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ARTIST'S COVER PAGE *seven skins* BY EMMANUELLE WAECKERLÉ

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BARBARA ROSENTHAL at Wilson Williams Gallery and 10 Gales Gallery, London by Jennifer Brewin

That Barbara Rosenthal is a book artist intrinsically, regardless of the media she works in, became apparent when "Existential Word Play", a partial retrospective of her text-based videos, was shown at both Wilson Williams and 10 Gales Gallery as part of *The Moving Exhibition* in London this June. Rosenthal's work in image-text, autobiographical, philosophical art were exhibited here in moving, time-based form. In this anthology of 32 shorts (1976-2010) comprising a 68-minute reel, some videos use a sequencing and arrangement of images that is grounded in print-based work, some feature excerpts from her journals, text-art cards, and artists' books, and others play with text as form, or verbalize text in speech. And at 10 Gales, she presented an interactive performance using masks and "Provocation Cards," text-cards she put in the hands of her audience as we entered the viewing room.

prints, xerox, video, audio, digital collage, artists' books, novels, short stories, essays, objects, printed clothing, button pins, display ads, billboards, placards - everything so far I think but bumper stickers. But in all, a sense of the literal and abstract nature of language, and its relationship to imagery, is a constant investigation. "Words Don't Tell Half The Story", says one of the text-art cards she handed me - wearing, I must point out, masks of herself at different ages, reproduced in smaller rondel versions both as button pins and in her book "Identity Theft Mask Book" For this artist, all forms of public, commercial, political media represent interchangeable vehicles for the public expression of private issues. Who am I, Who Are You, What's This Universe, What Is Time, What Is Space, What Is Change, Can I Depict It, Can Words Help Me Understand It?

This has been going on all her life. Barbara Rosenthal has kept a journal since age eleven, was editor of her elementary, high school and college literary-art magazines, has published dozens of artists books, articles and pamphlets, and has taught writing at The City University of New York for twenty years, besides video and photography at other universities since 1976, so it follows that text- and book-based art feature naturally in her work, both in a conceptual sense, and in the physical materials used. The relationship to her book art is continually apparent in her time-based videos and mediated performances, insofar as the images and texts on the screen are often arranged as if they were lines, pages, and sometimes chapters.



Barbara Rosenthal at 10 Gales Gallery giving Visitor Identity Theft Mask + Provocation Card

With performance as a key element in the identity-adrift-in-the-universe, grabbing-a-reed-of-language-to-stay-a-float nature of her work, Rosenthal uses the full range of publishable/reproducible media, including photography,



Barbara Rosenthal *Colors & Auras* Four Frames

The videos "How Much Does the Monkey Count" (1988), "Colours & Auras" (1984), and "Dead Heat" (2009), all