

stains on other prostrate imagined bodies. In some cases the body is reduced to a singular organ (the phallus divorced from its utility and rendered a site of the forlorn, of the could have been, or perhaps the once was). The resulting shapes become both voids and vessels, capable of eliciting and containing meanings applied by the viewer's perception while also appearing as though they hold nothing. This affects a kind of refusal: enclosed spaces incurred upon; efforts made to defuse the power of those incursions or to reclaim the enclosed space by disconnecting and enclosing the shapes that have incurred—setting up an invasion, a defense, and the question of repair on the cellular level. We are called upon to facilitate movement from the periphery, bringing what has been discarded, broken, and forgotten to a position of that which is adored, displayed, consecrated. In its variance of scale and richness of almost-repetition, Taylor's installation creates a moving taxonomy out of the entropy of life, sex, and death.

Adornments and stage properties proliferate in Josh Faught's video and wall piece *You Can't Live Scared* and floor piece *Live to Tell*: tinsel garlands, draped macramé, ancient bathtub against bordello wall-treatment, transparent curtains, and spidery house plants—all suggest a faded elegance or glamour that was never recognizable in conventional terms; the gal's still got it, even as we are tempted to think she doesn't—or she does in a way that explodes the familiarity of the notion of “having it,” that thing that makes her (sex) intelligible. Misplaced and jarring voices, faux faded strip-work, errant crochet, or the pointed absence and reappearance of the subject alchemize benign moments into the profoundly strange. Bathing, dressing, looking into a mirror, otherwise quotidian and unremarkable, are transformed by the seeming dysfunction of the figure who mismouths the graphic fantasy, who fumbles with his genitals, who displaces and replaces his glasses, who floats in and out of the tub involuntarily. Opposite this, the nostalgia of crochet work tagged with a single sloganeering button is both response to an unnamed fear and the relic and totem of a once simpler comfort. Context in these works encourages the viewer to imply a dubitable body, but which body? Is it the work that unsettles you? Or is it you and your constitution of discourses which is unsettling? Faught suggests that a world of emotion and recognition exists within the spaces implied by the presence of our lithe, mutable bather, and the queer expanses of textiles which are spread out, available.

The body (and by extension, the self) is constantly dispossessed of the wholeness, the singularity, the insularity, the fixed untroubled identity argued to be the hallmarks of acceptability and functionality. Ultimately the works contained in *Impossible Violence* argue for this reality to be valued. This acknowledgment and act of the self's dispossession is not only erotic, but also, crucially, productive of an ethic that engages and depends on the existence of difference in the other, and our ability to recognize it.

by **Sara Jane Stoner with Joshua David Riegel**

Brooklyn, 2007

Hyde Park**ARTCENTER**

5020 South Cornell Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60615 773.324.5520 www.hydeparkart.org

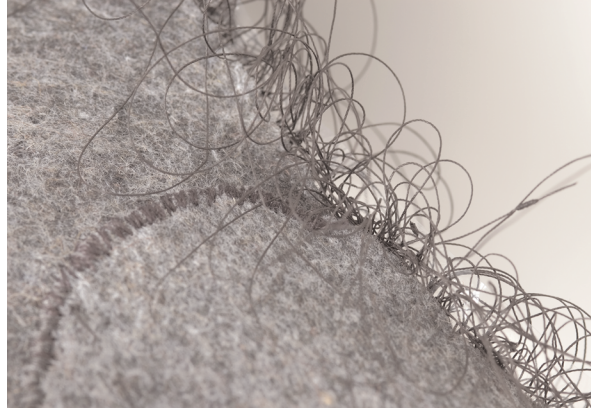
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Installation view



Christine LoFaso
Maquiladora (Sweatshop Worker) Series, Mayra, 2007
 Jacquard-woven video stills; cotton
 and gold metallic yarns
 32 x 42 inches



Judith Brotman
 Detail, *Objects for Perfect Strangers*, 2007
 Felt, wire, thread and plastic
 Dimensions variable

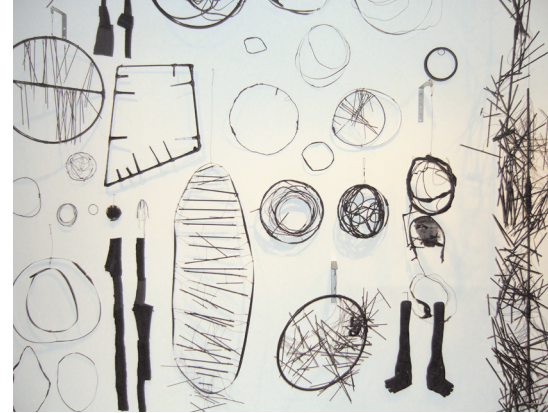
Knowing Me Knowing You

By not pursuing satisfaction and by letting the question remain open, even enduring, we let the other live, since life might be understood as precisely that which exceeds any account we might give of it.

