

An Unquiet Mind

Isabelle Cadieux

"She would lay in the bathtub, fully clothed, holding her breath until the instant her mind would quiet; the arrival of inner peace... a moment of solace transpired."

Isabelle Cadieux, French Outsider Artist and daughter of Richard and Georgette Cadieux, produced a body of work that culminated in a prolific period from 1986 until her untimely death at the age of 31.

After an electrical fire in 2007, much of Isabelle's stored artworks were lost. This event was the catalyst that brought Isabelle's presence to the public; as Jean-Pierre Bouchard, the closest friend of the Cadieux family and a collector of Isabelle's work, resolved to preserve her legacy.

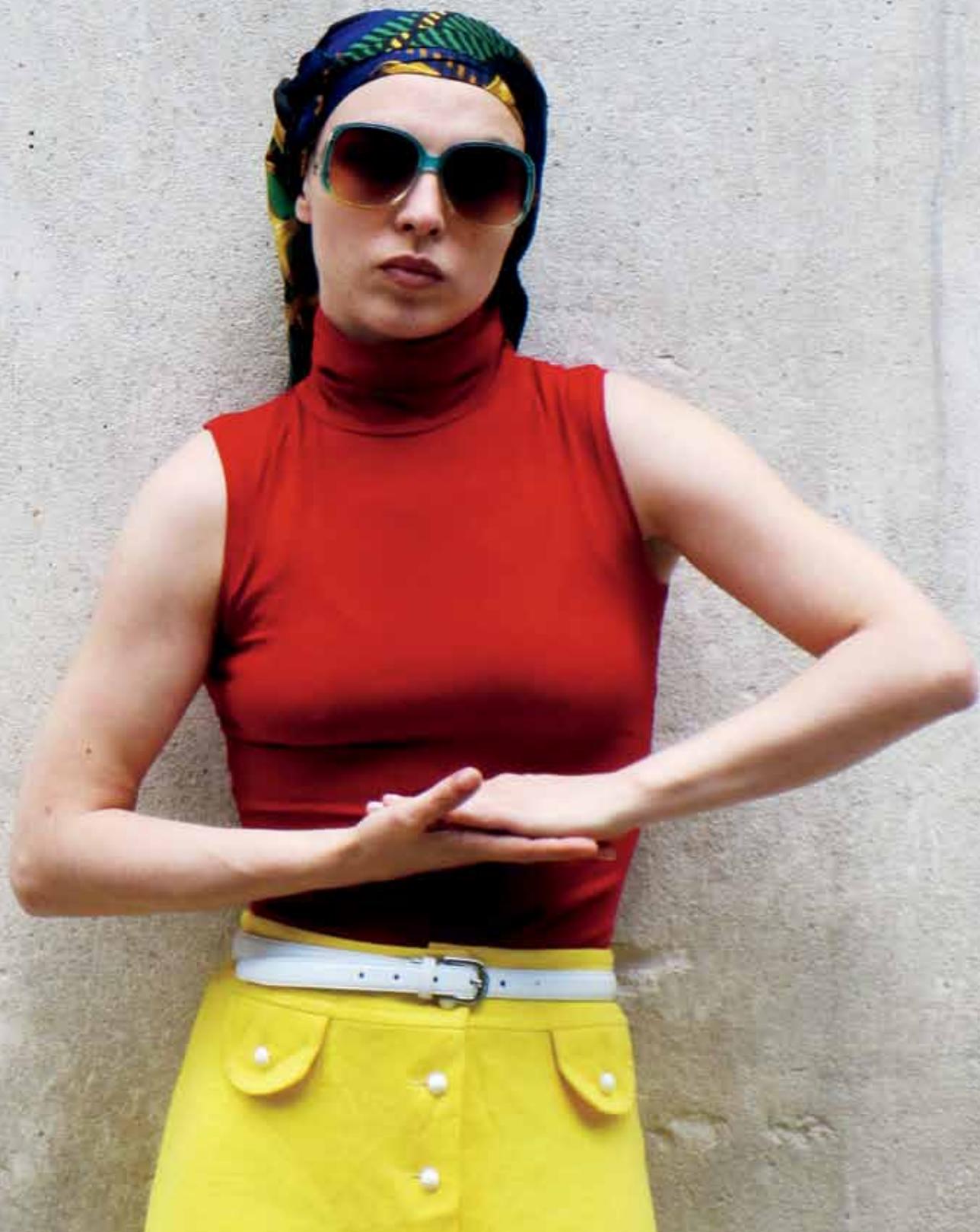
In 2009, Bouchard met American Artist & Curator Laura Elayne Miller in Paris. They have collaborated for the last two years to gather and expose the extant works of Isabelle Cadieux to the public. As a result, an exhibition of Cadieux's life and works entitled *An Unquiet Mind: The untold Story of Isabelle Cadieux* premiered in Chicago in April, 2011 at The Center For Book and Paper Arts. This catalogue was created in conjunction with the exhibition.

