Rendering Her Self:
Identity in the Work of Lee Lozano

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Abstract
Lee Lozano was a prominent conceptual artist in New York during the 1960s and early 1970s. After dropping out of the art world, she fell into obscurity. Since 1998, there has been renewed interest in her work.

Lozano struggled with her gender and artistic identity. Through her work, Lozano challenged traditional constructions of gender and created an androgynous persona for herself. She also used her art to challenge the limits of her body as an art-making machine. This thesis highlights three major parts of her oeuvre that demonstrate how her works defined her gender and artistic identity.

Early in her career, Lozano created many images of the phallus, as evidenced in her drawings of airplanes. She used machine aesthetics to undermine gender binaries and define androgyny. Her interest in machine aesthetics continued until the end of her career. She also made images that incorporated text, anticipating her later conceptual language pieces. The *Wave Series* from the late sixties and early seventies was a conceptual painting series based on the science of wavelengths. Lozano proscribed for herself a rigorous method of production that turned her body into an art-making machine and tested the limits of her endurance. Also during the late sixties and early seventies, Lozano created performance pieces. They were known as language pieces as well, since Lozano recorded the pieces in writing. For some of these pieces, Lozano enacted extreme behaviors; for others, she performed mundane tasks. In the end, her life fused with her art. This brought out latent mental instability that Lozano had struggled with much of her adult life. As a result of this instability and a growing disenchantment with the art world, Lozano dropped out of the art world.

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Introduction

This thesis traces the development of Lozano's work from drawings to language pieces in order to demonstrate how her mental instability was revealed in her art and how she was a symptom of the moment of New York in the 1960s. These symptoms manifested themselves in Lozano's battle with her identity as a woman and an artist. Lozano rendered her body in her quest to redefine her sexual and social identity, putting herself through a transformative artistic process. I deliberately chose the word "render" to describe what Lozano went through because the word has multiple meanings that relate to her work. "Render" carries the connotation of an industrial process of transformation and an artistic representation or performance.[1] Lozano used her art to define her androgynous persona. Similar to the rendering of fat to remove impurities in order to create soap, Lozano thus shed her femininity and attained a kind of purity in becoming more masculine. Representations of the body allowed her to question gender binaries. The process brought her to a place closer to the masculine where she could deny her femininity. She situated her gender identity in androgyny because it gave her the freedom denied many women artists.

The following chapters examine how Lozano rendered her identity via art. The first chapter explores previous literature on Lozano and set out the theoretical framework for my readings of her work. The second chapter deals with Lozano's early paintings and drawings. Lozano came back to representations of the airplane often and each time depicted it differently. Her images of airplanes in particular have never before been critically analyzed. This interest in airplanes points to the military aggression taking place during the early sixties. The airplane is also a highly sexualized symbol and represents social mobility. I also look at how Lozano combines text and image in ways that foreshadow later conceptual works. Both the airplanes and

[1] These are just two meanings provided by Merriam-Webster dictionary online: www.m-w.com

images with text share a preoccupation with the phallus. Using Freudian analysis, I argue that the repetition of phallic shapes at a time when Lozano lacked a strong male influence in her life demonstrates her attempt to make up for that lack and her own physical lack of a penis. The phallus appears often, so much so that it points to an obsession. These early works mark the beginning of her exploration of sexual identity.

Chapter three looks at Lozano's *Wave Series*, executed during the late sixties. Lozano used the series to explore wavelength phenomena. She had studied science at the University of Chicago from 1948 to 1952 and continued to learn about physics and astronomy after finishing college. Her interest in science came at a time when the United States was emphasizing the importance of math and science in education. Lozano's particular interest in astronomy and astrology coincided with the space race between the US and Russia. Reflecting the zeitgeist of the late sixties, Lozano created a scientific formula to determine the parameters of the *Wave Series*. She wanted to show the change in wavelengths from low to high frequency and thus from matter to energy. She carefully defined the production of the series and with each painting, the process became more physically taxing. At first, the paintings with longer wavelengths took a matter of hours, but by the final painting in the series with the shortest wavelengths, she was spending days on each canvas. This intense physical process tested the limits of her endurance, pushing her own body from matter towards energy at the same time she explored those properties in the painting of wavelengths. The series required Lozano to use her body like a machine in order to produce each painting. I argue that the physical demands of the *Wave Series* were an important part of the artistic process because Lozano used the series to efface her artistic identity.

In the final chapter, I turn to Lozano's conceptual language pieces, for which she is most famous. These pieces explored both her gender and artistic identity in the late sixties and early seventies, even as she continued to paint. Recorded in her sketchbook-diaries, the language pieces were forms of institutional and social critique. She espoused the intent of conceptual art as defined by Sol LeWitt to create works that defied the commodification of the art object. Lozano was critical of the dealer/gallery system that promoted and sold artists' works. However, critique seemed to have been a side effect of the language pieces, not their main intent. The language pieces focused on the stuff of Lozano's life and her body was the site of art making. She made nearly every daily task such as drug use, interactions with friends, and masturbation part of her art. These pieces are performances in many ways, but they have yet to be considered as such. Rather, scholars have focused on the feminist character of some of these pieces, overlooking how they relate to performance and body art. This kind of strict control over her actions suggests her increasing mental instability. As her mind deteriorated, Lozano attempted to bring order to her surroundings but she would not be successful. The element of critique inherent in her work slowly divorced her from the world around her. After years of intense participation in the art world of New York, she systematically began to disengage from her artistic identity until she reached the ultimate withdrawal in *Drop Out Piece.* She saw the direction her work had taken as a natural progression. In these final years in New York, Lozano also effaced her femininity until she denied the female sex all together in *Boycott Women*, refusing to speak to or even acknowledge other women.

I sought to understand Lozano's work within these terms. I did not want to tame her work or force her into compliance with the canon of contemporary art, but rather represented her in a way that is consistent with her beliefs. I wanted to give a balanced representation of her life and

work. I avoided as much as possible holding Lozano up as a troubled and tortured genius. Her mental state certainly played a role in her very personal work and should be considered in context. Too often scholars spoke of her as someone separate and differentiated from other Conceptual artists. Although she sought to distance herself from others and had her own unique process, Lozano continued to follow art world conventions while she lived in New York. Her work resonates with that of other artists, both male and female, of her time. Through her art, Lozano sought to define her gender and artistic identity. She did not see herself as fitting into traditional constructions of woman and this fed into her interpretation of what an artist was.

Chapter One

Lozano in Context:
Identity, Literature and Theory

This is it. This is me doin' my thin(g): the lonely/happy only child bit self-contained, self-entertaining, self-satisfying, living in a pain-free world of aesthetic delights. Lonely aesthete.
Lee Lozano, 1970

Lee Lozano worked professionally as an artist for just over ten years. The art she produced was highly personal for a time when the artist's hand was being removed from the creative process. She created a range of works during the sixties and early seventies that dealt with the social, political and artistic challenges of the time. When she decided to remove herself from the art world, Lozano was not forgotten. She had become a rather obscure figure, but within the last decade, those long familiar with her work have begun to bring her once again to the fore. This thesis seeks to remedy the paucity of scholarship about Lee Lozano by looking at three major periods in her career: early drawings, painting series, and conceptual performances. Through the lens of psychoanalysis, I will explore Lozano's obsession with the mechanization of the body, which in her art is used to efface her artistic and gendered identity.

Lozano's struggle with identity began as a teenager. Her parents named her Lenore Knaster, but by 1945, she began to call herself Lee. The adoption of this androgynous nickname coincided with her body being reduced to waif-like proportions by the thyroid medications her doctor had prescribed to help her lose weight. Lozano continued to have a thin boyish body as an adult. She altered her identity again in 1956 when she married Adrian Lozano, whom she had met while working at the Container Corporation of America in Chicago. Adrian was a Mexican-American artist and one of the top designers at Container Corp. By taking his name, she obliterated her nominal Jewish heritage. She also altered her body. Lee went through a period in the early to mid fifties where she stopped eating and become dangerously thin to the point that

she stopped menstruating. To help with these problems, she underwent psychoanalysis for two years beginning in 1957.

