

S U S A N M O G U L

F r o n t a n d C e n t e r

1973 - 2011

Selected Works

“Mogul’s narratives succeed precisely through the tension produced when “high art” and popular genres are forced to coexist within the same work, and as they are then equally brought to their knees, having failed on their own to measure up to the emotional complexities of a single life.”

- Glenn Phillips, Senior Curator Getty Research Institute

PREFACE

My body of work is autobiographical, often satirical, poignant and delves into the conflicts and contradictions of everyday life: fitting-in, love, loss, identity, sexuality, family, and relationships. The work itself eschews categories – even critiques them - and has been exhibited in and out of the art world since 1973.

This catalog is composed of video art, photo projects, performance and installation. I coined it “front and center” because I am the sole character in most of these works and tend to position myself front and center in relation to the camera and/or the audience.

HIGH ANXIETY

It occurred to me the other day that my film work from 1991 thru the present requires little explanation. Each film is a story, essay, or a re-constructed diary – and sometimes all three. One film informs or builds upon the other. There's not that much to figure out. The process of figuring stuff out happened in the making of each film. And that's what motivates me to make films in the first place.

But what about the work I made prior to filmmaking? The work produced the first fifteen years of my career, from 1973 through 1988. At first glance, this early work appears to be a disparate collection of stuff: video art, performance art, photo collage, installation. Concepts, anecdotes and fragments piled one on top of the other. How do you make sense of it? How do I make sense of it? Most of it is autobiographical like my films, but the similarity stops there. What ties these early works together? What occurs to me, for the first time, is anxiety.

It's the anxiety of an apprehensive restless young female who landed into the art world by mistake and is trying to figure a way out. And yet, at the same time she wants in. I present myself as a bundle of conflicts and contradictions. I was a bundle of conflicts and contradictions. My burgeoning feminist and art identities clash with my good little Jewish girl middle-middle class upbringing. Who am I? Where do I fit in? How will I make my way in the world? And how will I ever earn a living?

I try out a myriad of professional personas: a radio disc jockey, standup comic, billboard worker, Hollywood director, shopkeeper, news reporter, even Moses – anything seems more plausible than surviving as an artist. And a woman artist at that. My absurd identity crises and feminist fantasies of grandeur take shape in videos, performances, installations and/or photo-collages. I make one piece after the other, as I try to wiggle my way out of this incomprehensible vocation.

When I was almost forty, thirty-nine to be exact, something happened. I created *Dear Dennis* (1988), a video letter to Dennis Hopper. "You're a filmmaker and I want to impress you. And you seem like kind of a hard guy to impress." I'm being myself. No persona. I'm brushing my teeth and talking to Dennis Hopper. I'm sharing my aspirations to be a filmmaker just like him. The act of telling an individual, or even imagining a specific individual receiving my missive was all I needed. It didn't make a difference that the video letter was an over the top comic work. And that it was extremely doubtful that Hopper would ever watch it or ever did. The act of making it was enough. Shortly thereafter I shifted to filmmaking and began telling layered stories about my real life and the people in it. I was no longer a solo act. No more personas. No more props or costumes. And my anxiety began to dissipate - a little.



“Overflowing with vulgarity like a commercial gone beserk.”

- Kim Levin, *New Artists V*ideo, 1978

“One of the great things about ‘Dressing Up’ is that it just totally undoes every notion of how you might be expecting a woman to act during this period. And then the fact you’re naked eating CornNuts, which is the most unglamorous type of image, just puts it over the top.”

- Glenn Phillips, *“California Video”* Catalog, 2008

Dressing Up is a reverse strip tease inspired by my mother’s penchant for bargain hunting. It was the first of many pieces that satirized my relationship to my mother and my Jewish middle class background. Underneath that was the tension of a young woman attempting to define herself on her own terms.

DRESSING UP

Video 1973 7 minutes

“Marina Abramovic’s breasts are allowable, but not those of Los Angeles artist Susan Mogul.” - www.artinfo.com 2010

Dressing Up was banned on YouTube on July 23, 2010 and reinstated two weeks later after protest from several art publications on the internet.



“In ‘Take Off’ Mogul has struck a fine balance between the tellable and the untellable. Her most remarkable action, the use of her vibrator “in public” borders on being taboo (yet) is so ridiculous that ultimately “women’s polite language” is mocked as incisively as is Vito Acconci.”

- Afterimage, 1985

“...Mogul’s answer to Vito Acconci’s aggressively masturbatory videotape ‘Undertone’ transformed a confrontation with the viewer into a frank girlfriend to girlfriend discussion of the benefits of vibrators.”

- Nancy Buchanan, Art/Women/California Catalog, 2002

“Mogul takes to task the notion of the male artist’s body as as a text of creativity which can be read through its activities and gestures. With a good deal of ironic humor, she transforms the ‘girl’ into a woman and an artist, who positions herself not under the table (as in Acconci’s ‘Undertone’) but directly across from the viewer; alternately discussing the ‘history’ of her vibrator and occasionally using it.”

