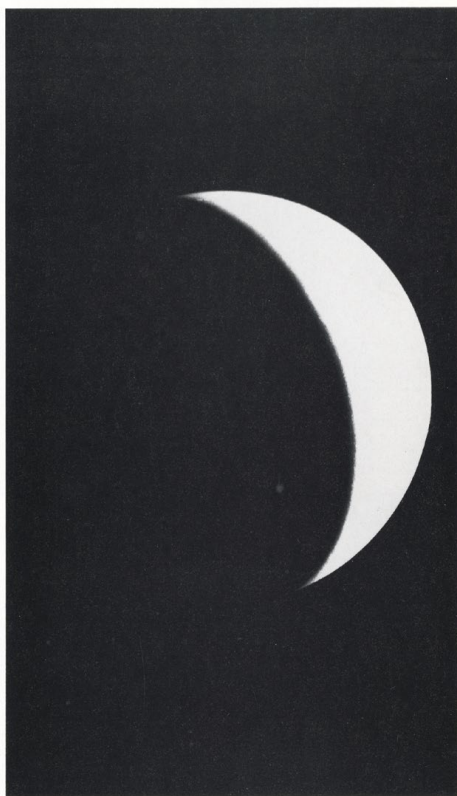
Photography testifies to the objectivity of the world. The subjective position, the position from which the world is viewed, is always that which is absent, that which is "missing" from the photograph. "This is how the world was viewed by someone." But who was that someone? Did the camera take the picture? Did the picture impress its image by convention upon the eye of the unsuspecting photographer? Or did a person create the infinite perfect just-so-ness of the world that arranges itself before its avid lens?

More than just the sum of documented circumstance isolated from the continuity of occurrence, photography, through its awesome power of description, provides an extensive and complex grammar of modern experience, a typology of mind. Representation is not a singular act, but a continuous and repetitive process of symbolization, a dense and hierarchical vocabulary of the world once removed. "Reality" is increasingly the vanishing point of its image, the inaccessible "other" and "elsewhere" of a copious landscape of articulated separation.

On Photography approaches its subject from a practice (of writing) which is exterior to photography. **In-Photography** is an exploration which is enacted on the field of the image itself, from within.

Sometimes I open an image in order to make room for myself, to disrupt the closure of an intensified known. The entry into an image, the rupture and reintegration of its coherent form, exposes that which lies between meaning, the reciprocal meeting of an object and its apprehension. That which is released is the difference between it and me.

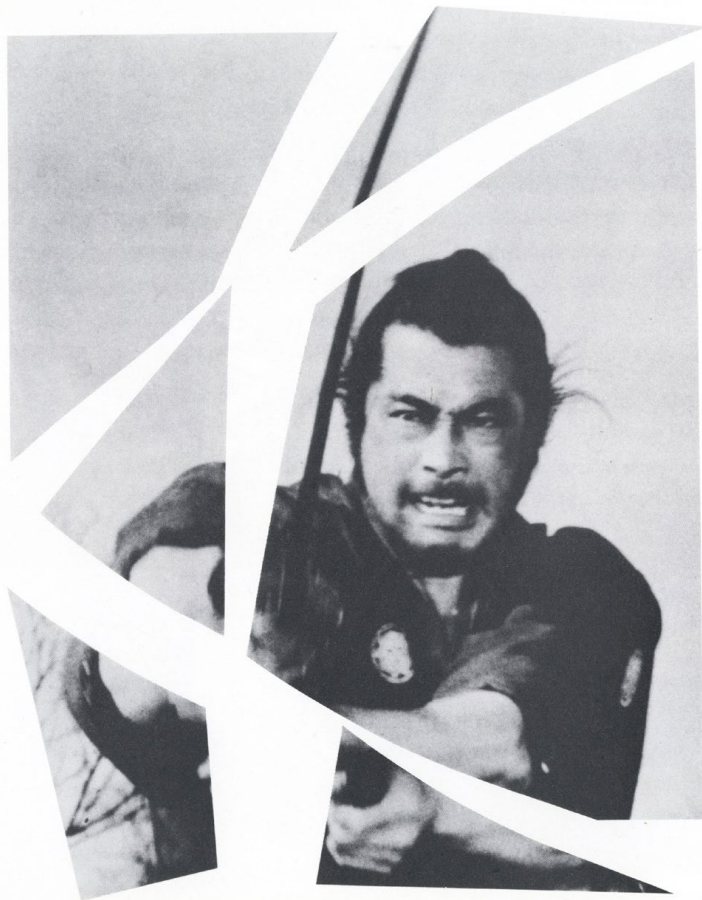
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Venus, The White Lady, and Light Break (from *The White Lady* series, 1981), in *In-Photography*, published by CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, NY, 1982



