

LINDA EKSTROM
a working backward

closing exhibition at Sherry Frumkin Gallery 2010



Linda Ekstrom
a working backward

Desire exists between humans and things--a secret wants to be given away.

In looking back we entice the past into the present; memory persists as a way to carry us forward. Projecting beyond our world, we look to the sky where a sympathy exists between humans and stars, and we draw lines connecting them. Art is one of the fundamental ways humans make meaning. It is a way we name the world; it is how we see relations between parts, it functions in the evolution of language; it reminds us that something is sacred.

Nestled at the core of these recent works are issues of tenderness, longing, and a desire for connection. There is ritual in the twisting, cutting, stitching, fastening and unfurling of things. There is devotion in deciphering a logic of association between the components. And, even in those things that do not make the final cut, there is the mystery of failure, the profound opening into another choice, a chain linking miracle to miracle to miracle.

Words are the central subject matter of my work. Found text lines are deconstructed, rearranged, tangled, or obscured. Selecting text fragments and weeding them out of their context, releases the text from a fixed meaning. The jars, in the *Found Poem* series, hold lines chosen for their evocative quality. These can be viewed individually or arranged as a visual poem. *Luce* and *Nestle*, are made of tangled words taken from the writings of Luce Irigaray, whose ground-breaking work in linguistics gives liberation to a feminine subject. In the works, *Eve's Constellation* and *Mary*, the narratives have been cut apart and illuminated in a new way to see the whole of the narrative as a textual icon for each woman. By giving abstract form to the text, I am seeking for, as Irigaray describes, "another sort of listening-to," not an acknowledgement of information, but "a listening to the still unspoken words of the other." The work, *Her Dress*, stands in for and becomes a way of claiming the presence of this voice.

Books are transformed, seeking for the spiritedness of the text. In the altered Bibles, such as *Pursed*, *Chained*, and *Tendrils*, I give form and visual vitality to the text, converting sacred text into sacred object. These Bibles are to be read through tactile and visual methods of reading. They entice, to subvert the ways these texts have been misused to erase and limit the lives of women. The altered Bibles defy a fundamentalist interpretation.

In more personal works, such as *Open Secrets*, I reveal seven things that only I know, symbolizing those unique things that each of us only know. Each secret is there publically, but intricately cut apart and scrambled to retain the private. The sculpture, *I You*, takes the words of Luce Irigaray and forms a poem of devotion. Across the paired chrome discs the words, "I love to you" offers a way around possessing the other. It suggests the freedom and equality that can exist between individuals even as the two discs are bound by the box.

In the *Eternal Return*, I appropriate a quote, of a quote, of a quote, leading back around to Nietzsche, who writes, "haven't we already coincided in the past?" This work suggests the cycle or return between us that reaches beyond this place and time we know. If we look up at the stars we see the same view that other humans have seen since the beginning of life on earth. The *Starry Lands* series presents images I have found in books of places where others have stood. Now made into locations pierced by constellations, these lands are real first and imagined later. In *Migration*, birds in flight are captured in a bottle, but seeking a way out, perhaps to these stars.

We pause at the gateway; birds fly overhead and in the distant there are lights in windows. Birds in search of shelter, lights illuminating a kitchen, neither can know how beautiful they are. It is our part to name this into word and form.

