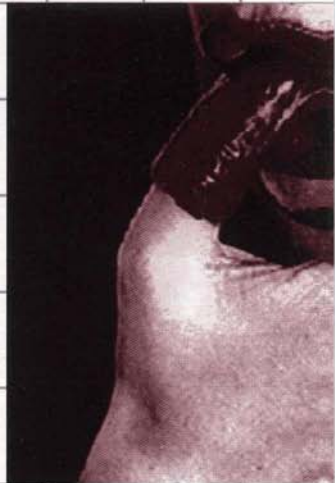


S u n n y

S i d e U p :

New Works by Hilla Lulu Lin

September 18 –



October 29, 1999

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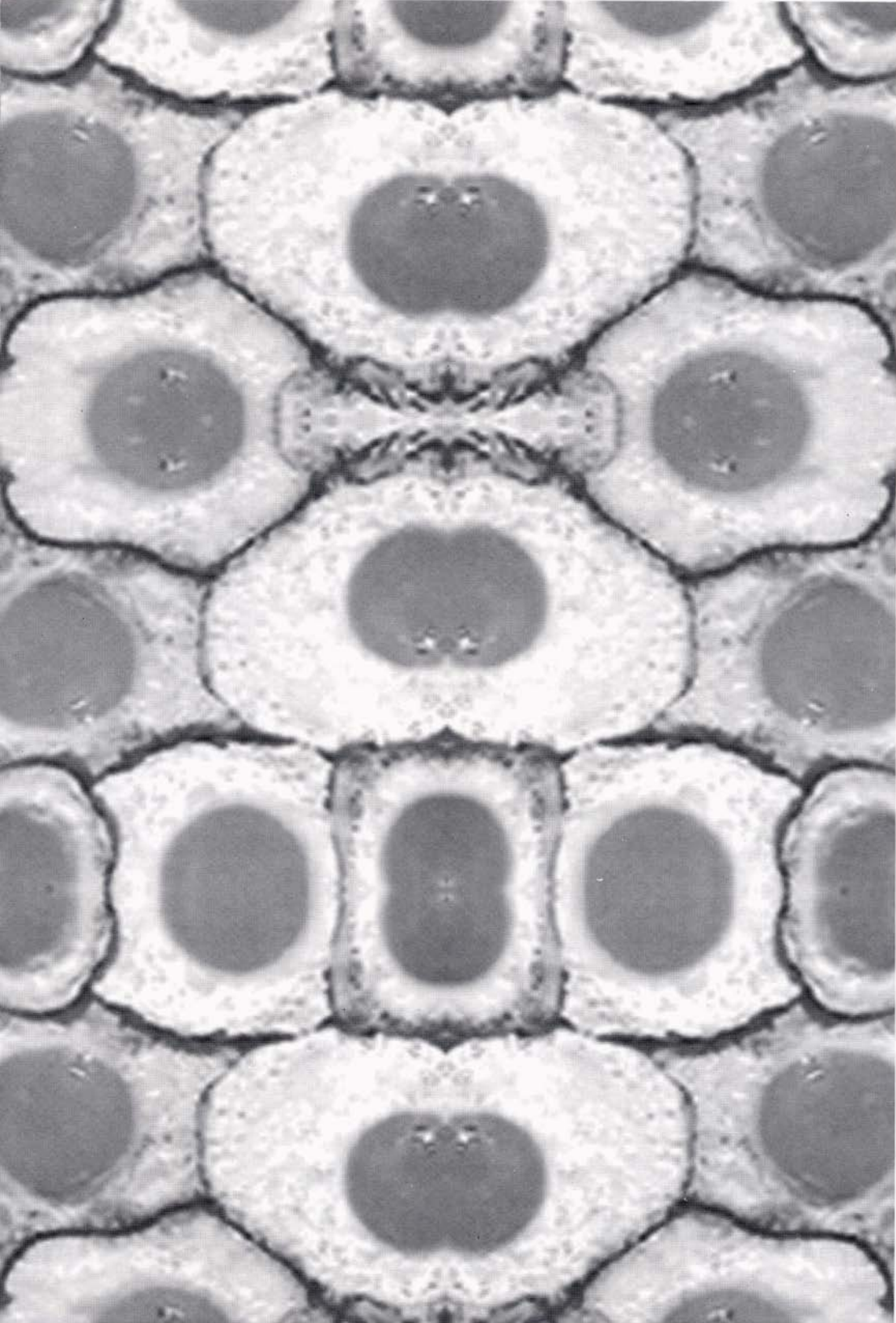
**HALLWALLS**