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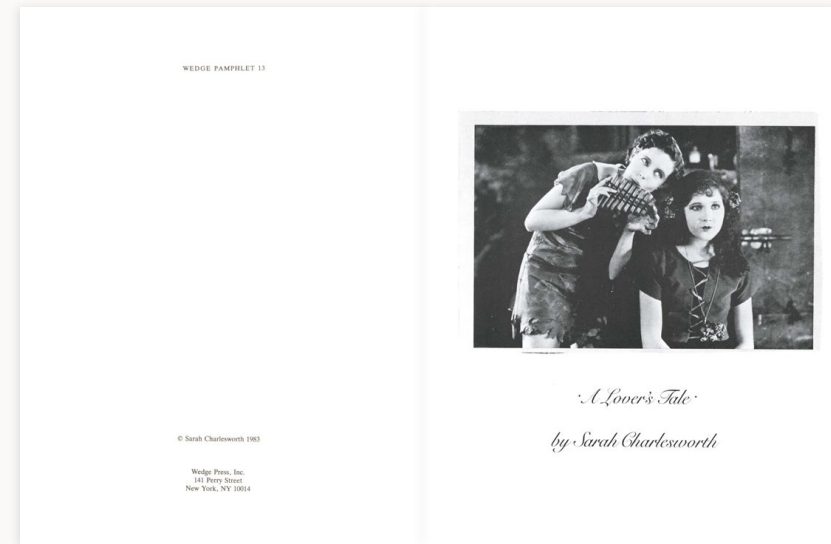
13

Lightning and Samurai, 1981, in *In-Photography*, published by CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, NY, 1982

A Lover's Tale (1983)

Published by Wedge Press as part of its "Pamphlets" series of artists' publications, *A Lover's Tale* (Wedge Pamphlet 13) by Charlesworth places dramatic stills from Old Hollywood romances and vampire films into a narrative sequence. The characters vary across images but function as recognizable photographic archetypes who illustrate the timeless story of seduction by brute force.

Wedge Press also produced a seminal periodical called *Wedge*—combining artists' projects and critical and theoretical writings, edited by Phil Mariani and Brian Wallis during the early to mid-1980s. *A Lover's Tale* was included in *Wedge, No. 3 / 4 / 5 (1983) Partial Texts : Essays and Fictions*, a special issue that gathered into one folder fourteen artists' chapbooks investigating the "viability of a politically engaged form of writing." Along with Charlesworth are books by Kathy Acker, Roberta Allen, Nan Becker, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, John Fekner, Matthew Geller, Candace Hill, Silvia Kolbowski, Harry Kondoleon, Gary Indiana, Mariani, Richard Milazzo, and Reese Williams.



A Lover's Tale, title spread, published by Wedge Press, New York, 1983



A Lover's Tale, published by Wedge Press, New York, 1983





other.
SARAH CHARLES



BOMB (1981-2013)
The magazine BOMB was founded in 1981 by Sarah Charlesworth and Charlesworth. It was a quarterly publication that focused on contemporary art and culture. The magazine was known for its bold, graphic design and its commitment to showcasing emerging and established artists. It was published until 2013, when it was discontinued.



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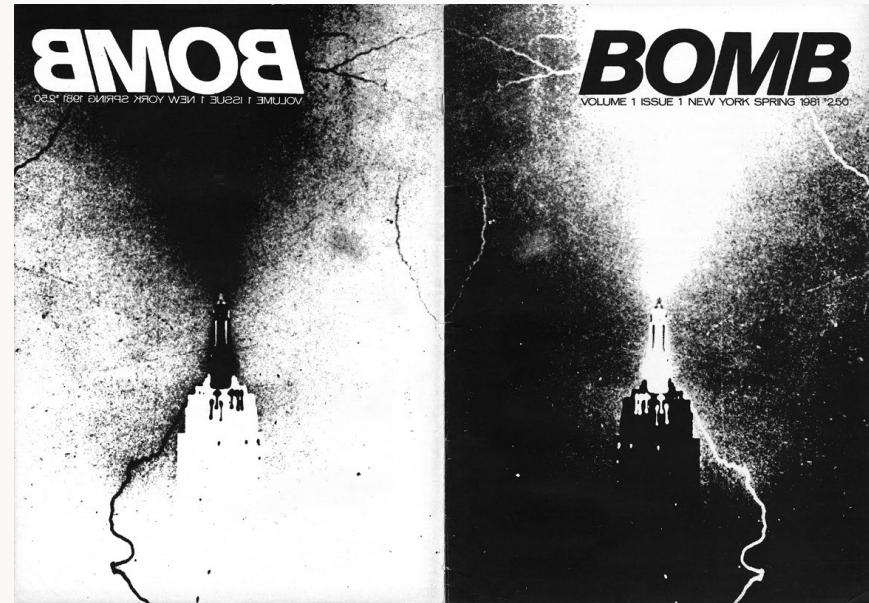
SARAH CHARLESWORTH
SARAH CHARLESWORTH



