Encyclopedia Persona

A-Z

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Kim Abeles:
Encyclopedia Persona,
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The end of an encyclopedia is to assemble the knowledge scattered over the earth, to expound it to contemporaries, and to transmit it to posterity...


Why Encyclopedia Persona? For a better understanding of this book’s title and its relationship to Kim Abeles’ work, the introduction will begin with a discussion of the meaning of *encyclopedia* and *persona*.

**Encyclopedia, the Circle of Learning.** The word *encyclopedia*, a neologism fabricated from the Greek *en* (in), *kyklos* (circle), and *paidia* (learning) is defined as: “the circle of learning.” In classical antiquity, the word referred specifically to the “circle” of arts and sciences, a general course of instruction the Greeks considered essential for a liberal education. While encyclopedic publications existed in antiquity, in the Middle Ages, and in Asia, the word is first used in a 1531 treatise, *The Governour*, written by the English scholar, Sir Thomas Elyot.

The modern published encyclopedia, an alphabetical index of information on all branches of knowledge, dates from the Age of Enlightenment. The French *Encyclopédie* (1751-1772), a 28-volume collaboration of philosophers, scientists, and artists known as the *Encyclopédistes*, was co-edited by Denis Diderot and Jean d’Alembert. In Diderot’s prospectus he wrote that the 18th century’s great accumulation of knowledge would be useless if not shared, and that the need for its dissemination was truly urgent. Since Diderot’s day, the founding of public institutions, the advent of computer technology, and even the ubiquitous cliché of the door-to-door salesman, have all contributed to greater dissemination of encyclopedic information to broader audiences.

Kim Abeles is an artist who shares the democratic spirit of Diderot’s directive to disseminate knowledge. Since 1979 she has worked in series, accumulating information on diverse subjects that have become a structure for her artistic production. She chooses a subject, investigates it thoroughly, then assembles the data and source materials in notebooks. Inspired by her fruitful research on a particular topic, each work distills an aspect of her investigative process. Realizing that even an entire series cannot contain all her research, she often makes books that reveal ancillary information about each subject.

The *Encyclopædia Persona* format results directly from Abeles’ own art-making and intellectual processes. More than just an alphabetical index of her twelve series, this book is both a repository for the plethora of accrued information and a chronicle of her life and work. The A-Z section, written in both first and third person, consists of Abeles’ own prose supported by text from other artists, scholars, and experts. The publication’s design resembles early 1960s encyclopedias with colorful graphics, maps, and Kodachromes. *Encyclopædia Persona* is a nostalgic tribute to the illustrated books that one could browse through to indulge in the simple pleasure of reading and enhancing knowledge.

Encyclopedias can be authoritative and arcane indices of knowledge, but this book attempts a more personal, pluralistic presentation on a range of Abeles’ interests. Her modesty and sense of irony prevent her from using an authoritarian voice on any of the subjects she investigates. Instead, she plays with the pre-conceived idea of an encyclopedia’s absolute authority by creating entries that function as meta-histories of her subjects. Abeles freely embellishes each entry and compares this process to the art of storytelling. While she sincerely wants people to understand her ideas and her work, parts of the book mimic and mock the didacticism of an encyclopedia.

Abeles’ fascination with authoritative texts surfaces in her individual works. *First Fork*, one of her *Fact Fiction Boxes* (1983-86), contains a “fork” painted on a spoon and a definition from the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Juxtaposing this altered utensil with a false definition, she satirizes the notions of lexical description, the constructions of history, and the myth of originality. For her *Dead Sea Scrolls* (1984-88), she combined “scroll fragments,” photographs, and legal texts to reveal the multi-layered story of the sacred scriptures’ discovery. In one of her *Biographical Portraits* (1982-91), Abeles found conflicting encyclopedia entries about pioneer woman Calamity Jane, wrote the texts onto sticks, and placed them in glass bottles. Each text exists as a secret message in a bottle that either validates or refutes Jane’s assertions about her life. Abeles used volumes of the children’s reference series, the *Wonder Books*, as the frame and support for some of her *Smog Collectors* (1991-92), objects with images created through the accumulation of particular matter on their surfaces. The image of a heart rendered in smog on the cover of *Great Engineers and Engineering* illustrates the dichotomy between technological innovation and the preservation of human life, contradicting the idealized narrative on progress found inside the book. In these works, Abeles questions the authority of the texts, emphasizing the failure of language or history to inform the reader. This issue of truth and fiction in Abeles’ work is discussed at length in Lucinda Barnes’ essay in the A-Z section of this book. (See Barnes, Lucinda).
**Persona: Resounding Through the Mask.** *Persona*, a Latin word for the mask worn by actors in Greco-Roman theater, derives from *personare*, meaning to "sound through, or to resound." It referred specifically to the way actors projected their voices to speak through a character in the arena, an important social function in ancient cultures. As time progressed, Roman law came to define *persona* as an individual, a citizen with rights and duties, and only later did it connote a "person."

