ANTENNAE

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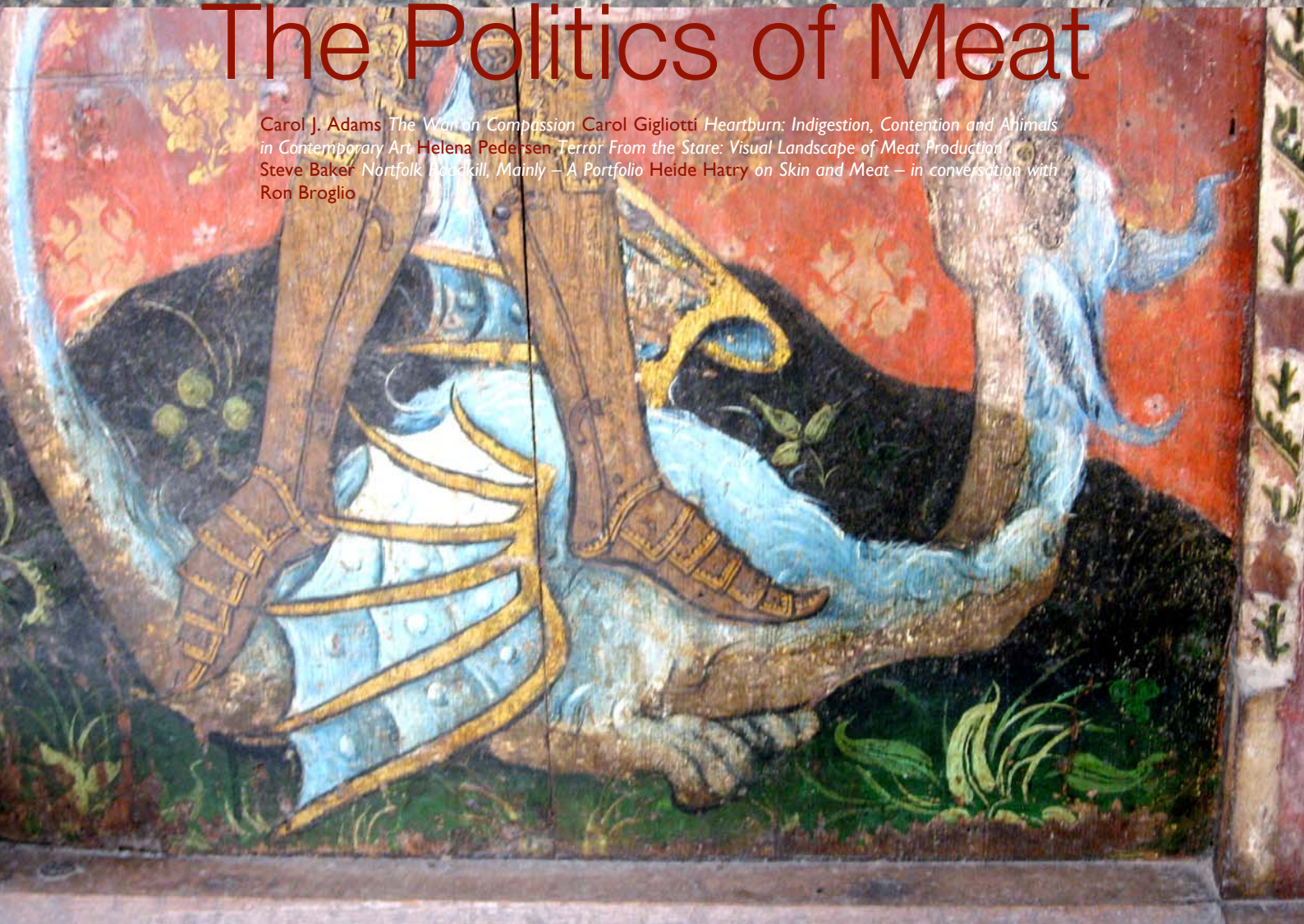
The Politics of Meat



ANTENNAE

The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture

Front Cover Image, Steve Baker, *Newton Road, Hainford, 20/09/09*, from the series *Norfolk Roadkill, Mainly*, 2009 -10 © Steve Baker
Back Cover Image, Heide Hatry, *Baby*, beef, 2008 © Heide Hatry