BOMB

In 1981, Charlesworth and a small group of artists and writers in New York, including current Editor in Chief Betsy Sussler, founded the magazine *BOMB*. The publication offered a collaborative space for artists to work out their ideas in essays, interviews, and conversations without the presence of journalists and critics. The name and logo of *BOMB* derived in part from *Blast*, a British art and literary journal from the early 20th century—it also referred to the short life the magazine's founders thought it would probably have. Charlesworth created the front and back covers for the first issue, pairing her 1981 works *Empire Light (Positive)* and the inverted *Empire Light (Negative)*. The images, re-photographed press photos sourced from the Picture Collection at the New York Public Library, depict a streak of lightning illuminating the night sky, looking as though it has just struck the Empire State Building.

Charlesworth's work appeared on several other covers: in 1987 with *Snake* from the *Objects of Desire* series, and in 2008 for the 25th anniversary issue—a 20x24-inch polaroid from her *Action Paint* series. In this image, drips and splatters of paint are lit and frozen in time, confusing and collapsing the distinctions between mediums. In 2013, a memorial issue dedicated to Charlesworth featured *Rider*, from the 1983–84 series known as *Red Collages*. In addition to her presence on the covers of *BOMB*, she was also featured in numerous interviews and portfolio spreads.



Above: *Empire Light (Negative)* [left] and *Empire Light (Positive)* [right], back and front cover of *BOMB* No. 1, Spring 1981

Left: *BOMB* No. 1 mock-up

Above: David Kain in Sarah's Kitchen, Jacksonville, 1976. } 10/11 x 15 HELVETICA
 Below: Linda Chappell at Home, Kosciusko Miss., 1977. } *mu = italic*
 Right: Outside Brown's Delishopp, Greenville, Miss. 1977. }
 Bill, Charles, Butch, N.Y.C., 1981. } 10 pt HELVETICA
 Ken, Tom Kavoor, In Soho, 1980. }
 Allan Frame
 Allan Frame - 24 pt and HELVETICA BOLD
 photo: Allan Frame - 10 pt Helvetic
 120 point
 360 point
 48 point
 Benignat medium
 BOMB HEADLINE CAPIONS +
 TWISTING AND SHOUTING
 by Craig Johnson - 48 point Benignat medium
 by Matthew Fleury
 ONE OF LUCKY'S STORIES } 90 point Luscious
 The Voyageur's Treatise } 48 point Luscious
 AIR HAIR ← 120 pt Helvetic
 by Klaus Kertess - 48 pt Helvetic
 From "STORIES" } 40 point Helvetic
 by Jane Warwick } 40 points
 CONGO ← 40 pt, Heavy face
 by Barry Yourznan ← 40 pt, 30 pt
 BEST A' FRIENDS 72 point Bodoni Bold
 by Susie Books 48 point Bodoni
 DILEMMA - 120 point Strach
 by Liza Bear 48 point Strach
 Photo: Allan Frame
 Richard Prince, 1981 1982 1981 } 10 pt. Helvetic
 Barbara Kruger, 1981, Photo Montage } upper and lower
 SARAH CHARLESWORTH } 60 pt. Helvetic Bold Italic
 } 48 pt → set twice
 Installation → 10 pt Helvetic
 The White Lady → 10 pt Helvetic
 Gallery: Mableine Schwaiger, Antwerp
 September 1981
 Tony Shafrant
 New York
 December 1981
 Helvetic Italic
 Lightning
 Samurai
 Stone Tablet
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 10 pt Helvetic
 Flurry
 Riser

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* - COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
 - ALL TITLES TENTATIVE!

SARAH CHARLESWORTH
SARAH CHARLESWORTH
SARAH CHARLESWORTH

Process documents for BOMB No. 3, Spring 1982
 Reproduction courtesy the Butler Library, Columbia University



Installation *The White Lady*, 1980

SARAH CHARLESWORTH

Spiral Galaxy, 1981

Lightning

Stone Tablet

Explosion

Tony Shatrazzi
New York
December 1981

Spread in *BOMB* No. 3, Spring 1982, featuring photos from *The White Lady* and *In-Photography*

Glossolalia (1983)

In the Spring 1983 issue of *BOMB*, Charlesworth and Barbara Kruger published an eleven-page portfolio of text and photographic images titled "Glossolalia." The magazine piece presented nearly fifty cited declarative statements on the subjects of images, photography, and representation, responding to mounting theoretical debates surrounding postmodernism and the contemporary status of the photograph in the 1980s. Some of the quoted ideas align while others appear to contradict each other, offering various interpretations of the function of photographs. The title "Glossolalia," meaning to speak in tongues or to speak without intelligible meaning, suggests the difficulty of finding clarity amidst these differing theories.

