

Elicit Bodies

Art Exhibition & Performance Ritual
R. Michael Fisher & Barbara Bickel
Elicit Bodies

edited by Nané Jordan

essay by Yvonne Owens
interview by Eva Tihanyi

In Search of Fearlessness Research Institute
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

We dedicate this work to
our brothers and sisters
in the arts of transformation

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Elicit Bodies

Elicit Bodies, first an art exhibition, then an art book, involved numerous interactions and collaborations that fed the creative outcomes.

Barbara is indebted to each of the women who collaborated with her in the original *She Knows* project, of which the art works became part of *Elicit Bodies*. Thanks to Monica Bremmer, Leah Fisher, Nané Jordan & Shanti, Cathy Pulkinghorn, Sophia Marten, and the late Lyn Hazelton for amazing openness and commitment to co-researching in the creative process, which enabled a richness to unfold in the art that could not have emerged without them. They have each contributed to the further uncovering and honouring of women's wisdom.

Michael is indebted to the work of the late Dr. Kenneth R. Beittel, artist-research-educator, whose philosophy and life is an ongoing inspiration. We thank Karen Green, Curator of *Elicit Bodies*, for taking the time to investigate our art and especially, we appreciate her eye to bring our works together in one art exhibition. Along with Bob Diskin of Diskin Galleries, Vancouver, BC, we are grateful to them for the opportunity they provided to perform our art in their space.

Our sincere appreciation extends to two very talented women, Eva Tihanyi and Yvonne Owens, whose interview and essay draw forth a deeper understanding of our art. We thank Leslie Stanick for her video and photo documentation of the opening and performance ritual. And to all those who read their poetry during the exhibition, we extend our thanks and encourage you all to continue writing. Last but not least, Nané Jordan has done a wonderful job editing this work and adding her insights along the way. She is a real soul sister to both of us and dula for the goddess of arts.

R. Michael Fisher & Barbara Bickel

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Elicit Bodies

Returning the act of making art to its perhaps ancient restorative and ritually healing function, R. Michael Fisher and Barbara Bickel rescue lost *bodies*. Though not lost really, maybe only hidden from full view, the activity of these *bodies* is theoretically recognised in post-modern times as socially constructed and regulated through layers of the Western canon. In the artwork of Fisher and Bickel, bodies rendered inert through secular, materialist commodification are returned, *elicited*, to life and the regenerative task of creation. A sense of movement and agency permeates the work.

Dedicated to "the arts of transformation" in their art and life practices, the art of Fisher and Bickel fulfills a sacred function. Their combined work in this exhibition plays on Yin and Yang, on Earthly and Heavenly forms. Bickel's *Yin Earth* represents organic bodies, *female* bodies, a traditional 'subject' of the Western patriarchal gaze. Michael's *Yang Heaven* plays on the cosmic symbolic body of the circle. I caution simplistic reduction of my dualistic reading towards a transformative vision. Fisher's circles and spheres remove the viewer to a cosmic perspective, engaging in a trans-identity that removes layers of culture in search of a spiritual dialogue with the cosmos. As Yvonne Owens notes in her essay herein, Fisher's spheres bespeak both "masculine" and "feminine" forms. In the words of Owens, Fisher's spheres shed "luminosity as effortlessly as breathing," moving such visual acts beyond pure reason. Owens'

Introduction

Before Separation



Barbara Bickel © 2002

mixed media collage on wood 14 X 14 in.

essay poetically tracks visual rhythms of the artist's works. She names the "third entity" of this exhibition, that of the artist's *relationship* itself.

Relationship is identified by Bickel and Fisher in their introductory essay. During the exhibition's opening night, they describe the importance of 'bridging' the artwork on the walls to the bodies of the audience, to the bodies of the artist's themselves. Drumming and dancing the art to life through an opening performance ritual, the ritual completes as the artists stand together as a couple, joined "in the circle" marked with cloth at the centre of the gallery itself. This performance of relationship to each other, to their artwork, and to the audience bespeaks a larger context for the work.

Themes of relationship and spirituality are foregrounded in the artists' interview with Eva Tihanyi. Where Bickel and Fisher discuss "bodies" as the 'subjects' of this exhibition, reaching towards "pre-cultural" and "primordial" locations of such - the interview ends with invocations of both "relationship" and the "sacred." These bodied subjects of Bickel and Fisher work to subvert the very categories to which they refer. Relationship and spirituality seem key to such subversion. Mystical callings of the bodies move beyond idealistic grounds of duality and orderly female/male, mind/body, spirit/matter, heaven/earth divides. This is a marriage of opposites that struggles to deliver and expose the trans-formative act of creation be-

Introduction

Nané Ariadne Jordan is a feminist theorist, Writer, artist and researcher. She is currently a doctoral student in the Centre for Cross-Faculty Inquiry in Education at the University of British Columbia. She completed her B.F.A. in photography at the University of Ottawa. Her working background includes pre-regulation midwifery apprenticeship and home birth attendance in both Ontario and British Columbia. Drawing from her community-based work and art practice, she completed her M.A. in Women's Spirituality at New College of California. Her research explores complex inter-relational terrains of women's spirituality and health, ecology, feminist curriculum and pedagogy, and the arts.

yond such identifications.

My own experience working with Bickel as a 'subject' in the *She Knows* project speaks to a sacred, relational activation of the female form. While still inhabiting the artistic subject of the body, Bickel disrupted norms of passive female model rendition. Though maintaining her role as the generative artist, Bickel's subject/object collapsing process drew inquiry from the models themselves in order to produce her works. Through a participatory, *female gaze*, Bickel invited her subjects to enter into and speak their images in a co-created process that engaged ritual and trance. I experienced a heightened sense of the tensions, gravity, unknowns and even grief of my own pregnant body through this artful inquiry. Through the art I met my-'self' in a transformed way, my pregnant being that held a grounded, spiritual meaning of 'not one' (two). Not only delivering my pregnant body transformations and tensions to the regulating experts at hand: midwives, doctors, others, I sensed innate capacities and sacred meaning within the depths of this (my) very female being, this generative epiphany of "not one" (two). Such a collaboration of artist and subject invoked a body knowing, a living location, beyond the diagnostics of representation common to post-modern conversations in art practice and theory.

The 'not one' (two) becomes as a Zen koan - a riddle held, passed, and pondered between the artists themselves in this collaborative exhibition. This embodied riddle of self/other reveals itself in the mystery of relationship that permeates their work.

