

Mar Goman: a portrait, with quotations

by W.C. McRae

"Art is not a matter of perfect technique, it is life of the soul." Pousette Dart

Mar Goman didn't even think about producing art until she was in her mid-20s. Gorman, whose "bag ladies" (ungiving female faces painted on paper bags) and canvases of large bodies in bathing suits against flat crayon backgrounds, are familiar to visitors of the Sunbow Gallery, grew up when "doing as good as the boys was most important." After a preliminary education in the sciences, Goman moved to Portland and began working on an MFA at PSU.

"The artist's enemy is the utilitarian, acquisitive, exploiting society in which any tendency to do anything for its own sake cannot be tolerated." Ad Reinhardt

But Goman "had trouble" at PSU. "I had a different notion of what being an artist was." At PSU academic prerogatives demand that art students assign themselves to specific fields, like painting or sculpture. When Goman attended, students whose activities were not neatly defined by these categories were for academic reasons discouraged to experiment in other media. "Established categories didn't allow for cross-overs" — drawing, collage, constructions "didn't count" for a painting student, nor did the notebooks that Goman kept, which she calls "the ingredients out of which come the artist" and which are "part of the artistic enterprise."

She left PSU and set herself up and "made art."

"What genuine painters do is to reveal the underlying psychological and spiritual conditions of their relationship to the world." Rollo May

Goman claims she "spirals in and out of themes" — "there are certain concerns I have and I work them through, through art." An ongoing theme for her has been the alienating potential of commercial images of women. Goman has treated this in a variety of ways. She has taken the faces of fashion models from magazines and by working them into her paintings, recuperates them for herself as images involved in her dialectic of art. She has also painted women's bodies with joyously expansive torsos, pictorially affirming the woman's body as women experience it, and not as a media image. Recently, she has created a series of parodies of *Vogue* covers with droll captions: on one, a faceless though well dressed torso flanks the questioning caption, "Do women need heads?"

"Everyone should be as different as possible. There is nothing that is common to all of us except our creative urge. Art means one thing to me: to discover myself as well as I can." Hans Hoffman

A series currently on show in Seattle is her "Mummies" — constructions of wrapped children's dolls that represent the coming together of several themes: a fascination with Egyptian art; concerns about abortion and "babies all over the world dying because of politics"; her own decision not to have children; and the more purely aesthetic idea of wrapping — inner and outer surfaces.

"Say to yourselves: I am going to work in order to see myself and free myself. While working and in the work I must be on the alert to see myself. When I see myself in the



Mar Goman with a bag lady.

work I will know that that is the work I am supposed to do." Agnes Martin

Goman has been very active recently as a feminist activist in her church. She's "working very hard for acceptance of women and gays in the church." This, too, she works out through her art in a series she calls "The Churching of Women." Of the images that emerge from this process, she says, "something is wrong with our notion of women if they seem out of place as spiritual leaders."

As influences she cites the English (and gay) painters Francis Bacon and David Hockney. Locally, she credits Gregory Grenon with helping her realize she too could paint faces, hence her "bag ladies."

"The trouble with people is that they don't have the fucking nerve or imagination to star in their own movie, let alone direct it." Tom Robbins

Goman recently resigned her position as director of Northwest Artists Workshop, in order to devote more time to her own art. Like most artists she has to balance commercialism and "going in my own direction." She dislikes having to work under demand, but "it's pleasing to know my art is accepted in homes across the country." Her "bag ladies" are now featured in LA, and Greystone Gallery in Portland will host an exhibition of her landscapes this spring.

"Beneath the whole art concept, every pass in the act, every stroke, should be our own identity." David Smith

"Art is a diary of what's going on in life," says Goman, "and my vision of the world. Art comes from this 'deep spot.' If you lose that you lose the ability to produce genuine art."

"Idle curiosity is the artist's best friend." Mar Goman

Performing Artists for Life to benefit CAN

Performing Artists for Life are joining forces for a benefit concert for Cascade AIDS Network on Friday, February 28 at 8:00 p.m. at Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. An impressive program, performed by James DePriest, Stefan Minde, members of the Oregon Symphony Orchestra, the Portland Choral Consortium and Portland Civic Theatre will range from Haydn to Sondheim.