In the pages following these quotations are black-and-white reproductions of images by Charlesworth, Barbara Kruger, Laurie Simmons, Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman, James Welling, and others—artists primarily associated with the Pictures Generation. Charlesworth's image in this section comprises ten black-and-white dice suspended in mid-air against a black background highlighting photography's historical qualities of chance, fate, and ephemerality. The piece offers a lens into the fixations that would occupy Charlesworth throughout her career with work that probed the problems and possibilities of the photograph.



GLOS SO-LA-LIA

Representation, then, is not—nor can it be—neutral; it is an act—indeed the founding act—of power in our culture.
—Craig Owens

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them; nor serve them . . .
—God

Deprived of narrative, representation alone, as signifying device, operates as guarantee for the mythic community: it appears as symptomatic of the pictorial work's adherence to an ideology; but it also represents the opposite side of the norm, the antinom, the forbidden, the anomalous, the excessive, and the repressed: Hell.
—Julia Kristeva

The desire of representation exists only insofar as the original is always deferred. It is only in the absence of the original that representation takes place, because it is already there in the world as representation.
—Douglas Crimp

Every cigarette, every drink, every love affair echoes down a never-ending passageway of references—to assessments, to television shows, to movies—to the point where we no longer know if we mimic or are mimicked.
—Tom Lawson

Relationship between human beings is based on the image-forming, defensive mechanism. In our relationships each of us builds an image about the other and these two images have relationship, not the human beings themselves . . . One has an image about one's country and about oneself, and we are always strengthening these images by adding more and more to them. And it is these images which have relationship. The actual relationship between two human beings completely and when there is a formation of images . . . All our relationships, whether they be property, ideas or people, are based essentially on this image-forming, and hence there is always a conflict.
—Kishnamurti

Where the real world changes into simple images, the simple images become real beings and effective motivations of hypnotic behavior.
—Guy Debord

The acquisition of my tape recorder (camera) really finished whatever emotional life I might have had, but I was glad to see it go. Nothing was ever a problem again, because a problem just meant a good tape (photo), and when a problem transforms itself into a good tape (photo) it's not a problem anymore. An interesting problem was an interesting tape (photo). Everybody knew that and performed for the tape (photo). You couldn't tell which problems were real and which problems were exaggerated for the tape (photo). Better yet, the people telling you the problems couldn't decide anymore if they were really having problems or if they were just performing.
—Andy Warhol

The objects which the image presents to us and to which our only relation can be that of possession, necessarily represents our being, our situation in the world. The libidinal investment in the image, an investment on which the economic investment turns, is profoundly narcissistic, and avoidance of the problem of the other.
—Colin MacCabe

The photographs have a reality for me that the people don't. It's through the photograph that I know them. Maybe it's in the nature of being a photographer. I'm really never implicated. I don't have any real knowledge.
—Richard Avedon

Incapable of producing metaphors by means of signs alone, he (the phobic person) produces them in the very material of dishes—and it turns out that the only rhetoric of which he is capable is that of affect, and it is projected, as often as not, by means of images.
—Julia Kristeva

. . . the image is treated as a stand-in or as a replacement for someone who would not otherwise appear . . .
—Craig Owens

All art is "image making" and all image making is the creation of substitutes.
—E.H. Gombrich

In a world which is topsy-turvy, the true is a moment of falsehood.
—Guy Debord

Photography today seems to be in a state of flight . . . The amateur forces his Sundays into a series of unnatural poses.
—Dorothea Lange

The destiny of photography has taken it far beyond the role to which it was originally thought to be limited; to give more accurate reports on reality (including works of art). Photography is the reality; the real object is often experienced as a letdown. Photographs make normative an experience of art that is mediated, second-hand, intense in a different way.
—Susan Sontag

To see and to show, is the mission now undertaken by LIFE (magazine).
—Henry Luce

The literal photograph reduces us to the scandal of horror, not to horror itself.
—Roland Barthes

People were murdered for the camera; and some photographers and a television camera crew departed without taking a picture in the hope that in the absence of cameramen acts might not be committed. Others felt that the mob was beyond appeal to mercy. They stayed and won Pulitzer Prizes. Were they right?
—Harold Evans

Distanciation is this: going all the way in the representation to the point where the meaning is no longer the truth of the actor but the political relation of the situation.
—Roland Barthes

The world is centered for us by the camera and we are at the center of a world always in focus. As long as we accept this centering we shall never be able to pose the question of "who speaks" in the image, never be able to understand the dictation of our place.
—Colin MacCabe

A clear boundary has been drawn between photography and its social character. In other words, the ills of photography are the ills of aestheticism. Aestheticism must be superceded, in its entirety, for a meaningful art, of any sort, to emerge.
—Allan Sekula

Our conviction that we are free to choose what we make of a

photograph hides the complicity to which we are recruited in the very act of looking.
—Victor Burgin

For the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual. To an even greater degree the work of art reproduced becomes the work of art designed for reproducibility.
—Walter Benjamin