These multiple connotations of *persona* are all visible in Abeles' work. Since her work is frequently narrative, she relies upon the use of different masks and characters to tell her stories. An avid reader of biographies since her childhood and a psychology minor in college, she is interested in human personality and the various personae we embrace. Abeles assumes the more public or social role of the ancient actor, speaking through specific personalities or an implied human presence. Her work usually revolves around the notion of a person and often focuses on human strengths and struggles.

Beginning in 1980, Abeles lived and worked in downtown Los Angeles on Broadway near the garment district and Skid Row. In her *Kimonos* (1979-82) and *Shrines* (1979-83), she used these forms to house personae and to comment on social issues. Her kimono *Sweatshop Down the Hall and Sometimes It's Me* refers to the poor labor conditions of garment workers in her own loft building, while *Imperial Shoeshine* is a shrine to her personal relationship with the owners of a Broadway shoeshine booth whose business closed as the result of urban gentrification.

Specific individuals inspired Abeles' *Biographical Portraits*, ranging from a homeless man she met on her street to people known for their impact on civil rights and political history, like Rosa Parks or Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. Initially, Abeles made a single work for each biographical portrait; later she devoted entire series to individuals such as her treatise on the celebrated young visionary from Lourdes, *The Image of St. Bernadette* (1987), and *Long Exposures: An Artist in her Later Years* (1991-92), a feminist portrait of her friend Florence Rosen. Whether deriving from personal acquaintance or copious research, Abeles creates uncannily perceptive portraits of people from every walk of life.

*Habeas Corpus* (1991-93), her most recent series, refers to the Roman notion of the person as citizen, focusing on the rights and representations of individuals in today's society. Abeles raises questions about how we are repeatedly required to prove our personal identities; how individuals must fight to defend their liberties and supposedly inalienable rights; how the media represents our national character and constructs our collective identity; and how our government manipulates global politics.

Even when Abeles does not allude to a specific personality, her work rarely excludes the notion of a person or human presence. Her sensitivity towards individuals in the early work has broadened to a concern for specific issues of the human condition in her recent work. Ultimately, at the heart of her oeuvre are people, the cast of characters that she has encountered over the past fifteen years.

**Abeles' Interest in Other Artists and Writers.** Although Kim Abeles' interests include both modern and contemporary art and artists, she does not align herself with any one group, school, or label. Because she uses many materials and strategies to balance form with content, her artistic production is not easy to codify. A closer look at her specific interests in other artists and writers reveals much about the art she produces and how it has changed during the past two decades.

**Dada and Duchamp.** Abeles' strong interest in the conceptual and the ironic can be traced back to dada. Her work pays homage to the dada concept of the *objet trouvé*, the appropriated, mass-produced, quotidian object that is assigned high art status by the artist. Abeles favors Duchamp's "assisted readymade," something that is not just chosen, but altered or transformed by the artist, since she often fabricates her own found objects, preferring the hand-made and simulated to the manufactured and mass-produced.

Abeles' group of sculptures, which she calls "contraptions," recall the machine-age aesthetics and "mechanomorphic" works of Duchamp and fellow dadaists Man Ray and Francis Picabia. Some of her contraptions have cranks, gears, or other mechanized parts that conflate the body and the machine. Sculptures such as *Experiment to Identify Change or Pentipede*, designed to measure Abeles' specific actions within a set system, are contraptions that consist of both the measuring device and the data they document.