EDITORIAL

ANTENNAE ISSUE 14

It may sound rather disconcerting to us today, but guided tours of Chicago's packinghouses were a regular occurrence in mid 1800s and quickly become as popular as rides on the newly invented Ferris wheel. The booming interest in the viewing of the disassembly of animals through the mechanized speed of conveyor belts generated a singular overlapping of the meat industry with the entertainment one. The reduction of animals to meat, through the development of the business of slaughterhouse touring, created therefore a new visual realm, one based on the mass killing of animals, designed for the visual as well as factual consumption by the masses. [i]

Through the slaughterhouse tours, as audiences stood on galleries, watching the fast moving spectacle of animal dismembering, the 'otherness' of the animal increased dramatically through this process. This is a landmark-moment in the consolidation of animal subjugation where an all-consuming human-gaze is key to extracting further commodity value from animal bodies.

Today, meat has acquired extensive symbolic values as a medium in contemporary art practice. In *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Carol J. Adams describes meat as a "symbol for what is not seen but is always there – patriarchal control of animals". [ii]

During the second half of the 1940s, Francis Bacon found himself involved in a long-lasting fascination with the portrait of Pope Innocent X, a painting by Velasquez from 1650. In *Head Surrounded by Sides of Beef*, Bacon introduced hunks of raw meat to both sides of the Pope's head. Focusing on a close analysis of the subject in *The Body, the Meat, the Spirit: Becoming Animal*, Deleuze notes that: 'The scream, which issues from the Pope's mouth, […] has meat as its object.'[ii] 'We are all meat, we are potential carcasses' said Bacon, 'whenever I am at a butcher's I always think it astonishing it's not me hanging on the hook, must be pure chance'. As Deleuze explains, 'meat is not dead flesh, it retains all the sufferings and assumes all the colours of living flesh. It manifests such convulsive pain and vulnerability […]. Meat is the common zone of man and beast, their zone of indiscernibility'.[iv]

Over this issue, and the next, ***Antennae*** will dissect the subject, presenting some of the most engaged writing and art practice. The current issue, titled *The Politics of Meat,* takes into consideration the essence of meat as an actively political medium. Its title is of course an homage to the work of Carol J. Adams who also gave us, for the occasion, a compelling exclusive interview.

The current issue also includes the voices of Carol Gigliotti and Helena Pedersen who looked at respectively, the subject of meat and animal killing in art and that of 'visual consumption of animals' in everyday life. The work of artist Heide Hatry provides a valued opportunity to discuss the complexities involved in the use of animal meat and skin as artistic media, whilst we are most proud to be able to present a portfolio of new images from Steve Baker's challenging photographic project *Norfolk Roadkill, Mainly*.

I would like to thank all members of ***Antennae***'s boards for their support, including Dr. Paula Lee for her initial help with this project and all contributors for their kind collaboration. Our second instalment, titled *Meat Animal Meat* in homage to the conference of the subject organised by Helena Pedersen in 2009, will be available in December.

Giovanni Aloi
Editor in Chief of Antennae Project

[i] Shukin, N. Animal Capital – Rendering Life in Biopolitical Times, University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota/London, 2009, pp. 93-94

[ii] Adams, J. C. The Sexual Politics of Meat, Continuum International Publishing, London, 1990, p. 27

[iii] Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1986) A Thousand Plateaus, Continuum, London, 1998, p.19

[iii] Ibid, p. 71

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HEIDE HATRY ON SKIN AND MEAT

Heide Hatry's art looks at meat and skin as media and challenges the signifying potentials of such media through uncanny sculptural and installation work. Here, Ron Broglio interviews the artist for Antennae.

Interview questions by Ron Broglio

Heide Hatry
Skinning © Heide Hatry

Carolee Shneemann
Meet Joy, performance, 1964 © Carolee Shneemann

Heide Hatry is a visual artist and curator. She grew up in Germany, where she studied art at various art schools and art history at the University of Heidelberg. Since moving to NYC in 2003 she has curated several exhibitions in Germany, Spain and the USA (notably Skin at the Goethe Institute in New York, the Heidelberger Kunstverein and Galeria Tribeca in Madrid, Spain; Out of the Box at Elga Wimmer PCC in NYC, Carolee Schneemann, Early and Recent Work, A Survey at Pierre Menard Gallery in Cambridge, MA and Meat After Meat Joy at Daneyal Mahmood Gallery, NYC). She has shown her own work at museums and galleries in those countries as well and edited more than a dozen books and art catalogues. Kehrer Verlag published her book Skin in 2005.