. . . for the modern photographer the end product of his efforts is the printed page, not the photographic print.
—Irving Penn

Much of painting today aspires to the qualities of reproducible objects. Finally, photographs have become so much the leading visual experience that we now have works of art which are produced in order to be photographed.
—Susan Sontag

For a certain moment photography enters the practice of art in such a way that it contaminates the purity of modernism's separate categories, the categories of painting and sculpture. These categories are subsequently divested of their fictive autonomy, their idealism, and thus their power.
—Douglas Crimp

The morphology of photography would have been vastly different had photographers resisted the urge to acquire the credentials of aesthetic respectability for their medium, and instead simply pursued it as a way of producing evidence of intelligent life on earth.
—A.D. Coleman

For every photographer who clamors to make it an artist, there is an artist running the risk of turning into a photographer.
—Nancy Foote

Photography is better than art. It is a solar phenomenon in which the artist collaborates with the sun.
—Lamartine

The photographic artists' downfall is the romance with technique.
—Carol Squiers

The creative in photography is its capitulation to fashion. The world is beautiful. That is its watchword.
—Walter Benjamin

While the aesthetics of consumption (photographic or otherwise) requires a heroicized myth of the artist, the exemplary practice of the player-off codes requires only an operator, a producer, a scriptor, or a pasticheur.
—Abigail Solomon Godeau

Montage before shooting, montage during shooting and montage after shooting.
—The Dziga Vertov Group

A work that does not dominate reality and that does not allow the public to dominate it is not a work of art.
—Bertolt Brecht

A certain contempt for the material employed to express an idea is indispensable to the purist realization of this idea.
—Man Ray

You know exactly what I think of photography. I would like to see it make people despise painting until something else would make photography unbearable.
—Marcel Duchamp

. . . the very question of whether photography is or is not an art is essentially a misleading one. Although photography generates works that can be called art—it requires subjectivity, it can lie, it gives aesthetic pleasure—photography is not, to begin with, an art form at all. Like language, it is a medium in which works of art (among other things) are made.
—Susan Sontag

The blatantly mechanistic condition bound to photographic seeing has confounded photographic discourse. One-way thinking has stratified this moonlighting medium ever since its invention, zoning it into polemic ghettos walled off by hegemonies and hierarchies.
—Ingrid Sischy

It is a fetishistic and fundamentally anti-technical notion of art with which the theorists of photography have tussled for almost a century, without of course achieving the slightest result! For they sought nothing beyond acquiring credentials for the photographer from the judgment-seat he had already overturned.
—Walter Benjamin

That photography had overturned the judgment-seat of art is a fact which the discourse of modernism found it necessary to repress, and so it seems that we may say of postmodernism that it constitutes the return of the repressed. These institutions can be named at the outset: first the museums; then Art History; and finally, in a more complex sense, because modernism depends both on its presence and upon its absence, photography.
—Douglas Crimp

The postmodernist critique of representation undermines the referential status of visual imagery, its claim to represent reality as if really is—either the appearance of things or some ideal order behind or beyond appearance.
—Craig Owens

Quotation has mediation as its essence, if not its primary concern, and any claims for objectivity or accuracy are in relation to representations of representations, not representations of truth.
—Martha Rosler

Perception that stops at the surface has forgotten the labyrinth of the visible.
—Ingrid Sischy and Germano Celant

In order for history to be truthfully represented, the mere surface offered by the photograph must somehow be disrupted.
—Siegfried Kracauer

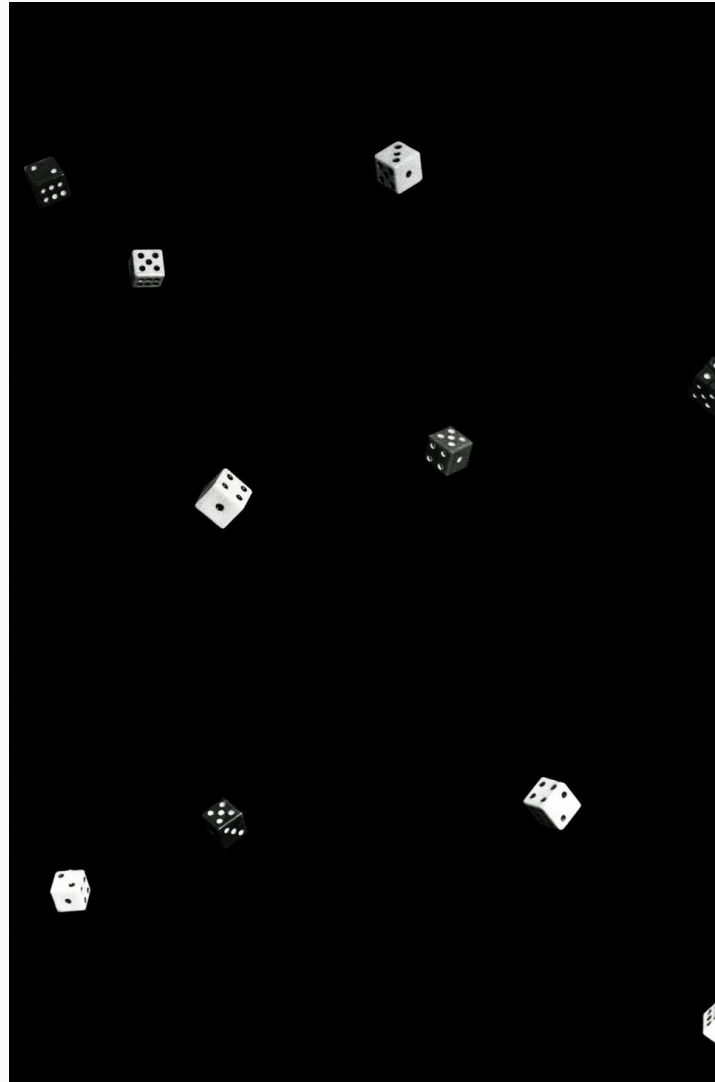
The intention of the artist must therefore be to unsettle conventional thought from within, to cast doubt on the normalized perception of the "natural" by destabilizing the means used to represent it.
—Tom Lawson