Abeles refers more explicitly to Duchamp appropriating his formal structures to reveal concepts about the function and meaning of objects and art. His readymade Bicycle Wheel (1913), is a recurring motif in several of her works (See DUCHAMP'S BICYCLE). The *Box In A Valise*, his 1941 "portable museum" with miniature reproductions of his work symbolizes his relocation from Nazi-occupied Paris to New York, bears similarities to Abeles' *Traveling Sales*, a leather
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suitcase filled with religious paraphernalia related to St. Bernadette. Both the *Box In A Valise* and *Traveling Sales* reveal issues of commodification, mass production, celebrated identity, and veneration, equally applicable to the worlds of art and religion.

**Assemblage and Sculpture.**

Art historians often discuss Abeles’ work within the context of West Coast assemblage, and she has shown in several assemblage survey exhibitions. Technically, her work is composed of found materials or hand-made objects assembled together. The synthetic, free-associative nature of assemblage allows her to combine myriad source materials to construct her narratives. Like other assemblagists, she creates a dialectic between artifice and reality; art and non-art; high and low; and she shares their sensibility for using multiple layers to create a form of visual poetry.

Abeles, however, is not seduced by the beauty of objects in favor of content, and she does not consider herself to be a formalist. She feels that her conceptual and systematic process, the socio-political nature of her work, and her age differentiate her art from that of many other assemblage artists. Her work is less related to Los Angeles’ first generation of assemblagists than to a second generation of artists who favor more conceptual and narrative forms of assemblage.

Edward Kienholz’s *State Mental Hospital* (1964–66), however, did make a tremendous impact on Abeles when she discovered it as an undergraduate painting major. This is not surprising, since Kienholz’s critique of state mental institutions’ use of drugs, lobotomies, and other inhumane practices to control patients, is far more political than the work of any other first generation Los Angeles assemblagists and is more akin to Abeles’ own subjects.

More compelling for Abeles than the predominantly male Los Angeles assemblage artists were two New York sculptors, Louise Nevelson and Eva Hesse. Nevelson interested Abeles for her process of assemblage castaway furniture parts in boxes stacked in tight grids to restore their beauty and to create new, unified wall environments. Eva Hesse provided even greater inspiration for Abeles with her meticulously drawn and sculpted compositions of circular forms from 1966-68. Abeles saw these works as important meditations on systems art and minimalism, and as precursors to Hesse’s later serial sculptures, in which she combined organic fabricated forms into sequences that began to function as installations.

**Feminist Performance and Photography.** As the women’s movement accelerated, Abeles became aware of feminist performance and intermedia work. She recalls Eleanor Antin’s *100 Boots* (1971–73), a photographic postcard series documenting a long line of rubber boots placed in locations ranging from California to New York. She liked the repetition of simple objects that take on new meanings in each different site, as the disembodied boots imply the presence of absent marchers. While Antin’s performances of historical women and female stereotypes are more theatrical than Abeles’ visual evocations of different personae, the two artists share an ability to project the character and nuances of human personalities.

Performance artist Laurie Anderson first appealed to Abeles for her Duchampian attitude toward objects. She especially liked Anderson’s early altered violins, simple objects outfitted with audio equipment to change their function and sound. In later performances, Anderson has used digital voice synthesizers to tell stories about language, media, gender, and other cultural issues that are close to Abeles’ own concerns.

For artists like Antin and Anderson, the photographic or video documentation of their performances has become their art. Neither a performance artist nor a photographer per se, beginning in 1979 Abeles made an ongoing series of photographic self-portraits to document temporal actions that underscore the function of the camera. *Experiment for Myself As Other* documents Abeles using kiln tongs and other heavy implements to strike the shutter release. In *Our Position, Always Reciprocal* she strapped a camera to different parts of her body (over her face, around her waist, and around her ankle) to express the voyeuristic nature of the camera and to refer to the subject/object relations of spectatorship. In *Sisypho* Abeles wears a gas mask and hangs tools (drills, saws, a glue gun, etc.) on her body, reversing the concept of anthropomorphism by becoming a “live” contraption. In these feminist self-portraits, Abeles performs actions, uses objects, and assumes vantage points that are culturally inscribed as “masculine.”