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lorraine mark





Isabelle Cadieux

Editor
Laura Elayne Miller, 2011

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Lorraine Mark
Chicago, Illinois, USA

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FORWARD

I met Richard Cadieux in 1963. He was a neighbor of my cousin, in the Quartier du Petit-Montrouge district in the 14th Arrondissement of Paris. Over the years I spent a lot of time with him and his wife Georgette, and eventually, their daughter Isabelle.

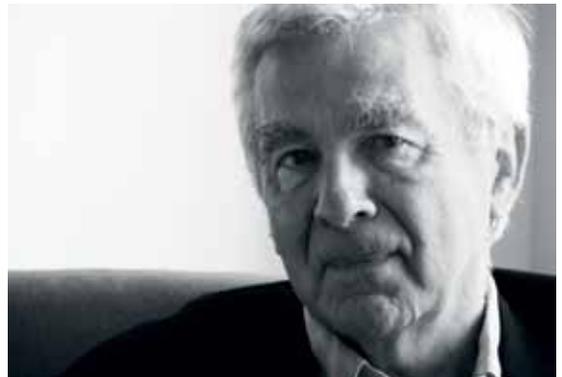
Isabelle was the daughter I never had. She and I were very close - as close as one could get to her. She had a shield with her secrets behind. However, she shared her ideas with me, and sometimes her artworks. I saw a glimpse of a mind so vast, so filled with intense intuitive energy, I was immediately captivated.

A strange young lady, Isabelle did not fit into society. She kept herself removed and could not interact naturally with others. Thus, she never reached the world of contemporary art, nor did she appear to desire such a path.

After her sudden death in 1998, I was distraught, and these feelings remained over the years. In 2007, Richard's shop burned in an electrical fire, where many of Isabelle's artworks were stored. After yet another tragedy, I felt compelled to bring her story and what was left of her artwork to the public.

This has been a personal journey. I do not know much of the art world, as I am merely an enthusiast. Yet this need to reveal Isabelle's life and works has lived in my mind, a necessity for me as I feel her voice needs to be known, her artwork a part of the contemporary canon. After all, the many minds and voices that are outside of our awareness are essential to understanding the larger picture of our history, and to perhaps re-examine our humanity once more.

Jean-Pierre Bouchard, 2011



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Adonis San Juan, Amanda Sarroff



BACKGROUND

Isabelle Cadieux

b. July 18, 1966, d. January 1, 1998, PARIS, FRANCE

A curious story begins...

As a child, Isabelle realized her ability to intuitively understand the internal worlds of others, as if she had x-ray vision into human emotional life. Daughter of Richard Cadieux, a Bricoleur, and Georgette Cadieux, a Seamstress, Isabelle led a lonesome and isolated existence.

An unquiet mind, Isabelle created a personal ritual as a child, which she continued to practice all her life. This ritual was an attempt to find peace from her intense mind and deep emotions. In the bathtub she would find respite. For the instant she could no longer hold her breath, a moment of solace transpired.

Isabelle's artworks illuminate her ideas and theories of sensory perception, embodied cognition, emotional energy, and phenomenology. Through the body, she believed, the world can be sensed, reflecting the emotional and psychological toll of experience. The internal landscape expressed through the external being.

January 1st, 1998 Isabelle died tragically, from a sudden brain aneurysm.



INTRODUCTION

Surfacing

Laura Elayne Miller

The revelation of something previously unknown is as a shell emerges on the seashore. The wonder of the ocean divulges its secrets. It is like the origination of an idea. A moment where the dark is lightened and the associations to our current knowledge base appear, broadening our understanding of what we thought we knew.

I had the good fortune to meet an intriguing gentleman, Jean-Pierre Bouchard, at an art opening in Paris, 2009. That year he learned of my work in the art world, and he revealed his secret story of a young unknown artist. It was then that I learned of Isabelle Cadieux. Our collaboration began immediately.

As an MFA Candidate at Columbia College Chicago, I realized I had an opportunity to bring forth this story. I had been working as an Interdisciplinary Artist, Filmmaker, and Curator, and saw this project as an amazing prospect. I felt a deep connection to what I learned of Isabelle, and my personal interests in Outsider Art, Feminism, and French Art and Culture made this project seem a perfect fit to become my MFA Thesis.