Elicit Bodies

The circle is the spirit in eternal motion. - Trinh T. Minh-ha

When this [sacred] art becomes figurative, it will renew the broken harmony between the Earth and its beings. We will see the human, and we will see landscape with vision.... the artwork will expand our consciousness within the imaginal realm. - Ken Beittel

Elicit Bodies is our fifth collaborative art exhibition as life-partners in the past 15 years. These include *The Rebel's Journey* (1992), *De-filed* (1997), *Fear & Desire* (2002), and *Inarticulate Ground* (2006) with Jennifer Peterson. We are interested in the role of art, creation-making, and creating sacred space for the purpose of encouraging the evolution of consciousness.

As a creative couple, we have always integrated our home space with creative workspace; which means we are interacting, critically and supportively, daily. This ongoing interaction, not surprisingly, influences our individual art work.

Every 4-5 years, working collaboratively on an exhibition has emerged as a vital rhythm in the cycle of reconnection, integration, and renewal. We have found when we are focusing on our individual work for too long, we miss the qualities that creating collaboratively brings forth in our relationship.

Elicit Bodies is the outcome of two separate bodies of work. During a studio visit in the spring of 2006 with Karen Green, we were delighted when she saw a connection between

Chrysalis



Barbara Bickel © 2002

mixed media on wood 48 X 36 in.

Michael's *"Beittel"* series (2005) and Barbara's *"She Knows"* series (2002). In reflecting on Karen's intuitive merging of our art series, we found overlapping patterns in our creative process and finished art. Both series consciously engage arts-based inquiry, in which the early stage of the project is rigorously designed around research questions. Michael was studying the writing and art of Dr. K. Beittel, Barbara was inquiring into body-knowing with a group of women. The imagery in the art of both projects portrays an other-worldly time and space where "bodies" appear, as "the sphere" in Michael's art, and "the double-figure" in Barbara's art.

Both of us consciously practiced our unique forms of, what Beittel would call, "spontaneous discipline." We wanted our art to imbue the ethical integrity of working with non-human Creation, what is to us the "perfect body"-- be it a circular form or human form. The consciousness, already "perfected" in its own Being as sphere and figure, prior to being discovered, named, or culturally regulated for political purposes, is the realm of Beauty. The beauty of the "perfect body" seems ever to attract an imaginary that includes but transcends the mundane, ordinary, and less than "perfect" existence we all experience daily. The trance-like methods we used participated in a rhythm, ritual, and reverence of the sacred. We sought to transform the "regulated body" into an "imaginary body" to free itself, even if temporarily, from 'normal' confines and limitations, if

not from suffering itself. Thus, we were able to retranslate an image in the art that reflects the spiritual aspect of our work.

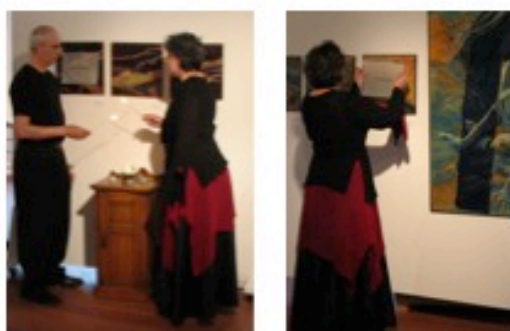
***elicit** - to draw forth in response... to arrive at (the truth, etc.) by questioning or other logical process.... to entice.*

R. Michael Fisher
Barbara Bickel
Vancouver, BC
July 14, 2006

There is, however, a proper region of mystery to our inquiry.... Such a shift induces the researcher to assume naturally a more phenomenological method. There is a centering on experiencing and a philosophical drift toward the existential. —Ken Belttel

DESIRE BEAUTY DISCIPLINARITY CIRCUMSCRIPTION

Elicit Bodies



CONSCIOUSNESS GRACIOUS



Photos by Leslie Sparick

On July 13, 2006, as part of the opening of the art exhibition, a performance ritual unfolded amidst the mingling guests. As artists who do not separate art from the sacred act of Creation, we co-evolve with spirit in our art making. Performance ritual is the manifestation of art and spirit through our bodies.

We have come to believe that art on the walls of a gallery, requires mediation through the body, through our living bodies. We invoked a sacred ritual at the gallery opening to 'bridge' the art pieces with the viewing audience. We 'danced the art into life' collecting and inviting all bodies in the gallery space to embody creation-in-the-making from moment to moment. As artists we have no desire to continue the art tradition of subjects looking at art objects, without the experience of a living process in-and-between the two.

Our ritual performance, drawn directly from the art works, began with writing 10 words that spoke from and to the art and ourselves. The words were printed in large letters on frosted mylar sheets (8.5 X 11 in.) and attached to chosen art pieces, veiling a portion of the image. This was prepared before the gallery was opened on the opening night.

MYSTERY DIVINE SALIENCE LAMENT

While guests were looking at the art and talking we silently walked to an altar with candles. Lighting the candles, we called out the title of the art exhibit. We walked deliberately to each art piece that was covered by a mylar sheet with a word on it and removed it, calling out the word loudly and fully revealing the art piece below. We then walked to a circle made of white cloth lying on the floor in the center of the gallery, placing the mylar sheets on the fabric of the circle. This circle was the stage for Barbara to dance the art into life.

Michael took up the drum and began to beat a rhythm of life as Barbara collected the words on sheets. Holding the mylar sheets as fans in both hands she entered the center of the circle and began to pivot on one foot, turning in prayer as the Sufi dervish turns. Her spinning movement gradually increased its speed until she reached the moment when she was ready to release the words from her hands. Upon releasing her hand-hold on the sheets they flew through the air, floating one by one to the floor. The performance ritual complete she came to stillness, bowed and Michael joined her in the circle.

Elicit Bodies

Magical Bodies: A Collaborative Vision

by Yvonne Owens

R. Michael Fisher's spheres emerge from their atmospheric, textured grounds like Plato's ideal bodies. Distended with undifferentiated potential, they bear vestigial anatomies--the suggestions of skin or hide, tongues, nipples, or *clitorii*. They have smooth, taut surface textures, gleaming amid mysterious fields of light. The spheres are potently feminine, as well as being masculine in a hermetic, saturnine sense. Some are dark and glowering-- black holes occluding the fierce light that escapes the semi-circular 'event horizons' of these 'black suns.' They are dark stars that are not nihilist nemeses so much as fertile sources of 'dark matter'-- androgynous celestial bodies, glowering with virile portent-- single cells on the threshold of division, ova on the eve of becoming zygotes.