At the time she began these photographic self-portraits, Abeles read Susan Sontag’s seminal book, *On Photography.* Since her work is preoccupied with documentation and questioning the authority of text, she was interested in the way that Sontag dismissed the idea that the photograph is a reliable document or an agent of absolute verisimilitude. Moreover, she was intrigued by Sontag’s insistence that only when
we begin to doubt the veracity of photography, can we truly consider it as an art form or as medium. This was an important idea for Abeles, since she uses photographs not just as documentation, but as a material that she alters, tears, fragments and presents out of context.

Sontag’s book may have also influenced other works where Abeles makes specific references to the processes of photography. Her Experiment to Identify Change functions like a large photo-booth and print rack that displays the results of a specific daily photographic ritual. Long Exposures (An Artist in Her Later Years) (1991-92), uses a darkroom as a metaphor for self-image during the process of aging.12

Language And Systems. Abeles cites writer Gertrude Stein as a strong influence on her work since the early 1980s. She found inspiration in the writer’s romantic, yet idiosyncratic, prose style of attenuated sentences built from cubist layers. Stein’s amusing word repetitions provided impetus for some of Abeles own rambling titles: She Said I Found This Sparrow and Thought of You I Said or The Celibacy and Practicality of Mother Ann/Speak In Tongues and Import Oysters. Abeles also admired Stein’s imagination and her independence to write with her own set of rules. In spite of its grammatical incongruities, she liked the way Stein gives nonsensical language new meaning.

Stein provided a model for Abeles to strike a balance between the didactic and the poetic as she synthesizes visual and written text to create multiple layers and readings. In the syntax of her own language, every object or artifact functions like a word; each individual work becomes a complete sentence; and every series elucidates the full narrative on her subject. Abeles sees her small-scale objects as “footnotes” that enrich her series with encyclopedic detail.

Abeles has also created her own specific written language with her Horizonlines drawings. These pen and ink outlines of topography and structures made while riding in trains, translate rural and urban landscape and skylines into hieroglyphic graphs or charts. Like concrete poems, the Horizonlines are the direct predecessors to the series of conceptual maps and illustrations found throughout this text.

As poetic as Abeles’ process can be, it is thoroughly systematic, as she often applies specific grids, structures, or rules to a particular investigation. Counting, cataloging, and completing specific tasks abound in her work. For both Index for the Pluperfect and Collective Diary, Abeles sets up a grid of photographs to organize an inventory of specific kinds of objects and images. In some works she undertakes daily tasks or makes investigations to help her better understand nature and the environment. Ritual for Instinctual Return involved the odd daily task of washing, drying and separating carrier pigeon feet from their identification bands. Displayed in neat rows on a drying rack, the severed feet and bands signified Abeles own feelings of her separation from nature. In Observatory/Territory, she built a domed structure to examine and chart daily solar and lunar movements. Her Pilgrimage to the Wedge, a 16-1/2 mile trek from downtown to a “clear vista” at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains, was carefully measured by her Pentipede contraption and documented in Instructions for Stride Forward.

Given her propensity for specific structures and tasks, Abeles’ work is related to systems-oriented and information-based art of the late 1960s and 1970s.13 It is not as prosaic or didactic as some conceptual art, since it goes beyond text and pivots on human subjects. The conceptualists she finds most appealing are Adrian Piper and Yoko Ono, who engage in more philosophical and social documentations. Like these women, she has found a unique way to combine formal sensibility with conceptual rigor and to mediate between the personal and the political in her work.

Abeles’ Role As An Artist/Activist. Never simply a maker of objects, Abeles’ role has spanned the gamut from producer to activist. Since her youth she has been deeply involved in social and political issues affecting not only artists, but people from many communities. Long before the dubious label of “political correctness” entered our vocabulary, Abeles proved her personal commitment as an activist who applies her artistic abilities to specific social concerns. In her typically comprehensive manner, she rarely makes a cursory work, but delves into a subject for an extended length of time.

