

This Skin of Ours

October 11–November 17, 2019

Miller ICA at Carnegie Mellon University

Curated by Liz Park

Kader Attia

Matty Davis and Ben Gould

Victoria Fu and Matt Rich

Byron Kim

Kiki Kogelnik

Sara Greenberger Rafferty

Wilmer Wilson IV



**Carnegie
Mellon
University**

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This Skin of Ours

LIZ PARK
Curator

Wearing the skin of a lion, the ancient king Gilgamesh embarked on a journey to mourn the death of his beloved friend Enkidu. Beyond offering practical benefits such as protection from the elements, the lion skin is a display of the bearer's power as symbolized by the defeated feline. Despite the great violence that had fallen on the lion, I see a tender embrace in the act of donning its skin—an enveloping consolation for the lone traveler who had lost someone dear.

The king's coat, a small detail in the ancient epic, illustrates the role of the skin as an organ. Skin is a protective and communicative medium through which we navigate the world. Our skin must breathe, absorb, repel, and react. Skin is not an impervious layer nor is its virtue in perfection. Wounds and scars, blushes and blemishes—what manifests or doesn't on this surface—are the result of skin's intelligence as a regulatory system. The skin adjudicates what it touches, falsely or correctly, and we often give language to this experience in binary terms: private/public, foreign/familiar, benign/malignant, caring/threatening.

This Skin of Ours is an exhibition that looks at this mediating layer as a pivot, and I approach the topic as a porous and dynamic site of discernment and analysis, where we can pause and contend with what we see as well as what we sense. Skin is an organ that bears an enormous cultural signification and is subject to intense scrutiny and judgment. This exhibition and the artworks that comprise it propose the skin as a site of formal investigation where the plasticity of various materials and a range of visual languages offer ways to reconsider what we see on the surface.

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My interest and research for the exhibition began with a consideration of the most conspicuous of skin's functions as a protective vessel. Skin signals—immediately and viscerally—physical pain and suffering: swelling, bruising, and other visible damages to the epithelial layer demand our sympathetic response. It is a powerful tool of communication and emotional connection that elicits an understanding of another person's suffering on the most basic level. While bearing witness to the other's injuries does not automatically lead to recuperative action, it nonetheless offers us a theoretical starting point for imagining the possibility of a collective sensing organ, one that presupposes a shared body that we must all care for. I found initial inspiration in the works of two artists—Byron Kim and Kader Attia—whose sustained investigation of the skin began to sketch out this collective sensing organ I was imagining.

Known for his monochromatic and abstract portraits titled *Synecdoche*, Byron Kim has been exploring what it means to paint someone's skin for decades. While the series has been celebrated for the diver-

sity of hues that it represents, it is foremost a painter's exploration of the nature of paint, surfaces that it creates, and the fine line between figurative representation and abstraction. Meaning a part for a whole or a whole for a part, "synecdoche" as an artistic mode applies to his practice that contends with both the surface and the profundity of a given subject matter.

In the last two years, Kim has been developing a series of "bruise paintings" using natural dye on linen or cotton canvas, which he stretches to finalize the composition of deep colorful stains. Though rooted conceptually in *Synecdoche*, the bruise paintings are a technical departure that draws attention to the instability of bodies, paintings, and even the idea of color. The press release that accompanied the debut exhibition of the series *Mud Root Ochre Leaf Star* at James Cohan Gallery reads: "Kim doesn't consider himself a political artist, but he demands that his paintings, no matter how conventional in format, seek a deep relationship with the times in which he works. Kim notes that trauma is in the air, inescapably seeping into our collective consciousness."¹ I imagine the artist struggling with the soaked and heavy canvas in an exercise of control while remaining open and vulnerable to the process itself—the canvas becoming a sieve that catches the trauma in the weave of the fabric.

The bruise paintings are inspired by the poem "Alba: Innocence" by Carl Phillips,² which intimately and lushly describes the changing colors of wounded human flesh. Contusions are a subject that befits Kim's artistic approach for they are the damage to the subsurface tissue that is shown through the unbroken skin. His paintings signal that there is something deeper than what we see—not only what lies under the skin but the invisible structures that enable violence on certain bodies.

"What is the true stake of injury today?" asks Kader Attia,³ another artist for whom the skin has been the subject of his own writing and theoretical investigation. Attia's essay "Scarifications, the Self-Skin's Architecture" references Didier Anzieu's Freudian analysis *The Ego Skin*⁴ and non-Western traditions of scarification in order to develop his ideas of repair in dialectic relationship with injury. Just as a bruise is the evidence of both the trauma and the body in the process of healing, a scar is a record of both injury and recuperation.

1 "Byron Kim: Mud Root Ochre Leaf Star," James Cohan Gallery, December 2016. <https://www.jamescohan.com/exhibitions/byron-kim2>.

2 Carl Phillips, "Alba: Innocence," in *Quiver of Arrows: Selected Poems 1986–2006*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 51.

3 Kader Attia, "Scarifications, the Self-Skin's Architecture," from the artist's website, 2015, <http://kaderattia.de/scarifications-the-self-skins-architecture/>.

4 Didier Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

Rather than the illusion of perfection achieved by concealing the marks from a repair, Attia prefers to draw attention to the aesthetics of the repair itself. For Attia, scars, especially from intended injuries, symbolize "the subject's triumph over pain and fear," and injuries play a part in a system that renews itself.⁵ From this reparative perspective, Attia presents his work *Scars Have the Strange Power to Remind Us That Our Past Is Real*.

Taking its title from Cormac McCarthy's novel *All the Pretty Horses*,⁶ Attia's photograph tightly frames a tree trunk with areas stripped of the rough outer bark that bear human inscription. The cursive writing is in a language that I do not know how to read. Based on the common sentiment behind etched graffiti, however, I read the messages as either existential statements or declarations of love. The tree, on the other hand, bears scars from attacks; its skin becomes a site of memory, a ground on which we inscribe ourselves. For humans also, scars tell stories of change and resilience and demonstrate our body's strength even under constant assaults. To quote artist Barbara Kruger's 1989 work, "Your body is a battleground,"⁷ and I look to the skin to tell us something of the fight.

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Kruger's iconic work was made in the context of second-wave feminism that advocated for a woman's right to her own body. This is an appropriate lens through which we can see the late Austrian artist Kiki Kogelnik's work in this exhibition. When she moved to New York in the early 1960s, she began a decades-long investigation of the body in an era of the space race, the feminist movement that asserted women's reproductive rights, and the rise of pop art. The ideologies of the time called for a reimagined body at the forefront of a changing world. Kogelnik's drawings, paintings, performances, and sculptures depict the medical body, the political and the politicized body, and the consuming and producing body. The body was indeed a battleground for Kogelnik, and the skin became her subject and material in her signature *Hanging* series.