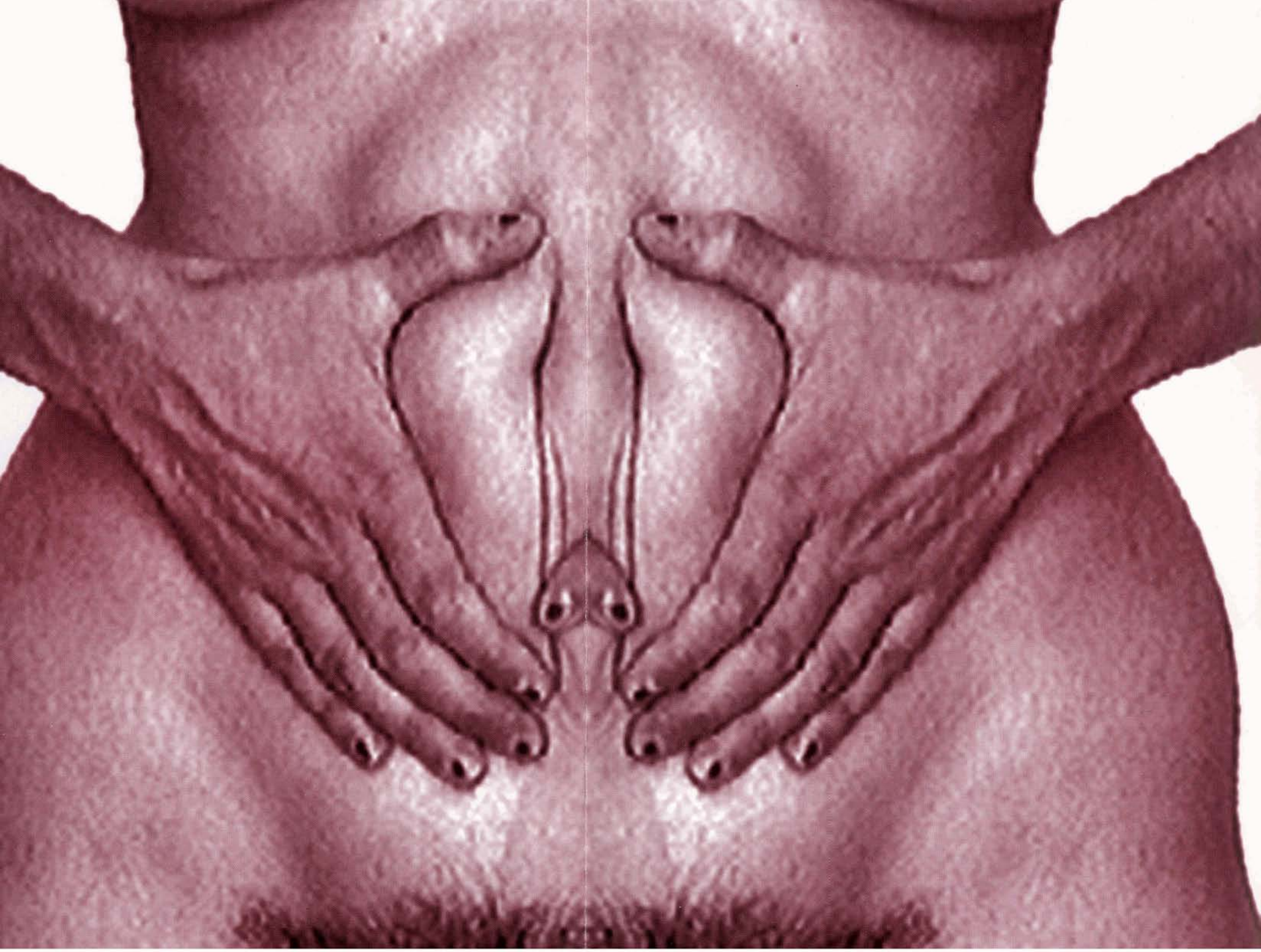
2495 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214 716.835.7362

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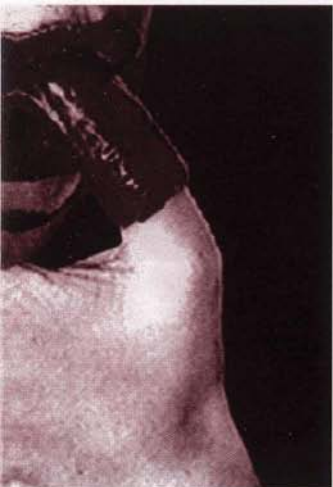
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S u n n y   S i d e   U p :   N e w   W o r k s   b y   H i l l a   L u l u   L i n





Hilla Lulu Lin's artist residency through the Hallwalls Artist in Residence Project (HARP) was supported by grants from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts and Chase Manhattan. Lin's residency was supported by an additional grant from the Consulate General of Israel in New York.



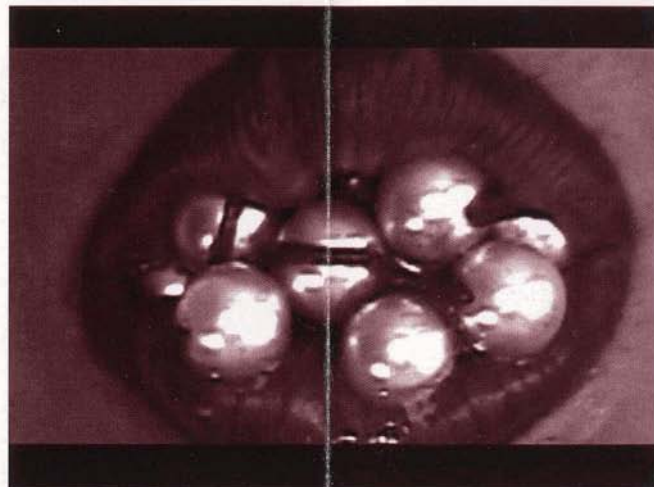
*Use Everyday and When Entertaining*  
1999 VHS:47:00

Major support for the 1999-2000 season has been provided by the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), a state agency, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, County of Erie Cultural Funding, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), a federal agency, the Members of Hallwalls, City of Buffalo Cultural Funding, Chase Manhattan Bank, the , and generous donations from individuals and local businesses.

Hilla Lulu Lin, one of the most highly recognized young artists in Israel, has created a new series of works as a part of the Hallwalls Artist in Residence Project. Much of her work is centered on the body, often using herself as both subject and object in her video, photo, installation, poetry and performance work. The works presented here articulate a language of physical sensation that is transmitted wholesale to the viewer. Her work is a highly personal exploration of how the body can be manipulated, what happens when it comes into contact with objects, and what these objects evoke.

In the first room is a tile floor printed with eggs, in the second, a large-scale digital print of the artist's torso. The eggs are larger than life, larger than a chicken could produce—more human sized in their scale. The egg without its shell is exposed, prone to being consumed, sunshine yellow orbs surrounded by the white. We are invited to tread over what we would usually be eating, to walk through a field of eggs. Standing on top of this work is a dizzying experience, simultaneously distanced by the height of our eyes from the floor, and made intimate by contact with the feet. Standing amongst thousands of them, we are at the center of life—cell division and growth, the womb—an interior view of bodies.

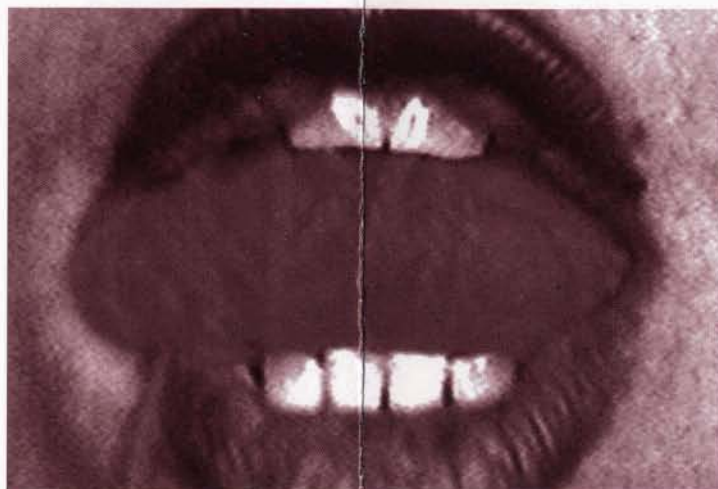
Lin has used eggs and egg yolks before in works such as *No More Tears* (1994) In this video, Lin rolls an egg yolk in her mouth, passes it to her arm, and gently rolls the yolk down her arm, through her interlaced hands and up her arm again to her mouth. Each of the videos here focus on the mouth; a site of eating, speech, and pleasure now also the entrance to a netherworld, a devouring amimus.



*Remember Personality is Very Important* 1999 VHS:60:00

The videos are presented in four, 20 foot long viewing hallways, two hugging the right wall of the gallery, one bisecting the gallery, and one on the left. They are narrow enough to allow only one or two people at a time, and each is entered awkwardly, at a corner or just before the entrance to another one of the galleries. Each enclosed space is completely coated with the lipstick red Lin wears in many of her digital photo works. Red, the color of blood, fire and revolutionaries. The color of Venus, theater chairs, and, according to Kandinsky, a color that sounds like trumpets. The dark and venous interiors are lit by the glow of the video monitor at the end. The monitor is set close to the ground, its screen pointing upwards so one is forced to enter the corridor to see the image. It entices an intimacy with the work, lures one into the dark, and envelops you before curiosity can be satisfied.

In the first video, titled *We Select the Face You Select the Rest* (1999) Lin rolls an egg yolk in her mouth. Her open lips, painted the red of seduction, fill the small television screen. She manipulates the yolk with her tongue, its tip rising and lowering like a wave revealing its bluish underside. The yellow yolk slides from teeth to throat, bulging from the lips then disappearing behind the tongue. At first, it's curious, the egg rolls again, again, and again to the back of the mouth. The skin of the egg slowly started to digest, saliva pooled under the tongue, and rivulets poured out. In *Remember Personality is Very Important* (1999), Lin works at a tangled strand of cheap pearls, chewing, gnawing and endlessly working away at an undigestible thing. Sometimes the lips close—did she swallow them?—and then the beads come out from her teeth, slipping out of the mouth (for a moment looking like a molecular model), then back into the mouth for more fruitless mastication. In the only work that also includes the hands, *Use Everyday and When Entertaining* (1999), the hands are red talons, encased in red peppers, like nails grown gnarled as a tree trunk. The motion of the fingers is arachnid, like legs moving independently of one another. One by one, their tips are bitten off. Slowly, deliberately, each of the talons are nibbled and sliced by the teeth down to nothing, revealing human fingertips, then the whole finger. The final work, *She Can Move Like I Move* (1999), wound pink wool fills red painted lips. The lipstick on the bottom lip is progressively worn away as the yarn is pulled from the mouth, dragging across the lower lip to make a constant channel of skin, the lips and chin reddening with the constant abrasion. Taking an object unexpectedly into the mouth transmits a powerful physical experience, a simultaneous pleasure and disgust.



*She Can Move Like I Move* 1999 VHS:54:00

A large-scale digital image on the back wall is at first hidden by the central video viewing corridor. Rounding the corner, *Absolute Naked* stretches the entire length of the back wall, billboard big, the pixelations of the original video exaggerated by the scale. It's an 11 foot high picture of the artist's belly, her hands pushing the flesh to the center, making long folds and knobs of flesh at the abdomen, the skin a clay manipulated vulviform. It's striking, at first calling to mind works by Hannah Wilke and Vito Acconci. Sexual and iconic, with a title lifted from a popular advertising campaign, *Absolute Naked* used the simplest of techniques to create parallels between cells and pixels, and create new responses to women's bodies.

The work is made by the bloodless bytes of digital manipulation, an image of the artist cut in half and mirrored, making possible the impossible folds of skin.

Once the method of its making is clear, the image is simple. It strikes powerful notes in the psyche, made a potent illusion of the real made by digital technology. It suggests ancient terrors inspired by women's bodies and reproductive capabilities (e.g. vagina dentata and taboos around pregnancy and menstruation) and hints at contemporary issues such as genetic engineering, cloning, and fetal tissue research. Where cells divide, things change, and new forms can arise from our familiar bodies. Who has the power to make the decisions around how human matter is used?

In describing these works, Lin said that she initially thinks of them purely visually, and that the process of making the works includes manifesting them with integrity to the medium, as seen in the retaining of the pixel in all of these works. The words come later. For example, in Lin's thinking eggs are "eggs without their shells," not "broken eggs." Many of Lin's titles come from outside sources, such as Sunny Side Up, from a common phrase. Use Every Day and When Entertaining from a box of sugar cubes, or Remember Personality is Very Important from a mail order catalogue for dolls made to look like a living person. The experience of looking at visual art is almost always accompanied by words: titles, a text such as this, a write up in the newspaper afterwards, and discussion by those looking at it. But then there are wordless moments of visuality, of drinking in an image or color or thing with the eyes, of seeing something so moving or so shocking that the response comes long before any words or logic. Lin stages environments for our physical and emotional responses, unfolding the visual and the visceral.

Sara Kellner / Visual Arts Director / 9.9.99



*We Select The Face You Select The Rest*

All of the works in this exhibition were produced in Buffalo as a part of the Hallwalls Artist in Residence Project (HARP). Thank you to Chris Borkowski, Hal Leader at Printing Prep, Joseph Scheer at SUCC at Alfred University; Craig Centrié, from El Museo Francisco Oller y Diego Rivera; Don Keller of Keller Graphics; Michael Bauman, Leah Rico, Dina Shoam, and Meg Knowles and the Department for Media Study at the University at Buffalo.