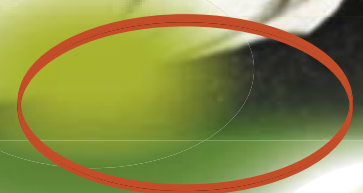
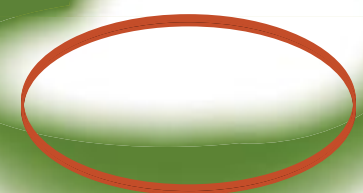
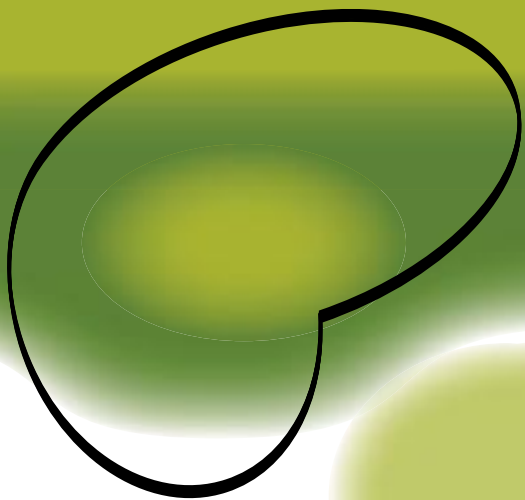
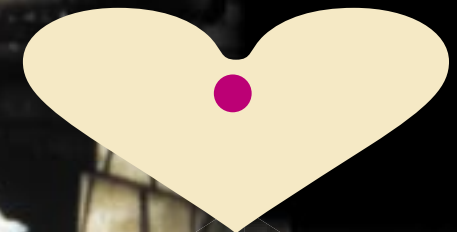
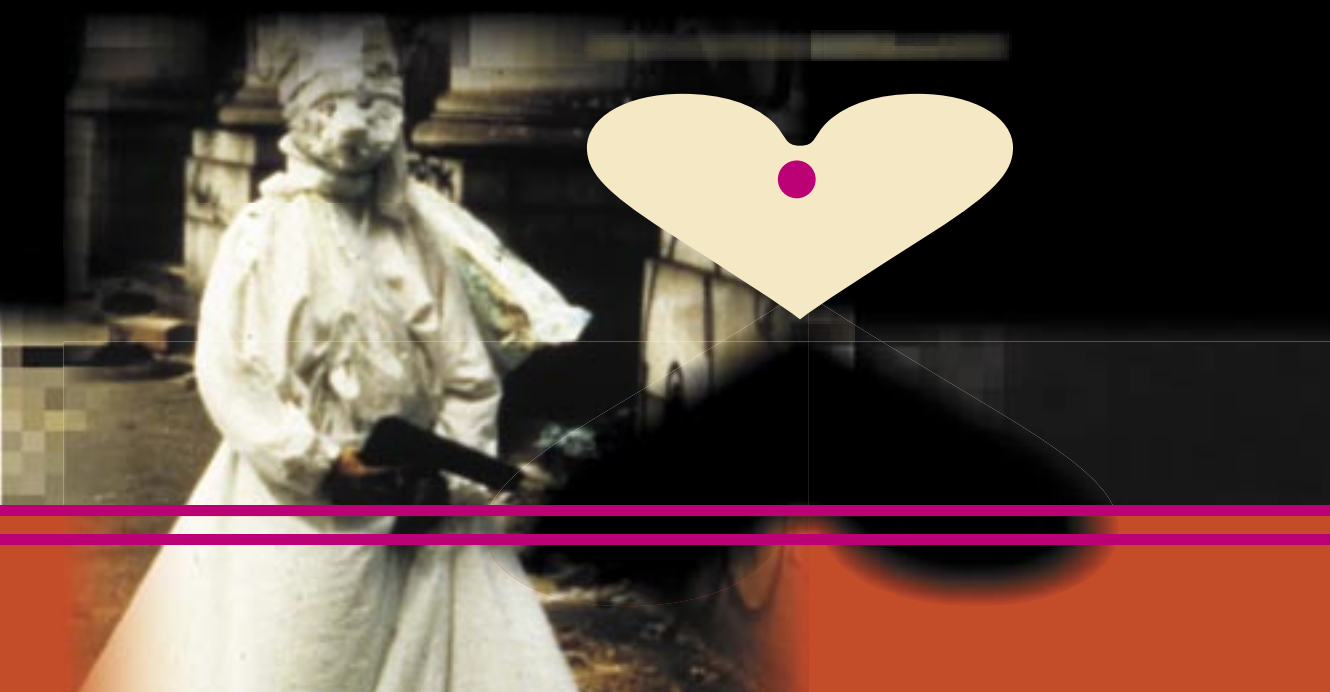




