



Losing Yourself in the 21st Century

October-November 2009: Welch School Gallery, Georgia State University, Atlanta

February-March 2010: Maryland Art Place, Baltimore

Blog site: losingyourself.com

Exhibition Projects:

Katherine Behar, New York | Amber Boardman, New York | Milana Braslavsky, Baltimore | Kate Hers, Berlin/LA | Noelle Mason, Tampa | Shana Moulton, Brooklyn | Renetta Sitoy, Bay Area, CA | Pamela Phatsimo Sunstrum, Baltimore | Amber Hawk Swanson, New York | Stacia Yeapanis, Chicago | Saya Woolfalk, New York

Public Performances:

Susan Lee-Chun, Miami [MAP] and Ali Prosch, Los Angeles [GSU]

Curators:

Cathy Byrd, Executive Director, Maryland Art Place

Jillian Hernandez, Doctoral student, Women's and Gender Studies, Rutgers University

Susan Richmond, Assistant Professor of Art History, GSU Welch School of Art & Design

Losing Yourself in the 21st Century is shaped by our experience of a cultural landscape that is simultaneously unrestrained and prescriptive. Web-based media allow us to establish flexible and diverse notions of self and community through social networking and blogs. At the same time, these technologies regulate new spheres of conduct—obliging us to assume multiple identities with individual user names and passwords. Within this context, traditional distinctions between private and public, self-empowerment and self-surveillance, consumerism and activism have dissolved. A loss of “self” has become somewhat inevitable, a circumstance both desirable and disturbing. Not confined to the virtual world, these dynamics of identity production play out visibly in all spheres of contemporary life.

How, we ask, are young women artists negotiating this terrain? How are they approaching the subject of identity and self-representation in the 21st century?

We created the site *losingyourself.com* to address these questions and invited postings by women artists from around the country. Their responses were immediate and passionate, and the ensuing online dialogues and conceptual connections were rewarding. As curators, we became especially interested in projects that engaged the idea of “loss of self” through new media technologies and representations of gendered subjectivity in popular culture.

Artists selected for the *Losing Yourself* exhibition represent those strands of inquiry. Diverse in both concept and technique, their works re-imagine, reconfigure and re-contextualize the contemporary self from a gendered point of view. While offering no solution to the predicament of 21st century identity, these young women articulate attendant issues in ways that resonate with all of us.

*The Maryland State Arts Council, Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts and National Endowment for the Arts, along with community, corporate and foundation supporters of Maryland Art Place, provide funding for MAP's presentation of **Losing Yourself** exhibition and programming. Georgia State University's Center for Collaborative and International Arts, the GSU Student Activity Fee Fund and the Fulton County Arts Council funded exhibition and programming at GSU's Welch School Gallery.*



maryland art place
mdartplace.org
410.962.8565 | cathybyrd@mdartplace.org