For ten years Abeles has tackled environmental issues, particularly air pollution. Motivated by her personal dilemma of living downtown next to a factory that produces toxic emissions, she often sets up systems to sample the smog and measure the air “quality” in Los Angeles. The 274 photographs included in Mountain Wedge document the obscured view of the mountains from her studio, while Sixty Days of Los Angeles Sky Patch (View to the East) compares daily samples of the sky’s color, ranging from white to blue to brown, during a two-month period. Abeles’ public art project for the California Bureau of Automotive Repair consists of large-scale Smog Collector Sculptures fabricated from recycled vehicle exhaust systems. Placed in Southern California locations, these sculptures gather smog to raise issues and pose solutions to the pollution problem. On each piece, bilingual panels with automobile driving and maintenance tips, smog facts, and Rideshare program information promote environmental awareness, helping the public combat the pollution that is a visible part of each sculpture.
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For five years Abeles has focused attention on the world-wide AIDS pandemic. Her project Collective Diary: Dedicated to People With AIDS, first presented in 1989, incorporates the writings, memorabilia, and photographs of People With AIDS (PWAs). A truly compassionate representation of AIDS, this project gave PWAs a chance to validate and dignify their lives as it showed the audience aspects of our common human existence. Originally part of the exhibition Living in the Age of AIDS, curated by Anne Ayres at the

Oris Parsons Gallery, Abeles subsequently helped to organize its national tour and public education program. Abeles' recent HIV Tarot, a bilingual educational brochure about AIDS, was funded by Los Angeles' Cultural Affairs Department and widely circulated through public venues and schools. With their hand-drawn graphics, vibrant colors and explanatory texts, the appealing tarot images on each card attract the attention of young people, reminding them not to tempt fate, but to become aware of safer sex practices and AIDS prevention.

In 1990 Abeles co-ordinated World News, an exhibition in which 60 artists and writers spontaneously responded to the outbreak of the Persian Gulf War. Far from the biased, hyperbolic broadcasting of CNN, this project empowered artists to respond to a catastrophic global issue. In 1992 also Abeles co-curated Smog: A Matter of Life and Breath, with the staff of the California Museum of Photography, continuing her efforts to inform the public about air pollution.

At the core of all her diverse activities is Abeles’ goal to educate her audience and the public. In each situation she sees herself and her work as a conduit for obtaining information that she feels should be public, rather than privileged. It is Abeles' indefatigable energy that forces her to pursue difficult issues, and to try to educate her community and the general public.

Completing the Circle of Learning. Abeles attempts to complete the classical ‘circle of learning’ and fulfill Diderot’s directive by disseminating and sharing information with others. Diderot’s idealistic desire and rationalist pursuits may seem incongruous in today’s postmodern world in which contemporary discourse and philosophies instruct us to mistrust the pursuit of authoritative knowledge, to doubt the meaning of the text, and to question the very notion of humanism.

Abeles tries to grapple with the overwhelming challenges facing our contemporary culture, wading through the inundation of information, profuse production, and sensory overload in our late capitalist society in order to glean the truth. She is committed to the arduous task of trying to make the incomprehensible comprehensible for as many people as possible. Like the encyclopedia, Abeles’ work is didactic and instructive; it is however, aesthetic and poetic, always grounded in persona, in people and in humanity. She weaves many threads through her work, returning again and again to her subjects with an optimism and sense of humanism that is a rare quality in anyone living on the edge of the millennium.
ABELES, A bel əz, KIM (1952–    ), born Kim Victoria Wright in Richmond Heights, Missouri to Frances Elizabeth (Sander) (Wright) (Schoemaker) Hoffman and Burton Noel Wright. Her mother, a singer in the St. Louis Municipal Opera, later becomes a visual artist. Her father (1919-1990) worked as a sales manager in the firebrick industry in St. Louis, Missouri. Her only sibling, Jill Wright, is an accomplished illustrator. Following her mother’s second marriage in 1960, she is raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She expresses a strong sense of art-making early in life. In her early teens, she travels to conferences on civil issues as a representative for the local YWCA.

Chronology. 1969. Selected as American Field Service student to Utsunomiya, Japan. Abeles meets Buddhist priest, Kōsai Kobari, who introduces her to traditional Japanese arts: calligraphy, woodcut printing, ceramics, and kimono-making.


Map based on longitudes of the artist’s travels.
ABELES, KIM

1978. Accepted into graduate program at California Institute for the Arts and sets up studio there for the summer. Receives numerous grants from UC Irvine and enrolls in MFA program. Manages living quarters for a revolving group of artists, including Alan Saret and writer Michael Krekorian. While at UC Irvine, receives critical support from writer and filmmaker Alan Sondheim and art historian Melinda Wortz.