To reframe is of course to represent that which I have seen . . . to represent the process by which vision projects and transforms itself, to engage in the struggle to discover that which is absent, obscured from our vision, through an encounter with that which is manifest, given.
—Sarah Charlesworth

To photograph is to confer importance. There is probably no subject that cannot be beautified; moreover, there is no way to suppress the tendency inherent in all photographs to accord value to their subjects. But the value itself can be altered . . .
—Susan Sontag

SARAH CHARLESWORTH AND BARBARA KRUGER

Sarah Charlesworth and Barbara Kruger, title spread of the portfolio "Glossolalia," in *BOMB* No. 5, Spring 1983



Sarah Charlesworth, Untitled (from the portfolio "Glossolalia" by Charlesworth and Barbara Kruger, in *BOMB* No. 5, Spring 1983)

Red Collages (1983–84)

Red Collages consists of four cibachrome photographs made from collages of single images, which have been excised from their original contexts, cut up and reassembled into other forms. These works are associated with and anticipate the conceptual and visual themes of the series that would follow, known as *Objects of Desire*. In the production paste-up for *Rider*, a *LIFE* magazine clipping of Natalie Wood (rehearsing for the film *Gypsy*) reveals the shape of a cowboy riding a horse on the reverse side of the page. By superimposing one image onto the silhouette of the other, Charlesworth created a visual narrative between the two images, allowing doubled readings and merging extreme gender stereotypes.



Construction, 1983–84

Fashion Collage, 1983–84

From the series “Red Collages”

Cibachrome prints with lacquered frames



Construction, 1983-84
Fashion Collage, 1983-84
From the series "Red Collages"
Cibachrome prints with lacquered frames



Sarah Charlesworth exhibition invitation cards

Light Weave 2009

From the series "Work in Progress"
For Crystal Archive print with acquired second name
Courtesy the Estate of Sarah Charlesworth
and Paula Cooper Gallery, New York



Light Weave, 2009

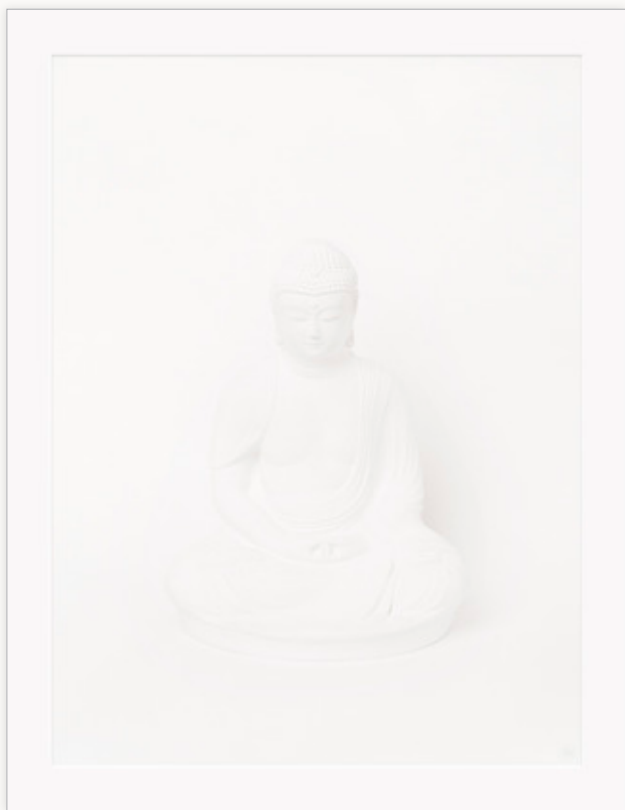
From the series "Work in Progress"