- Video Data Bank

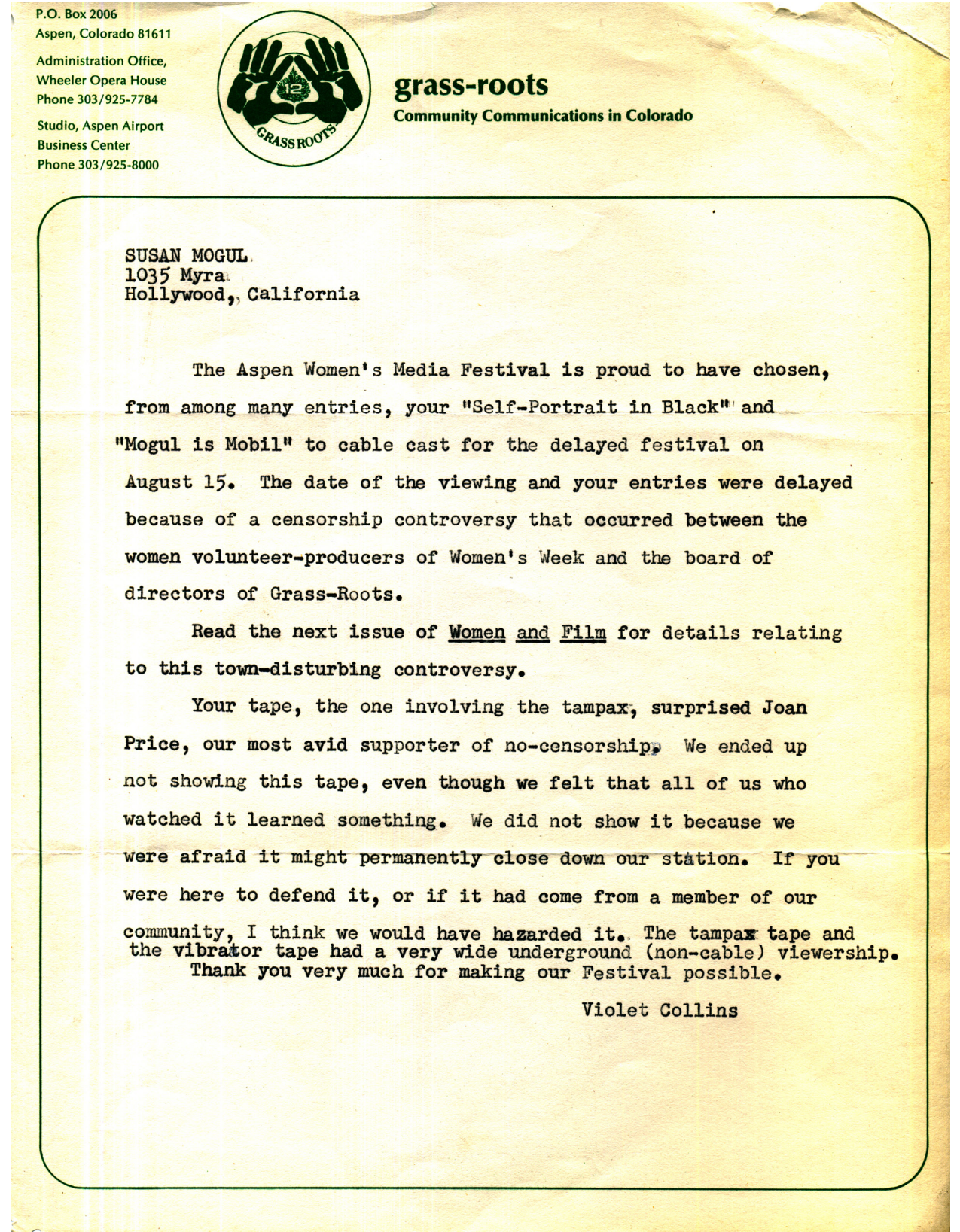
TAKE OFF
Video 1974 10 minutes



Your tape, the one involving the tampax, surprised Joan Price, our most avid supporter of no-censorship. We ended up not showing this tape, even though we felt that all of us who watched it learned something. We did not show it because we were afraid it might permanently close down our station.

UNTITLED

Video 1973 1 minute



P.O. Box 2006
Aspen, Colorado 81611
Administration Office,
Wheeler Opera House
Phone 303/925-7784
Studio, Aspen Airport
Business Center
Phone 303/925-8000



grass-roots
Community Communications in Colorado

SUSAN MOGUL.
1035 Myra
Hollywood, California

The Aspen Women's Media Festival is proud to have chosen, from among many entries, your "Self-Portrait in Black" and "Mogul is Mobil" to cable cast for the delayed festival on August 15. The date of the viewing and your entries were delayed because of a censorship controversy that occurred between the women volunteer-producers of Women's Week and the board of directors of Grass-Roots.

Read the next issue of Women and Film for details relating to this town-disturbing controversy.

Your tape, the one involving the tampax, surprised Joan Price, our most avid supporter of no-censorship. We ended up not showing this tape, even though we felt that all of us who watched it learned something. We did not show it because we were afraid it might permanently close down our station. If you were here to defend it, or if it had come from a member of our community, I think we would have hazarded it. The tampax tape and the vibrator tape had a very wide underground (non-cable) viewership.

Thank you very much for making our Festival possible.

Violet Collins

Letter to Mogul from the Aspen Women's Media Festival written in 1975 or 1976.



