

Linda Ekstrom

Feminist Works: The Body and Sacred Texts
in the Art Work of Linda Ekstrom



In my art work I explore a range of religious themes that address and challenge the patriarchy of religious institutions. As a feminist I specifically address the sacred texts that have been used by Judaism and Christianity to uphold the institution and its marginalization of women in ritual practices and leadership.



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.

Luce symbolizes “another sort of listening-to,” as theorist, Luce Irigaray describes. “Not an acknowledgement of information,” but “a listening to the still unspoken words of the other.”

Introduction

Throughout the history of Jewish and Christian tradition the role of women has continued to be problematic. Maleness serves as the norm, with femaleness seen as a deviation from this norm. The institutions of both traditions, and the sacred word upon which these are constructed, have evolved within the understanding of a historical reality that is androcentric, in which man has defined woman relative to him. Man becomes the subject; woman is the other, remembered as marginal in a world centered on man. The sexism we experience today in Western culture has deep roots in Jewish and Christian traditions and practices.

Early notions of spiritual dualism in some sects of Judaism and throughout Christianity, conceived the person as body *and* spirit, with the unity of the body understood as divided. The body and its natural functions were believed to be lower while the spirit, or those things associated with the soul, was of an elevated state. This strong gender dualism has existed over the ages. Men have been associated with the higher spiritual realm, and thought to be privileged in their communications with God and interpreting God's message. Women have been relegated, symbolized as *body*, and associated with animal nature and sexuality, those things of the lower, earthly realm. With the female being associated with the body, and thus, subordinate to male, the shaming and governing of women's bodies has been a central preoccupation.



Mary and Eve (from *Domestic Mary* series) 1998
canning jar, water, apple, plastic Mary statue

Jewish and Christian practices have both hidden the body from view and explored it obsessively, thus constructing the justifications for controlling women's place within their traditions and cultures. Both have imaged the female body as the location of temptation, sin and impurity. In the Creation Story, Eve, through succumbing to temptation becomes the source from which humanity is cast under the mantle of sin. In the New Testament story, Mary undoes this action by giving birth to the Savior, yet this can only come about through a spotless, virgin conception. The cult of devotion to Mary that has developed within the church upholds Mary as a woman without sexual desire or human frailty. In the Christian theology of saints and mystics we see many other examples of the female body objectified and elevated to states above sexuality and bodily desires.



Above: partial view of *Domestic Mary*

Various religious and domestic objects are canned in water, oil, wine, etc. to suggest the merging of the sacred with the mundane in women's domestic practices.

Since the 1970's Jewish and Christian feminist theologians have challenged the male centered perspective of their traditions through revisionist methods of Biblical translation and history. Christian theologian, Elizabeth A. Johnson, in her book, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse*, defines feminist theology as "a reflection on God and all things in the light of God that stands consciously in the company of all the world's women, explicitly prizing their genuine humanity while uncovering and criticizing its persistent violation in sexism...this perspective claims the fullness of the religious heritage for women precisely as human in their own right and independent from personal identification with men."



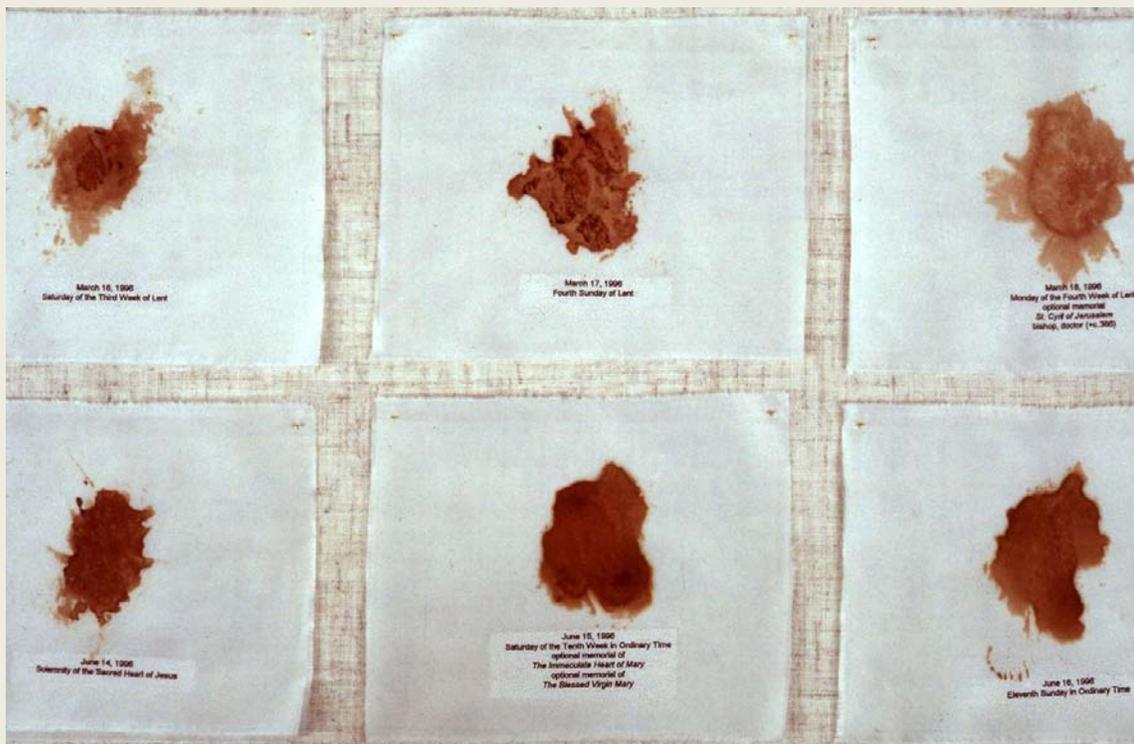
Menstrual Liturgical Cycle 1994 – 1998 (shown on table with box & detail)
menstrual blood-blots on silk, photo transfer text, pins, cloth bound box

Menstrual Liturgical Cycle addresses the marginalization of women in ritual prayer and the barring of women from ordination in the Roman Catholic Church.

The Body

As a feminist artist who explores the body in much of my work, my research has shown how the issues of sexism, that women continue to face today, have been largely formed by the biases found within the larger world's religious traditions and practices. These have shaped a world view of women that persists today and continues to be reinforced by the institutions of religion. The body in contemporary art speaks to issues around the *body self* and the *body politic*. Artists are interested in the body as a cultural object where power, resistance, desire, sexuality, fragmentation, alienation, and more intersect. The body is where the private and the public collide; the point of departure, or site, for the artist's discussion to begin.

Yale professor and theologian Teresa Berger, in her essay, *Women as Alien Bodies in the Body of Christ? The Place of Women in Worship*, describes how “two constraints governed the place of women in Christian worship throughout history; first their exclusion from the priesthood, which was conditioned by their gender and secondly the taboo of menstruation. Both of these led to specific ways in which women were excluded from certain spheres of liturgical life.” There have been many incidents in Christian history where the taboo of menstruation meant women had restrictions in taking part in worship. They had to abstain from receiving communion or postpone their baptisms. In some places women were forbidden to visit a church and receive communion after giving birth. In Jewish tradition menstruation meant defilement and isolation followed by purification rituals and offerings. A version of this historical view remains firmly in place today within in the Roman Catholic Church, in the way it continues to enforce restrictions on women’s bodies and reproductive rights.



Menstrual Liturgical Cycle 1994 – 1998 (detail below)

Created over a four and a half year span following my cycle, the blood stain of menstruation served as the raw material for *Menstrual Liturgical Cycle*. This work was made in direct response to Pope John Paul II's letter in 1994 to the Church at Easter, *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, in which he restated to the Church his position for banning women from priesthood, declaring the issue closed. The letter, with all of its carefully turned phrases and theological justifications could be distilled down to one, hollow and simplistic central issue. Jesus was male and women cannot be priests because they were not born male. The problem with women being prohibited from ordination and priesthood expands beyond their participating fully in the liturgical rituals of the Church. It also means they can never achieve authentic levels of decision making power within the church to bring about institutional change; these positions are exclusively held by ordained men who advance through the ranks to become bishops and cardinals.

In *Menstrual Liturgical Cycle* I began with the physical distinction of genitalia as the most specific issue used to justify barring women from priesthood. To produce an authentic sign of this omission, I used menstrual blood for mark making as a material unique to woman and her reproductive system. Each of the silk pieces in *Menstrual Liturgical Cycle* is marked by menstrual blood, blotted each day of my cycle. Text was added as a way to merge my body's cycle directly to the days on which it occurred within the Liturgical Calendar the Church

uses to mark its yearly ritual feasts and celebrations. Most days on the calendar are dedicated to individuals, saints or martyrs who are commemorated in the celebration of the mass for their corresponding day of the week. By linking my body's cycle to the calendar from which the Church's ritual practices ebb and flow, I position my femaleness into the central ritual action of the mass. *Menstrual Liturgical Cycle* claims a solidarity between my blood and the lives of past individuals named on the days of the Church's calendar. It subversively consecrates my menstrual blood as a symbol for all women and their exclusion from Christian history and ritual. What has been seen as a mark of inferior status is elevated as a sign of transcendence.

In feminist art practice the use of menstrual blood has been about empowerment, about owning and flaunting the aspects and functions of women's bodies that have been hidden and shamed. In *Menstrual/Liturgical Cycle* my body becomes a site to react against such degrading notions. By making it *seen* I reject the ways women's bodies are circumscribed. The blood stains are my most direct and primal way of making a drawing about my life as a woman in society, within the life of the Church.





Litany of Women, 1996

Litany of Women, and *Women Named in Scripture*, are two works in which I explore the inclusion and exclusion of women in sacred scripture. In *Litany of Women* I cut from the pages of the Bible each female's name where she first appeared in the text, whether she had a central role in the story or was named only in reference to a man. I also included generic terms, such as wife, mother, whore, sister, and all female pronouns. *Litany of Women* forms a loose leaf artists' book in which each name is glued to a page of silk and stacked in order of the name's appearance. Interspersed throughout the silk pages are fragments from the poetry of Jorie Graham. These are included to express the sense of longing that comes from the incompleteness of these women's stories. A cloth bound box serves as the binding. After the names have been removed, what remains is a Bible that has not been changed much. One could turn page after page without even seeing a hole where a woman's name had been, as most women were included only as minor characters to complete the stories of the men

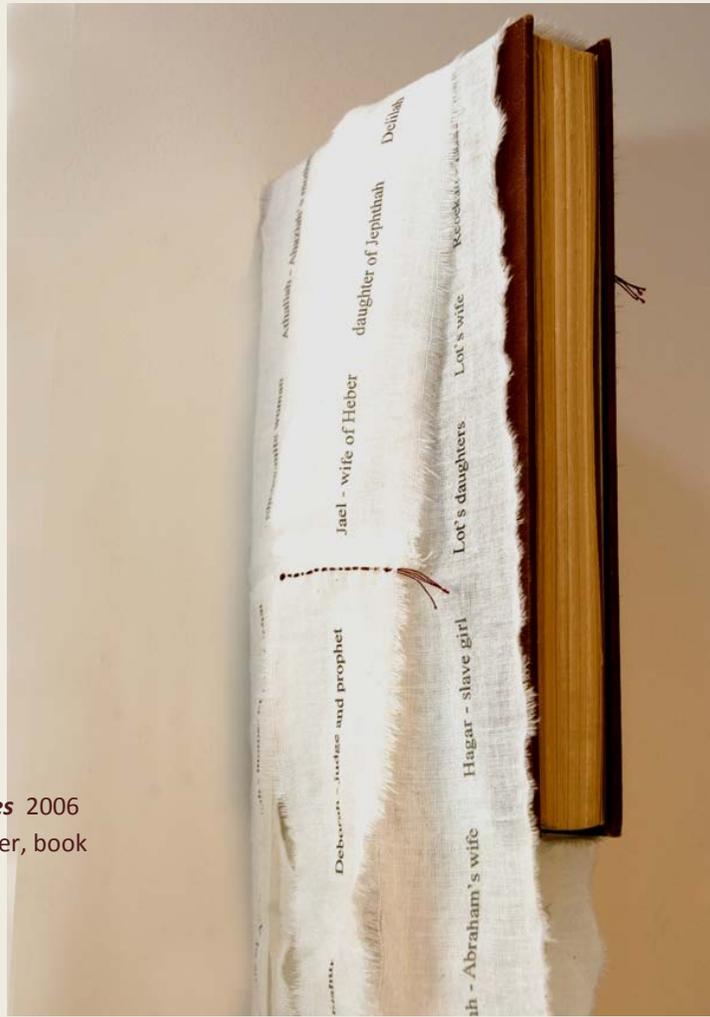


***Litany of Women*, 1996**

women's names cut from the Bible, silk, vellum, clothbound box

An artists' book created by cutting each woman's name from the pages of the Bible. Each name is glued to individual rectangles of silk, stacked in chronological order and encased in a cloth bound box. Lines from the poetry of Jorie Graham are interspersed to echo loss and fragmentation.

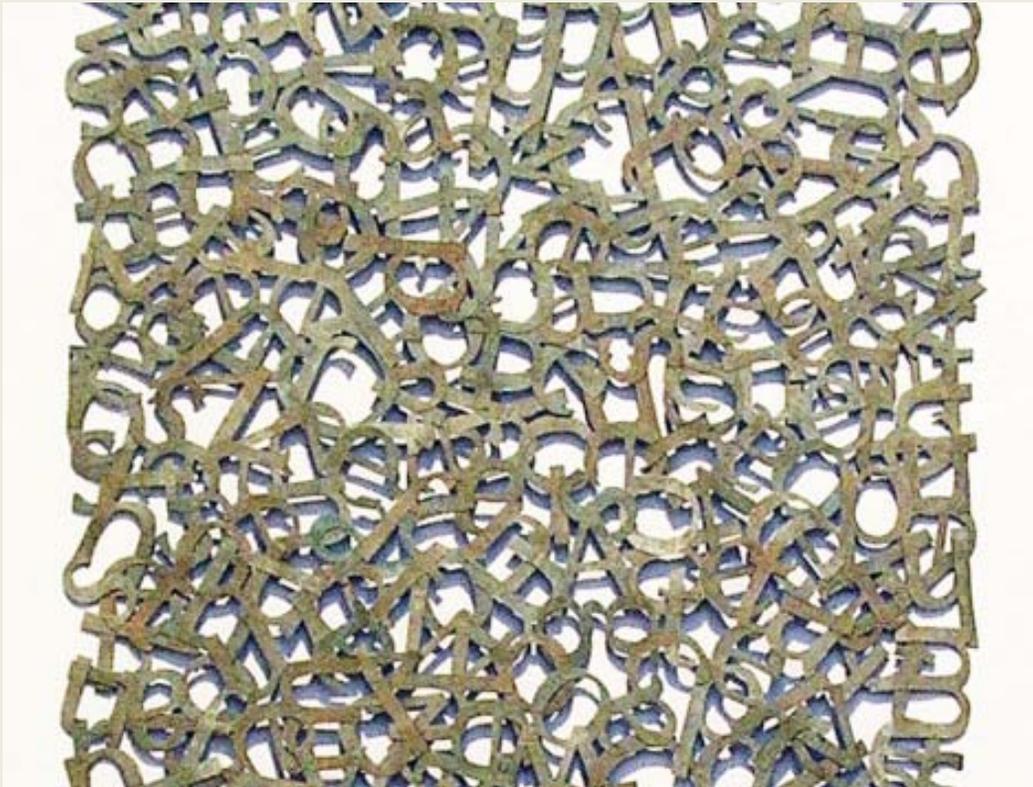
Women Named in Scriptures 2006
cloth, thread, iron on transfer, book
(detail)



In *Women Named in Scripture*, the women's names have been heat transferred onto strips of cotton gauze like fabric in the order of their appearance in the Bible. The strips are then hand sewn together using red thread. Included with the names, are those anonymous women listed as girl, mother, servant, slave, wife, whore, as well as all female pronouns. The length of names is looped over a Bible or other hook. I wanted the work to have a domestic appearance, to create a ribbon of names linking all the women together into a fabric scroll.



Women Named in Scriptures 2006 (full view) size varies, 6w x 6d x 60 inches h shown



Mary, 2010 (detail)

The stories of two key women in the Bible, Eve and Mary, have been reshaped into iconic forms in two text sculptures, *Mary*, and *Eve's Constellation*. The lives of Mary and Eve have become intertwined. In Christian history, it is Mary who “unties the knot that Eve tied.” In both *Mary*, and *Eve's Constellation*, I have enlarged and transferred the words from each woman's stories onto mulberry paper covered with ink and acrylic paint. Each letter is cut out by hand and clustered together so that a literal reading of the story is exchanged for an iconic one. *Mary* hangs like a banner with a ragged edge at the bottom suggesting the ongoing story that extends through the various devotions to Mary over the ages. In *Eve's Constellation*, the binding of Eve, through her “fall from grace,” is set free in the circular clustering of words that float on the wall. Eve, the cosmic mother, becomes our constellation.



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

Mary is created using the letters
from all the texts attributed to
Mary in the New Testament.
Each letter is cut from mulberry
paper, treated and glued into a
hanging form.





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.

Sacred Texts

In my art practice I also explore the book as a cultural and symbolic object, and as a container of history, narrative and memory. The Bible, as the primary book of Western culture and central to my tradition, is the book I alter and transform into sculptures. The altered Bibles serve as visual symbols against fundamentalism, defying a singular, literal read by rearranging the order into myriad possibilities. In altering a Bible I admittedly experience both ambivalence and reverence. I transgress the ways the biblical words have been arranged and secured by male consensus. As a feminist working with the Bible I am aware of the male perspective that has bound this book together over the ages and how women have been excluded and written out of much of the history of Jewish and Christian tradition. While my art is a direct extension and materialization of my religious practice, and my interest in Jewish and Christian traditions, many of my works question and critique these institutions.





Spherical Bible, 1996
altered Bible, box
24 x 6 x 6 inches

Spherical Bible presents the book as a long, continuous line of text wound around, like a domestic ball of yarn, to create spherical forms that can be held in the hand, turned and read in fragments. Each page is cut between the lines creating switchbacks, so that the text of the page can be lifted out of the book as one long line. The integrity of the book's order is maintained in the grouping of the spheres according to the traditional Christian division: the Pentateuch, the Historical Books, the Wisdom Books, the Prophets, and the New Testament.



Effusion, 2003
altered Bible
15d x 18w x 36h inches

Pages of the Bible were cut into spirals but held in at the spine. Each spiral was pulled through an opening in the cover and unfurled from the page to create a Bible spilling out curls of text.



Seed, 2001

pearled Bible text, silk bag

13h x 10w x 10d inches

Each line of the Bible has been cut and rolled into a tiny ball like a seed or pearl. These are held together in a silk bag.



Tangled

29d x 29w x 38h

altered Bible, wooden table

Each page of the Bible has been removed and glued end to end, then twisted tightly into one long continuous length of twined text. The Bible is shown tangled on a tabletop.

The altered Bibles open possibilities for ways the book might take shape beyond literary arrangements, and despite their altered forms, a tension exists in wanting to retain readability. Often the shredded and tangled lines remain bound at the spine, even though they are scrambled. The text columns twist into continuums of twine, or the spheres suggest they could be unwound to be read. It is all there twisted, rolled, tucked under and pressed down, even though only bits of words and isolated letters remain. In the end an essence of words are offered to be taken in through the experience of the senses, in visual and tactile methods of reading.

When I cut apart a Bible it is overtly subversive; when I re-shape a Bible into a new form it involves an intentionality that touches on reverence and ritual. In altering the Bible, I depart from how the religious culture has sanctioned it and seek for ways to present it anew. My process is antithetical to scholarship in the way one understands midrashic tradition or Biblical translation. I explore translation in another way: by delving into the Bible in tactile ways, by cutting, twisting and tearing through the pages to uncover meaning and reorder the form.



Pursed, 2010 (detail)



Circling

9d x 9w x 9h

altered Bible

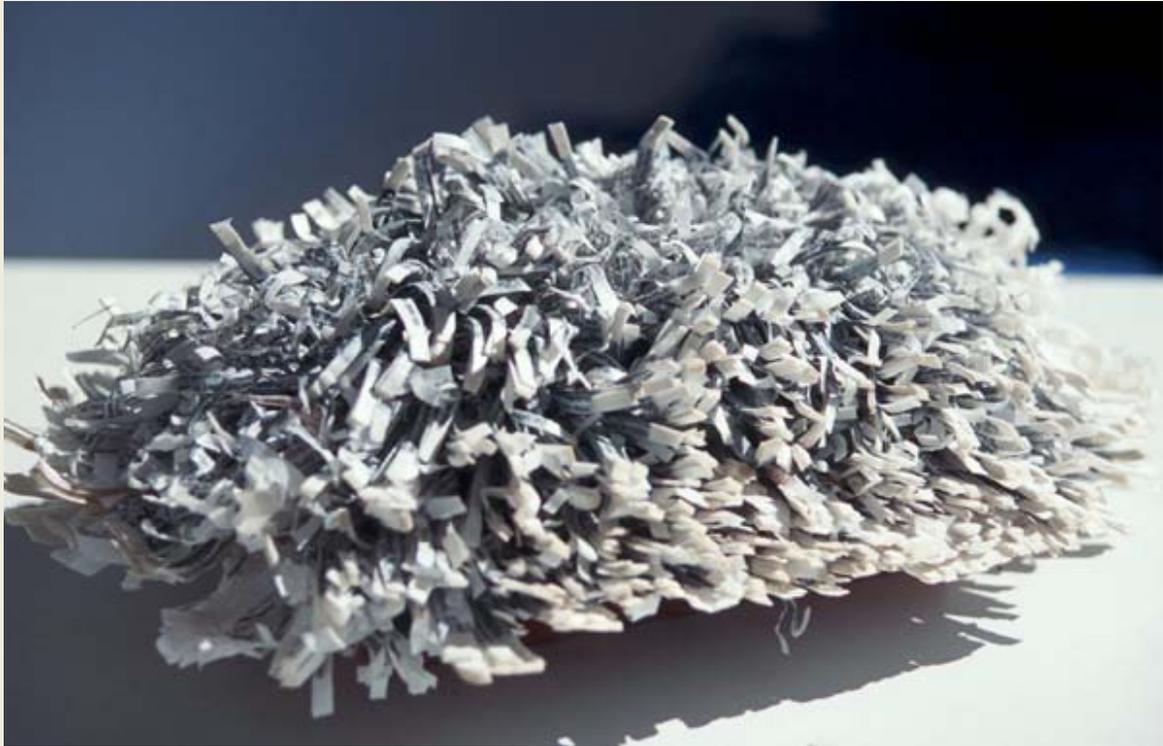
Each page of the Bible was removed and glued end to end. The pages were then twisted tightly into a long continuous length of twined text and rolled into a spherical form.



***Twined Bible*, 1999**

Bible, leather, wooded Shaker style box
10w x 10d x 6h inches

Each page of the Bible was removed and glued end to end. The pages were then twisted tightly into a long continuous length of twined text and coiled with the leather cover attached at each end. In this view the altered Bible is shown outside of the wooden box.



***Flourish*, 2003**

altered Bible, beeswax

8.5w x 12d x 4h inches

The Bible pages are cut between each line of text with each page held in at the books spine. The lines are then scrambled and tangled to create a tactile form. The book is then dipped in beeswax to hold its shape.

The altered Bibles especially entice the human touch in ways that gives the static book a visual vitality. Words “spill out” beyond the confines of the cover. The arrangement is scrambled, the sequence is jumbled. The new form defies bookish reading for a random, tactile one, where the viewer reads fragments in a back and forth between their fingers and their eyes—a sensual and sensory way of reading the textual. While the altered Bibles are no longer books operationally, to a greater extent, they function *visually*. In the same way the alphabet and the arrangement of letters is an abstract representation of words, the altered Bibles are forms inspired from the invisibility and abstract aspects of oral and silent reading.



Hemisphere, 2003

Bible text, beeswax

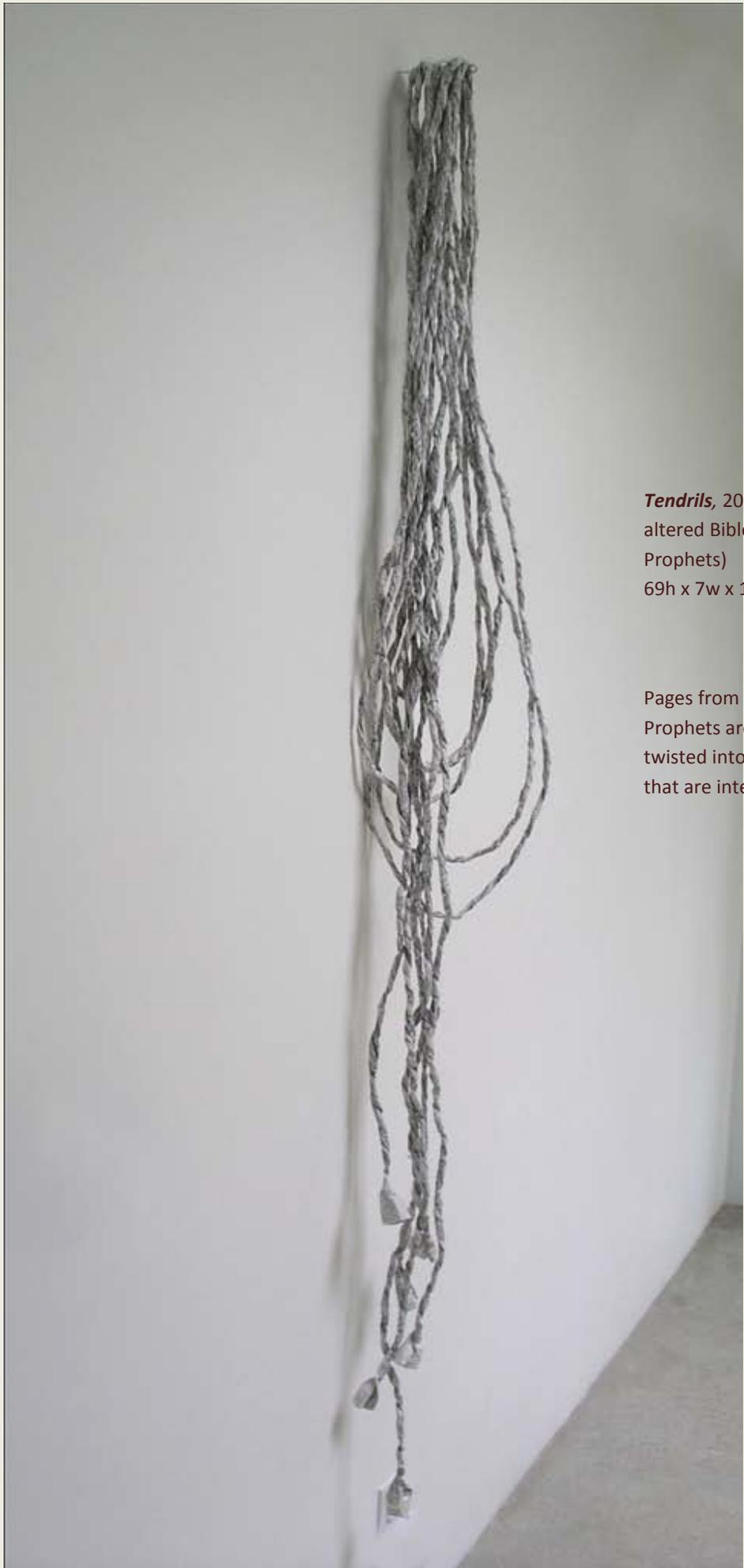
4d x 7w x 7h inches (shown wall mounted)

The Bible is cut into 1/16 inch strips that are dipped into beeswax and shaped into a half-sphere. The work is wall mounted.



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

Groupings of pages throughout the Bible are cut into long thin spirals that remain connected to the spine of the book. The spirals are pulled out and released to form a curled and tangled spill of words. The work hangs from a cord suggesting a purse. The curls appear playful and seductive. They also suggest women's hair and thus make reference the many ways women's bodies have been circumscribed through ritual laws, and sexualized in the stories of the Bible.



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 strands
that are intertwined.

Detail below



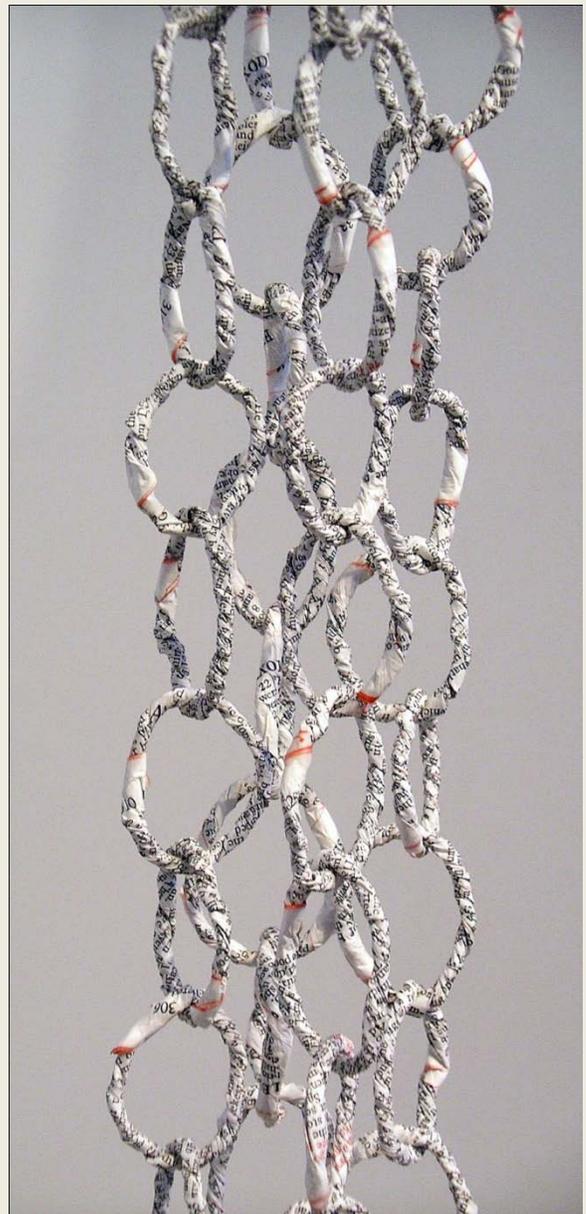


***Chained*, 2010**

altered Bible, 56 feet chain

installation size varies

Each page of the Bible is formed into one link. The links are connected to form a chain that begins with the first page of Genesis and ends with the last page of Revelation. The text no longer holds agency in any literal way. It is received visually. The “endless” chain recalls the various forms throughout religious history that refer to the axis mundi – a connecting of the underworld, to our world, to the heavens beyond. The chain also suggests bondage.



What is surfacing in the altered Bibles is a sense for all that lies behind the Bible—this is how it *looks*. My practice of repetitiously deconstructing the Bible appropriates the texts to re-invent, and to somehow take the whole of its history into my experience as a woman, as an artist, and as a Catholic. In doing so, I offer to the Bible a way to rise above patriarchal constraints. I am positioning myself within the biblical, historical traditions of: interpretation, story, ritual, and iconography, and in my imprint, I emphasize these traditions as open-ended and unsettled. These altered Bibles operate within the tradition of religious iconography; they are a transformation of sacred *word* into sacred *object*.



Around, 2010
altered Bible, silver cord, silver
thread

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

Berger, Teresa. "Women as Alien Bodies in the Body of Christ? The Place of Women in Worship." Liturgy and the Body.
ed. Louis-Marie Chauvet and Francois Kabasele Lumbala. SCM Press Ltd, London and Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 1995.

Johnson, Elizabeth A. She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse. Crossroad, New York, 1993.



LINDA EKSTROM

<http://www.lindaekstrom.com>

Linda Ekstrom completed her MFA in Studio Art 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, Jane Deering Gallery, Santa Barbara; Frumkin Gallery, 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.

ACADEMIC

BA College of Creative Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara 1982

MFA University of California, Santa Barbara, 1996

Faculty in the College of Creative Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara 1999 to present

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2013 *Labyrinth*, Jane Deering Gallery, Santa Barbara

2013 *Tangled Texts/Teasing Textures: Book Art and Beyond*; Broome Library Gallery,
Cal State University Channel Islands, curated by Anette Kubitza

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 *In Search of Ancient Sisters* - University of California, Santa Barbara

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2012 *Lift*: Westmont Annual Juried Exhibition, juror: Howard Fox, Westmont Museum of Art
- 2012 *Artists Create Books*: Cal State University Dominguez Hills
- 2011 *Matter and Spirit: Art and Belief in a Digital Age*, Biola Library, CA
- 2011 *Achromatic Variations*, Jane Deering Gallery, Santa Barbara, CA
- 2011 *Word, Image, Text, Object Juried Exhibition*; School of Fine Arts Gallery, Bloomington, IN; College Book Arts Association
- 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
- 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
- 2005 *Artists Create Books*, Terhune Gallery, Toledo Ohio; Tiffin University, Ohio Northern University
- 2005 *Books: An Exhibition of Exceptionally Scaled Books*, W. Keith and Janet Kellogg University Gallery, Cal Poly, Pomona
- 2005 *Power of Word*, Reynolds Gallery, Westmont College, Montecito CA, juror Richard West
- 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)
- 2002 *memory/in/voice*, installation created for Yom Ha-Shoah in
- 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 (catalog)
- 2001 *Out of Line*, Channing Peake Gallery, Santa Barbara (catalog)
- 2001 *Theory or Faith*, LIMN Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2001 *Spun*, The Living Room: Special Projects in Contemporary Art, Santa Monica, CA

- 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
- 2000 *Mathesis*, Cerritos College, CA
- 2000 *Faculty Exhibit*, University of California, Santa Barbara,
- 2000 *memory/in/dwelling*, installation created for Yom Ha-Shoah, Hillel, UCSB
- 1999 *So Cal(led) Books: Diversity in Artist's Books from Southern California*
San Francisco Center for the Book, San Francisco
- 1998 *trans-*, Quotidian Gallery, San Francisco
- 1998 *Open and Closed: Artists Contemporary Books as Sculpture*,
Fullerton College Gallery
- 1998 *Significant Others*, Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum
- 1998 *Charity2*, Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum
- 1997 *Second Biennial Artist's Books Juried Exhibition*,
Athenaeum Music and ArtsLibrary, La Jolla California
- 1997 *Group Exhibition - Riverside Art Museum*, Riverside. California
- 1997 *Testimony*, Montgomery Gallery, Pomona College, Claremont, California
(curated by Rebecca McGrew; catalog)
- 1997 *The Uncommon Book: I thought hope was home*,
Sun Valley Center for the Humanities, Sun Valley, Idaho
- 1997 *Seeking Balance*, Riverside Art Museum, Riverside, California
- 1996 *Reproducing Nature*, Sherry Frumkin Gallery, Santa Monica, California
- 1996 *Score*, University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara
- 1996 *Un Ange Passe*, Reynolds Art Gallery, Westmont College, California
- 1995 *Investigations*, Gallery 1434, University of California, Santa Barbara
- 1995 *Small Images*, Atkinson Art Gallery, Santa Barbara City College
- 1995 *Retrospective: Awards in the Visual Arts, Individual Artist Program*
Ro Snell Gallery, Santa Barbara
- 1994 *Individual Artist Program:Traveling Exhibition*,
Elverhoy Museum and Channing Peake Gallery
- 1993 *Prints*, selected by Ro Snell, Faulkner Gallery, Santa Barbara
- 1993 *CHAIRity*, Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum
- 1992 *Un Ange Passe*, Reynolds Art Gallery, Westmont College, California
- 1991 *AMDG: Exhibition in Grace Cathedral, San Francisco*
(curated by Armand Rascone and Terrain Gallery, San Francisco)
- 1989 *Faculty Exhibition*, Atkinson Art Gallery, Santa Barbara City College
- 1989 *AIDS CAP*, Frameworks Gallery, Santa Barbara, California
- 1988 *Assemblages*, Arpel Gallery, Santa Barbara, California
- 1987 *Art Walk*, Open Studios, UCSB Alumni Association,
- 1987 *Dionysian Revel III: Garden of Earthly Delights*, Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum
- 1986 *All California 86 on a Small Scale*, Laguna Art Museum, California
(selected by Howard Fox; catalog)
- 1985 *X-Change*, traveling exhibition, Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum,
Anchorage Alaska, Moskow Idaho (*catalog*)

- 1984 *Group Show, Women's Building, Santa Barbara, California*
 1983 *December Group Show, Risser Gallery, Pasadena, California*
 1983 *Pacific States Print and Drawing Exhibition, University of Hawaii at Hilo,*
 (selected by Charles Garabedian; catalog)
 1983 *California Mystique: Contemporary Women Painters, McPhee Union Art Gallery*
 Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, California (selected by Sandy Ballatore)
 1983 *Western States Figurative Realism, Cypress College, Cypress, California (catalog)*
 1981 *Big Paintings, College of Creative Studies Art Gallery, UC Santa Barbara*

AWARDS and RESIDENCIES

- 2004 - Faculty Professional Development Grant, UCSB
Capturing the Bird: Material Forms of the Word in the Poetry of Emily Dickinson
 2003- Erasmus Institute Faculty Seminar, "Religious Hermeneutics and Secular
 Interpretation." Led by Geoffrey Hartman, Yale University
 1999-2005 - Artist in Residence, The Center for the Study of Religion, UCSB
 1996-1998 - Visiting Scholar, Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara,
 1996 - Abrams Award, artist grant - UCSB Women's Center
 1995 - Abrams Award, artist grant - UCSB Women's Center
 1995 - Un Ange Passe, cash award - Westmont College
 1994 - Un Ange Passe, cash award - Westmont College
 1993 - Individual Artist Program, grant - Santa Barbara County Arts Commission
 1986 - ARTSEEN, grant for site specific work - Santa Barbara Museum of Art

CATALOGS

- 1983 "Western States Figurative Realism"- Cypress College
 1983 "Pacific States Print and Drawing Exhibition" - University of Hawaii, Hilo
 1985 "X-Change"- Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum
 1986 "All California '86 on a Small Scale"- Laguna Art Museum
 1997 "Testimony"- Montgomery Gallery, Pomona College
 2000 "Faith: The Impact of Judeo-Christian Religion on Art at the Millennium"
 Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art
 2001 "Out of Line, Drawings, Personal Notations,"- Channing Peake Gallery
 2004 "City Dialogues at Barnsdall Art Park," City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs
 2004 "Sacred Texts," Minneapolis College of Art and Design
 2006 "The Barry Berkus and Family Art Collection," Santa Barbara County Arts Commission

GUEST LECTURES OR PAPERS PRESENTED

- unraveling*, Sherry Frumkin Gallery; Santa Monica, CA; December 2006
To Make Space: The Ritual Dimension Present in Contemporary Art and Practice,
 Union Theological Seminary; New York, NY; November 2006
Symbol Language in Contemporary Art, Yale Institute of Sacred Music;
 Yale University, November 2005
Symbol Language in the Work and Practice of Contemporary Artists,
 Form/Reform: National Conference on Art and Architecture; Los Angeles, CA; 2004
Unveiling the Sacred in Contemporary Art: Interpreting Christian Boltanski, Anselm Keifer, and
Wolfgang Laib, Linda Ekstrom, Richard Hecht; The Cultural Turn; February 2001

Material Memories, The Herman P. and Sophia Taubman Symposia in Jewish Studies;
Interdisciplinary Humanities Center; UCSB; Spring 2000

SmART talks, The Helen Rosenberg Memorial Lecture Series; Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum;
Santa Barbara, CA; October 2000

Art and the Body: the body politic and the body private, University of California; Santa Barbara, CA;
October 2000

Dialogue: Linda Ekstrom and Judith Hoffberg discuss the artist's book, Sherry Frumkin Gallery;
Santa Monica, CA; October 2000

The Book-Work and Process, Art Department, Cal State University; Long Beach, CA
lecture and graduate studio critiques; April 1998

Religion and Material Form, Department of Religious Studies, UCSB; May 1998

Testimony, a discussion of feminist concerns in religion and art, Religious Studies Department,
Pomona College; Montgomery Gallery, Pomona College; Claremont, CA; November 1997

Testimony, discussion of bookworks, Art Studio Department, Pomona College; Montgomery
Gallery, Pomona College; Claremont, CA; December 1997

Lecture and Bookbinding Workshop, Art Studio Department, Pomona College; Claremont, CA
binding of limited edition artists' book, "Testimony"

PUBLICATIONS

Articles Published

1989, "Fire and Water: an artist explores the message of these two primal symbols"
Modern Liturgy Magazine, Vol. 16 no. 2, Resource Publications, Inc.

1997, "Space, Memory and Place" Environment and Art Letter, Vol. 10 no 1

1997, "Gober's Mary fires debate on art, religion" National Catholic Reporter, December 5

1998, "Jewish women take another look as identity as 'people of the book'"
National Catholic Reporter, February 6

1998, "Angels a sure winner but exhibit raises doubts on Church's view of art"
National Catholic Reporter, May 8

2002, "LA's cathedral's new sacred space and ritual can offer healing" National Catholic Reporter,
November 29 (co-authored with Richard Hecht) 2007, "Ritual Performance and Ritual Practice:
Teaching the Multiple Forms and Dimensions of Ritual" in *Teaching Ritual*, edited by Catherine Bell,
Oxford University Press (co-authored with Richard Hecht)

2007, "Informed Source" (Linda Ekstrom featured artist and writer) Surface Design Journal;
Spring 2007, Volume 31, #3

Books Illustrated or Art Contributed

1990, *Words Around the Fire*, Gail Ramshaw, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago

1990, *Death Sourcebook*, ed. Ginny Sloyan, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago

1991, *Words Around the Table*, Gail Ramshaw, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago

1991, *Melodious Accord*, Alice Parker, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago

1992, *Paschal Mission 1992*, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago

1995, *Words Around the Font*, Gail Ramshaw, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago

1995, *The Psalter*, (ICEL translation) Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago

1995, *Psalms for Morning and Evening Prayer*, (ICEL) Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago

1995, *I Will Lie Down This Night*, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago

1995, *Triduum Sourcebook*, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago

1996, *The Canticles*, (ICEL translation) Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago

1998, *The Lectionary*, three volume ritual book, cover and inside art, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago
2006, *Biblical Religion and the Novel, 1700-2000*, ed. Mark Knight and Thomas Woodman, Ashgate Press
2007, *Teaching Ritual*, edited by Catherine Bell, Oxford University Press – Cover image
2008, *Liturgy: New and Borrowed Rites*; ed. Siobhan Garrigan and Janet Walton;
volume 23, no.1, Taylor & Francis Group, Routledge Press
2011 *The Hospitable Text: New Approaches to Religion and Literature*, Conference; University
of Notre Dame London Centre, London – Cover Image

LIMITED EDITION ARTISTS' BOOKS from hand-to-mouth press, Linda Ekstrom

1994, *Poetry in the Hand: selected poems by Joyce Carol Oates*; edition of 20
1994, *The Kidnapping*, story by Linda Ekstrom; edition of 20
1994, *O, the night of the weeping children*, a poem by Nelly Sachs; edition of 20
1995, *Taboos: based on Totem and Taboo by Sigmund Freud*; edition of 20
1996, *Abu Steve is Coming Out of Retirement*, story by Richard D. Hecht; edition of 100
1996, *The Disappeared*, story by Richard D. Hecht; edition of 100
1996, *Jerusalem*, poems by Jehuda Amichai, commemorating Amichai's reading at UCSB; edition of 85
1997, *Testimony*, Montgomery Gallery, Pomona College; edition of 45
2004, *Ahasuerus*, poem by Geoffrey Hartman, commemorating his visit to the campus; edition of 50
2006, *The Visit*, story and design by Linda Ekstrom; edition of 26
2011, *Book of Isaiah*, poem by Anne Carson, edition of 25

INCLUDED IN PUBLICATIONS/ ARTICLES OR LECTURES PRESENTED ON SUBJECT

"Faith in Art," Patricia Rosoff; Innocent Eye Tupelo Press, North Adams, MA, 2012
"Art that is Critical of Religion," Gary Elkins: On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art,
Routledge, New York and London, 2004
"Sacred Books and Sacred Subversions: Linda Ekstrom's Altered Bibles," Richard D. Hecht;
"Journal of Contemporary Midrash," 2000
"Sacred Books and Sacred Subversions: Linda Ekstrom's Altered Bibles," Richard D. Hecht;
American Academy of Religion, March 1998, Claremont, CA
Interdisciplinary Humanities Center; May 1998, UCSB
"Shredding the Bible at Westmont College?" Robert H. Gundry;
Westmont College, Santa Barbara, CA, January 23, 1996

COLLECTIONS

Yale University Museum of Art
Barry and Gail Berkus
Alan Chasanoff
University of California at Santa Barbara, Special Collections Davidson Library
University of California at Los Angeles, Rare Books and Special Collections Library
Carnegie Mellon University, Special Collections Library
Pomona College Museum, Pomona College, Claremont
Simon Wiesenthal Center Library, Tolerance Museum, Los Angeles, California

ADDITIONAL

1998 to 2001: Los Angeles Cathedral, Our Lady of the Angels, committee for art and furnishings
1987 to 1997: Freelance illustrator of books and publications
1981- 1982; Gallery Director, UCSB Women's Center Art Gallery

REVIEWS OF EXHIBITIONS (partial list)

Joseph Woodard, "Leading Nowhere to Somewhere"

Santa Barbara News Press, Scene, April 19-25, 2013

Charles Donelan, "Ekstrom Unbound"

Independent, April 17, 2013

Amanda Rountree, "Linda Ekstrom's Tendrils & Trunk: Matter and Spirit, Biola University"

<http://visionvoicepractice.blogspot.com/2011/03/linda-ekstroms-tendrils-trunk.htm>, 2011,

Rachelle Woo Chuang, "Rachelle Woo Chuang Interviews Artist Linda Ekstrom," Fall 2011

CIVA Journal,

Joseph Woodard, "Color of a Different Color"

Santa Barbara News Press, Scene, May 20-26, 2011

Elizabeth Schwyzer, "Lessons in Impermanence"

The Independent, Art Seen, May 19, 2011

Leah Ollman, "An eloquence of mystical intent"

Los Angeles Times, November 12 2010

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

Sarah Jesse, "Preserve, Transform: A Review of Altered Books"

www.behance.net/gallery/Exhibition-Review-Altered-Books/815996, August 2010

Sarah Atlee, *Review: Altered Books*

<http://write-curate-art.blogspot.com/2010/12/review-altered-books.html>, December 7, Joseph

Woodard, "Art of the Kneading Kind"

Santa Barbara News Press Scene, January 29-February 4, 2010

Leah Ollman, "'Illiterature' mixes messages"

Los Angeles Times, Around the Galleries, March 5, 2009

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/culturemonster/2009/03review-illitera.html>

Joseph Woodard, "Links in the chain – Some of the Arts Fund's 129 'Individual Artist Awards' recipients are on view at the Channing Peake Gallery" *Santa Barbara News Press*, October 16, 2009

Rayhané S. Sanders, "Unraveling," www.urbanpollution.com

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

The Argonaut, November 2, 2006, (photos: Bird: flight of circumference; Effusion)

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

Shirlie Gottlieb, "Artists' books draw unique perspectives,"

Press Telegram Long Beach, 2004

Victoria Dalkey, "Encina's 'Girl Talk' show offers a serious visual conversation,"

The Sacramento Bee, January 27, 2002 (photo: Twined Bible)

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

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

Meridith Tromble, "A Name for Everything: Genetics and Art,"

D.J. Palladino, "Sketchy Truths 'Out of Line: Drawings and Paintings by Seven Artists,'"

The Independent, September 27, 2001

Charlene Roth, "Santa Monica, Linda Ekstrom – Beverly Semmes," review
Sculpture Magazine, April 2000, Vol. 19, No. 3 (photo: Blossom)

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)

Joan Crowder, "Scenes from Sketchbooks,"
Santa Barbara News Press, October 8, 2001 (photo: Labyrinth)

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)

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

Susan Kandel, "Panic and Lust,"
Los Angeles Times, July 18, 1996

Claudine Isé, "'Reproducing Nature' at Sherry Frumkin Gallery,"
Artweek, September 1996

"Reproducing Nature,"
Los Angeles View, July 12-18, 1996

Joan Crowder, "'Score It',"
Santa Barbara News Press, May 17, 1996

Marina Walker, "The Materialization of Their Private Vision,"
Santa Barbara News Press, September, 12, 1997

Joan Crowder, "A Fine Sampling of Talents at Ro Snell,"
Santa Barbara News Press, February, 13, 1995

Michael Darling, "Winners Dazzle and Beguile,"
Scene Santa Barbara News Press, January, 6 1997 (photo: Desert/West from Exodus series)

Judith Callander, "Minor Key,"
The Independent, December 15, 1994

David Wright, "Sore in Spirit; 'Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam' at Grace Cathedral,"
Art Week, May 16, 1991

"Has to be Artseen to be Believed,"
Santa Barbara News Press, April 20, 1986

Bill Anderson, "Art Attack: In Outer Space,"
Santa Barbara New & Review, March 28, 1985 (photo: Minor Prophet)

Richard Ames, "Farr Exhibit Reflects Mid-Century Americana,"
Santa Barbara News Press, March 16, 1985

"Linda Ekstrom in Outer Space," (Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum)
Santa Barbara News Press, March 9, 1985