It was also during her marriage that Lozano would have felt the nascent struggle with her artistic identity as she searched for her personal style. In 1961, she completed her education at the Art Institute of Chicago, and she and Adrian went on a trip to Europe to mark the event. Upon returning to the states, Lozano fulfilled a promise she had made to herself when she married: that she would move to New York. Adrian did not want to leave Chicago so the couple divorced. Lee encountered a new artistic milieu in New York's avant-garde and she quickly fell in with artists that practiced minimalism and conceptualism. She worked in different mediums yet the same themes can be found throughout her oeuvre.

People around Lee recognized that she was mentally unstable. Symptoms of her mental state often found expression in her art. She was also very much attuned to the time in which she lived. Her art reflected political and social concerns of the sixties and early seventies. Given the uncertainty of her mind and the world in which she lived, many of Lozano's pieces were efforts to control her life. These efforts were undermined by her heavy drug and alcohol use. The role of wife and mother, which would have offered some stability, was not one that she wanted for herself. Lozano looked to art instead. Over the years, she increasingly used her art as a means to give order to her life, regimenting the quotidian activities that filled her days.[2]

Literature Review

At the end of her life, Lozano experienced a resurgence of interest in her work. This resurgence of interest was largely precipitated by the major exhibition of her work in 1998 hosted by the Wadsworth Atheneum as well as by her death the following year. There have been

[2] For a more in-depth biography, see Appendix.

three retrospective exhibitions of her career: one at P.S. 1 at the Museum of Modern Art, and two in Europe, at Kunsthalle Basel and Kunsthalle Vienna respectively. 2006 saw an explosion of scholarship: exhibition catalogs from the two European retrospectives, a book of her drawings and writings, and an article about her in *Artforum*. Her work was showcased in an exhibition on artist's sketchbooks at the Fogg Art Museum that year as well.[3] Writing on Lozano emphasized her rediscovery by the art world and her erratic individuality almost to the point of exoticizing her. Polite allusions were made to possible mental health problems, but since no formal diagnosis was ever made, this was overlooked in order to focus on the superficial eccentricities of her work.

The reviews of Lozano's work that exist were largely perfunctory. Most of the reviews were written during her rediscovery in the 1990s, with only a few available from 1960s and 1970s.[4] The reviews often offered only a brief biography and a description of her work. Several articles, mostly from newspapers written in conjunction with exhibitions, discussed Lozano's career and highlight specific works. However, these articles often distorted the chronology of her works, making it seem that she produced the drawings and the language pieces at the same time. These articles also tended to make Lozano out as some kind of artist-freak because of her eccentricities. Her radical behavior was emphasized over the content of her work. Among the earliest writings on Lozano was a 1968 exhibition catalog for a group show at the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center, titled *Gordan, Lozano, Ryman, Stanley.* A slim book, with only a page of biographical introduction about Lozano, illustrated some of her minimalist paintings. It offered no critical analysis of the paintings.

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[3] No catalog exists for the Fogg Art Museum exhibition, but a website was developed: http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/exhibitions/fogg/underCover.html

[4] The best collection of these articles is in the press kit on Lozano for Hauser and Wirth.

It was not until the last phase of her life that scholars began to consider her work in depth. The renewed interest in her work was due to the efforts of her dealer, Jaap van Liere, and Sol LeWitt, who remained in contact with Lozano after she moved to Dallas. The exhibition of her *Wave Series* at the Wadsworth Atheneum in 1998 was made possible by their support. The Wadsworth exhibition displayed several drawings and language pieces, but most significantly, it was the first time that Lozano's *Wave* paintings were displayed according to her specifications.[5] Although no catalog was produced for the Wadsworth exhibition, James Rondeau provided an essay for the pamphlet accompanying the exhibition. Rondeau divided his essay into two parts. The first dealt with the *Wave* series and its production process. The second part examined how this process related to the language pieces Lozano made.

In 2006, Europe saw two retrospective exhibitions of Lozano's work and each took a different approach. Adam Szymzyk was the curator for *Lee Lozano: Win First Don't Last Win Last Don't Care* at the Kunsthalle in Basel. The exhibition was extensive and included examples from the different modes that Lozano worked in: drawing, painting, language. This catalog brought together a collection of original writings on Lozano, some of which were rare or never before published. The overall framework of the exhibition was the historical importance of Lozano in her moment of the sixties in New York. Szymzyk sought to illuminate Lozano's career, her relationship to the avant-garde and to justify her place within the art historical canon. Todd Alsen offered an overview of Lozano's career. Anecdotes about exhibitions, such as the one at the Art Institute of Chicago attended by Queen Elizabeth II, and her connections with other artists in New York place Lozano within the context of a thriving art world. Alsen examined the sexual aspects in her oeuvre as well. He saw in her early drawings an odd mixture of deeply erotic and lustful imagery with elements of the hilarious and the disturbing.

[5] These specifications will be discussed in chapter three.

Jill Johnson had written a review of the show that was printed for the first time in the *Win Last* catalog. In 1965, Lozano was supposed to have an exhibition of her *Tool Paintings* at the Green Gallery. However, the show had to be cancelled when the gallery closed suddenly. Typical of the reviews of Lozano's work from this time, Johnson praised her individualistic art while commenting on the sensuality of the paintings of anthropomorphic tools. She looked at the elements of compositions, space, form and color in the *Tool Paintings*. The sensuality of Lozano's work was addressed in another rare text by Carl Andre that originally appeared in the 1983 *Abstract Artists.* Andre fondly recalled his and Lozano's mutual friendship with Hollis Frampton, their shared readership of *Scientific American*, and their arguments about the materiality of her paintings. He conceded, "Now I see her pictures were so good, I could not stand them."[6] The inclusion of these writings in the catalog demonstrated that Lozano was in active dialogue with other artists and reacting to the theories of the minimalism and conceptualism.

A statement from Lee Lozano about the *Wave Series* also appeared in the catalog for *Win First Don't Last*. The statement was published originally in a 1983 interview published in *Art in America*. Lozano had not seen the *Wave Series* since its first showing at the Whitney in 1970. She explained how the waves related to the electromagnetic spectrum. Starting in the range of infrared with large waves with few oscillations, she attempted to represent an infinite energy. She talked briefly about the physical process of painting the series, the long hours of production and the amount of energy it took. In recalling the Whitney exhibition, she criticized the display, saying that the paintings were hung too high and not accessible to the viewer. In her conception of the series, Lozano had wanted the viewer to be able to get close the canvases and be able to

[6] *Win First*, 83.

see the texture in order to amplify the viewing experience. She ended the statement by discussing her color choices, arbitrary as they were.

The catalog included the article that Helen Molesworth wrote, "Tune in Turn on Drop Out" which also originally appeared in *Art Journal* and is discussed further below. Finally, the catalog had a transcript of a lecture that Lozano gave in 1970 at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax. Lozano talked freely about her views on drugs and institutions of the art world. In the lecture, she expounded on her artistic process. Dan Askevold, who invited Lozano to NSCAD, recalled her visit. He remarked that she had a unique personality. After the lecture, Lozano and several people from the class retired to the home of one of students. She conceived of this gathering as an opportunity for the students to observe her while she was under the effects of LSD. This piece did not impress Askevold.