“I know of no way to reduce the fantastic density of Mogul’s chatter into a few lines of a review and still retain her hilarity. Her extroversion is so extreme that her story leaps from the vacuum around her, over the camera and off the screen entirely.” - Artforum, 1976

...a portrayal of the disastrous failure of her (Mogul’s) personal fantasy of shining as a stand-up comedian - a metaphor for the solitude of the artist.”

- Sascha Bleuler, Visions du Reel Film Festival Catalog, 2009

BIG TIP/ BACK UP /SHUT OUT

Video 1976 10 minutes


“I may have to get a back up career.” I mull over what I might do if I don’t make it as an artist. What if I lose my eyes? I figure a career as a stand-up comic is a safe bet and try out a few jokes on an imagined audience - of course with my eyes shut tight.

BIG TIP COMMENTARY

Big Tip is my first work that grapples with the economics of being an artist and the anxiety that it produces. *Mogul’s August Clearance*, a one-woman installation made later that same year in 1976, expresses that same anxiety although it takes a different form with me playing the “shopkeeper” of my art. And unlike the rough and raucous *Big Tip*, *Clearance* is comparatively gentle in its satire and is an earnest attempt to sell my work at prices anyone could afford.

After the initial “success” of *Take Off* and *Dressing Up* colleagues in the art world suggested I become a stand-up comic because “Susan, you’re so funny.” Although pleased to be “entertaining”, I thought the suggestion absurd. Yet on the other hand, stand-up comedy was appealing. I never aspired to be an artist in the first place. And besides comics, not artists, were revered in my family.

LA Filmforum screened *Big Tip* in 2012 at the Egyptian Theater in Hollywood. It hadn’t been screened in over 35 years and it got a lot of laughs. Were they laughing at my jokes or my dilemma as a struggling artist as struggling comic? Prior to that, it screened twice in the mid seventies: Anthology Film Archive in New York City and David Ross’s Southland Video Anthology II, Long Beach Museum of Art. Even though *Big Tip* got a good review in the December 1976 issue of Artforum it never attracted the attention that *Dressing Up* and *Take Off* did. Maybe it’s a good thing I never pursued a career in stand up comedy.



Moguls'

AUGUST CLEARANCE


GRAND OPENING: Starts 7th of August 2 - 5 P.M.

Pre - Sale for special customers

CANIS GALLERY - Woman's bldg.
1727 North Spring Los Angeles, Ca 90019

Sunday - Wednesday 12 - 5 P.M.

Ph. 221-6161 ENDS 31st of August



Mogul's August Clearance, my first one-woman show, was a clearance sale. My first video *Dressing Up* was devoted to bargain hunting with my mother. *Big Tip* confronts the economics of being an artist while *Mogul's Clearance* additionally satirizes institutions and categories. I am haunted with the impractical nature of making art and the desire to make it on my own terms. What am I worth? And who decides?



MOGUL'S AUGUST CLEARANCE
Installation, Woman's Building, Los Angeles, 1976

Documentation exhibited in *Under the Big Black Sun*
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2011- 2012

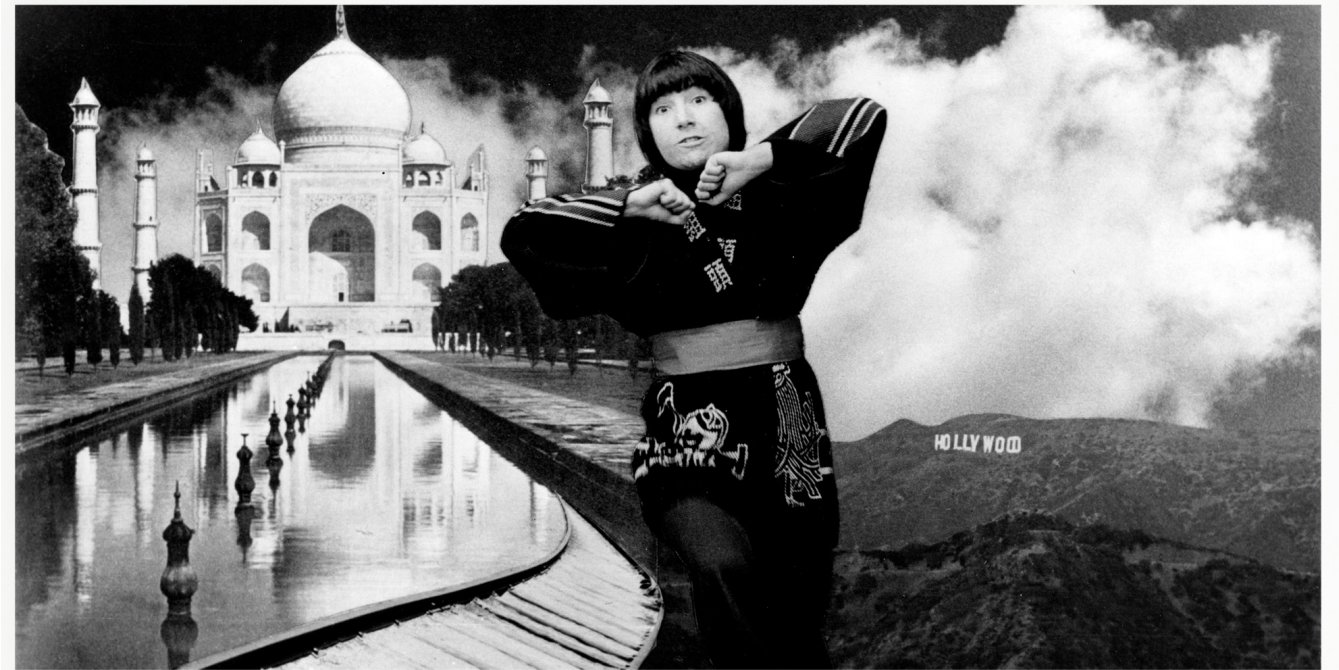


The Back Room, behind Mogul, was modeled after the Back Room at Loehmann's clothing store. It featured original and the most expensive merchandise in the shop. It was also the only merchandise that could not be handled by the customers. Note *Making It Big* on the front counter.