This exhibition features an iconic hanging from circa 1970 alongside Kogelnik's drawings and a painting (1960s–1970s) that reveal the artist's exploration of the human figure as fragmented and re-assem-

5 Attia, "Scarifications." Thinking more broadly, Attia suggests that art is a case where injuries, in the form of a violent break from the established order, generate "new orientations" and foster development that would otherwise not have been possible or imagined.

6 Cormac McCarthy, *All the Pretty Horses*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).

7 Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your body is a battleground)*, 1989, photographic silkscreen on vinyl, 112 × 112 in., Los Angeles, The Broad.

bled parts. *New Re-entry Shape* is an early painting that depicts two silhouetted bodies that are stitched together amid a tangle of hands. The green glow behind the figures coupled with the work's title suggests a space-age modification that re-envision the astronautic body as modular and interchangeable. Pulsing colors—outside the human range of natural pigmentation—make the bodies strange and attractive at once. The scratches of colored pencils under the onion-peel layers of silhouettes in her drawing *Untitled (Figure)* test out an intensely bright palette that Kogelnik continued to develop throughout her career. Similarly, the self-portrait titled *Woman's Lib* features the artist standing triumphantly on a pile of multi-colored, ageless, and sexless figures.

Woman's Lib displays the agency of the artist—seen here holding an enormous pair of scissors, her tool of destruction and creation. The featureless silhouettes were Kogelnik's to shape and the permission she gave herself to begin with a blank slate rather than become mired in a conflicted territory of staid ideas about gender as defined by science and culture. Kogelnik literally shapes these figures in *Hanging* by manipulating the supple vinyl as drape-like material that can hold volume while remaining flat. *Hanging* re-envision a human body as a blank potential as if it were a piece of clothing on a hanger, waiting to be donned and activated. This potentiality signals a possible new identity for the wearer—not unlike Gilgamesh in his lion skin embarking on a journey.

**

“...I will let my hair grow long for your sake, I will wander through the wilderness in the skin of a lion.”⁸ Conjuring the voice of Gilgamesh, this epigraph opens Michael Ondaatje's celebrated novel *In the Skin of a Lion*. Throughout his masterful narrative, characters in working class immigrant communities of early twentieth century Toronto undergo transformation of identities as though they are shedding their skin and putting on new ones: a nun throws away her cloak and abandons the convent; a prisoner paints his body blue against the sky to escape. Ondaatje also writes unflinchingly of the reality of economic entrapment and laboring bodies when he describes men at a tannery who must dip their body in acrid solutions meant for animal hide—the smell of which soaks in through their pores for a delayed perfusion as they lay in bed with their lovers at night. Sometimes you cannot shed your skin fast enough. Sometimes taking off the cloak, smock, coat, or apron—whatever the occupational garb may be—does not give the laborer respite. They become second skin.

8 *The Epic of Gilgamesh* as quoted by Michael Ondaatje for epigraph in *In the Skin of a Lion* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1987).

The tumultuous lives of Ondaatje's characters exemplify how class and gender are worn like the very fabric that we put on our bodies. Inversely, artistic and life partners Victoria Fu and Matt Rich have been investigating how an article of clothing, specifically the apron, can help conjure a body with its gender, class, and abilities. In their recent exhibition catalogue, Sam Toabe refer to these aprons as “psychological and social armor for the proletariat and the psyche.”⁹ In aprons as armor, I hear an echo of Kruger's battle cry—the body is a site of many intersecting struggles.

Often associated with women's work, the apron anticipates an inevitable, abject soiling. This association has been a productive point of departure for Fu and Rich, who titled their previous exhibits of the aprons *Monster A*. Perhaps the monster is a grotesque progeny that sprang from their imagination as the potential wearer of the aprons. Long trailing straps, multiple circular holes for heads or limbs, patches of rectangles and circles too large or too small for a human body—these aprons command space gracefully but prominently on large custom-built pedestals, one of which is outfitted with hooks and a rail. The pedestals stand in as a stage, suggesting that the aprons are both costume and prop in a performance. In fact, Fu and Rich have collaborated with other artists and dancers in the past to activate their work, giving further volume and shape to these layers.

The aprons as an artistic surface display bright and, at times, aggressive splashes of color that have been dye-sublimated onto the fabric. The images are the combined output of Fu's media work and the abstract painting practice of Rich's. Their visual languages intersect on the aprons, which, in an analogue way, extend Fu's research on the screen as a mediating layer.¹⁰ Through the lush imagery that promises depth, the aprons operate like the increasingly touchable and interactive surface of mobile devices that claim to be a portal to other worlds.

This contemporary phenomenon of the touch screen has also captured Sara Greenberger Rafferty's attention though in a different manifestation. In a large-scale installation of glass panels produced for this exhibition, Rafferty cast her heroine from Adobe Stock images with the search terms: “woman touching screen.” She appears in the middle of a grid of black glass panels with her back to the viewer, her hand raised, pointer finger at the ready to press a virtual button. Tape measures, set squares, and

9 Sam Toabe, “Introduction: Mending the Surface and the Core,” in *Monster A: Victoria Fu & Matt Rich* (Boston: University Hall Gallery, University of Massachusetts Boston, 2018), 7.

10 Victoria Fu and Susanne Østby Sæther organized the conference Touching the Screen at the University of Oslo, April 28–29, 2015, which asked the question “How do current practices of physically touching screens transform our relationship to media technologies and their images?” Conference description, speakers and abstracts are posted on Victoria Fu's artist website: <https://www.victoriafu.com/ARTWORK>.

toggle switches float around her in the undifferentiated background. Little swarms of bees and ants momentarily create confusion—on which side of the glass are they? Rafferty describes them as “small nuisances or blemishes on the skin or wounds.”¹¹

Rafferty titled the work *The Veldt* in a nod to Ray Bradbury’s 1950 short story of the same title. This prescient science fiction is a grim parable of the all-absorbing virtual world that ends with a simulation of wild beasts becoming a real-life threat to human operators of a virtual reality room. The glass screens of the room ultimately fail to serve as a boundary between reality and a representation of reality—it’s a story that could have well been an episode of the current television series *Black Mirror*. Like a halted broadcast or a frozen computer screen, the dark glass of Rafferty’s work showcases a woman in limbo—unsure of the effects of her touch in reality or in a virtual world. Though Rafferty’s work is far from an illustration, the lush glass surfaces deliver a sense of confusion and allure that pervade the story.