As a result, I created a dramatic curation of Isabelle's life and artworks, including artifacts, documentary footage, sculptures and works on paper that I received from the collections of Jean-Pierre Bouchard, and Richard and Georgette Cadieux. A great mystery unraveled as I sifted

through the remains. Some artworks had titles and journals with information about them, while others appeared unfinished and unexplained. The video footage came without authorship, except for the tapes that Jean-Pierre had filmed himself. I began weaving this unusual story as best I could, and a dialogue between Isabelle and I emerged.

In her time, Isabelle never appeared in the contemporary art world, in a gallery, in a book. I chose to create a dramatic curation rather than a traditional curation of her story and works because I felt it was honest and true to her character. The dissonance between the gallery walls and the artwork was inherent conceptually, thus intentional. The shadows of the artworks evoke the ghost of the artist. The footage sequences were quite an interesting journey to create, as the documentary footage invites an intimate glimpse into Isabelle's life.

What entices me about this unveiling is the cloud of questions that it raises. How do we understand our histories? How does the revelation of a new voice, an aesthetic, a life, transform our present consciousness? How do we collectively remember the past when it constantly shifts, a refraction of time, a perception altered? We must always examine and rethink our pasts to resolve our present. Information contains a fluency that engenders new analysis and a constant revolution of our 'now'.

Isabelle Cadieux is a catalyst for further investigation of our notions. Her fixations, sensory perception, embodied cognition, emotional energy and intuition, have been discussed time and again, yet through her eyes, we see these ideas anew. How might we experience these notions in new ways? How might we engage with our world with the awareness that she possessed?

This catalogue includes all of the pieces of the puzzle that I have managed to gather. Through the voices of various curators, artists, and art historians, the concepts behind this endeavor are illuminated in a way that creates a shape to the shapeless. Isabelle still remains a mystery. Through our collective efforts we hope to evoke

a response both instigating a present dialogue of the past, and a past dialogue influencing the present.

Laura Elayne Miller 2011



LA GLOIRE APRÈS LA MORT

Danielle Mund

It is sadly not a stretch to note that had Isabelle Cadieux lived to see today, an exhibition like *An Unquiet Mind* would not have been a thought in the mind of any curator. Cadieux was not only an outsider artist—and a very young one at that—but her work was simply unknown. She did not create her work out of a need for recognition, but instead for herself and her need for self-examination.ⁱ She was neither famous nor sought attention during her lifetime, and most of the works she created have been destroyed. The question is glaringly obvious: from where does this exhibition's fascination with Isabelle Cadieux come, and why do we disseminate it in this form? Why this sudden acknowledgement of her life—if not the emergence of a sort of “fame”—after her death?

Cadieux was deeply fascinated by the connection between life and death. Death was, in a way, the antidote to her living with her “unquiet” mind. As curator Laura Elayne Miller explains, “For the instant she could no longer hold her breath, a moment of solace transpired. Death as a way of escaping emotions, changing reality, taking off the pressure of an interconnected world.” Cadieux’s works are manifestations of these interconnected, collected thoughts, conglomerations of body parts and found objects, reflecting an almost Frankensteinian-like interest in the meaning of being alive, and more so, of being human. In their corporeal

amassment, her works are the very escape from her own life.

Cadieux’s artistic process of recreation can thus label her a sort of collector. The subconscious wish of a collector, argues Jean Baudrillard, is to defy nature by outliving oneself through one’s collection, which acquires the aura of that collector over time.ⁱⁱ In psychoanalytic literature, collecting is a task often performed by children attempting to gain control over their diminutive status in the world.ⁱⁱⁱ Cadieux’s collection and recreation of body parts—those things nearly living but not quite—can be seen as both her attempt to gain control over and also as the extensions of her conscious existence. If Cadieux’s objects exist, then so does she, in life or in death.

The artifacts from Cadieux’s life are the objects that allow her spirit, or “aura” in Baudrillard’s terms, to live on past her death, and in their exhibition, celebrate what we as humans fear most: the loss of memory. *An Unquiet Mind* is an exhibition of Cadieux’s memory in particular (her fears, self-mollification, and desires) as much as it is about us as viewers not forgetting (Cadieux herself, and the ability of each of us to be remembered). Fame, or widespread renown, after death, can therefore be seen as the ultimate expression of a collective memory. The *raison d’être* of Isabelle Cadieux’s post-mortem fame

is, therefore, about the insistence of the human spirit itself.