blinded

JANE
GILMOR





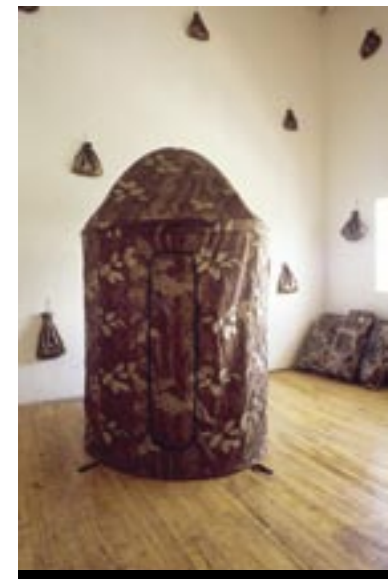
Let us first consider the objective facts of *Blind*, Jane Gilmore's installation at the AIR Gallery, for it is usually advisable to begin with reliable baseline data the better to appreciate the pandemonium set off by this artist's slyly fantastical imagination. The facts are simple enough; Gilmore has created a room-sized installation of fabric and fabricated metal sculptures who trace their ancestry to a peculiarly designed hunting blind. A three-quarter scale recreation of that blind is actually in the room, surrounded by an extraordinary armature of copper and scrim. More on that later. A six minute film of the original blind (with the artist inside) insinuating itself into highly charged religious sites in Portugal—Druidic stone circles, 5000 year-old dolmens and Catholic convents—is playing on a small flat screen monitor on one wall. Circulating helpfully around the room dispensing Kleenex, vacuuming up and even responding to remote control demands from visitors are three smaller motorized versions of the hunting blind. Shining through a slit in the large blind and projected on a nearby column is a video loop of Gilmore's hand endlessly unzipping a zipper in the blind that contains the projector.

As she has over the past thirty years of work, Gilmore has plinked a number of nerves, some raw, some ticklish, and has gently woven our conflicted strands of amusement and discomfort into something strangely moving and profound. The literal meanings of the object begin to give way under the weight of the overburden of information Gilmore has built into the installation. We might notice, for example, that the big blind looks like a big penis, and the smaller mobile blinds look like smaller big penises dwarfed by the grand central blind/penis, which somehow adds poignance to the absurdity of their determined putt-putting about. The visual and verbal punning of the blind penises is characteristic of Gilmore's work, as is her restraint, if that is the right word, in exploiting the issue. Her observation that it is amusing when hunters disguise themselves as fabric penises to blast away at wildlife with their big shotguns is offered to the viewer without an intervening and enervating polemic. The joke is implicit, latent and all the funnier for that.

Her restraint holds, even in regard to another surreal aspect of the blind's history. The duck blind's manufacturer had a specific reason for its product's appearance; the duck blind is designed to be handicap accessible. This information, and the grotesque hilarity of building a contraption that allows the physically challenged to indulge in the maiming and crippling of the odd passing duck is once again acknowledged, but not commented upon. A political critique may be read into the military adventurism and the asymmetrical projection of power implied by these mobile bunkers. Gilmore refuses as always to be trapped by specificity, though, and the satire is entirely latent in its obviousness; present, but not accounted for. It is the viewers' privilege and responsibility to draw their own conclusions.