Making it Big is a faux tear sheet/collage created from an article about record mogul, Artie Mogull, in the June 1976 issue of *New West*, a popular California magazine at the time. I not only create my own fantasy about being a tycoon - one of the definitions of "mogul" - but placed next to the cash register in Mogul's Clearance, it "sold" the idea that Mogul and her "shop" were covered in the press.

MAKING IT BIG, Photo Collage, 1976

NEW WEST INTELLIGENCER MAKING IT BIG



Record Mogul: A slow rise to the top—and \$140,000 a year.

Mogul a Mogul

Mogul has been up and down more times than an elevator operator. Now after 30 years in the business, he reached the top floor, president of big Artists at an estimated \$140,000 a year.

Artists' hottest group, (U.S. sales: 8 million records in five years), celebrated Mogul's arrival by hosting a "Welcome Art Party" atop a posh West Hollywood high-rise apartment. As the sun set over the Strip, some 450 guests in French T-shirts, leather jackets, and body chains feasted on \$10,000 worth of ribs, chicken, and drink. The biggest laugh of the night was a telegram from Atlantic that read: Art Take a little, leave a little."

Mogul broke in as a band boy and then struck it big in the fifties by becoming the music publisher. signed over the phone, sight unseen.

Not all deals were hitsville; some were splitsville. When he walked into Mogull's office, the nineteen-year-old nobody "absolutely bowled me over with a song

"The opening lines stunned me— Mogul recovered fast, signed her, and managed her. Later, sued, and shed Mogul But hung onto her music publishing and made a killing.

Mogul kept on plugging. By 1972, was vice-president, —and hot.

But Men brought in over a chairman. Mogul made a bad move: "I impulsively delivered an ultimatum to Men said no. Exit Mogul.

Next stop was Records. But there were problems. Says Mogul: "That was the fourth time I worked for him We're like some married couples who love each other: We can't live together."

Mogul went out on own in 1975—professionally and personally. year broke up. Then spent eighteen months plugging artists, cutting deals, "and hating it."

Mogul doesn't criticize predecessor at A. But says: "Everybody was too busy looking for new acts instead of getting records out of the existing acts."

Will power go to head? Says Mogul: "I've been down often enough to know I can be down again" —

Captain Video



A sense of humor and video electronics.



“Mogul hangs her work - photos and photo collages - on wire hangars and puts it in bins. The logic of the producer-consumer transaction has led her to price each piece according to its degree of “finish” (shades of 19th century academicism!).” - Martha Rosler, Artweek, 1976

SUSAN MOGUL: MOVING THE GOODS

Los Angeles

Martha Rosler

The art world as market. It is probably we lean and hungry types, not well-established artists, who dwell on the overlap between art making and sales. This is the central focus of *Mogul's August Clearance* at the Canis Gallery in the Woman's Building, as it was of Oldenburg's *Store Days* and my own *Monumental Gar(b)age Sale*. Shows like these, while they differ widely in their particulars, seem to mark a stage in the development of the artist's consciousness and orientation. Recognizing and accepting (or rejecting) that art, like everything else in our system, has an economic base are fundamental in becoming a "professional" artist. Professionalism tends to be poorly differentiated from financial success. "Making it" means having to come to terms with yourself as a producer of consumables for sale, deciding how closely to gauge the market and gear your product to it.

Showing in a gallery, where acceptance and dollar bills are linked, effectively drives home this point. The quasi-churchly fog that blankets museum exhibitions is absent from gallery shows, and the "audience" can clearly be seen as potential "clientele." Artists may learn to despise the lookers because they need the buyers: Edward Weston railed in his journal against "idlers, parasites, curiosity seekers who patronize exhibits but only with their presence — they never buy!" Artists who have no salable product or documentation parlay their reputations into grants, teaching jobs or gallery salaries. But there is a deeper issue at hand than simply the seeking of support; it is the question of how much, in this 100% commodity culture, the *meaning* itself of the work depends on its commodity or exchange value. Billy Al Benston says, "There's a sucker born every minute — I tell people the only way to understand my work is to buy it."

Frustration with this system, coupled with a desire to take control (to move the audience toward some kind of acceptance, if not into purchasing), spur some of us to take on the role of shopkeeper, if only to prove a point. For Susan Mogul, in part because of her cultural history (New York Jew) and family history, the analogue of the art world is the retail garment industry — not bad, for as the artist divests her/himself of the work, the buyer dons it as an attribute or at least an adornment of the self. Mogul places herself near the business' lower end. Her model is Loehmann's, a "clothing outlet" that, on the one hand, allows manufacturers of expensive women's wear to clear their racks and that, on the other, allows designer-conscious middle-class women unwilling or unable to pay the normally high prices to approach the imagined glories of *haute couture*. In such a place both the status of plush surroundings and the obsequiously coercive salespeople are absent.