It is interesting that both the title of this exhibition and the objects and images it displays reveal that it is as much about Cadieux as a unique specimen of humanity as it is about her works of art. Cadieux's story and her work are captivating, arousing some of the most pertinent contemporary questions around phenomenology of the body, escape, and fragmentation. Yet it can almost be said that there is another great artist in this exhibition; it is the curator who raises questions of collective memory, grief, and fame after death by bringing Cadieux to the forefront of our consciousness, and committing her life-work to the canon of humankind.

ⁱ Interview between Jean-Pierre Bouchard and Isabelle Cadieux. Jean-Pierre: "And what motivates you? What drives you? Knowing that in the end there is no recognition?"

Isabelle: "I do it for myself and because I'm telling myself that it's not possible, I will maybe find THE thing which would make that it will change inside me...that I won't be stared at in the street as if I was a monster. I'm just a human being who tries to deal with the problem of being human."

ⁱⁱ Baudrillard, Jean. 'The System of Collecting'. *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, London: Reaktion Books, 1994. p. 17.

ⁱⁱⁱ Baudrillard, *Ibid.*, p. 9. Baudrillard cites Sigmund Freud's observations of his grandchild who plays the *fort-da game*, whereby in order to exert control over his mother's uncontrollable absences, he repetitively threw away and subsequently sought a toy which he used to represent his mother.

Danielle Mund holds a BA in Art History from Wellesley College and an MA from the Courtauld Institute of Art, where she specialized in Post-War and Contemporary Art and achieved several awards and honors. Currently she resides in New York City, where she continues her Art History practice as well as Curates for numerous downtown galleries.

EXPLORING OUTSIDER ART

Dan Rybicky

The term “outsider art” is credited to art critic Roger Cardinal, who in 1972 first used it as an English synonym for *art brut* (“raw art” or “rough art”), which was the label French Artist, Jean Dubuffet gave to describe art that existed outside the boundaries of culture. Dubuffet, who was particularly interested in art made by insane-asylum inmates, wrote,

“Those works created from solitude and from pure and authentic creative impulses – where the worries of competition, acclaim and social promotion do not interfere – are, because of these very facts, more precious than the productions of professionals. After a certain familiarity with these flourishings of an exalted feverishness, lived so fully and so intensely by their authors, we cannot avoid the feeling that in relation to these works, cultural art in its entirety appears to be the game of a futile society, a fallacious parade.”¹

Chicago’s Intuit, a not-for-profit organization that promotes public awareness of this form of art through education, exhibition, collecting and publishing, defines intuitive and outsider art as “the work of artists who demonstrate little influence from the mainstream art world and who instead are motivated by their unique personal visions. This includes what is known as art brut, non-traditional folk art, self-taught art, and visionary art.”² Intuit’s Executive Director Cleo Wilson says, “A lot of self-taught artists aren’t

aware they’re creating art. They’re just...creating. It’s a compulsion, it’s something they have to do.”³ Dealer Andrew Edlin, whose NYC gallery handles the estate of legendary outsider artist Henry Darger, says, “There are still some self-taught artists whose work does not rely at all on art historical references. This is interesting to me, as the work tends to be much less self-conscious than a lot of contemporary art.” He goes on to say, “The influence of this genre of art is more and more pervasive among young artists trying to distance themselves from their academic backgrounds. Subsequently, the lines between insider and outsider have blurred considerably—which is good because these kinds of labels are pretty banal.”⁴

Although the label might be banal—although all labels can be considered banal—“outsider artist” continues to be what is used to describe people like Isabelle Cadieux, a young Frenchwoman who was neither aware of nor influenced by the gallery world and commercial art scene. Cadieux had a great deal of interest in creating work but almost none in sharing it with the world at large. Although it is not clear whether Cadieux was a manic-depressive or suffered from another mental illness of some kind, we do know that, like many outsider artists, she had very deep emotions, which drove her to create the work that she did.

The details of Cadieux's life might appeal to those interested in collecting and showing her work, although outsider art world aficionados often try and take special cares to avoid falling into the trap of what Huffington Post art critic Monica Westin refers to as the "fantasy of outsider art," namely the desire to "fetishize" the life of the outsider artist when presenting his or her work.⁵ Although classifying art based exclusively on an artist's biography would be troublesome, it is clear that prices of artists' works—both "outsiders" and "insiders" - are oftentimes influenced by the stories people know of their lives.

The term "outsider art" is becoming less meaningful as the boundaries between who's inside and who's outside continue to blur. For the first time in its history, the American Folk Art Museum will present installations by four self-taught artists and murals by four graffiti artists during the 2011 Venice Biennale. This type of art is also beginning to attract the kinds of prices usually reserved for contemporary, or "insider" art. NYC gallery owner Andrew Edlin, who represents works by some of the major outsider artist icons including Henry Darger, Martin Ramirez and Adolf Wölfli, recently said that six-figure deals are fairly common for him.⁶

Quality and biography remain the two most controversial areas of debate within the outsider art world. And this show— the first exhibiting the work of Isabelle Cadieux—will likely add even more fuel to these flames. Although the quality of her work is yet to be determined by the art world, I do believe that her untimely death at early age, combined with the mysteries surrounding her life and art, will ultimately increase the value of what she's left behind.