Gilmore in fact, has no interest in condemning the hunters at all or in encouraging us to laugh at them. She is far too sophisticated and generous a spirit for such smallness of vision and such strategic predictability. It must be said in fact that the whole scene is rather jaunty, and we cannot help but be swept up in the slapstick spirit of the thing, checked by the note of dread and caution supplied by the videotape of the hand in its endless Sisyphusian pursuit of the completed unzip. That systemic failure of the hand to complete its journey condemns the entire endeavor to an endless limbo. Everything, and everyone (including, crucially, the artist herself) is caught in a permanent vicious cycle, a perverse closed loop of good will, bloodlust, vanity and pure brilliant stupidity that seems close to the core of Gilmore's take on the human condition.

The animating principles behind this project, as they have been for so much of Gilmore's work, are the artist's purity of intent and her complete lack of condescension in approaching her loaded, sometimes politically combustible subjects. The authentically ingenuous character of Gilmore's work distinguishes her from so much contemporary discourse in art. She is that rare artist who is not content to merely adopt a facile political position and is not content to rely purely on irony and bile to ingratiate herself with her audience. She manages to celebrate the strange expression of humanity inherent in the handicapped hunter's blind and she even shares in it.



Blind, details of installation, fabricated metal, handpainted fabric, video, robotic vacuum cleaners, large structure 78" x 62" x 58", Rick Edleman collaborator

Top to bottom: Wheelchair accessible hunting blind in artist's studio with fabricated metal bags and pillows 2002 / *Extend Operation*: performance-tableau series, Portugal, 2003: Dining room at Conventinho do Bom Jesus, Valverde / Chapel at Conventinho / Cromeleques dos Almendres (Neolithic stone circle), Guadalupe

This inherent decency peppered by a mischievous and subversive streak a mile wide is key to Gilmor's nature as an artist, both conceptually and esthetically. The project itself embodies the spirit of true collaborative art. Gilmor was reluctant to cover up the armature her collaborator Rick Edleman built to her somewhat vague specifications for an entirely different project. "It was so beautiful..." Gilmor writes, "...he was supposed to make something I could cover with fabric though not transparent – but I couldn't bear to cover it because it was gorgeous and not at all my usual awkward eccentric form – eventually I invented the interior and the small ones and the whole little scenario."

Gilmor puts herself where her art is, and her art as a consequence goes far beyond mere diatribe and becomes the stuff of a life. In 1976, for example, she entered her cat in the Eleventh Annual All-American Glamour Kitty Pageant, a cat beauty contest sponsored by a kitty litter company and modeled on the Miss America Pageant. Her good faith efforts were rewarded with a trip to Miami Beach as a national finalist. Once there, she created a video that documented the bizarre but touching parades, cabaret performances and competitions that preoccupied the subculture of which she was a somewhat marginal member: people who really really love their cats.

Gilmor continued to travel back and forth along the human-cat continuum for years following. She appeared in costume as an archetypal cat goddess in ancient and modern ruin sites ripe with historic associations (the Temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens, Luxor's Temple of Karnak, The Manhattan Bridge), reclaiming them for the female psyche in us all.

The film of Gilmor and the blind also touches on the physical interaction of the artist and her work: In recent years the artist has begun to literally put herself where her art is. She has created work that she can inhabit, such as the current hunting blind, or wear, such as in *The Architecture of Fatigue*, a 2002 piece in which the artist, encased in a slumping obelisk, reached out and touched unsuspecting gallery visitors.

Even more to the point, she has created an ongoing body of collaborative work with underprivileged adults and children over the course of many years using a variety of drawing, writing, performative and installation techniques to help bring suppressed stories and opinions to a wider audience. She is actually giving voice to the disenfranchised, instead of simply arguing that the disenfranchised should have a voice.

The seamless connection between Jane Gilmor's life as a teacher and activist and her artistic practice nourishes both and enriches us all.

Matt Freedman

Matt Freedman is an artist and writer living in Queens



Great Goddesses: Kitty's Apparition of her Greatness, photo tableau, Temple of Apollo, Delphi, Greece 1977



Great Goddesses: Do You Have a Light? Temple of Athena Pronaë, Delphi, Greece 1978



Great Goddesses, Temple of Olympian Zeus, Athens, Greece 1978



The All-American Glamour Kitty's Apparition of Her Greatness, Pomukale, Turkey 1977



Great Goddesses: Do You Have a Light? Temple of Athena Pronaë, Delphi, Greece 1978



Large image: *Terrorist Kitty with Pinocchio near the Manhattan Bridge* (with World Trade Towers on the horizon) photo-tableau series, New York City 1986

Top inserts:
Left: Ms. Glitter in her Square Dance Dress for the Kitty Fashion Parade, Eleventh Annual All-American Glamour Kitty Pageant, Miami Beach 1976

Right: The Artist and Ms. Kitty Glitter in their state costumes, Finals, *Eleventh Annual All-American Glamour Kitty Pageant*, Hotel Fontainebleau, Miami Beach, photo: Frank Riehl 1976

Bottom inserts:
Left: *Table invitation for The Eleventh Annual All-American Glamour Kitty Pageant 1976*

Right: *Terrorist Kitty at the Entrance to the Manhattan Bridge*, photo/tableau, New York City 1986.



Clockwise from above top left:
Beds, installation detail, Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha, wood, text on aluminum, water, steam, cabbages, found notes and objects, each bed is 60"x24"x36" 1993

The Architecture of Migration, two details, Banff International Center for the Arts, Canada, wearable building, performer interacts with viewer through touch, voice and video, detail size 58"x25"x25", wood, text on metal, video/audio, artist's books, 2001

The Architecture of Fatigue, inhabitant interacts with viewer through touch, voice, and video, 84"x30"x30", wood, text on metal, fabric, lights, video, artist's books, 2002

The Architecture of Fatigue, detail, wood, text on metal, fabric, artist's book, 40"x22"x23" 2002

Ireland, wood, moss, Kleenex, 8"x10"x2" 1993

Above left: James, homeless participant, *The Big Issue*, community-based project, London, U.K. 1992

Above right: Jackie with her message, *Windows '95* participant, University of Iowa Hospitals, 1995

Left: *Jack's Weeds*, found note embossed in aluminum 6.5"x 9" 1985

Below: *Windows '95*, walk-in wood structure covered with text on metal foil and embedded video images created by seriously-ill low-income children and their families at The University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City, 84"x 60"x 60" 1996, collection of The Des Moines Art Center



JANE ELLEN GILMOR

<http://www.mtmercy.edu/depts/jgilmor.htm>

EDUCATION:

M.F.A. Intermedia/Painting, M.A. Painting/Printmaking,
The University of Iowa School of Art, Iowa City 1975-1977
Graduate study, The School of The Art Institute of Chicago 1969-70
B.S. Textile Design, Iowa State University, Ames 1969

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Blind, A.I.R. Gallery, New York, New York 2005
A Semester at Sea, Maharishi International University, Fairfield, Iowa 2003
Slow Dip, Steady Drip, Artemisia Gallery, Chicago 2000
Olson-Larsen Galleries, Des Moines 1999, 1997, 1995, 1993, 1991, 1989
BedHeadRoom, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls 1996
BedShoeHome, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art 1994
WhereHomels, Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha 1993
Mid-Career Retrospective, Museum of Art, Waterloo, Iowa 1991
Our Bodies Worry Us, Artemisia Gallery, Chicago 1989
Jane Gilmor: This isn't Easy, Real Art Ways, Hartford, CT. 1988
Jane Gilmor: Roadside Mysteries, Palazzo Vagnotti, Cortona, Italy 1986
Jane Gilmor: Recent Work, N.A.M.E. Gallery, Chicago 1984
Jane Gilmor, Augustana College, Davenport, Iowa 1980
The 1976 All-American Glamour Kitty, Coe College, Cedar Rapids 1977

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Extend Operation, Olson-Larsen Galleries, Des Moines 2005
Ten Artists, New Work, Olson Larsen Galleries, Des Moines 2004
Visions of Labor (@workinthefield), Saint Xavier University, Chicago 2003
New Space New Work, A.I.R. Gallery, NYC 2002
UnBound: Reshaping Artists Books, Henry Street Settlement, NYC 2001
Outside New York, A.I.R. Gallery, NYC 2001
Colors of Conscience, CSPS LegionArts, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 2001
Iowa Artists, Des Moines Art Center, curator, Janet Kardon 1999
Fall Group Invitational, A.I.R. Gallery, NYC 1988-2000
New Work, Olson-Larsen Galleries, Des Moines 1989, '91, '95, '98, 2002
Wisdom Pass, with Sandra Taylor, St. Paul History Center 1998
From Body into Being, cur. Michael Danoff, Des Moines Art Center 1997
Invitational, Galerie Rufino Tomayo, Oaxaca, Mexico 1996
In the Spirit of ..., University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 1996
Iowa Artists, Des Moines Art Center 1996, 1993, 1990, 1974-88,
Purchase Award 1996, Best in Sculpture 1990, 1988, Younker Award 1977
Eight Artists, Dennison University, Ohio 1992
Faculty Exhibit, University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City 1988, 1990
Four Sculptors, University of Minnesota, Morris 1990
Ten NEA Recipients, (traveling) Minnesota Museum of Art, St. Paul 1986-88
Midwest Invitational, Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City 1988
Sculpture Invitational, Texas A&M University, College Station 1987, 1990
The National Sculpture Exhibition, Carnegie Arts Center, Lexington, Kentucky 1987
Invitational, California State University Museum, Long Beach 1985
Michel Champendal Gallery, Rouen, France 1985
Let's Play House, Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, NYC 1986
Ten Sculptors, Florida State University, Tallahassee 1986
National Women's Exhibit, Louisiana World Exposition, New Orleans 1984
Ten Women Artists, Connecticut College, New London 1982
Invitational, Franklin Furnace, NYC 1982
Jellicle Cats, Wing Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. 1982
The Animal Images: Contemporary Objects and the Beast,
The Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, D.C. 1981
Art Fabric, F.I.T. Galleries, New York 1980
In a Small Frame, Olbrick Gallery, Kassel, Germany 1980
Young Americans '77, Museum of Contemporary Crafts, NYC 1977-79

PERFORMANCE /INSTALLATION AND COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS

Blind, performance/tableaux, Anta Grande do Zambujiero (dolmen) and
Cromeleques dos Almendres (stone circle) Valverde, Portugal 2003-04
Work-Shift, community-based site activation in abandoned meat packing plant,
collaboration with Community Architexts, Chicago, Cedar Rapids 2000-01



Images top to bottom:
Blind, detail of installation, two-hour loop
video projection, 70" h x 35" w, 2005

The artist and the artist's studio in
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 2005