Mogul hangs her work — photos and photo collages — on wire hangers and puts it in bins. The logic of the producer-consumer transaction has led her to price each piece according to its degree of "finish" (shades of nineteenth century Academicism!). She arrived at a hierarchy running from "sketch," or work print, to full-scale work, in which only a finished item is seen as fully worthy of her "signature." The monetary value then is a function of the labor invested (and "self" reflected) — but the show,



SUSAN MOGUL: Installation at the Woman's Building, Los Angeles. Photo: Lilla Gilbrech.

of course, represents an attempt to capitalize on all labor invested, just as an outlet allows manufacturers and shopkeepers to recover some of their investment even from slightly damaged, shopworn or poorly selling goods.

The show casts Mogul in two roles. She controls the anxiety about success (selling, getting good reviews) by acting as the purveyor of cut-rate goods, a businessperson who bluntly proclaims that the merchandise is high-class though prices are low. But she is also the maker, whose products are on the sale racks and subject to pawing in the close-out bins, as well as enthroned in the spot reserved for "designer originals." This split allows her to sidestep the problem of choosing her "best" and "most salable" work. It also leaves unresolved her ambivalence about surrendering the innocent directness of the amateur (the willingness to reveal process rather than presenting an idealized front as, say, Alexis Smith does) for the sake of career. Mogul's pieces themselves show a similar split. Some address fame and fortune, playing on the meanings of

"mogul" with rather winsome absurdity — a TV showing Mogul trying on dresses off the rack forms the facade of the Taj Majal, for instance. (She used this image on her shopping bags.) But many are photographs of "just people," mostly women, in the company of others — at parties, in back yards, in kitchens, in the street — being social yet private.

Mogul's show is worked out clearly. Because there is neither enough work nor enough space really to simulate a clothing outlet, the exhibit becomes emblematic of an attitude. *Mogul's August Clearance* is a gentle but shamelessly insurgent attack on the fetish of the fine-art object, in a favor of a more democratized, downwardly mobile — though inevitably still class-bound — fetishism. □

Artist Martha Rosler's varied concerns include video and works involving the written word. She has also written art criticism and is completing a book to be published by Printed Matter, Inc., in early 1977.

ARTWEEK, August 1976

The "sale" was a huge success and possibly the only clearance sale in history to ever be reviewed by a Marxist.



A couple of months after *Mogul's August Clearance* closed I was evicted from my apartment on Myra Avenue in East Hollywood, my first abode in LA. I don't remember if I was evicted because I couldn't come up with the rent, wouldn't come up with the rent, or the landlord wanted me out cause I painted the hallways of the apartment building bright orange. Regardless, I didn't have money to move into a new place. So I stored my belongings with friends in LA and went off to New York for the winter where I could always crash with friends and family.

I lived like a gypsy housesitting on the upper east side and west side of New York City in various apartments. And I landed a job through childhood connections selling socks at Saks Fifth Avenue over the Christmas holidays.

So instead of "playing" the role of shopkeeper, I was selling merchandise in a real store in Manhattan. Mom loved it cause when Saks had their Christmas sale I could get her significant discounts on merchandise that was already drastically marked down. That impressed Mom much more than the first review I got in *Artforum* that same month. I saved my wages and moved back to Los Angeles right after the holidays.

ART AND LIFE: SELLING SOCKS AT SACKS, 1976

AM MOGUL IN THE PM ON FM

Close Radio, KPFK August 11, 1977

Listening, more than thirty years later, to a recently resurfaced copy of Susan Mogul's first and only experiment in live radio art, one has the impression of a woman who has been seized by a manic and desperate sense of urgency. During the twenty minutes allotted for the performance, Mogul manages to run through another radio station's Top Ten list from two weeks ago, take nine phone calls from listeners and friends, and to keep running updates on the time—at 10:00, 10:01, 10:02, 10:07, 10:08, 10:10, 10:16, and 10:17—all while telling three or more simultaneous narratives about a sometimes fictional version of herself. The result, while perhaps not Mogul's masterpiece, provides tremendous insight into her process.

Mogul's performance was presented as part of KPFK's *Close Radio*, a weekly program of artists' radio projects that was primarily organized by artists Paul McCarthy and Nancy Buchanan between November 15, 1976 and March 21, 1979. Collectively, *Close Radio* presents a remarkable, and remarkably diverse, array of approaches to the use of sound and live radio broadcast as an artistic medium, with projects spanning the entire range of conceptual and performance art and experimental and underground music practices typical of the late 1970s. Surprisingly, Mogul's project is one of only a handful that play with the familiar tropes of commercial radio programming, and it is certainly the only project in the series that attempted to play with all of those tropes at once.