The second European exhibition, *Seek the Extremes*, was at the Kunsthalle in Vienna and curated by Sabine Folie. This was a joint retrospective that also featured the work of Dorothy Iannone. Lozano and Iannone were not acquainted with each but produced similarly subversive art. The title of the exhibition came from a statement Lozano made in her sketchbook diaries: "Seek the extremes. That's where all the action is." Folie's exhibition sought to define a unifying theme in Lozano's diverse oeuvre. She brought a critical lens to her interpretation and drew connections between art and the psyche. Folie placed Lozano within a much wider dialogue on issues of gender. The catalog contained two original articles inspired by the works shown in the exhibition. Hans-Jürgen Hafner devoted his essay the different aspects of Lozano and her artistic development, placing her within the historical context of the sixties. He pointed out that once Lozano had achieved complete fusion of life and art by 1968/69, she became even more radical. Her changing attitudes toward the art scene made it inevitable that she would leave it. He dealt

specifically with her early drawings and their relationship to her later language pieces. He argued the drawings and the pieces have similar themes. Hafner explored the context for Lozano's career. He considered her artwork in relation to Minimalism, Pop and Conceptual art of the 1960s and demonstrated how it fit into this scene. He indicated 1968 as the year she turned to more performative works. Hafner recognized the essentially private nature of the performance pieces: "Most of her performances, or *pieces*, took place without an audience, some in the privacy of the studio, some at social events, at parties, gatherings, or openings, with witnesses so to speak, but never expressly public."[7] These performance pieces could be quite simple actions, like *Throwing Up Piece* which involved throwing copies of *Artforum* in the air, or they could be complex chains of events, as in *Real Money Piece* where the artist had a jar of money from which friends were invited to take as much money as they wanted. Hafner saw these pieces as part of a progression that led to Lozano's departure from New York. He turned again to discussion of her disappearance from the art world and her eccentric boycott of women, one of her defining actions. He pointed out that there was gradual rediscovery of her work over the years, but when in 1995 Lucy Lippard called her the major female artist of the 1960s, Lozano began to come out of obscurity. Hafner argued that looking back, Lozano's projects are incomplete and there was no way to complete them. Hence, Lozano was capable of a permanent revolt from art by creating pieces that were eternal within the studio due to their incompleteness.

Folie took a more theoretical approach in her essay for the catalog. She drew on the writings of Freud, Mary Douglas, and others to show the underlying archetypes that were present in Lozano's work. Throughout the essay, she inserted excerpts from Lozano's sketchbook-diaries in order to illuminate her points. Folie pointed to major themes that link the drawings and the

[7] In *"Seek the Extremes…" Lee Lozano,* Gerald Matt and Sabine Folie, ed. (Vienna: Verlag für Moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 2006), 14.

language pieces together. She identified the extremism of Lozano's work. For instance, Lozano produced both language pieces and abstract paintings. Folie argued that Lozano was deeply skeptical of traditional values and used this as the starting point for her artistic investigations: "Running through her entire career, which spans just ten years from 1961 to 1971, are skepticism, rejection, and destructivity as an extreme form of questioning/doubting, but also the struggle with an absolute, uncontaminated spiritual form in her final painterly endeavor, the eleven *Wave Paintings*."[8]

Folie examined the idea of the vagina-dentata/baubo in relation to Lozano's early drawings. This body of work belied the formal artistic training Lozano received. Folie placed the drawings within the tradition of caricature, likening Lozano to artists like Daumier and Hogarth. The strong sexuality of the drawings recalled for Folie the grotesque representations of female genitalia during the Middle Ages. Folie linked the drawings to representations of the vagina dentata in the form of Baubo, an ancient figure that consists only of a gaping vagina. Folie then moved on to consider the penis in Lozano's drawings. Phalluses and their penetration of forms was the focus for a number of drawings. Lozano often portrayed an androgynous human face with a penis instead of a nose, twisting and bending to penetrate the orifices of the head. Folie pointed to Mary Douglas's ideas of pollution and taboo, and drew comparisons between the body politic and the physical body. Next, Folie considered religion and spirituality as it concerned Lozano. In the drawings, Lozano appropriated Judeo-Christian imagery though she objected to organized religion.

Folie then moved on to examine Lozano's painting style. The *Tool Paintings* were representations of both pleasure and violence according to Folie. Lozano applied her views of the body as machine to the *Tool Paintings*, creating sensual anthropomorphic images, but Folie

[8] *Seek the Extremes*, 18.

argued that it was in the language pieces that Lozano explored extremes to the fullest extent. Lozano worked out her obsession with science through the *Wave Paintings.* Finally, Folie dealt with the issue of Lozano and feminism. Lozano did not embrace the feminist movement, and often criticized it. She understood that both men and women were oppressed by society. However, *Boycott Women* caused no little comment among other artists. Sol LeWitt recalled two instances when Lozano's refusal to interact with women bordered on pathology.

Helen Molesworth wrote two seminal articles on Lozano. The first was "Tune In Turn On Drop Out: The Rejection of Lee Lozano." It appeared in *Art Journal* in 2002. Molesworth identified three major periods within Lozano's work: drawings, the *Wave Paintings,* and the *Language Pieces*. She examined Lozano's rejection of women and the New York art world from a feminist perspective. She regarded the *Dialogue Piece* as arguably the most important work Lozano produced because this piece allowed her to use her art to live a highly examined and thoughtful life. Molesworth pointed out that Lozano used both performance and conceptual art practices in her work. Lozano's career also had all the signs of that of a successful artist and Molesworth situated her within the New York context of the 1960s: "she showed at Green Gallery; was reviewed in *Art News* and *Artforum*; was included in Lucy Lippard's group exhibitions; and had a modest, one-person exhibition of the Wave Paintings at the Whitney. Another indication of her art-world stature and her political leanings was her participation in the Art Workers Coalition."[9] Molesworth then moved on to consider *General Strike Piece* and *Boycott Women*. She argued that both pieces were structured on principles of rejection. As a result of having thus isolated and removed herself from the art world, Lozano fell into obscurity. *General Strike Piece* according to Molesworth was a critique of art and the artist as commodifiable entities. Molesworth considered Lozano's choice of words for *Boycott Women*

[9]. Lee Lozano: Win First Don't Last Win Last Don't Care, Adam Szymczyk ed. (Basel: Schwabe, 2006), 134.

and how her linguistic choices influenced the piece. She then examined the gender critique implicit in both pieces as simultaneous rejections of subjugated women and male power.

Molesworth's second article, *Lee Lozano*, was a review of the *Win First Don't Last Win Last Don't Care* exhibition. The article opened with a brief summary of Lozano's career, highlighting *General Strike Piece* and *Boycott Women*. Molesworth then compared *Win First Don't Last Win Last Don't Care* to the P.S. 1 exhibition, *Drawn From Life.*[10] She argued that both exhibitions overreach in their attempts to provide a broad look at Lozano's career. In Molesworth's view, since Lozano was neglected for so long, the curators of these exhibitions overcompensated by displaying a large number of works. The P.S. 1 show had about 150 of her works and *Win Last* displayed 212. This need to display an abundance of Lozano's works was understandable, but Molesworth worried that this vast display overwhelmed visitors and impaired their ability to see how Lozano's work questions the canon.

Next, Molesworth pointed to the wild sexuality of Lozano's drawings in which the human body morphed with machine. She remarked that this integration of human and machine in the drawings relates to writings of Deleuze and Guaratti, making their theories seem tame in comparison.[11] The theories Molesworth referred to came from *Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Anti-Oedipus*, in which Deleuze and Guaratti critiqued Freudian psychoanalysis and Marxism. They argued that desire was a real force not limited by imaginary fantasies. There was a productive nature of desire that creates a "desiring-machine", which was connected to and powers other psychic and social machines. The "desiring-machine" also related to Deleuze and Guaratti's conception of sexuality. Putting aside gender binaries, sexuality was defined as a

[10] I was unable to find a catalogue for this show, but there are a handful of reviews, none of which offers any particular insight into Lozano.

