

## CONNECTIONS GUIDE

# MILDRED LANE KEMPER ART MUSEUM

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS



Constructing Roberta Breitmore  
*Lynn Hirschman 1975*  
① Lighten with Dior eyestick light. ② "Peach Blush" Cheekcolor by Revlon. ③ Brown contour makeup by Cory. ④ Shape lips with brush, fill in with "Date Mate" scarlet. 5. Blond wig. ⑥ Ultra Blue eyeshadow by Max Factor. ⑦ Maybelline black liner top and bottom. ⑧ \$7.98 three piece dress. ⑨ Creme Beige liquid makeup by Artmatic.

# Beauty and the Blonde.

An Exploration of American Art and Popular Culture.



November 16, 2007–January 28, 2008



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### Cover:

*left*

**Lynn Hershman Leeson**

*Construction Chart #1, 1975, from Roberta Breitmore*

*lower right*

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*Pushing Lipstick (Full Profile), 1979*

*lower left*

**Nikki S. Lee**

*The Hip Hop Project (I), 2001*

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed as a companion to the special exhibition *Beauty and the Blonde: An Exploration of American Art and Popular Culture*. Its primary aim is to facilitate a sense of open discovery, encouraging visitors to explore the exhibition and make connections among various works of art. The themes, topics, and discussion questions in this resource are provided as a starting point for such discovery, facilitating the process of looking and making meaning of selected works in this exhibition.

In conjunction with its focus on the *Beauty and the Blonde* exhibition, this guide also links to the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum's school and community program entitled "On the Outside: Rethinking Identity through American Art and Literature." The aim of this program is to open dialogues regarding issues of identity, beauty, and physical appearance, specifically focusing on the strategies that specific artists adopt to critically address these and other aspects of representation. The sections of this guide that relate to "On the Outside"—which include a description of the program and the colored side boxes—can be used by teachers and visiting community groups as well as anyone interested in exploring this exhibition in new and different ways.

This guide was prepared by Michael Murawski, coordinator of education and public programs at the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum. The exhibition overview and information on individual works of art are based on the essay by Curator Catharina Manchanda in the *Beauty and the Blonde* exhibition brochure, unless otherwise noted.

# Beauty and the Blonde

*An Exploration of American Art and Popular Culture*

Definitions of beauty are subject to change, always measured against a concept of perfection. Throughout its long history in Western culture, “the blonde” has developed as a symbol of beauty replete with competing meanings.

Images of blonde women tend to instantly evoke associations with youth, virtue, and purity, or with illicit sexual pleasure. Both legacies continued in the first half of the twentieth century, when the iconographic blonde vamp and the youthful, innocent blonde circulated prominently in popular novels and movies of the time.

In the increasingly commercial culture of the 1950s and early 1960s, the ascent of the blonde as a desirable image of feminine beauty was further aided by the aggressive promotion and growing social acceptability of blonde hair coloring. Women’s magazines and daytime television programs were increasingly dedicated to questions of physical appearance—interspersing articles with advertisements and programs with commercials—and the image of the blonde became a vital part of the “American Dream.”

In this context, the blonde was redefined as an iconic ideal, in part due to the influential role of Hollywood superstar Marilyn Monroe. Through her repertoire of poses, many borrowed from pin-up conventions, Monroe’s sensuous female body (wrapped in tight, revealing clothing) combined with a sweet, charming, and vulnerable persona, making an explicitly sexual rendering of the blonde more acceptable on screen and in print media. The industrious, devoted, and unerotic blonde housewife stood out as the antithesis of the seductive blonde bombshell, rooted in traditional family values but now equipped with modern household appliances. Stereotypes such as these, examples of which are showcased in the entrance to the exhibition, provided ample material for a variety of artistic efforts in the 1960s and ensuing decades.