In addition to *The Veldt*, Rafferty presents *van Cleve Lucretia 1515* and *Kane Dress 2016*, which depict, respectively, the historical Roman figure Lucretia and a woman’s dress designed by Christopher Kane for spring/summer 2016, described as having a “Crash and Repair” approach.¹² At first glance, the works appear to be abstract and expressionistic, but beneath the blotches and blurs of color, they depict a woman’s body that is symbolically or physically in need of care and repair. Lucretia has been the subject of innumerable poems, music, and painting throughout time, including the sixteenth century Flemish painter Joos van Cleve’s portrait. Often depicted in a state of distress with her chest made bare—by Titian, Dürer, Cranach the Elder to name a few more men who painted her besides van Cleve—the tragic heroine killed herself after being raped by Tarquin, the son of the last Roman king. Rather than being read as a failure of society to protect the vulnerable and to assist survivors of a violent crime, Lucretia’s suicide has, for centuries, represented an exemplary moral standing of a woman. Rafferty’s image appropriates van Cleve’s depiction of Lucretia at the decisive moment, pointing a dagger to her bare chest. As though to intervene here, Rafferty obscures the view by applying polyester film on top of the image with goey acrylic paint. The colors have run on the plastic surface like acid as toxic as the masculinity that drove Lucretia to suicide. We are left with an abject surface that complicates the image as an honorable depiction of a noblewoman.

Representation of women falls under Rafferty’s intense scrutiny, like the object of study that has been

11 Sara Greenberger Rafferty, message to author via Google document, September 2, 2019.

12 “Christopher Kane s/s 2016,” Collezioni: International Fashion Magazines, accessed October 3, 2019, <https://www.collezioni.info/en/christopher-kane-ss-2016/>.

prepared and flattened in a slide under a microscope. Rafferty is an acute observer of transgressions: in the case of *The Veldt*, the border between the virtual and the real; in *van Cleve Lucretia 1515*, sexual transgression enacted so violently on the heroine. When the body becomes a site of transgression, skin is the threshold that is breached.

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Writing about the skin as “the institution of double difference,” writer and curator Max Jorge Hinderer Cruz offers a way to parse transgression of the body from the broader perspective of contemporary global politics.¹³ Hinderer Cruz establishes that “double difference” refers to the skin’s functions as the border between the inside and the outside of the body and as the demarcation between the self and the other. He further argues that the skin has enabled some of “the most effective technologies of government to organize life in the capitalist world.”¹⁴ Think police databases of fingerprints and tattoos, increasingly sophisticated facial recognition systems, and other biometric technologies that require that our skin be read and analyzed. These technologies are deployed to regulate human movement. Hinderer Cruz addresses the abhorrent way Europe has managed the so-called refugee crisis using his idea of the skin as the institution of double difference. Border-crossings are as physical as they are psychological, and boundaries that demarcate one space or state from another are managed at global, national, and local levels.

The tension between access and barriers as they are experienced and lived—physically, psychologically, and politically—has been an ongoing concern for Wilmer Wilson IV. Wilson collects visual inspirations such as flyers, posters, and banners from the streets of Philadelphia where he lives and works. In an earlier body of work, Wilson had enlarged and pasted images from advertisements that circulate in public, predominantly targeting people of color, on 4’x8’ plywood sheets and covered them entirely with staples. The silvery needles of the staples permit only a faint view of the figures entombed beneath and created a surface like television snow from afar. For his new work *TRICK*, Wilson collected a cache of barbershop advertisements that cater to black patrons and display a range of styles for men and women. Rather than pasting enlarged flyers onto the board, Wilson printed images directly on the ply-

13 Max Jorge Hinderer Cruz, “Things that Go In and Out of the Body,” *Chimurenga*, October 19, 2018. <https://chimurengachronic.co.za/things-that-go-in-and-out-of-the-body/>. Hinder Cruz also presented a version of this paper at the symposium *The Multiplication of Perspectives: The 10th Anniversary of MoMA’s Global Research Initiative, C-MAP* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, April 26–28, 2019.

14 Hinderer Cruz, “Things that Go In and Out of the Body.”

wood, where the wood grain becomes the light brown skin of the barbershop patrons. For *TRICK*, Wilson abandoned both the staples and the default white or cream paper as the surface. Instead, he collected vinyl banners—the kind that advertises real estate potential on construction lots—and spray-painted them various hues of brown, black, white, and tan. He then draped the banners over the panels to partially and frustratingly obscure the view of the hair models.

He describes his materials as being “native to the provisional landscape of public urban space.”¹⁵ This statement conjures boarded up doors and windows and fences that outline the perimeter of private property from public land. Wilson’s banners obstruct and invite a close look at the boards underneath, just as fences, tarps, and plywood sheets that are meant to keep out passersby have the effect of making a conspicuous show of a cordoned off property. Construction and demolition are both signs of economic flux in a city, which translates to profit for some and loss and debt for others. Philadelphia currently has 40,000 vacant lots as a result of entangled economic and social factors.¹⁶ As it is in many other places in the United States, vacant lots along with demolished or abandoned properties have become a common feature of disinvested neighborhoods.¹⁷

In recognizing the need to reconfigure the very terms of the conversation around access and investment, I looked to Braddock Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh’s neighboring municipality as an exemplary space of enrichment and re-centering. Located in the heart of Braddock, a small municipality of just over 2000 residents, the library has been a cultural and social hub for generations of readers and learners despite the depopulation and disinvestment that it has experienced. This is the context for hosting a short-term residency by Matty Davis and Ben Gould who explore their bodies’ reach and abilities in their performance *Carriage* (2018). *Carriage* is an hour-long performance of movements that explore control and energy, informed by the personal experiences of Gould, who was diagnosed with Tourette syndrome five years ago, and his creative partner Davis.

Commonly referring to a wheeled vehicle, carriage signifies a burden and expresses how someone carries and moves their body. Davis and Gould will further explore these ideas of weight, burden, and movement at the Braddock Carnegie Library, where they will develop and premier a new performance

work titled *Bearance*. This word, too, signifies that which we need to endure, care for, and attend to, like precious cargo in carriage. To signal their performance, they transported a couple of chairs from the library’s music hall to the gallery for exhibit and as functional furniture. Built in the late nineteenth century, the chairs have borne the weight of generations of library users. Visitors to the exhibition are invited to sit on the chairs and browse Davis and Gould’s publication that provides an insight to their process and thoughts during the performance.¹⁸ The book transmits the artists’ voice as well as writers who have witnessed *Carriage*. They draw from their past experiences of illness, injuries, or death of a loved one in relating to the performance and reflect on the precarious nature of the artists’ bodies and their own. At the time of writing, I am not privy to the performance that will take place, just as I will never know how my body and its surface will alter me and my sense of the world. This is the nature of their work and of skin as the envelope and the interface for each body.

When I began this research on the skin, I read about the practical functions of the organ as well as the theoretical and design approaches to how we invest a sense of collective and individual identity on our skin. Skin is a site of care, grooming, alteration, and individuation; it is an aesthetic surface. In a theoretical rumination on the “politics of touch” theorist Erin Manning writes of skin as “surfaces that connect intervals between worlds.”¹⁹ A reach toward the other is an open-ended gesture that acknowledges the distance that needs to be bridged and the power of touch—the sharing of skin—helps build that bridge. The various skins that are brought together in the exhibition metaphorically and visually reach for one another. Sharing skin is a proposal to feel our way through the world as we continually reach for experiences yet to come and unknown to us. So, let us collectively feel our way through this world where we will inevitably emerge scarred, but, through our shared experiences, with a deeper understanding of the other.