What seems to have most captured Mogul's attention with radio is its ability to act as a barometer of the present, with "Top Ten" lists presenting a supposed snapshot of our collective musical tastes, call-ins providing core samples of public opinion, and traffic and weather reports presenting empirical evidence about the changing conditions in our cities. But can these forms be turned to more subjective ends? A typical radio broadcast might aim to simulate casting a net to catch fragments from the world at large, but Mogul would wish to cast herself out with that net, infecting the world at large with fragments of her self. Thus, Mogul is not interested in the weather for Los Angeles, but in the weather for Wendy Birnbaum on Prospect and Vermont (and "while we're waiting for the weather, let's go back to my childhood. AM Mogul in the PM on FM, I have to confess, was a lonely, shy kid.") Finding out that the weather on Prospect is "better than it was," Mogul presses on:

Mogul: And emotionally, what is the weather over there?

Birnbaum: Well it's muggy.

Mogul: Emotionally muggy.

Birnbaum: Very muggy

Mogul: Wendy, I'll be checking in later with you in your helicopter. So just don't go away. I'm going to have to get back to my childhood now- okay?

This is a search for emotional microclimates, and it could be viewed as a descriptive model for every work Mogul has ever made. Picking up a video camera in 1973, Mogul began a series of works that twisted the conceptual forms of performance and video art into blunt, personal, and always hilarious narratives about her life. This focus has remained constant throughout her career, as the works have steadily gained in complexity. Mogul's narratives succeed precisely through the tension produced when "high art" and popular genres are forced to coexist within the same work, and as they are then equally brought to their knees, having failed on their own to measure up to the emotional complexities of a single life. But perhaps, Mogul seems to postulate, if you just try everything, and then keep trying...

Mogul the fictional DJ continues on with byzantine stories about installing ten phone lines in her home, about posing as a survey operator, about her fear of fame, about her real fake age (65, even though she looks 15). Prearranged calls are interrupted by surprise calls and hecklers. Panic when a real meteorologist calls in. Traffic in Laurel Canyon was pretty good two hours ago. It's foggy in San Pedro, shaky in Granada Hills. And how's the weather down at the station? "It's great. There's a cute guy outside the window. There's *two* cute guys outside the window." And the Top Ten countdown continues. In the midst of this barely controlled chaos, Mogul the artist emerges to speak:

My job is my mouth. And I have been very concerned about what I would do if I should lose my mouth. Recently I took up visual art as a form of security. Some people believe in division of labor. I believe in the division of the senses. If I should lose my mouth, I still could make art. You don't need a mouth to make art. Just eyes. And besides, most artists say they can't verbalize anyway. They just can't talk about their art or their work, or their pieces—whatever they want to refer to them as. But even if I should lose both my mouth and my eyes, I still feel fairly secure. Because I will still have my ears. And the field of listening is an untapped area. Very undeveloped. As I see it, there is a glut on the market of orators. Every day there is a new orator on another soapbox seeking an audience, trying for at least one listener. And I predict that in the near future, that instead of the lecture circuit, colleges will be hiring professional listeners on the hearing circuit. That's right- a hearing circuit. I think all of you closet listeners should come out. It's about time you got paid for all that hard work you do every day.

We imagine Mogul gradually stripped of her senses, with each removal testing her abilities to define herself as an artist, and she poses a surprise conclusion: listening would be enough. The artist whose every move has involved twisting conventions in the service of her own voice would be content to, like the video camera she uses, simply receive. To be the net that is cast out. To be the microphone (unamplified). To become the medium, even if there is no message. It can hardly be a surprise then to learn that the number one song—formerly number 72—is "I Just Want to Be Your Everything." And so she does.



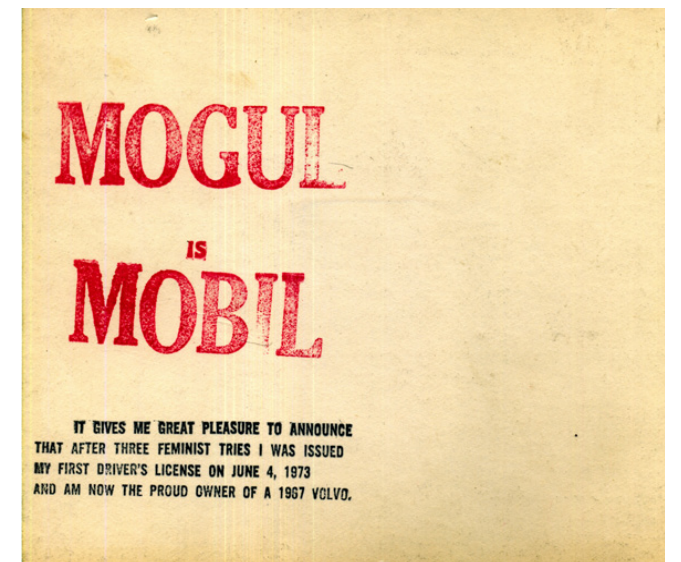
MOSES MOGUL PARTS THE HOLLYWOOD HILLS
Photo-Collage, 1977

My last name, a burgeoning staunch feminist identity and the open landscape of billboards and palm trees, inspired the photo collage series titled *Hollywood Moguls*.

My first photo collage, *Mogul is Mobil* (1974) kicked off the series before I knew it would even become a series. *Mogul is Mobil* was a feminist postcard announcing that I had finally learned to drive - in Los Angeles.

The *Hollywood Moguls* were designed to be posters or billboards – multiples that would go out into the world just like my postcard - but bigger.

