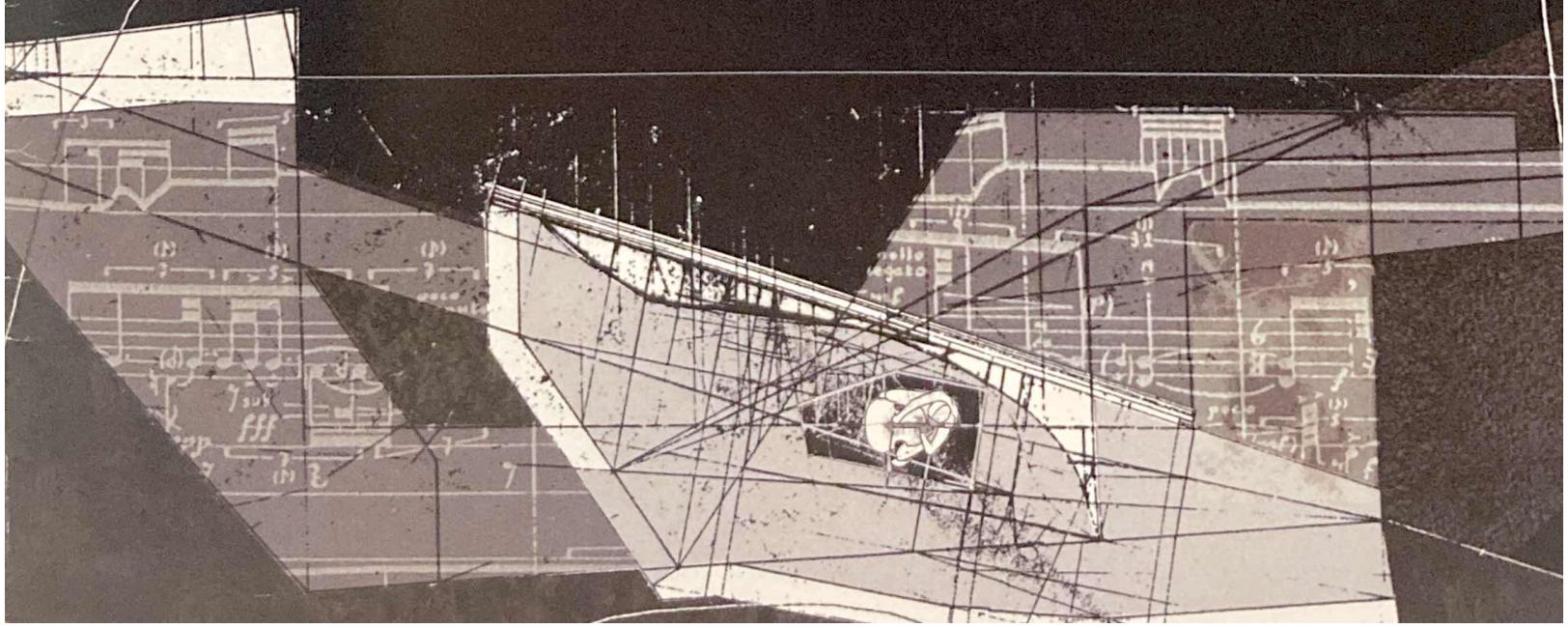


**Benjamin Menschel Fellowship**

**Exhibition**





The Benjamin Menschel Fellowship Program to support creative inquiry was endowed by a grant given to The Cooper Union by the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation in 1994 to support work in the fields of art, architecture, design, and engineering. This generous grant was intended to provide funding to exceptional students who propose scholarly, independent projects that will in some way provide a culmination to their educational endeavors at The Cooper Union. It is the hope of the Goldsmith Foundation that students designated as Benjamin Menschel Fellows will be encouraged by their awards to complete bodies of artwork, develop scientific protocols, or otherwise further their intellectual investigations in a manner that will provide inspiration and illumination to the community as a whole.



THE COOPER UNION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE AND ART

Benjamin Menschel Fellowship

Veronica Barrow  
Isabelle Grizzard  
Josephine Halvorson  
Jeremy Mores McWreath  
David Tomlinson  
Ellen Zhao

Exhibition

November 12-22, 2002  
The Cooper Union  
Foundation Building

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7D  
M548X

## Veronica Barrow

The subject of my research is the architectural and mechanical history of the German Baroque pipe organ. A deeper understanding of the wider context of these organs—their geographical locations, social influences, and technological innovations—can lead to a clearer understanding of their architectural structure. A key to defining the many layers of native and foreign influences rooted within each organ is geography: the architecture of a particular organ is not only site specific, but also specific to the landscape or region where it was constructed.

