

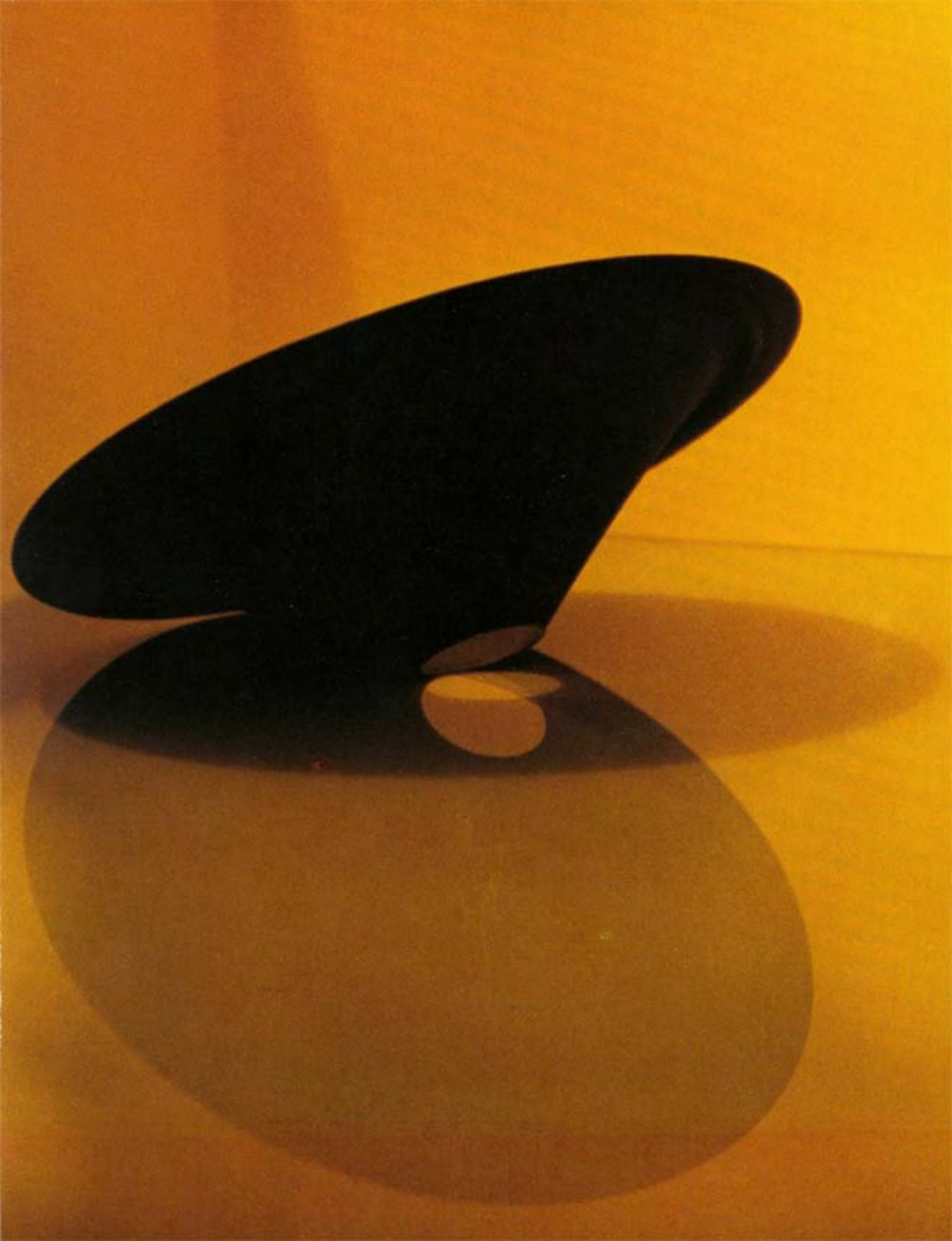
JENNIFER BOLANDE

JENNIFER BOLANDE

NORDANSTAD - SKARSTEDT



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MISHKIN
N.Y.