-Linda Ekstrom

Migration, 2010
silk, photo transfer, glass bottle
15h x 4w x 4d



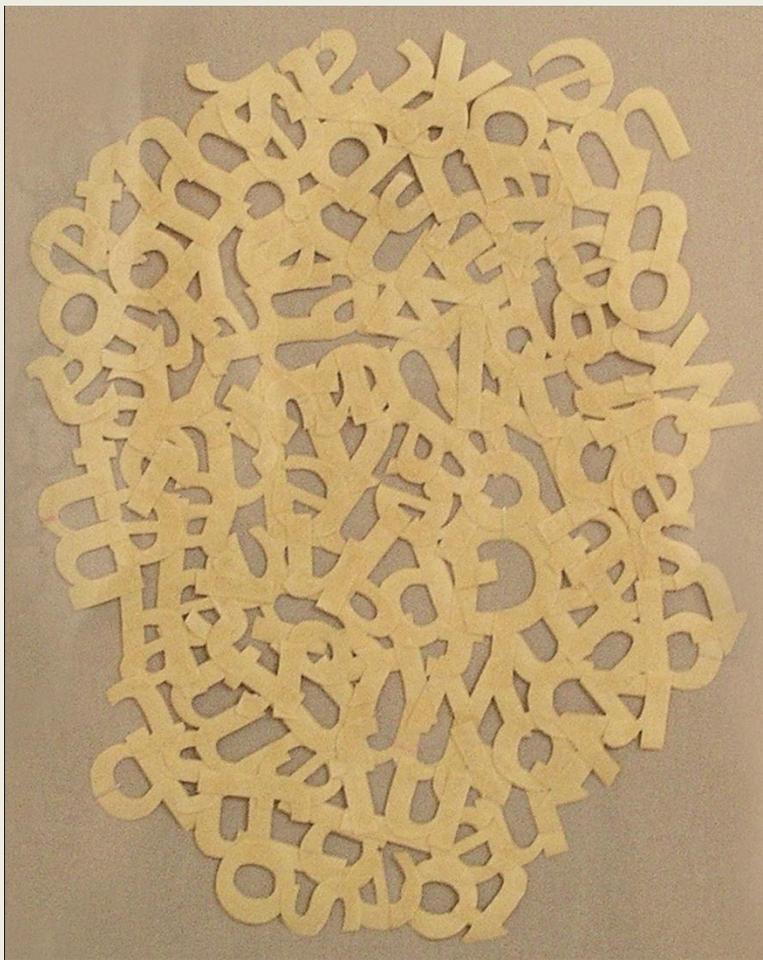


Her Dress (over chair), 2004 – 2010
embroidered image of dress on silk,
wood chair
34h x 34+d x 34+w

Her Dress, is a way of claiming the presence of the absent voice, another sort of listening-to," as Luce Irigaray describes. "Not an acknowledgement of information, but "a listening to the still unspoken words of the other."

dress shown over chair (left)
dress shown undraped (below)



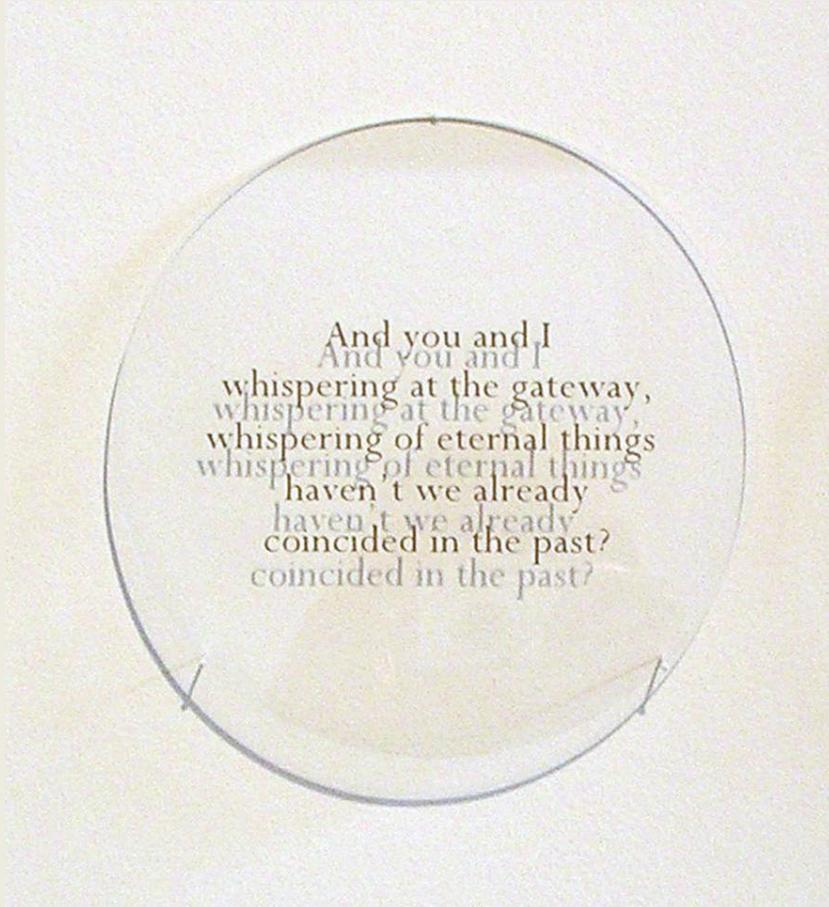


Open Secrets, 2010
mulberry paper, acrylic medium, thread
16.75h x 12.75w

Open Secrets “reveals” seven things that only I know, symbolizing those unique things that each of us only knows. Each secret is there publically, but intricately cut apart and scrambled to retain the private.

close view of one secret (left)
shown in the gallery (below)



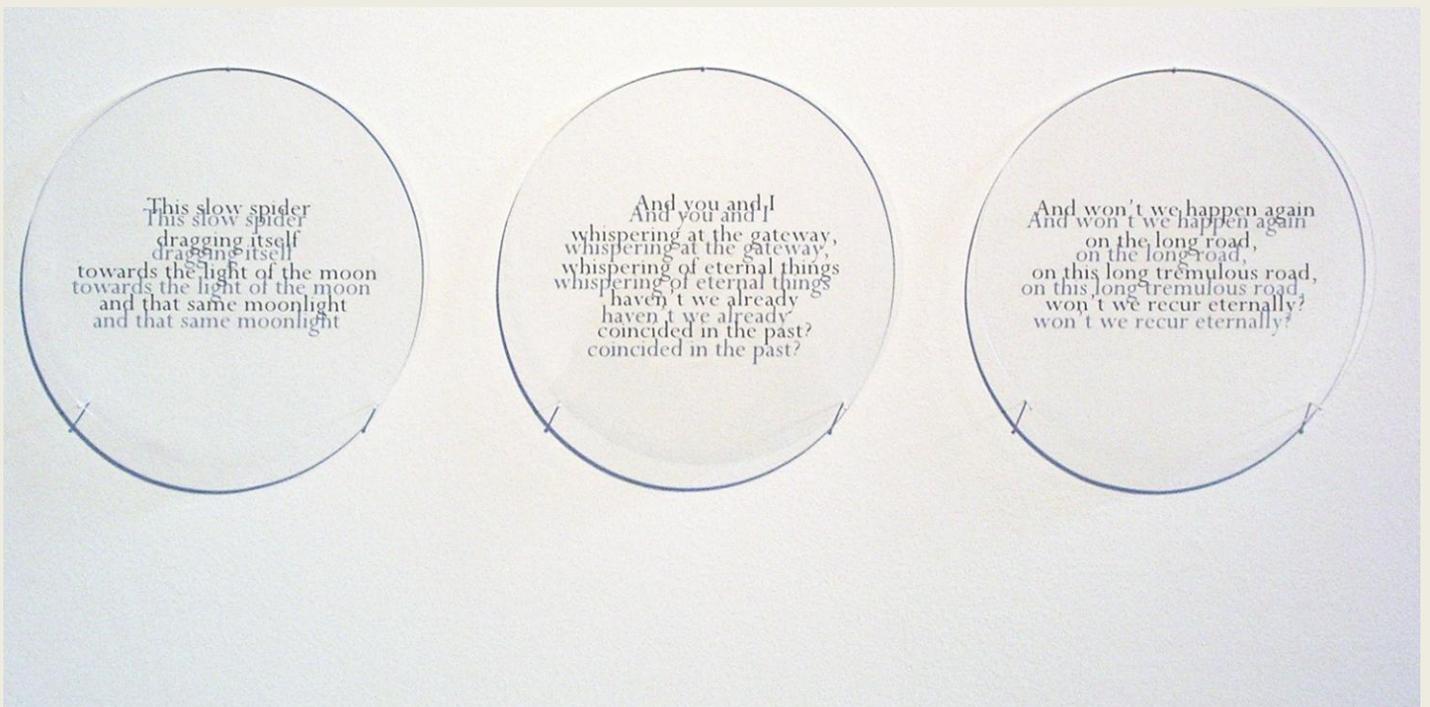


Eternal Return, 2010
acrylic discs, vinyl text
22.5w x 7h

A quote, of a quote, of a quote, leading back around to Nietzsche, who writes, *haven't we already coincided in the past?* This work suggests the cycle, or return between us, that reaches beyond this place and time that we know.

detail view left

full view below





Luce, 2010
synthetic cloth, thread
53h x 8w x 5d

Tangled words cut from silky shades of blue cloth sewn to form a delicate tale/tail. The text uses the writing of Luce Irigaray, whose ground-breaking work in linguistics gives liberation to a feminine subject.





Pursed, 2010
altered Bible
36h x 14w x 8d

Pages throughout the Bible are cut into long thin spirals and then released into a curled and tangled spill of words.



Tendrils, 2010
altered Bible text (The Prophets)
69h x 7w x 10d

Pages from the books of the Prophets are attached and twisted into three long strand that are intertwined.

Detail below

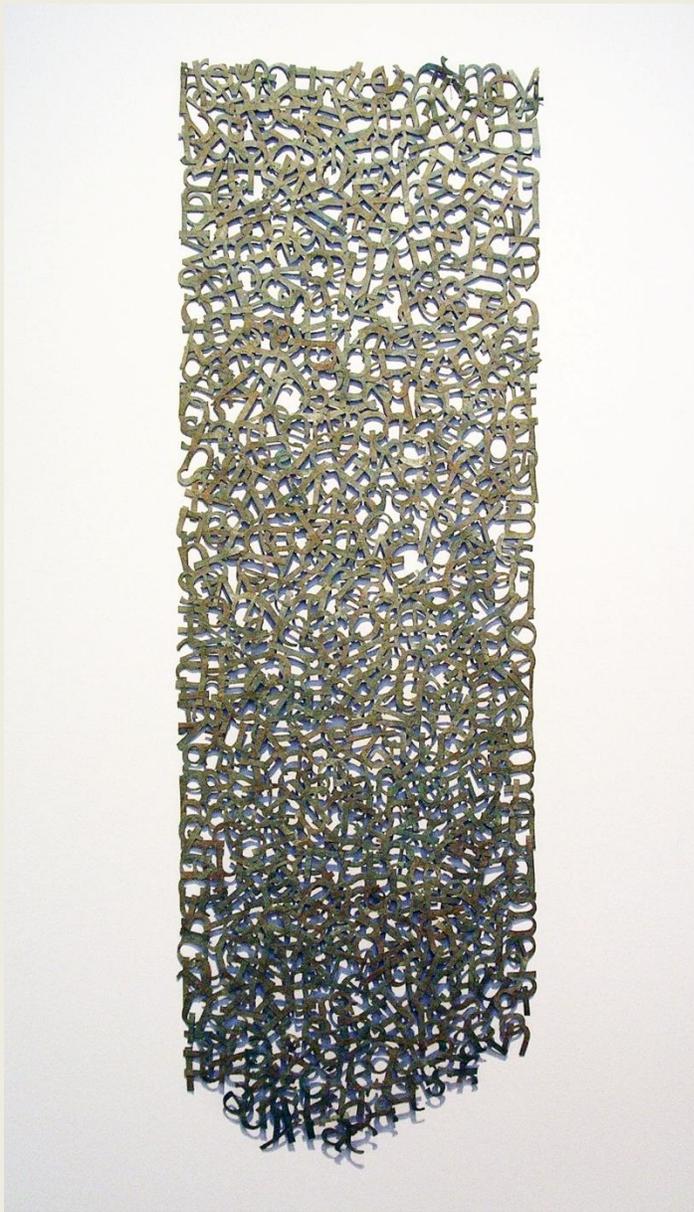




Trunk, 2010

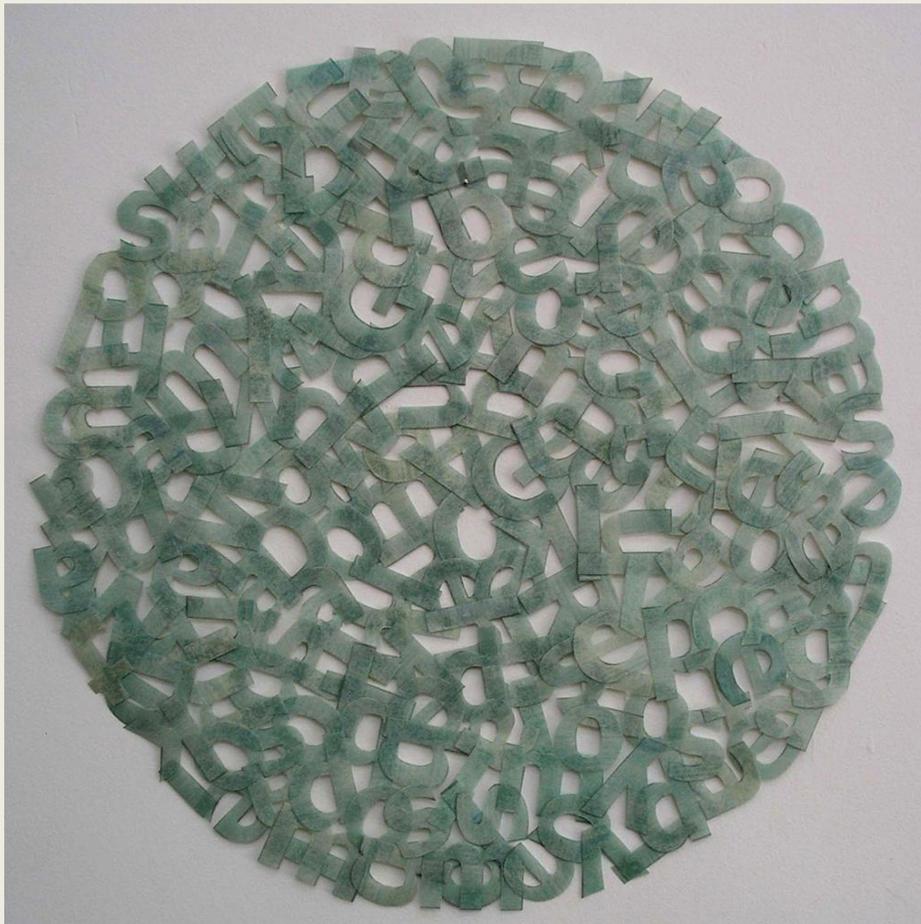
altered Bible with cloth cover, photo transfer, gold thread
8h x 4w x 4d

A coverless Bible wrapped in cloth printed with the faded image of a landscape. The book is rolled, like a scroll, and bound with gold thread. The first page of Genesis can be partially read through the cloth cover.



Mary, 2010
mulberry paper, ink, acrylic
paint, acrylic medium, glue
48 h x 14 w

Mary is created using the
letters from all the words
attributed to Mary in the
New Testament



Eve's Constellation, 2009
mulberry paper, acrylic paint,
acrylic medium, glue

size varies according to display

The constellation is created using the letters from the story of Eve. The circular shapes can be arranged in various ways to create constellations or partially overlapping, as shown above.

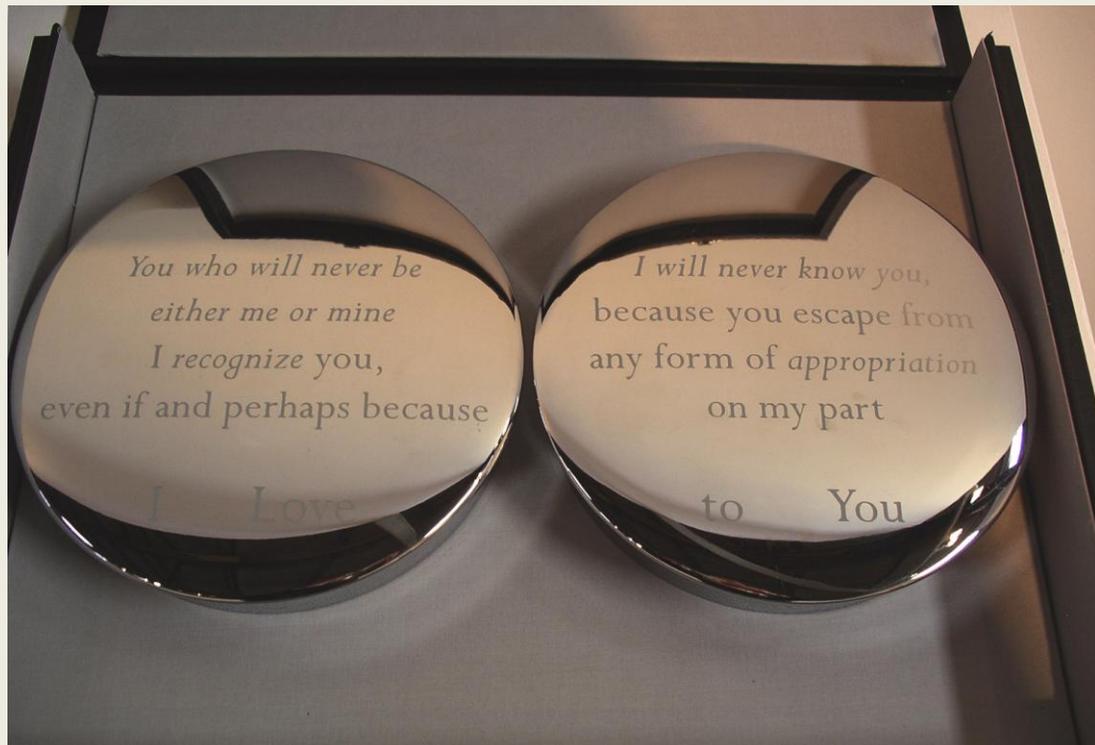


I You, 2010

chrome disc, vinyl text, clothbound box

box open: 12h x 15w x 14d (discs: 7 diameter x 1h)

The words of Luce Irigaray form a poem of devotion, offering a way to avoid possessing the other though bound together in the cloth bound box: *I Love to You*





Gloved, 2010
silk glove, thread and drawstring
22w x 5d x 2h

The silk glove is filled with strands of blue thread, like veins.





Found Poems series, 2010

Embroidered text on silk scrolls that wind around inside of the various glass vessels. The text can be read through the layers. Each jar is set on a turntable.

what if anything is forgotten, 2010

13h x 9w x 9d

a sympathy exists between humans and stars, 2010 (shown above center)

9h x 6w x 6d

from miracle, to miracle, to..., 2010

7.5h x 7w x 7d

something is sacred, 2010

7h x 5w x 5d

the mystery of failure, 2010 (shown above, right)

10h x 6w x 6d

a secret wants to be given away, 2010 (shown above left)

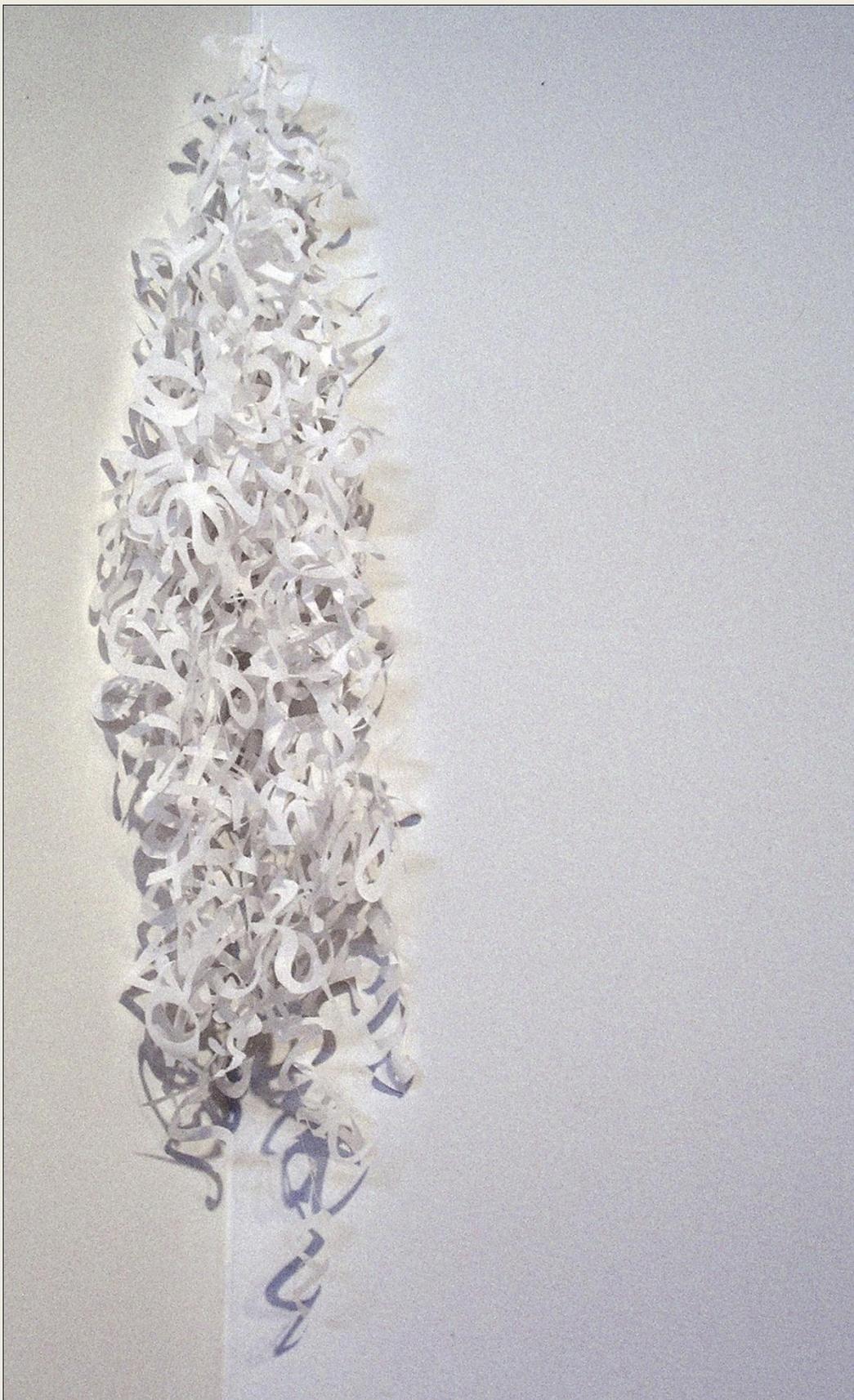
13h x 9d x 9w

we draw lines connecting the stars, 2010

10h x 8w x 8d

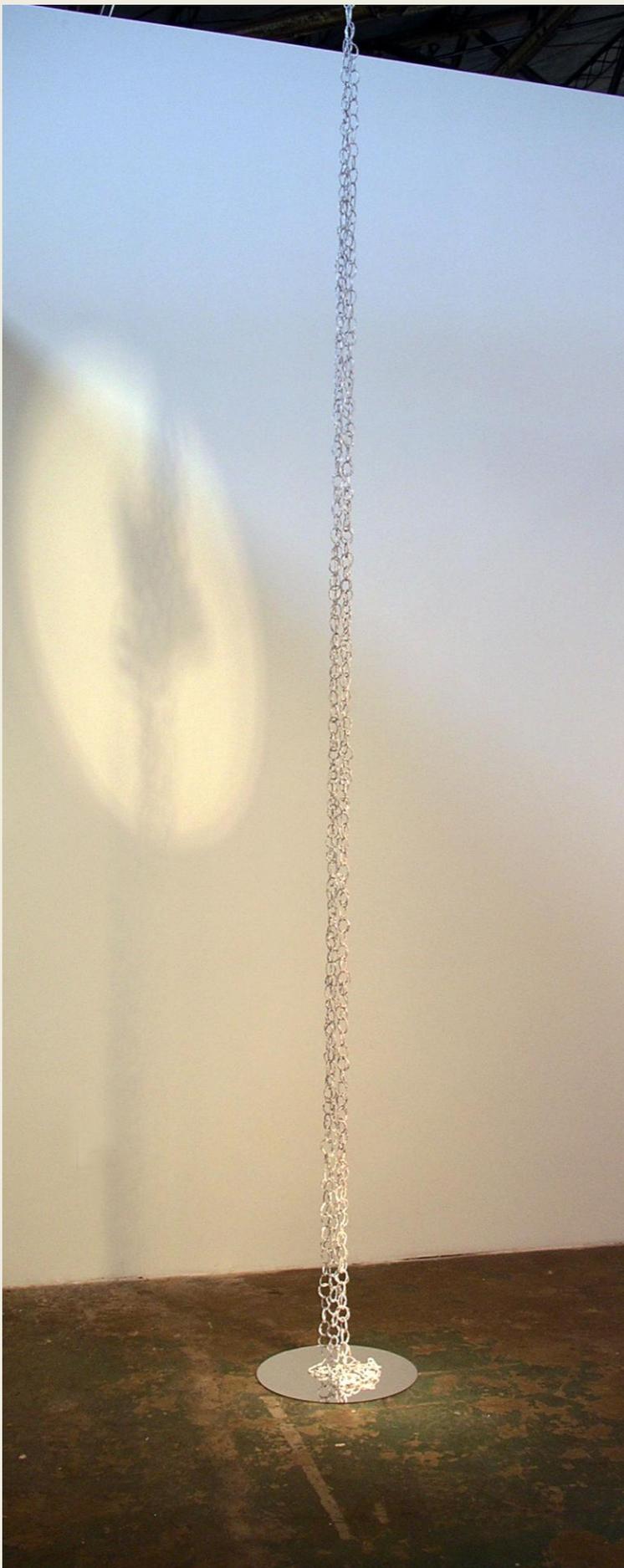
Additional views of *Found Poems*





Nestle, 2010
paper, thread
21h x 7w x 7d

Tangled words cut from silky shades of blue cloth sewn to form a delicate tale/tail. The text uses the writing of Luce Irigaray, whose groundbreaking work in linguistics gives liberation to a feminine subject.



gallery view (left)
shown extended
with mirror on floor

Chained, 2010
altered Bible 56 feet chain
installation size varies

Each page of the Bible is formed into one link. The chain begins with the first page of Genesis and ends with the last page of Revelations.



detail (right)



Around, 2010
altered Bible, silver cord, silver thread

Formed from thin strands of cut Bible text
wound with thick silver cord, *Around*
hangs like a celestial body.





Starry Lands series, 2010
ink jet print images on cloth, silk, silver cloth,
thread
27h x 14w

Constellations pierce the photo imagery to reveal silver cloth, creating stars from beneath. The images are from books of places where others have stood. These lands are real first and imagined later.

Installation (above)
detail of one image(left)

Linda Ekstrom
ekstrom@arts.ucsb.edu
www.lindaekstrom.com
806.886.7226

Biography:

Linda Ekstrom completed her MFA in Art Studio at the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1996 where she teaches in the studio art program in the College of Creative Studies. Her works have been included in both solo and group exhibitions including, Frumkin Gallery in Santa Monica; Montgomery Museum, Pomona College; Center for the Book, San Francisco; Center for the Book, New York; Kellogg Museum, Cal Poly, Pomona; LIMN Gallery and Quotidian Gallery in San Francisco. In addition her work was included in the international exhibition, "Faith" at the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield Connecticut; in "Sacred Texts" at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and, in "City Dialogues" at Barnsdall Museum, Los Angeles. Ekstrom's work has been reviewed in Art in America, Sculpture Magazine, the Los Angeles Times and numerous other publications.

Partial list of exhibitions:

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2010 *a working backward*, Sherry Frumkin Gallery, Santa Monica
- 2006 *unraveling*, Sherry Frumkin Gallery, Santa Monica
- 2001 *Beneath Memory*, Frumkin Duval Gallery, Santa Monica
- 1999 *Deep Sleep of Resemblance* Sherry Frumkin/Christine Duval Gallery
- 1998 *children of memory* - University Art Museum, UCSB
- 1997 *Transcriptions* - Sherry Frumkin Gallery, Santa Monica, California
- 1996 *a space for memory* - Holocaust Remembrance Week, UCSB Gallery 1434
- 1990 *...from the fire and Garden* - OuterSpace Gallery, Contemporary Arts Forum
- 1989 *Fire, Water, Night Sky, Cross and Gold* - Puccinelli Gallery
- 1986 *ARTSEEN, Santa Barbara Museum of Art: Triptych Wall*
- 1985 *Recent Works* - OuterSpace Gallery, Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum
- 1982 *Resolved/Unresolved: Installation* - College of Creative Studies, UCSB
- 1982 *In Search of Ancient Sisters* - University of California, Santa Barbara

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2010 *Altered Books: A New Object*, [ARTSPACE] at Untitled, Oklahoma City, OK
- 2010 *Aldrich Undercover*, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield Connecticut
- 2010 *Density*, Atkinson Gallery, Santa Barbara
- 2009 *Illiterature*, Arena One Gallery, Santa Monica (Cal State Chico Gallery, 2010)
- 2009 *Book as Sculpture*, Brand Stater Gallery, La Sierra University, Riverside, CA
- 2008 *Aldrich Undercover*, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield Connecticut
- 2008 *Illiterature*, LIMN Gallery, San Francisco (curated by Mark Carter)

- 2007- 2008 *ZOOM+/-* - Arena 1 Gallery, Santa Monica; & LIMN Gallery, San Francisco (curated by Doug Beube)
- 2007 *Artists' books Made Here*, Elverhoy Museum of History and Art
- 2006 *Fiber/Fabric*: Angels Gate, San Pedro, CA
- 2006 *Aldrich Undercover*, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield Connecticut
- 2005 *Submersed: Contemporary Altered Books*, International Surface Design Conference, Kansas (curated by Teresa Paschke)
- 2005 *Artists Create Books*, Terhune Gallery, Toledo Ohio; Tiffin University, Ohio; Ohio Northern University (curated by Jean Clad)
- 2005 *Books: An Exhibition of Exceptionally Scaled Books*, W. Keith and Janet Kellogg University Gallery, Cal Poly, Pomona
- 2005 *Dialogue*, I-5 Gallery at the Brewery, Los Angeles (curated by Michelle Onstot)
- 2004 *Metaphorical Books*, Angels Gate Cultural Center, San Pedro
- 2004 *City Dialogues*, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery at Barnsdall Art Park
- 2004 *Sacred Texts of the World*, Minneapolis College of Art and Design (curated by Diana Mullin; catalog)
- 2002 *Girl Talk*; Encina Gallery, Sacramento, CA (curated by Elizabeth Adan)
- 2001 *Year End* LIMN Gallery, San Francisco, CA (curated by Christine Duval)
- 2001 *So Cal(led) Books: Diversity in Artist's Books from Southern California*, New York Center for the Book, New York (curated by Gloria Helfgott; catalog)
- 2001 *Out of Line*, Channing Peake Gallery, Santa Barbara (curated by Rafael Perea de la Cabada; catalog)
- 2001 *Theory or Faith*, LIMN Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2001 *Spun*, The Living Room: Special Projects in Contemporary Art, Santa Monica,
- 2000 *Faith: The Impact of Judeo-Christian Religion on Art at the Millennium*, Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT (curated by: Christian Eckart, Harry Philbrick, Osvaldo Romberg; catalog)
- 2000 *Within Our Walls: The Museum at Pomona College*, Montgomery Gallery, Pomona College, Claremont CA

REVIEWS OF EXHIBITIONS (partial list)

Leah Ollman, "Linda Ekstrom at Sherry Frumkin,"

Los Angeles Times, November 11, 2010

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/culturemonster/2010/11/art-review-linda-ekstrom-at-sherry-frumkin.html>

Leah Ollman, "Linda Ekstrom at Frumkin/Duval,"

Art in America, May 2002, No. 5, (photo: Expanse from the Castles Series) p.158

http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1248/is_5_90/ai_86194996

Rahne Pistor, "Altered bibles, tense faith central to Ekstrom's conceptual..."

The Argonaut, November 2, 2006

Leah Ollman, "Sacred texts and the power of love,"

Los Angeles Times, November 17, 2006

Tahree Lane, "Books as art..."

The Blade (Toledo Ohio), November 10, 2005

Victoria Dalkey, "Encina's 'Girl Talk' show offers a serious visual conversation,"
The Sacramento Bee, January 27, 2002 (photo: Twined Bible)

Ann Wilson Lloyd, "In A New Millennium, Religion Shows Its Face,"
The New York Times, January 23, 2000

Eleanor Charles, "Art and Religion," *New York Times*, The Guide, January 23, 2000

Stephanie Ramp, "Take It on Faith: The Aldrich Museum mounts..."
Fairfield County Weekly, February 3, 2000

Frank Merkling, "A New Look for Virgin Mary--bobby socks,"
The News Times, February 4, 2000

Matt Sedensky, "Faith - The Aldrich Museum explores..."
Connecticut Post, February 27, 2000

L. P. Streitfeld, "'Faith' Harvests a Renaissance in Ridgefield," *Stamford Advocate*, March 2000

Patricia Rosoff, "Faith in Art- The mystery of belief, the lure of the numinous at the Aldrich,"
The Hartford Advocate, March 23, 2000

Grace Glueck, "Creative Souls Who Keep the Faith or Challenge its Influence,"
The New York Times, April 21, 2000
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9401E0D81031F932A15757C0A9669C8B63>

David D.J. Rau, "Faith: The Impact of Judeo-Christian Religion on Art at the Millennium,"
New Art Examiner, June 2000

Mark Daniel Cohen, "Faith: The Impact of Judeo-Christian Religion on Art at the Millennium,"
Contemporary Visual Arts, June 2000, Issue 29

Lindsey Westbrook, "Theory or Faith," Critics Choice: Art,
San Francisco Bay Guardian, August 5, 2001 (photo: Opera Apum-Work of the Bees)

Limn Gallery, "Wrap Up! 2001,"
San Francisco Frontiers, December 13, 2001, Vol. 20, Issue 17 (photo: Rose Bible)

Steven Jenkins, "'trans-' at Quotidian Gallery,"
Artweek, May 1999, Vol. 3 (photo: Collaborative Drawings)

Leah Ollman, "Lost and Remembered,"
Los Angeles Times, Art Reviews November, 12, 1999 (photo: Open Wing Bible)

"Gallegiate Report Card" and "Gallegiate Top Ten,"
Coagula, Summer 1997, Vol. 28