Ron Broglio: You have curated the work of Carolee Schneemann and published a book that provides a retrospective of her work. How has Schneemann helped establish a language for gender and bodies, a language that has been used by artists after Schneemann?

Heide Hatry: Although, to my mind, Carolee Schneemann is the first woman artist in history to fully thematize woman's experience in her work (and of course to dramatically expand the range of what might have been viewed as "women's experience"), she has always been a political artist, and the entire notion of "establishing a language," which resonates to me with "establishing a beachhead," is a political and maybe even a martial issue. The popular apothem to the effect that the winners determine the terms of discourse, crude and anti-humanist though it might seem, is the fruit of a very pragmatic social perspective, and the sort of guerrilla incursions into the dominant lexicon that Schneemann's work exemplifies have had a definitive, if still contested, impact on the understanding of what is relevant to us in art. That she presented woman as a protagonist rather than simply a prop or an object, as an articulate subject of experience rather than a patronized "mystery," as a full and autonomous participant in the human adventure, a force of nature, a locus and a fountain of power are facts about her art that, although they didn't register as exactly what they were with most of her early audience, both male and female, have had enormous impact on both the language of art in her wake and, in fact, though largely unacknowledged, on the more theoretical discourse of feminism. Her use of the body, particularly her own body, is a means of tearing the image off of the canvas, of defying the two-dimensionality of (particularly female) experience – in fact her use of her own body as an art element is explicitly this, freeing it from thraldom to technique, to

Heide Hatry
Stapling © Heide Hatry

passive scopophilia, to objecthood. The strength of her work, and what has made it hardest to conjure with, from an "aesthetic" point of view, is that it is unclear just what it is (supposed to be), and this is the problem of women's experience from a male (that is, aesthetic) perspective, as well. It is alive, mobile, labile, slippery and unpinned from the board of aesthetic lepidoptery, but it is magnificently, even heroically, present for the feminine sensibility that it was depicting, and in fact, forging.

Broglio: I have often thought Schneemann's work – Meat Joy *but also* Up to and Including Her Limits, Fuses *and other work as well – possesses a Dionysian quality: intoxication, corporality, sexuality and celebration, yet also violence and the rending of flesh. Do you see this quality in your own work and/or the work of other artists using flesh as a medium?*

Hatry: There is certainly a persistent ecstatic element in Schneemann's work, especially the early, and nowiconic, works that you mention. The Dionysian element, which I think I'd like to distinguish from that, particularly in *Meat Joy*, has seemed to me to reflect both a need to destroy the reigning world, in this case through an excess of joy, and to suggest the fact that the destructive element is already inscribed within us, (in this case, in women, whose self-consciousness has been determined by patriarchal hegemony), and this is where the iconographic value of the meat comes in. The ecstasy of, say, *Fuses*, is more the ecstasy of standing aside from the immemorial social expectations of women's sexuality and a standing free of constraints as a person and not an object, a fearlessness that frees beauty from male sexual and social expectation. Working with flesh is a way of "standing outside of oneself," of ecstasy, in that the inner is turned outward, the subject is made object, the normal surfaces of things are undermined or put in question by their essences. My work certainly implies violence, de-spiritualized corporeality, an uneasy relation of inner and outer. But the fact that it works in a realm of implication also keeps it at a reflective distance from them, strong though its overt contents might sometimes seem.

It's difficult to use the sorts of material I use without invoking thoughts of death, violence, rending, tearing bodies from souls, but although I want to conserve these "values" as undertones, my hope is to create and sustain tensions that imply that such persistent social/cultural phenomena are only elements in a larger picture, perhaps unnecessary elements, and certainly not the whole truth, even if they are the truth that is normally suppressed.

As Bert Olivier says: "It (art) is not to prettify or reassure – as in the case of philosophy. It is to interrogate the status quo, to dislocate, defamiliarise it" or, as Socrates claimed regarding philosophy, to bring about a "wholesome unrest" in the soul.

Broglio: In Heads and Tales *you use animal skin and body parts to fashion heads of women. You then photograph these and ask writers you admire to "select the image of one of my women and create a life for her." Did the writers know the heads were formed from animal parts?*

Did the animals' deaths affect your work and their writing?

Hatry: The writers were made aware of the nature of my project and materials when I invited them to participate in making the book, and of course this fact would have to have some effect on their writing. I didn't really think of the question in just the way you pose it, but upon reflection I see that there are several stories in which killing an animal plays a part, though not uniformly in a horrific way, in fact at least once in a darkly and persistently comic way. As to how this affected my own work, the material I used was mostly offal, waste by-products of the slaughtering process, and therefore even more demeaned essences than meat, pelt or leather, and to me it lent a poignancy to the new creatures into which it was fashioned, which I sometimes imagine I see, especially in their sad or clouding eyes. Many of the stories in *Heads and Tales* do treat of death or violence or oppression, and I would have to surmise that the traces of violence in the scoring of the pigskin of which they are made, the occasional residues of subcutaneous blood, and the slight or sometimes greater eccentricity of the fabrication itself must, to some extent, have invoked such thoughts. And after all, in making the works, I did have in mind the history of violence that characterizes the universal experience of women, even if I didn't allude to that in my prospectus.

Broglio: Skin acts as a surface between two worlds, a borderline between our "inner" world and the world outside. It is a site of vulnerability, a zone of events between inside and outside. How do you see your skin works as reflective of this borderline?

Hatry: Your question allows me to discuss why I chose to connect my portraits to stories. This is because the skin reveals both and conceals what we have experienced, even to the extent of telling something of our inner lives, and I wanted the meaning of these objects to be deepened by verbal evocations of human experience. Although visual art invites interpretation and suggests meanings, it is fundamentally surface, and in determining that these works were to be given voice, I wanted to define a sphere of inner life for them.

In general, I think of the works I have created out of skin and animal parts as having a conceptual or meta-dimension that is determined by their material alone, and that sets them into a state of tension, or perhaps more properly, creates an irresolvable tension in their viewer, who believes himself to be looking at one thing and discovers he is looking at another, and this in itself exemplifies a borderline or liminal quality in the material.

Broglio: Pigs are in some ways close to humans. We use their organs for xenotransplant. Their skin has a pink color and texture that seems close to that of humans. You use pig skin in a number of works. What is it like for you to work with parts of an animal which are so like us and yet so different from us?

Hatry: I grew up on a pig farm, and for me pigs are very different from humans. Although they are in many ways biologically closer to us than most other species, they seem for me personally further away from humans than other animals. We had thousands of pigs on our farm. They came to us when they were quite young, and they lived a terrible life in a small stall together with 10 or 15 others on a hard stone floor with open channels through which their excrement would fall directly into a system that removed it. There was no hay or straw or anything they could dig into, there was almost no daylight, and they knew that they would get fed – a process controlled by a computer – when the light was switched on. My father would walk through the stable to check if they were all still alive at feeding time, but he didn't have any feelings for them or connections to them either, except for a financial one – he was happy when he got them cheap and could sell them dear. Having experienced that during my entire childhood, it is very difficult for me to see the animal, the living creature in a pig. I observed them a lot and today I am sure that the reason for my non-feeling towards them was the way they were treated. They were not even able to play (on account of the circumstances in the stable), and as Huizinga asserts, play is central in human culture; I noticed that animals who are playing felt more like me.

I found pigs not only uninteresting, I actually found them disgusting. First the smell: if you confine thousands of pigs in a single room, that is just about big enough to fit them, with only small corridors to get them in and out, the smell is so horrendous you cannot imagine. When you first go into a place like that you think it is impossible to breathe, or that the stuff you are breathing is definitely not air. The smell is so intense that you immediately feel nauseated. Your body's involuntary reaction is similar to how it responds to an intense reek of vomit.

But the most disgusting thing about the behaviour of captive pigs is what they do when they are bored, or need distraction: they engage in a kind of cannibalism. Maybe because they see the tails of the other pigs moving, they start to play with them, and try to catch them and bite and eat them, and when they've eaten once, they continue until the whole posterior of the other pig is a raw piece of meat, and the animal begins to die of blood-loss or infection or has to be killed.

When that happens once, it will never stop, because the aggressors will have acquired a taste for it. Then the other pigs in its stall have to be covered with tar (their entire ears and tails and the flesh around the tail). If that doesn't help, the most aggressive, or the most playful pig – as you wish – has to be removed, and it's best for all concerned if it is killed. But I remember having seen these open wounds – their hind quarters looked liked the asses of baboons, just without skin or a

Heide Hatry
Madonna, photograph, 2008 © Heide Hatry

tail, and maybe with some gnawed pieces of bone hanging down from the wound.

So I saw the pigs as products and that somehow never changed for me. I already found it fascinating back then to cut up a whole pig and divide the pieces for us to eat from the pieces for the other animals, the "real" animals, the animals I loved.

But obviously pigs are very similar to humans: we don't xenotransplant only the internal organs you immediately think of, but pigskin is used in grafting onto human bodies when a significant patch has been burned or damaged. That means that pigskin does not only look like human skin, but that the structure is actually identical. It is therefore that it is so exciting to use as an art material, to use it to depict human skin, and especially to depict women, who are, in patriarchal societies, as Carol Adams states, non-humans too.

Broglio: In your projects Heads and Tales, Skin, and Meat After Meat Joy*, many of the works use skin and meat as media which have unique properties; they are linked to bodies and identity and violence. How do the identity of the animal and the death of the animal to produce the material with which you work affect your art?*

Hatry: No animals are killed to produce the art works. The animal parts I use are waste products. Pretty much every part of an animal has some industrial application, but the skin and eyes are regarded as worthless, and I actually get them free at a slaughterhouse. Their only other use would be to be re-fed to other animals. The meat employed in all of the artworks exhibited in *Meat After Meat Joy* was a relatively negligible quantity, and I think that it served a purpose that animals would applaud if they were able, not to mention that their deaths in this case were not for nothing, or for pure consumption, but were meaningful. Although I could imagine art made of animal materials for which this question might be relevant, or could even be contextualised, it doesn't really seem to me to apply to my own, the apparent conflict notwithstanding.

Broglio: You have done a number of performance pieces dressed in very smart, neat dress and then interacted with rather messy, fleshy materials. I'm thinking here of you in a white dress while skinning and cutting a pig. I believe it was a performance in 2006, in Heidelberger Kunstverein, Germany related to Skin. *And there is the egg performance in* Expectations *(2007)* and Birth of an Idea *(2006) where you release a chicken egg from your vagina in a way that recalls Schneemann's* Interior Scroll. *Could you discuss this juxtaposition of the clean frictionless dress in contrast to the messy friction of (animal/human) bodies?*

Hatry: Juxtaposition is one of the primal tactics of art, and I use it whenever I can. I love contrasts, even contradictions; because they make you stop and think, make you aware. Arresting the eye and forcing the viewer to pay attention, to feel something, is what I am trying to achieve in art and what I hope to find in the art of others. The performance in Heidelberg incorporated many meanings, rituals and associations. It was composed iconographically so as to operate on several levels. I wanted to invoke and question gender roles, for example, the wedding dress, preparation of the animal for consumption, decorating the house representing the function of women and slaughtering, carrying the carcass, building the house, etc., those of men, and I wanted to throw those separate roles into confusion by conflating them. The sleek, white, virginal dress reflected to me, on another level, the antiseptic separation of human beings from the harsh realities of the bases of their survival, which I set in contrast against the bloody corpse, my procession with which would certainly suggest ritual sacrifice to many. I assembled the whole thing along the lines of a poem, but using images.

Broglio: I am struck by the notion of vulnerability which you talk about in your artist statements and curatorial work. Your work is a profound thinking through this topic. Reason and social progress often dictate against thinking of fragility as anything other than an unfortunate by-product for those in the wake of social advancement. How is it possible to make and show art on vulnerability without co-opting the vulnerability for career advancement, recognition, or commercially successful art? Asked otherwise, how can we stay with this difficult feeling and concept, vulnerability, without using it for other ends?

Hatry: On the one hand, I want to invoke Marcuse's "repressive tolerance." It is almost a truism at this point that "the system" absorbs all, including what loathes it, turning it to the larger purpose, even against its will. At the same time, I'd like to suggest that the purpose of the critic, one of whose incarnations is the artist, is to thwart the vast metabolism of the totality by making its digestion a little more difficult. A wrench in the works might only stop the machine for a briefer and briefer moment, but without resistance, there is nothing but the machine, and that is the difference. Nugatory though it might seem. The difficult feeling probably cannot be sustained. It's a moment in a larger complex, but one to which one can always return in the work where it is embodied, and where new eyes and souls can always come upon it anew. And it is therefore not irrelevant.

The rest of your question concerns the artist's individual motivations, my motivations. In a moment in which it seems both that there is nothing an artist can do to actually create the experience of shock, as well as that the purpose of what passes for shocking, is simple commercial guile. I can only assert that the artist is an eternal human type. His or her purpose always precedes the market, and the work of even the most venal artistic spirit cannot be thoroughly digested, nor exhaustively comprehended, by the market without residue. In other words, I have faith in art. And I have faith in humanity, even if every individual human is

Heide Hatry
Head, beef, photograph, 2008 © Heide Hatry

corrupt and every work of art co-opted.

Broglio: You are, of course, familiar with Carol Adams' work including The Sexual Politics of Meat. *She has delineated the link made by patriarchy between women and animals as well as women and meat or flesh for consumption. How has your work been influenced by Adams and/or similar writing and thinking?*

Hatry: Although my work has not been explicitly influenced by the writing of people like Carol Adams, Donna Haraway, Mary Midgley, et al., and I only came upon their books after having been well embarked upon the bodies of work in which I've employed animal products, I certainly acknowledge many general resonances and food, as it were, for thought, as well as plenty of differences. Even my personal discussions with feminist friends like Catharine A. MacKinnon, Eileen McDonagh, Thyrza Goodeve, and others, served rather to confirm than to determine the direction I am going with my work, though they certainly influenced me.

I believe today that my upbringing, my experience with animals and women, and my observations influenced me most when it comes to the work: already as a child I connected the consumption of flesh with power and maleness (Adams says: "Meat eating is linked with virility, intelligence, courage, and material affluence. The "superior" sex requires and consumes more flesh") and this I experienced at home. My father and little brother got most of the meat. I saw that meat advertisements clearly spoke to male customers or to women who are going to feed these men. Adams says that Anna Kingsford (who happens to be one of the "characters" in *Heads and Tales*), and other early feminists in the 19th century, had already made a connection between flesh eating, domestic violence, and war. She says that these women saw the elimination of violence on the dinner table as a first and necessary step toward eliminating violence on the domestic "front," and ultimately between nations.

On our farm we gave our guard dog meat to make it more aggressive, and I have known people who have attributed episodes of "aggression" in others to an excess of meat in the diet.

In the U.S. 700,000 animals are slaughtered each hour, that is 11,500 each minute for human consumption. I wasn't aware of this crazy statistic as a child, but the fact that we bred these poor creatures in enormous numbers to kill and eat them was clear to me very early on when I accompanied my father to the slaughterhouse and saw hundreds of trucks filled with animals like ours waiting to be unloaded and killed.

I don't know how many people actually read books like those of Carol Adams. For me, an image leads to a faster and more immediate confrontation with these issues, though images do require words to transcend sense and enter consciousness.

Broglio: In 2008 you curated a show called Meat After Meat Joy *which featured a number of artists whose work carries a similar concern along the nexus of identity, gender, power, and the corporeal flesh of humans (mainly women) and animals. The show reveals a striking number of artists working with meat as a medium. Could you explane the threads of similarity among the works, but also the differences: what are the unexpected different directions these artists have taken while using meat as a medium or item of inquiry.*

Hatry: The range of themes that meat as metaphor or meat as meat suggests is, as you might expect, a little narrow, even if extremely powerful. Works that question the meat and leather-goods industries intertwine quite naturally with investigations of the plight of workers, the de-humanization of technology, the perception of women by men, women's perception of themselves, the essence of animal and human life, violence, death, appearance and reality, surface and substance, the predication of life upon death. For me Jana Sterbak's *Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic* remains among the extraordinary and powerful works of contemporary art, simple in many ways though its subject is. And Betty Hirst's self-portrait, "obvious" though it seems to be, is something I cannot look at without feeling that it has said something so essential and yet so elusive that I cannot tear myself away from it. When I conceived the show, the first thing I thought of was Zhang Huan's *My New York*. It's a work that I still find rather perplexing and unsubmissive. There is some fairly overt iconography, but the tension of power and vulnerability embodied in one and the same iconographic component is an effect I find endlessly compelling. I suppose, though, that in the end, the work that I still find most provocative is Carolee Schneemann's *Meat Joy* – it's certainly the work that must have been historically most unexpected. It is ostensibly a work of Dionysian ecstasy, but the point might actually be that all of the blandishments of ecstasy are merely enticements to enslavement. The images of free and independent, "whole" women are inherently undermined by thraldom to meat, to killing and death. Or it may say that freedom is purchased at the cost of killing and death, that the worm is always already in the apple. Neither is very comforting, and the effect is that the work, whose surface seems so empowering, and so powerful in a straightforward sort of way, cannot be appropriated by the powers of any persuasion.

Broglio: I have often thought of meat as the moment when what remained hidden is opened up. The insides become exposed outsides. The depth of form becomes a surface and the depth of being becomes the thin lifelessness of an object exposed. Meat makes the insides visible, and through sight the body becomes knowable. And while meat serves as a means for us to take in the exposed flesh visually and mentally, it also marks the moment when the physical becomes consumable. Do you see these thematics in your work and/or the work of other artists working with animal flesh?

Heide Hatry
Violet, photograph, 2008 © Heide Hatry

Hatry: The dynamic of inner and outer, of appearance and reality, of surface and substance are all integral to my work and have informed it fairly self-consciously. The issues of identity and more recently, of what has been called "iconoplastic deconstruction" (a concept used by Paul Manfred Kaestner, to describe the strategy I've employed in the *Heads and Tales* works as well as in the work in a forthcoming project) are central to much of my work. I want the medium itself, as it gradually reveals itself to the viewer, to shake our common responses to things, to make us reconsider givens that we normally process pre-critically, and to put the viewer in the grasp of a sort of physical aporia, to be forced to conjure with the tension between appearance and reality, to transcend the state of "viewer" and actually experience, and think.

Broglio: It is often noted that representation is a kind of violence and appropriation. Using animal flesh to express identity, gender, power relations, pain, and vulnerability seems like a doubling of the violence. Is this the case or might we be able to see it otherwise?

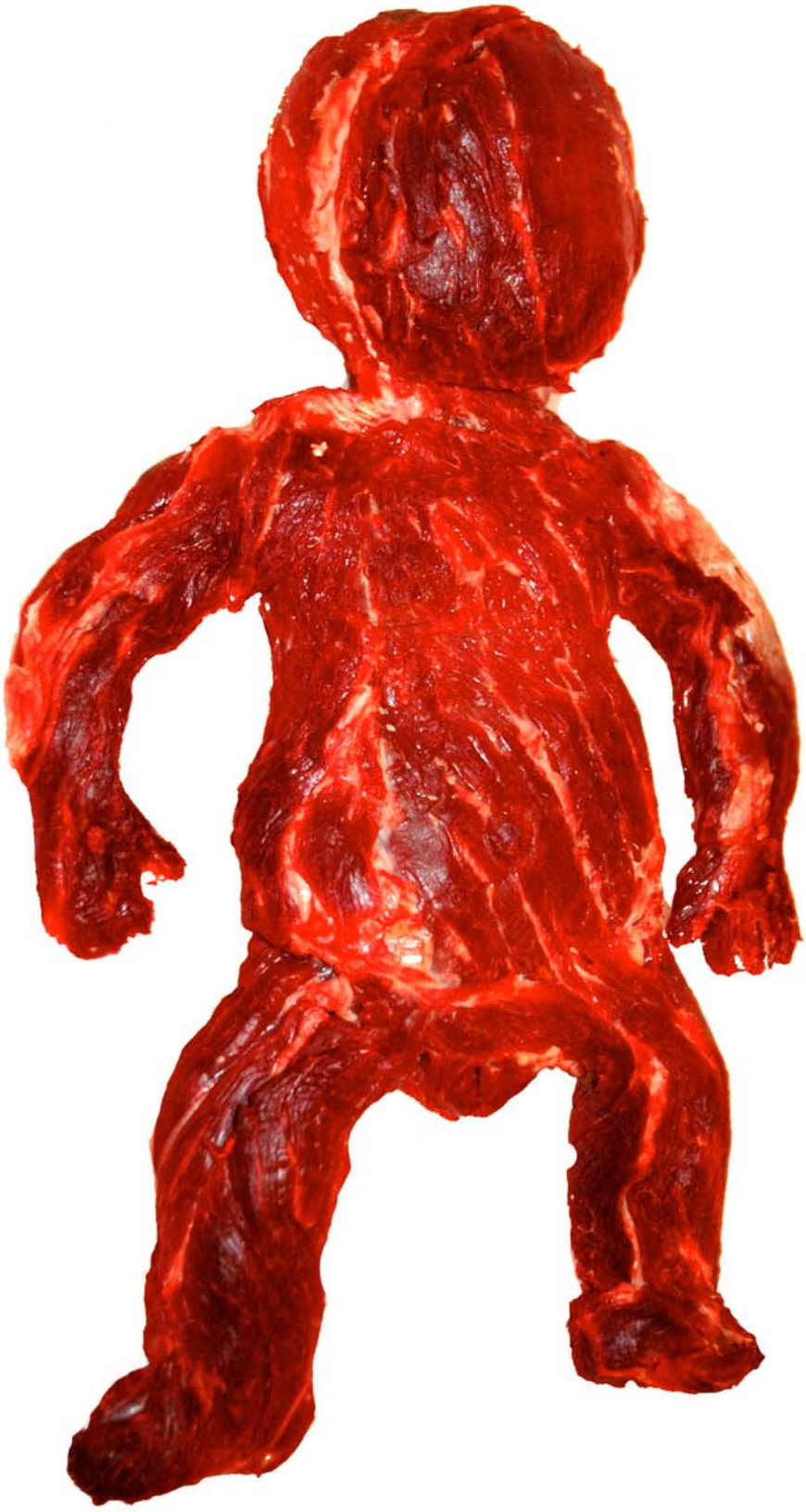
Hatry: Returning to an earlier theme, the victors get to write history, to determine the terms of discourse. It is in that sense that I understand the notion that representation is a form of violence and appropriation. And I see that largely in the sense that John Berger so elegantly delineated it in *Ways of Seeing*. Representation is tendentious; it is untrue, even perfidious, to its subject, in spite of its innocent-sounding simplicity. And it hides its real purpose, even from itself. These are historical acts, whether or not they are epistemological necessities. I've suggested elsewhere that I think that the critical perspective, which I believe is inherent in real art, whether or not it enables us to thwart the totalizing horror, is fundamental and ineradicable. Art is the realm of freedom. Even if I were the killer of the animals whose parts I actually feel have been redeemed in my art, parts that are the waste of an industrialized and unspoken program of slaughter, I can imagine that they could be viewed as sacrificial lambs, whose purpose was the ending of slaughter. So of course I think that there is an alternate possibility and an alternate view.
I sometimes feel that we makers, the farthest thing from whose minds is destruction, are the messengers who are blamed for the bad news.

Broglio: I have covered a range of questions, but I'm sure I have left something out. In closing, is there anything I have overlooked, some blind spot of mine, which you would like to discuss?

Hatry: One important aspect of my work, both conceptually and practically, is that the material I use is, like us, ephemeral. From the beginning of these bodies of work, I researched and experimented on how the material could be preserved. I started out using various chemical solutions (along lines that have already been used for centuries), then I tried taxidermy and, finally, I worked with Gunther von Hagens' technique of plastination, which was the most promising, but still not quite satisfying for my purposes. Even his wonderful technique altered the "living" flesh enough that it became dead in appearance: like any other art material, it looked artificial.

For me the whole joy in working with these life-like substances is that you have the feeling that you are creating life or working with life itself, it is so powerful. So elemental. Of course, it is quite different for the viewer. When most viewers realize that untreated dead animal parts have been used, they are nauseated, or repulsed. I've notice that people need a greater distance to be able to actually look at the work and not run disgustedly towards the gallery exit – losing our chance of communication. That's why I often use photography as an intermediary and present only documentation of the sculptures I've made. It enhances the realistic appearance of the image by setting it in an aesthetic and art historical context that brings with it relatively fixed
visual expectations. Leading the viewer more gently to an engagement with the material and what is at stake in it.

Heide Hatry is a German visual artist and curator. She studied art at various art schools and art history at the University of Heidelberg. She taught at a private art school for 15 years and after she moved to NYC in 2003 she has curated several exhibitions in Germany, Spain and the USA (notably Skin at the Goethe Institut in New York, the Heidelberger Kunstverein and Galeria Tribeca in Madrid, Spain; Out of the Box at Elga Wimmer PCC in NYC; Carolee Schneemann, Early and Recent Work, A Survey at Pierre Menard Gallery in Cambridge, MA; Meat After Meat Joy at Daneyal Mahmood Gallery, NYC; Kate Millett, Oppression and Pleasure at Pierre Menard Gallery in Cambridge, MA and Theresa Byrnes, NEST at Hatry's loft in NYC). She has shown her own work at museums and galleries in those countries as well and edited more than a dozen books and art catalogues. Her book Skin was published by Kehrer Verlag, Heidelberg in 2005 and Heads and Tales by Charta Art Books, Milan/New York in 2009. The solo exhibition Heads and Tales was shown in 2009 in Los Angelos, CA; Cambridge, MA; New York, NY; Heidelberg and Berlin, Germany and will travel to Madrid, Spain, Washington, DC amongst others



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