Organized into three sections—“The Iconic Blonde,” “Deconstructing the Blonde,” and “Transforming the Blonde”—the exhibition brings into focus how artists since the 1960s have directly or indirectly utilized a variety of blonde stereotypes to reevaluate and revisualize concepts of feminine beauty in America. From Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein to Cindy Sherman, Nikki Lee, and Ellen Gallagher, artists have deployed representations of the blonde for their own creative purposes. In the 1960s, as part of a project to challenge elitist notions of high art, artists appropriated depictions of the blonde from popular culture to critique conventions of portraiture and the nude, provocatively inscribing the commodified blonde for aesthetic consideration within art.

In the 1970s and 1980s, feminist thought and conceptual strategies inspired many artists to use the image of the blonde to scrutinize the construction of visual conventions in popular media. For artists of color, the delimiting power of the blonde has enabled reflections about racial difference as well as self-transformation. Together, the artworks gathered here invite us to distinguish more clearly between specific blonde types and to see the image of the blonde—its ability to reduce and also seduce—with more open, discerning eyes.

# On the Outside

*Rethinking Identity and Physical Appearance through American Art and Literature*

The Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum is offering a school and community learning program in conjunction with *Beauty and the Blonde* to stimulate meaningful connections between art, literature, and contemporary life.

Building on the success of the NEA Big Read program during spring 2007, the Museum is continuing to promote unique learning experiences through art and literature. This program aims to openly explore issues of identity, beauty, and physical appearance as well as the range of strategies that artists adopt to critically address certain representations in popular culture.

The Museum has selected two short stories in American literature—Zora Neale Hurston’s “How It Feels to Be Colored Me” and Sandra Cisneros’s “Barbie-Q”—to connect to selected artworks in the exhibition. First published in 1928, Hurston’s famous essay recounts her experiences as a young girl, describing the moment she becomes aware of being colored. Her essay sharply challenges the relationship between identity and physical appearance, and it continues to raise poignant questions about what it means to be different. Similarly, Sandra Cisneros attacks artificial stereotypes in her 1991 short story “Barbie-Q,” using the perspective of two young girls to address a culture that buys into images of women as presented by Barbie dolls—and how these dolls create and perpetuate concepts of female beauty and behavior.

Participants in this program are encouraged to read these two short stories and schedule a visit to the Museum to participate in guided discussions and explorations in the galleries. Connections made between works of literature and visual art in the “On the Outside” side boxes in this guide focus on the various strategies these artists and writers use to investigate questions of beauty and identity—and invite us to turn and examine our own lives.

To participate in this program, contact Michael Murawski at [murawski@wustl.edu](mailto:murawski@wustl.edu) or 314.935.7918.

# Play & Display



## Laurie Simmons, *Pushing Lipstick (Full Profile)* (1979)

Laurie Simmons began photographing dolls in 1978 after working as a freelance photographer for a dollhouse miniature company. For her early works, she constructed miniature spaces in her studio using dollhouse furniture and wallpaper that she purchased at antique stores in upstate New York. Simmons has described these works as “the re-creation of a sense of visual memory or history,” reproducing “a feeling, a mood, from the time that I was growing up.”<sup>1</sup>

*Pushing Lipstick* is part of a series of small color photographs from 1979 in which Simmons constructed a mini-narrative of a single blonde doll confronting and pushing an actual-size red lipstick. The blonde housewife figure is placed alone in this empty yet dramatically lit dollhouse interior. Both the lipstick and the oversized floral wallpaper print establish a sense of scale in this compressed, theatrical, and artificial space.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How would you describe the relationship between the female doll and the lipstick in Simmons’s *Pushing Lipstick*?

Why do you think the artist has chosen to photograph a 1950s antique doll in this work, instead of an actual woman?

Visit the first gallery in this exhibition and reexamine the selected popular magazine advertisements and images from the 1950s that depict housewives and the American family. How does Simmons’s representation of the housewife differ from those magazine images?

## ON THE OUTSIDE

In Sandra Cisneros’s “Barbie-Q,” the child narrator talks about how she and her friend play with their Barbie dolls. The girl elaborates on the costumes and outfits in which they dress their dolls—including one “dress invented from an old sock.” While we are uncertain as to whether any of this story is autobiographical, the vividly descriptive text definitely evokes a childhood nostalgia.