[11] It is unclear whether Lozano was familiar with the writings of Deleuze and Guaratti. She often listed the books she was reading in her sketch-book diaries and their names do not appear.

multi-gendered connections made by the "desiring-machine." The *Tool Paintings* also related to the human-machine drawings. Molesworth pointed to the *Tool Paintings* as an example of the influence of Carl Andre and Hollis Frampton on Lozano's painting style. Lozano became less expressive and more hard-edged as the series progressed. Molesworth argued: "it's hard to avoid seeing these works as her attempt to broker a deal between the intensely erotic passion of her art and what suddenly seems like the puritanical sublimated industriousness of much Minimalist sculpture."[12] These paintings related to Lozano's language pieces, in particular *All Verbs*. Molesworth was quick to state that Lozano's verb list appeared before Richard Serra's, and it had a much different tone. Serra made an artistic to-do list, whereas Lozano listed words about sex, violence, and speed. Molesworth conceded that it was a challenge to integrate language pieces and paintings that were made around the same time. Szymczyk gave priority to the paintings, a decision which Molesworth felt undermined the connections between the works. She ended the article with a consideration of Lozano's studio and its role in her work, as her language pieces increasingly became task-oriented activities to be performed in her studio. The *Wave Paintings* for Molesworth represented the consummation of Lozano's efforts to unite the working machine-body with the erotic agent of production.

In 1999, Robert Wilonsky wrote "The Drop Out Piece" for the obituary of Lozano in *The Dallas Observer*. The obituary went into great detail about her life, demonstrating a level of research that reflected the increased interest in Lozano at the time. Wilonsky was sympathetic to Lozano's mental illness and attempted to give a fair and balance account of her life and work. He acknowledged that it would have been all too easy to sensationalize her biography. Wilonsky ultimately failed in his task, since his overly poetic language painted Lozano as a tragic romantic

[12] Helen Molesworth, "Reviews: Lee Lozano" *Artforum* September 2006 http://www.artforum.com/inprint/id=11498 (Accessed February 5th, 2008).

artist, long tormented by personal demons, finally at peace. In his efforts to give a true representation of what Lozano was like, he interviewed her cousin, Mark Kramer, Adrian Lozano, and Jaap van Liere, her dealer beginning in the eighties. These men provided insight into Lozano's unique work and her troubled life. Wilonsky began at the end, standing at Lozano's unmarked grave, and recalled in brief her art career and the years afterwards. He was one of the few who wrote on Lozano and dealt candidly with her mental stability. Lozano was never formally diagnosed, but Wilonsky stated that friends and family recognized something was wrong. Wilonsky described her life as an only child, and Kramer's portrayal of Lozano's father as a Jewish Willy Loman shed light on her future relationship with her parents. Adrian Lozano recalled meeting Lee at the Container Corporation. They started out as merely friends since he was married at the time. He described her irresistible allure that drew men to her, but repulsed women. After his wife committed suicide, Adrian and Lee's relationship deepened, leading to their marriage in 1956. Although Adrian remembered their marriage as happy and normal, there were problems. Lee did not want a family and in fact had an abortion shortly after the marriage. Lee stayed in touch with Adrian for a few years after their divorce, but then stopped contacting him.

Wilonsky then turned to her life in New York and the successes she had in her art career, until the execution of *Drop Out Piece.* It is unclear where Lozano went after leaving New York in 1972. She did not immediately move to Dallas, as other writers have made it seem. Lozano arrived in Dallas in 1982 and moved in with her parents. She told her cousin nothing of those in-between years and van Liere had heard that she was in Europe, London or Belgium maybe, but did not know for sure. Kramer admitted to being intrigued by Lozano at first. He had never met her before she moved to Dallas. Her first words to him were: "I have relinquished my artistic

identity."[13] She then insisted on being called E. Kramer was blunt in his descriptions of her erratic, self-destructive behavior and her violence towards her parents. The last years of her life were difficult. With both her parents dead and little to no income, Lozano bounced around between hospitals and the apartments of assorted unsavory boyfriends. Van Liere, who had become her dealer in the 80s, continued to promote her name and in the 1990s, he saw the fruit of his efforts. Van Liere claimed that Lozano was happy for the success as long as she did not have to participate in the art world. Everything was left to her dealer to manage. In 1999, Lozano discovered she had cervical cancer, which had metastasized. She underwent treatment for only a few months and died later that year on October 2nd. The wealth of information about Lozano's private life in her obituary was unparalleled and of great use when examining her artwork.

I find myself closest to Hafner and Folie in my approach to Lozano and her work. Like Hafner, I seek to understand Lozano with the context of conceptual and performance art. I also recognize that she had connections other prominent artists of the late sixties and that mutual influence can be found among them. I also look to relevant theories that relate to Lozano's work, as does Folie. Given the restrictions of an exhibition catalog essay, she glosses over certain aspects of Lozano's work. I have taken the opportunity to look more closely at the psychological and gender issues behind her art as well as explore more fully how she tested the extremes of her mind and body.

Theoretical Framework

Lozano was a difficult artist to decode. The complexity of her work in her moment demanded a veritable arsenal of theoretical tools. She was marginalized for so long because of

[13] Robert Wilonsky, "The Dropout Piece" *The Dallas Observer* December 9, 1999, 5. http://www.dallasobserver.com/1999-12-09/news/the-dropout-piece/5 (Accessed February 5th, 2008)

her short career and eccentric art. The question of how now to deal with her was quite problematic. She used conceptual art strategies in her work and the pieces described in her sketch books spoke very much to performance and body art, but her work carried no explicit political or feminist message. Rather, her art stemmed from an angst-ridden curiosity about her own body and its functions. She subjected herself to activities in altered states of consciousness. Of particular interest to Lozano seemed to be her body's reaction to drugs and sex. In exploring her oeuvre, these two themes came to the fore. She was very much interested in the intersection of self and art, a common practice for artists at this time. In particular, she explored the limits of her body as an art-making machine. Social alienation also figured prominently in her work, especially in her late conceptual pieces.

In addition, there was the question of her mental instability. Most art historians and critics did not address that aspect of her life in discussions of her work. They preferred to concentrate on finding meaning in her whimsical, antagonistic, and sometimes arbitrary pieces. In the many writings on her that have appeared since her death, only the obituary by Robert Wilonsky examined both her life and her art. Given Lozano's obsession with her body and its importance to her art, art historians and critics should take her seeming mental illness into account. The point was not to continue to marginalize her because of her strange behavior, but to gain greater insight into her conceptual art pieces by trying to understand why she thought the way she did. In order to best understand her, Lozano should be understood within the same social and psychological terms that she used to define herself.

Lozano also must be considered within the context of the art world. *Dialogue Piece* and *Real Money Piece* demonstrated that Lozano actively participated in the avant-garde art world in New York. However, it would be too easy to consider her work in isolation from other

Conceptual artists since her defining *General Strike/Drop Out Piece* centered on alienating herself from the art scene and *Boycott Women* separated her from half the population. After leaving New York, Lozano became an obscure figure in the art historical canon. Scholars often express a sense of shock that Lozano could be forgotten. Her work is so provocative it seems wrong that her work should be overlooked for so long.

In order to best understand the social milieu in which Lozano worked, I looked at the writings of Lucy Lippard. Lippard, an art critic, gave first hand accounts of the New York art scene in *From the Center*, a collection of her essays on women's art. Lippard was a feminist and focused on the challenges faced by women artists in the 1960s and 1970s. She addressed issues that were reflected in Lozano's own artistic concerns in the essay, "Sexual Politics: Art Style." Lippard began the essay by describing some of the feminist groups that emerged in New York and California. Women Artists in Revolution was affiliated with the Art Workers' Coalition. Lozano made disparaging comments about the group in her sketchbook-diaries; Lippard stated that the group found little support from artists of both sexed. Lippard lamented the fact that despite the feminist movement the art world was still a sexist, male-dominated field. She gave a list of the types of discrimination women faced in the field: refusal to acknowledge the art of married women or mothers, labeling women unfeminine if they assert their value, treating women artists as sex objects, and identifying women artists in terms of the men in their lives.[14] Lippard also accused the few successful female artists of discriminating against other women. Art schools and college art departments were the worst offenders "not only of discrimination, but of the tragic feelings of inferiority so common among women artists."[15] The lack of support available to women and the lack of other women artists as mentors caused many female students

[14] Full list Lippard, "Sexual Politics: Art Style" in *From the Center* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc, 1976), 31.
[15] Lippard, *From the Center,* 33.

to abandon their art educations. Lippard observed that some changes were coming about but not at the upper echelons of the art institutions.