Who was Isabelle Cadieux? And how much does knowing about her life increase the amount

people will appreciate her work? The answers, like many of the details surrounding the oeuvre of this unquiet mind, remain deliciously unclear.

¹ Jean Debuffet, "Make way for Incivism," *Art and Text* no. 27 (Dec. 1987–Feb. 1988), 36.

² Intuit website < <http://www.art.org/about/mission> >

³ Cleo Wilson, *Almost There* documentary interview (March 2011)

⁴ Lilly Slezak, "Profiles: Andrew Edlin," *Art in America* (Feb. 15, 2011), 1.

⁵ Monica Westin, "Two Important Shows at Intuit, Transvestite Fights and the Fantasy of Outsider Art," *Huffington Post* (July 15, 2010)

⁶ Slezak, 1.

*Dan Rybicky is an artist and teacher currently living in Gary, Indiana. His collaborative transmedia project titled *Almost There: A Portrait of Peter Anton* was first seen as an exhibit in 2010 at Chicago's Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art. Princeton Architectural Press intends to publish a book based on the exhibit in the coming year. Dan is also co-directing a documentary based on the project, which is scheduled for release in 2012.*

A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

Melissa Potter

On the most fundamental level, museum and gallery worlds are still far from inclusive despite the surge of feminist exhibitions such as *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* and the *Elles* at Centre Pompidou. (The conceptual ruse for the *Elles* exhibition: their entire collection of women artists – a mere 17% of their holdings--were hung at the same time throughout the museum.) Even if we follow the work of the Guerrilla Girls and second-generation activist groups such as Brainstormers, the simple fact is, women are outsiders to the art world.

This reality likely will persist for a few more generations, despite changes in curatorial and collecting practices. In more socially specific terms, a “woman artist” is outside the status quo. In fact, a self-possessed, creative woman can be said to be an outsider to her entire culture, her independence and sexual freedom usually punished by death in mainstream film and literature.

In this context, a woman who is driven primarily by her artistic self rather than familial or cultural duties is often interpreted as mad. I would like to suggest, without unduly engaging psychology, that the intense traumas of Isabelle Cadieux reveal more about women artists struggling with an outsider status in the world than with common

stereotypes of “madness” or mental illness in outsider art.

Given the limited scope of scholarship on Cadieux’s work, it is difficult to guess whether her insight into the gender-free spaces of our inner organs is conscious or unconscious. One of Cadieux’s primary theories is the idea that “consciousness is in the lungs” ... the site of our thoughts and emotions, the place where our interiors meet the exterior as we breathe. In a similar vein, the explorations of the great French artist, Claude Cahun subvert the visual spectacle and objectification of the female form with androgynous symbolism.

In Laura Cottingham’s essay, “Considering Claude Cahun,” she states, “Despite the deployment of some of surrealism’s favored tropes—mirrors, doublings, distortions, theatrical props and stagings—Cahun’s self portraiture significantly adjusts and implicitly critiques the spectacularization of the female body offered in dominant surrealist practices.”¹ Like Cadieux, Cahun was deeply private—an easy and often employed excuse for her erasure from surrealist history. Although little is known about Cadieux’s larger spheres of influence, this inward, rather than social engagement — perhaps in full acknowledgement of her outsider role—is

evidenced in much of her work as well as the scant footage we have about her life.

We also know little about Cadieux's personal life, although from most appearances, she was working independently outside the context of an artistic (or long-term romantic) partnership. This is arguably one of the main influences on a woman's success in the art world, the proverbial "room of one's own," a product of marriage for so many woman artists to-date. Women who work without the advantages afforded by normalized female relationships are yet again outsiders, another dissociation with the mechanisms of success.

In a famous exchange, the great Alice Neel asked Louise Nevelson how she managed to dress so beautifully on her minimal WPA Art Project stipend. Nevelson replied: "Fucking, dear, fucking."ⁱⁱ Perhaps in part this will explain the gross neglect of Neel's work until her death; she is now widely lauded as one of the great (and most overlooked) painters of the 20th Century. Throughout her career, she remained independent, often living on the fringes in inexpensive apartments in Harlem.