At that time, in the seventies, there were relatively few galleries and museums in LA. Billboards were ubiquitous, and to my way of populist thinking, a much better venue to get work out into the world. Additionally, I liked these popular formats because they use everyday language, have a sense performance and often speak directly to the viewer.



"It gives me great pleasure to announce that after three feminist tries I was issued my first driver's license on June 4, 1973 and am now the proud owner of a 1967 Volvo."

MOGUL IS MOBIL
Postcard, 1974



MOGUL TELEVISION EMPIRE
Photo-Collage 1976

SHABBIR MANSURI AND THE COLUMBIA COFFEE SHOP

One day in December 1978 I walked into the Columbia Coffee Shop at Sunset and Gower in Hollywood. Actually the building signage read Columbia Drugs. There was a stage and screen cosmetic shop in the front and a soda fountain/ coffee shop in the back. It was Saturday, almost closing time and the coffee shop was dead. I was scouting for a soda fountain to photograph. A new collage was in the making for my *Hollywood Moguls* series: a satire about the Lana Turner myth, getting discovered at a Hollywood soda fountain.

Shabbir Mansuri, a man from India, ran the coffee shop. When I told him my name was Susan Mogul he was ecstatic. Moghuls are royalty in India. The Taj Mahal was built by a Moghul emperor. Shabbir let me photograph his soda fountain counter.

By the time I got home I dreamt up a new idea. I returned to Columbia a week later with *Mogul Television Empire* - a 1976 collage featuring the Taj Mahal in Hollywood. "Shabbir, what do think about me having a show of my *Hollywood Moguls* in your shop." He was hooked.

As time went on I told Shabbir I was making placemats, and life size cutouts for the exhibition too. No problem. Then I mentioned a performance, "I'll conduct screen tests at the soda fountain for the closing celebration? What do you think?" I walked into Columbia Drugs because I wanted to take a photograph. I walked out with a one-woman exhibition, performance, a video and a new friend.

Epilogue

A year later, Bob Smith, the director of LAICA on Robertson Boulevard, the alternative art space in LA at the time, asked me to show my soda fountain project and the video *Waiting at the Soda Fountain* (produced from the screen test footage) at their space. I agreed. But I knew it would never match the experience I had mounting the show at Columbia. I asked Shabbir if we could hold the premiere of the video *Waiting at the Soda Fountain*, at his place. I already had the okay from LAICA. And that's what we did.

Dressed in a beret and a bad attitude, Mogul masquerades as a “male” movie director who callously evaluates the auditions of the women in attendance, discarding those who fail to meet “his” stereotypical image of who they should be rather than who they are. Her parodic impersonation of the movie director, while debunking the sexist imperatives associated with his power, disguises Mogul’s latent ambitions to direct a feature film.

- Excerpt James Moran, *Wide Angle*, 1998





Top: Mari-Linn Hughes screen test. Bottom: Cheri Gaulke screen test.

WAITING AT THE SODA FOUNTAIN
Video/Performance 1980 29 minutes

Secret Directors Copy

Screen test # 1
 Let's start out with something simple. You are sitting in the Columbia Coffee Shop, at the soda fountain. I would like to hear how you would order a cup of coffee.
 "Pardon me, when you have a moment I'd like to order a cup of coffee."
 You are a very shy young woman. You are not used to being out in a restaraunt by yourself . Now again;"pardon me, when you have a moment I would like to order a cup of coffee."
 Okay, you are on you coffee break. You are on a new job and your boss is a ~~pe~~ real strict clockwatcher. You are nervous and in a big rush. you are having trouble getting the attention of the waitress .Again
 "Pardon me, when you have a moment I would like a cup of coffee."

Screen test # 2
 You were engaged to be married and you just received a call from your fiance calling it off. He tells you he has eloped with a princes from an exotic island. You are crying as you a order at the fountain:
 "I'll have an egg salad sandwich on whole wheat bread, hold the lettuce, a side of fries, a large glass of milk and a slice of apple pie."
 Now try it again, This time you are not upset that your fiance has called it off. Youare relieved. and feel like a new woman. You were getting married because of family pressure. Again ;
 I'll have an egg salad sandwich on whole wheat, hold the lettuce, a large glass of mil and a slice of apple pie."

A page from the director's screen test script.

The video, *Waiting at the Soda Fountain* was created from the footage of the performance at Columbia Drugs. It features women from the Woman's Building in L.A., fellow graduate students from UCSD, and other women in my life at the time.



The entire premise is ridiculous but Mogul's deadpan panache gives the work an ingenuous urgency that creates drama out of the mundane. And unlike the man whom her letter addresses, Mogul never sells out her integrity as an artist (or as a woman) in efforts to earn recognition."

- Excerpt James Moran, *Wide Angle*, 1998

Dear Dennis was inspired by the fact that Dennis Hopper and I had the same dentist, Dr Chin. It was also inspired when Dr. Chin informed me that I grind my teeth at night. He told me to relax. I don't know how to relax. Instead I made a video to amuse myself. When I am amused I laugh. And when I laugh I reduce my level of anxiety.

DEAR DENNIS

Video 1988 4 minutes

Anxiety and Self-Promotion

Some curators categorize *Mogul's August Clearance* and the *Hollywood Moguls* as self-promotion. While that may be true, why am I promoting myself in the first place? My work from the seventies and eighties - and even my recent 2011 guerilla poster *Mogul Celebrates Mogul* - is rooted in anxiety – the anxiety about “making it” in a man’s world.*

As a “boomer” woman who came of age in the seventies, I tried to figure out how to be a “new” woman - a woman who made her presence felt in the public sphere. I produced videos and photo collages that spoke directly to the viewer, advertising an assertive albeit quirky female point of view.