Lippard's vast *Six Years: The Dematerialization of Art* was a cross-reference of Conceptual art around the world first published in 1973. Lippard included seven references to Lee Lozano. This book placed Lozano within the context of Conceptual art. The artists that she knew and interacted with also appear in the book, such as Robert Morris, Carl Andre, and Dan Graham to name a few. The opening essay to the second edition, "Escape Attempts", was written in 1995. Lippard wrote the essay in order to contextualize Conceptual art and the many other new art forms that came after it. She defined two types of Conceptual art. There was conceptual art, the art based on ideas put forth by the likes of Sol LeWitt. Then there was Conceptual art, a broad movement that encompassed a whole range of untraditional media. Lippard recalled the New York art scene, the Conceptual artists she knew, both male and female, her travels to Brazil, and her political involvement with the feminist movement. Of all the women artists she discussed, Lippard singled Lozano out:

> In terms of actual Conceptual art, the major female figure in New York in the 1960s was Lee Lozano, who had shown her huge industrial/organic paintings at Dick Bellamy's cutting-edge Green Gallery. She was making extraordinary and eccentric art-as-life Conceptual works in the late sixties: a 'general strike piece,' an 'I Ching piece,' a 'dialogue piece,' a 'grass piece,' and 'infofictions.' 'Seek the extremes,' she said, 'That's where all the action is.' (When the Women's Movement began, Lozano made the equally eccentric decision never to associate with women.)"[16]

Lozano put her body at the core of her art process. Her pieces challenged the notions of gender and shared elements with performance art. Lozano used her body not only as the means of producing but also as the site for her art. This focus on herself created an intensely private aspect in Lozano's art process that can be illuminated through gender and performance theory. Amelia Jones examined the artist's body and performance in her writings. *The Artist's Body* and

[16] Lippard, Lucy, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), xii.

Body Art/Performing the Subject set out the terms of body and performance art. Jones identified seven major themes in body art in *The Artist's Body*: painting bodies, gesturing bodies, ritualistic and transgressive bodies, body boundaries, performing identity, absent bodies, and extended and prosthetic bodies. The book also included key source documents that related to the themes.

In *Body Art/Performing the Subject*, Jones emphasized that her interpretations throughout the book were based on a model of engagement. Through this model, Jones offered a reading of the works based on specific aspects of postmodern subjectivity and art historical questions while staying true to their critical discourse and historic context. This resulted in a very personal experience: "I engage with what I experience as these works in relation to contemporaneous theories of subjectivity and aesthetics; I consider my readings to be a dialogue with the bodies/selves articulated in there important practices."[17] She also provided her reasoning for preferring the term 'body art' to performance art. Body art gave the self of the artist greater importance as the site of art-making and it pointed to a specific moment in visual art when the body was used in a sexualized and gendered way. In the first chapter, Jones provided a historical and theoretical frame for the book. Chapter two examined the work of Jackson Pollock who linked the performative in modernism and postmodernism. Jones devoted a chapter each to the exploration of works by Vito Acconci and Hannah Wilke. In writing about Wilke's feminist art, Jones pointed the narcissism implicit in feminist works of art. Feminist artists focused their creativity at themselves. Lozano shared this narcissism, though not for the same ideological reasons. She did not consider herself a feminist and so her narcissism has less to do with empowerment through personal exploration and more to do with testing her physical limitations.

The writings of Freud and Lacan offered a way to understand Lozano's complex and contradictory body of work. She used repetition often in her work, in image and action. The

[17] Amelia Jones, *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 10.

constant repetition fetishized her subject matter. In particular, the phallus held a fascination for Lozano. It was not only the phallus as penis, but also the phallus as a symbol of power that concerned her. By repeating phallic imagery, Lozano sought to appropriate the symbol's power. The frequency of phallic imagery pointed to an obsession with her lack of a penis. This set her apart from other women artists of the sixties and seventies who used female identification to ennoble their sex. In describing the Oedipal Complex in girls, Freud argued that once girls have rejected the mother and adopted the father as their love-object, they also developed a dislike for other women. Lozano seemed to have adopted some of the chauvinist views promoted by Freud and projected them on to other women. Given the way that Lozano described herself in comparison to other women, it was clear that she saw herself differently. Because her behavior and attitude were more like that of a man, she could not be ridiculed as a weak-minded, petty, emotional woman. In her quest to define her identity, Lozano aligned herself with men by becoming androgynous.

I understand that psychoanalytic theory is often dismissed as a legitimate tool for understanding art, but I believe in Lozano's case it is relevant and warranted. Lozano had undergone psychoanalysis and was well-versed in its application. The writings of her sketchbook-diaries revealed her understanding and critique of the method. She claimed to have killed her superego. She also offered a rereading of the Oedipal complex through the Vietnam War, stating that fathers want to seduce and kill their sons.[18]

Judith Butler also critiqued psychoanalysis and her writings on the performance of gender were particularly relevant to Lozano's work. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* expounded on the materiality of sex and gender by looking at the constructions that underlie them. The book expanded on the ideas Butler first presented in *Gender Trouble* about

[18] Sketchbook #6, undated.

performative gender. In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler drew on the works of Plato, Aristotle, Foucault, and Luce Irigaray. The first part of the book looked at the production of "sexed morphologies through regulatory schemas."[19] The first two essays examined the normative conditions that form and frame the materiality of the body, especially as to the formation of categories of sex. The first essay, "Bodies that Matter", explored the relationship between classical ideas and contemporary theories. The second chapter reconsidered the psychoanalytic assumption of sex. She continued to critique Freud and Lacan in the third chapter in examining the political and social significance of sexuality. Butler examined the materiality of sex and gender by looking at the constructions that underlay them. She demonstrated how power relations work to form sex and materiality. My reading of Lozano is informed significantly by Butler.

Peggy Phelan's *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* related to the work of Lozano as well. Phelan approached performance from the Left in Marxist terms. The first chapter examined memory, sight, and love in terms of performance. She then went on to explore the work of specific artists. The final chapter on the ontology of performance spoke to some of the issues in Lozano's work. Phelan's discussion of representation without reproduction related to how Lozano recorded her performative pieces. Phelan stated, "Performance's only life is in the present."[20] Because the performance only exists in the moment of its creation, it could not be commodified. Lozano's language pieces defied the process of economic exchange. Since the pieces were largely private body performance, there was nothing to sell. The only documentation of the pieces was the formalized write-ups Lozano did in pen on paper.

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[19]Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routeledge, 1993), 16.
[20] *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 146.

Lozano struggled to define her identity. It was hardly my place to speak for who she wanted to be. Her work did that for her. By examining her deeply personal work, an idea of what Lozano was striving for can be found. My framework focused on a psychoanalytic reading of her pieces, as it related specifically to Lozano's experience with psychoanalysis, as well as exploring the gender dynamics at play in her art. The search for a gender and an artistic identity characterized Lozano's work. In an oeuvre of such variety, this quest remained constant.

Chapter Two

Reading the Phallus:
Airplanes and Language in the Early Works

I DECIDED THAT I DO NOT WANT TO LIVE WITH A MAN (OR ANYONE ELSE).
Lee Lozano, May 2nd, 1968.