In a somewhat radical reading of Charlotte Perkins Gillman's, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, it is the narrator's forced isolation through which she becomes an interpreter of her surroundings, utterly aware that she is totally misunderstood and misrepresented. The subtext is that she could never again rejoin the normalized world of women, where wives are calm, quiet, and attend to children. She writes:

There is one marked peculiarity about this paper, a thing nobody seems to notice but myself, and that is

that it changes as the light changes... At night in any kind of light... it becomes bars! The outside pattern, I mean, and the woman behind it is plain as can be.ⁱⁱⁱ

Perhaps this is the function of Cadieux's personal ritual in which she dipped fully clothed into a bathtub holding her breath, an intense experience of the world shut out completely.

Isabelle Cadieux's work rests alongside the legions of women artists who go unrecognized. Some are sainted in death as great artists, others relegated to obscurity. Cadieux had the great fortune of discovery. When we leave women outside the discourse until death, we lose the opportunity to encourage their greatness in life. Sealed in the quicksand of nostalgia and diagnoses, they remain objects to be moved at will in and out of histories. May the ghosts of these women, now outsiders to their lives as well, haunt the hallowed canon of art history and wreak havoc on the inside.

ⁱCottingham, Laura. *Seeing Through the Seventies: Essays on Feminism and Art*. Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 2000. Print. pp 191-192.

ⁱⁱLisle, Laurie. *Louise Nevelson: A Passionate Life*. Lincoln, NE: IUniverse.com, 2001. Print. pp 126.

ⁱⁱⁱGilman, Charlotte P. *The Yellow Wallpaper*. New York: Feminist Press, 1973. Print. pp 44 -45.

Melissa Potter is a multi-media artist whose work deals with the commodification of women and their rites of passage, from marriage to motherhood. Her critical essays on art, particularly art in the Balkans, have been printed in publications including Art Papers, BOMB, Flash Art, Metropolis M, and AfterImage.

SHATTERED GLASS: THE FRAGMENTS OF ISABELLE CADIEUX

Tiffany Ann Funk

"We, in a glance, perceive three wine glasses on the table; Funes saw all the shoots, clusters, and grapes of the vine. He remembered the shapes of the clouds in the south at dawn on the 30th of April of 1882, and he could compare them in his recollection with the marbled grain in the design of a leather-bound book which he had seen only once, and with the lines in the spray which an oar raised in the Rio Negro on the eve of the battle of the Quebracho. These recollections were not simple; each visual image was linked to muscular sensations, thermal sensations, etc. He could reconstruct all his dreams, all his fancies. Two or three times he had reconstructed an entire day... He could perceive I do not how many stars in the sky."¹

The Jorge Luis Borges tale "Funes the Memorious" tells the story of a man who remembers in infinite detail every moment of life; because of a childhood brain trauma, he is unable to distinguish between the inconsequential and momentous events of his existence, and is ultimately doomed to spend his days in bed in almost utter darkness in order to avoid the painful overwhelming experience of living. After a necessarily truncated interview with his childhood acquaintance, the narrator suspects that "...he was not very capable of thought. To think is to forget a

difference, to generalize, to abstract. In the overly replete world of Funes there were nothing but details, almost contiguous details."²

But what do we make of Isabelle Cadieux?

What would it be like to be privy, constantly, to the interior emotions and energies of the world? Like Funes' inability to "think", was Isabelle incapable of something perhaps so fundamental to our being that we overlook its importance: a conceptual boundary of phenomenal existence, short—but necessary—bursts of uninterrupted subjectivity and interiority? Though no one would accuse her of being "incapable of thought," was she incapable of real, human emotion, as we understand it? Did her unique, porously perceived emotionality render her only a conduit for the rest of the worlds' energies? If the energies of the Other unrelentingly blasted through her own desires, conception of subjectivity, and thus ego, would it be fair to note that, as any self-respecting Lacanian might, Isabelle lacked any conceivable sense of self at all?³

Unfortunately, Isabelle is not here to state her case. However, Jean-Pierre Bouchard, a close family friend, is, along with a number of Isabelle's remaining works and a smattering of evocative footage. We witness Isabelle in her

bathtub ritual, forcibly giving herself something of a reprieve from the cacophonous symphony of sensations that comes naturally to us; we see her awkward attempts at navigating in public; we witness her be-goggled, at work on another of her creations. These moments are punctuated by narration from Bouchard, who, as a radiologist, stands as the necessarily scientific figure to guide us toward Isabelle's interior life.

Interestingly, these moments are also physically punctuated by Bouchard's presence in Cadieux's workshop: he gifts her x-rays, comments upon her work, and observes her as we observe them together.