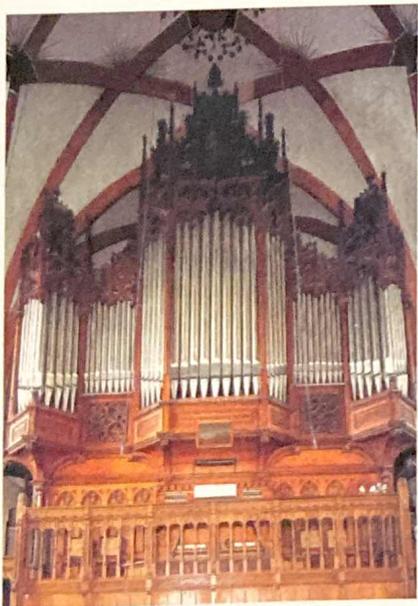
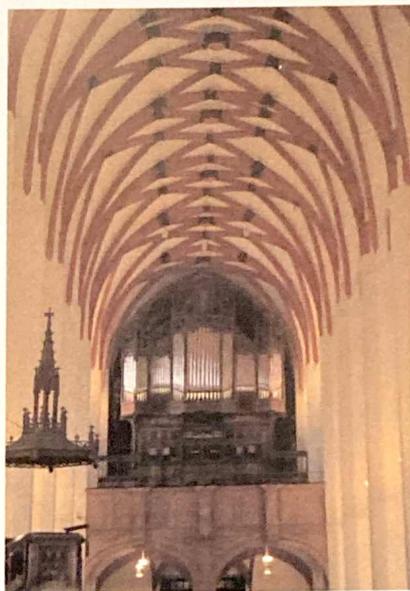
The organs of Johann Sebastian Bach's homeland—Thüringen, Sachsen, and Sachsen-Anhalt—are pertinent to this consideration of geographical regions, architecture, and mechanics. It was in

Wenzelskirche, in Naumburg, where the characteristics of both the northern and central schools of organ building were merged. Two of the most important organ builders of that time were Zacharias Hildebrandt and Gottfried Silbermann. Bach worked with both these men, who made instruments according to his specifications. Prior to this collaboration, organs in central Germany did not employ the *Rückpositiv* case, the grouping of pipes placed in front of the main body of organs from northern Germany, but instead relied on a set of eight-foot pipes much narrower than those in the *Rückpositiv*. The structural addition of the *Rückpositiv* to the central German organ augmented the tonal range and timber of this new “hybrid” organ—

an organ that informs the interpretation of J.S. Bach's organ works and provides insight into the inventiveness and variety of Bach's performances.

By studying Bach's compositions and the pipe organs on which he played one can begin to map out musical changes in color and texture as they relate to his varying geographical placements throughout central Germany and the varying characteristics of each organ.

I have attempted to capture the variation in sound of each organ—in color, tonality, and pitch—through visual and spatial representations. But the variations are best exemplified through the structure of Johann Sebastian Bach's organ music.