1979. Coordinates, with artist Sandra Rowe, a three-day symposium at UC Irvine on Symbolization involving workshops, performances, lectures, and panels (including Jacki Apple, David Antin, Doni Silver and Suzanne Lacy). Selected as Honoraria Program Recipient in Recognition of Outstanding Student Research and Creative Achievement at UC Irvine for Impressions, an installation composed of 1,046 handmade cobblestones and a limited edition book. Travels to Europe.

Survival, a drawing published in Seventeen, was based on an animated film made by Abeles in 1970.

Detail of Tabula Rasa. 1977. Acrylic on canvas, 34' x 28'. Private Collection. During the mid-1970s, Abeles concentrated on trompe l'oeil paintings with personal/psychological themes.
Intraconnections. 1979. Acrylic on canvas, dyed cheesecloth, wood, 50" x 46" x 48". Selection from Abeles' MFA exhibition at UC Irvine in 1980.

1980. Receives MFA from UC Irvine with her thesis on Shingon Buddhism and a series of kimonos related to its philosophy. Sets up a studio in downtown Los Angeles with artist Doni Silver. Adjacent sweatshops and the harsh streetlife provoke her to create artworks about "real" life rather than ethereal themes. Earns a living for three years answering "Miss Lonelyhearts" letters. Studio-mates during various years include sculptor George Stone, painters Mary Werbelow, Lauren Richardson, and Sylvia Tidwell, and writer Roberta Ostroff. Performs as flying figure in George Stone's filmic installation, Capacitor.

Artist Lauren Richardson, who shared the Broadway studio in downtown L.A. with Abeles in 1986, is seen working on her painting, Giant.

George Stone, Capacitor. 1980–81. Film-based installation, 35' x 35'. Installation view, Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles. Abeles performs as the flying figure.

Detail of Inverted Ritual. 1982. Mixed media, 70' x 50' x 19'. Abeles' move to downtown L.A. in 1980 influenced her to create artworks about sweatshops and labor.
ABELES, KIM

1981. Primary introduction into Los Angeles art-scene through the exhibition Southern California Artists at the Los Angeles Institute for Contemporary Art, curated by Barbara Haskell of the Whitney Museum.

1982. Creates shrine-like sculptures that focus on social issues. Solo exhibition of Abeles’ sculpture at the Bridge Gallery, Los Angeles City Hall, sponsored in part by the Office of the Mayor and Departments of General Services and Cultural Affairs.

1983. Begins series of Fact Fiction Boxes, primarily installed in libraries, which challenges notions of knowledge and academic reality.


1986. Travels to Germany and stays with artists Margarete Fidel and Achim Pahle, whom she met through George Rickey and begins Horizon Race series while there. Active member of Artists Resource Center (ARC), founded by Sheila Pinkel, which creates posters and banners for activities such as Big Mountain Support Group and U.S. Out of Central America rallies. Teaches at Claremont Graduate School (also in 1987, 90, 91).

1987. Travels to Europe with artist Deborah Small and historian Bill Weeks. Stays in Yugoslavia with gallery owner Annna Smith. Travels to Lourdes and leaves St. Bernadette Souvenir Cards in telephone booths. A Mile a Minute (LA to Del Mar as Seen from a Moving Train) purchased under the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the Hassan and Speicher Purchase Funds. Creates two installations, The Image of St. Bernadette and Pilgrimage to the Wedge. Creates first Smog Collector, even though she does not develop the series until 1990. Creates Horizon Block for the traffic island at the intersection of Santa Monica Boulevard and La Cienega for the six-month exhibition Art on the Island sponsored by the City of West Hollywood and organized by Vicki Shipkowitz and Ian Tanza. Marries Russell Moore.

Counting Time in the Seven Day Work Week/...The Hero is Conscious. 1982. Woven garment hanger, acrylic on shirts, wood, metal, 72" x 50" x 42". Collection of the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, Los Angeles.

Sculptor George Rickey working in his upstate New York Workshop. He founded the Hand Hollow artist's retreat at the Workshop.

Achim Pahle

Artists at Hand Hollow Foundation in 1984 standing with a sculpture by Achim Pahle (left to right, Ruth Lerman, Pahle, Nancy Hammer, Loretta Dunkelman, and Abeles).
Deborah Small. Detail of 1492. 1986. Mixed media, 15" x 19" x 2" (each panel). Abeles and Small have shared a close friendship since meeting at UC Irvine in 1978.