Though his intervention, we are reminded of another Borges tale, that of "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote"; Just as Menard rewrote Cervantes' *Don Quixote* word for word, Bouchard shepherds us through Cadieux's oeuvre and life as a narrator. Here, in the present exhibition, he necessarily remakes Cadieux through the only surviving fragments, thrusting her into an art historical narrative for the first time.

Bouchard's ability to insert himself into her narrative wrests her from this world and necessarily places Cadieux in a much larger context—the Surrealist dream fragments of Rene Magritte, the theatrical readymades of Marcel Duchamp, the visionary nightmares of Edvard Munch—that she could never have been part of nor privy to in life.

It would be easy to read Bouchard as a Pygmalion, Cadieux as a lump of clay molded into a sort of tragic heroine, too delicate for this world. But Bouchard's role in Isabelle's life is hardly this simple; without Bouchard we are left simply with

images and fragments. W. J. T. Mitchell, in his seminal text *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images*, asks us to consider the active role these items might play in constructing this narrative, and how they all at once modify and dislocate the actual body of Cadieux:

"The keys to this modification/dislocation are (1) assent to the constitutive fiction of pictures as 'animated' beings, quasi-agents, mock persons; and (2) the construal of pictures not as sovereign subjects or disembodied spirits but as subalterns whose bodies are marked with the stigmata of difference, and who function both as 'go-betweens' and scapegoats in the social field of human visibility."⁴

If Cadieux herself no longer has a voice to express concerns as to the presentation of her work and its place in the world (assuming, probably incorrectly, she could have done this in life), according to Mitchell, at least her remaining artifacts certainly do. These "mock persons," or rather "go-betweens" all at once attempt to lead us to the negative space of the unavailable body of Cadieux, but also take on all the importance as well as all the blame of her absence. Out of frustration, we ask of these objects, *Why can't you tell us anything more?* We tend to both blame and exult all at once Bouchard, himself just an image in the videos: *What are you withholding?* even as we thank him for attempting to save any last fragment of Cadieux's existence for posterity. In the end, it seems we are left with everything but Isabelle Cadieux. With these bits, we build, strip apart, and rebuild Isabelle *ad nauseum*, in an attempt to understand. Ultimately, one must ask: Is this the fate of every life? Are we all inexorably slouching our way toward fiction?

"The dead—how hopeless to gather that which in life had been torn to bits. It is as if one would try to put together a shattered glass."⁵

NOTES

¹ Jorge Luis Borges, "Funes the Memorious," in *Labyrinths*, ed. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby (New York: New Directions Books, 1964). 63-4.

² *Ibid.*, 66.

³ While it might be unfair to judge Isabelle Cadieux through any battery of psychoanalytical theory, one can only wonder would Jacques Lacan might make of her sense of the Imaginary, or how she might fit the characteristics of a *schizoid* personality, without a functional, but balanced decentered subjective identity. While no subject can be absolute, such a porous vessel as Cadieux might prove too incomplete to constitute any type of totality at all. Theory regarding the schizoid, or entirely decentered subject is central to Michel Foucault's conception of man and his ability to grasp the phenomenal world in his *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1994), as well as Jacques Derrida's *The Work of Mourning*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). The mode of the decentering and its effect upon the subject is outlined at length in Jacques Lacan's best-known text *Écrits* (London: Routledge, 2001).

⁴ W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 46.

⁵ Edvard Munch, *We Are Flames Which Pour Out of the Earth: The Private Journals of Edvard Munch*, ed. trans. J. Gill Holland (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005) 21.

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Tiffany Funk (PhD ABD) works in all aspects of art, whether practice, theory or criticism. Researching the future(s) of the past, in particular visionary artistic models, her work strives to uncover fundamental links between art and science, specifically in the fields of life sciences, cybernetics, and images.



BODY OF WORK

Roberto Van Essen

As an artist who worked outside of the marketplace and whose ambitions were personal rather than professional, Isabelle Cadieux created a body of work that frustrates and challenges our conventional sense of what we mean by a 'body of work'. Eluding commodification, it is difficult to determine where her work begins and ends. Are the artifacts she left behind meant to be read as "found objects" alongside her dated and titled artworks? Without being sanctioned as art objects through their participation in the marketplace, can the enigmatic fragments of her creative life legitimately qualify as "art objects" without betraying Isabelle's agency as an artist? The liminal status of her art is particularly prevalent in the filmed footage she left behind. And despite their ambiguous status—as home video, as performance, as filmed diary—they point, I think, to how we should begin to think about Cadieux's legacy.

