

CORKIN GALLERY



Barbara Astman, *Scenes from a Movie for One*, 1997

Scenes from a Movie for One is sensual, evocative, and passionate, incorporating a physical connection with the body, greater than in her previous autobiographical work.

Unlike Astman's earlier image-text work, this is a silent film, which boasts one of the characteristics of all film: to record and suspend something in a temporal vitrine. The finale – a chiaroscuro effect – is about the presence of the body rather than portraiture as character study. It brings to mind Eugène Carrière's turn-of-the-century paintings, as early "static" films of Andy Warhol, as well as Stanley Kubrick's blinking eye in 2001 Space Odyssey, which is at once trying to see and being blinded.

Eight self-portraits, originally SX-70 Polaroids, were re-photographed as 35-millimeter black-and-white negatives and enlarged. A Polaroid close-up box was used to shoot colour details of the prints, which converted the black and white to tones. After peeling off the Polaroid backing, Astman scratched the image surface – a reductive rather than additive process. The images were re-photographed in 35-millimeter and enlarged to 20x24 in Ektacolor prints.

The second reading of the "scenes" were multiple image works, 32 "scenes" assembled in a grid of four by eight, and produced as colour and black-and-white Xerox "scripts" as heat transfers on paper. The laborious process does not exemplify complexity for its own sake, but a gradual disintegration of any notion of the photograph-as-document. This means to this end is a way of literally and figuratively scratching out a personal correspondence from the edge.