How does Cisneros’s use of dolls in her childhood narrative compare with Laurie Simmons’s visual strategies? How important are the dolls’ clothes in each case?

At the beginning of “Barbie-Q,” the narrator describes a scene in which the girls’ Barbie dolls interact:

“...my Barbie’s boyfriend comes over and your Barbie steals him, okay? Kiss kiss kiss. Then the two Barbies fight. You dumbbell! He’s mine. Oh no he’s not, you stinky!”

Why do these children make their dolls act in this way? In what ways is this similar or different from the implied action of the doll in Simmons’s *Pushing Lipstick*? What might both Cisneros and Simmons be saying about the role that dolls play in creating and reinforcing certain types of female behavior?

At the end of Cisneros’s story, the girls defend the new dolls that they purchased after being damaged in a toy warehouse fire:

“So what if our Barbies smell like smoke when you hold them up to your nose even after you wash and wash and wash them. And if the prettiest doll, Barbie’s MOD’ern cousin Francie with real eyelashes, eyelash brush included, has a left foot that’s melted a little—so?”

How do the girls cover up these flaws? What do you think Cisneros is saying about beauty and identity?

Why does the title of Cisneros’s story refer to a cooking technique? How does this relate to Sandy Skoglund’s image?



To buy a Barbie is to lust after Barbie accessories.... Both conspicuous consumer and a consumable item herself, Barbie surely was as much the fantasy of U.S. retailers as she was the panacea of middle-class parents.<sup>3</sup>

— Jacqueline Urla and Alan Swedlund

### Sandy Skoglund, *At the Shore* (1994)

Similar to Laurie Simmons, Sandy Skoglund utilized toy representations of women in her photograph *At the Shore* to make a critical statement about how women have been represented as objects or “playthings.” She also employed dolls to raise questions about how we perceive reality by juxtaposing the real and the artificial.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Skoglund’s specific use of the iconic Barbie doll—with long, crimped, platinum blonde hair—alludes to issues of female body image and American consumerism, as well as the range of artificial female stereotypes epitomized in every Barbie doll.

In her photograph, Skoglund places nearly a dozen Barbie dolls in an expansive landscape of French fries. This constructed tableau appears monochromatic, with only the pink flower pattern of Barbie’s two-piece swimsuit diverging from the golden tones of the fries, blonde hair, and Barbie’s oily bronze skin. The scene is intensely lit from above, referencing both a scorchingly hot summer day at the beach as well as the heat lamps that keep French fries warm at a fast food restaurant.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What do you think of when you first look at this photograph? Describe the first thoughts that come to your mind.

Describe the dolls used by Skoglund in this work, and consider the different roles in which Simmons’s and Skoglund’s dolls are cast.

In *Pushing Lipstick*, the pairing of the doll and the lipstick highlights the stereotype of the blonde housewife and her “oversized” concern with physical beauty. How does Skoglund’s pairing of Barbies and French fries complicate this relationship between the ideal blonde female and beauty?

opposite

**Laurie Simmons**  
*Pushing Lipstick (Full Profile)*, 1979

above

**Sandy Skoglund**  
*At the Shore*, 1994



## Cindy Sherman, *Untitled #188* (1989)

Cindy Sherman is best known for her *Untitled Film Stills*—several of which are included in this exhibition—where she photographed herself posed as an unnamed actress in shots reminiscent of Hollywood movies and film noir. In the latter half of the 1980s, Sherman embarked on a series of “disaster” images in which she depicted masks and plastic body props in a state of decay. The blonde female is a recurring image in this series, although she is presented as fragmented, abused, or grotesque rather than an enticing icon of beauty.