previous pages

1 *Caruso Group*

(detail) 1985

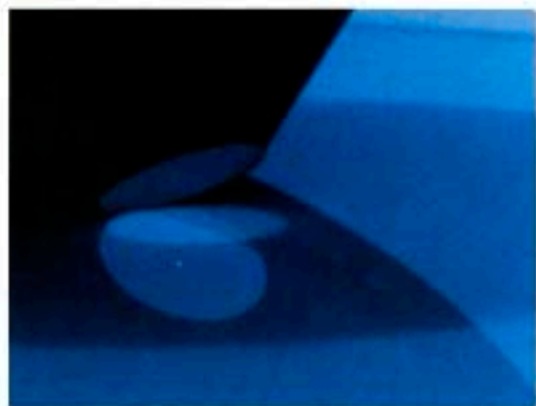
2 *Composition with Speaker Cone*

1990

right

3 *Composition with Speaker Cone*

(detail) 1990



4 *Carousel*

1990-91



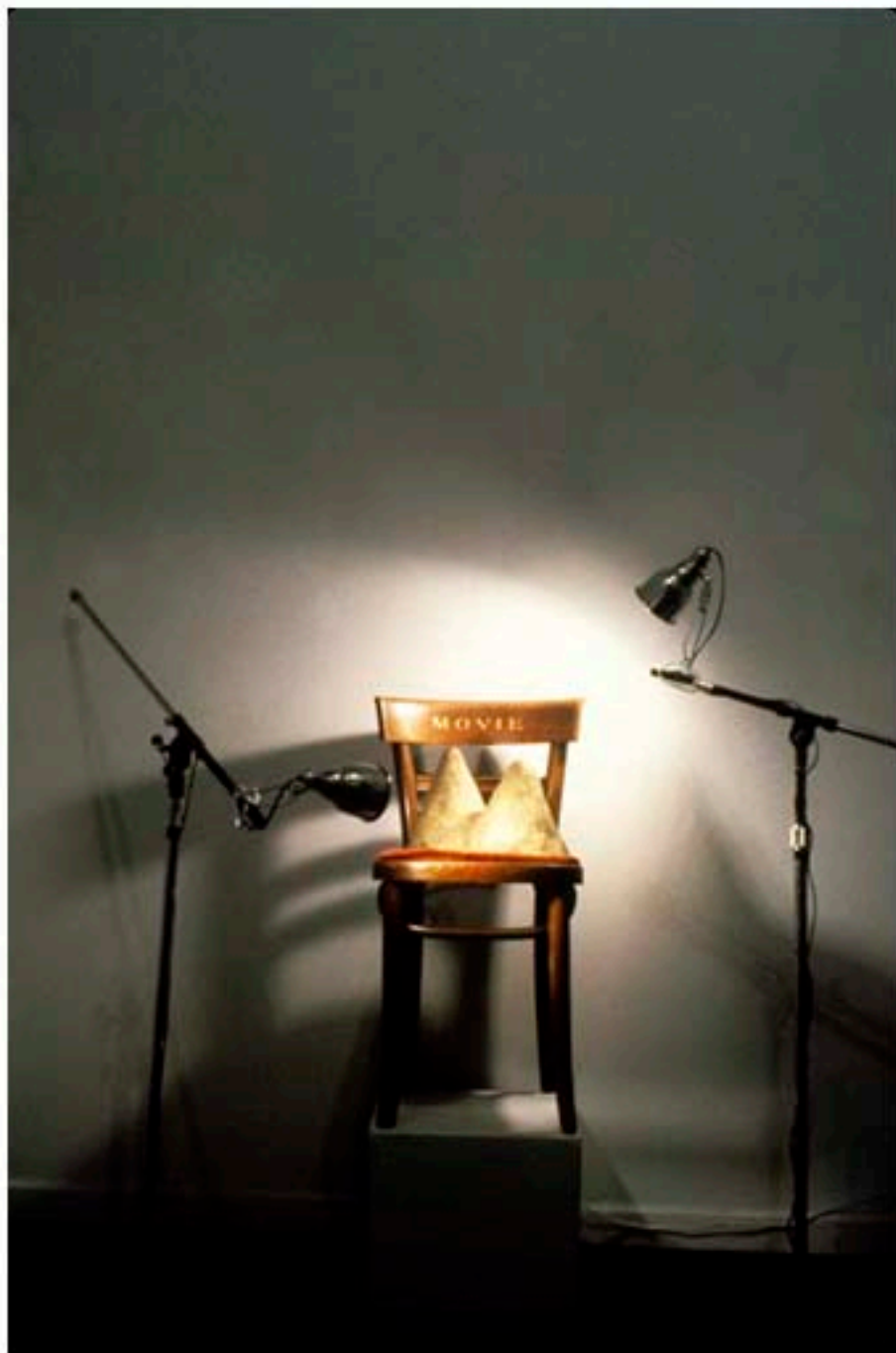
5 *Side Show*

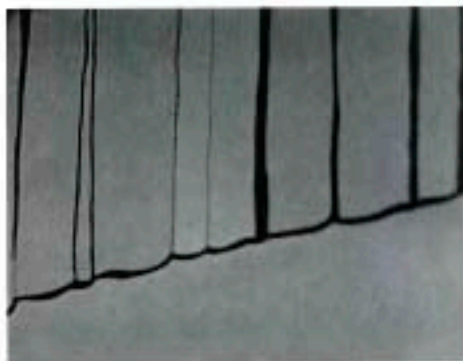
1991



6 *Movie Chair*

1984





AN AMBIGUOUS STORY

Gertrud Sandqvist

One of Jennifer Bolande's first works, *The Porn Series* (1982) is a series of black and white photographs of small, dingy interiors: an armchair, curtains, a lamp. There is something odd about the light. It obviously does not come from the lamp, but from another source higher up. The title of the small, neatly framed photographs betrays its origin. The room acquires a double meaning through our knowledge that it is the set for a low budget porn film.

The main feature of Jennifer Bolande's project is already signalled here. There is an interplay between space and surface, word and image, between photograph and object, between suspended motion and expectation, in progressive stages between the artificial and the natural. Figure is added to figure in an ever more complex choreography of unfulfilled, or as of yet unfulfilled, expectations.

The difference between pornography and the erotic is that pornography is by nature homogenous naïve, unary. The object of desire is exposed as directly and clearly as possible. There is no doubt here. There is no risk of confusing the major and subordinate clauses. By contrast, the erotic involves interplay. It is a dance. An erotic occurrence requires a rift, a relation, an ambiguous story. The erotic is approached through the confusions and aberrations of the masquerade, through new, unexpected combinations of language, image, lust and space.

To take the argument a step further let us test out the idea of the erotic as carnival behavior, in the manner of Michael Bakhtin. Bakhtin, interested in dialogue (or in the works of Dostoyevsky, polylogue) as a principle of composition of literary works, did not investigate masterpieces—works subjugated to a consistent will—but ones that leave room for polyphony and fragmentation, works Gertrude Stein would call Cubist. In his major work on Rabelais (1965), Bakhtin holds up ancient forms of folk culture as an alternative to bourgeois culture in which the author is master of his text. According to Bakhtin, the carnival, masquerade, commedia dell-arte, and circus belong to a culture of laughter

where power and fear of power are literally laughed away. From antiquity through the Middle Ages, people lived in dual worlds—the official and serious world, and its mirror image, the world of laughter with its Feast of Fools, Festival of the Ass, carnival, and the great free “Easter Laughter” (*risus paschalis*).

People live in such festivals. They do not observe them. Festivals are for participants only: another life, a suspension of all hierarchies and of all privileges. The carnival, the festival of creation and renewal, always contains both extremes of change—the dying and the being-born. In the classical aesthetic everything is complete and terminal. In the carnival aesthetic all is in a state of becoming. That is why, as in the grotesque, all natural laws are overturned. What is below is set against what is above, as when Samuel Beckett says that “woman gives birth astride a grave.”

In the carnival, life is seen as contradictory, fundamentally ambivalent, erotic. Because nothing is complete, everything is imperfect; things are able to grow. Bodily apertures are crucial in the culture of laughter, because as passages for life and for excess, they reveal the body as it goes beyond itself—in sex, in pregnancy, in birth, in the death struggle, in eating and drinking; they reveal all that enters and leaves the body.

Such joyful, laughing freedom is also linked to the female as body, as earth, as ‘lower nature’, as the other world; the female, ambivalent like the simultaneously holy and blasphemous masks that temporarily allow people to live another identity. This culture is chimerical; a hybrid female monster—the Chimera—a mixture of heterogeneous elements, a culture of parody and caricature. The mask embodies the principle of play in life and is thus, as Bakhtin says, rooted in the extremely special reciprocal link between reality and image characteristic of ancient forms of ritual theatre.

For Bakhtin, laughter obliterates everything finite, everything negative. Laughter expands the world into an infinite, living process, where the fixed and solid become irresistibly comic, where science and reason appear as forms of confinement, where pornography becomes ‘proper.’ It has, with carnival culture, its own language opposed to the regularity of writing; a living, spoken argot of the streets and squares with exaggerations, oaths, extreme metaphors, pet names, nicknames. It is a language based on playfulness and familiarity, on things both familiar and changeable. Bakhtin cites as examples swear-words, which frequently combine the elements of the folk culture of laughter: obscenity, allusions to hell or ‘the lower nature’, and the defamation of the patriarchal family tree. When Julia Kristeva, a pupil of Bakhtin, locates Postmodernism’s refusal to identify itself with the Law of the Father in a prelinguistic maternal space—the space in which the subject is in a state of becoming (*sujet en proces*), in which

relations are still not fixed—she particularly follows on Bakhtin's analysis of manifoldness and materiality.

Where is the carnival, the great freedom today? It has been banished to the margins, to the periphery. It has become the circus clown, all forms of 'low' culture, the comic, the vulgar. It is no longer a space the official culture lives with, side by side, but a space which it rejects.

Jennifer Bolande works in this space, in its borderlands—what psychoanalysis calls the Imaginary—the realm between image and speech. It is here that poetic language is born, and also the linguistic image. It is here that the joke brings us when it liberates us from order through laughter. It is the erotic space that stimulates by concealing, that draws our interest away from the object, through a subject, toward desire, toward divided space. By revealing this empty space, or hidden space, Bolande restores the viewer's expectations. She shows the stage before the play begins.

Let us look at how she uses curtains, interiors, photography and film. *Cartoon Curtain* (1982) shows the gap, the crease. Behind the curtain something is to be played out, or should be played out. The play follows rules. This precedes the play. Thus a breathing space is marked out, something echoed in the title: "cartoon" in the sense of a model, a set of directions, but also a series, or an animated film, which, in our culture, has become the refuge of overflowing laughter. Bolande thus shifts from the seriousness of pornography into the domain of laughter.

Bolande marks out her stage as a space preceding or within the real story, a space only accessible to expectation if we know the codes of the culture; in the same way as the model can only be interpreted by someone who knows what the signs mean; in the same way as the carnival achieves its explosive power in the face of a fixed order; in the same way as laughter is most liberating in the face of a great terror. The picture exerts its attraction through being a likeness, though reminding the viewer of her imaginary stage, the stage on which the fantasies of longing are played out.

