

Meredith Rosen Gallery

Meredith Rosen Gallery is pleased to present ten photographs from Aura Rosenberg's *Who Am I? What Am I? Where Am I?* collaborative portrait series, which haven't been shown in New York for almost twenty-five years. For these particular photographs, Rosenberg worked with Christopher Williams, John Miller, Gerald Jackson, Louise Lawler, Jutta Koether, Laurie Simmons, John Baldessari, Allan McCollum, Mike Kelley, Ann Craven, and Joan Jonas. The exhibition opens on September 29th and will be on view until October 29th. A public opening reception will be held on Thursday, September 29th from 6pm until 8pm.

The series began unexpectedly in 1995 when Rosenberg brought a set of face paints to her daughter Carmen's Berlin kindergarten. Carmen's teacher, Marie Schmitz, painted the children's faces, and Rosenberg, in turn, photographed them. That summer, Rosenberg exhibited these works at Künstlerhaus Bethanien. Back in New York City, she invited artist friends to paint on children's faces. A series of three-way collaborations ensued between Rosenberg, the other artist, and the child. It entailed negotiating an identity comprised of various artistic styles, the camera, and the child's performance of self. In these encounters, Rosenberg's input functioned through these moments of exchange. Ultimately, she would work with over 80 artists on what became an ongoing project.

Rosenberg often pushes the boundary of where the artistic process begins and ends. In this case, she knew that face painting, though popular with families of young children, is considered more of an activity than artistry per se. Rosenberg implicitly asks whether face painting can be taken seriously. Her embrace of this way of making speaks to the condition that artwork never comes from a vacuum and is often supported by a network of care. *Who Am I? What Am I? Where Am I?* also reminds us that becoming ourselves, exemplified by socialization in kindergarten, has always been an act of communion. *Who Am I? What Am I? Where Am I?* captures glimpses of becoming, when identity is pliable and discovered through a sense of play.

While *Who Am I? What Am I? Where Am I?* offered artists a chance to rediscover the kind of play at the core of making art; the series also had long-lasting ramifications for the children who took part. Lena Dunham considers the photo shoot with her mother Laurie Simmons as her "directorial debut". Rosenberg's daughter Carmen's shoot with Mike Kelley was similarly formative. Although excited about the chance to dress up, when she looked in the mirror, she was frightened to see a face she couldn't recognize. She took control of the situation by donning a pair of her mother's dark sunglasses, "Now, the power was in my hands. I could choose to remove that layer of identity whenever I wanted; I learned change can also be a source of strength."

Aura Rosenberg (b. 1949, New York, NY) received a BA from Sarah Lawrence College, completed the Whitney Independent Study Program in 1971, and received an MA from Hunter College in 1974. She currently lives and works in New York and Berlin. Rosenberg has held solo exhibitions including: "Angel of History", Bauhaus Museum, Weimar

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(2022); "The Bull, The Girl and The Siegestsäule", Efremidis, Berlin (2021); "Statues Also Fall in Love", Martos Gallery, New York, NY (2019); "Angel of History", Studio Teatr Galeria, Warsaw, Poland (2017); "Head Shots (1991-1996)", JOAN, Los Angeles, CA (2016) and "Who Am I? What Am I? Where Am I?", Meliksetian Briggs Gallery, Los Angeles (2015). Recent group exhibitions include "Up To and Including Limits: After Carolee Schneeman", Muzeum Susch, Switzerland (2019) and "Ekstase", Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Germany (2019). Rosenberg's works are included in the permanent collections of Bard College, Center for Curatorial Studies Museum, Annandale-On-Hudson, NY; Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach, FL; Boise Art Museum, Boise, ID; Cincinnati Museum of Art, Cincinnati, OH; Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art & Design, Kansas City, MO; LUMA Foundation, Arles, France and Lhoist Collection, Brussels, Belgium. Rosenberg will have her first New York survey this spring 2023 at Mishkin Gallery, Baruch College (CUNY) and Pioneer Works, accompanied by a publication.