A tortured spirit, Cadieux was nonetheless naturally performative. Some of the filmed vignettes have a surrealist quality, others a personal video journal of sorts. But were these videos intended as performance? The most notable footage of Isabelle captures her obsessively undergoing the same private ritual. Wearing a shower cap and clothing, Cadieux repeatedly submerged herself in a

bathtub, holding her breath until it became unbearable, prompting her to rise from the water, gasping for air.

This meticulously captured footage encapsulates a private psychic necessity Cadieux needed to go through in order to assuage her inner turmoil and demons. Holding one's breath, not only for Cadieux, but for all of us, is an ecstatic experience in which we are taken to the very limits of what we mentally and physically are capable of. Loosing our battle against breathlessness, our sense of self dissolves, renounces itself in order to focus on the rudimentary instinct for survival. But in the moment we gasp for air, the sense of self returns, 'shattering', fracturing into the space around us, giving us the fleeting but wonderful sensation of not knowing where we begin and end. This, I think, is the spirit of Cadieux's work: a desire for self-shattering in which selfhood would no longer be contained within the limitations of a body bounded by flesh, but would expand extra-corporeally; outside of the conventional parameters that determine (and police) our sense of what an art object or an artist or a life should be.

Looking at Cadieux's sculptural work and prints, and its obsessive turn towards anatomy, it would be easy to read her

practice as one fascinated by death; one that guts and disembowels the subject. I think it would be more accurate to see the work, again, under the register of fracturing the self not in order to acknowledge death but to defy it. Her art seeks to project a subjectivity with an infinite remit, whose embrace of the 'logic of the fragment' was a means to reject the limitations of corporeal integrity. The identification between artwork and artist appears unequivocal.

In *Courage*, Cadieux seems to fashion her own spine into a Jacob's Ladder stretching into the heavens, *Le Jardin de vos Pensées*, provides the fantasy of blasting her subjectivity from a speaker like music, and in *Sans Titre*, the curiosity box suggests a desire for flight, for an eye untethered to the limitations and gravity of a body. Lastly, *La Mémoire est Intemporelle* displays again a fascination for the finite

(memory) with the infinite (no time). Set against an x-ray of hands, a reminder of our physical restraint, red string zig zags and bounces off around the space created by an open box, defying the limitations of body, time and space, shattering the self to create a constant and untamable trajectory. The body within the body of work, from her own physical ritual to the dissemination of anatomy in her work, enlightens us to her cause; she lived through her artwork and not through life itself. Thus a body of work ensues.

Roberto Van Essen is a PhD in Art History, and an art critic of Contemporary European Art and Film. Although based in London, he frequently lectures, writes, and curates in Brussels and Paris.

ORGANS WITHOUT BODIES: ISABELLE CADIEUX'S WORKS ON PAPER

Amanda Sarroff

Yves Klein blue lungs splayed on paper. A grey heart, finely rendered, against a backdrop of blue blotches and sprays. White outlines lend contour to these stains, which bleed unhindered across the page. At once corporeal and topographical Isabelle Cadieux's (1966-1998) works on paper reveal a rich interior life that questions the limits of internal and external.

Artist Isabelle Cadieux was a French artist nearly unknown until the endeavor of Jean-Pierre Bouchard and Laura Elayne Miller to bring her oeuvre to light. Yet what this curatorial excavation has unearthed is almost too personal, too deeply intimate to be revealed. A fragment of a spine here, of a pelvis there. Cadieux's oeuvre is a body flayed across the breadth of her work.

Although Cadieux herself resisted inculcation into any one artistic movement, her artistic practice is situated in the post-war traditions of surrealism and art brut. Most poignantly her works on paper recall the legacy of Antonin Artaud, yet without the rancor wrought by years of suffering. As Artaud said in his radio play *To Have Done with the Judgement of God* in 1947:

"When you will have made him a body without organs, then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions and restored him to his true freedom."

For Artaud, organs were functional articulations that constituted the body as organism, as organizing principle. This concept was later adopted by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, for whom the expression "body without organs" was used to describe what they called the "the plane of consistency of desire" or the field of immanence of desire. As opposed to the body's surfaces, which could be rendered by the judgment of God into a signification, into a subject, a "body without organs" was a body released into the decoded and deterritorialized flows of desire. Freedom as full self-dispossession.

What then, to make of Cadieux's organs without bodies? According to Artaud, Deleuze and Guattari, these works are the absolute embodiment of subjection. Yet here the organs, even as they spread, open and unfurl, they become organs without borders that ultimately resist complete dissolution. These fragile works on paper restore a sense of agency to the corporeal at its most base to create alternative apertures not only of transgression but of transcendence.

Amanda Sarroff is an Art Historian living in London, England. Her focus is Post-War and Contemporary Art, specializing in French art and culture.