Lee Lozano began her short professional art career in 1961 after her arrival in New York City. She acquired a studio on Grand Street, where she would live and work until 1972. She was divorced from her husband. Lozano had finished art school leaving her free to explore whatever subjects she chose. For the first time in her life, she was truly independent, with no male figure, be it father, husband or professor overseeing her. She also found herself once again refashioning her identity. Continuing on the path begun as a teenager, Lozano removed herself from customary womanly roles in order to become more androgynous. She used her art to explore and challenge assumptions about gender.

Between 1961 and 1964, her main artistic output was drawings and oil paintings, many of which were not dated. In exploring these works, it became clear that Lozano was still subject to male power even though she had freed herself from the traditional feminine and submissive roles of wife and student. The phallus was the dominant form throughout the drawings. Lozano could be both subtle and explicit in her representation of penises and the act of penetration. The phallus and its penetrating force appeared in the form of airplanes and in the captions of drawings. The fetishistic repetition of this phallic imagery in her early drawings distinguished her from other women artists of the time. She rejected her femininity in favor of androgyny and sought to recreate her gender identity. In the end, Lozano created for herself a third sex that put a masculine gender on her female body.

Lozano was compelled to repeat phallic imagery as a means of making up for the lack of an actual phallus, both in terms of her female body and in terms of her status as an unattached woman. She had always acted different from others of her sex and as her body began to feminize, she found ways to redefine her gender. Her actions related to Judith Butler's views of gender as choice: "To choose a gender is to interpret received gender norms in a way that reproduces and organizes them anew. Less a radical act of creation, gender is a tacit project to renew a cultural history in one's own corporal terms."[21] Lozano worked to make herself androgynous. She had changed her name from feminine Lenore to gender neutral Lee as a teenager. She denied her life-giving potential by refusing to have children; she dressed in dark, sexless clothes. Her waif-like body and periods of amenorrhea further removed her from the sexual binary of male and female. To her physical appearance, there was the added condition of her new status as a divorcée. She denied the womanly role of wife. Although she had male friends, and certainly lovers, during these early years in New York, they could not exert power over her and force her into a submissive role. Lozano gained entrée into the male-dominated avant-garde and had a voice in their artistic debates, as evidenced by her clashes with Carl Andre.[22] Gender roles, described and challenged by figures like Betty Friedan, dictated that a woman be a quiet and passive wife and daughter, the subordinate of husband or father. Even though traditional gender roles were beginning to shift in the sixties, these traditions still dominated.

Lozano turned to androgyny in order to bring herself closer to the dominant male power structure. She could not undo the fact of her female sex, but she did reject traditional gender

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[21] "Variations on Sex and Gender: Beauvoir, Wittig, Foucault (1987)" in *The Judith Butler Reader*, Sara Salih ed. with Judith Butler (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 26.

[22] Andre described his friendship with Lozano and their arguments over painting to *Art Abstracts* in 1983, an article that was reproduced in *Win First Don't Last.*

dynamics. This allowed her to exist in a third gender between male and female. She could largely escape oppression as a woman by refusing to see herself as a victim of her sex. This distinguished her from other women but did not equate her with men. Although this kind of behavior may seem radical, Lozano was actually conforming to Freudian models of sex: "Freud refers to the male sex organ as 'large' and 'superior,' and what he takes to be the female equivalent (i.e. the clitoris) as 'stunted' and inferior.' Not only does the male subject possess the privileged appendages, but the female subject acknowledges the importance that possession confers. Thus the value of the penis depends entirely upon the twin assumptions of female lack and envy."[23] Freud pointed to the oedipal development of girls as the time when girls learn about their lack, which caused them to not only envy men but also felt animosity towards other women. Lozano combined this Freudian literal phallic envy with a Lacanian understanding that the phallus was a sign that designates privilege: "What is at issue here is not the female subject's biological inferiority, but her symbolic exclusion or lack—her isolation, that is, from those cultural privileges which define the male subject as potent."[24] As a result of her divorce and subsequent move to New York, Lozano felt both the physical lack of a penis, in the Freudian sense, as well as the lack of the phallus as a symbol of power, in the Lacanian sense. There was no evidence that she had any connections in New York to help her. Lozano turned to phallic imagery in order to make up for the lack of dominant male power in her life and to further her move towards androgyny. She would not give into inferiority but had to find a way to gain access to cultural privileges. In order to accomplish this feat of gender maneuverability, Lozano tailored herself as an independent person. She downplayed her femininity in favor of androgyny and appropriated the symbol of the phallus in her art to align herself with its inherent privileges.

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[23] Kaja Silverman, *The Subject of Semiotics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 137-138.
[24] Silverman, 142.

The repetition of the phallus in her drawings and paintings helped to fill the void of masculinity. Hence, the lack of the phallus was redeemed in her art. As time passed, Lozano used phallic imagery in her work less and less. In 1964, Lozano began to exhibit her work with Dick Bellamy's gallery and took part more fully in the male-dominated art world, accessing the cultural privileges offered by the phallus. Additionally, the lack of the male power that she had felt was now remedied as she entered the gender dynamics at play in art institutions. This marked the beginning of a decline in explicit phallic imagery in her art. Her obsession was eased by the physical presence of the phallus through participation in the male-dominated power structure of the art world and so she no longer felt compelled to represent the phallus in her work.

Drawing Style

In the early works, Lozano began to explore themes that would occupy her throughout her short career. Her interest in sex and the mechanized body became obsessions. She depicted the same imagery over and over: grotesque faces, airplanes, sex, religious symbols, tools, and her studio.[25] The early works in some ways represented a transitional period between the abstract expressionist manner she had developed in art school and her later conceptual pieces. She continued to create highly individual pieces based on her personal experience as she began to instill elements of critique in her work. Lozano's style of drawing was deliberately crude, but her technique betrayed her academic art training. The drawings, although roughly made, showed an understanding of form, shadow, and texture. She used a wide range of colors from natural flesh tones to gaudy bright hues. Some of the drawings were more finished than others but all demonstrated her interest in the coarse and unrefined. This was even reflected in the choice of medium. Many of her drawings were executed in crayon and pencil lending an element of

[25] See Folie in *Seek the Extremes* for discussion of these themes.

childishness to them. However, there was no mistaking her work for that of an amateur. She built up texture by heavily applying the waxy crayon to the paper, as seen in the airplane depicted in Figure 2. The drawings she did in ink are flatter and have a harsher quality to them. The thin black lines ran together to create shadowed voids. Regardless of medium, her technique in the drawings did not vary and there was a commonality to these images.

At the same time that she was making the drawings between 1961 and 1964, Lozano also executed paintings in oil on canvas. A few of her drawings acted as studies for paintings. She applied the paint heavily on the canvas in broad loose strokes, almost as if she were drawing with the brush. The colors she used were deep and rich, contrasting strongly with each other. Sensuality in her painting style communicated her sexual obsession, as in two paintings from the early sixties as seen in Figures 1 and 3.[26] These paintings represent airplanes with supple forms. Lozano exploited the plastic qualities of oil paint to create lush tactile surfaces. This sensuality worked to soften the mechanized imagery and lent to the representation of machines an anthropomorphic quality. The paintings were not as crude as the drawings. Although she continued to use simplified and abstracted forms, her handling of the paint was sensuous and smooth. The roughness of the drawings had been replaced by fluidity. The heavy application of paint in thick strokes removed some of the roughness leaving a richly textured canvas. As with the drawings, her paintings showed the distinctive mark of her hand in the aggressive handling of thickly layered paint.