Some years later, in 1987, came *Resting Place*. Here Bolande plays even more clearly on the illusion of nature. "We won't play nature to your culture," declared Barbara Kruger: in a western phallogocentric society the fantasy of The Other can take on the role of both woman and nature. Language reveals these fantasies in expressions that talk of nature as raped or desecrated, of resting in the bosom of nature, of nature as virgin and wild, or of nature carefully cultivated.

Carnavalesque culture contains the same equation of woman and nature—as something not yet defined, as something which goes beyond itself.

Bolande uses nature as photographic wallpaper, as a curtain, with a corner displaying the word Kodak. In the center of the wallpaper another black curtain conceals something. In front of it, in the real space, is an illusorily painted log. The curtains play a game with illusion and we find another allusion to *The Porn Series*. The unambiguous object of desire has been removed, or at least concealed in an ambiguous setting.

This wallpaper of nature, like the Kodak photograph, also alludes to something else, to the way memory and history can be manipulated. In a work from 1991, *Carousel*, Bolande explicitly links this manipulation to the circus; she makes a slide carousel into a circus tent, while another slide carousel is buried in 'the earth' outside the circus tent. The carousels contain pictures. If photographs are ostensibly objective memories—while in fact being manipulated so as to select a subject—then these carousels may be suggesting how we recreate our personal history, how we can use small shifts in the sequence of the pictures to create a completely new history, new memories. Or they may be about how the self is not fixed, once and for all, but is modified again and again by the narratives, the 'mental images,' from which it is constructed. In the same way the illusion of nature—the wallpaper—can become a substitute reality, or remind us of another reality which is also an illusion.

The circus, too, belongs with the carnival as the degraded representative of a wild, unambiguous, dangerous culture. It belongs with the clown, like the harlequin, or Casper, the tame ghost of the commedia dell'arte tradition: the circus as manifold against the singular, chimera against the closed, multiple perspectives against a central perspective. This was Gertrude Stein's method of composition, as it is Bolande's, who in several works has explicitly used clowns, stuntmen and other identity shifters.

The strange flagpole ornament in Bolande's *Pinnacle* (1989) may be part of this putting of identity into question. In *Pinnacle*, Bolande fixed a red velvet curtain to a flagpole with a bronze ornament shaped like the Tower of Babel. Babel, preserved in the word 'babble', has become the image of linguistic loss, of the fragmentation of a common language into a manifold incomprehensibility. Here again we find the idea of familiar languages, fragmented jargons that only a small group of people completely understands, and of dialects. But the drapery hangs like a cloak and it is impossible not to associate the work with a king, a king with a babbling head. Here we see the carnival's rare critique of the absolute and the unambiguous. The king apparently has a need to mark his position, to flag it clearly. Yet his position is in no way fixed. Who moves this mobile king, this pathetic flagholder whose insignia have long since become outmoded paraphernalia?

Jacques Lacan claims that there is no such thing as a sexual relationship, that erotic interplay is constructed from fantasies, that man parades while woman attends a masquerade. And where do we use flags, banners, and pennants if not at parades? Bakhtin also speaks of the parade as a taming of the carnival, where all that was ambiguous is made unambiguous and official, where power is worshipped instead of satirized. The masquerade on the other hand, preserves its ambiguity. And woman, The Other, becomes like nature a projection screen for all that is pushed aside and rejected by masculine culture. In a rational culture woman stands for intuition; in a warlike culture she becomes nature; in an ostentatious one she becomes an insignificant mouse, standing out like a parrot among grey suits. Where intense silence is highly esteemed, woman babbles, holding her tongue in eloquent company. For the agnostic she is wise and enigmatic, while the church sees her as in league with the devil. Woman thus becomes a repository of all dreams, she reflects them like a blank sheet: and what are films? Sagas for our time, phantoms and shadows, dreams for the waking?

Bolande makes works out of metaphors for the masculine and the feminine. She lets function become object, and thus takes language into the imaginary space which is also the real space—she makes Harold Edgerton's photograph of the splashing of a drop of mild real by making it in porcelain (*Milk Crown*, 1987-88). Breaking down the metaphor, Bolande concretizes abstraction. The metaphor, according to Lacan, is the phallic function of language; it gives the feeling of liberation through domination; while metonymy, by contrast, works through transposition, operating laterally like the transformations of the drapery in the background to *The Porn Series*. Metonymy is thus the carnivalesque function of language. It breaks down the abstract, making it more earthly; it alters things by allowing language to renew itself through change and confusion, through small shifts which distort perspective.

Kristeva has described space as the mother's space—space as the repository of dreams. In Jennifer Bolande's work this can also be an explicitly domestic setting, the space in which "I am at home against what is outside." In *Caruso Group* (1985), a set of desktop pictures conduct a subtle dialogue about illusion, about photography and representation, about suspended motion, about the carnival artist pushed to the margins, about simulacrum and reality. Of interest here is the scale, and also the grouping of objects into a 'family,' a recurring strategy in Bolande's work. The family has a common home. The things inside the family are familiar and shared; things outside it must force their way in or trespass. Such a trespasser (if we follow Lacan and Kristeva), can be language, mediated by the voice from outside. In Bolande's works we find a number of works with loudspeakers.

The speakers seem to be both intermediaries and conjunctions. Several of them have a modified perspective; they seem to protrude through the wall, or give the space another shape. We are reminded of central perspective's origins in stage sets with fixed vanishing points and of its role as the preserver of order, of the only order. These works can also recall central perspective as a load-bearing axle for traditional art history, in which developments are judged according to how well the artist masters this technical knack of creating illusion.

Bolande's use of family likenesses and the alien is particularly interesting in *Marshall Stack*. The alien is clearly set apart: the planet Mars—the planet of the Martians who were supposed to invade the world in all those 1950s horror films, also the planet of the god of war, the mythologically masculine planet. Alliteration may like Mars and Marshall, the company name on the top speaker cabinet. Both Mars and the speakers could be seen as trespassers. Beneath is a film poster for *Runaway Train*, with a violently intrusive picture of an oncoming train. All of this alien, potentially threatening material has been absorbed and dethroned through family likenesses or 'listings', through cataloguing of the disparate objects as in a dictionary or a telephone book. The train rushing towards us is also taken from the film itself, with its illusory irrationality, and made harmless by the way movement and time are suspended. The Caruso clown is frozen for all time in the moment before the blow hits the drum. The milk drop is petrified in Bolande's *Milk Crown*. The tornado is frozen in her *Times Square Cone* (1989); in *Untitled*, for the same year, a ring of skydrivers float hand in hand (a family, a crown?) above a whirlpool that is sucking them in with great force.

If danger can be averted by freezing motion, by making the moment eternal, then the camera should provide a certain guarantee of security, although at a certain price. We are all familiar with the theory underlying post-feminist photographic strategies: the camera's supervisory gaze, the photographer as hunter, the photographed as quarry; yet for Bolande photography seems to have more of an allaying function, perhaps even a protective one. Is this why Bolande so often plays with photography as a curtain?

One dividing line between the outer and inner space is the window. Bolande's window pieces, whether the log cabin window with a pane missing in *Untitled* (1987), or *Windshield* (1990), are only partially transparent. They only partially fulfill their role as windows. They are both shield and barrier, depending on which side one looks from.

In *Windshield* (1989) the dust, or the mist, has the same ambiguous character as the window itself, which is similar to the character of Bolande's process of making metaphors physical, or objectifying photographs. In this

space, which is yet to be seen perspectively, which is yet to be abandoned, the rules are seen in carnivalesque fashion, as in language. The law is arbitrary.

Gertrude Stein claimed that her poems are the equivalent of Cubism in art. The cubism she was referring to is the analytic phase, which breaks up perspective, destroys the object, and shifts the picture away from mimesis. Her poems break up perspective, destroy the object, which shifts the picture away from mimesis. Stein's poetry operates along two axes: one is grammar, the other the word list. In *The Making of Americans* (1909) sentences about an American family are varied according to syntactic rules; the narrative is transported outside the family, to another plane, to another place. In *Tender Buttons* (1916), poetic language is reduced to long lists of nouns. All conjunctions are removed. The poem constructs its own body—fixed, solid—impossible to interpret other than as an intersection with the reader's own body of memories. The reader of Gertrude Stein thus constructs a private context out of the given object list.

Jennifer Bolande is also fascinated by listings, aligning objects or meanings according to an additive principle. She leaves the work of connection to the viewer. It is this arbitrary or serial connection that represents metonymy's victory over metaphor in Bolande's work, while at the same time operating on a protective, almost prelinguistic plane; from underneath, so to speak, undermining language.

Bolande piles up a *Stack of Shims* (1987), emphasizes the shims as the *Undercut* (1989) a felt covered directory-board, and uses the same felt board as drapery in a work from the same year, to partly reveal a ship that has foundered in the upper right corner. This ship recurs in *Overseas* (1990), now with a visible lower half, a U-boat in blue-green water. And, of course, the U-boat undermines, just as Bolande undermines.

She does this on all levels in a discrete, and for that reason an insidious, attack on an ingrained lack of ambiguity. Bolande's carnival is a carnival of values where things acquire ambiguous histories.

translated by Michael Garner

following pages

8 *The Porn Series*

1982











FIELDS OF POSSIBILITIES

Daniela Salvioni

9 *Shadow Box*
(detail) 1990

There appears to be an irreducible sense of mystery surrounding Jennifer Bolande's art. In her sculpture, Bolande selects, accumulates, combines and recombines worn scraps of everyday things. Yet, despite her bricolage process she quickly parts from '60s-style assemblage by rendering her composites obtuse and highly personal.

Hi-fi speakers, parts of a movie-marquee, a post-card rack, shoulder pads, a refrigerator door, the stage curtain, spotlights, windows, Kodak yellow, the cone shape, shims, movie-derived images—these are some of the elements employed again and again throughout Bolande's oeuvre, rendering a stable repertoire out of a seemingly unlikely array of objects. While component elements are ubiquitous and easily recognizable, their particular combinations are not—making the work as a whole idiosyncratic. Bolande is quick to admit however, that both the secretive and the immediately readable co-exist in her constructions. A fragile symbiosis of the personalized and the highly trafficked is at the center of her work.

By systematically juxtaposing objects from a well-defined and rather fixed (albeit unusual) set, Bolande generates a kind of core vocabulary that suggest the production of a veritable language. Indeed, in speaking about her creative process, Bolande often employs the metaphor of writing, describing her pieces as constituting something like "sentences" or "paragraphs." This is reflected in the sequential structure of her pieces and in their form, which suggests an almost temporal flow. For, rather than being fused to the point of rendering individual identity irrelevant or non-existent, the elements are strung together in one of two ways. They are used like building blocks, built up as in her "stack" pieces; or they flow together like the cascade of frames on film. (Bolande has worked as a film cutter.)

Although it is tempting to extend the linguistic metaphor in order to describe the elements of Bolande's compositions as words or basic units of

meaning, the verbal trope is in fact confined to her work's formal structure. Any attempted to decode it linguistically—to “read” it—is rapidly foiled: “sentences” never seem to coalesce or hang together, “phonemes” dangle disjointedly. Whether singularly or in combination, her elements invariably refuse to betray some overriding content on which to fix their meaning within the context of the artwork. The polyvalence of this work does not declare any one thing, but suggests a plurality of intents. The rhizomatic mode within which the juxtapositions are forged defies obvious conclusions and hence narrational closure. Just as the signature speakers in her sculptures are sliced and recast and so deprived of their looming authority, Bolande's body of work contains a private language that does not offer the easy access associated with the cozy authority of a master narrative.

By rendering possible a multiplicity of meanings, her combinatorics undermine the establishment of an unequivocal message or centered “text.” Bolande's own analogy is of a multi-vocal, as opposed to uni-vocal, whole—as something that can be read forward, backward, horizontally, vertically, diagonally, in any cross-section. Each respective reading reinforces the previous ones and hence the character of the whole. Somehow, the whole is of another order than the sum of its parts.

On the face of it, the constituent elements in Bolande's pieces function metonymically—they are a part of what they convey. Being “self-evident,” they assert a thudding sense of reality and truth: the hi-fi speaker in the artwork represents a hi-fi speaker because it is an actual hi-fi speaker. Despite this common sense the signifying task remains strained; the elements may be easily identifiable, but the meaning of the composite work continues to be elusive. Merely recognizing metonymic hints does not necessarily lead to a greater understanding of the whole.

Uncoupling significance and information is the provocative, albeit frustrating, ploy whereby Bolande deftly underscores the constructedness of meaning itself. As we get a surplus of information meaning seems increasingly ephemeral, almost as though the closer we are to the work, the more remote its inner secret. This is graphically demonstrated in the early piece entitled *The Porn Series* (1981). Floating on a disproportionately wide mat, a tiny image with a provocative title attracts one inadvertently yet insistently. The images, only discernible from inches away, are 1940s pornographic movie stills showing exclusively incidental things like curtains, lamps, the legs of chairs or tables, the shadow of a woman, the floor, and the like. We can catalogue the various ingredients of the pale images, but they are as peripheral to the meaning of the piece as they are to the central action of the movie. Not only are

one's expectations dashed and one's desires unfulfilled, but we get the uneasy feeling of perhaps missing the real point. Somehow the signifying site is perpetually displaced.

Paradoxically, the concomitant excess of information releases the elements composing the pieces from their ordinary stupor of familiarity; they reappear in Bolande's composites as strange and unprocessed, like that which precedes the erection of meaning. With some indefinable and untapped potential, her combinations elicit a special fascination that depends on the recuperation of a fundamental obtuseness in the thing at hand. Bolande's work probes the allure of the "strange, unassimilable detail," described by Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida* in reference to a photograph of his mother which he happened upon one day. Although we cannot help but be drawn toward the detail, it nevertheless always remains irreducibly distant.

The chance encounter between a sewing machine and an umbrella on an operating table, heralded by the Surrealists, is perhaps the most famous exposition of a fascination with the uncanny that has gripped much of the twentieth century imagination. But the estrangement Bolande's pieces enact differs from the Surrealist exploits—indeed, the establishment of a set vocabulary is antithetical to the shock value sought by the Surrealists. The Surrealists extricated a symbol from its public meaning so as to release its subliminal associations. Bolande garners all the social information—moving in a distinctly non-psychological terrain.

Jasper John's advance on surrealism is a more propitious cue for Bolande's project. With Johns the emphasis is no longer on the element of chance involved in the absurd combination. Instead, the equivocal nature of the sign itself becomes salient: his impasto numerals are at the same time heavily laden with meaning (as they are with encaustic) and entirely void of it (numbers being the most abstract of concepts). Bolande preserves this focus on ambiguity, but for her the signs are transmuted. We have entered the post-Pop era. Something as Pop-like as the Kodak logo appears in her work as warm and familiar, hardly spectacular or alien—at this point this logo as integral to the social landscape as just about anything else. Typically, Bolande will not use the Kodak logo whole or uncorrupted, preferring instead to work with aspects (the trademark yellow color; the corner peeled away—both details which abound in Kodak ads). Bolande's elements are perversely estranged from their function as public icons; they are wedged in the shadowy recesses of our personal memory. If Johns illustrated the trophies of the modern collective unconscious, Bolande picks through the wreckage long after they have exploded into so many solipsistic suburban TV rooms.

The media-imbued world is no longer novel, horrific, or spectacular; it has sediment at the periphery of our vision. Its presence is felt, but because it is understood almost viscerally it can return from its own obsolescence not as a symbol of an era (although traces of this role linger), but as something functioning like the photograph of Barthes' mother. Bolande couples the fascination based on irreducible distance—the eternally strange—with a nurturing familiarity (in place of the spectacular and the shocking). Even the most public and insidious signs are shown to have been already appropriated and personalized. We could view Bolande's project as a contemplation of fetishism if it were not for the fact that it demonstrates a process of internalization gone too far for insidious purposes to be truly effected. We have broken out to the other side of consumer fetishism and regained the possibility of wrestling a margin of control.

Let us consider *Shadow Box* (1990), a work consisting of the frame of a hi-fi speaker and a projection screen, the latter hanging inches above the former. In the center of the screen is a strip of film which has been formed into a ring and casts an oblong shadow making it appear as though it were suspended in mid-air. Bolande estimates that in over fifty percent of her work she may have used things pertaining to movies, such as the projection screen. The hi-fi speaker and the elliptical shape appear less, but still very frequently. Also, these three items have been used together variously before. If we try to imagine the other combinations where the three occurred, we would be hard pressed to keep the entire map of relations in mind. Turning, next, to what the combination in *Shadow Box* itself evokes, the interpretive possibilities expand exponentially. Briefly, we can note the following: formally, *Shadow Box* has the physiognomy and proportions of a fireplace, and this association with fire, wood, the hearth and a warm glow recurs throughout Bolande's oeuvre. So too the motifs of entertainment and stardom are also present here. The piece conjures up the sense of sound, yet another thing stressed in many Bolande pieces. The way in which the ring is rendered suggests levitation or floating, a sensation which again we find allusion to in other works. The three elements reiterate a central emptiness; each is a frame around a void that may or may not be filled—the ring by a finger, the screen by an image, the speaker/fireplace by sound/fire.

This concise listing of salient aspects of but one relatively simple piece (based only on what may be readily supported by a general knowledge of Bolande's project) should exemplify the density of overlapping and crisscrossing vectors of possibilities of meaning in her work. But rather than dwell on the symbolic content of this piece, I wish to present it—or by description of it—as a manifestation of the general poetics subtending Bolande's art.

Taken as a whole, Bolande's work not only presents multiple facets, but each facet, in turn, may be viewed several different ways. Her art plays itself out on "fields of possibilities." Umberto Eco discusses the musicians Henri Pousseur's use of this term:

The notion of "field" is provided by physics and implies a revised vision of the classical relationship posited between cause and effect as a rigid, one-directional system: now a complex interplay of motive forces is envisaged, a configuration of possible events, a complete dynamism of structure. The notion of "possibility" is a philosophical canon which reflects a widespread tendency in contemporary science; the discarding of a static, syllogistic view of order, and a corresponding devolution of intellectual authority to personal decision, choice, and social context.

Umberto Eco, *The Open Work*

This description applies, aptly, to Bolande. The notion of a field captures the multifarious inter-relations and permutations found within a single work and across Bolande's entire production. Through the notion of a field of possibilities it becomes clear how significance, as opposed to information, could become unstable and elusive. This forever receding horizon of meaning is an essential feature of Bolande's project, but, in as much as it suggests a fundamental "knowing" is precluded, it simultaneously implies a widened space for the creation of potential new significance.

The contingency, polyvalence, and indeterminacy exhibited by Bolande's combinatorics marks what Eco describes as the "devolution of intellectual authority to personal decision, choice and social context." Bolande's father is a scientist and the daughter usurped the scientific methodology. This method instantiates the processes of deliberation and choice that she flagrantly adopts in her work. Nothing is taken for granted or pre-ordained; there is no "always ready." Through trial and error, she tests, revises, breaks with, and resubmits possibilities. Because this is manifest at the scale of her oeuvre as well as within a single piece, closure is doubly averted. The work is radically undeclarative. Bolande maps the "pre-socialized" terrain out of which meaning is created, distinctions made, definitions established, and categories drawn.

This cartography of that which lies prior to the definition of things is where a certain freedom can be gauged. Bolande broaches this realm of freedom through the dramatization of deliberation and choice. Rather than constructing a private language as an end in itself, then, she uses it to question the fixity of meaning imposed from without by laying bare the machinations which allow it to come to be. Her work pries open a space between us and what is given, and in suggesting the possibility of forging new or simply different meaning, she is staking out a supremely liberating sphere.

10 *Milk Crown*

1987



11 *Untitled*

1989







previous pages

12 *Pinnacle*

1989

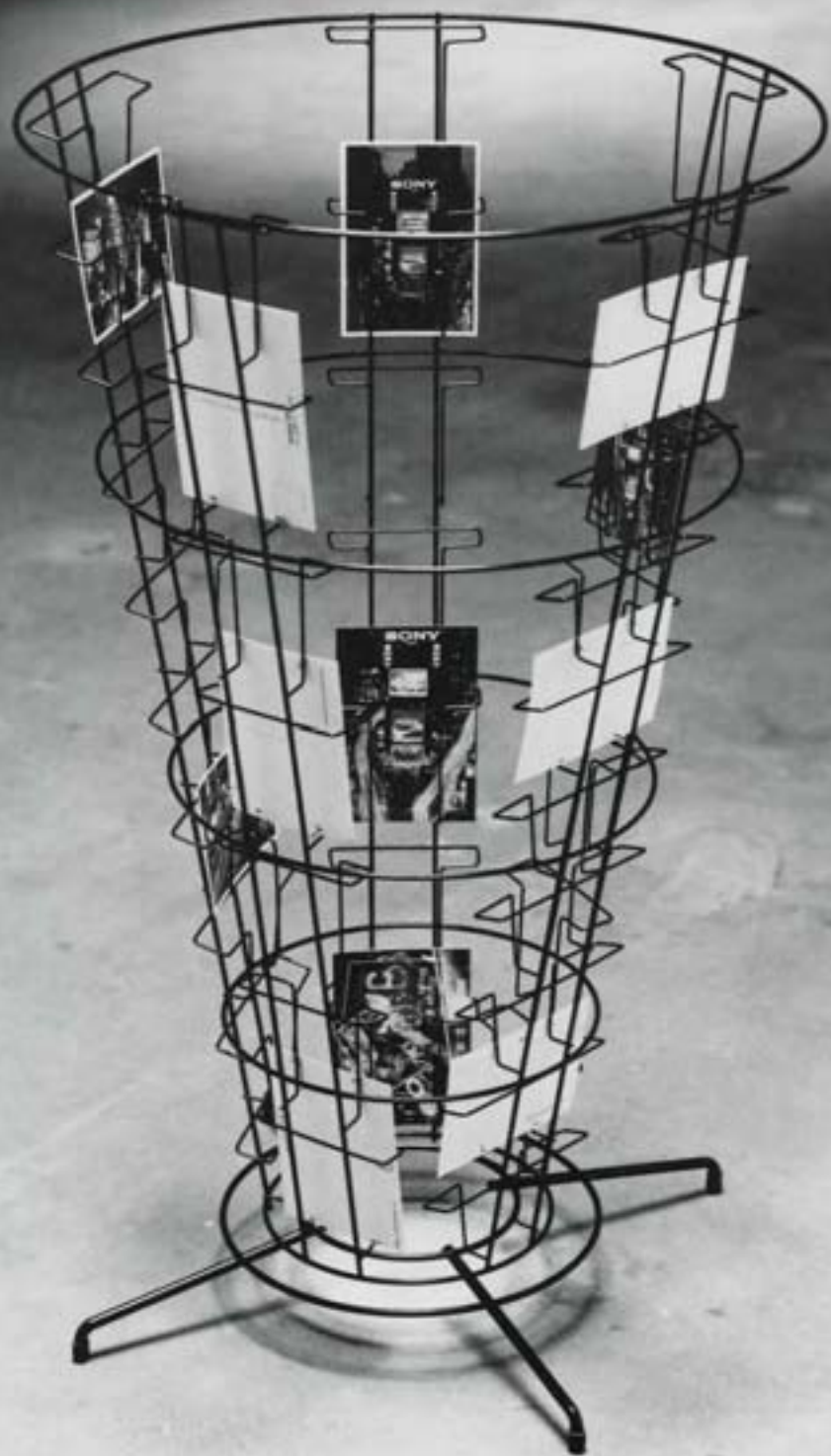
13 *Pinnacle*

(detail) 1989

right

14 *Times Square Cone*

1989



Marshall

PLANET
MARS



*Runaway
Train*



previous pages

15 *Marshall Stack*

1987

16 *Installation:*

Robbin Lockett Gallery

1987

right

17 *Conjunction*

1987

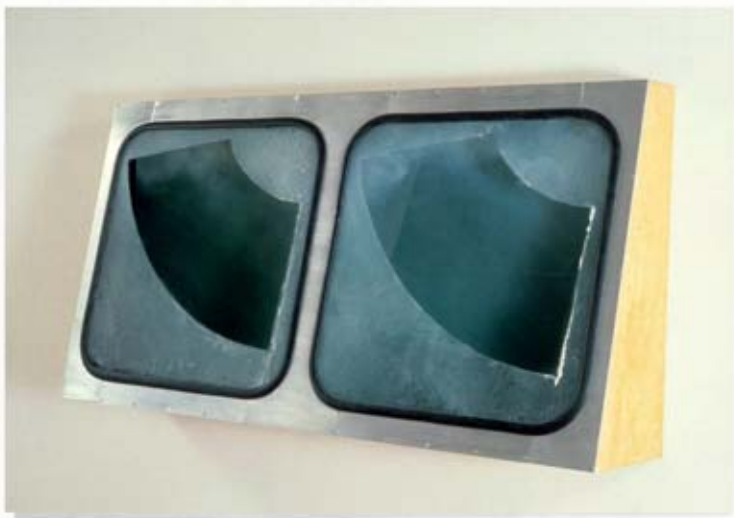


18 *Conjunction Assemblage*
1988



19 *Untitled*

1989



20 *Installation:*

Galleri Nordanstad-Skarstedt

1990



21 *Dismantlepiece*

1989



22 *Overseas*

1990

following pages

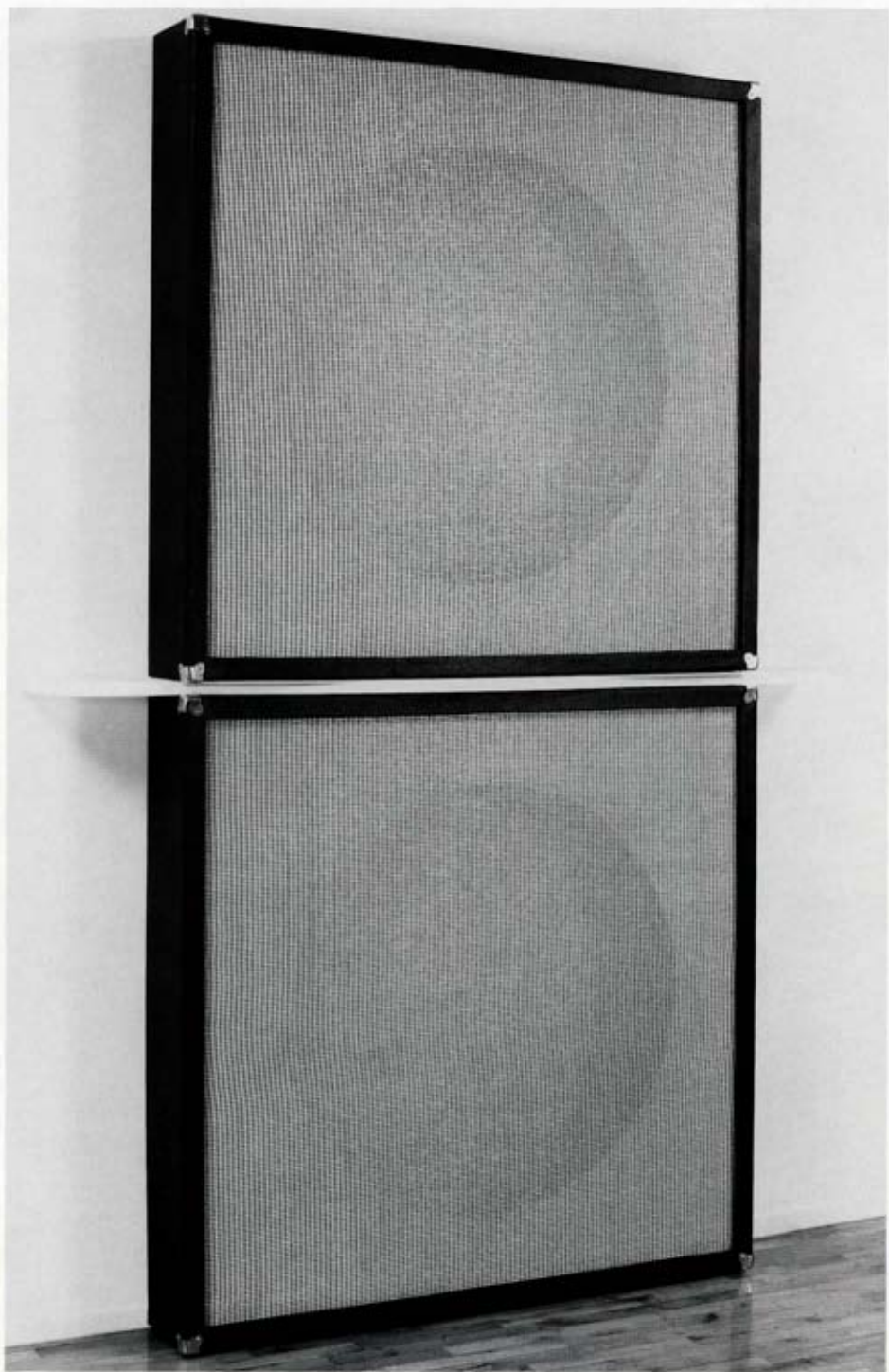
23 *There, There*

1990

24 *9 Foot Pole*

1989







JENNIFER BOLANDE

Born in 1957 in Cleveland, Ohio

Studied at the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design

One-person exhibitions

- 1982 The Kitchen, New York
1983 Artists Space, New York
1986 Nature Morte, New York
1987 Robbin Lockett Gallery, Chicago
1988 Metro Pictures, New York
Beaver College Art Gallery, Glenside PA
1989 Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles
Metro Pictures, New York
1990 Urbi et Orbi, Paris
Galleri Nordanstad-Skarstedt, Stockholm
1991 Robbin Lockett Gallery, Chicago
1992 Metro Pictures, New York