They are not only voracious in their absorption of the available light within the frame (and their drawing of the viewer's eye), but also productive; their gravitas creates spatial disturbances, like low-pressure systems over the Atlantic, stirring up dynamic whorls of energy, or visual 'weather.' As with collapsing stars, their bursting light cannot be contained entirely, nor swallowed up. The impression is of such compressed heat and light-- such barely contained energies--

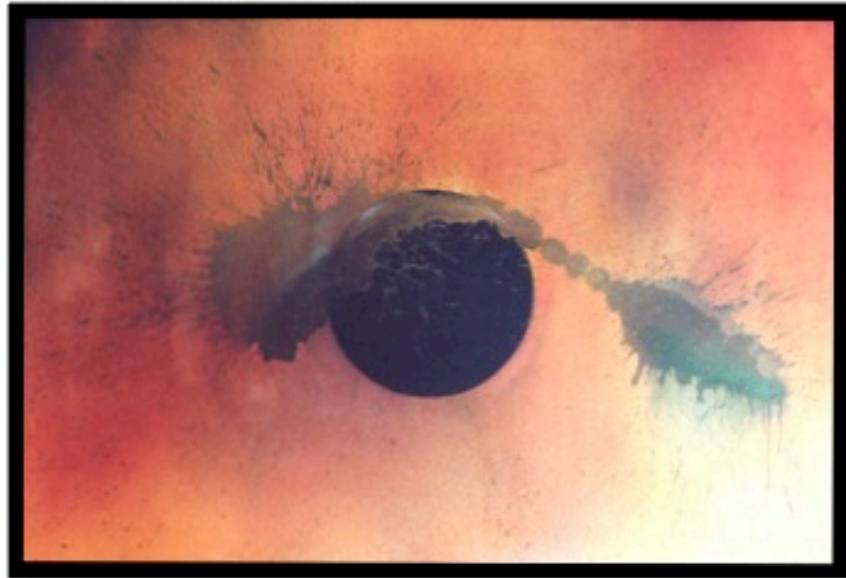
that their escape velocity elides the consuming gravity of their solid, spherical sources. This is true also of the spheres Fisher renders a moist, dense red. But others are translucent and light as duck down. These bodies are etheric, floating on delicately streaming light like dandelions on a breeze, shedding luminosity as effortlessly as breathing.

I mentally named spherical body entitled: "Archangel Gabrielle," "The Fried Egg of Life." To my eye, it portrays the cosmic chaos of messy creation even while being highly organized compositionally. Geometry enters the garden of primordial chaos in "Spirit's Door," ordering the creative cosmos' spatial dynamics. The heroic, nipples sphere still 'cooks,' however, and in image "Imbricate Structure," the visceral sphere splits and sheds its insufficient, antiquated skin, revealing the complex intricacy of its inner dimension. It occurs to me that Fisher's visual marathon is a creation cycle, informed as much by myth as by science and geometry.

Barbara Bickel partners Fisher's creation cycle with her evocations of body-centered knowing. While Fisher addresses the primary evolutionary movements of life itself, Bickel's visual discourse salutes a different order of evolutionary process.

... androgynous celestial
bodies, glowering with
virile portent.... informed
as much by myth as by
science and geometry.

The Art of Qualitative Thinking: Late Autumn



R. Michael Fisher © 2005

mixed media on canvas- 32 X 46 in.

Serena



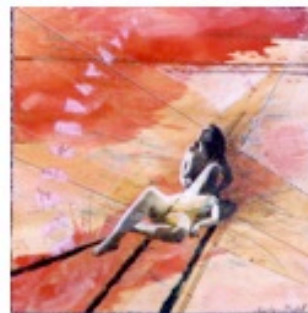
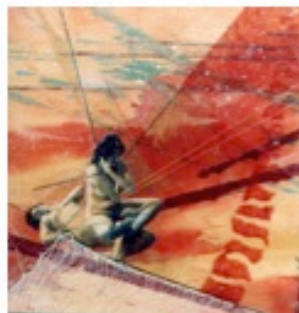
Barbara Bickel © 2002

mixed media collage on wood 48 X 18 in.

Through symbol and gesture, her figures reclaim the indwelling conscious knowledge of the feminine body. Reviled in patriarchal ideologies and theologies for millenia, feminine physiology and corporeal cognition is redeemed in Bickel's images, here subversively upheld as the proud legacy of the Judeo-Christian Eve or Magdalene, of Talmudic Lilith or Zoroastrian Jahi (the 'demon whore,' Menstruation). In Bickel's tableaux,

*... Bickel's embodied voices have
profoundly spiritual significance....*

Listening I, Listening II, Listening III



mixed media collage on wood 14 X 14 in. Barbara Bickel © 2002

surrendering to sensual cognition does not constitute 'lust' as vice, or 'sin.' Nor is it a corruption 'pollution,' constituting one of the poles of the dualistic purity and pollution discourse underwriting militaristic, patristic theologies. Here, in *Elicit Bodies*, an heroic (or 'Hera-like') surrender to the incipient knowledge of the flesh constitutes a Voice. Here is risk and trust, death and rebirth, crashing/burning and rising. 'Truth' is a responsive, emoting body. Whether Muse, divine inspiration, or the secret whisperings of the soul, Bickel's embodied voices have profoundly spiritual significance. They offer redemption, integration, dynamism, evolutionary development and, not least of all, wholeness-- much like her partner's spherical bodies.

This is Fisher and Bickel's fifth dual exhibition. As in their previous shows over the past 15 years, *Elicit Bodies* combines ritual performance with artist talks on how the works encompass and express their collaborative and solo philosophical journeyings. Rigorous intellectual inquiries provide the subtext for their individual and collaborative works, as both partners are engaged in aesthetic and philosophical scholarship. Both are professional academics as well as artists, creating a demanding and dynamic, interdisciplinary fusion within their lives-- and within their life together. There is a third entity presenting in this exhibition of performance and visual art, and that third

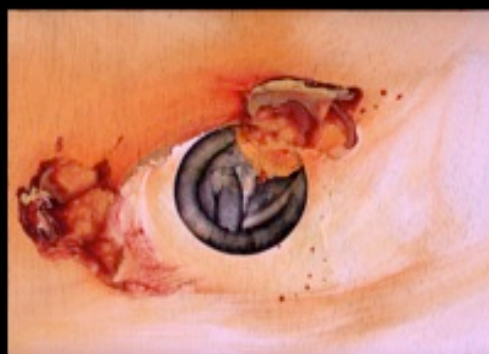
Yvonne Owens is completing her Ph.D. in Art History, Gender, and Cultural Studies at the University College of London. She holds a Masters degree from the University of York (U.K.) and a BA in art history from the University of Victoria, BC. She has written regularly on arts and culture for *Artichoke*, *Vie Des Arts*, *Monday Magazine* and many other publications over the past decade.

being is the relationship itself. Like a magical child, it exists in the resonances and tensions among the 40 works, talks and performance piece. Its voice is single, dual and several, and can be seen and heard as embodied knowing. Fisher and Bickel speak to the eye, the ear and the flesh of one's being directly, on several levels simultaneously. The Fisher/ Bickel show is on the road again in *Elicit Bodies*, a renewal of their multi-sensual, multi-media, collaborative fare for mind, body and soul.