Fuji Crystal Archive print with lacquered wood frame



Light Weave 2009
From the series "Work in Progress"
Fuji Crystal Archive print with lacquered wood frame
©2009 The Estate of Paul Chan
and Phyllis Chan Gallery, New York





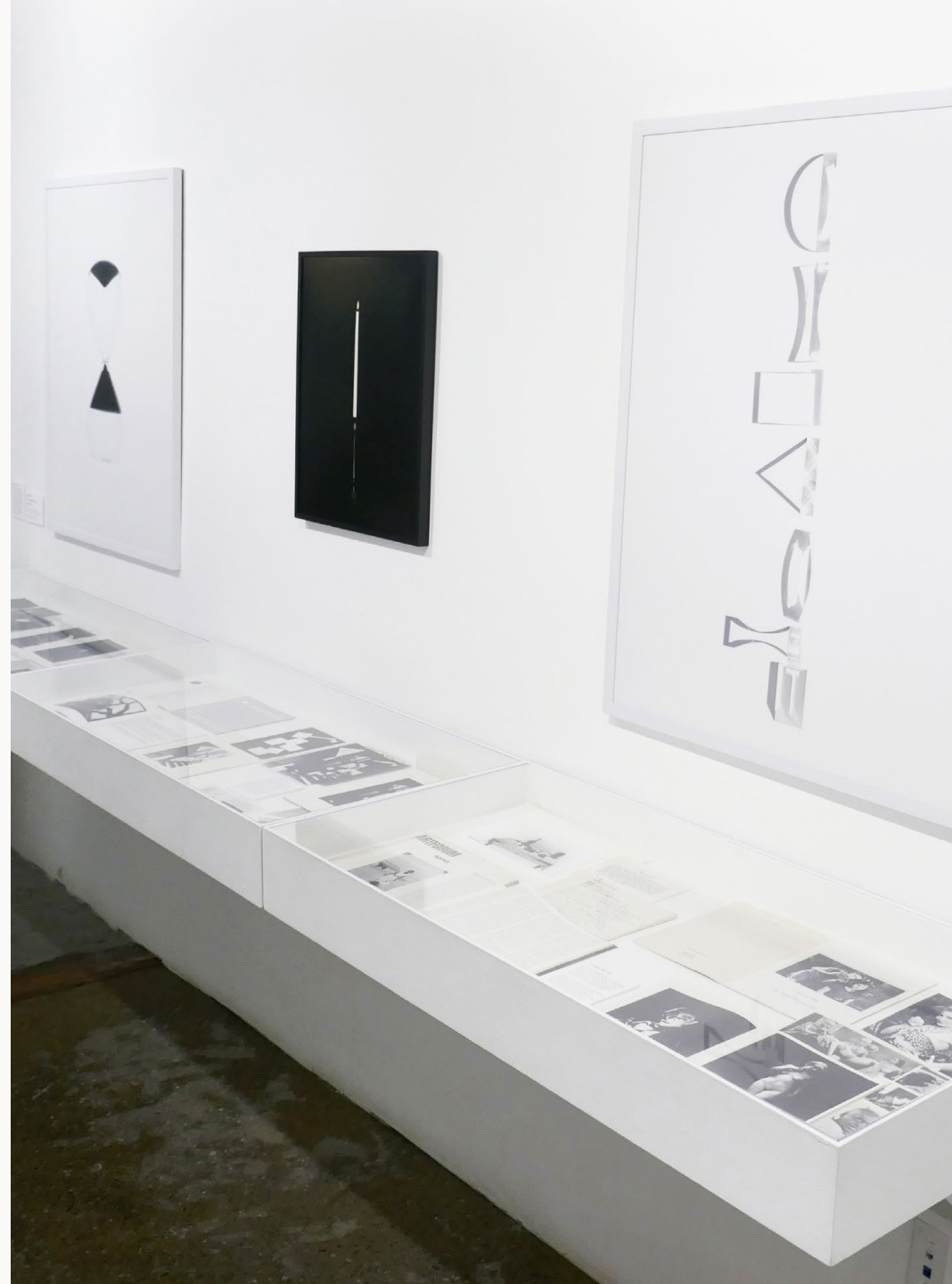
Seated Buddha (Small Version), 2000

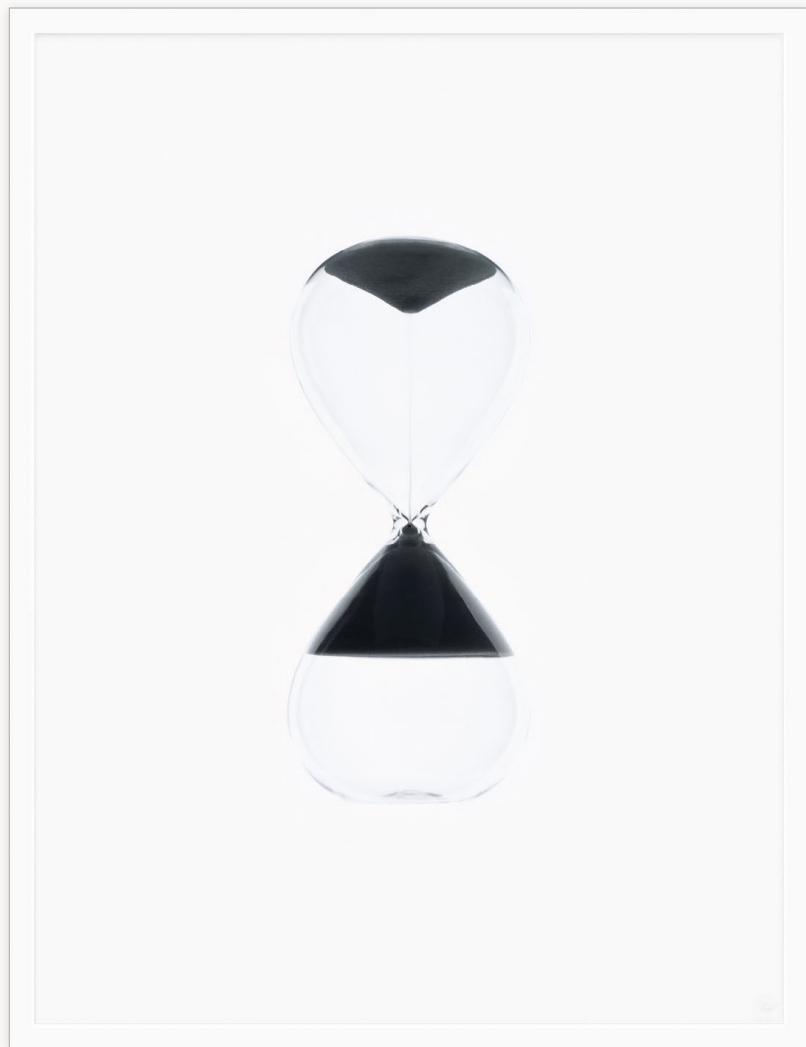
From the series "0+1"

Fujiflex print with lacquered wood frame

***Available Light* (2012)**

After nearly two decades of photographic investigations involving appropriation, a surprising shift occurred in 1992 when Charlesworth began making her own photographs—trading her use of found images for actual objects photographed in the studio. From this point on, the artist exclusively worked in this mode. The series *Available Light* (2012) is a formal investigation of light and objects. The twelve photographs and diptychs in the series were photographed with available light in her studio on color film in a palette of black, white, and turquoise. Charlesworth transformed the space beside her studio window using forms of material and natural light: objects, paper, reflections, refractions. Some images echo the central placement of isolated objects of earlier series, such as *Objects of Desire*, taking up an alternative mode of appropriation.





Hourglass, 2012

From the series "Available Light"

Fuji Crystal Archive prints with lacquered wood frame



Candle (Small Version), 2012

From the series "Available Light"

Fuji Crystal Archive prints with lacquered wood frame



Crystals, 2012

From the series "Available Light"

Fuji Crystal Archive prints with lacquered wood frame

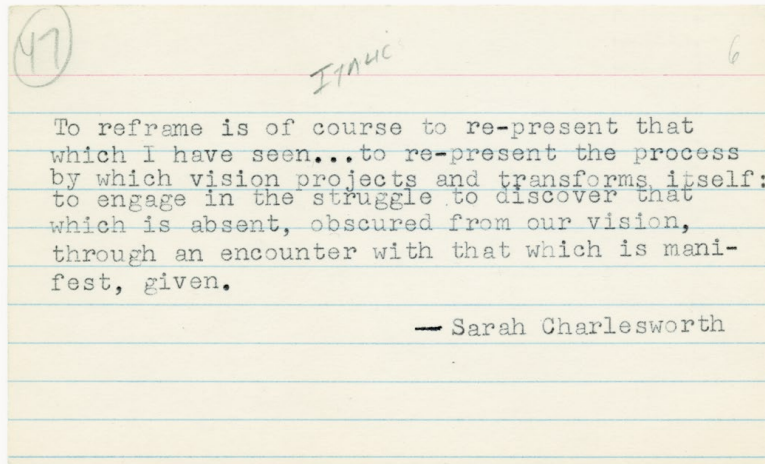
Sarah Charlesworth: IMAGE LANGUAGE

Exhibition organized by Christine Robinson

Vitrine materials: Courtesy the Estate of Sarah Charlesworth

Wall works: Courtesy the Estate of Sarah Charlesworth and
Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

This program is supported, in part, by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with City Council, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.



Index card, process for "Glossolalia," 1983



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