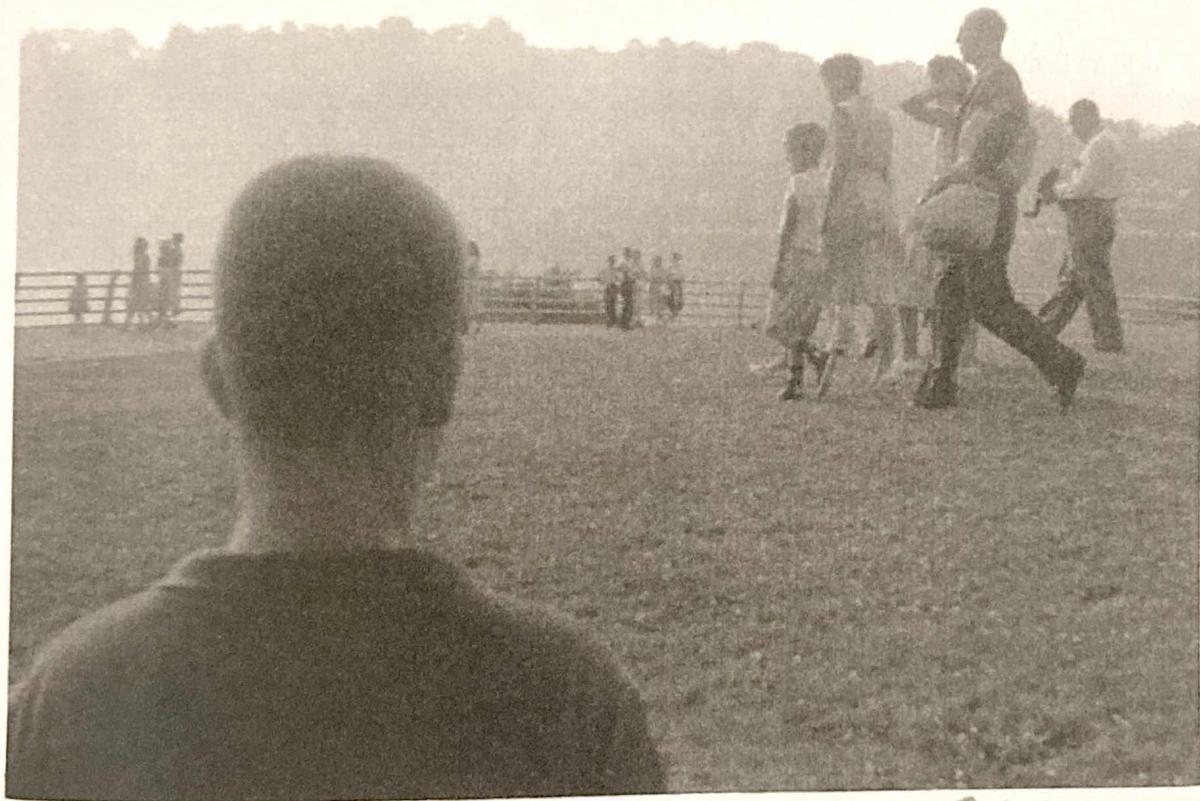
## Isabelle Grizzard

I was raised on storytelling. In a large family of artists, writers, farmers, and other skilled exaggerators, turning real events into myths becomes a bridge between past and present, teller and listener. I quickly learned that audiences, whether cousins in a backyard or strangers in an academic institution, receive not only cold facts about the past, but the lore, the lies, the myths as well. These hand-me-downs eventually become history.

Using my family's oral tradition, I am producing artifacts—a body of prints and poems that interpret and adapt our mythology for a larger audience. Like storytelling, printmaking and writing rely on unending alterations. Every line or word pushes the meaning of the work

in a different direction as it is added. These pieces are an experiment in memory; even finished they include a part of the first sketch.

Myth endures because it gives us a sense of place, something universal and private at the same time. Today, through drawing and writing, I know the faces of men and women who died a century ago. Their lives form a collection of dates, locations, and actions for genealogists to catalogue. But for me, the foundation provided by fact is an inheritance on which to build my own stories and images.



Roger Woodward 1960  
over the hills & survived

## Josephine Halvorson

My project is about regionalism and painting. I traveled to northern California where I studied and made landscape paintings. I attempted to identify and investigate qualities of West Coast painting and to incorporate them into my own work as a means of understanding how painting functions and is defined regionally, both in California and in New York City.

I visited art museums in San Francisco as well as local galleries in Sonoma County. I looked at paintings by the Bay Area Figure Painters and California Impressionists, whose work has come to define "California painting" in the twentieth century. Seeing the paintings in person was critical: I was able to detect the artist's hand and to perceive

surface, scale, brushstroke, and the true colors that were intended. In these paintings color is used, even exploited, to define form, depict light, and create atmosphere. Landscape, and more specifically the abstraction of landscape, is the dominant subject matter while an emphasis is placed on the materiality of the paint through the painting's brushwork and surface.

These themes are present in contemporary West Coast painting and seem to be embraced by the regional public at large. It is clear that most paintings made in this region are in response to both the physical environment (the sublime landscape and temperate climate are conducive to painting *en plein air*) and to the region's painting traditions. These

influences are reinforced by the public's favorable reception. Are these components typical of regional art? I tried to address the issue of regionalism through the making of my own paintings, fusing what I learned from West Coast paintings with what I have learned at Cooper Union and from contemporary art in New York City.

My paintings are done from direct observation, painted outdoors in the *plein air* tradition. There are eleven pairs of paintings, with each pair intended as one piece. One painting is a purely representational response to the specific scene I saw; the other employs a more experimental approach to depicting the same place. Together the pair creates a picture of my experience.