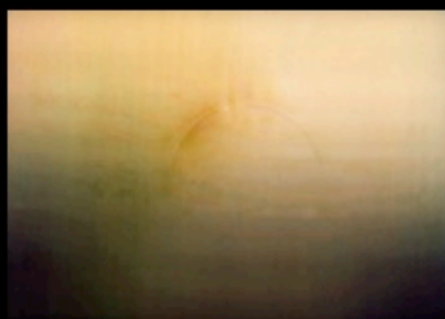
Yvonne Owens
June 2006
London, UK

1. Untitled - mixed media on wood 10.5 X 14.5 in. © 2005
2. In Between the Nameless and Named - mixed media on foamcore and wood 14 X 16.5 in. © 2005
3. Archangel Gabrielle - mixed media on paper and wood 12.5 X 10.5 in. © 2005
4. Panparatica - mixed media on canvas 28 X 35.75 in. © 2005
5. Spirit's Door - mixed media on wood 10.5 X 10.5 in. © 2005

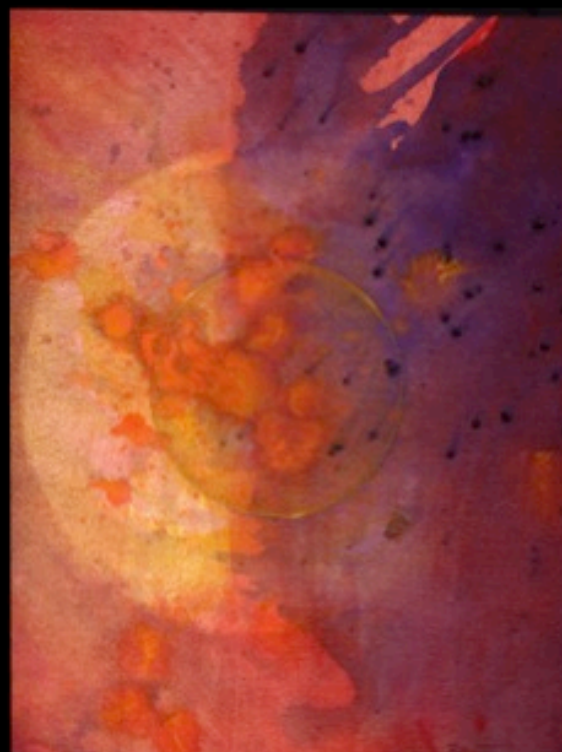
R. Michael Fisher



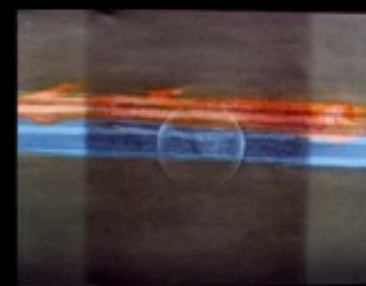
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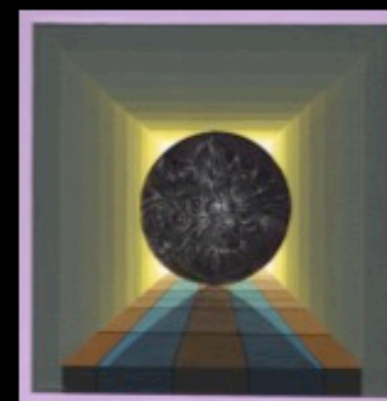
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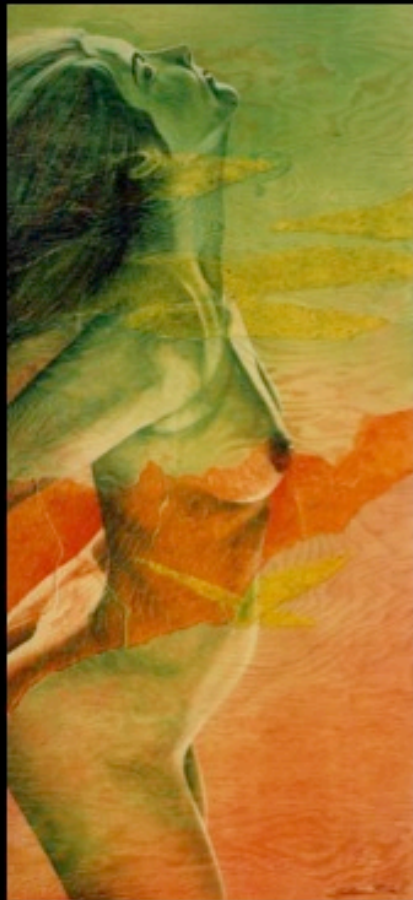
1. Truth Is - mixed media on wood 48 X 24 in. © 2002

2. Peace Offering I - mixed media on wood 14 X 14 in. © 2002

3. Interface - mixed media on wood 14 X 14 in. © 2002

4. Trailblazer - mixed media on wood 48 X 30 in. © 2002

Barbara Bickel



1.



2.



3.



4.

Elicit Bodies

De-Commodifying The Body:

An Interview with Barbara Bickel & R. Michael Fisher

The following interview was conducted on e-mail by Eva Tihanyi

Can you comment on the title of your show, *Elicit Bodies*?

BB: "Bodies" seemed a natural choice since so much of my work is about the body and Michael felt that his circles were bodies as well. Both of our series are in otherworldly/ cosmic environments. It is a baffling journey if we try to understand life from solely a logical place. We are not taught ways of distinguishing the mystical from the irrational in our society. Our experiences of the mystical are, for the most part, not validated so we learn to become afraid of them and keep them private. The contemporary art world still has an aversion to anything spiritual and mystical. This is a great loss in my view. We liked the word "elicit"-- bringing forth the bodies in sacred context. (We were also playing the "illicit" pun, of course.)