Margarete Fidel and Abeles. Abeles met Fidel at Hand Hollow Foundation, and they continued their friendship through visits in Berlin and Los Angeles.

Abeles' daughter Zoë Noel Moore at age 9 months.


1989. Participates in Living in the Age of AIDS exhibition curated by Anne Ayres with performances and programs organized by Francy Balcomb at the Art Gallery of the Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design (now Otis School of Art and Design). Begins touring selections from the exhibition as part of a public outreach program with safer sex workshops, panel discussions, lectures, volunteers to field questions, and brochures. Begins a series of AIDS-related postcards. Exhibits in Dialogue: Prague/LA Exchange, curated by Barbara Benish and Zdenka Gabalová at the Galerie Mladych and Lidový Dům, Prague, and in the touring exhibition Object/Concept: 40 Years of California Assemblage, guest curated by Anne Ayres at the Wight Art Gallery, University of California, Los Angeles.

1991. Receives Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Grant to create the HIV/AIDS Tarot, which she distributes free to the public. Receives grant from Art Resources Transfer, Inc. Begins first variation of the installation, Long Exposures (An Artist in Her Later Years), which includes interviews and documentation of artist Florence Rosen. Commissioned by the California Bureau of Automotive Repair and Department of Consumer Affairs to create on-site Smog Collector sculptures for a campaign to inform the public about smog checks, rideshare, and anti-smog solutions. The sculptures tour forty corporations and agencies in Southern California to promote rideshare programs. The Smog Collector projects receive extensive national and international attention through electronic media and print. Coordinates, with Barbara Benish and Deborah F. Lawrence, World News, a grassroots exhibition about the Gulf War involving 60 artists and writers. With Sheila Pinkel, organizes a series of monthly lectures held at Abeles’ studio that
presents speakers to educate artists and activists about issues of racism, the environment, and labor.

1992. Receives a Clean Air Award from the South Coast Air Quality Management District for her environmental artwork. Selected from the United States for the Fotografie Biennale Rotterdam, The Netherlands curated by Bas Vroge and Frits Gierstberg. Panelist for Contemporary Artist’s Books: Creating New Access at the International LA Art Fair. Panelist for From Ego-centric to Eco-Centric: Raising Our Own and Others’ Environmental Consciousness for the Western Museums Conference. International Visitors Council of Los Angeles arranges studio visits with cultural representatives from Hungary and Korea. Guest Curator, with Senior Curator Edward W. Earle at the California Museum of Photography, Riverside, for Smog: Views of Life and Breath, an exhibition that brought together artists and scientists from the Statewide Air Pollution Research Laboratory. Selected through the Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department as artist on the design team for the Panorama City Library. Becomes member of the Board of Directors for Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions. Develops The Smog Watch for Exactly, Inc. for purposes of public access to art and activism.


PREVIOUS SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1993  Linda Moore Gallery, San Diego, CA
1993  Turner-Krull Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
1992  Laurence Miller Gallery, New York, NY
1992  Turner-Krull Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
1991  Laguna Art Museum Satellite Gallery, Costa Mesa, CA
1990  Atlanta Pavilion, Atlanta Arts Festival, Atlanta, GA
1988  Institute for Design and Experimental Art (IDEA), Sacramento, CA
1987  Drudis-Biada Art Gallery, Mount St. Mary’s College, Los Angeles, CA
1987  Karl Bornstein Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
1986  A.I.R. Gallery, New York, NY
      Guggenheim Gallery, Chapman College, Orange, CA
1985  Karl Bornstein Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
1985  University Art Gallery, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA
1983  Karl Bornstein Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
1982  Phyllis Kind Gallery, Chicago, IL
1982  Bridge Gallery, Los Angeles City Hall, Los Angeles, CA
1981  Karl Bornstein Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
1981  Municipal Art Gallery, Barnsdall Park, Los Angeles, CA
1980  Fine Arts Gallery, University of California, Irvine, CA
1979  Fine Arts Gallery, University of California, Irvine, CA


Sixty Days of Los Angeles Sky Patch (View to the East), 1993. Acrylic on paper matching sky colors each day (distorted by smog), assemblage contraption for viewing sky section, ancillary artworks utilizing color data, 10' x 10'. Installation view at Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles.