

Valerie Hammond
Curated by Kiki Smith

April 27 – June 3, 2006

(Opening Reception: Thursday, April 27, 6-8pm)

“Valerie’s work exists in a glimmer, in the periphery, slightly away or out of vision, in a kind of magical realm in the musty undergrowth at the edge of our gardens.”

— Kiki Smith



Madril, 2006
Transfer, pencil and wax on paper, 38 1/2" x 25". Photo credit: andywinright.com

Valerie Hammond has always been drawn to places and objects that are full of mystery. The expressive and devotional qualities of church shrines, ex-votos, and Asian art ranging from Tibetan medical drawings to Buddhist sculptures serve as inspiration for the artist. As spiritual objects, they possess the ability to impart on the viewer a sense of enchantment grounded by human connectivity, and this offering of transformation echoes Hammond’s desire to record both the tangible and elusive aspects of the human condition in her work.

On view at CUE, Hammond’s over 30 current works on paper and site-specific installation explore the emotional, physical, and psychological properties of gesture as essential qualities of portraiture. In Hammond’s grouping of portraits of close friends, the artist conveys her subject’s essence by focusing exclusively on heads and hands — the most expressive parts of the body. She initially renders onto paper either the actual gesture of the sitter or the subject’s recorded imprint, then submerges the drawing in wax, and continues applying further layers of

imagery derived from organic materials such as ferns, vines, and twigs. In her highly tactile visual translations, textures and properties of chosen materials often take on human, physical attributes and at times, threads and beads directly sewn onto the surface heighten the corporeal effect of her patterning. The delicate pencil and gouache renderings of flowers drawn on tissue-thin, gampi paper that comprise the series, *Pieces of Woe* (2006), quietly emerge layer-by-layer as intricate mandelas and profound metaphors for the body’s decay and healing processes. In the site-specific work, *Substance of a Dream* (2006), Hammond translates her ephemeral memories into tangible forms, patterns, and shadows. Mask-like faces, constructed out of paper or lucite and embedded with images and words derived from the artist’s dreams, journals, and collection of old anonymous photographs are combined to convey an open mediation on the passing of time.



Substance of a Dream (detail), 2006
Mixed media, Dimensions variable. Photo credit: andywinright.com

Through Hammond’s layering process, moments, memories, dreams, and references to the power of touch become profound psychological markers with which to convey both the physical and emotional connections she shares with her subjects.

(Cont.)

Artist Bio:

Valerie Hammond was born in Santa Maria, California. She received her MFA from the University of California at Berkeley, where she was awarded the Eisner Award. Upon graduation she moved to New York City and subsequently, was appointed to her first teaching position through the Cleveland Institute of Art in Lacoste, France. She lived in France on and off for the next three years. Upon returning to New York, she began teaching inner city school children art part time through the Studio in a School program. Hammond has taught printmaking at Columbia University, New York University, the Yale Norfolk Program; drawing at Cooper Union School of Art, and has been a visiting art critic at RISD. Most recently, she has had exhibitions in Madrid, New Zealand, New Delhi, as well as the M% Gallery in Cleveland, OH, The Lisa Sette Gallery in Scottsdale, AZ, and Weber State University, in Ogden, UT. Hammond lives and works in the Lower East Side of New York City with her husband and two children.

This exhibition is supported in part by **Agnes Gund & Daniel Shapiro**. This exhibition also received support from the **Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Manhattan Community Arts Fund**.

Related Public Program: Eleanor Heartney & Irving Sandler Book Signings
Thursday, May 18th, 7:00-8:30pm at CUE

Exhibition Curator Eleanor Heartney

Defending Complexity: Art, Politics and the New World Order, 2006 (Hard Press Editions)

Examining the question of whether art has affected social consciousness over the last ten years, Heartney's essays deal with the failures and successes of art committed to social change. Taken together, they present a plea for complexity in Contemporary Art and in our understanding of that art.

Eleanor Heartney is an internationally published art critic and cultural commentator. She is the author of *Critical Condition: American Culture at the Crossroads*; *Postmodern Heretics: The Catholic Imagination in Contemporary Art*; and *Postmodernism (Movements in Modern Art)*. Her essays appear regularly in such publications as *Art in America*, *Artpress*, and the *New York Times*.

CUE Advisory Council Member Irving Sandler

From Avant Garde to Pluralism: An On-The-Spot History, 2006 (Hard Press Editions)

This collection of Sandler's seminal writings, from 1950 to the present, chronicle the sweeping changes in Modern Art, from Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art and Minimalism of 1950's and 60's—to Pluralism, which has dominated the art world for the last thirty years.

Irving Sandler's influential career within the field of visual arts for over the last fifty years has included serving as a champion of emerging artists; art critic; professor of art history and criticism; and arts administrator. Emerging as a critical voice in the 50s and 60s, Mr. Sandler's published writings have encompassed a broad spectrum of contemporary art, including ground-breaking monographs on Alex Katz and Mark Di Suvero. Recent publication includes, *A Sweeper-Up After Artists: A Memoir* (Thames & Hudson, 2003).

ABOUT CUE: CUE Art Foundation, a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization, provides educational and professional development programs in the visual arts. These include student internships, stipends, exhibitions, public lectures, and an in-gallery studio program, all of which draw from the talents and experience of the diverse community of artists, art critics, and teachers that the Foundation brings together.

CUE's exhibition season gives unknown or under-recognized artists public and professional exposure comparable to that offered by neighboring commercial galleries, without the usual financial restraints. The Advisory Council, an honorary group of artists and leading figures from the arts education, applied arts, art history, and literary communities, has the responsibility of selecting exhibition curators. The curators, in turn, nominate artists to exhibit at CUE, and continue to play a role throughout the exhibition process. Both the Advisory Council and the exhibition curators actively participate in the public lectures and educational programs.

CUE Art Foundation is supported in part by public funds from the New York Department of Cultural Affairs and the New York State Council on the Arts through the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and the Experimental Television Center.

For additional information, please contact Beatrice Wolert-Weese, Programs Coordinator, CUE Art Foundation, 212 206-3583, or email beatrice.wolert@cueartfoundation.org. Gallery hours: Tues. – Sat., 10am – 6pm.