RMF: The "body" of the "sphere" (in my case) and "body" of the "human body" (in Barbara's case) are pre-cultural bodies, bodies that no human created per se. (Of course, we culturally construct them through ideas, but I'm sure the Earth existed spherically long before I named it and learned about it, and so too did the human body.) There is

Three Moons Above (detail)



R. Michael Fisher © 2006



R. Michael Fisher © 2006

mixed media on panels 14.25 X 35 in.

Three Moons Below (detail)

something primordial and inherently ethical in those creations as they were not created originally for "marketing" or "manipulation." As an artist, I find that "purity" interesting to work with. Barbara and I in our art do a type of "cleansing" of our distortions of perception that are built up with culture and politics and living a life where everything is commodified. That commodification affects all of us and we see "bodies" (as something to buy and sell, etc.). So we are working with the primordial, pre-cultural qualities of these bodies in order to recover "spirit."

Is there a particular theme the two of you are exploring?

BB: Both series are about re-translation. I was re-translating women's trances and Michael was translating the philosophy of Ken Beittel. The visual art is the translation medium. The installation and the performance ritual at the opening, along with the artists' talk, will be the active collaboration. We both strive to work with integrity which means staying true to the form that we are re-translating: in Michael's case the sphere, in my case the human body. I do not distort the body, which is already perfect, and Michael does not distort his spheres. This show also makes visible our differences joining together. My underlying relationship with

Her & I



Barbara Bickel © 2002

mixed media on wood 48 X 24 in.

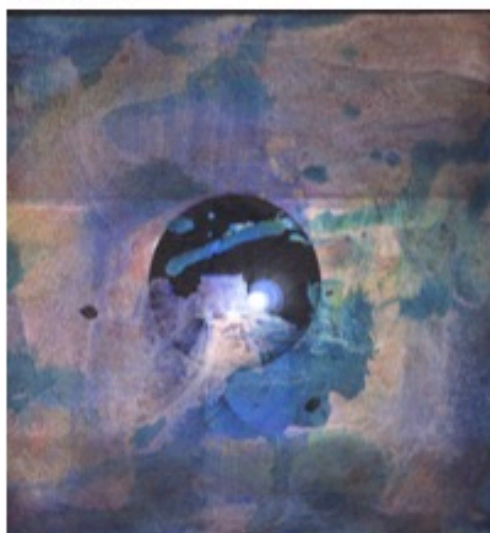
the body is literal whereas Michael's relationship with the sphere is cosmic. This reflects our personalities. Although at times I work from a "big picture" perspective, I am more particular and grounded in the here and now in my relationships. Michael, although capable of working from the particular and the here and now, tends more to see things from a universal, larger perspective.

RMF: I think there are several themes we are both exploring, as Barbara mentioned. However, until we put these two separate series of art works together in the gallery we won't know which particular theme is going to emerge that both of us will emphasize for *Elicit Bodies*. I was working with the theme of "spontaneous discipline" from Beittel's art and philosophy which I have been studying for a year. I wanted to apply his Zen-like philosophy to making pots (and living as an artist) to two-dimensional painting and drawing, so I attempted to make "pots" with this series of works using a formula of a "centre" and a "bracket" that was fairly consistent in each piece.

How do you define the concept of "body" in terms of your art?

BB: I am fairly literal when it comes to the body. I love the human form and feel the most satisfaction when there is some form of reverence to the body in my work. It is the body that entices me in art if it is

Source Field



R. Michael Fisher © 2005

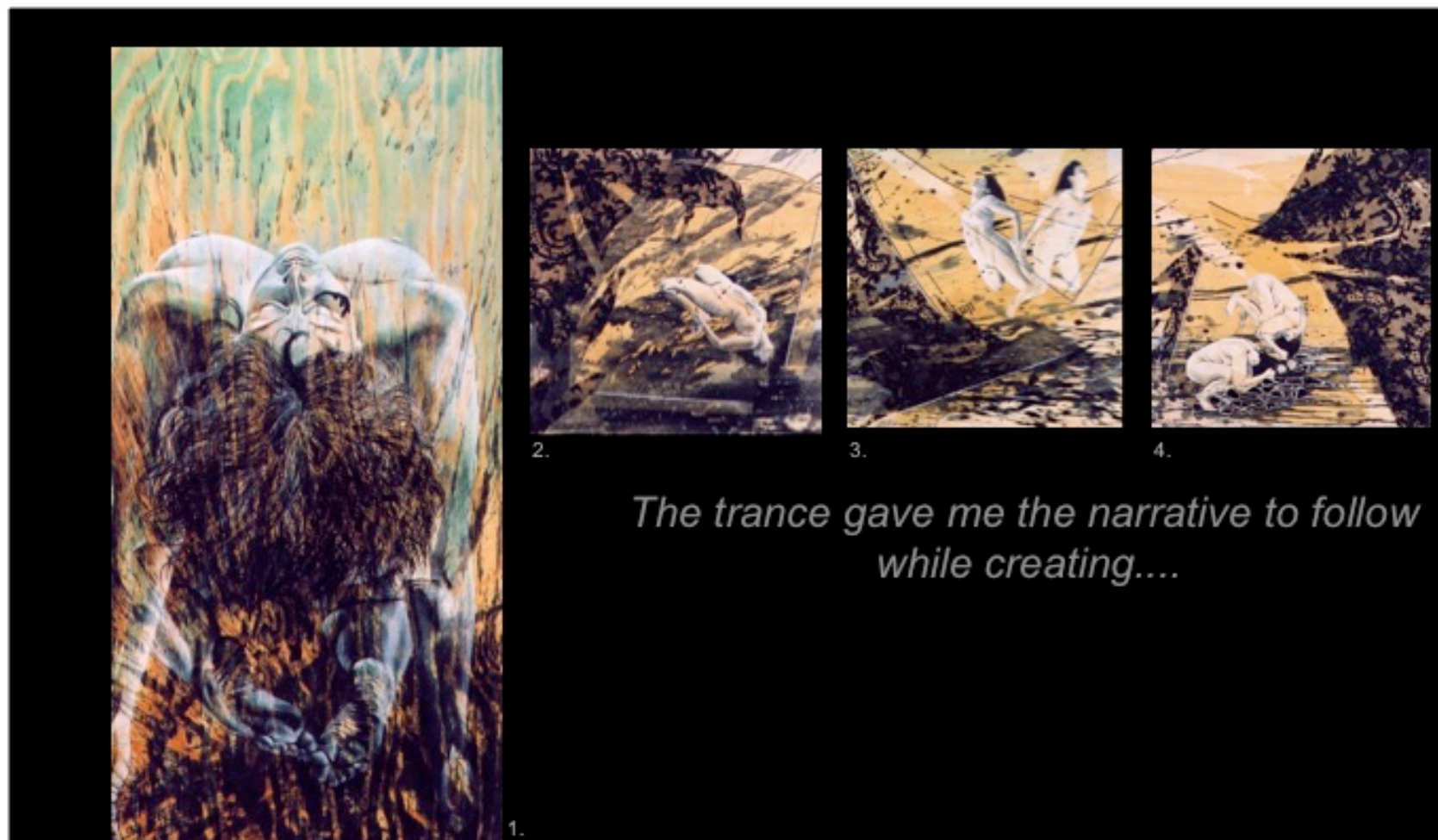
mixed media on paper/wood 9 X 9 in.

done with sensitivity and respect. I agree with Thomas Moore: "The body is indeed the temple, not simply for its beauty and value, but because it houses the holy mystery of human existence."