## Jeremy Mores McWreath

An estimated one million people in the United States have aphasia—a condition most people know nothing about. Aphasia is a communication disability caused by damage to the language areas of the brain through traumatic injury or stroke. A stroke or “brain attack” occurs when the blood supply to the brain is interrupted, and it is typically older people who suffer them. But such is not always the case, and anyone can experience brain injury from an accident. There is no cure for aphasia but there are various forms of rehabilitation.

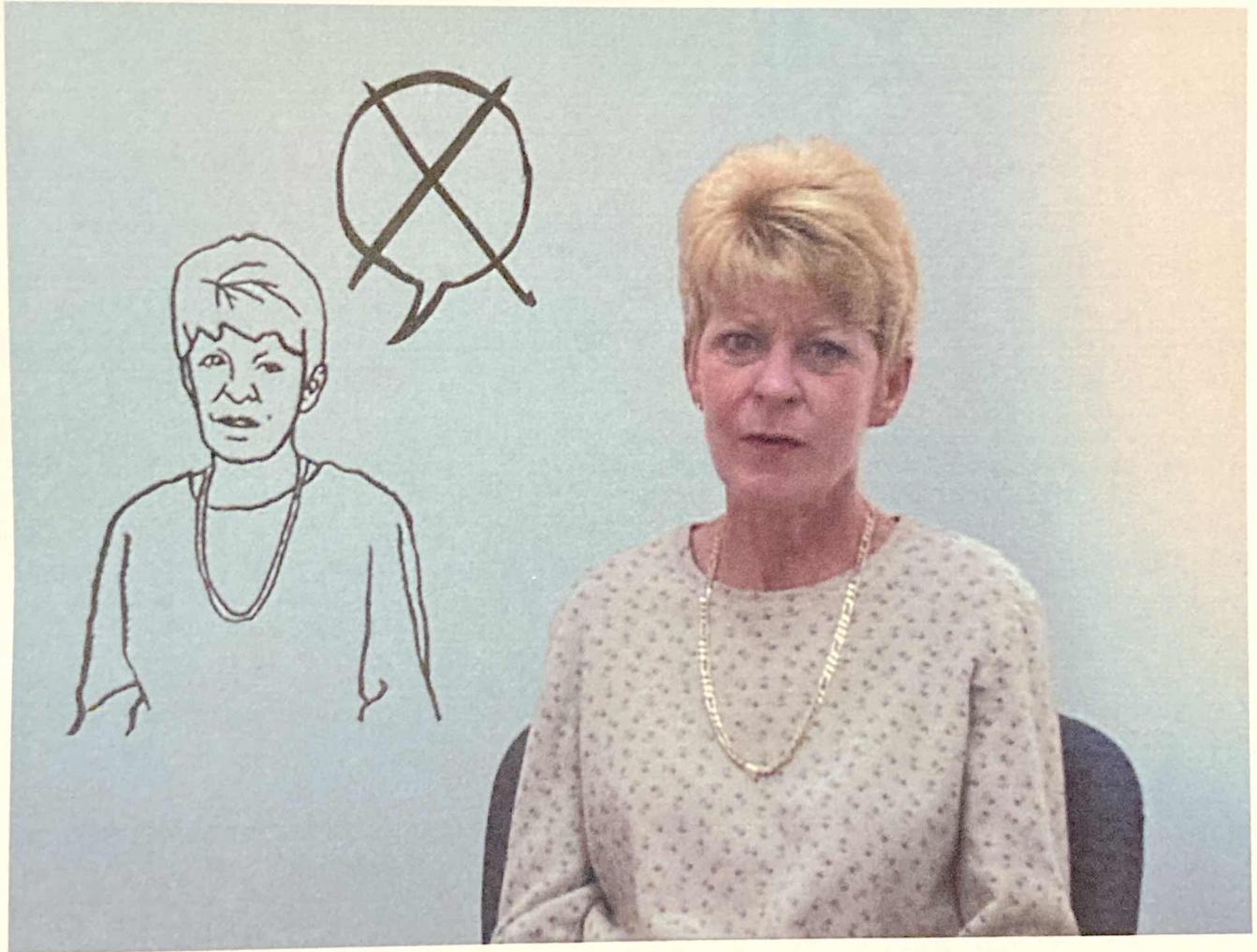
Every person’s brain function is unique, and so are the language disabilities that might result from damage to the brain. Any of several types of aphasia can affect

both comprehension and production of either spoken or written language. One victim might have ears that function normally but a brain incapable of processing speech sounds. Another might be capable of producing vocal sounds but not words or sentences. Every person with aphasia has a different level of disability in language comprehension and production: language comprehension may remain intact while language production is destroyed, or vice versa. Aphasia does not affect a person’s intelligence in any way; language ability may be altered but general brain function is not.

