

# CORKIN GALLERY



**Barbara Astman, *Red* series, 1981**

The *Red* series represents a visual breakthrough on several levels: symbology, content and form. In this iconic series, Astman is again posed frontally. This time she is amidst a carefully balanced composition of household objects, each has been spray-painted red. As the background objects suspend midair, they assume something more than their original mundane functionality.

Barbara composes her series using a saturated quality of red, imbuing her objects with a variety of connotations ranging from playful to vaguely threatening. Using a fluorescent light, her skin acts as a cool surface. The result creates an unusual resonance that transforms the photographic medium into something that recalls a painting.

The use of text has been eliminated from these ektacolor murals. Without words one cannot be certain of their own individual interpretations of the piece. Nevertheless, the *Red* series evoked a strong response. Some viewers felt that the work had feminist overtones, while others simply enjoyed the graphics, and associations made with the colour red.