RMF: For me, body is like a "content" or "subject" of a work of art, and it is that basic. If I were doing color field painting, for example, there wouldn't be a "body" in the art work. The bodies in this particular series are basically "circles" ("spheres") and that seems pretty innocuous, yet they can appear to some as quite disturbing. At times they embody forces that are beyond our normal sense of categories of the comfortable or predictable and that alone for some is moving toward the illicit (i.e., the uncontrolled, the unregulated, the unpredictable and anxiety-provoking or unknown). I take the body (circle, sphere) that is so standardized and regulated by all the rules and I put it in a context that deregulates it and "breaks the law," thereby eliciting new responses to the most basic shape in human cultures around the world: the circle.

I take the body... and I put
it in a context that deregulates it
and "breaks the law"....

1. Source - mixed media collage on wood 48 X 24 in. © 2002 Barbara Bickel
2. Shot Through - mixed media collage on wood 14 X 14 in. © 2002 Barbara Bickel
3. Flying Beyond - mixed media collage on wood 14 X 14 in. © 2002 Barbara Bickel
4. Keep Stirring - mixed media collage on wood 14 X 14 in. © 2002 Barbara Bickel



RMF: This series is very different for me because of the arts-based research approach behind it. Ken Beittel's meditations on "roundness" and "centering" are all part of the series, a series not motivated by commercial sales or career building. This was an academic/artistic enterprise that I entered, and I guess it was what I needed at the time because my "tank" of inspiration was running on fumes, so to speak. The circle in the centre of each piece in this series is perplexing and ordinary at the same time, and compositionally is something I would never do in my art. They teach you in art school (or so I'm told) never to centre your main object. So I broke the rule and loved pulling it off. That's satisfying to the rebel in me, I suppose.

When a viewer enters *Elicit Bodies* and considers your work-- both of your work together in the same space-- what do you hope will happen?

BB: The first thought that comes to mind is that I would love people to experience a relationship. One that is an intimate committed relationship

Eva Tihanyi's fifth volume of poetry is *Wresting the Grace of the World* (Black Moss, 2005). The cover of her fourth, *Restoring the Wickedness* (Thistledown, 2000), featured a painting by Barbara Bickel on its cover. Tihanyi teaches at Niagara College in Welland, Ontario, and reviews books for *The National Post* and *The Toronto Star*. She has just completed her first short story collection.

willing to share itself with the larger community through art. A crossing of public and private. A relationship that has differences as well as core similarities (not always easily visible). We are not there to create a spectacle of relationship as is found in our media and entertainment, but a conscious spiritual relationship. Whether it is between Michael and I, the co-creators of my series or the relationship of Michael with Beittel via his philosophy.

RMF: We are trying to communicate something 'sacred' that is not of the everyday world. This involves guiding viewers to some kind of journey experience, beyond mere entertainment, beyond mere salve for the wounds, beyond the trivial and mundane.

Eva Tihanyi
June 2006
Welland, ON

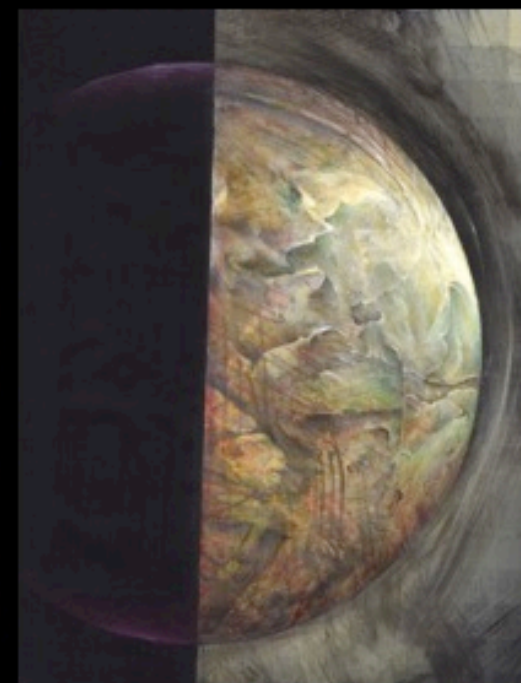
1. Eye of Compassion - mixed media on canvas 20 X 24 in. © 2005 R. Michael Fisher
2. The Green Shield - mixed media collage on wood 48 X 24 in. © 2002 Barbara Bickel
3. Messy World in Transition- mixed media on wood and mylar 10.5 X 10.5 in. © 2006 R. Michael Fisher



1.



2.



3.

Artist's Biography

Barbara Bickel, a Canadian born (1961-) artist, researcher, educator and independent curator has lived in Alberta and British Columbia for most of her adult years. She is currently working on a Ph.D. in Art Education (Curriculum Studies) at The University of British Columbia where her arts-based research is focused on women, spiritual leadership, collaboration and education. Barbara completed an MA in Education at UBC in 2004. Art and collaborative creation, which is the participation and interaction of the subject/ model, the artist and the art medium, has been the driving force behind her evolution as an artist and a woman. Since 1995 she has been exploring the female image, relationships with women, their wisdom, and their strength through the making of art. She holds a BFA in Painting from the University of Calgary and a BA in Sociology and Art History from the University of Alberta. Her art and performance rituals have been exhibited and performed in Canada since 1991. She co-founded The Centre Gallery (1995-2001), a non-profit women's-focused gallery in Calgary, Alberta. Her art and research can be viewed on-line at www.barbarabickel.ca and www.barbarabickel.com

EDUCATION

- 2004-08 **University of British Columbia**, Vancouver, BC, Ph.D. (art education)
 2002-04 **University of British Columbia**, Vancouver, BC, Masters in Education (arts-based research)
 1993 **University of Calgary**, Calgary, AB, Bachelor of Fine Arts (painting)
 1986 **University of Alberta**, Edmonton, AB, Bachelor of Arts (sociology, art history)