This documentary is intended both to raise awareness of aphasia and function

as a therapeutic device for people with aphasia. Each person interviewed is given a forum to communicate with people who have aphasia and those who do not. It is an experiment in communication. Visual symbols are by no means a universal form of communication. The drawings created to interpret each person’s statements were designed to help bridge the gap between hearing, seeing, and comprehending. The images act as an aid to understanding the spoken language.

The goal of this project is to allow people who have just developed aphasia an opportunity to understand that rehabilitation is not only possible but likely.



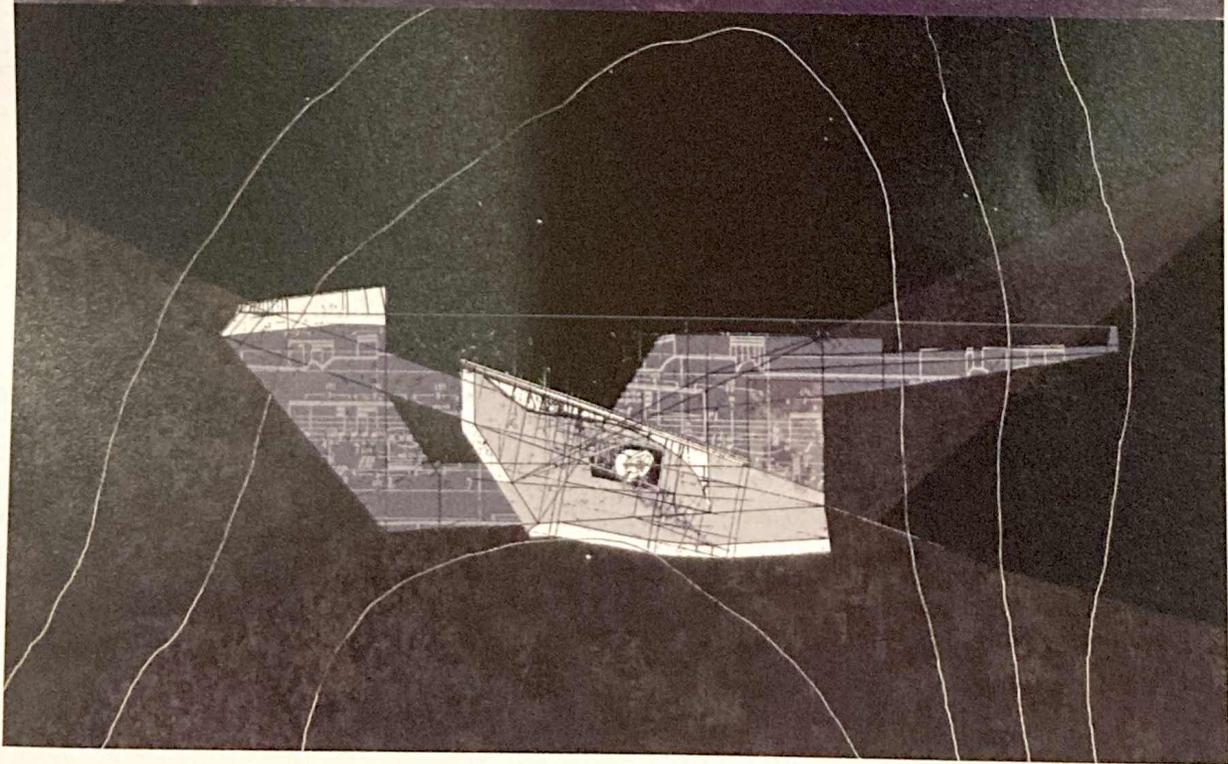
## David Tomlinson

A year ago I investigated the interaction of three elements: body, cello, and music. A sequence of drawings produced an architectural interpretation of that interaction. The cellist's body was considered to be part of the cello, and the cello as part of the body. Now I have applied this theory of reciprocal extension and incorporation to a particular structure: the expressive space of the cellist is transposed into the expressive space of the house.