15 Wilmer Wilson IV, email to author, September 2, 2019.

16 “Vacant Lot Program,” City of Philadelphia, last updated December 13, 2018. <https://www.phila.gov/programs/vacant-lot-program/>.

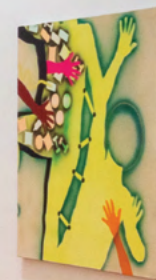
17 I understand disinvestment as an active process by which set priorities result in systematic withdrawal of aids, subsidies, and financial investments from certain areas.

18 Matty Davis and Ben Gould, *Carriage* (New York and Pittsburgh: Wendy’s Subway and Miller ICA at Carnegie Mellon University, 2019).

19 Erin Manning, *Politics of Touch: Sense, Movement, Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 113.

This Skin of Ours

Curated by Liz Park
Kader Attia
Matty Davis and Ben Gould
Victoria Lu and Matt Rich
Boris Krieger
Kiki Kogelnik
Sara Greenberger Rafferty
Wesley Wilson IV





This Skin of Ours

Curated by Liz Park

- Kader Attia
- Matty Davis and Ben Gould
- Victoria Fu and Matt Rich
- Byron Kim
- Kiki Kogelnik
- Sara Greenberger Rafferty
- Wilmer Wilson IV







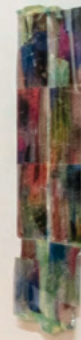
KADER ATTIA



KIKI KOGELENIK





















MATTY DAVIS & BEN GOULD

List of works

KADER ATTIA

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Scars Have the Strange Power to Remind Us That Our Past Is Real, 2015
Chromatic print, 23 5/8 × 35 7/16 in.

MATTY DAVIS & BEN GOULD

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Carriage with chairs from the Braddock Carnegie Library, 2019
Publication, chairs, installation dimension variable

PAGES 44–45:

Bearance, 2019
Performance
Braddock Carnegie Library, Pittsburgh, PA

VICTORIA FU & MATT RICH

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Comet, 2018
Dye-printed fabric, 47 × 30 in.

Big X, 2019
Dye-printed fabric, 84 × 142 in.

Blue Pendant, 2018
Dye-printed fabric, 21 in. diameter

BYRON KIM

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The Valleys Are Asleep and the Mountaintops, 2019
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Surrender, 2019
Dyed cotton, 50 × 42 in.

The Swarm to the Hive, 2019
Dyed cotton, 46 × 30 in.

The Monsters in the Salt Deep of the Violet Sea, 2019
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Muffled, 2019
Dyed cotton, 48 × 32 in.

KIKI KOGELNIK

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Untitled (Figure), 1970
Ink and colored pencil on paper, 13 3/4 × 11 in.

Womans Lib, 1971
Silkscreen and colored pencil on paper, 30 × 22 1/8 in.

PAGE 26:

New Re-Entry Shape, 1965
Oil and acrylic on canvas, 48 1/8 × 50 1/8 in.

PAGE 27:

Untitled (Hanging), c. 1970
Sheet vinyl with chromed steel hanger,
63 × 19 3/4 × 1 1/2 in.

SARA GREENBERGER RAFFERTY

PAGES 32, 34–35:

The Veldt, 2019
Fused and kilnformed glass,
overall dimension 60 × 111 × 3/4 in.

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van Cleve Lucretia 1515, 2013–2019
Acrylic polymer and inkjet prints on
acetate on Plexiglas, hardware,
irregular 52 × 40 × 1/2 in.

Kane Dress 2016, 2016–2019
Acrylic polymer and inkjet prints on
acetate on Plexiglas, hardware,
irregular 48 × 24 × 1/2 in.

WILMER WILSON IV

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TRICK, 2019
Ink on plywood, spray paint on vinyl banners,
324 × 48 in.

Related Programs

OCTOBER 31, 2019, 6:30–8:00 PM

Byron Kim and Carl Phillips in Conversation
Simmons Auditorium A, Tepper, Carnegie Mellon University

Co-sponsored by CMU, Center for the Arts in Society with support from
University of Pittsburgh, Center for African American Poetry and Poetics

NOVEMBER 4–18, 2019

Matty Davis and Ben Gould in artist residency at Braddock Carnegie Library

NOVEMBER 16, 2019, 2:00–3:00 PM

Bearance

Braddock Carnegie Library

Bearance is the second work in an evolving performance collaboration between Matty Davis and Ben Gould that continues a trajectory set forth by *Carriage* (2018), a work that radically explores control and empathy. Begun in solitude in the Braddock Carnegie Library's gymnasium, *Bearance* used *Carriage* as an energetic and emotional primer, aiming to unbury and make felt new relationships between sensation, structure, and meaning.

Written on the Skin: Violence and Liberation

WENDY VOGEL

This Skin of Ours, curated by Liz Park, envisions the skin as more than a marker of identity. Park sees the organ as a form of protection, interface, and even projection. As she writes, “Skin signals—immediately and viscerally—physical pain and suffering ... It is a powerful tool of communication and emotional connection that elicits an understanding of another person’s suffering on the most basic level.”¹

This essay traces three feminist artworks that can be read alongside the themes of this exhibition: Nil Yalter’s 1974 video *La femme sans tête (The Headless Woman or the Belly Dance)*; Catherine Opie’s two scarification self-portraits (1993–94); and Jenny Holzer’s text-and-photograph series *Lustmord* (1993). These projects address taboos around female sexuality through writing on (or piercing) the skin—acts which function as marks of both violence and liberation. Although they predate most of the objects in the exhibition, they share similarities with the works that comprise *This Skin of Ours*. For the three artists, skin functions as both a seductive texture and a barrier. When that barrier is penetrated, bodily viscera are loosed, along with fears of contamination, excess, abjection—associated with the female, the foreign, the sick. These works also speak to a political urgency around the politics of identity in both the ‘70s and ‘90s. In broaching subjects such as sexual agency and assault, the colonial gaze, ethnic cleansing, and homophobia, Holzer, Opie, and Yalter create powerful statements of solidarity through the use of the body as material and metaphor.

This Skin of Ours includes several works that emulate the organ’s texture and colors in an allusion to collective trauma. Byron Kim’s “bruise paintings” on cotton illustrate damaged skin. The artist, however, labors in an abstract, semi-improvised way; rather than referencing source images of a bruise, he works dye into the fabric, enacting a physical struggle with the materials.² Similarly, Wilmer Wilson IV’s installation *TRICK* utilizes objects that recall the texture of skin to explore larger concerns about class, race, access, and urban space. He prints images from barbershop posters on plywood sheets, strategically placing found vinyl banner ads over the eyes of the African-American models. Wilson has spray painted these banners in various flesh tones. The text on the vinyl signs—ads that meld patriotic images of star-spangled banners with crass commercialism—are sometimes faintly visible and sometimes occluded. These competing strategies of intimacy and anonymity are echoed in the practices of Holzer, Opie, and Yalter.

1 Liz Park, “This Skin of Ours,” 7.

2 As Park writes, “His paintings signal that there is something deeper than what we see—not only what lies under the skin but the invisible structures that enable violence on certain bodies.” “This Skin of Ours,” 8.

In other works on view, the punctured or carved “skin” signifies invasion, contamination, and sometimes emancipation. Kader Attia’s photograph *Scars Have the Strange Power to Remind Us That Our Past Is Real* (2015) depicts an inscrutable message in Arabic carved into a tree near the location of a 1983 massacre at Maasser el-Chouf, Lebanon. This witness tree is a stand-in for the human body subject to violence. Critic Ana Teixeira Pinto interprets Attia’s interest in scars from a sociological point of view, writing that “the traumatic incisions produced by scarification turn the body into a human sign, fit to enter society and culture. But this reversal of inwardness and outwardness is not only a psychoanalytical play, it’s a political one.”³ Yalter, Holzer, and Opie all draw upon the political implications of tattooing, which involves intentional wounding of the skin to create symbols, as a mark of ownership or a statement of self-identity. The Austrian Pop-feminist artist Kiki Kogelnik also uses penetration and cutting as motifs in her work. In the 1960s, she traced silhouettes of her friends and used them in the background of her futuristic paintings. *New Re-Entry Shape* (1965) shows two glowing silhouettes from above, as though under an X-ray, penetrated with hands and mysterious objects. The hand-colored print *Womans Lib* (1971) asserts feminist agency, depicting Kogelnik in a trench coat wielding lifesize scissors, surrounded by multicolored cutouts of human silhouettes. Throughout the ‘70s, Kogelnik produced the sculptural series *Hangings*, where she snipped life-sized silhouettes from thin vinyl sheets and slung them over standard clothes hangers. Melding the slick look of vinyl with typical homeware items, Kogelnik’s second-wave feminist practice challenged notions of production, reproduction, and gendered labor.

Working at the same time as Kogelnik, the Turkish-French artist Nil Yalter explored writing on the body and corporal fragmentation in her first video artwork, *The Headless Woman or the Belly Dance* (1974). Yalter moved from Istanbul to Paris in 1965, and by the mid-‘70s she was already involved in feminist collectives and leftist politics, often advocating for immigrant rights. *The Headless Woman* operates as a powerful critique of the reductive Western view of female sexuality. In the 24-minute, black-and-white videotape, Yalter transcribes an excerpt from French sociologist René Nelli’s tract *Erotique et civilisation* (1972) across her midriff, then proceeds to animate the text through belly dancing. She begins writing around her navel, continuing down the sides of her abdomen and across her waistband. Her stomach remains tightly framed by the video camera—a positioning she controlled by looking at the Portapak video monitor.



Nil Yalter
La femme sans tête
 1974
 Video still
 Courtesy of the artist

Nelli’s tract that Yalter inscribes on herself argues for an expanded understanding of female sexuality. Penned during the height of the Western sexual revolution, the sociological treatise encouraged erotic pleasure and condemned the brutal practice of female genital mutilation. Yalter begins her transcription with a sentence stating the physical facts of female genitalia: “*La femme véritable est à la fois convexe et concave*” (“A veritable woman is ‘convex’ and ‘concave’ at the same time.”)⁴ The text goes on (translated here in English): “But she needs not to be deprived mentally or physically from the central part of her convexity: the clitoris (...). This aversion to the clitoris corresponds to man’s ancestral horror from this virile and natural part of woman, this part which is capable of absolute orgasm.”⁵

Yalter’s composition calls attention to the fetishization of women’s bodies, especially those of colonized and non-Western women. While she centers her navel in the frame, which alludes to the female genital opening by proximity, the words that she writes externalize agency and desire. Indeed, she is “headless,” but not silent.

Furthermore, the gesture of writing on her own skin subverts a patriarchal religious ritual. As the artist explains, an Anatolian custom of writing on women’s skin was used as a public ritual to expose female sexual inadequacies. Disobedient or childless married women would be brought to the village imam, who would blindfold them and inscribe a prayer directly on their bellies. If he made a mistake, he would often

3 Ana Teixeira Pinto, “Kader Attia’s ‘Scarification, Self-Skin’s Architecture,’” *art-agenda*, June 10, 2015. <https://www.art-agenda.com/features/237406/kader-attia-s-scarification-self-skin-s-architecture>.

4 Istanbul Modern. “A selection from the collection: Nil Yalter, *The Headless Woman or the Belly Dance*,” Accessed November 20, 2019, <https://www.istanbulmodern.org/en/collection/photography-collection/5?t=3&id=1186>

5 Ibid.

Catherine Opie
Self-Portrait/Cutting
1993
Chromogenic print
40 × 30 in. (101.6 × 76.2 cm)
© Catherine Opie, Courtesy of Regen Projects,
Los Angeles, and Lehmann Maupin,
New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul



lick it off and start over.⁶ Here, Yalter inscribes her own flesh with an invocation to seek erotic knowledge and pleasure. Decades later, the artist would describe the arc of her practice in quasi-religious terms: “The body of the artist is a vector for social topics ... I am a female shaman on a knife’s edge. The surface I write my message on is my own skin.”⁷

In the early ‘90s, Los Angeles–based photographer Catherine Opie took a knife to *her* own skin. Her series of scarification self-portraits paid tribute to her sexuality and challenged cultural notions of deviance. Opie had been part of lesbian S/M groups since the ‘80s, starting with the Outcasts in San Francisco. While she identifies as a leather lesbian, she has said that “S/M was never sexual” for her.

Rather, the transgressive acts opened up a sense of play and community.⁸ For years, Opie took portraits of her lesbian friends in elements of drag, posing in front of backdrops that recalled Northern Renaissance painter Hans Holbein’s elaborate settings. In *Self-Portrait/Cutting* (1993), Opie steps in front of the lens, her back to the camera. Between her shoulder blades, she bears a freshly carved drawing of two skirted figures holding hands in front of a house. The childlike image belies the fleshy extremity of Opie’s cutting—rivulets of blood cascade down her back—as well as the depth of her desire for a queer family life. This unexpectedly tender image of domesticity flew in the face of the public’s perception of the LGBTQ+ community.

Opie makes her self-presentation more explicit in *Self-Portrait/Pervert* (1994), styling herself with the full trappings of her S/M gear. Here, she sits in front of a backdrop of black-and-gold brocade, her head draped in a leather hood and her arms studded with piercings. Someone has sliced the word “Pervert” in cursive letters on her chest. Opie considers this picture a direct confrontation to the panic surrounding LGBTQ+ individuals during the AIDS crisis. “The leather community was really disowned,” Opie said. “The homophobia in relation to AIDS was so deep. People who weren’t in the leather community were, like, ‘Well, *they’re* perverts.’”⁹ After she gave birth to her son in 2001, Opie created another self-portrait. This time, she faced the camera and nursed her baby—with the pervert scar still visible across her chest. By daring to picture herself in contradictory guises—butch and mother, a pervert and domestic partner—Opie celebrates the divergent possibilities of female sexuality.

Like Yalter’s video, Opie’s photographs telegraph a message beyond the scope of their materiality. If Yalter’s work operated as a metaphor for ancient taboos around external female genitalia, sexual assertiveness, and foreign otherness, Opie’s work delivered a statement about homophobic fears of contamination. Jenny Holzer’s *Lustmord* portfolio, created initially for the *Süddeutsche Zeitschrift Magazin* (SZ *Magazin*) in 1993, equally addressed anxieties around defilement through the subject of sexual abuse and war.

For the *Lustmord* series, Holzer sought to respond to the devastating accounts of rape as an instrument of ethnic cleansing during the Bosnian War (1992–95). She authored a series of 26 short statements from the imagined perspectives of a sexual assault victim, perpetrator, and witness and wrote

6 Centre Pompidou. “Video Vintage: Nil Yalter” dir. Philippe Puicouyoul, Service audiovisuel du Centre Pompidou, 2012, Flowplayer video file, 10:13, <https://www.centrepompidou.fr/cpv/resource/c6bXXrR/r6rkzXq>.

7 Rosemarie Martha Huhn, “Ethnic, Ethic and Aesthetic Crossways in the work of Nil Yalter,” *Contemporary Artists* vol. 2 (Detroit: St. James Press, 2001), quoted in Eda Berkman, “Off the Record,” in *Nil Yalter: Off the Record* (Istanbul: Arter, 2006), 43.

8 Quoted in Ariel Levy, “Catherine Opie: All-American Subversive,” *The New Yorker*, March 5, 2017: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/03/13/catherine-opie-all-american-subversive>.

9 Ibid.

them by hand onto the skin of 28 different individuals. Wrenching and anonymous, they read as urgent political messages. Photographs of these handwritten messages ran as full-color, full-bleed images in the 30-page issue of *SZ Magazin*, designed in collaboration with Tibor Kalman. Critic David Levi Strauss stresses the importance of Holzer's given medium of newsprint: "As one turns the pages one becomes hyper-aware of the skin of one's fingers on the pages, and it feels like one is reading a book of skin."¹⁰ The intimacy of the magazine format marked a new direction for Holzer, whose text-based work since the 1980s had assumed the form of pithy aphorisms delivered through the vehicles of public speech: wheatpasted posters, LED signs, and even marble benches and plaques. While her audience had previously touched or even defaced her work, this was the first instance where she created an object to be physically handled, pored over, and leafed through.

For the *SZ Magazin* readership, Holzer's photographs of writing on skin—calling to mind Holocaust tattoos—proved less disturbing than the relatively plain cover of the issue. On the front of the magazine, Holzer had affixed a folded white card with the words "DA WO FRAUEN STERBEN BIN ICH HELLWACH" (I am awake in the place where women die) printed on the outside in red ink. Inside the card were two more ominous statements, printed in black, from the perspective of a witness and an assailant. Holzer revealed that the red ink contained microscopic amounts of blood donated by German and Yugoslav women. Although the blood was heated to a temperature that would destroy any contagion, the circulation of bodily fluids caused an uproar and moral panic. As curator Bice Curiger observes, "Holzer's work was described as perverse, wasteful, and sensationalistic. The irony is that regular news reports of violence against women or wartime bloodshed were being consumed—as they are today—without objection. But when the blood is brought into people's sitting rooms, they react differently."¹¹

Holzer herself explains, "I wanted people to feel rather than simply to know. I thought they must touch the blood. We didn't imagine the way it turned out. We had everything from tears to outrage—the outrage almost exclusively from men."¹²

¹⁰ David Levi Strauss, "Written in the Blood of Women: Inscription and Contagion in Jenny Holzer's *Lustmord*," in *Witness to Her Art*, ed. Rhea Anastas and Michael Brenson (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY: Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, 2006), 240.

¹¹ Bice Curiger, "1993: Jenny Holzer's Feminist 'Sex Murder' Raised Fury in Germany—For All the Wrong Reasons," *Artspace*, May 17, 2018, https://www.artspace.com/magazine/art_101/art-in-the-90s/1993-jenny-holzers-feminist-sex-murder-raised-fury-in-germany-for-all-the-wrong-reasons-55438.

¹² Jenny Holzer, "Interview: Joan Simon in Conversation," in *Jenny Holzer*, eds. David Joselit, Joan Simon, and Renata Salecl (London: Phaidon, 1998), 31.



Jenny Holzer
Lustmord
1993
Ink on skin: Cibachrome print
13 × 20 in. (33 × 50.8 cm)
Text: *Lustmord*, 1993–95
Photo: Alan Richardson
Courtesy of Jenny Holzer / Art Resource, NY

The visceral nature of Holzer's project ignited conversations about the weaponization of women's bodies, invasion, and infection. One of the most disturbing texts, which also appears in black on the cover card, is written from the perspective of the sexual assailant: "The color of her where she is inside out is enough to make me kill her."¹³ As art historian David Joselit interprets this statement, "It is the obscenity of her body transgressing its boundaries that incites murderous desire in the Perpetrator."¹⁴ Female sex here again becomes an ancient and fearful paradox. Joselit continues: "In *Lustmord* the body's violation—its involution or externalization—is framed by a parallel slippage between the private and the public."¹⁵ In other words, Holzer brings the private language around assault to public discourse, through the medium of print on/as skin. She goes further than that, however, by bringing an unsuspecting readership into direct contact with the body's interior through her blood ink. She shatters the notion of language as a hygienic abstraction and, in doing so, perhaps points a way beyond the despair that the work may generate.

The flesh-and-blood practices of Nil Yalter, Catherine Opie, and Jenny Holzer form one feminist lineage through which we can read the works in *This Skin of Ours*. The historical conditions under which these artists (and Kiki Kogelnik, an artist in the exhibition) labored, however, must be understood as distinct from our own. In the '70s through the early '90s, it was still considered a radical act for women to create images of their own bodies—especially if those women were queer, non-white, disabled, or survivors of sexual assault. *This Skin of Ours* brings together works that investigate ideas of trauma, gendered labor,

¹³ Jenny Holzer, "Lustmord," *Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin*, Nov. 19, 1993: 1–31.

¹⁴ David Joselit, "Voices, Bodies and Spaces: The Art of Jenny Holzer," in *Jenny Holzer*, eds. David Joselit, Joan Simon, and Renata Salecl (London: Phaidon, 1998), 51.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 52.

objectification, and dependency but through forms that move away from straightforward portraiture and linguistic testimony. Today, we experience constant pressure to self-promote through technological means, with our own images and tweet-length captions seen through the screen of mobile devices. In positioning the skin as an interface as well as a collective sensing organ, this exhibition re-envisioned the feminist principles of solidarity, political action, and community care.

Afterword

ELIZABETH CHODOS

Director, Miller ICA

Carl's Old Poem

One of my major take-aways from Liz Park's curatorial project, *This Skin of Ours*, is that time renews as much as it ravages. This feeling comes from both the design and content of the exhibition and its attendant programming. The component parts of *This Skin of Ours* include: an exhibition with nine artists; one collaborative residency between the Miller Institute for Contemporary Art (Miller ICA) and the Braddock Carnegie Library; one public conversation that was held at Carnegie Mellon University (CMU); and this catalog. Taken individually, these endeavors created discrete moments for contemplation and for processing ideas. Taken together, these parts represent an endeavor that has unfolded over a long expanse of time. In one sense, this project began when I invited Park to submit a proposal to the Miller ICA. In another sense, it began long before then.

In Park's essay, we learn that Byron Kim's paintings helped inspire her concept for the exhibition. Yet Kim's paintings themselves were inspired by a poem written by Carl Phillips about a bruise on his lover's body. During a moderated conversation with Kim, Phillips revealed that he thought of this poem, "Alba: Innocence,"¹ as old; something he was done with and from which he had moved on. Yet this old poem had the power to prompt Kim to generate an entirely new body of work that in turn inspired Park's curatorial effort. In this way, no work is ever done and it continues to make meaning as it moves through the world over time and encounters new people in evolving contexts.

Park's approach to organizing this exhibition and its component parts was not to bend works into a pre-existing thematic conceit, but rather to open up a fluid space for exchange and to conduct a conversation that could unfold over time, allowing ideas to bounce between the poetic, political, historic, and personal, much as they would at a perfectly composed dinner party. It was an exercise in understanding who we've been, who we are, and who we can be someday. Each element of *This Skin of Ours* acted as an invitation for participants to examine their whole selves and bring to bear all of the complexity that is contained within the haven of their largest organ.

When Park began to formulate her exhibition concept, the potency of the topic of skin was underscored for me by the shared gestation period of the project and my son, Abraham. As Park composed her list of

1 Carl Phillips, "Alba: Innocence," in *Quiver of Arrows: Selected Poems 1986-2006*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 51.

artists and crafted thinking on the project, Abraham was growing inside me, and his skin was developing as the boundary between what constituted his body as something distinct from my own. The profound function skin has in shaping, covering, describing, defining, and protecting, from the very earliest stages of our existence, was something that I was understanding in a new and vulnerable way, as my identity as a mother grew in time with his body.

Skin literally defines us before we enter the world, is with us at all times, records our passage through life over time, and connects our interior world to the external environment through a sensing and sensitive surface. It is a mutable constant and the site where the litany of life's encounters are spelled out. This curatorial project by Liz Park opens up all the complications of this part of our body that both contains and connects and determines what is ours and what is other. It is a timeless topic that on the verge of 2020 has a particular urgency when what defines "us" and "them" is shaping the dominant discourse in society. Park's project came into the world at a time of discord and rupture, and the wounds and bruises of this moment are evident in the ways we engage with the subject matter. But the content of this exhibition, attendant events, and publication represent a multitude of interpretive possibilities. As time carries on, these works of art and this catalog will enter into new contexts and activate new conversations, bodies of work, and interpretations of this skin of ours.

Artist Biographies

KADER ATTIA

Kader Attia (b. 1970) has developed a dynamic practice that reflects on aesthetics and ethics of different cultures and interrogates the concept of repair as a constant in human nature, about which the Western and non-Western worlds have always had opposing visions. Repair is deeply connected to traumatic experiences from the past that live on in the collective human psyche. In 2016, he founded *La Colonie* in Paris, a space for decolonizing discourses that extends his praxis from representation to action. Kader Attia's work has been shown in biennials, such as the 12th Shanghai Biennial; the 12th Gwangju Biennial; the 12th Manifesta, Palermo; the 57th Venice Biennial; dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel, and in group shows at museums, including The Met Breuer, New York; Kunsthalle Wien; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; Centre Pompidou, Paris, and Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Notable solo exhibitions include the Hayward Gallery, London; Fundació Joan Miró in Barcelona; The Power Plant, Toronto; Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney; S.M.A.K, Gent; Museum MMK für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt; Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts Lausanne; Beirut Art Center; Whitechapel Gallery, London; and KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin.

MATTY DAVIS & BEN GOULD

Matty Davis (b. 1989) is an artist and choreographer originally from Pittsburgh, where his grandfather worked in the steel mills and his father's plane crashed. He grew up as an athlete, north of the city in Cranberry Township. Often collaborative—with other people, the land, and histories—his multidisciplinary work begins with the body and the mining of physical and psychological resources. Unpredictable relationships and undertakings are navigated through risk, trust, and intimacy in search of personal and interpersonal transformation. His work has been presented recently at Palais de Tokyo, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Max Ernst Museum Brühl des LVR, and Printed Matter, Inc. He has taught movement and performance workshops throughout the U.S. and is excited to return home for this exhibition.

Ben Gould (b. 1993) is a visual and performance artist based in New York. After developing Tourette syndrome five years ago, his studio practice has come to harbor a growing investment in the body—exploring resistance, the loss of control, and how energy is transformed and transferred. Gould has performed site-specific projects across the country, and his work has been presented by Palais de Tokyo, The Watermill Center, Human Resources, the Chicago Cultural Center, Judson Church, Sala Diaz, Creative Growth Art Center, and Open Spaces, among others. He was a 2015 Ox-Bow Fellow and has been an artist-in-residence at Queenslab, Kickstarter Headquarters, Light Box, and Haystack Mountain School of Crafts.

VICTORIA FU & MATT RICH

Victoria Fu (b. 1978) received her MFA from California Institute of the Arts, an MA in Art History/Museum Studies from the University of Southern California, and a BA from Stanford University. She attended the Independent Study Program of the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and is a 2015 Guggenheim Fellow. Her work has been exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tucson; The Contemporary, Baltimore; the University Art Gallery at UC Irvine; the Pérez Art Museum Miami; the Whitney Biennial 2014, New York; and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, La Jolla.

Matt Rich (b. 1976) received an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, a BA from Brown University, and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. Rich's solo exhibitions include venues such as Halsey McKay Gallery, East Hampton and New York; Project Row Houses, Houston; the Athenaeum Music and Arts Library, La Jolla; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; and the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City. His work has been featured in publications, including *Modern Painters*, *Artforum*, *Art Papers*, and *The Boston Globe*, among others, and he has received grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Terra Foundation for American Art, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Alongside their individual practices, Victoria Fu & Matt Rich began a collaborative studio practice in 2017 that was recently awarded the San Diego Art Prize. This partnership combines their aesthetic sensibilities and working processes, resulting in solo exhibitions at The Suburban, Milwaukee; Angels Gate Cultural Center, San Pedro; the University Hall Gallery at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and the Orange County Museum of Art. They have commissioned performances in their installations with Marcus Civin and Matt Savitsky, and one forthcoming at The Getty in 2020. They teach, live, and work in San Diego and maintain studios in both San Diego and Los Angeles.

BYRON KIM

Like the artists he admires, Ad Reinhardt, Mark Rothko and Agnes Martin, Byron Kim (b. 1961) works in an area one might call the abstract sublime. His work sits at the threshold between abstraction and representation, between conceptualism and pure painting. *Synecdoche* is Kim's signature work, which was started in 1991, exhibited in the Whitney Biennial in 1993, and is in the permanent collection of the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. Comprised of a grid of hundreds of panels depicting human skin color, the work is both an abstract painting in monochromes and a group portrait. His ongoing series of *Sunday Paintings*, in which he records the appearance of the sky every week along with a diary entry, juxtaposes the cosmological with the quotidian. He is a senior critic at Yale University. Among Kim's numerous awards are the Louise Nevelson Award in Art, American Academy of Arts and Letters (1993), the New York Foundation for the Arts Grant (1994), the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award (1994), the National Endowment of the Arts Award (1995), the Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant (1997), and the Alpert Award in the Arts (2008).

KIKI KOGELNIK

Kiki Kogelnik (1935-1997) lived and worked in New York and Vienna. After studying at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and traveling around Europe, Kogelnik settled in New York in the early 1960s. There, she abandoned her previous abstract and gestural manner of painting and, using diverse media, started to create works inspired by robotics and space travel. She exchanged this focus, in the 1970s, for one on the portrayal of women and representations of femininity. The constant in Kiki Kogelnik's work was the body—human figures captured as tracings, cutouts stenciled onto canvas as silhouettes or hung as pieces of vinyl or paper on hangers like hollow skins.

SARA GREENBERGER RAFFERTY

Sara Greenberger Rafferty (b. 1978) has exhibited widely since 2001, including solo exhibitions at MoMA PS1, New York; The Kitchen, New York; Eli Marsh Gallery at Amherst College, Massachusetts; Fine Arts Center Gallery at the University of Arkansas; and a commissioned sculpture for the Public Art Fund. The artist was included in the 2014 Whitney Biennial and the 2014 Hammer Biennial, in addition to group shows at the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, Oregon; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; and The Jewish Museum, New York. Her work is included in the collections of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Carnegie Museum of Art, The Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the RISD Museum, and the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. Rafferty is associate professor and director of Graduate Studies in Photography at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn.

WILMER WILSON IV

Wilmer Wilson IV (b. 1989) is a recipient of The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage Fellowship and an American Academy in Rome Affiliated Fellowship. Select institutions that have presented his work include the New Museum, New York, NY; Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Boston, MA; Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia, PA; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, Washington, D.C.; Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL; National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.; and In Flanders Fields Museum, Ieper, Belgium. His work is included in the collections of the Baltimore Museum of Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of Art, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and New Orleans Museum of Art, among others.

Contributor Biographies

ELIZABETH CHODOS

Elizabeth Chodos is director of the Miller Institute for Contemporary Art at Carnegie Mellon University. She is co-founder of Common Field and served as executive and creative director of Ox-Bow School of Art and Artists' Residency. Elizabeth received a dual master's degree from the departments of Art History, Theory, and Criticism and Arts Administration from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and her Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing from Sarah Lawrence College. She was formerly executive director at Threewalls in Chicago.

LIZ PARK

Liz Park is curator of exhibitions at University at Buffalo Art Galleries. She was most recently the associate curator of the 2018 *Carnegie International* at Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. She has curated exhibitions at a wide range of institutions, including the Western Front, Vancouver; The Kitchen, New York; the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), Philadelphia; and Seoul Art Space Geumcheon. Her topics of investigation have included representation of violence, invisibility, migration and moving images, and burial and buried histories. She was a Helena Rubinstein Fellow in the Independent Study Program at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 2011–2012 and the Whitney-Lauder Curatorial Fellow at ICA Philadelphia in 2013–2015.

WENDY VOGEL

Wendy Vogel is a writer, critic, and independent curator based in New York. Her work focuses on the legacies of feminism and how sexual politics interface with questions of class, race, and ability. A former editor at *Flash Art International*, *Modern Painters*, and *Art in America*, her writing has appeared in a variety of publications, including *Artforum*, *art-agenda*, *The Art Newspaper*, *ArtReview*, *frieze*, and *MOUSSE*. She is a 2018 recipient of The Creative Capital | Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant in Short-Form Writing.

Acknowledgments

We gratefully acknowledge the support of artist studio, foundation, and galleries:

James Cohan Gallery

Kader Attia Studio

Kiki Kogelnik Foundation

Kukje Gallery, Seoul

Mitchell-Innes and Nash

Rachel Uffner Gallery

Simone Subal Gallery

Susan Inglett Gallery

The following partner organizations have supported related programs and publication efforts:

Wendy's Subway

Center for the Arts in Society, Carnegie Mellon University

Center for African American Poetry and Poetics, University of Pittsburgh

Shipman Agency

Braddock Carnegie Library

Sincere thanks to our dearest colleagues:

Dana Bishop-Root

James Duesing

Yona Harvey

Dawn Lundy

Carl Phillips

Lauren Russell

Rachel Valinsky

Sara Greenberger Rafferty acknowledges the Faculty Development Fund of Pratt Institute.

Victoria Fu and Matt Rich thank Julia Norman and Jordan Readyhough.

Colophon

This Skin of Ours

October 11–November 17, 2019

Miller ICA at Carnegie Mellon University

Curated by Liz Park



**Carnegie
Mellon
University**

Miller ICA is Carnegie Mellon University's contemporary art institute providing transformative experiences with contemporary art through exhibitions, conversation, and exchange in a free and open public space.

General operating support for the Miller ICA is provided by Carnegie Mellon University. Exhibitions and programs are supported by Regina and Marlin Miller, as well as the CMU College of Fine Arts and in part by a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Additional support comes from gallery members, patrons, sponsors, and donations.

Published by the Miller ICA in conjunction with the exhibition.

Miller ICA at Carnegie Mellon University
Purnell Center for the Arts
5000 Forbes Ave.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
www.miller-ica.cmu.edu

Produced by:
Elizabeth Chodos, Director
Liz Park, Curator
Sonia Yoon, Designer

Copy editor: Larissa Garcia
Exhibition photography: Tom Little
Performance photography: Ryan Michael White
Pages 34–35: Photograph courtesy of the artist and Rachel Uffner Gallery. Photo: JSP Photography.
All works courtesy of the artists and the Kiki Kogelnik Foundation.

ISBN 978-1-7335378-1-0

First printed in 2020 in an edition of 300.
Printed in China.

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\$20.00
ISBN 978-1-7335378-1-0
52000 >



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