The body was ever present in the early works in both subtle and obvious ways. She depicted the human form explicitly in genitalia and faces. She manipulated the body: cocks and tits morphed into heads and eyes, displacing the actual anatomy of the face. Cavernous mouths with jagged teeth tore into other objects. Objects of all kinds penetrated the orifices of her

[26] This is especially true of the paintings in the *Tool Series*. I will not be discussing this series in depth in this thesis.

crudely rendered bodies. The extreme close-ups in some of the images transformed the inexpertly drawn forms into frightening monsters. In the drawings, the narrow view of the bodies and faces made them sexless. Genitalia were distorted and out of place. Penises and vaginas became mechanized and alienated from their sexual function. Alternately, she gave human form to machines and other inanimate objects. She even combined body and machine in order to further disrupt notions of sex. The drawings and paintings of airplanes showed how Lozano anthropomorphized machines in order to heighten the connection with the human element.

In addition to the body, language also played a role in the drawings. Lozano did not keep sketchbook-diaries or make language pieces until the late sixties.[27] Many of the drawings that incorporated captions functioned as her voice during this period, communicating her biting critique of world. The text she used in the drawings came primarily from popular culture references but Lozano altered them to make them overtly sexual. Often the drawings to which the text referred would be relatively innocuous in imagery and the language delivered the sexual meaning.

Airplane Drawings

The airplane was the locus for a complex relationship between class, violence and sexual desire. Lozano's airplane drawings have been largely overlooked by scholars to date. However, the airplanes appear in a significant portion of her early work. The airplane was a phallic object of lust and aggression and Lozano tamed it by softening, almost anthropomorphizing, its form in her work. At a time when she lacked a strong male influence in her life, she used phallic imagery to fill that lack in her self-defined terms. Prior to moving to New York, Lozano had to submit to

[27] The chronology of Lozano's work is often confused. It is important to keep in mind the progression of her career in order to fully understand her artistic development.

socially-defined male authority figures, such as her father and professors, and there was little she could do to alter that authority. The phallus in the drawings was a male presence that was subject to her control. She made the phallus subordinate to her whims. The study of drawings and paintings with airplanes reveal how sex "penetrated" Lozano's work. As with most of her representations of inanimate objects, Lozano gave to the airplane an anthropomorphic quality that added to the sexual undertones of the drawings. All of the drawings and paintings of the planes were phallic. Their soft bulbous forms were more reminiscent of nubile flesh than hard metal. The bending bodies seemed more like those of manatees or some other ocean-mammal. The airplanes had the sleek forms of creatures gliding through water rather than machines flying through the air.

The significance of airplanes in the early sixties should not be overlooked. In 1961, the United States began sending large numbers of troops to Vietnam. The following year saw the start of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Lozano would have been well aware of the military use of planes. Her drawings of airplanes are reminiscent of fighter-planes with their distinctive noses and slender profiles. On the other hand, the United States also saw growth in commercial civilian air travel after World War II. Airplanes were not only harbingers of death and destruction, but also an exotic and erotic gateway to the world. Stewardesses had a reputation for friendly service and sexual availability.[28] Both military and commercial aviation represented a chance to climb the social ladder. By signing up with the Air Force and the airlines, young men and women had an opportunity to travel around the world that would otherwise have been denied them by class circumstance. Lozano's middle-class background would have reinforced feelings of desire for luxuries, such as air travel. Lozano's depictions of airplanes focused on the sexual aspects.

[28] See Trudy Baker and Rachel Jones, *Coffee Tea or Me?: The Uninhibited Memoirs of Two Airline Stewardess* (New York: Bartholomew House Ltd., 1967). The book provides a candid description of the authors' experiences.

Although she did not show airplanes in combat or as seats of luxury, there was a latent aggression and consumerism to them. The propeller type was associated with both fighter and privately owned airplanes. Her rough drawings counteracted these associations by reducing them to the status of toys: ill-proportioned for flight and too anthropomorphic to be real machines.

A 1963 untitled painting demonstrates how Lozano undermined the associates around airplanes. It depicts the airplane in its most life-like form (Fig.1). Lozano placed two airplanes in a sea of pale blue. The larger airplane occupies the bottom half of the canvas. Its wings and tail are painted brown and the top was painted silvery grey. The smaller airplane just above has a greenish brown color. Both planes have silver noses. Lozano gives the planes' surface the texture of fur. The heavily loaded brush strokes create the illusion of water and the planes appear to be swimming, not flying. The feeling of water is enhanced by the wave of blue sky that comes up and covers part of the wing of the smaller plane. The machine has become an animal. The threat of penetration becomes diminished when the airplane is overtaken by the sky. The sky encloses the airplanes which become soft-edged and impotent. The airplanes could not forcefully penetrate this sea/sky; rather the sea/sky threatens to drown them.

It was worth comparing Lozano's airplanes to those of Nancy Spero, a contemporary of who had a similar art career. Spero attended the Art Institute of Chicago in the early fifties, lived in Europe from 1959 until 1964 when she moved to New York. Both artists were also similar in that they were not widely known during the sixties: "Spero received no rigorous historical and theoretical consideration before the late 1980s, primarily because she was a woman and a self-described feminist, as well as the wife of a (then) better-known artist."[29] It was difficult to determine whether Lozano had any direct influence on Spero. The two were both members of

[29] Amy Ingrid Schlegel, "Codex Spero: Rethinking the Monograph as a Feminist" in *Singular Women: Writing the Artist,* ed. Kristen Frederickson and Sarah E. Webb (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 202. Spero's husband was Leon Golub.

Art Workers' Coalition and Women Artists in Revolution in the late sixties and would have likely met through those organizations. Lozano despised participating in WAR as she felt that the group was nothing more than a forum for airing grievances and catfights rather than a forum for real change in terms of women in the arts. Although Lozano worked in solitude, she was not unaware or unaffected by trends in the art world. This later example of her participation demonstrated that she did indeed take part in the art world while continuing to be critical of it. Spero had a similar interest in language and airplanes and she made a series about planes called *War Series*. Whereas Lozano's works lacked any overt meaning, Spero imbued the series with a political anti-war message. Spero also created language-based pieces that used text to create drawings.

Sabine Folie argued that the airplanes represent a masculine force penetrating the feminine space of the sky.[30] This interpretation failed to take into account the androgyny that characterized Lozano's life and art. Unless showing genitalia explicitly, Lozano aimed for androgyny. She gave no indication that we should read the sky as gendered. There was no denying the phallic shape of the airplanes or the phallus's active role in the act of penetration. Lozano knew that the airplane is capable of penetration due to its phallic shape, but she chose when to make it do so. By contrast then the sky became the passive receiver. Celestial elements correlated with bodily openings in other drawings thus opening up the possibility for penetration. Yet because the pictures deal with machines, they had no definable sex in biological terms. Active and passive behaviors implied gender roles, but Lozano blended imagery to create a contradictory hypersexual-sexlessness.

Lozano reinforced the phallic nature of the airplanes when she depicted them violating the face, as in an untitled painting from 1962 (Fig. 2). The painting depicts a green plane with a

[30] See Folie, 20.

silver nose emerging from a blue-lipped mouth. The metallic silver and bronze of the skin of the face make it seem lifeless and mechanical. In contrast, the vibrant green plane seems like an animate creature. It is almost as if the face has died giving birth to the airplane. The airplane stood out as well in an untitled drawing from the early sixties. Here the bright blue plane flies into an ear outlined in grey and black (Fig. 3). In both the painting and the drawing, Lozano used extreme close-ups of the face in order to focus attention on the penetrated openings of mouth and ear. The metallic tones used for the skin work to abstract and mechanize the human figure. By comparison, the airplanes are lively and playful: poking out of a mouth, tickling an ear. Here, penetration occurs not as a threat but a tentative entry into the void.