*The House for Strings*, situated on the edge of a clearing, is simultaneously an inhabitable structure and an instrument. The house is composed of three elements: inhabitable space, wind harp, and resonant cavity. The house participates

in the activity for which it was built: musical performance. To accomplish this dual purpose, an Aeolian harp is integrated into the structure of the house. The wind harp consists of a series of cables over which the wind blows, inducing vibration and creating sound-energy. In this house, that sound-energy is transmitted to resonant cavities within the house, similar in principle to the main body of a cello. These resonant cavities locate the sound of the wind inside the house itself. It becomes possible for the cellist to play along with the wind, and for the house to play along with the cellist. The two become reciprocating structures, allowing for the composition of new music.

Two versions of the *House for Strings* are proposed. Each unfolds from a sequence of diagrammed bowing motions, studied and extracted from an initial cello performance. The first house expresses a compressed structure in which the harp's cables are located within the structural elements, some to be played by the wind, others to be bowed by a performer. The second house expresses a linear structure, in which the cables run parallel to the structural elements. The first house is designed for one cellist and wind, the second for two cellists and wind. Each house suggests different possibilities for musical composition.



## Ellen Zhao

I am interested in the relationship between the narrative and the face of the narrator in documentary video. In most documentaries, the voice of the speaker is linked to the narrative, which in turn is intrinsically part of the face. In video documentary, when a person is telling a story on screen, the audio and visual elements are usually synchronized. This synchronicity produces the illusion of truth. Somehow, by seeing a person's face, the audience is led to believe that what they hear is as true as what they see.

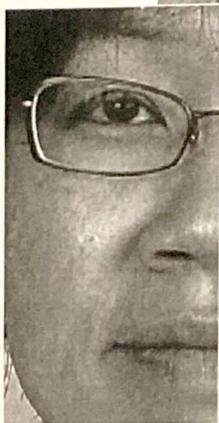
I am also interested in "Asian" and "white" couples, and in how two very different identities function in a relationship while merging into one single entity, the family. I put the words "white" and

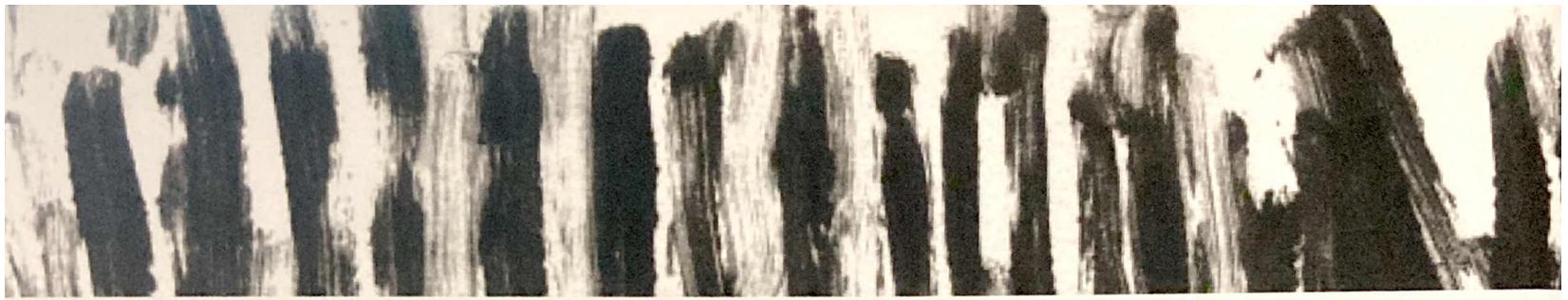
"Asian" in quotation marks because I realize that both words have become so loaded with stereotypical signification and contradictory connotations that they have become virtually meaningless.

Through my research on the subject, I realized that so much discussion of interracial relationships is burdened by the assumptions we make about people based on their physical appearances, the words we use to describe them, and the stories they tell about themselves. I realized that the only way of talking about this "issue" is through discussion that is free of assumptions, free of stereotypes, and free of appearances.

In this video, the focus is on three Chinese and Chinese-American women

and their "white" husbands. The couples talk about each other's stories and experiences in the first person point of view. Through this inversion of roles, the link between THE story and THE face is broken. Viewers will no doubt make assumptions about the speakers based on the physical images they see and the stories they hear, but these assumptions will soon become destabilized. My hope is that, instead of unconsciously making judgements about people, the viewers will be confronted with their own stereotypes, and begin to develop a deeper understanding of the couples through a more active and engaged way of watching and listening.





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