I put myself front and center and often took on male-personas: Moses, a Hollywood director, a stand-up comic, a Jewish professor in a tallis and yarmulke, and a billboard worker who posted billboards. I satirized the artist Vito Acconci (*Take Off*), and tried to get the attention of Dennis Hopper (*Dear Dennis*).

Was I really promoting myself? Or, challenging the status quo?



MOGUL CELEBRATES MOGUL

“Mogul, an artist ahead of her time, frozen in time, with plenty of time to think about time.”- Susan Mogul
CELEBRATE THE ARTIST WHO CONTINUES TO INSPIRE HERSELF: 1973-2011

Mogul is Mobil. She drives. Parts the Hollywood Hills. And still wears her mother's clothes. Force yourself to think critically about this L.A. artist.

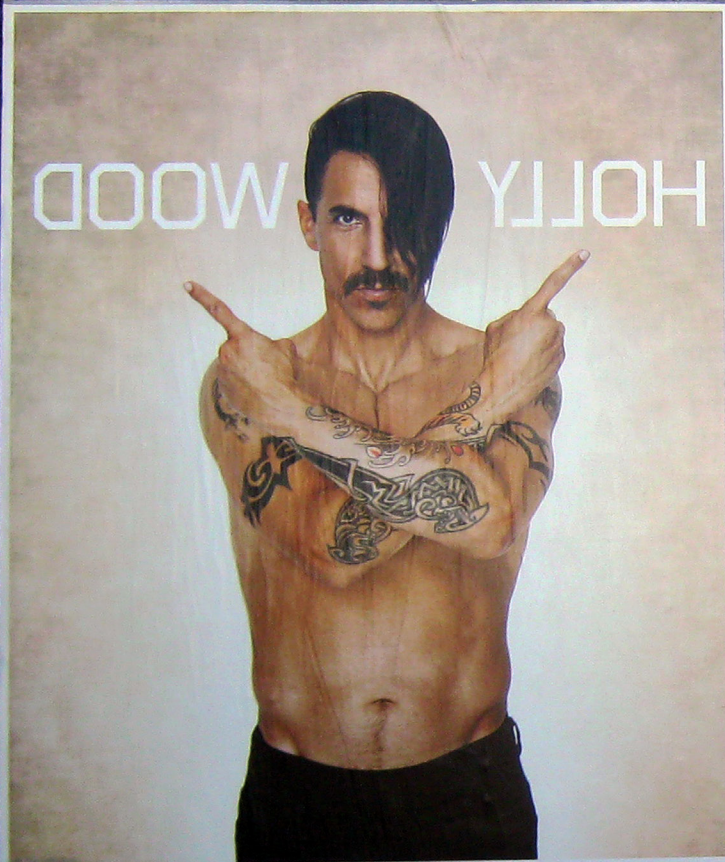
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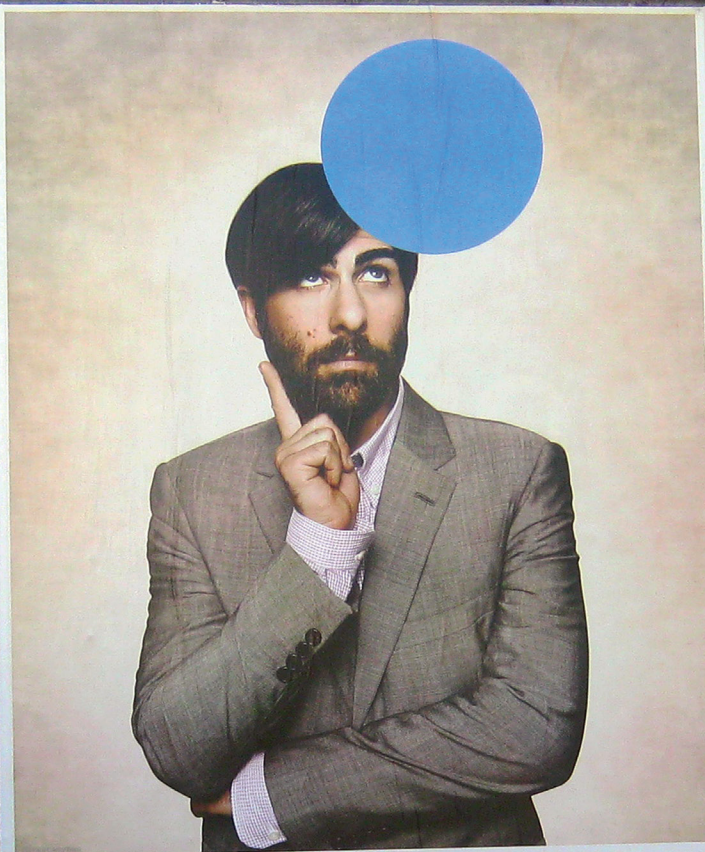
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MOGUL IN L.A. 1973-2011

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Mogul models her Mother's 1975 orange suede pants suit - a Bill Atkinson original.

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