James DePriest and members of the Oregon Symphony Orchestra: Beethoven/"Allegro ma non troppo" from Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68, "The Pastorale"; Rachmaninoff/"Adagio" from Symphony No. 2, in E Minor, Op. 27.

Stefan Minde and members of the Oregon Symphony Orchestra and the Portland Choral Consortium: Beethoven/excerpts from "The Mount of Olives"; Haydn/"The Heavens are Telling" from "The Creation".

Portland Civic Theatre: excerpts from "Ain't Misbehavin'"; excerpts from "Sweeney Todd".

Patron Party: The Woody Hite Big Band. "Take gay people out of the arts," says Fred

Korman, "and you have an empty stage." Korman, principal oboist with the Oregon Symphony, has been involved with Cascade AIDS Network's PAL Project since last fall. Korman says that his experience with the PAL Project gave him an idea which evolved into the upcoming benefit concert, because, "It is equally important to raise consciousness as it is to raise money."

Fred Korman, born in Brooklyn, NY, has been a member of the Oregon Symphony Orchestra since 1978, coming to Portland after extended stints with the New Orleans and Hartford Symphony Orchestras. Korman also holds teaching posts at Portland State University and Lewis & Clark College.

Korman took his idea to James DePriest, conductor of the Oregon Symphony and the benefit was on its way. "People came out of everywhere," Korman says. James DePriest and Gwyneth Gamble Booth are co-chairs for the benefit, Margie Boule, Alyce Rogers and Shirley Nanette are hostesses for the event, and the Woody Hite Big Band will play for the patron party.

Tickets, ranging in price from \$16 to \$52.75 are available at Civic Auditorium, Stevens & Sons (Lloyd Center), Portland Civic Theatre and G.I. Joe's. So fill up the Schnitz.

Noted author to do reading

A Woman's Place, in celebration of its 13th anniversary, will host an autograph party and reading by noted lesbian writer, Lee Lynch, on Saturday, March 1. Lynch, whose column, *Amazon Trail*, appears regularly in *Just Out* and other periodicals nationwide, is the author of several novels which include *Toothpick House*, *Old Dyke Tales* and *The Swashbuckler*.

The autograph party will be held at A Woman's Place (2349 SE Ankeny) between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. All of Lynch's novels will be available for signing and refreshments will be served. Lynch will read from her works in the banquet room at Old Wives Tales (1300 E Burnside) at 6:30 p.m. (A donation is requested for the reading.)

A Woman's Place has provided feminist novels, literature, resources and more in Portland for 13 years.

Edward II makes rare appearance

by Jim Hunger

Edward II made a rare appearance recently — and in Portland, no less! The play chronicles the reign, captivity, and murder of a relatively unspectacular English monarch of the early 14th century, but has nonetheless earned a position of significance in literary as well as gay history, although it is seldom performed on stage or presented in the classroom.

The original play, written around 1590 by Christopher Marlowe, Shakespeare's early mentor and mutual influence, is one of the few surviving literary nuggets that contains within it attractive images of homosexuality. Most western historians, and western writers in general have scrupulously avoided positive references to homosexuality since the decline of Rome. Until recently, their homophobia and anal retentive fastidiousness proved fairly effective in obscuring most alternative sexuality references from mainstream literary consumption.

Edward is an unlikely hero. A bungling warrior, an uninspired and uninspiring leader, he doesn't begin to reveal his greatness until he is a prisoner and facing death. While Edward's mediocrity as a ruler and his love affair with Gaveston were problems for Elizabethan audiences, they were nothing compared to the deeds of Mortimer and the Queen. Their treasonous acts were damning crimes against the natural order of the cosmos, of which the divine right of kings was an important link.

Bertolt Brecht's *Edward II*, one of his earliest plays, was first performed in 1924. Brecht followed the general story line, but added dimension to some of the characters: the Queen, Mortimer the younger, and Gaveston in particular; and incorporated a number of other changes, some rather curious. French knight Piers Gaveston ("Danny boy!"); Queen Isabelle was renamed Anne; and she meets Mortimer on the road to Scotland, rather than in Paris.

Brecht also made extensive use of "presenters," choral characters who announce additional complications of setting and plot. This device, initially disconcerting, helps to convey a sense of the passage of time, par-