Wisdom Pass, with Sandra Taylor, HealthEast Oncology, St. Paul 1997
Bed/Shoe/Home, YWCA, Madge Phillips Center Womens' Shelter and
The Museum of Art, Cedar Rapids 1996.
Windows '95, University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Iowa City 1995
The Big Issue Project, London, U.K. 1994
Homelessdrawinghome, Bemis Center for Art, Omaha 1993
Home is Where? Davenport Museum of Art 1991
Manhattan Bridge/Bowery Project, New York City 1986
Tabernacle Shelter Workshops, Venice, CA. 1987
Federal City Shelter Workshops, Washington, D.C., 1988
Great Goddesses: Do you have a Light? performance/tableaux Temple of Olympian Zeus, Athens;
Temple of Apollo, Temple of Athena Pronaé, Delphi, Greece 1977-81
Great Goddesses: Excuse Me! Temple of Karnak, Luxor, Egypt 1978
Finalist: 1976 All-American Glamour Kitty Pageant, video and performance event,
Miami Beach, Florida 1976

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS:

Fulbright Senior Scholar/Research Fellowship, Evora University, Portugal 2003
NEA Creation/Presentation Project Grant to Community Architexts for *Work-Shift* 2001
Banff International Center Artist Residency Fellowship, Banff, Canada 2000
McKnight Foundation/Intermedia Arts Interdisciplinary Fellowship 1997
NEA Diverse Visions Interdisciplinary Project Grant, Minneapolis 1996
Delphina Foundation Residency Fellowship, London, U.K. 1995
Bemis Center for Contemporary Art Residency Fellowship, Omaha 1993
Tyrone Guthrie Centre Fellowship Residency, Newbliss, Ireland 1992
MacDowell Colony Residency, Peterborough, New Hampshire 1988
Ragdale Foundation Residency, Chicago 1988, 1990
Virginia Center for the Arts Residency Fellowship, Sweet Briar, VA. 1989
National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship Grant, New Media/ Sculpture 1986
University of Georgia Cortona Program, Artist in Residence, Cortona, Italy 1986

PUBLICATIONS AND REVIEWS:

Jane Gilmor: *BLIND*, catalogue, A.I.R. Gallery, NYC 2005
"Of Tongue Scrapers and Lung Trimmers," by Margarite Perret, *Little Village*, Aug. 2002
Beautiful Necessity: The Art and Meaning of Womens Atars, K.Turner, Thames/Hudson 2000
An Uncommon Vision: The Des Moines Art Center Collection, Hudson Hills Press, NYC 1998
Contemplation: Five Installations, catalogue, essay by I. Michael Danoff, Des Moines Art Center, 1996
From Body to Being: Reflections on the Human Image, catalogue, I. Michael Danoff, Deborah Leveton,
Des Moines Art Center 1997
"Everyday Art of the Late Cenozoic," Bill Radl, *Tractor: Iowa Journal of Art Culture*, Winter 1996
The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970's, History and Impact, ed. Broude and
Gerrard, Abrams, NY 1994
"Iowa Artists," J. Levin, *The New Art Examiner*, Jan. 1994
The Reflowering of the Goddess, Gloria Orenstein, Pantheon, 1992
"Reviews," David McCracken, *Chicago Tribune*, October 20, 1989
OVERLAY: Contemporary Art and the Art of Pre-History, Lucy Lippard, Random House, 1983
"Jane Gilmor at N.A.M.E. ", N. Hamel, *The New Art Examiner*, Nov. 1984
"Reviews: Young Americans", *The New York Times*, Sun, May 18, 1980
"The All-American Glamour Kitty," by J. Storm, *Copenhagen Daily*, Nov 15, 1977

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha
First National Bank Collection, Chicago, curated by John Neff
Delphina Foundation, London
Museum of Contemporary Crafts, New York
Betty Saar, artist, Los Angeles
Gracie Mansion, Art Dealer, New York
Los Angeles County Museum, Library
Principal Financial Group, Des Moines, Iowa
Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Newbliss, Ireland
Salvatore Virgile Collection, Paris
The Des Moines Art Center
Cedar Rapids Museum of Art
American Medical Association, Chicago

TEACHING:

Professor of Art, Mount Mercy College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa.1974-present
Visiting Professor, Graduate Intermedia, University of Iowa, Iowa City 1988-89