

# adrian piper reflections



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## acknowledgements

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## adrian piper: reflections 1967-1987

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# introduction

jane farver

The Alternative Museum is pleased to present this retrospective exhibition by Adrian Piper. The works in this exhibit span twenty years, and testify to the remarkable intelligence and commitment of this artist. Early works in this show reflect her involvement with conceptual art in the late 1960's and early 1970's, and her contribution to its development. Adrian Piper's pursuit of abstract thought, use of herself as an art object, and sociological investigations link her to other conceptual artists such as Sol Lewitt, Vito Acconci, and Hans Haacke. In the most recent works in the exhibition, she has returned to making drawings, incorporating in them many of the elements she has developed throughout her life's work.

The prevailing issue in Adrian Piper's work is the relationship of the self to the other. She generally expresses this concern through works of self-investigation or self-transformation, which relate to real-life political events, in which she explores the relation of the self to the other on a global scale. Her self-investigation pieces have continually led to new works of self-transformation, which have led to further self-investigations. Sometimes Adrian Piper refers to her autobiographic self; at other times she refers to "the self" in more universal terms.

In her early self investigation pieces, Piper moved away from the art object as commodity to create conceptual artworks from her own perceptions. The *Hypothesis* series (1968-1969) and *Food for the Spirit* (1971) were examples of these self-inquiries in which she precisely recorded and analyzed her activities and surroundings at given times, giving confirmation to her own reality. After the U.S. invasion of Cambodia, Kent State and Jackson State, and the beginnings of the women's movement, Adrian Piper moved even farther away from the material art object. Using herself as her subject, she took her art into the streets in the first of the self-transformation pieces. Many women artists have used self-transformation in their art;

Eleanor Antin, Jill Kroesen and Cindy Sherman are just a few. Women are good at self-transformation as most perform this task every morning with clothes and makeup, hiding defects and creating an image to present to the world. Adrian Piper's self-transformations do not, however, hide her, but serve to make her more transparent to us. They reflect her inner convictions and her intentions.

Adrian Piper's *Catalysis* series (1971) were experiments in xenophobia, fear of the foreign or strange. In these unannounced street performances, she grotesquely transformed herself to elicit reactions from her unsuspecting "Viewers," her fellow pedestrians and subway passengers. In her *Untitled Performance at Max's Kansas City*, a demonstration of her desire for autonomy, she wore a blind fold, earplugs, gloves, and noseplugs in a symbolic attempt to avoid being co-opted into the art consciousness of the day. In time, these self-transformations consolidated into a single art persona, the *Mythic Being*, who appeared in many of her works from 1972-1981. The *Mythic Being* self-transformation, a young, angry, third world male, allowed Piper to investigate the male 'other' in her own personality; as well as to experience society's indifferent or fearful reactions to this type of individual, and act out resulting feelings of alienation and hostility.

From 1978-1980, she created the autobiographical *Political Self-Portraits Nos. 1, 2, and 3*, which incorporated Piper's own difficult experiences as a mixed race child learning to operate between her Black Harlem neighborhood and the private, mostly White school she was sent to by her parents. She describes her confused identity in *Political Self-Portrait No. 2*, "...I would never simply say [I was] Black because I felt silly and as though I was co-opting something, i.e., the Black Experience, which I haven't had. I've had the Gray Experience."

Piper had also in the late 1970's and early 1980's, created a number of performance art works and large scale installation pieces in which she assumed the position of the other as viewer. In the installation pieces,

which have political content, Piper's self transformations are present as disembodied, sometimes ironic, voices on audio tape. It is important to remember that these self-transformations are not like theatrical roles: the viewer must remain aware of the artist behind the persona. Even when Adrian Piper assumes the persona of an apathetic (*Art for the Artworld Surface Pattern*, 1976), or racist other (*Four Intruders Plus Alarm Systems*, 1980), irony affirms our sense of the real content of the works. Piper also uses self-transformation as self-affirmation, as in *Self-Portrait Exaggerating My Negroid Features* (1981), a drawing in which she enhances those physical characteristics that reflect her Black ancestry, challenging the viewer to see those traits in her. The work also reflects her decision to proudly claim her Black cultural heritage. Subsequent investigations of her cultural heritage became subject matter for new works.

Her performance *Funk Lessons*, focused on the fact that most of the major achievements of Black culture have been appropriated by White artists and musicians who have given little or no credit to their sources. Culturally inaccessible to most Whites, funk music and dancing are among the few Black art forms not yet appropriated, and were used by Piper in *Funk Lessons* to conduct experiments in overcoming xenophobia. Utilizing her real life experiences as a teacher and musicologist, she engaged the audience in funk dancing as a communal means of self-transcendence.

Adrian Piper also examines the self/other relationship in terms of assimilation, asking how society can integrate without either the self or the other being consumed in the process. She asks how we can avoid the 'Gray Experience'. *A Tale of Avarice and Poverty* (1985) is the narrative history of two branches of a Black family, with members of one branch passing for White. The piece tells of the pain alienation caused by unacknowledged kinship. The self and the other, here the same, separate and come to fear each other because of artificial social barriers. In *Portrait* (1983), Piper links unacknowledged kinship on a global scale to the threat of nuclear holo-

caust. The text for this piece states, "We do not know ourselves very well. Often we feel assaulted by unacceptable thoughts and impulses, and move to suppress them; or shamed by unacceptable physical features and work to remove them; or threatened by others' unacceptable behavior or appearance, and so attack or reject them. We view these things as alien enemies, not as the familiar ingrained parts of ourselves they are. And so we are constantly moved to destroy and reconstitute ourselves in conformity with our truncated and distorted self image." Piper is not telling us that there are any ultimate solutions to the self/other dichotomies; these keep coming to us in different guises and situations. Her individual works may resolve or come to terms with specific aspects of the self/other relationship, but myriad other aspects then present themselves for investigation.

In her most recent works, the *Vanilla Nightmares* series, Piper makes drawings using selected *New York Times* pages, most of which feature articles on South African apartheid. She transforms these pages by adding to their original layouts figures arranged in confrontational, erotic, or subjugated poses. Although these drawings seem to be a departure from Adrian Piper's earlier works, relationships can be drawn. Is she using those objectively reported *New York Times* articles about "Constructive Engagement" with South Africa as another of her ironic voices? Is the *Mythic Being* included in the groups of figures, multiplied and resurfaced, appropriating the *New York Times* as his own media vehicle to speak for those rendered voiceless by South African censorship? Are those figures Adrian Piper's renderings of stereotypical fantasies others projects onto her? In these new transformation pieces she continues her ongoing investigation of the rights and responsibilities of both the self and the other. Today, when political events echo the 1960's and the art world is taken up with neo-conceptualist commodities, artists as concerned and committed as Adrian Piper are needed more than ever.

Jane Farver  
Curator

## adrian piper: talking to us

clive phillpot

Adrian Piper has many selves: the musician, the dancer, the artist, the performer, the writer, the philosopher, and the teacher. These selves are, or were, potentially coexistent, and so, given the different directions in which they might separately have led, and given also her mixed racial background and her maturation in a feminist climate, it is hardly surprising that one of the first priorities for Adrian Piper was the establishment of her own social and artistic identity.

After her exposure to minimalism during her first years as an art student, and her consequent work in this manner, she moved, with the times, towards conceptual art. It would seem that while Piper's mind was fully engaged in the logic of such work, it did not in itself provide the means to fully engage with her experience, beyond the documentation of aspects of her life, as in the *Hypothesis* series.

Soon after graduating from art school Piper began to perform the [Catalysis](#) street performances, some of which, through abrasive and caricatured behavior, could be said to have involved questions of identity, as well as inter-personal relations. But more crucial for Adrian Piper was *Food for the Spirit*, a private "performance" begun in the following year, 1971, after commencing full-time study of philosophy. *Food for the Spirit* represents an interior voyage which led to a radical stripping away of her acquired identity. Indeed, she became so involved with abstract ideas through reading Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* that she reached the point of needing to reassure herself that she existed at all. She confirmed her existence both by looking in the mirror, and by recording her image on film and her voice on tape. *Talking to Myself* is the title of her illuminating autobiographical book of 1974 which discusses this period of her life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Adrian Piper—*Talking to Myself: the Ongoing Autobiography of an Art Object*. English/French edition: Hamburg: Hossman and Brussels: MTL, 1974. English/Italian edition: Bari: Marilena Bonomo, 1975.

In 1972, the year after this intense, definitive experience, Adrian Piper experimented with an alternative identity, a male alter-ego that she termed the [Mythic Being](#). A narrative work of 1974, entitled *I/You (Her)*<sup>2</sup> graphically represents the transformation of the sweet, girlish Piper, who could pass for White, into the disturbing image of a Black man, with afro, moustache, and shades. The visual progression also underscores the evolving text about the painful disintegration of a friendship, while epitomizing the polarities of male and female, passivity and assertiveness, Black and White, with which Piper was grappling.

The Mythic Being is intended to represent a character as offensive as those that were created in the *Catalysis* performances, with the crucial difference that he specifically introduces the topic of race into Piper's work. Furthermore, he is not just an eccentric or marginal figure in society, but a representative of the youthful, potentially-aggressive, non-White male underclass.

In 1975 during her first full year in the doctoral program in philosophy at Harvard, Piper made a series of posters in which the Mythic Being became her mouthpiece. The presentation of herself as a slim young Black or Hispanic man accents the philosophical monologue on identity *A 109* (Kant); the interpersonal narrative *Let's Talk*; and, in particular, [It Doesn't Matter](#); in which the now macho figure takes command of the situation. Finally, in this sequence of works, the Mythic Being is identified with a White person's negative image of blacks in [I Embody Everything You Most Hate and Fear](#).

While the Mythic Being was to emerge again later, notably in the multi-layered performance [It's Just Art](#) in 1980, which was an over-rich amalgam of past and future elements of Piper's work, the conclusion of the Mythic Being poster works, and her first "self imposed hibernation from the art

<sup>2</sup> *I/You (Her)* published in: Alan Sondheim, editor *Individuals: Post Movement Art in America*. New York: Dutton, 1977.

world" in 1976 and 1977, mark a point after which her concerns bifurcate into the exploration of a more strictly biographical self-identity on the one hand, and an interest in the identities of the viewers of her work on the other.

The separating out of Piper's identity in her art work is epitomized by [Political Self-Portrait](#) numbers 1, 2 and 3; *Race, Sex and Class*, 1978-1980, in which she presents memories of some of the key childhood incidents that helped to establish three crucial aspects of her understanding of who she was. These verbal descriptions of Piper's own experiences are coupled with personal images, but have a more than personal resonance; the factual presentation suggests the attainment of self-understanding and a clear identity. [Self-Portrait Exaggerating My Negroid Features](#), made a year later, in 1981, does not contradict this conclusion, since it seems simply to be confirming and exploring the identity that Piper had established for herself.

In the period after she finished her philosophical course work at Harvard, and after her "hibernation", one of Piper's first works to be exhibited in 1977 was an environmental installation: [Art for the Artworld Surface Pattern](#). This is also the first work to deal directly with the viewer, without the interposition of the artist herself. The work was preceded by the poster *This is not the Documentation of a Performance*,<sup>3</sup> a few months earlier, in which Piper altered the slogan on one of the placards carried by people protesting eviction of Hispanic families in a photograph, so that it read: "This is not a Performance". In *Art for the Artworld Surface Pattern* the internal walls of the rectangular environment were papered with press photos and captions from newspapers, representing recent international, and particularly Third World, disasters and injustices, which were then overlaid by the stenciled legend, in red, which stated that these were "Not a

<sup>3</sup> Reproduced in Lucy Lippard, "Caring: Five Political Artists," *Studio International* 193, No. 987 (Summer 1978), 197-207.

Performance". But the final element in the environment is Piper's voice greeting the spectator with a first-person monologue representing the thoughts of an informed art world visitor momentarily struggling to understand the purpose of the work, then growing increasingly annoyed with its political content, and eventually letting their liberal veneer fall away as they complain about the lack of art, and the intrusion of real life into the art sanctum. After denigrating the artist for upsetting their equilibrium and their expectations, the "visitor" concludes with a strained defense of their own basic attitudes.

*Art for the Artworld Surface Pattern* was a very effective means for presenting political content to an art world audience, as well as an attempt to expose and change viewers attitudes via images and words both printed and spoken in a circumscribed constructed space. This means was further refined in the following year, 1978, in [\*Aspects of the Liberal Dilemma\*](#). In this white painted environment a single photograph of Black South Africans, moving forward and looking directly and assuredly at the viewer, is placed on the wall behind reflective glass, with lights set up so as to illuminate the face of the viewer and cause it to be clearly reflected in the glass covering the photograph. The simplicity of this arrangement is brilliant. While the viewer considers the photograph and their reflected image a tape of Piper's voice is also heard in the space. In this work, rather than assuming the first person singular again, Piper adopts the guise and tone of a lecturer or guide addressing the visitor. In this role she assumes the intelligence and seriousness of the viewer, and suggests an even tone what their expectations might be; how they might react to the work; and what the work might be understood to include. Then she raises questions about the nature of the work and the artist's intention, before finally needling the viewer with more questions about themselves and their understanding of the work.

The principal thrust of the monologue in *Aspects of the Liberal Dilemma* is not so much the question of race, in spite of the image of Black South

Africans that is presented to the spectator, it is rather the preconceptions and perceptions of the viewer. At one point, however, the questioner does ask what the image means, why it is made up of Black people, and why the image is confrontational. The inability of the viewer to scrutinize the image without alternately scrutinizing their own features, a process underlined by the switching back and forth of the questioner, has been beautifully engineered by Piper.

*Aspects of the Liberal Dilemma* was shown again in 1980. On this occasion Piper produced a four page pamphlet entitled: *Where's the Art ?*,<sup>4</sup> which, through the juxtaposition of a repeated image of Vietnamese boat people with a few phrases, once again puts words into the mouths of viewers. This time the work demonstrates the viewer's momentary concern with the content of the piece before their impatience breaks through: "Is this all? Where's the art?"

Piper's creation of environmental installations took another step forward in 1980 when she exhibited [\*Four Intruders Plus Alarm Systems\*](#). A small curved space was created which contained four enlarged images of the heads of Black men. The dark space was illuminated solely by lights installed behind the eyes of each image. Funk music and lyrics were relayed into the space, while the viewer had the opportunity of using headsets to listen to spoken words on different tapes. Each of the tapes portrays a different White response, or "alarm system", to the images. They range from totally disassociated and disapproving, through hip empathizer and paternalist/maternalist liberal, to outright racist, all talking calmly and apparently reasonably and focusing either on the art or the Blacks or both.

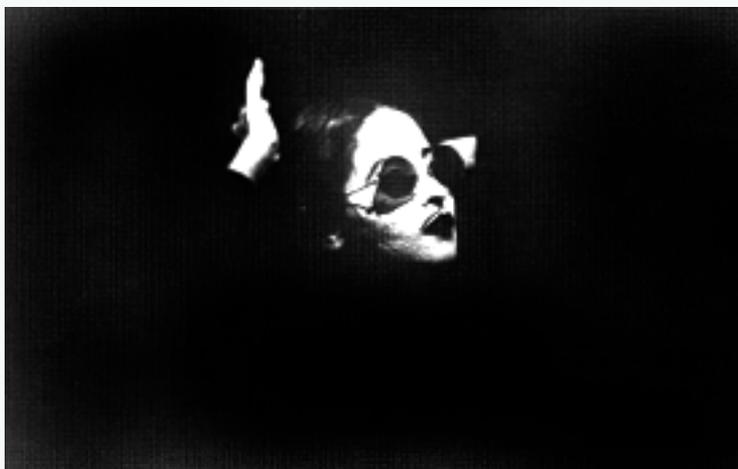
By exposing viewers of *Four Intruders Plus Alarm Systems* to responses which might coincide in part or wholly with their own, or with those of their friends or acquaintances, Piper tries once more to undermine racist atti-

<sup>4</sup> Adrian Piper *Where's the Art?* Hartford, CT: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1980. [4p].

tudes. While one could consider the four monologues as a form of preemptive strike against the likely responses of viewers, the simple act of publicly articulating these attitudes in a reasonable tone is what is so devastatingly effective.

During the next two years Piper completed her Ph.D. dissertation, took a second self-imposed "hibernation" from the art world, and moved to California. She also worked out a new strategy for achieving her ends, which incorporated her musical, dance, and teaching interests. From 1982 Piper staged collaborative performances with groups of people sometimes quite large groups for whom she would provide *Funk Lessons*, encouraging them to "Get down and party. Together."

Piper had introduced Funk music into her work in 1972 with the Aretha Franklin *Catalysis* performance, in 1976 with the performance *Some Reflective Surfaces* and in 1980 in the installation *Four Intruders Plus Defense Systems* and in the performance *It's Just Art*, in which she also danced. In Funk Lessons she took on the role of teacher, even to the point of using chalk and board, and explained steps and movements, as well as the origins and character of Funk music. Through this procedure, and through the unifying activity of dance, Piper's aim was to "restructure peo-



ple's social identities, by making accessible to them a common medium of communication Funk music and dance", which are some of the "last artifacts of Black culture that are identifiably Black" and have not been appropriated or assimilated into White culture.<sup>5</sup> In other words Piper had moved from a critical mode of operating against racism to a creatively subversive one.

Some issues, even those that involve racism, such as voting rights for Blacks in the Southern United States or the right of self determination for the Blacks of Southern Africa, seem to peak in the public mind (via the media), and then recede from wide public consciousness, particularly when something can be said to have been done about them. Unfortunately racism is often so unfocussed and pervasive that it cannot be tied to another issue and thereby attracts the fleeting attention of the public. While Piper will sometimes allude to specific issues in her work, whether homelessness or apartheid or refugees or nuclear disaster, in the end her principal political stand is against this apparently timeless poison of racism, which is both a personal and a socio-political issue.

Given Adrian Piper's academic achievements, and her position in the art world, she mixes professionally with various White elites, and given that she is often not known to be of mixed descent, she is consequently a potentially silent witness to the discreet racism of the bourgeoisie. (As El Hajj Malik El Shabazz (Malcolm X) and Dick Gregory, amongst others, have said, sometimes the overt racial prejudice of some White Southerners might almost be said to be preferable to the politeness and covert racism of Northern Whites.) One of Piper's recent strategies to deal with those who make racist remarks when they assume themselves to be in homogeneous groups, is to present the person responsible for the offense with a calling card, as part of her reactive guerrilla "performance": [\*My Calling \[Card\] #1\*](#).

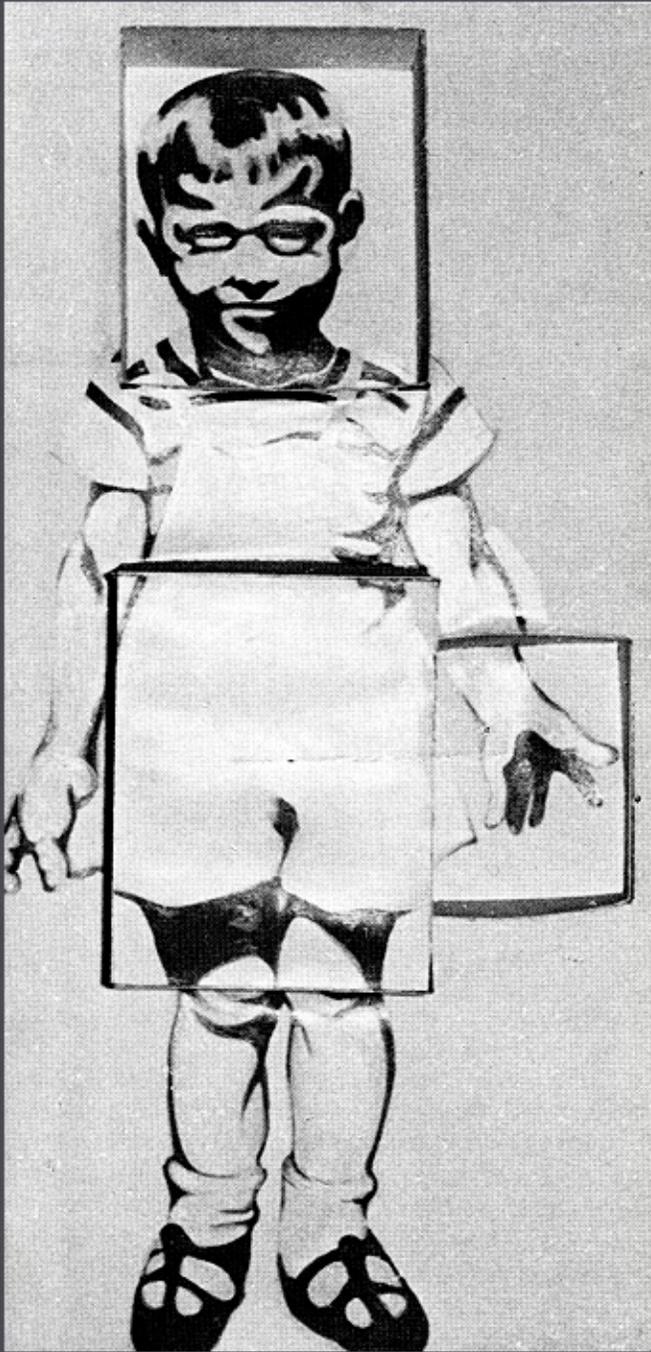
<sup>5</sup> Quotations from: Adrian Piper—*Notes on Funk II*, October 1983. Unpublished (scheduled for publication in: Rudolf Baranik, editor *On Art*.)

1986. The card informs the recipient that Adrian Margaret Smith Piper is Black, and politely regrets any discomfort her presence is causing, just as she assumes that the recipient regrets the discomfort that their racism is causing her!

This calling card demonstrates that Adrian Piper does not seal off her life from her art—though, it should also be plain that neither does she seal off her art from her life. Her art can be specifically autobiographical, ranging from the intensity of *Food for the Spirit* 1971 to the *Self Portrait Exaggerating my Negroid Features* 1981, but it can also illuminate those inhumane forces that impinge upon her life and the lives of others, ranging from *Aspects of the Liberal Dilemma* 1978 to *Portrait* 1983 which portrays the human race as almost intrinsically self-destructive.

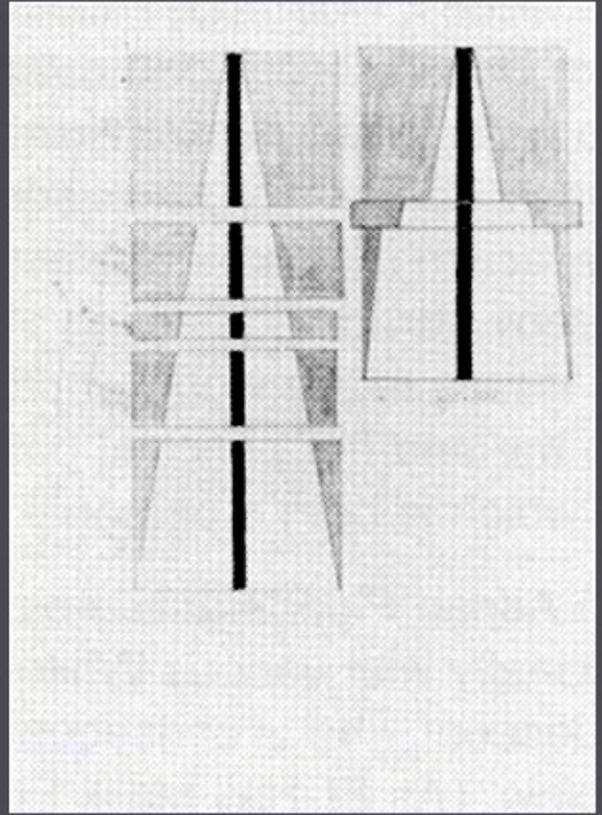
Adrian Piper, by virtue of her background and experience, and by virtue of her academic and artistic achievement, stands at the fulcrum of our society. Her hard won identity and the relevance and intelligence of her dual contributions are almost paradigmatic of those that are needed to further social and artistic progress.

Clive Phillpot  
1st March 1987

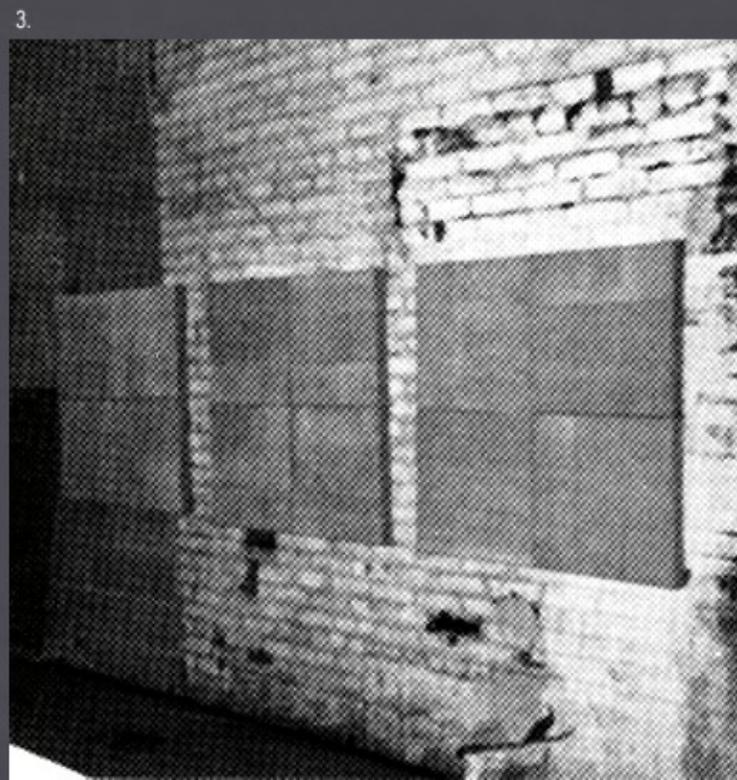


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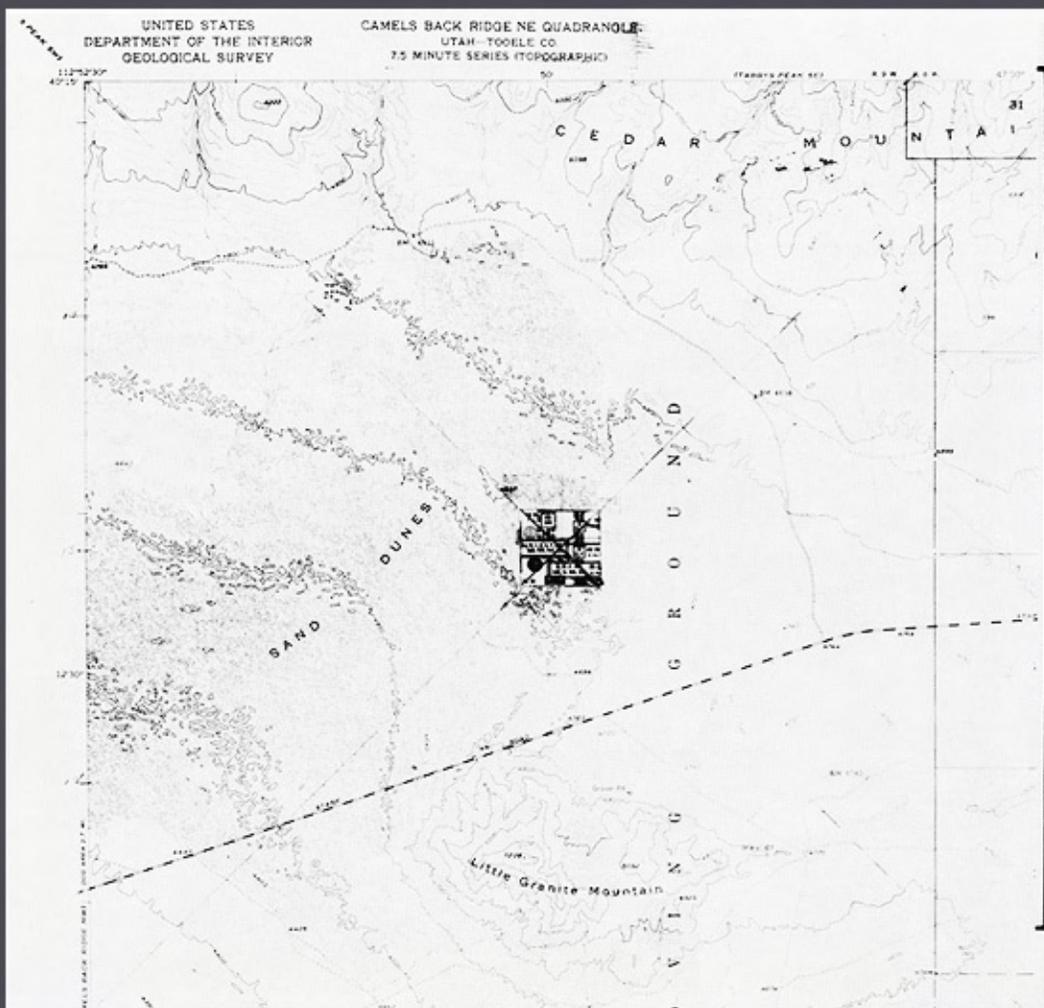
1. **Michael Sternschein**, 1967 Oil paint, canvas, cardboard 18x36 inches
2. **Untitled Drawing**, 1967 Paper, pencil 6x9 inches
3. **Untitled Three-Part Painting**, 1968 Wood, canvas, primer, pencil 36x36 inches



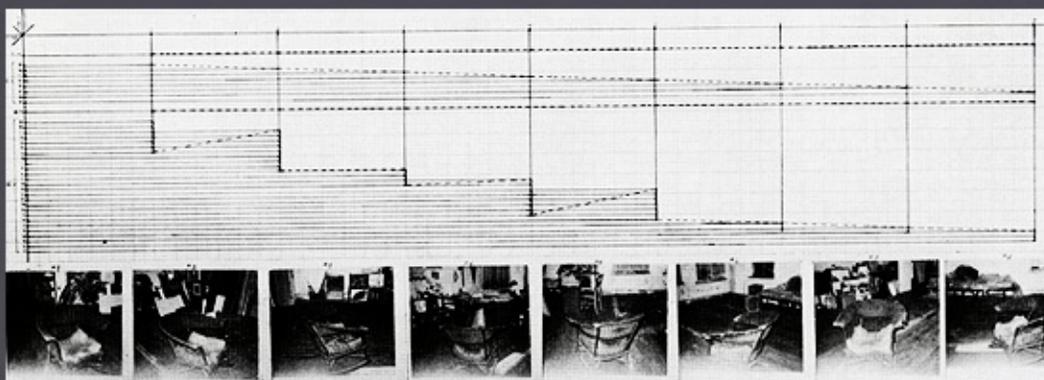
2.



3.



1.



2.

1. **Utah-Manhattan Transfer #1**, 1968 Map collage 18x18 inches
2. **Hypothesis, Situation #19**, 1969-70 Photo-text-chart collage 12x34 inches

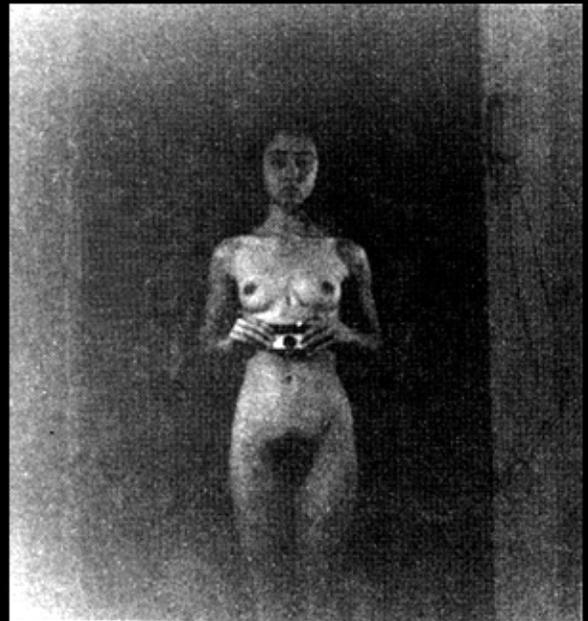


**Untitled Performance for Max's Kansas City**, 1970 Street performance, Max's Kansas City, New York City  
Photo credit: Rosemary Mayer

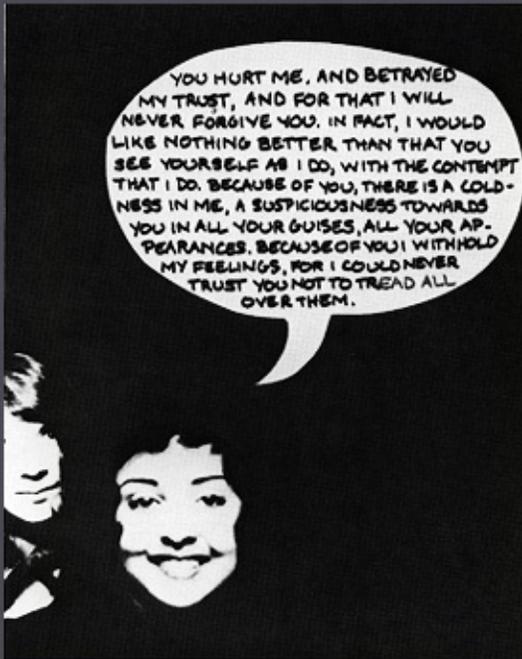


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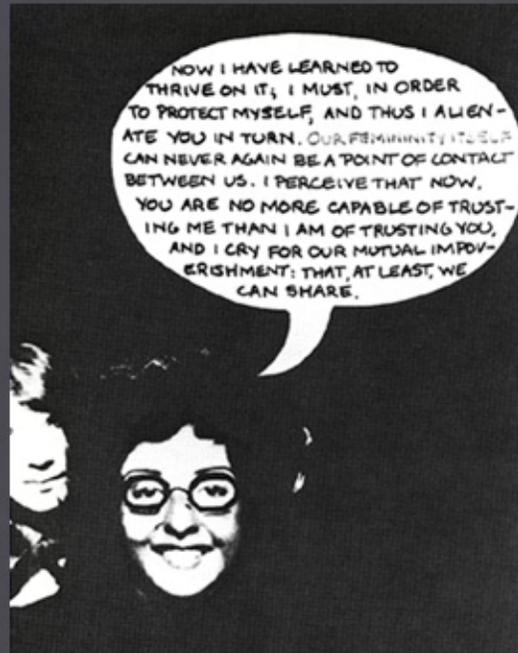
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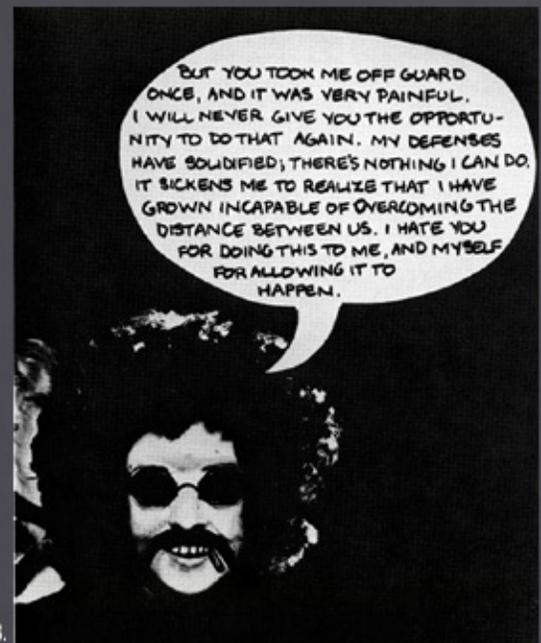
1. **Catalyst IV**, 1970 Street performance, Allen Street Bus  
New York City. Photo credit: Rosemary Mayer
2. **Food for the Spirit**, 1971 Private loft performance New York City



1.



2.



3.

1. **The Mythic Being I/You (Her) #3**, 1974  
Page work: Photo, ink and tempera paint 5x7 inches each.
2. **The Mythic Being I/You (Her) #7**, 1974
3. **The Mythic Being I/You (Her) #10**, 1974



1.



2.



3.

### **The Mythic Being**

1. Getting Back #2 1975

2. Getting Back #3 1975

3. Getting Back #5 1975

Street performance, Cambridge Commons  
Cambridge, Massachusetts. Photo Credit: James Gutman



1.



3.

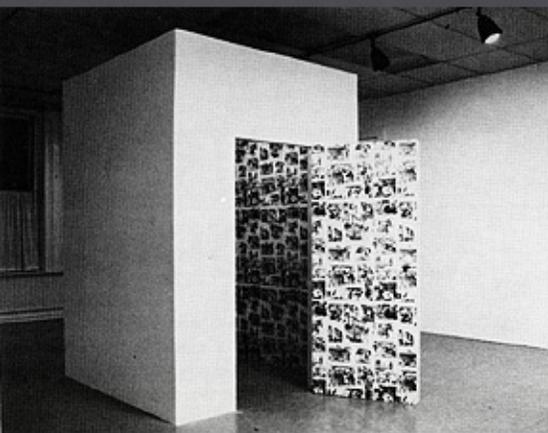


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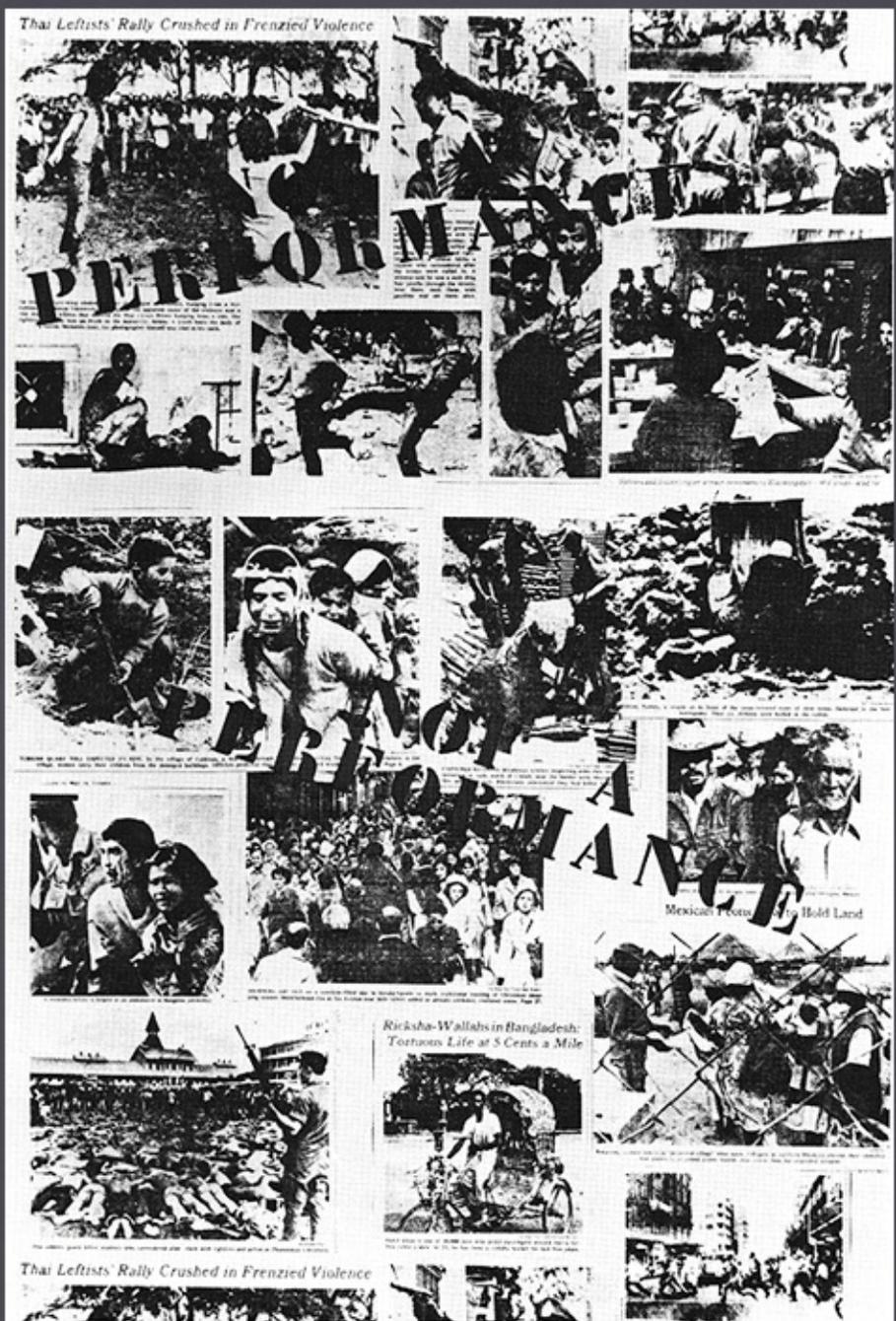
1. **It Doesn't Matter #1** 1975  
Photo and oil crayon 8x10 inches
2. **It Doesn't Matter #2** 1975  
Photo and oil crayon 8x10 inches
3. **It Doesn't Matter #3** 1975  
Photo and oil crayon 8x10 inches  
(poster image original)



**I Embody**, 1975 Photo and oil crayon (poster image original) 8x10 inches



1.



2.

1. **Art for the Artworld Surface Pattern**, 1977 Installation: Bounded environment, lightbulb, wallpaper, audiotape 5x5x7 feet
2. **Art for the Artworld Surface Pattern**, 1977 Detail of installation

# flying

Adrian Piper

1. One of my two most treasured recurrent dreams, with variations:

I spring from the ground, executing high leaps, tour jetes, turns, somersaults, twists, and twirls. I float effortlessly through these figures, can stay suspended in the air for as long as I like. My ballet and modern dance teacher, Miss Copeland, watches transfixed. I run and leap, flapping my arms, and take off. At first I am flying close to the ground, and often land without wanting to. But by running faster, leaping further, and flapping harder I eventually ascend higher and higher, far above the people below me, who are watching, marveling, trying to catch me by the feet and drag me down. I soar above them, twisting, dipping, gliding, leaving them in the distance. This part is not effortless, and not without anxiety. I have to work hard to stay sufficiently far above them so that they cannot get at me. It takes skillful maneuvering and energetic flapping to keep them at bay, but I manage it. Eventually I relax into my ability to stay afloat above them, even leave them behind completely, as long as I concentrate. I alight on the roof of a building to rest and decide where to fly next, realizing that I must stay on the move, ahead of them, so they won't catch up with me and drag me to the ground. I try to avoid landing on the sidewalk; I try always to take off from an elevated perch—a rooftop, the top of a lamppost or tree or truck, the ledge of a mountain or skyscraper. Sometimes I take off from a perch that is so very high that it knots my stomach and takes my breath away to look down and see how far away the ground is. It's the view from an airplane on a cloudless day, but without windows, cabin, or seatbelt, and with even greater detail in what I see below me: sometimes mountain ranges, or plains, or city buildings; sometimes turbulent sea shores, or oceans with giant cresting waves and no land in sight. I feel dizzy with fear of being up so high, and doubt my ability to navigate over these dangerous, distant, alien landscapes. But if I do not spring off my perch and into the air they'll catch up with me, capture me, and drag me down. So I take a deep breath, jump, flap my arms vigorously and catch a wind current! I'm still a bit

dizzy because of the height, but I'm firmly sailing, soaring aloft, confidently navigating a dangerous and solitary journey, which I come to love and crave. I can do it. I've escaped.

Sometimes I can't escape, because I'm flying around the ceiling of a room in an apartment on a high floor, and can't get out the window because it's only open at the bottom and if I dip down to fly out the bottom half of the window they'll catch me, and the window is stuck at the top. So I kick at the top pane of glass with my shoe and shatter it, and dart out through the jagged hole, into the open air, among the tenements and skyscrapers. I land lightly on a rooftop, see them coming, and, without thinking, duck into the stairwell. I run! leap/float swiftly down endless flights of stairs, taking each flight with a single jump. I duck into the basement, turning and twisting down innumerable labyrinthine passages, gray cement rooms poorly lighted, searching for a window or an exit, hiding stilly in a corner or behind a wall when I feel them close by. It occurs to me that it was not a good idea to re-enter a building in the first place. I see a high, sunny basement window on the opposite wall of a cluttered storeroom. I hold my breath, run, and dive for the window before they can get to me. I feel their hands closing around my ankles, but the velocity of my body as I hurtle through the window is too strong for them. I feel the glass crash around me as I emerge outdoors again, now spinning, twisting, bounding off the sidewalk into the cool night air. I flap my arms gently and float effortlessly above the streetlamps, to the treetops. This time I've really made it. I am invisible, disembodied, pure sexual desire, and the night holds no fears for me. Its spirits, indoors and out, are my old friends, and we coil through, around, and alongside people, objects, and one another, exuberantly, shamelessly, knowingly.

## 2. Abstraction:

Abstraction is flying. Abstracting is ascending to higher and higher levels of conceptual generalization; soaring back and forth, reflectively circling around above the specificity and immediacy of things and events in

space and time, from a perspective that embeds them in a conceptual framework of increasing breadth and depth, a framework without horizon, ceiling, or basement; a framework composed of increasingly comprehensive concepts that generalize over increasingly comprehensive classes of things, organize them relative to one another, unify them into a coherent tapestry, a dizzying object of contemplation the details of which stun one into panic by their connectedness, significance, and vividness.

Abstraction is also flight. It is freedom from the immediate spatio-temporal constraints of the moment; freedom to plan the future, recall the past, comprehend the present from a reflective perspective that incorporates all three; freedom from the immediate boundaries of concrete subjectivity, freedom to imagine the possible and transport oneself into it; freedom to survey the real as a resource for embodying the possible; freedom to detach the realized object from oneself more and more fully as a self-contained entity, fully determined by its contextual properties and relations, and consider it from afar, as new grist for the mill of the possible. Abstraction is freedom from the socially prescribed and consensually accepted; freedom to violate in imagination the constraints of public practice, to play with conventions, or to indulge them. Abstraction is a solitary journey through the conceptual universe, with no anchors, no cues, no signposts, no maps, no foundations to cling to. Abstraction makes one love material objects all the more.

### 3. Two flights:

#### 3a. Abstraction from materiality, 1967-72:

Early on, I was dazzled by ideas, but intuited them dimly and confusedly; artmaking was engrossing, but muddled and distorted by my restless intellectual meddling in the creations of sensory intuition. I could heed neither intellect nor intuition because both were tangled and inchoate. My adolescent adventures separated, clarified, and coordinated both.

Up to 1967 I was drawing, sculpting in clay and cardboard, and doing representational painting, often monochromatic, with a real object embedded in the canvas at the appropriate representational location. I had started to attend the School of Visual Arts in 1966, and to see exhibits in New York and read art magazines. I started to distinguish subject matter from formal concerns, and to explore the latter. I thought about perspective, about objects receding and protruding in space, and about the representation of these versus the reality of them versus the reality of their representation ([Michael Sternschein](#)).

I took a first step by ascending to the level of abstract three-dimensional objects, stripped of all subject matter and features extraneous to my preoccupation. It was very difficult to abandon specific subject matter in order to work on these issues further, because I love to draw the process of penetrating the meaning of the object, the product that appropriates it. But I had learned by then to respect the demands of my intellect. I stopped representing immediate objects and circumstances, but have continued to reflect them. My work during this period was very strictly minimalist. All aesthetic decisions were dictated by my exploration of perspectival spatio-temporality. I thought further about the space perspective defines, and in which objects protrude and recede ([Untitled Drawing](#)).

I made another small hop, this time to the level of abstract thought about space, time, and the objects within it; their materiality, concreteness, their infinite divisibility and variability, their indefinite serial progression through stages; their status as instances of abstract concepts. Sol LeWitt's work and writings offered me the tools and encouragement to pursue this line, against the disapproval of some of my teachers at SVA. I began to carve up humble, dusty, austere objects on grids and maps, vary their properties and relations, and line them up sequentially ([Untitled Three-Part Painting](#)). I stopped attending school, but occasionally brought in photos to show my teachers. I worked furiously, constantly, and hermetically.

For me the great leap intellectually was to abandon three-dimensional constructed objects altogether as tools of investigation. Concrete pieces of paper—typing paper, graph paper, maps, and photographs, and audio tapes, would do just as well. However, this was easier psychologically than the decision to abandon representational subject matter had been, because constructing three-dimensional objects cost a lot of money, took a lot of energy, and progressed far too slowly relative to my thought processes about them in any case. But marks on paper or sound tape could also refer: concretely to themselves, or to the surface they existed on, or to the conditions under which they were perceived; abstractly to absent objects, events, or locations; to non-perceptual objects, such as space, time, and numbers; to general concepts expressive of the possible and the abstract, rather than the actual and concrete ([\*Utah—Manhattan Transfer\*](#)). Reality could be rearranged, relocated, varied, shot through with metaphysics. I was drunk on intellectual construction, theory, abstract structure; swooping and swerving crazily through uncharted sky.

From that distance, all three-dimensional objects, found or constructed, sentient or inanimate, myself or others, were noumena: enigmatic entities assigned meaning by the encompassing conceptual framework within which they are embedded. I utilized those objects and media that most fully embodied my conceptual concerns (a principle to which I still adhere). I experimented with my own object-hood, transforming it sculpturally as I had other objects, took it into the street, confronted others with the end products, and watched the effects on my social relations (the *Catalysis* series). I traumatized myself, burned out, and began to withdraw from the artworld into the external world. The political upheavals of 1970 Kent State, Nixon's invasion of Cambodia, the student revolts, the women's movement, and others' responses to my perceived social, political, and gender identity braked my flight a bit, reflecting back onto me, enclosing me in my subjectivity, shocking me back into my skin [see *Talking to Myself: The Ongoing Autobiography of an Art*

*Object*, Bonomo or Spillemaeckers edition]. I struggled to transcend both (the early *Mythic Being/Village Voice* series), It didn't work. I plummeted back to earth, where I landed with a jolt.

### 3b. Abstraction from identity, 1972 present:

In 1969, I wrote an essay called "Hypothesis" which was to be reprinted in the "Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects" exhibit catalogue. It was about space and time as forms of perception, and provided the conceptual underpinning for the *Situation* series I was working on at that time. My best friend, the late Phillip Zohn, who studied philosophy, strongly suggested to me that if I was going to pursue this line of thought, I should get serious and read Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. I did, and immediately became obsessed (in a way I had not with Wittgenstein). In 1970 I enrolled at the City College of New York with a major in Philosophy and minor in Medieval and Renaissance Musicology. I took almost every course listed in the Philosophy Department catalogue.

In academia, the interpersonal ramifications of my social and political identity began to close in on me even further. Feminism made intolerable my college boyfriend's derisive condescension about my "weirdo" art. Another time he said, You won't have any trouble getting accepted to graduate schools; a black woman can go anywhere these days, even if she looks like you. One of my college philosophy professors, upon seeing a discussion of my artwork in the *Village Voice*, said, That's not art. Who [or perhaps it was Whom] do you think you're fooling? Later he defaced with obscenities a poster advertising a feminist speaker. Another one lost his temper and yelled at me for questioning his views. A third began his ethics course with a speech about why women should not fight for equal rights. In graduate school, I had a reputation for partying hard. A fellow student once complimented me on my English. Another accused me of being flirtatious when I trounced him in argument. I learned about no-holds-barred academic one-up-manship, and about the politics of deference (without ever managing to master

either). I made some close, enduring friendships. I met a few very modest individuals with intimidating, overpowering intellects; and many intimidating, overpowering individuals with very modest intellects.

Some of my artwork during this period (the later [Mythic Being](#) performance and poster pieces) reflected the ongoing initiation into interpersonal confrontation, political alienation, failures of communication, rejection, ostracism, and mutual manipulation I had been experiencing in my social relations. But as my philosophical training began to take effect, it purified the imagery in my artwork of excess theoretical baggage and offered me a new kind of reflective conceptual tool. The work began to make political sense of my anger, my confusion, and my past in an intelligible vocabulary and simplified form that had previously eluded me ([Three Political Self-Portraits](#)). It began to reflect the politically retrograde stereotypical responses I was experiencing as objects of contemplation and humor ([Art for the Artworld Surface Pattern](#)). I was absorbing a lot philosophically: practising, exercising, tooling up for another flight, this one to be honed by intellectual discipline and rigor. It was hard. There were constraints and rules—valid and important ones—that had to be mastered and separated from the blinders, taboos, and perfunctory rituals. One step forward, two steps back; a running leap into the air, a tug on the chain, tripped up, stumbling, grounded again, a hop forward, two hops back, tug to heel, start again on higher ground. At the end of graduate school, I was poised to fly, itching to take off.

My first academic job nailed my feet to the ground. A senior colleague invited me to breakfast, apparently in order to explain to me at length how women's sanitary napkins had ruined the plumbing in his apartment building. Another invited me to dinner, where I listened to him and his guests deplore the worthlessness and vulgarity of black working class music. A third, a WASP, joked about the plethora of Jews to be found in the university vicinity. His wife, also an academic (and WASP), dismissed my worries about sexism with the comment that I was just too refined to deal with it successfully. A fourth, a married metaphysi-

cian, made sexual overtures to me in my office, remarking casually that he was a moral cretin. A fifth accused me of insulting him when I presumed to criticize his views. Yet a sixth incited the male graduate students to boycott my courses, by publicly airing his view that I was a man-hating closet lesbian who befriended only effeminate men. A seventh wrote me an official letter reproving me for not deferring to his criticisms of my work. His five-yearold son asked loudly at dinner, Why isn't Adrian married? An eighth advised me to have children, and, when I demurred, commented that it stood to reason, because I was very self-centered, and also probably worried that my children would turn out much darker than I was. This is a partial list.

I marveled that such people could be so smart in their respective fields, yet so very provincial and tasteless in all other areas of life. As elitists each of whom violated all of my elitist assumptions about the "intellectual aristocracy," i.e. the implicit connection between education and courtesy, cultivation, sensitivity, integrity, honesty, etc., they fascinated and repelled me. I tried to, but couldn't crack the fears, fantasies and stereotypes they projected onto me ([Four Intruders Plus Alarm Systems](#)), the walls of mistrust and suspicion they erected between us ([Vanilla Nightmares](#)): mistrust of my motives, my self-presentation, my equilibrium; suspicion that I was trying to use them, guilt-trip them, take advantage of affirmative action policies by identifying myself as black. They forced me to see what they saw:

I am the racist's nightmare, the obscenity of miscegenation. I am a reminder that segregation is impotent; a living embodiment of sexual desire that penetrates racial barriers and reproduces itself. I am the alien interloper, the invisible spy in the perfect disguise who slipped past the barricades in an unguarded moment. I am the reality of successful infiltration that ridicules the ideal of assimilation ([Funk Lessons](#)). I represent the loathsome possibility that everyone is "tainted" by black ancestry: If someone can look and sound like me and still be black, who is unimpeachably white?

Some of those, both black and white, who later become my friends, upon first meeting, peer closely at my face and figure, listen carefully to my idiolect and habits of speech, searching for the telltale stereotypical feature to reassure them. Finding none, they make some up: “Ah,” they say, “but of course your hair is wavy...,” or: “Perhaps a certain flair of the nostrils...,” or: “But the way you dance is unmistakable. [[Self-Portrait Exaggerating My Negroid Features](#)]. Or they find out my identity later, after we’ve become friends, and go through a period of cognitive dissonance, a bout of mild perceptual disorientation, before our friendship dissolves these preconceptions.

Blacks who look and sound like me bring out racism in those who want to believe they have transcended it, racism expressed in a virulent desire to examine, to pry, to fantasize; in a compulsion to impose the stereotype even at the cost of good manners. We are unwilling witnesses to the forms racism takes when racists believe there are no black people present [[My Calling \[Card\] #1](#)]. We don’t like what we see. It humiliates us to be forced to observe the hostile underside of the system of norms to which we have been so thoroughly acculturated. Sometimes what we observe hurts so much that we want more than anything else to disappear, disembody, disinherit ourselves and our consciousness from our black identity. And then we pass for white, and lie to our children about who we are, who they are, and why they have no relatives [[A Tale of Avarice and Poverty](#)]. Some southern historians have estimated that the actual proportion of Americans of black ancestry is not 10%, but closer to 15% or 20%. But of course many of them don’t know they are black. And we don’t know it, either.

Each of these responses—fear, fantasy, mistrust, suspicion, anger, confusion, ignorance obstructs my self-transcendence, my ability to lose myself temporarily in the other, in the world, in abstract ideas. These are the barriers my art practice reflects, because they are the ones that keep me grounded. Unlike materiality, I can’t transcend these barri-

ers *solely* through the intellectual act of ascending to higher conceptual levels and reflecting on them from a distance. I am no longer drunk on abstract theory, because the sobering facts press in on my daily life too insistently. To be sure, it helps to try to understand philosophically these “moral cretins” (many of whom in fact work in moral philosophy), make sense of their behavior, locate them as test cases within the larger framework of my research in meta-ethics, and develop a sense of humor about them, some feeling of compassion for them. Doing philosophy disciplines my urge to fly, improves my sense of direction, and enables me to soar, for a time, above the moral cretins. But it doesn’t change their behavior, or the behavior of more readily identifiable (because less highly educated) others like them. So they always bring me down again eventually. And there is no escape: I know I will find such individuals in every institution in this society. However, academic philosophy also contains some of the very finest individuals I have ever met, whose personal integrity I admire and whose intellects I respect. I engage with those I respect as professional colleagues, but vigilantly ready to flee from attack by the moral cretins. So partly by my own choice, partly by accidents of my birth and position in society, I am cornered, hemmed in, somewhere in the basement of the building, preparing to crash my way out. My art practice is a reflecting mirror of light and darkness, a high sunny window that holds out to me the promise of release into the night.

Adrian Piper  
February 1987  
Washington, D.C.

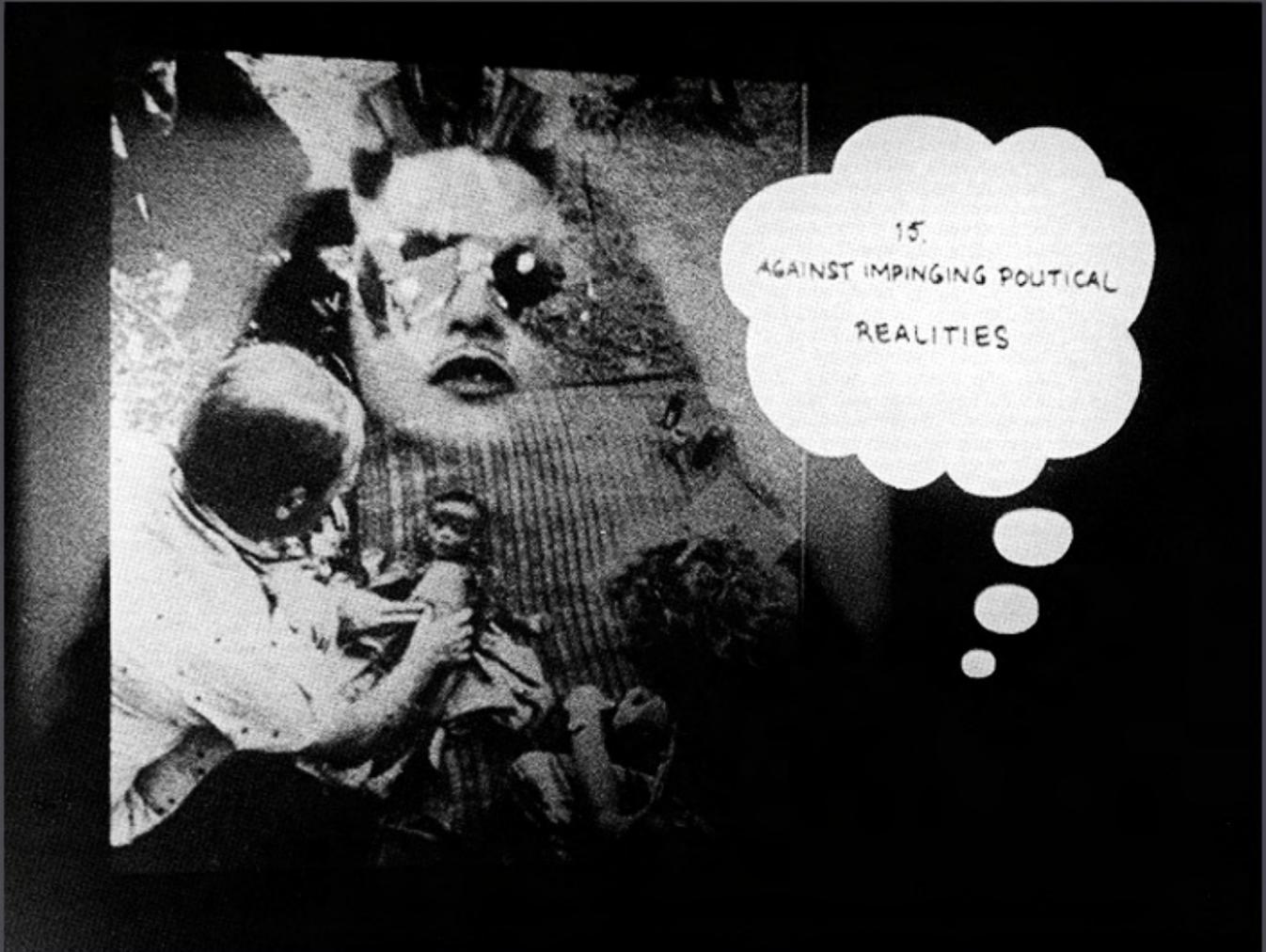


**Aspects of the Liberal Dilemma**, 1978 Installation: Photo under glass, audio tape, lighting  
Installation detail: photo under glass, 18x18 inches. Photo credit: David Auerbach, National Geographic

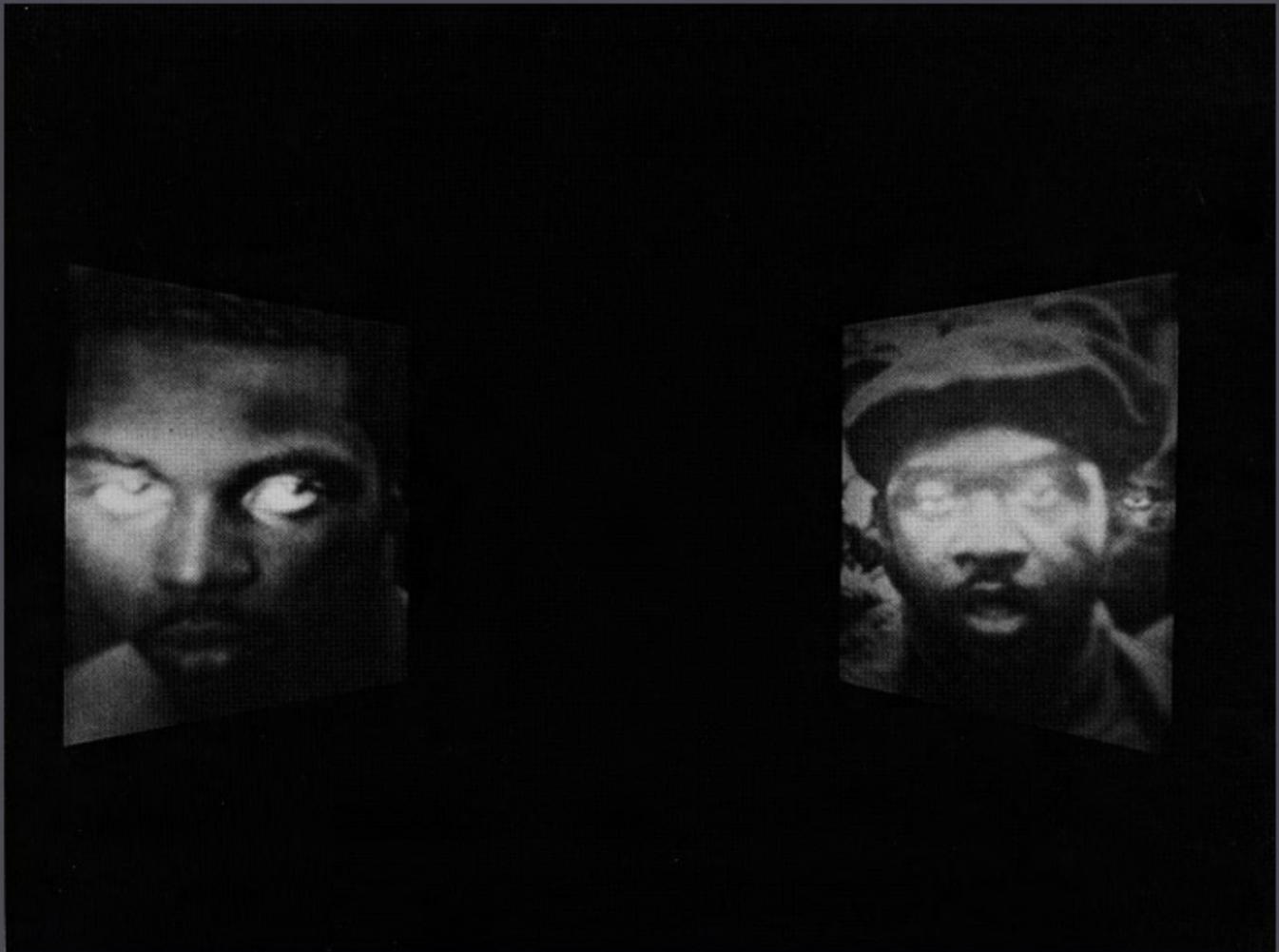
My folks had to send me away to camp when I was five because they both had to work overtime that summer and didn't want to leave me alone in that hot apartment. It was a girls' camp for the children of practicing Protestants called Camp Good Hope. I had a friend named Karl who was sixteen and came from the boys' camp across the lake. He played catch and volleyball with me and took care of me and I adored him. I told someone that he was my big brother (I'm an only child) and she said But that's impossible; Karl's white and you're colored. She said Colored. I didn't know what she meant. Karl and I were pretty much the same color except that he had blue eyes. A few years later my mom thought it was time I started going to and from school by myself instead of her taking me on the bus. The school was far away because it was not a local public school but rather an expensive progressive prep school called New Lincoln where there were lots of rich mediocre white kids and a few poor smart white kids and even fewer, poorer, even smarter black kids. But all I knew then was that there sure was a difference between where most of them lived (Fifth Avenue) and where I lived (Harlem). Anyway I started going to school by myself and the neighborhood kids would waylay me as I was walking the two blocks from the bus stop to my house and would pull my braids and tease me and call me Paleface. By then I knew what they meant. No one at school ever called me Paleface. Once I was visiting one of my white classmates at her big fancy apartment house on Central Park West where there were four doors into the house with a doorman standing at each and two separate elevators with an elevator man for each and only one apartment on a floor and a cook and a maid and a cleaning woman and a governess (!!). She said to her little brother I bet you can't guess whether Adrian is white or colored. He looked at me for a long time and very searchingly and said White. And she said You lose, she's colored, isn't that a scream? I thought it was really a scream. I was afraid of the black kids on my block because they bullied me and I was afraid of the black kids at school because they made cutting remarks about my acting too white. But I wasn't afraid of the white kids because they were so stupid. Later when I was in fifth grade and getting sick alot and hating school I had a teacher named Nancy Modiano who really bullied me. Once we all went on a hike and I became very thirsty and she wouldn't let me get any water. Then we went back to school and she forced me to follow her around the school for four hours while she did her errands but wouldn't let me stop at a water fountain for some water. When my mom came to pick me up I was almost fainting. In conference with my parents she once asked them Does Adrian know she's colored? I guess she must have thought I was too fresh and uppity for a little colored girl. My folks were very upset and wanted to transfer me in to another class but it was too near the end of the term. Nancy Modiano was one of the few whites who overtly bullied me because of my color. The only others were white philosophy students later when I was in college who hated me and said You don't have to worry about graduate school, a black woman can get in anywhere, even if she looks like you. But as I got older and prettier white people generally got nicer and nicer, especially liberals. I was very relieved when my folks moved out of Harlem when I was fourteen, and into a mixed neighborhood on Riverside Drive because there weren't so conspicuous, and besides the boys in my old neighborhood were no longer pulling just my braids when I passed them on the street. In my new neighborhood I hung out with a Puerto Rican gang that accepted me pretty well and taught me to curse in Spanish. I didn't see New Lincoln people very much because they were turning into boring and neurotic people and were really getting into being rich. But I made other friends when I started going to the Art Students' League and Greenwich Village. I noticed that all my friends were white and that I didn't have much in common with the children of my parents' very light-skinned, middle class, well-to-do black friends. They seemed to have a very determined self-consciousness about being colored (they said Colored) that I didn't share. They and many of my relatives thought it a scandal that I went out with white men. I felt just as alienated from whites as blacks, but whites made me feel good about my looks rather than apologetic. When someone asked me why I looked so exotic I would either say I'm West Indian (my mother's Jamaican) or if they looked really interested I would go on at length about my family tree: how my mother's family is English, Indian from India and African, and how there's a dispute about my father's family which my grandmother told me about before she died because there are now two branches of the Piper family, the rich ones who now live in Chicago and founded the Piper Aircraft Company and the poor ones, i.e. us; how they were originally a single English family who settled in the South but at some point split up and disowned each other (i.e. the rich ones disowned the poor ones) because the poor ones publicly admitted to being partly descended from the slaves who worked on their plantation and the rich ones didn't want to acknowledge any African blood in the family; but how for the poor ones it was a matter of honor after the Civil War not to pass for white. But I would never simply say Black because I felt guilty and as though I was coopting something, i.e. the Black Experience, which I haven't had. I've had the Gray Experience. Also I felt guilty about unjustifiably taking advantage of justified white liberal guilt. But I would never deny that I'm black because I understand how it can be a matter of pride and honor for my folks to positively affirm their heritage and I don't want to deny a part of myself that I'm proud of. But sometimes I wonder why I should be caught in this bind in the first place; why I should have to feel dishonest regardless of whether I affirm or deny that I'm black; and whether I, my family, and all such hybrids aren't being victimized by a white racist ideology that forces us to accept an essentially alien and alienating identity that arbitrarily groups us with the most oppressed and powerless segment of the society (black blacks) in order to avoid having that segment gradually infiltrate and take over the sources of political and economic power from whites through the defeat of successful integration of which we hybrids are the products and the victims. When I think about that I realize that in reality I've been bullied by whites as well as blacks for the last three hundred years. And there is no end in sight.

Political Self-Portrait #2 (race), 1978 Poster 24x36 inches

For a long time I didn't realize we were poor at all. We lived in that part of Harlem called Sugar Hill, where there were lots of parks and big houses that had once been mansions but had then been converted into hotels or funeral homes. When I was little it was nice. Boys didn't start loitering in the hallway of my building singing four-part harmony until I was around eight. After that it got seedy very quickly. Around the same time many of the girls in school started wearing shoes from Papagallo's and coats from Bonwit Teller's. Suddenly I began to notice that they all had maids and doormen and lived in apartments bigger than my whole building. I hadn't noticed it before because it hadn't determined who was popular before. Before it had been how smart and nice and good at sports you were. Nobody had talked about where they bought their clothes, or how many servants they had. It was difficult, but because I was an only child, my parents could keep up with a lot of this. My mother had a very good, steady job as a secretary at City College, and my father had a very unsteady real estate law practice in Harlem, where people paid him for defending them against unscrupulous landlords by sending his shirts or cooking things for him or fixing his car. My parents spent all their money on me. They put me through twelve years of New Lincoln (a fancy private prep school). They gave me ballet and modern dance lessons at Columbia University. I took piano lessons first from a neighbor, and later from a teacher at Juilliard. I got art lessons from the Museum of Modern Art and the Art Students' League. Once I even got a coat from Bonwit Teller's. Although my mother normally took me on shopping trips only to places like Macy's or Gishel's, I dressed as well as anyone else in the class and was invited to all the parties and had cute white boyfriends. But I became ashamed to invite people over or have my boyfriends pick me up because I lived so far away and my neighborhood and everyone in it seemed so alien and sinister next to my rich white New Lincoln friends. I could have stood not having had any servants if we at least had had a big apartment in a large building with an awning and a doorman. At least an awning. The final blow came when I was eleven. I had been embarrassed by my house and neighborhood to give a party although all the other popular kids in my class had. So I had started noticing all the advertised vacant apartments on Fifth Avenue, Park Avenue, and Central Park West as I came home from visiting my friends who lived there. And one day I said to my mother, Why don't we move? I just saw a sign for a lovely twelve-room apartment at Fifth Avenue and Eighty-Sixth Street, and it's so small and dark and crowded here. My mother laughed a very angry and bitter laugh and said, Get that idea out of your head right now. We don't move to Fifth Avenue because we do not and never will have that kind of money. I was shocked and didn't believe her at first. I thought she was just in a bad mood the way she always was when I asked her for new clothes, and that she was that way because she just didn't want me to have them. But when I brought it up again, carefully, a few days later, she saw that I really didn't understand. So she explained very patiently and carefully that we lived where we did because we had to, not because we wanted to. She explained about Daddy's deciding to serve his community and getting paid in apple pies and embroidered shirts when he got paid at all, and about how many weeks of a secretary's salary a coat from Bonwit Teller's cost. I was stunned. I became very depressed. Reality began to look very different after that. I started becoming more and more estranged from my school friends. I saw that I would never be able to keep up with them economically and was almost relieved to drop out of the race. I realized that all along, they had inhabited a world which I had never in fact had access to. It disgusted me to think that I had tried so hard to emulate them. I began dressing arty rather than junior miss, and to spend time at home listening to classical music and reading novels rather than going to school parties. I found that I didn't miss those parties at all. I spent a lot of my free time in libraries and museums. I became reflective and started to keep a journal. That was when I began to understand the choices and sacrifices my parents had made in order to educate me, and the inner resources they had insisted that I develop. Those resources became a refuge for me now. I learned to be self-sufficient, and to revel in my solitude. But by that time my self-image had been too strongly affected and formed by my school associations, as much as by the complexities of my total environment. I still have tastes I can't afford to satisfy except by getting into debt, which I do, and then feel simultaneously guilty and frustrated for having them. My standard of living seems to me excessive for an artist and an academic, even though I know I would find anything less barren and depressing. I dream unrealistically of the political and economic purity of the ascetic's life, and of the revolution which will redistribute the wealth my classmates so unreservedly enjoyed. I fear having more money because I know my taste for books, records, art, clothes, and travel will increase, leaving me with none of the extra cash I now give to support that revolution. I watch with detached anxiety as I sink further into the morass of proliferating material desires at the same time as I ascend the ladder of material affluence. And my radical political sentiments seem cheap for the asking by comparison.

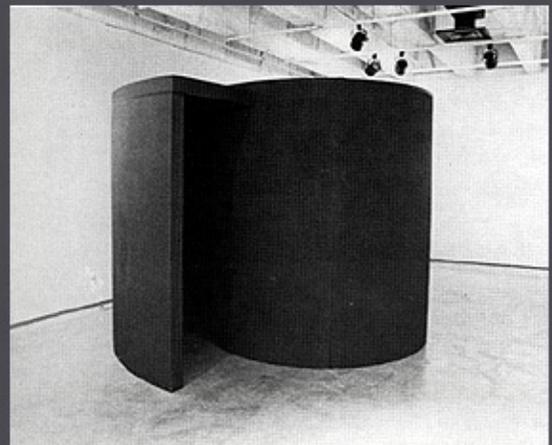


**It's Just Art #15**, 1980 Mixed media performance: Film, dance, slides, audio; The Western Front, Vancouver, B.C.



1.

2.



**Four Intruders Plus Alarm Systems, 1960**

1. Detail of the installation: Silkscreen lightboxes #3 and #4 18x24 inches each.
2. Installation: bounded environment, four silkscreened light boxes, four audio monologues, audio music soundtrack. 6 feet high, 5 feet in diameter.  
Collection of the Wexner Center for the Visual Arts, Ohio State University.



**Self-Portrait Exaggerating My Negroid Features**, 1981 Pencil and paper 9x12 inches



**Funk Lessons**, 1983 Group participation performance. Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Photo credit: Daniel Lander

## PORTRAIT

All sentient species are biologically programmed to attack alien enemies. Some species are programmed to attack their own members as alien enemies. Rats, for example, will attack, kill or even cannibalize one another under conditions of overcrowding and deprivation. But human beings are more unique still. Only human beings are capable of self-destruction, of suicide, of acts that have our own self-obliteration as a conscious purpose.

Human beings must view themselves as alien enemies to be able to do this. They must believe that if they allow this alien enemy to exist, it will destroy them. And so to avoid destroying themselves they destroy themselves.

We can see why this might be so. We do not know ourselves very well. Often we feel assaulted by unacceptable thoughts and impulses, and move to suppress them; or shamed by unacceptable physical features, and work to remove them; or threatened by others' unacceptable behavior or appearance, and so attack or reject them. We view these things as alien enemies, not as the familiar ingrained parts of ourselves they are. And so we are constantly moved to destroy and reconstitute ourselves in conformity with our truncated and distorted self-image.

In all these cases, and others like them, we fail to recognize that we are destroying ourselves. And so our centrally motivating urge to self-destruction itself goes unrecognized. Perhaps we wouldn't recognize this particular facet of ourselves if it stared us in the face.



*Nagasaki, August 9, 1945, three minutes after the bombing. The smoke column reached 20,000 feet. (Hiroshima-Nagasaki Publishing Committee, U.S. Department of War)*

©Adrian Piper, 1983

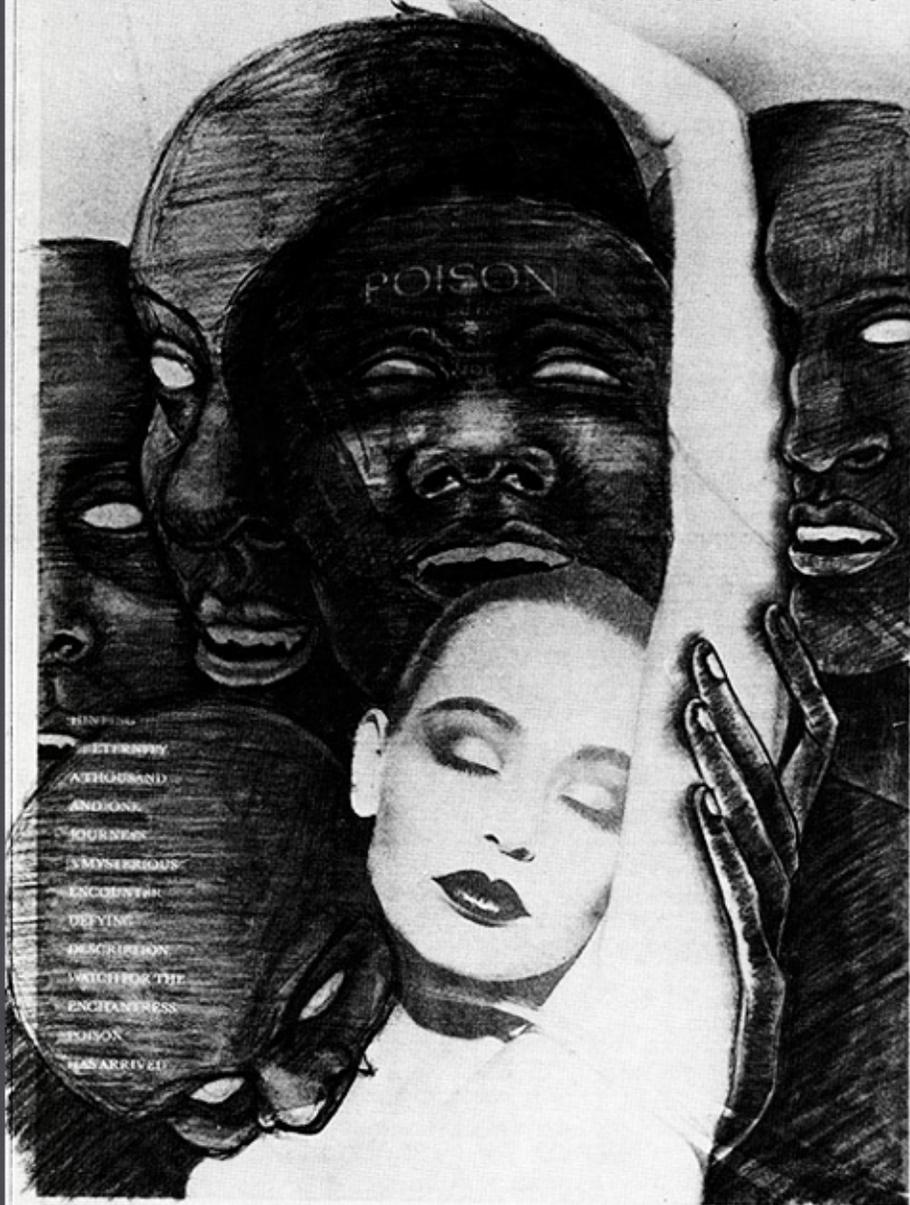
**Portrait**, 1983 Photo-text collage 24 x 36 inches



**A Tale of Avarice and Poverty**, 1985 Photo 24x36 inches and six pages of text, 8 1/2 x 11 inches each

# P O I S O N

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VANILLA NIGHTMARES #8 2/86  
 © Bloomingdale's 1986

Vanilla Nightmares #8, 1986 Charcoal drawing on newspaper 14x22 inches

Dear Friend,  
I am black.

I am sure you did not realize this when you made/laughed at/agreed with that racist remark. In the past, I have attempted to alert white people to my racial identity in advance. Unfortunately, this invariably cause them to react to me as pushy, manipulative, or socially inappropriate. Therefore, my policy is to assume that white people do not make these remarks, even when they believe there are no black people present, and to distribute this card when they do.

I regret any discomfort my presence is causing you, just as I am sure you regret the discomfort your racism is causing me.

Sincerely yours,  
Adrian Margaret Smith Piper

My Calling (card) #1, 1986 Business card 2x 3 1/2 inches  
Reactive guerilla performance (for dinners and cocktail parties)

## chronology

by adrian piper

- 1948 Born September 20 at Sydenham Hospital, Harlem, only child of Daniel Robert and Olive Xavier Smith Piper.
- 1951 Taught to draw by maternal grandmother Margaret Norris Smith, a former high school teacher, who lives with family.
- 1952 Enters Riverside Church Nursery and Sunday School.
- 1953 Writes and illustrates own stories. Spends summer at Camp Good Hope on Cape Cod, Massachusetts.
- 1954 Enters first grade at New Lincoln School in Manhattan on a scholarship. Spends summer (and every summer thereafter through 1962) at Camp Bass Lake Farm in Aitmar, New York.
- 1956 Begins ballet and piano lessons. Reads Herman Wouk's *Marjorie Morningstar*.
- 1957 Takes art classes at the Museum of Modern Art after school.
- 1958 Fifth grade teacher, Miss Modiano, asks parents if Piper is aware that she is colored. Sells comic book collection.
- 1959 Receives art lessons from paternal grandmother, Beatrix Downs Piper McCleary, a former grammar school teacher.
- 1961 Abandons piano lessons after paralyzing stage fright before planned participation in Town Hall recital. Sells 45 RPM rock music collection, starts listening seriously to classical music. Assistant Arts and Crafts counselor at Bass Lake Farm (through 1962). Does Indian Ink gouache illustrations of Hans Christian Anderson's "What the Moon Saw."
- 1962 Joins SNCC. Family moves from Harlem to Riverside Drive, leaving bachelor maternal uncle, Martin Smith, who also lived with family, in Harlem apartment, where he becomes a recluse. Maternal grandmother dies. Joins Puerto Rican gang. Teaches self to play the guitar. Participates in drawing groups with model at various locations in Manhattan.
- 1963 Attends the March on Washington. Abandons ballet and modern dance lessons. Takes jazz dance lessons. Starts painting and drawing classes at the Art Students' League after school, summers, and weekends. Starts part-time freelance fashion modeling (through 1965). Hangs out at Steve Paul's The Scene; encounters Edie Sedgwick.
- 1965 Does psychedelic drawings and paintings, writes poetry. Leaves home, works as a discotheque dancer at the Ginza and Entre Nous nightclubs. Meets Phillip Zohn.
- 1966 Graduates from New Lincoln School. Enters the School of Visual Arts. Studies yoga with Swami Satchidananda (through 1971). Goes to NYC art galleries, subscribes to *Art News* and *Artforum*, attends films by Andy Warhol, the Kuchar brothers, happenings by Robert Rauschenberg, Simone Forti Whitman, and Marcel Duchamp at SVA.
- 1967 Begins summer courses at the City College of New York. Meets Rosemary Mayer and Vito Acconci. Stops attending classes at SVA. Reads Robbe-Grillet, Beckett,

- Stein, Borges, Sarraute, Duras, Butor, Pinget, Wittgenstein; listens to Schoenberg, Webern, Boulez, Stockhausen, Cage, LaMonte Young, Terry Riley, Steve Reich. Attends Charles Ludlam's Ridiculous Theatrical Company production, *Conquest of the Universe*. Sees Sol LeWitt's show at Dwan Gallery, 46 *Three Part Variations on Three Different Kinds of Cubes*. Begins to carve up objects spatio-temporally into infinite series, progressions, and variations.
- 1968 Conceptual art works published in Vito Acconci's *O to 9* Magazine. Meets Sol LeWitt. Attends Yvonne Rainer's dance concert, *The Mind is a Muscle* three days in a row. Attends lectures by Borges at SVA and 92nd St. YMCA. Awarded First Prize in Drawing and Honorable Mention in Sculpture at School of Visual Arts Annual Student Exhibition. Sells sports magazines on the telephone. Moves to loft on Hester St. Hospitalized with dysentery and colitis; becomes a lacto-vegetarian. Produces *Grid Proposal for Dugway Proving Grounds* and *Concrete Space—Time—Infinity* pieces. Performs *Meat Into Meat* under guise of *Five Unrelated Time Pieces*. Meets Hans Haacke.
- 1969 Receptionist and administrative assistant for Seth Siegelaub Gallery. *Three Untitled Projects* mail art exhibition published by *O to 9* Press. Shows conceptual work at Dwan Gallery, Paula Cooper Gallery, Städtisches Museum Leverkusen, Kunsthalle Bern, etc. group shows. Graduates from SVA with A.A. in Fine Arts. Reads Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. Models for Raphael Soyer (through 1971). Executes drawings for Sol LeWitt. Types Ad Reinhardt manuscript for Lucy Lippard. Bookkeeper for Cameo Personnel Agency.
- 1970 Performs *Catalysis series*. Conducts a series of juice fasts. Begins CCNY fulltime with a major in Philosophy and minor in Medieval and Renaissance Musicology. Clerk in CCNY music library (through 1971). Exhibits *Context #7* in *Information* show at the Museum of Modern Art. Withdraws *Hypothesis* from *Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects* show at the New York Cultural Center, in protest against Nixon's invasion of Cambodia and Kent State massacre. Joins Art Worker's Coalition. Attends open rehearsals held by Steve Reich and Phillip Glass.
- 1971 Hears about Hans Haacke's Guggenheim show. Fasts, isolates self, does yoga while writing paper on Kant. Produces *Food for the Spirit* private loft performance. Starts women's group with Rosemary Mayer, Donna Dennis, Randa Haines, Grace Murphy, others. Receptionist, clerk, and switchboard operator at the Animal Medical Center (through 1974).
- 1972 Starts *The Mythic Being/Village Voice* performance series. Holds music listening evenings for small group of philosophy classmates. Followed home from CCNY by Diotima the cat, who settles in.
- 1974 Graduates from CCNY summa, Phi Beta Kappa, etc. Awarded Danforth and Ford Foundation graduate fellowships. Moves to Cambridge, Massachusetts. Begins doctoral program in philosophy at Harvard University.
- 1975 Performs later *Mythic Being* streetworks in Cambridge and produces posters.
- 1976 Performs *Some Reflective Surfaces* at Whitney Museum. Finishes course work at Harvard. Teaching assistant for courses taught by John Rawls and Ronald Dworkin.

- 1977 Awarded Harvard Sheldon Traveling Fellowship to spend the academic year in Berlin and Heidelberg working on Kant and Hegel. Passport and belongings stolen in Musee d'Art Moderne while constructing *Art for the Artworld Surface Pattern* for the Paris Biennale. In Heidelberg, participates in student resistance to *Altstadtstudentenheimsanierung*, studies and writes all day, drinks beer all evening, goes dancing most of the night.
- 1978 Flies from Cambridge to Paris for four days to see *Paris—Moscow* exhibit at Beaubourg. Premieres *Aspects of the Liberal Dilemma* at Artists Space. First philosophy article published, "Utility, Publicity, and Manipulation."
- 1979 Awarded first full grant NEA Visual Artists' Fellowship. Moves to Ann Arbor, Michigan. Begins tenure-track Assistant Professorship in Philosophy at the University of Michigan.
- 1980 Completes *Three Political Self-Portraits*. Premieres *Four Intruders Plus Alarm Systems* and *It's Just Art* in *The Art of Conscience* exhibition at Wright State University.
- 1981 Completes Ph.D. dissertation, "A New Model of Rationality." Buys house. Maternal uncle Martin dies. Performs *It's Just Art* at AND/OR in Seattle, Washington, where member of audience asks Piper why she is up on stage shaking her booty.
- 1982 Awarded second full grant NEA Visual Artists' Fellowship. Also awarded two-year Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellowship to do research in Philosophy at Stanford University. Marries Jeffrey Evans. Travels to Jamaica on honeymoon, meets mother's family in Kingston, Portland, and Port Antonio. Moves to Menlo Park, California. Begins work on manuscript, *Rationality and the Structure of the Self*.
- 1983 Premieres *Funk Lessons* at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. Best friend Phillip Zohn dies of AIDS-related encephalitis. Begins design of poster, *Think About It*, commemorating 1983 March on Washington.
- 1984 Reluctantly returns to the University of Michigan.
- 1985 Father dies of cancer, shunned by his sister Beatrix Hamburg and her family, during his illness and death. Denied tenure at the University of Michigan. Begins continuing self-collection piece, *What Will Become of Me*. Premieres *A Tale of Avarice and Poverty* at the New Museum of Contemporary Art.
- 1986 Philosophy article, "Two Conceptions of the Self," voted one of the ten best of 1985. Prepares *My Calling [Card] #1* and *#2*. Begins *Vanilla Nightmares* drawings on newspaper. Moves to Washington, D.C. Separates from husband. Begins permanent position at Georgetown University.
- 1987 Celebrates Diotima the cat's fifteenth birthday and year together with Piper. Attends inaugural meeting of Women of African Descent in the Visual Arts (WADVA). Gets divorce. Completes *Think About It*.

This chronology was created solely by Adrian Piper and is presented as part of her artistic work.

## adrian margaret smith piper

Born September 20, 1948 in New York City.  
Lives in Washington, D.C.

### EDUCATIONAL RECORD

- 1966-69 School of Visual Arts, New York,  
N.Y.AA. (Fine Arts)  
1970-74 City College of New York, New York,  
N.YBA. (Philosophy)  
1974-77 Harvard University, Cambridge,  
Mass.M.A. (Philosophy)  
1977-78 University of Heidelberg, Heidelberg,  
West Germany—translated portions of  
Kant's *Reflexionen zur Moralischen  
Phiosphie*; audited courses on Kant,  
Hegel, and Marx  
1981 Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass  
Ph.D. (Philosophy)

### ONE WOMAN EXHIBITIONS

- 1969 *Three Untitled Projects* (postal), O to 9  
Press, New York, N.Y.  
1971 *One Man [sic], One Work*, New York  
Cultural Center, New York, N.Y.  
1976 *Adrian Piper*, Gallery One, Montclair  
State College, Montclair, N.J.  
1980 *Adrian Piper at Matrix 56*, Wadsworth  
Atheneum, Hartford, Conn. in conjunc-  
tion with Adrian Piper, Real Artways,  
Hartford, Conn.  
1981 *Adrian Piper*, And/Or, Seattle, Wa.

### GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 1969 *Number Seven*, Paula Cooper Gallery,  
New York, N.Y.  
*Language III*, Dwan Gallery, New York, NY  
*557,087*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle,  
Wa. (traveling)  
*Concept Art*, Städtisches Museum,  
Leverkusen, West Germany  
*Groups*, School of Visual Arts Gallery,  
New York, N.Y.  
*Plans and Projects as Art*, Kunsthalle

Berne, Berne, Switzerland

- 1970 *995,000*, Vancouver Art Gallery, Van-  
couver, B.C.  
*Conceptual Art and Conceptual Aspects*,  
New York Cultural Center, New York, NY  
*Art in the Mind*, Allen Museum, Oberlin,  
Ohio  
*Information*, The Museum of Modern  
Art, New York, NY  
*Language IV*, Dwan Gallery, New York,  
NY  
1971 *26 Contemporary Women Artists*, Larry  
Aldrich Museum, Ridgefield, Conn.  
*Paris Biennale*, Paris, France  
1972 *Art Without Limits*, Memorial Art Gallery,  
Rochester, NY  
*Communications*, Inhibodress Gallery,  
NSW, Australia  
1973 *Thought: Structures*, Pace College  
Gallery, New York, NY  
*Nine New York Artists*, Hartwick College,  
Oneonta, NY  
*Artforms, Abstract Activities, Ideas*,  
Pomona College, Claremont, Ca.  
*c.7,500*, California Institute of the Arts,  
Valencia, Ca.  
1974 *Word Works*, Mt. San Antonio College  
Art Gallery, Walnut, Ca.  
*Woman's Work: American Art 1974*,  
Philadelphia Civic Center, Philadelphia,  
Pa. (traveling)  
*In Her Own Image*, Samuel S. Fleischer  
Art Memorial, Philadelphia, Pa.  
1975 *Bodyworks*, Museum of Contemporary  
Art, Chicago, Ill.  
*Word Works II*, San Jose State  
University Art Gallery, San Jose, Ca.  
*Eleven in New York*, Women's Interart  
Center, New York, NY  
*Lives*, The Fine Arts Building, New York,  
NY  
1976-77 SELF-IMPOSED HIBERNATION FROM  
THE ART WORLD  
1977 *Paris Biennale*, Paris, France

- The Sense of the Self: From Self-Portrait to Auto-biography*, Newberger Museum, Purchase, N.Y.
- 1978 *Untitled Exhibition*, Artists' Space, New York, N.Y.
- 1979 *Eventworks*, Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, Mass.  
*Both Sides Now*, Artemesia Gallery, Chicago, Ill.
- 1980 *A Decade of Women's Performance Art*, National Women's Caucus for Art Conference, New Orleans, La.  
*Speaking Volumes: Women's Artist Books*, A. 1. R. Gallery, New York, N.Y.  
*Art of Conscience*, Wright Gallery, Dayton, Ohio [traveling]  
*Issue: Twenty Social Strategies by Women Artists*, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, England
- 1981 *Events: Artists Invite Artists*, The New Museum, New York, N.Y.  
*The Gender Show*, Group Material, New York, N.Y.  
*The Page as Alternative Space*, Franklin Furnace, New York, N.Y.  
*Oppositions*, And/Or, Seattle, Wa.
- 1982-83 SELF IMPOSED HIBERNATION FROM THE ART WORLD  
*Art at Ground Zero: Artist's Statements on Nuclear War*, University of Michigan Residential College, Ann Arbor, Mich.  
*The Black and White Show*, Kenkeleba Gallery, New York, N.Y.  
*Language, Drama, Source, and Vision*, The New Museum, New York, NY  
*Disarming Images: Artists' Statements Against Nuclear War*, Newburger Museum, Purchase, NY [traveling]
- 1984 *A Decade of New Art*, Artists' Space, New York, N.Y.
- 1985 *Tradition and Conflict*, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, N.Y.  
*Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn*, Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna, Austria  
*The Art of Memory/The Loss of History*, The New Museum, New York, NY

#### PERFORMANCES

- 1968 *Meat Into Meat*, Loft Performance, New York, N.Y.
- 1970 *Untitled*, Max's Kansas City, New York, N.Y. Streetworks, New York, N.Y.
- 1970-71 *Catalysis Series*, Streets of New York, N.Y.
- 1971 *Streetworks II*, New York, N.Y.  
*Food for the Spirit*, Private Loft Performance, New York, N.Y.
- 1971-73 *Untitled Streetworks*, Streets of New York, N.Y.
- 1972 *Two Untitled Streetworks*, Rochester, NY
- 1973 *Untitled Streetwork*, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI.  
*Being Mythic on the Street*, for Adrian Piper: "The Mythic Being," in *Other Than Art's Sake*, a film by Peter Kennedy
- 1975 *Some Reflective Surfaces*, The Fine Arts Building, New York, NY
- 1976 *Some Reflective Surfaces*, The Whitney Museum, New York, N.Y.  
*The Mythic Being*, Streets of Cambridge, Mass.
- 1977 *Danke(sehr)schon*, Kurfürstendamm, West Berlin, West Germany
- 1978 *Collegium Academicum Freischrei*, Hauptstrasse, Heidelberg, West Germany
- 1980 *Its Just Art*, Allen Memorial Museum, Oberlin, Ohio  
*Its Just Art*, Contemporary Art Institute of Detroit, Detroit, Mich.  
*Its Just Art*, Wright Gallery, Dayton, Ohio
- 1981 *Its Just Art*, The Western Front, Vancouver, B.C.  
*Its Just Art*, And/Or, Seattle, Wa.  
*Its Just Art*, Artists' Space, New York, N.Y.  
*Its Just Art*, Penn State University, University Park, Pa.
- 1982 *Wide Receiver*, Streets of Menlo Park, Ca.
- 1983 *Funk Lessons*, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Nova Scotia  
*Funk Lessons*, Walker Art Center and

- the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis, Minn.  
*Funk Lessons*, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, Ca.
- 1984 *Funk Lessons*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, Ca.  
*Funk Lessons*, The Women's Building, Los Angeles, Ca.  
*Funk Lessons*, California Institute of Art, Los Angeles, Ca.  
*Funk Lessons*, New Langton Arts, San Francisco, Ca.
- 1985 *Funk Lessons* (videotape), "What's Cooking VI," Center for Music Experiment, University of California at San Diego, La Jolla, Ca.
- 1986 *My Calling (Card) #1*, Dinner/Cocktail Party Guerilla Performance  
*My Calling (Card) #2*, Disco/Bar Guerilla Performance (Part II of Het Luv)
- FELLOWSHIPS IN ART
- 1979 NEA Visual Artists' Fellowship  
1982 NEA Visual Artists' Fellowship
- CRITICAL REVIEWS
- Perreault, John, "Art," *The Village Voice*, March 27, 1969. 15-17
- Perreault, John, "Art," *The Village Voice*, May 1, 1969. 14-16
- Perreault, John, "Art," *The Village Voice*, June 5, 1969. 1618
- Perreault, John, "Art," *The Village Voice*, November 20, 1969. 34
- Plagens, Peter, "557,086," *Artforum* (November 1969), 67
- Kosuth, Joseph, "Art After Philosophy II," *Studio International* (November 1969), 161
- Perreault, John, "Art," *The Village Voice*, May 14, 1970. 16
- Perreault, John, "Art," *The Village Voice*, July 16, 1970. 31
- Perreault, John, "Art," *The Village Voice*, April 29, 1971. 31
- Lippard, Lucy, "Catalysis: An Interview With Adrian Piper," *NYU Drama Review* (March 1972), 76-78
- Mayer, Rosemary, "Performance and Experience," *Arts* (December 1972), 3336
- Perreault, John, "Art," *The Village Voice*, February 8, 1973. 28
- Crichton, Fennela, "London Newsletter," *Art International XVIII*, 6 (Summer 1974), 42
- Lippard, Lucy, "Johnathan Borofsky at 2,096,974," *Artforum* (November 1974), 63n.
- Serlis, Effie, "Adrian Piper," in *Interviews with Women in the Arts* (New York, N.Y.: School of Visual Arts Press, 1975)
- Lippard Lucy, "Transformation Art," *Ms.* (October 1975), 33-39
- DeAK, Edit, "Pencil Moustache Makes Up," *Art-Rite* 1112 (Winter 1975)
- Frank, Peter, "Performance Diary," *Soho Weekly News*, April 1, 1976. 18
- Lippard, Lucy, "Women's Body Art: The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth," *Art in America* (May/June 1976), 7382
- Goldberg, Roselee, "Recent Performance Work," *Studio International* 191, 1981 (May/June 1976), 288
- Goldberg, Roselee, "Public Performance, Private Memory" (with Laurie Anderson, Julia Heyward, and Adrian Piper), *Studio International* 192, 1982 (July/August 1976), 1923
- Lippard, Lucy, *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art* (New York, N.Y.: ER Dutton, 1976)
- Howell, John, "Exegesis of the Phenomenon of Written Art by Women," *Art-Rite* 14 (Winter 1976-77)
- Lippard, Lucy, "Caring: Five Political Artists," *Studio International* 193, 987 (Summer 1978) 197-207
- GoodeBryant, Linda, and Phillips, Marcy, *Contextures* (New York, N.Y.: Just Above Midtown, 1978), 33
- Kingsley, April, "Art Goes Underground," *The Village Voice*, October 16, 1978. 122
- Frank, Peter, "The Self and Others," *The Village Voice*, November 27, 1978. 102
- Litten, Laura, "Both Sides Now," *New Art Examiner* (April 1979), 13-14
- Hanson, Bernard, "Matrix Art Engages

Spectator," *The Hartford Courant*, Sunday, March 2, 1980. 20

MillerKeller, Andrea, "Adrian Piper," *Matrix 56* (Hartford, Conn.: Wadsworth Atheneum Press, March 1980)

Hirsch, Linda Blaker, "Stretching the Boundaries," *The Hartford Advocate*, March 26, 1980

Phillipot, Clive, "Art Magazines and Magazine Art," *Artforum XVIII*, 6 (February 1980), 5254

Phillipot, Clive, "Talking to Myself," *Art Journal* 39, 3 (Spring 1980), 213-217

Goldberg, Roselee, *Live Art: Performance from 1900 to the Present* (New York, N.Y.: Harry N. Abrams, 1980)

Kohn, Barbara, "Piper in Performance," *Dialogue* (September/October 1980), 9-10

Kuspit, Donald, "Art of Conscience: The Last Decade," *Dialogue* (September/October 1980), 19-20

Jordan, James, "A Critic Reveal(ed)(ing)," *Dialogue* (November-December 1980), pp. 45

Keziere, Russell, "Less Medium, More Message: Adrian Piper," *Vanguard 10*, 4 (May 1981), 36-37

Barber, Bruce, "Adrian Piper," *Parachute* (Summer 1981), 4546

Barber, Bruce, "Performance as Social Intervention: Interview with Adrian Piper," *Parachute* (Fall 1981), 25-28

Green, Ellen R., "Adrian Piper," in *No Title: The Collection of Sol LeWitt*, The Wadsworth Atheneum (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University, 1981)

Phillips, Deborah C., "New Faces in Alternative Spaces," *Art News 80*, (9 November 1981), 99-100

Roth, Moira, "Adrian Piper," in Moira Roth, Ed. *The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance Art in America, 1970-1980* (Los Angeles, Ca.: Astro Artz, 1983)

Borger, Irene, "Funk Lessons: A Guerrilla Performance," *L.A. Weekly*, March 28, 1984. 63-4

Norklun, Kathi, "An Art Problem," *Artweek* 15, 18 (May 5, 1984), 12

Buchanan, Nancy, "Collective Funk," *High Performance 26* (September 1984), 69

Lippard, Lucy, *Get the Message? A Decade of Art for Social Change* (New York, N.Y.: ER Dutton, 1984)

Lasch, Christopher, *The Minimal Self* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1984), 15051

Olander, William, "Art and Politics: Of Arms and the Artist," *Art in America*, June 1985

Fass, Matthew, "Confrontational Art," *The Antioch Record* 14, 17 (May 16, 1986), 8

Irene Borger, "The Funk Lessons of Adrian Piper," *Helicon Nine 14-15* (1986), 150-53

Elizabeth Hess, "Art Apocalypse," *The Village Voice*, October 28, 1986. 94

#### PUBLICATIONS IN ART AND ART CRITICISM

"Untitled," *O to 9* (New York, N.Y.: O to 9 Press, December 1968), No. 5

"Untitled," *O to 9* (New York, N.Y.: O to 9 Press, July 1969), No. 6

"Untitled," *Streetworks* (New York, N.Y.: O to 9 Press, July 1969)

"Untitled," *Art Press* (New York, N.Y.: Art Press, August 1969), No. 1

"Three Models of Art Production Systems," in *Information* (New York, N.Y.: The Museum of Modern Art, 1970); also reprinted in *Conceptual Art*, Ed. Ursula Meyer (New York, N.Y.: ER Dutton, 1972)

"Untitled," *Free Media Bulletin* (London: Ted Hawke Press, 1971), No. 12

"Groups," [collated by Lucy Lippard], *Studio International* (March 1970), 95

"An Ongoing Essay," *Art and Artists* (March 1972), 42-46

"Selections from An Ongoing Essay," in *Six Years: The De-materialization of the Art Object*, Ed. Lucy Lippard (New York, N.Y.: Praeger, 1973)

"Untitled," in *Six Years: The De-materialization of the Art Object*, Ed. Lucy Lippard (New York, N.Y.: Praeger, 1973)

"Withdrawal Statement [from the New York Cultural Center]," in *Six Years: The Demateriali-*

zation of the Art Object, Ed. Lucy Lippard (New York, N.Y.: Praeger, 1973)

"In Support of MetaArt," *Artforum XII*, 2 (October 1973), 7981

"A Political Statement," *Art-Rite 6* (Summer 1974)

"Notes on the Mythic Being," *Tri-Quarterly* (Winter 1974)

*Talking to Myself: The Ongoing Autobiography of An Art Object* (Bari, Italy: Marilena Bonomo, 1975; English-Italian); also (Brussels, Belgium: Fernand Spillemaeckers, 1974; English-French)

"To Art (Reg. Intrans. V.)," *The Fox 1*, 1 (1975)

"A Proposal for Pricing Works of Art," *The Fox 1*, 2, (1975)

"The Mythic Being: I/You (Her)," in *Individuals: Post-Movement Art*, Ed. Alan Sondheim (New York, N.Y.: E. R Dutton, 1976)

"Notes on the Mythic Being, 111," in *Individuals: Post-Movement Art*, Ed. Alan Sondheim (New York, N.Y.: ER Dutton, 1976)

"Some Reflective Surfaces," *Sun and Moon 2* (Spring 1976), 1820

"Untitled (1968)," in *Essaying Essays: Alternative Forms of Exposition*, Ed. Richard Kostelanetz (New York, N.Y.: Out of London Press, 1976)

"Untitled (1969)," in *Essaying Essays: Alternative Forms of Exposition*, Ed. Richard Kostelanetz (New York, N.Y.: Out of London Press, 1976)

"Cheap Art Utopia," *ArtRite 14* (Winter 1976-77), 1112

"I Embody," in *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art*, by Lucy Lippard (New York, N.Y.: ER Dutton, 1976)

"This Is Not A Documentation Of A Performance," *Studio International 193*, 987 (Summer 1978), 200201

"Arty and Illiterate in Berlin," *Art-Rite 20* (forthcoming)

"Critics' Delight," in *A Critical Assembling*, Ed. Richard Kostelanetz (New York, N.Y.: Participation Project Foundation, 1979)

"Political Self-Portrait #2 (Race)," (text only), *Heresies 2: Third World Women*, 4 (1979), 37-38

"Where's the Art?" *Matrix 56: Adrian Piper* (Hartford, Conn.: Wadsworth Atheneum, 1980)

"Is the Alternative Space a True Alternative?" (compiled by Rudolph Baranik), *Studio International 195*, 990 (1980), 72

"Political Self-Reflections (July 1980)," *Issue* (London: Institute of Contemporary Art, November 1980)

"Some Thoughts on the Political Character of This Situation," *Art of Conscience* (Dayton, Ohio: Wright University, 1980)

"Untitled Art-Political Meditation," *The Village Voice* (February 4, 1981), 62

"Food for the Spirit," *High Performance 4*, 1 (Spring 1981)

"It's Just Art," *High Performance 4*, 1 (Spring 1981)

"Ideology, Confrontation, and Political Self-Awareness: An Essay," *High Performance 4*, 1 (Spring 1981)

"Performance and the Fetishism of the Art Object," *Vanguard 10*, 10 (December 1981/January 1982), 1619; reprinted in Bruce Barber, Ed. *Essays on Performance and Cultural Politicization: Open Letter 5-6*, Fifth Series (Summer/Fall 1983), 717

"Critical Hegemony and the Division of Labor in Art," Position Paper for the Visual Arts Seminar on Art Criticism, September 1920, 1983, *Proceedings of the National Endowment for the Arts 1983* (Washington, D.C.: The National Endowment for the Arts, 1984)

"Letter to Thomas McEvilley," *Artforum XXII*, 2 (October 1983), 23

"Selected Funk Lessons: A Page Project by Adrian Piper," *Artforum XXII*, 5 (January 1984), 64

"Notes on Funk, I IV," in *On Art*, Ed. Rudolph Baranik (forthcoming)

"A Tale of Avarice and Poverty," (text), *White Walls* (forthcoming)

"Deutschland über sich," 1, 1 (forthcoming)