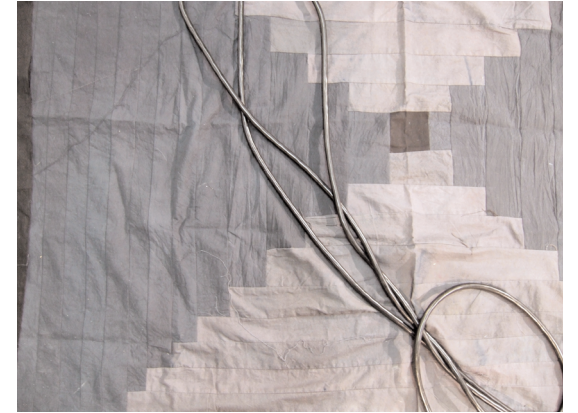
—Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself*

One of the greatest challenges inherent in the encounter between self and other is feeling, trusting, and believing that which we do not already know. The familiar, established, and public reinforce their own claims to truth and authenticity via their accessibility and readiness to be recognized. Such recognizability grants a false and reified realness to performances, images, artifacts, and people as subject to construction and emendation as those considered non-referential or patently artificial. The works contained in *Impossible Violence* suggest that encounters between self and other inevitably become sites of both contest and context as “you” and “I” struggle not only to understand one another but to formulate and share articulations of ourselves.

An image, unlike the person it depicts who may be constrained by class or national boundaries, can travel physically or digitally—accomplishing encounters, even confrontations, otherwise impossible. Christine LoFaso’s *Arnold/Larry King Live* and *Maquiladora (Sweatshop Worker) Series* pairs woven images of Guatemalan maquiladoras and California’s then candidate for governor, Arnold Schwarzenegger. The terms of each group’s contribution to that confrontation jar and mingle and repel, almost like oil and water. Like this archetypal duel between liquids, an inherent hierarchy is both present and denied by the work’s medium and how it figures into a history of decorative tapestry. LoFaso’s use of silver casts a kind of cinematic sheen and visual pun over the aspiring governor, suggesting the cultural capital derived from his work as an actor. As he is confronted with accusations of sexual misconduct, his face is frozen in various postures of defense: outright anger, rapture, dubiousness, and straight-talking indignance. Gendered, economic and governmental forces seem bound up and hidden in the violence of political personal



Fraser Taylor
 Detail, *Densities and Reflections*, 2007
 Multimedia installation
 126 x 528 inches



Josh Faught
 Detail, *Live to Tell*, 2007
 Recorded audio with hand dyed fabric, thread, guitar
 amplifier plaster, Xerox transfer, hand-dyed jute twine and
 chicken wire; dimensions variable

ity. The sweatshop workers, dramatically recontextualized in gold jacquard, raise questions of how an unfamiliar face expresses truth, and how individuals become valued. Implicit in the effort at identification LoFaso’s work inspires (we are bound to these women, to Arnold, in their struggle for intelligibility, for recognition) is our obligation to investigate how their stories, obfuscated and partial, inform and grant meaning to our own incomplete stories, warranting our responsibility to the other.

The use of handcraft and textile practices in *Impossible Violence* solicit and interrogate the known by invoking discourses of meaning which manipulate knowledge production and value judgment in the context of self and other. Judith Brotman’s structured yet punctured industrial felt constructions titled *Objects for Perfect Strangers* drape and pose on the wall: bolstered, restrained and restraining, these forms appear impotent only in that they seem to imply that they’ve had a previous life outside the frame of the gallery, that they exist in the aftermath of both a grand battle and one decidedly more intimate. Where there might be a hard architecture defining space our eyes slide toward a melting, a compromise inherent to the work’s materials that recognizes the numerous discursive frames laying claim to its shape (the anatomical, the martial, the sexual, the necrotic) and bends and breaks these frames to make the event of the viewer’s encounter with the piece intensely personal. Key to this intimacy is the fabric’s accomplishment of a body’s permeability, an apparatus’s function, a reptilian molting. Against the strength and woundable separability of the felt, the thread appears as a spontaneous growth or rogue logic, contributing to and contradicting the construction. What results is a giving up of form even as it is articulated, contesting any strict differentiation between interior and exterior—the tension between the hardness of armor or skeleton and the tenderness of the flesh.

In Fraser Taylor’s *Densities and Reflections*, meaning is conferred upon the body through the slippage between its figuration and abstraction; the allure of assignment establishes a hierarchy of visual signification along a lateral axis. The body’s value is contested within a geography of found objects, stitched and reflective surfaces, densities in black, pure formal inspirations, and