*Untitled #188* depicts an inflatable plastic female doll lying twisted on her back in a field of debris. As we explore this mysterious scene, we begin to stumble across shocking clues of some disturbing act: smudged lipstick on the doll’s face, a shadowy figure in the upper right whose face is buried in the doll’s thighs, and various cables and bars from a home gym system that contort and restrain the doll. In the debris, we also notice a scattering of plastic spoons, party hats, and streamers—perhaps the aftermath of a party gone terribly wrong.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Much of Cindy Sherman’s earlier black-and-white images can be associated with the genre of film noir. Clearly different from these images, what genre of film do you think *Untitled #188* most closely represents?

In this photograph, Cindy Sherman creates a viewing angle that is low to the ground and almost too close for comfort. How is this perspective similar or different from her *Untitled Film Stills* on display in this exhibition? How does this low viewing angle impact our reaction to this particular image?

In what ways is Sherman’s use of a blonde doll in *Untitled #188* essentially different from that of Simmons or Skoglund?

above

**Cindy Sherman**  
*Untitled #188*, 1989

opposite

**Andy Warhol**  
*Outer and Inner Space*, 1965

# Manipulating Film & TV

## Andy Warhol, *Outer and Inner Space* (1965)

Andy Warhol's film and video project *Outer and Inner Space* is installed as a double screen projection with two black-and-white films playing simultaneously side by side. Both films show actress Edie Sedgwick sitting in front of a television monitor playing a prerecorded videotape of herself. Sedgwick's video image is on the left side of the frame in each film, and her "real" self is shown on the right. We are thus presented with four close-up images of the blonde actress's head. In addition, the two films are not synchronized and the audio is distorted—making the overlapping words almost completely incomprehensible.

Similar to his serigraphs of Marilyn Monroe, Warhol is multiplying the image of another blonde female celebrity in *Outer and Inner Space*, while experimenting with the medium of video to distort Sedgwick's image and voice. This project provides an interesting and complex exploration of celebrity, iconography, and the relationship between outer appearance and inner experience—or between "outer and inner space," as the title suggests.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why do you think Andy Warhol chose to work in both video and film to create this project? Are there any visual elements of the work that could not have been achieved through film alone?

Listen closely to the audio track for a moment. Can you understand or recognize any of Edie Sedgwick's words in the films? If so, how might these words connect to the project's emphasis on image and celebrity? If not, why do you think the artist chose to manipulate the audio beyond recognition?

With her videotaped image behind her, a person off screen talking to her, and Warhol giving her directions from above the camera, the "real" Edie Sedgwick seems distracted during the filming of this project. How is this similar to your experience of Warhol's film as you stand in the gallery space? How is your experience different?

Return to the main "Iconic Blonde" gallery, and take some time to look at Warhol's other work on display in this exhibition—his famous *Marilyn* series. How is the image of Marilyn Monroe being represented and altered in these screen prints? What do you think are some of the major similarities and differences between these prints and Warhol's video/film project?



**Dara Birnbaum, *Kiss the Girls: Make Them Cry* (1979)**

For *Kiss the Girls*, Dara Birnbaum manipulates off-air footage from the popular TV game show *Hollywood Squares*, repeating a series of stereotyped responses by several minor female celebrity participants. The video is paired with excerpts from the 1978 disco song “Georgy Porgy” recorded by Toto. The song repeats the first two lines of the familiar nursery rhyme, “Georgy Porgy, puddin’ and pie, kissed the girls and made them cry,” while Birnbaum spells out the lyrics with on-screen text.

Birnbaum re-edits and repeats these television fragments to isolate the exaggerated expressions and body language of the three actresses who represent female stereotypes. The feeble gestures and bobbing head of the blonde actress, for example, project an image of cuteness and charm rather than authority. Birnbaum’s video magnifies dominant associations of the blonde as concerned with appearance rather than intellect, and asks us to reflect on the ways in which women represent themselves and are represented through television and film.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

The nursery rhyme “Georgy Porgy,” which originated in 17th-century England, is commonly referred to as one of the earliest references to sexual harassment. In what ways do you think this relates to the meaning of Birnbaum’s video?

What is the relationship between the music and the images in this work? Why do you think Birnbaum includes the text of the lyrics on the screen?

Compare the use of repetition and framing in Birnbaum’s video and Andy Warhol’s *Outer and Inner Space*. How is the multiplied image of the blonde “celebrity” treated differently in each work?

above

**Dara Birnbaum**

screen shot, *Kiss the Girls: Make Them Cry*, 1979

opposite right

**Ellen Gallagher**

*Wiglette*, detail from *DeLuxe*, 2004/05

opposite left

**Ellen Gallagher**

installation view, *DeLuxe*, 2004/05

# Hair and Beauty



I would say the concept of repetition and revision, like you have in jazz or jungle music—where a conductor might ask to have a phrase played and then repeated and there’s this kind of call and response between the musician and the conductor, between the DJ and the audience—is central to my work.<sup>4</sup>

—Ellen Gallagher

## Ellen Gallagher, *DeLuxe* (2004–5)

Ellen Gallagher’s *DeLuxe* presents a series of sixty prints in which the artist altered beauty product advertisements from black popular culture magazines from 1939 to 1972 such as *Ebony*, *Our World*, and *Sepia*. The project focuses on ads for wigs, hair straighteners, skin lighteners, and other products that promise their consumers a transformation of physical appearance. For instance, a 1940s advertisement for a bleaching cream offers the promise that you will be “Made for Kisses” with “the Lighter, smoother skin men adore.” Other ads from the 1970s feature Afro wigs with names such as “Supreme Freedom” and “Jumbo Afro”—allowing consumers to pick a new look and a readymade identity.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Spend some time exploring this large set of prints, closely examining the underlying advertisements and how Gallagher has altered specific images and texts.

Can you date any of the advertisements based on hairstyles or the people featured in them?

Continue to explore these prints. Can you identify any recurring characters that the artist has placed in these advertisements? What other types of connections, narrative, or dialogue might exist among the various prints?

What relationships does Gallagher set-up between her dark-haired characters and her “blonde” characters?

Why do you think the artist chose to create sixty prints for *DeLuxe* instead of a much smaller number of works? How would your response to this project be different if there were only five prints on display?

Gallagher reactivates the advertisements’ texts, hairdos, and characters through a hybrid form of drawing, printmaking, collage, and painting. In prints throughout the large installation, we quickly notice Gallagher’s use of yellow Plasticine, a synthetic modeling substance from which she creates blonde wigs and helmet-like structures for dozens of characters in the ads. Her strategic use of yellow Plasticine—as well as a range of other materials—highlights the desire to transform one’s appearance to comply with, or rebel against, standard definitions of beauty associated with whiteness and blondeness. Overall, each print in *DeLuxe* carries as much material texture on its surface as it does information about a vast history and complex network of ethnic stereotypes, ideals of beauty, and a quest for identity through transformation.



## Lorna Simpson, *Wigs (portfolio)* (1994)

Lorna Simpson's *Wigs (portfolio)* displays a group of twenty-one lithographs printed on felt that show various wigs and hairpieces. All of the hair pictured in these prints is black, except for one image of a blonde wig. Small text panels accompany these prints, with a range of short fragments from testimonies, statements, interviews, and historical accounts—yet the sources of these texts are not identified in the work.

Hair plays a crucial role in Simpson's work, and she has continually explored the role of hair as a marker of social and ethnic identity. Wigs, especially, reveal how easy it can be to alter one's appearance or to disguise oneself through hair. As in many of the prints in Ellen Gallagher's *DeLuxe*, wigs here are shown to

provide a means of transformation in response to dominant white standards of beauty, perhaps represented by the isolated blonde wig.

Through works such as this, Simpson investigates the ways in which people, especially African-American women, are identified and judged based on their physical attributes. "In my work," says Simpson, "I try to get viewers to realize...that it is all a matter of surfaces and façades." Her collection of wigs and hairstyles playfully engages identity as costume, giving it endless possibilities. At the same time, we are asked to make sense of the ambiguous texts based on these images, raising our awareness that meaning and identity depend so much upon context.<sup>5</sup>

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why do you think Lorna Simpson chose to print these images of wigs on felt? How does that affect the meaning of the artwork?

What is the relationship between the images and the text in this work? Would your interpretation of it be different if the texts were not included? Why?

If we view these wigs as types of "portraits," what might each wig suggest about the person it represents?

## ON THE OUTSIDE

Questions of identity and difference are addressed in Zora Neale Hurston's "How It Feels to be Colored Me." The essay is divided into a series of vignettes, each of which responds differently to the unspoken question "How does it feel to be colored you?" When Hurston asserts "I do not always feel colored," that question is directly challenged and undercut. Far from answering the question, Hurston deconstructs the very grounds of an answer, replying "Compared to what? As of when? Who is asking? In what context?"<sup>6</sup> In this historic essay, she pulls apart the concepts of identity and physical appearance, suggesting that both can shift readily.

Find a phrase or passage in Hurston's essay that you think connects to the works by Ellen Gallagher or Lorna Simpson. In what ways do you see connections with this passage? How do these works explore the relationship between identity and physical appearance in similar or different ways?

One of Simpson's text panels refers to Gladys Bentley, an openly lesbian jazz performer during the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s and '30s. Bentley sang some of the most risqué and provocative songs of the decade, and often performed in men's attire. How do you think this text panel connects to Simpson's images of wigs? How might this type of pointed historical reference establish connections with Hurston's essay?

above

**Lorna Simpson**  
*Wigs (portfolio)*, 1994

opposite

**Lynn Hershman Leeson**  
*Construction Chart #1*, 1975, from *Roberta Breitmore* project

# Staging Identities

Many people assumed I was ROBERTA. Although I denied it at the time and insisted that she was “her own woman” with defined needs, ambitions, and instincts, in retrospect we were linked.<sup>8</sup>

—Lynn Hershman Leeson



## Lynn Hershman Leeson, *Roberta Breitmore* (1974–78)

Begun in 1974, *Roberta Breitmore* was a four-year project in which Lynn Hershman Leeson performed the life of an invented person. Roberta Breitmore was a fictional persona of a divorced blonde woman living in the San Francisco Bay area, and the artist selectively documented both her external appearance and her internal psychological struggles. This character was so fully realized that she had her own credits cards, checking accounts, driver’s license, apartment, and even regular sessions with a psychiatrist.

On display in this exhibition are selected documents, photographs, and artifacts from Hershman Leeson’s multi-year performance, including *Construction Chart #1*. This annotated photograph spells out the formula for creating Roberta Breitmore’s physical appearance. It specifies the areas of her face to be covered in makeup and notes particular brand names for beauty products.

While Roberta outwardly projected the image of an attractive blonde beauty, she emerged as psychologically vulnerable, insecure, and scarred. “At the time, women were dealing with the idea of creating identities,” states Hershman Leeson, “and this was a way of objectifying and analyzing what it was to be this person, seeing how she would be treated, and dealing with the external elements of what identity was.”<sup>7</sup>

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What do the photographs, objects, and materials on display from this project tell you about the character Roberta Breitmore?

As part of this project, Hershman Leeson invited several friends and colleagues to take on the guise of Roberta Breitmore, with each of these multiples taking on their own adventures and experiences. How does this change the work?

In recent years, Hershman Leeson has become deeply invested in digital media. In fact, she recently revived Roberta Breitmore as an avatar in the online virtual world of Second Life. If we consider this for a moment, we find ourselves caught in the confusing layers between the fictional and the historical. Consider the links between the first Roberta Breitmore and the rapid growth of online avatar

communities. Furthermore, what happens when a virtual avatar embodies an already simulated character?



### Nikki S. Lee, *The Hip Hop Project* (2001)

In a series of photo-based projects begun in the late 1990s, Nikki Lee observes and becomes immersed in a range of social groups—including schoolgirls, punks, yuppies, rural white Americans, and urban African Americans. With each project, Lee adopts the fashion, hairstyles, and body language of the group, drastically transforming herself into this new identity, as seen in *The Hip Hop Project*. She introduces herself as an artist, and spends weeks or months

participating in the community's routine activities and events while a friend or member of the group photographs her with an automatic "snapshot" camera. In *The Hip Hop Project (1)*, we see a candid group shot in the interior space of a car or SUV, with blonde-haired Lee in the arms of a man who is gesturing towards the camera. Her immersion in this group appears seamless.

**Essentially life itself is a performance. When we change our clothes to alter our appearance, the real act is the transformation of our way of expression—the outward expression of our psyche.<sup>9</sup>**

—Nikki S. Lee

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What characteristics of Nikki Lee's photographs makes them look like amateur snapshots? Why do you think the artist chose to take these images as spontaneous snapshots instead of more finished studio photographs? Compare and contrast the role that photography plays in these works by both Lee and Hershman Leeson.

Since Lee hands the camera off to whoever is around to take these photographs, she loses a certain amount of control. "I want to control it," she says, "but I know that I can't."<sup>10</sup> What elements of each project does she control? In what ways do you think this balance between control and lack of control relates to how we each form our own identities?

Lee's projects pose many questions regarding identity and society. Do we consciously choose our social groups and identities? How are we identified by other people? Is it possible for us to move between groups and identities, as Lee seems to successfully do in her projects?<sup>11</sup>

## ON THE OUTSIDE

"I do not always feel colored.... I feel most colored when I am thrown against a white background.... Among the thousand white persons, I am a dark rock surged upon, and overswept, but through it all, I remain myself. When covered by the water, I am; and the ebb but reveals me again."

What does Zora Neale Hurston mean in the above excerpt?

Read the above excerpt again, and consider it in relation to the photographs by Nikki Lee. How do Hurston and Lee draw on their identities in their work? In what ways do they transform themselves?

above

**Nikki S. Lee**  
*The Hip Hop Project (1)*, 2001

# List of Artworks in This Guide

(alphabetical by artist)

## Dara Birnbaum

*Kiss the Girls: Make Them Cry*, 1979  
Color video with sound, 6:50 minutes  
Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI),  
New York

## Ellen Gallagher

*DeLuxe*, 2004/05  
60 printed objects, 15/20, 84 3/4 x 176" overall  
Collection of Alison and John Ferring

## Lynn Hershman Leeson

Selections from *Roberta Breitmore*, 1974–78  
Ephemera (including wig, dental x-ray, urine and  
blood samples), gelatin silver prints, C-prints, and ink  
drawings, variable dimensions  
Courtesy of the artist and bitforms gallery, New York

## Nikki S. Lee

*The Hip Hop Project (I)*, 2001  
Fujiflex C-print, 21 1/4 x 28 1/4"  
Courtesy of the artist and Leslie Tonkonow  
Artworks + Projects

## Cindy Sherman

*Untitled #188*, 1989  
Chromogenic development print, 45 x 67"  
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Gerald S.  
Elliott Collection

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## Laurie Simmons

*Pushing Lipstick (Full Profile)*, 1979  
Cibachrome print, 1/7, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2"  
Courtesy of the artist and Sperone Westwater,  
New York

## Lorna Simpson

*Wigs (portfolio)*, 1994  
Waterless lithographs on felt, 72 x 162 1/2"  
Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art,  
Chicago, gift of Rhona Hoffman Gallery and the artist

## Sandy Skoglund

*At the Shore*, 1994  
Cibachrome print, 11 x 14"  
Collection of Helen Kornblum

## Andy Warhol

*Outer and Inner Space*, 1965  
16mm film transferred to digital files (DVD)  
Black-and-white, with sound, in double screen,  
33 min.  
Collection of the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh  
Contribution The Andy Warhol Foundation for  
the Visual Arts, Inc.

## NOTES

**1** Laurie Simmons, quoted in Kate Linker, "Reflections on a Mirror," in *Laurie Simmons: Walking, Talking, Lying* (New York: Aperture, 2005), 9.

**2** See Olivia Lahs-Gonzales, "Defining Eye / Defining I: Women Photographers of the 20th Century," in *Defining Eye: Women Photographers of the 20th Century. Selections from the Helen Kornblum Collection* (St. Louis: Saint Louis Art Museum, 1997), 119.

**3** Jacqueline Urla and Alan Swedlund, "The Anthropometry of Barbie," in *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 280.

**4** Ellen Gallagher, *School Arts* 105, no. 7 (March 2006): 14.

**5** Lorna Simpson, quoted in Walker Art Center, <http://www.walkerart.org/archive/9/B7838D-D567B1D4546174.htm>, retrieved on October 16, 2007.

**6** See Barbara Johnson, "Thresholds of Difference: Structures of Address in Zora Neale Hurston," *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1985): 280.

**7** Lynn Hershman Leeson, quoted in Jesse Hamlin, "Artist probes appearances in video, drawings, sculpture...and yes, robots," *San Francisco Chronicle* (December 3, 2005).

**8** Lynn Hershman Leeson, "Roberta Breitmore," <http://www.lynnhershman.com>, retrieved October 16, 2007.

**9** Nikki Lee, quoted in Kendra Greene, [http://www.mocp.org/collections/permanent/lee\\_nikki\\_s.php](http://www.mocp.org/collections/permanent/lee_nikki_s.php), retrieved on October 23, 2007.

**10** Nikki Lee, quoted in Russell Ferguson, "Let's Be Nikki," in *Nikki S. Lee / Projects* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2001), 9.

**11** See Kendra Greene, [http://www.mocp.org/collections/permanent/lee\\_nikki\\_s.php](http://www.mocp.org/collections/permanent/lee_nikki_s.php), retrieved on October 23, 2007.

# Beauty and the Blonde.

## Events and Public Programs

### BEAUTY AND THE BLONDE PANEL DISCUSSION

Friday, November 16 @ 6:00 pm  
Steinberg Hall Auditorium

Curator Catharina Manchanda will lead a conversation with feminist scholar Maria Elena Buszek and artist Lynn Hershman Leeson examining some of the influential and shifting roles that the blonde has played in American art and popular culture since the 1950s.

### CURATOR'S DIALOGUE

Wednesday, January 23 @ 6:30 pm  
Reception begins @ 6 pm  
Kemper Art Museum

Join Curator Catharina Manchanda for an informal and open dialogue in the galleries about the exhibition *Beauty and the Blonde*.

### EDUCATION RESOURCES ONLINE

Visit the Museum's Education webpage,  
[kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu/education.html](http://kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu/education.html)

Access a downloadable PDF file of this Connections Guide, as well as links to artists' websites and more information about the exhibition *Beauty and the Blonde*.

### ICONIC BLONDE FILM FESTIVAL

This mini-festival of film relates to the themes of the *Beauty and the Blonde* exhibition.

Tuesday, December 4 at 7 pm  
*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953)*  
starring Marilyn Monroe

Wednesday, December 5 at 7 pm  
*Vertigo (1958)*  
featuring Kim Novak

Thursday, December 6 at 7 pm  
*Bonnie and Clyde (1967)*  
with Faye Dunaway

All films will be screened for FREE at the Tivoli Theatre (6350 Delmar).

*Visit our website to sign up for the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum eNews.*

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Admission to the Kemper Art Museum is always free and open to the public.

#### HOURS

Mon, Wed, & Thu: 11–6

Fri: 11–8

Sat & Sun: 11–6

Closed Tue and University holidays

Tel: 314.935.4523

Email: [kemperartmuseum@wustl.edu](mailto:kemperartmuseum@wustl.edu)

Website: [kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu](http://kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu)

#### SCHEDULE A FREE TOUR

To schedule a FREE tour for your group, organization, class, or even just a group of friends or family, please contact Michael Murawski, coordinator of education and public programs, at [murawski@wustl.edu](mailto:murawski@wustl.edu) or 314.935.7918.