

Selected Bibliography

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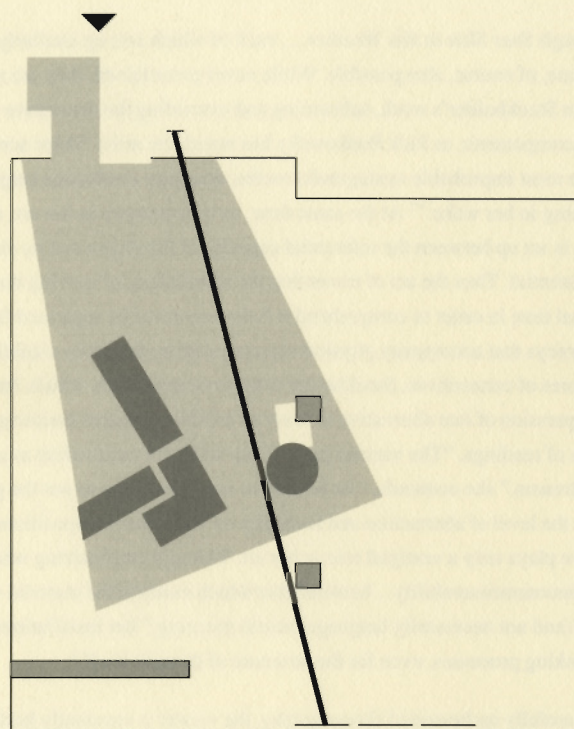
Jessica Stockholder: Sweet for Three Oranges. Barcelona: Sala Montcada de la Fundacio "La Caixa," 1995. Essays by Jessica Stockholder and Jeffrey Swartz.

Jessica Stockholder. London: Phaidon, 1995. Essays by Lynne Cooke, Barry Schwabsky, and Jessica Stockholder, interview by Lynne Tillman with Jessica Stockholder.

Born in Seattle, Washington, in 1959, Jessica Stockholder was brought up in Vancouver, Canada. After graduating from the University of Victoria, British Columbia, in 1982, she studied sculpture at Yale University between 1983 and 1985 before moving to New York City. She has exhibited widely in the United States and Europe with works that range from drawings and collages to autonomous sculptures and monumental installations.

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Site Map



Materials

Plastic stacking crates, stuffed shirts, pillows, papier-mâché, yarn, carpet, concrete, lamps, yellow electric cords, swimming pool liner, steel, paint, and miscellaneous building materials.

JESSICA STOCKHOLDER

Your Skin in this Weather Bourne Eye-Threads & Swollen Perfume

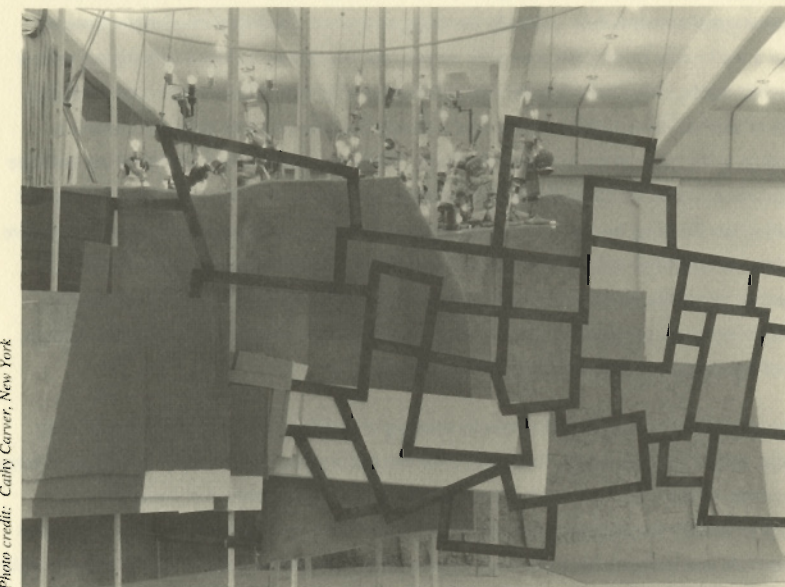


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DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

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548 West 22nd Street, New York City

Your Skin in this Weather Bourne Eye-Threads & Swollen Perfume

Even before entering the lobby, one's attention is snared by the shrill green swathe surging across the floor. Brooking neither delay nor deviation, it solicits, entices, and propels the viewer into the installation. By following the lime linoleum, the threshold is breached and one has not only entered the gallery but is already within Stockholder's massive, monumental construction—already on stage, as it were. Funneled irresistibly forward past a wall made from a luscious pink carpet, one negotiates a cluster of hanging yellow electric cords, sidles between the vast cubic mass of purple plastic crates and a bulging pile of stuffed shirts lightly resting like a plump Buddha on a low pedestal, finally to emerge at the edge of the concrete platform. While one's eye may keep traveling with the adjacent metal beam through the three transparent windows to be arrested at last by the wall of the building beyond, one's feet hesitate in front of the jarring planes of declarative color—dried blood red and vitreous lemon yellow—which open up ahead. From this vantage point, the incursions into the fabric of the building reveal themselves clearly: temporary walls propped by makeshift studs, partition walls breached to reveal storage, steel beams penetrating into neighboring spaces...