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS & PERFORMANCE RITUALS

- 2007 **Womb Entering**, collaborative installation and performance ritual with 13 co-researchers, AMS Gallery, University of British Columbia, Vancouver B.C.
 2006 **Elicit Bodies**, show and performance ritual with R.M. Fisher, curated by Karen Green, the Diskin Galleries, Vancouver, B.C.
 2005 Two Woman Show, with Laura Fir-Schultz, curated by Linda Hankin, The School of Ideas Gallery, Lewiston N.Y.
 2004 **Who will read this body?** multi-media installation & performance ritual, AMS Gallery, UBC, Vancouver
 2004 **She Knows**, Kensington Fine Art Gallery, Calgary, AB
 2001-04 **Women "Enduring Freedom,"** installation with Mary Blaze, performance with C. Snowber, Campbell River Pubic Art Gallery, BC, Fran Willis Gallery, Victoria, BC. & Ishtar Gallery, Vancouver, BC
 2003 **Fire at the Edge of Water**, School of Ideas Gallery, Welland, Ontario
 2003 **Deepening Desire: A 10 year retrospective**, Madeleine Wood curator, Vancouver E. Cultural Center Gallery, BC
 2002 **She Knows**, show & sound installation & collaborative performance ritual with 6 female co-researchers, AMS Gallery, UBC, Vancouver, BC
 2002 **Bodies Menagerie**, Mezzanine Gallery, curated by M. Herbert, The University of Calgary, AB
 2001 **Illuminatus**, show & performance ritual, Unitarian Church of Vancouver, BC & The Centre Gallery, Calgary, AB
 2000 **Ancient Battlegrounds: Quest for the Woman Warrior**, show & performance ritual with singer/writer P. Le Bell, Bowen Is. Arts Council Gallery, Bowen Is., BC & The Centre Gallery, Calgary, AB
 2003 **Body & Soul**, curated group show, Cultural Center, New College of California, San Francisco, CA
 1998 **The Spirituality of Eroticism**, show & performance ritual with movement artist Kathryn McGregor, The New Gallery, Calgary, AB
 1997 **Venus Crossings**, show & performance with 6 female performers, The Centre Gallery, Calgary, AB

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- 1996-7 **Her Venus Signature**, Vanderfeelie Gallery, Edmonton, AB & The Centre Gallery, Calgary, AB
 1996 **Re-emergence**, Art is Vital Gallery, Calgary, AB
 1996 **Weaving the Fragments**, Candler Art Gallery, Camrose, AB
 1995 **Sisters**, show & performance ritual with 22 female co-creators, The Centre Gallery, Calgary, AB
 1994 **Grounded in Figure**, Art is Vital Gallery, Calgary, AB
 1993 **Men as Birthers, not Destroyers**, Turacos Gallery, Calgary, AB

PERMANENT COLLECTIONS

Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Medicine Hat Art College, AIDS Calgary,
 Naniamo Art Gallery, Calgary Birth Control Association, Private collections in
 North America, Britain & Nigeria

AWARDS & GRANTS

- 2005 **Arts-based Educational Research Outstanding Thesis Award (ABER)**,
 American Education Research Association
 1997 **Alberta Foundation for the Arts**, Project Grant
 1996 **Calgary Region Arts Foundation**, Impressario Grant

REPRESENTATION

Fran Willis Gallery, Victoria, BC, **Kensington Fine Art Gallery**, Calgary,
 AB, **Art School of Ideas Gallery**, Welland, ON

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Bickel, B. (2007). *Embodying exile: Performing the 'curricular' body*. In D. Freedman &
 S. Springgay (Eds.), *Curriculum and the curricular body*. NY: Peter Lang.
 Bickel, B. (2006). *Crossing the waterline: A ritual inquiry*. In K. Keifer-Boyd & D. Smith-
 Shank (Eds.), *Visual Culture and Gender* 1(1), 86-91. [http://](http://www.visualculturegender.emory.edu)
www.visualculturegender.emory.edu
 Bickel, B. (2003). Interviewed by Eva Tihanyi, *Nude for thought. Niagara Current*,
 Summer, 28-32.

SELECTED CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- 2007 **Labyrinths as Ritual Art: A Pedagogy of Inquiry/witnessing/listening to
 the Sacred**. Video & paper presentation/performance. co-presenter Nane
 Jordan. Canadian Society for the Study of Education, ARTS-SIG, May 26 -
 29. The University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Sask.

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- 2007 **A Transformative Learning Community: Being with Women.** Multi-media presentation. Co-presenters N. Jordan, J. Stubbs, W. Neilsen, A. Smith, & V. Triggs. Canadian Society for the Study of Education, CASWE, May 26 - 29. The University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Sask.
- 2007 **The City of Richgate: Research Creation into Community-engaged Arts Practices.** Co-presenters R.L. Irwin, Gu Xiong, R. Beer, P. Sameshima, & K. Ricketts. SSHRC forum Research Creation, Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, The University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon Sask. May 28.
- 2006 **Crossing the Waterline: An A/r/tographic Ritual Inquiry,** multimedia presentation, Not Drowning But Waving: Women, Feminism, and the Liberal Arts Conference, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB
- 2006 **Interweaving Boundaries: Art, Education, & Spirituality,** video & paper presentation, co-presenters C. Leggo, R. Irwin, P. Sameshima & L. Stanick, American Education & Research Assoc. (AERA), Spirituality & Education SIG, San Francisco, CA
- 2006 **Presence and Precedence: Staying close to ground zero in art/ research/ education,** multi-media & paper co-presentation with R. M. Fisher, American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (AAACS), University of California at Berkeley, San Francisco, CA
- 2005 **Embracing the Arational Through Art, Ritual and the Body,** video & paper presentation, 3rd Annual International Conference on Imagination and Education, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC
- 2005 **Writing on the Body/Resistance/Endurance: A/r/tographic Inquiry,** video & paper presentation, American Education & Research Assoc. (AERA), University of Montreal, Montreal, PQ
- 2004 **Dancing Art to Life: An Embodied Pedagogy,** multi-media presentation & paper, Canadian Society for the Study of Education, ARTS-SIG, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MN
- 2003 **She Knows: Feminist Art & Pedagogy,** multi-media presentation & paper, Women & Spirituality Conference, Body & Soul: Connecting with an Expanding Community, New College of California, San Francisco, CA