Selected group exhibitions

- 1982 *Resource Material: Appropriation in Current Photography*, Proctor Art Center Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
Real Life Magazine Presents, White Columns, New York
1983 The Kitchen, New York
1984 *(Some Places East of Eden)*, The Kitchen, New York
Motives, Hallwalls, Buffalo, New York
1985 Michael Bennett Gallery, New York
Bolande, Clegg & Gutman, Robbins, Nature Morte, New York
Christminster Gallery, New York
Infotainment, Texas Gallery, Houston. Traveled to Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago; Vanguard Gallery, Philadelphia; The Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, Colorado; Galerie Montenay, Paris
1986 *When Attitude Becomes Form*, Bess Cutler Gallery, New York
Cinemaobject, City Gallery, New York
Metro Pictures, New York
1987 *Bolande, Dryer, Lemieux*, Lawrence Oliver Gallery, Philadelphia
Playback, Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna
Photo Mannerisms, Lawrence Oliver Gallery, Philadelphia
Material Fictions, 49th Parallel, New York
Robbin Lockett Gallery, Chicago
Metro Pictures, New York
1988 Gallery 121, Antwerp, Belgium (two-person show with Tim Maul)
Reprises de vues, Halles Sud, Geneva

Presi per Incantamento, Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milan

Galerie Barbara Farber, Amsterdam

Hover Culture, curated by Ronald Jones, Metro Pictures, New York

Metro Pictures, New York

The Pop Project, The Clocktower, New York

Graz 1988, Stadtmuseum Graz, Austria

Made in Camera, curated by Peter Anderson, Galerie Sten Eriksson, Stockholm

Metro Pictures, New York

Works Concepts Processes Situations Information,

curated by Robert Nickas, Hans Mayer, Dusseldorf

Detail in the Cottage, curated by Mitchell Kane,

Randolph Street Gallery, Chicago

Galerie Sophia Ungers, Koln (2-person show with John Miller)

1989 *A Climate of Site*, curated by Robert Nickas, Galerie Barbara Farber, Amsterdam

Avant 1989, organized by Haim Steinbach, Villa Gillet-Frac Rhone-Alpes, Lyon

Painting/Object/Photograph, Barbara Krakow Gallery, Boston

Bolande, Ebner, Kelley, Lum, Robbin Lockett Gallery, Chicago

A Good Read: The Book as Metaphor, Barbara Toll, New York

Pathetique, organized by Ronald Jones, Galerie Schmela, Dusseldorf

Galerie Contur, Stockholm

Metro Pictures, New York

Dream Reality, curated by Peter Nagy, The School of Visual Arts Gallery, New York

Robbin Lockett Gallery, Chicago

Galerie Brenda Wallace, Montreal

Moscow-Vienna-New York, The Vienna Festival, Vienna

The Experience of Landscape: Three Decades of Sculpture,

curated by Karl E. Willers, The Whitney Museum of American Art Downtown at Federal Reserve Plaza,"

New York

1990 Galerie Brenda Wallace, Montreal (two-person show with Tim Maul)

Disconnections, Galleri Nordanstad-Skarstedt, Stockholm

Status of Sculpture, L'espace Lyonnais d'Art

Contemporain, Lyon; ICA, London; Lowen-Palais, Berlin

The Readymade Boomerang, Eighth Biennale of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

- The Koln Show*, Cologne
Sculpture, Margo Leavin, Los Angeles
Stendahl Syndrome: The Cure, Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York
Viewpoints Towards the 90's: Three Artists from Metro Pictures (Bolande, Kelley, Miller), Seibu Contemporary Art Gallery, Toyko
Das Sibyllinische Auge, (The Sibylline Eye) Barbara Gross Galerie, Munich
- 1991 *American Art Today: New Directions*, The Art Museum at Florida International University, Miami
Stuttering, Stux Gallery, New York
Something pithier and more psychological, Simon Watson Gallery, New York
Anni Novanta, Galleria Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Bologna, Italy
Projections, curated by Gregorio Magnani, Castello di Rivara, Turin, Italy
Constructing Images—Synapse between photography and sculpture, curated by Ingrid Schaffner, Lieberman and Saul, New York: Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, FL; Center for Creative Photography, Tuscon, AZ
Residue Politics, curated by Paula Marincola, Beaver College Art Gallery, Glenside, PA
- 1992 *Vienna Secession*, Vienna
-
- Selected bibliography**
- 1982 Colin Westerbeck, *Artforum*, Summer
Kate Linker, *Artforum*, November
Andy Grundberg, "In Today's Photography, Imitation Isn't Always Flattery," *The New York Times*, 14 November
- 1983 Thomas Lawson, "Victor Alzamora and Jennifer Bolande," *Artforum*, March, p 76
- 1984 *Motives* (exhibition catalogue), Hallwalls, Buffalo, New York
Anthony Bannon, "Review: Art," *The Buffalo Evening News*, 6 March
- 1985 George Sax, "World View Explores Aesthetics of Photographs," *Buffalo News*, 5 March
Howard Halle, "The Anticipated Ruin," *Spectacle* #3, Los Angeles
- 1986 *Infotainment* (exhibition catalogue), essays by Thomas Lawson, David Robbins and George W.S. Trow, J. Berg Press, New York
David Robbins, "(Untitled)," *Arts*, March pp 22-23
Gary Indiana, "Talking Back," *The Village Voice*, 11 February, p 84
Andy Grundberg, "New Perspectives in Photography," *The New York Times*, 12 September
Maurice Poirier, "When Attitude Becomes Form: Bess Cutler Gallery," *Artnews*, December, p 163
Kim Levin, *The Village Voice*, 7 October
- 1987 *Atlantic Sculpture* (exhibition catalogue), Art Center College of Design, Pasadena, California
Andy Grundberg, *The New York Times*, 9 August
Jack Bankowsky, *Flash Art*, Summer p 94
Klaus Ottman, "Jennifer Bolande, Moira Dryer, Annette Lemieux," *Flash Art*, April
Material Fictions (exhibition brochure), essay by Ronald Jones, 49th Parallel, New York and University Art Gallery, State University of New York, Binghamton
- 1988 Paula Marincola, "Photo-Mannerisms: Lawrence Oliver Gallery," *Artforum*, February, p 151
Ronald Jones, "Jennifer Bolande: Robbin Lockett," *Artscribe*, March/April, p 89
"Jennifer Bolande: Une Conversation entre Jack Bankowsky et Robert Nickas," Halle Sud, Geneva, No 18 (originally published in English in *Flash Art*, May/June)
Isabelle Graw, "Still-Life," *Wolkenkratzer Art Journal*, Stuttgart, January/February, pp 54-56
"Jennifer Bolande: A Salient Point (Detail): A Conversation Between Jack Bankowsky and Robert Nickas," *Flash Art*, May/June, pp 78-79
Reprises de Vues (exhibition catalogue), Halle Sud, Geneva
Ronald Jones, "Hover Culture," *Artscribe*, London, Summer, pp 46-51
Graz 1988 (exhibition catalogue), Stadtmuseum Graz, Austria
Presi X Incantamento (exhibition catalogue), Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Giancarlo Politi Editore
Ken Johnson, "Jennifer Bolande at Metro Pictures," *Art in America*, October, pp 193-4
Made in Camera (exhibition catalogue), VAVD Editions, Gallerie Sten Eriksson, Stockholm
Edward J. Sozanski, "19 Works Making A Lot Out of Little," Daily Magazine, *The Philadelphia Enquirer*, 3 November
Matthew A. Weinstein, "Jennifer Bolande, Metro Pictures," *Artforum*, November, p 142
Norbert Messler, "Group Exhibition: Barbara Farber," *Artscribe*, May, p 90
Thomas Lawson, "Nostalgia as Resistance," *Modern Dreams* (exhibition catalogue), The Institute for Contemporary Art, New York

- N.B., "Reprises de Vues," *Halle Sud*, *New Art International*, Paris, October, pp 78-79
- 1989 Paula Marincola, "Something to Do with Jennifer Bolande," *Artforum*, January, pp 70-73 and cover illustration
- Avant 1989* (exhibition catalogue), essay by Ronald Jones, Villa Gillet-Frac Rhone-Alpes, Lyon
- Robert Nickas, *A Climate of Site* (exhibition catalogue), Galerie Barbara Farber, Amsterdam
- Gregorio Magnani, "This Is Not Conceptual," *Flash Art*, March/April, p 107
- Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, "Avant 1989, Villa Gillet-Frac Rhones-Alpes," *Flash Art*, March/April, p 124
- Gregorio Magnani, "Koln Letter," *Art Issues*, Los Angeles, May, p 29
- Norbert Messler, "Jennifer Bolande, John Miller, Sophia Ungers," *Artscribe*, May, p 89
- Christian Gargeric, "Graz 1988, Kunstverein," *Artscribe*, May, pp 91-92
- Sophia Willems, "Pathos des kleinen Formats," *Dusseldorfer Nachrichten*, Dusseldorf
- Works Concepts Processes Situations Information* (exhibition catalogue), curated by Robert Nickas, Galerie Hans Mayer, Dusseldorf
- Sewan Geer, "The Galleries," *The Los Angeles Times*, June 23, pp 14-15
- Roberta Smith, "Jennifer Bolande," *The New York Times*, Friday, 20 October, p C28
- "The Galleries," *The New Yorker*, 30 October, p 16
- Edward Ball, *7 Days*, 8 November, p 70
- Dan Cameron, "Pop n' Rock," *Art Issues*, Los Angeles, November, pp 9-12
- Katie O'Looney, "Letter from New York," *Apex*, Cologne, No. 7, pp 46-49
- Moskow-Vienna-New York* (exhibition catalogue), Vienna Festival, Vienna, essays by Hubert Winter, Oliver Wasow and Viktor Misiano
- The Experience of Landscape: Three Decades of Sculpture* (exhibition brochure), The Whitney Museum of American Art Downtown at Federal Reserve Plaza, New York, essay by Karl E. Willers
- 1990 Peggy Cyphers, "New York Review: Jennifer Bolande," *Arts*, January, p 96
- Jennifer Bolande* (exhibition catalogue), Urbi et Orbi, essay by Jerome Sans, Paris
- Joshua Decter, "Jennifer Bolande," *Flash Art*, January/February, p 129-30
- New Art*, Harry N. Abrams, Publisher, New York
- Piero Balma, "New York: A Kaleidoscope from Outside," *Segno*, Umberto Sala Ed.
- Status of Sculpture* (exhibition catalogue), essay by Bernard Brunon
- Nachschub*, The Koln Show (exhibition catalogue), edited by Isabelle Graw
- Maria Campitelli, "Jennifer Bolande," *Juliet Art Magazine*, Trieste, April
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- Readymade Boomerang*, (exhibition catalogue), Sydney Biennial, edited by René Block
- Viewpoints Towards the 90s: Three Artists from Metro Pictures* (exhibition catalogue), Siebu Contemporary Art Gallery, Japan, essay by Ronald Jones
- Das Sibyllinische Auge* (exhibition catalogue), Barbara Gross Galerie, Munich
- 1991 Andrew Renton, "Status of Sculpture," *ICA London*, January/February, pp 137-38
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- Residue Politics* (exhibition catalogue), Beaver College Art Gallery, Glenside, PA
- Herta Wolf, "Titre à Préciser: Title to be Announced," *Camera Austria*, No. 33/34, pp 74-81

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- 1980 "A Mood on the Rise," *Real Life Magazine*, Issue 34, Summer film issue
- 1981 "Elk grazed as if nothing had happened," *Real Life Magazine*, Issue #7, Autumn
- 1985 "Art and Poetry," *LAICA Journal*, Vol 5, #41 Spring
- 1987 "**** 1/2," *Picture This, Films Chosen By Artists*, Hallwalls Contemporary Center, Buffalo, New York
- 1988 *Journal of Contemporary Art*, New York, Fall-Winter, pp 56-61

Catalogue of Plates

- 1 *Caruso Group*, (detail) 1985
- 2 *Composition with Speaker Cone*, 1990 C-print 31 x 20"
- 3 *Composition with Speaker Cone*, (detail) 1990
- 4 *Carousel*, 1990-91
Plaster, wood, fabric, slide carousels 60 x 28 x 28"
Photo: Tom Van Eynde
- 5 *Side Show*, 1991
Cibachrome 55 x 32"
- 6 *Movie Chair*, 1984
Paint, bronze, chair, lights, lightstands
- 7 *Cartoon Curtain*, 1982
C-print 32 x 30"
Photo: Ellen P. Wilson
- 8 *The Porn Series*, 1982
B/W photographs, ed. 6
- 9 *Shadow Box*, (detail) 1990
- 10 *Milk Crown*, 1987
Porcelain 2 x 7" diameter, ed. 6
Photo: Ellen P. Wilson
- 11 *Untitled*, 1989
Lithograph 33 x 26", ed. 12
- 12 *Pinnacle*, 1989
Aluminum flagpole with cast bronze ornament and velvet curtain 71 x 48 x 48"
Photo: Douglas M. Parker
- 13 *Pinnacle*, (detail) 1989
- 14 *Times Square Cone*, 1989
Inverted wire postcard rack, postcards, thread 38 x 22"
Photo: Douglas M. Parker
- 15 *Marshall Stack*, 1987
Speaker cabinets, Marshall fabric and logo, laminated color photograph, B/W photograph 69 x 22½ x 6½"
Photo: Tom Van Eynde
- 16 *Installation: Robbin Lockett Gallery*, 1987
Photo: Tom Van Eynde
Pictured (l to r):
Cascade, 1987
Resting Place, 1987
The Glimpse Becomes A Stare, 1987
Stack of Shims, 1987
- 17 *Conjunction*, 1987
Type C-print 25½ x 16½"
Photo: Eeva Inkeri
- 18 *Conjunction Assemblage*, 1988
Refrigerator door, speaker facing, framed color photo 75 x 35 x 5½"
Photo: Alistair Overbruck
Courtesy Gallerie Sophia Ungers, Cologne
- 19 *Untitled*, 1989
Wood, chalkboard, chalk, aluminum, rubber, glass 32½ x 66 x 12½"
Photo: Ellen P. Wilson
- 20 *Installation: Galleri Nordanstad-Skarstedt*, 1990
Pictured (l to r):
Untitled, 1990
Shadow Box, 1990
Repeal, 1990
- 21 *Dismantlepiece*, 1989
Painted mantlepiece, shoulder pads 72 x 12 x 9"
Photo: Ellen P. Wilson
- 22 *Overseas*, 1990
Two laminated cibachromes 19 x 8¾"
Photo: Ellen P. Wilson
- 23 *There, There*, 1990
Speaker cabinets, painted mantlepiece 90 x 78 x 9"
Photo: Ellen P. Wilson
- 24 *9 Foot Pole*, 1989
Aluminum flagpole 9' x 12"
Speaker cabinet 14 x 12 x 7"
Photo: Douglas M. Parker
- 25 *Caruso Group*, 1985
Photographs with paint in easel frames 8 x 10" and under
Photo: James Welling

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Nordanstad-Skarstedt

49 Greene Street, New York, NY 10013

Telephone 212 274 1747

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150 Greene Street, New York, NY 10012

Telephone 212 925 8335

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