The mixture of materials and elements relating to building and to furnishing—plaster, paint, carpet, electric cords, linoleum, even the excavation that discloses the lath and inner structure of the wall—proves both consistent with and, arguably, determined by the need to modify the architecture in order to realize a site-specific project. However, these materials and artifacts have not been employed in conventional ways: they playfully make reference to the notion of an in-situ installation while, in fact, operating according to a more autonomous and abstract formal logic.

A retreat to a clear zone in order to survey the whole from a safe distance reveals an unexpected stasis, harmony, and resolution. For the installation coheres as the spectator adjusts to a new role, from agent in a putative drama to observer of a pictorial display spread under a canopy of yellow cords. This transition from immersion to overview, from engagement to contemplation, is, literally, physically acted out in the shift from the interior to the exterior of a work that embodies Stockholder's most forceful polarizing of these dual types of experience to date.

Yet it is difficult in *Your Skin in this Weather Bourne Eye-Threads & Swollen Perfume*, as always in Stockholder's art, to separate the actual and experiential from the evoked and invoked, to mark, that is, the boundary between physical and mental space. "My work often arrives in the world like an idea arrives in your mind," she contends. "You don't

quite know where it came from or when it got put together, nevertheless it's possible to take it apart and see that it has an internal logic. I'm trying," she avers, "to get closer to thinking processes as they exist before the idea is fully formed."¹

Other routes through *Your Skin in this Weather*..., each of which sets up similarly complex transformations, are, of course, also possible. While never preordained, they are nonetheless encouraged in Stockholder's work, subsuming and overriding the denotative sense of the individual components; as Jack Bankowsky has noted, the artist "skips across the surface by the most improbable syntagmatic routes, dragging a nebulous cargo of dissembled meaning in her wake."² At the same time, as is customary in her art, a signature tension is set up between the referential capacity of the object and its more purely abstract potential. Thus the act of traversing the installation, of moving through real space in actual time in order to comprehend it fully, can never be separated from the metaphorical journeys that accompany physical circumlocution. In part by establishing such elusive textures of connectives, Stockholder achieves a resolution, which, far from requiring the suppression of one alternative in favor of another, conjures meanings amid the disintegration of readings. "The various parts of my work are multivalent as are the various parts of dreams," she contends, "At best there are many ways to put the parts together."³ Given the level of abstraction and formality on which her compositions function, narrative plays only a vestigial role in her art. Through emphasizing what David Pagel terms "the incommensurability...between that which exists in the material world and its unfixable (and not necessarily language-based) meaning," her installations become analogues for thinking processes, even for the structure of thought itself.⁴

Navigating this carefully orchestrated choreography, the viewer is constantly beckoned by the appearance of unexpected features, coaxed forward by the introduction of novel color accents or of new chromatic relationships in a schema that boldly counterpoints a myriad of hues. *Your Skin in this Weather*..., offering neither an immediate overview nor a single encompassing vantage point, memorably embodies Stockholder's proclivity for a sequence of perceptual, visceral, and somatic experiences based in change, relativity, and variation.

Contingent, charged, but unforced, the conjunction of domestic and construction materials with "abstract" elements in this installation approximates as much a mental projection or an imaginative construct as a scenographic model. On one level provisional, even hypothetical, on another it is obdurately present, concretely rooted in the space, tied and tethered to the physical fabric of the building. At once literal and fictive, it eloquently bears out the artist's claim that "the knowledge that we have invented our world does not erase the possibility that we might believe in it."⁵

Lynne Cooke

1. Jessica Stockholder, "Interview with Klaus Ottmann," *The Journal of Contemporary Art* 5, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1991), p. 100.

2. Jack Bankowsky, "The Obligatory Bed Piece: Jessica Stockholder," *Artforum* 29, no. 2 (October 1990), p. 142.

3. Stockholder, "Interview with Klaus Ottmann," p. 100.

4. David Pagel, "Jessica Stockholder," *Arts Magazine* 66, no. 2 (October 1991), p. 89.

5. Quoted in Robert Nickas, "The State of Things: Questions to Three Object Conscious Artists," *Flash Art* 153 (March–April 1990), p. 132.