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

- 2003-07 **Art Seen,** Co-curator of electronic journal, *Educational Insights*, UBC
www.educationalinsights.ca
- 1999 **The Community Arts Council of Vancouver,** Visual Arts Committee, BC
- 1995-98 **The Centre Gallery,** Curator/Director, Calgary, AB

Artist's Biography

R. Michael Fisher a Canadian born (1952-) artist, researcher, educator and author, has lived in Alberta and British Columbia for all of his adult years. He currently works as an independent scholar and public intellectual. He completed his Ph.D. at the Centre for Curriculum & Instruction at The University of British Columbia (2000-03) where he undertook an arts-based dissertation exploring the performative nature of writing and art images, while representing a feminist sequel (screen play) of *The Matrix* sci-fi film (1999-03). Michael completed an MA in Adult Education at UBC in 2000. His research continues to focus on developing a 'conflict' pedagogy and integral approach to 'fear' studies in a post-9/11 world. Although a successful professional artist-painter of wildlife in the 1980s and early 1990s, he has always chosen spontaneous art meditations as his ongoing inquiry processes. His art work has been bought internationally, with several pieces in corporate and college art collections.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2007 **Fearology of Technology: A Phenomenology of "Educational" Weapons of Mass Destruction**, Art Seen online exhibition, *Educational Insights*, 11 (1). <http://www.educationalinsights.ca>
- 2005 **Fearology of Technology: A Phenomenology of "Educational" Weapons of Mass Destruction**, Edibles Art Gallery, Education Bldg., Vancouver, UBC
- 2005 **Fearology of Technology: A Phenomenology of "Educational" Weapons of Mass Destruction**, AMS Art Gallery, UBC, Vancouver, BC
- 2002 **Platinum 'Fear', *Plat du jour***, installation, AMS Art Gallery, UBC, Vancouver, BC
- 2001 **Platinum 'Fear': Art Works that Subvertise Public Enemy No. 1**, Second Annual Conference on Curriculum & Pedagogy, Nov. 10-13, Victoria, BC
- 1996 **At-tracking 'Fear'**, installation, Centre Gallery, Calgary, AB
- 1985 **Art of Robert Fisher**, Rocky Mtn. Art Galleries, Calgary, AB
- 1984 **Wildlife Art of Robert Fisher**, Walsh Galleries, Red Deer, AB
- 1984 **Art of Robert Fisher**, Deloray's Frame Gallery, Olds, AB
- 1984 **Art Retrospective Show**, Common Ground, Olds, AB
- 1984 **Wildlife Art Show**, Watervally Arts Club, Watervally, AB
- 1983 **Art of Robert Fisher**, House of Curios, Didsbury, AB
- 1983 **Art of Robert Fisher**, County of Mtn. View Schools, Olds & Cremona, AB

TWO PERSON & GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2007 **Dialoguing on Fear**, show and community project, Britannia Art Gallery, Vancouver BC.
- 2006 **Elicit Bodies**, show and performance ritual with B. Bickel, curated by Karen Green, the Diskin Galleries, Vancouver, B.C.
- 2006 **Inarticulate Ground**, with B. Bickel & J. Peterson, AMS Art Gallery, UBC, Vancouver BC.
- 1998 **Visions of Transformation**, curated show, The Centre Gallery, Calgary AB
- 1997 **De-Filed**, collaborative installation with B. Bickel, etc. room, The Center Gallery, Calgary AB.
- 1992 **The Rebel's Journey**, collaborative installation with B. Bickel, The Little Gallery, U of Calgary, Calgary AB
- 1984-87 **Wildlife Art Shows** at Rocky Mtn. Galleries, Calgary AB & Mississauga ON, Deloray's Frame Gallery, Olds AB, Prairie Accent Gallery, Calgary AB, Walsh Gallery, Red Deer, AB, The Frame Up Gallery, Edmonton AB, Stony Plain Multi-cultural Centre, Stony Plain AB, Provincial Wildlife Conference, Edmonton AB, Nature Interpretive Centre, Medicine Hat, AB, Arts club, Edson, Hinton & Grande Cache, AB
- 1978-80 **Canada Nature Art Exhibit**, Juried traveling show, 2 years across Canada and in over 30 public art galleries and museums.

the perfect articulation
of the center
is not perfect

preceded by
what came before
integrated

rearticulated
the perfect inarticulation
bleeds multiformity

- Barbara Bickel

Imbricate Structure



R. Michael Fisher © 2005

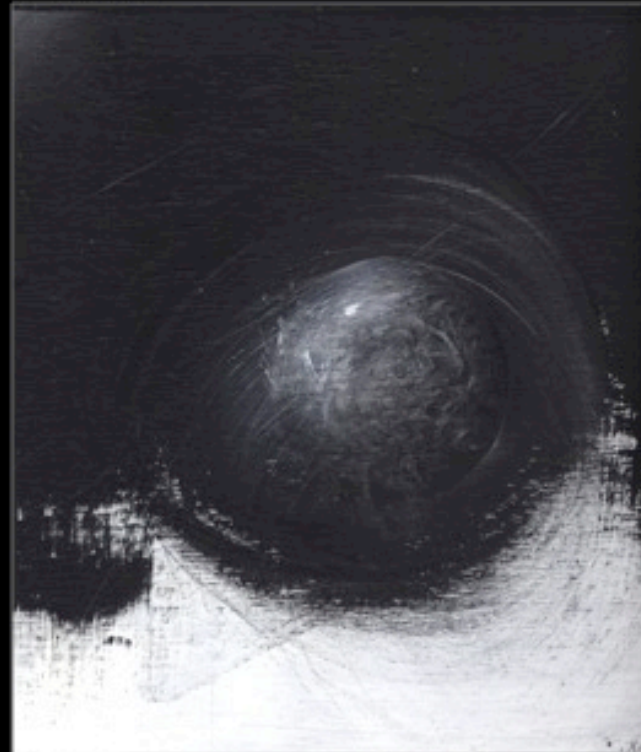
mixed media on masonite 9 X 9 in.

monophonic unison
stroked
marked
played
one and zero in concert

- Barbara Bickel

The last two pages of art and poetic response come from an article that Barbara and Michael co-authored in respect for the work of the potter and author of *Zen and the Art of Pottery*, the late Kenneth R. Beittel.

Perfect Creation



R. Michael Fisher © 2005

mixed media on wood 10.5 X 10.5 in.

Elicit Bodies

Diskin Gallery Performance Ritual
Vancouver, BC, Canada, July 2007
1.5 minute Video Excerpt

Acknowledgements:
Leslie Stanick, videography