Connections can also be found between Lozano's work and Dadaism. Mechanomorphism was a central theme in the work of Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia, as was the manipulation and challenging of gender. The machine aesthetic went along with the Dadaist ideal of anti-art. Machines took on anthropomorphic characteristics as human forms were mechanized both in art and in industry. Dadaists often related machines to sex in the early 20th century. This was particularly the case with New York Dada, which reflected the belief in America as a land of industry and mechanization. Lozano's drawings of airplanes related to the mechanomorphism of Dada. She shared with Duchamp and Picabia an interest in exploring sexuality. Lozano very likely would have been familiar with Duchamp's work. In the early sixties, he reproduced his famous ready-made, *Fountain*, an event remarked upon by the art world at the time. Both Lozano and Duchamp explored their gender identity in their art. Lozano worked to bring herself closer to the male by adopting an androgynous persona. Duchamp on the other hand went to the extreme of creating a female persona, Rrose Sélavy, for himself through dress and even created art in this guise (Fig. 4). He moved between male and female, whereas

Lozano situated herself between the two: "Rather than expressing the union of fixed opposites of androgyny, Duchamp's female alter ego tests the unstable nature of gender difference and stereotypes."[31] In terms of representations, Lozano shares an interest in the sexual machine with Picabia. His *Fille Née Sans Mère* (Fig. 5) depicts a grouping of intertwined machinery. He anthropomorphizes the machine through the title, which translates as Girl Born Without Mother. Picabia made two versions of this image. The larger version resembles a collage and "exemplifies Picabia's interest in the metaphors of machinery and sexuality: as the flywheel turns, the shaft moves up and down replicating the mechanics of sexual intercourse. Further, the idea of a girl born without a mother is a reverse 'virgin birth,' of an entity 'born' of the male industrialized world."[32] The concerns of Dada were based in industrialization and the resulting class issues. These concerns carried over to conceptual art but were somewhat altered. Rather than critiquing industry, conceptual artists appropriated the factory and used mass-production to critique the traditional constructions of artists. In terms of Lozano's work, the sexual aspects of technology come to the fore. Machines were sexualized objects in Dada and worked to challenge social constructions of gender. Lozano not only challenged gender but used her art to redefine what constitutes gender.

Most of the airplane drawings are set in the sky. The elements of sky, moon, and stars vary between each image. In one of the drawings, Lozano drew a bulbous propeller plane over a body of water (Fig. 6). A green peninsula echoes the phallic shape of the airplane. A crescent moon cuts across the bottom of the drawing and blunt tower erupts from the water below to cross the moon. Above the plane, a lone gold star hangs in undefined space and is reflected in the tail of the plane. The plane itself is described in thick black lines; the star's reflection is the only

[31] Dawn Ades, Neil Cox, and David Hopkins, *Marcel Duchamp* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 134.
[32] Rudolf Kuenzli, ed., *Dada* (London: Phaidon Press, 2006), 80.

color on it. Swirling black smoke shoots from the back of the plane. More surprising than the random tower is the penis and scrotum attached to the plane. Lozano colored the penis a fleshy pink in contrast to the uncolored body of the plane. The penis contrasts with the vaguely breast-like contours of the front of the plane. Here the airplane seems to be a penetrating force as it threatened to break through the picture plane. However, the blunt tower is a much more menacing presence. The tower thrusts upward, penetrating the sky and blocking the airplane's flight path. The strong dark lines that form the tower contrast with the limp, almost floppy, airplane.

Despite its phallic shape, the airplane looks weak and vulnerable. The tower asserts its dominance over the sky. In this drawing, the tower takes on the role of the penis. The feminized phallic airplane must cede to the tower. The tower takes the plane's place in the gender hierarchy. Lozano made the tower square and blunt-edged, merely alluding to the phallus. In this drawing, Lozano illustrated her struggle to redefine her gender identity. She was neither male nor female, but rather a third androgynous sex. Given how Lozano has assigned gender to the airplane, the tower then comes to represent the third sex that rises up to displace the gender binaries embodied in the airplane. The image is an enactment of the Oedipal complex in boys: "The blocking phallus (of the father, according to Freud) has to be eliminated in order to make room for the new penetrator."[33] The "father," represented by the airplane, stands for male dominance and the limiting social construction of sexual binaries as male and female. Lozano's third sex combats the "father" making room for androgyny as the next generation. The plane, even though it has a penis of its own, becomes the feminine factor with a breast-like nose. It flees from the menace of the tower. The whole scene is framed by the grey crescent moon. The moon

[33] Folie, 21.

is a grinning mouth and this identification is reinforced by the shadow of the tower that creates a black void like missing teeth.

The blunt tower appears in other drawings as well. In one drawing, the tower curves out from the surface casting a long shadow across the tail of an airplane (Fig. 7). The tower is much more innocuous in this drawing than in the one discussed above, suggestive of androgyny. It is smaller and curves slightly; it lies parallel to the picture plane rather than thrust up and out of it. The shadow that the tower casts mars the image, but the shadow is ephemeral and broken. The tower has lost its power as a phallus but remains a symbol of the androgynous third sex, moving from the stiff rigidity of the phallus to a curving feminine form that lands between the two binaries. The airplane itself appears like a flat, thick pancake, and is, in fact, not an airplane at all. The plane-shape is cut-out of the surface of the paper to reveal another realm beyond. The shadow of the tower highlights the edge of the hole. The flattened blue surface is covered in white planes jetting across a piece of sky. The black sun in the brown sky seems like the pupil and iris of a great eye. Lozano created the effect of a hole in a face. The hole has the potential to be penetrated. It is a vulnerable void and yet there is no threat of violation. The airplanes zip playfully in their blue sky; the tower bends away. The drawing embodies the highest amount of potential energy. The hole is open and the planes and tower are there, poised in a liminal position that seems innocuous but could quickly reverse and become hostile.

An ink drawing of an airplane from 1963 shows how even with a black-line drawing, Lozano was able to capture the sensuality of her subject (Fig. 8). The lines of the plane flow thick and thin, suggesting the rounded body of the airplane. Wings and nose are defined with a few quick pen strokes. The nose tilts upward in a jaunty manner. Three thin lines shoot off the tail of the airplane creating motion as the airplane appears to fly through open space.

Uncharacteristically, Lozano signed the work. The signature appears in all lower-case cursive script. Next to the airplane is a quickly scrawled note in pencil: "I was here Lee, Frank." Frank underlined his name. It is very likely that Frank Stella left this note. Lozano would have known him during this time and she often invited him into her studio. She also sold some of her drawings to him. It is possible that he used one of these drawings to let her know of his impromptu visit. The writing provides definition to an otherwise boundless space. Without the text to define the limits of space, the airplane would float unhindered in the drawing.

The "Symptoms"

Time and again in these early drawings and paintings, Lozano returned to the representation of the phallus and penetration to the point of obsession. She worked through her obsession repeatedly and in many different kinds of imagery, including the two themes discussed above. This kind of sexuality remained in her later works, although in varied modes. These early drawings were the beginning of Lozano's exploration of sex and the body, and pointed to her struggle to define her gender identity. According to Butler, gender was performative and put on the body: "performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration."[34] Butler used performance to show how gender, perceived as an interior essence, actually was manufactured through repetitious acts that sustain the gendered stylization of the body. Lozano explored her gender through her body and her art: the adoption of androgyny and the repeated imagery of phallic objects allowed her to naturalize her gender.

Lozano often repeated subject matter and actions in her art, which may point to her psychological instability. According to psychoanalytic theory, repetition was part of memory.

[34] "Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions (1990)" in *The Judith Butler Reader*, 94.

Lacan demonstrated the connections Freud made between *Wiederholen* and *Erinnen*, repeating and remembering. Freud saw repetition as a function and Lacan clarified how the function works in the relation between the real and thought: "The subject in himself, the recalling of his biography, all this goes only to a certain limit, which is known as the real."[35] Through the function of repetition, the subject was able to discover the real, having removed it from obscurity by repeated remembering. The real was related to the thought: "An adequate thought, *qua* thought, at the level at which we are, always avoids—if only to find itself again later in everything—the same place. Here, the real is that which always comes back to the same place—to the place where the subject in so far as he think, where the *res cogitans,* does not meet it."[36] What Lacan meant by *res cogitans* is the Cartesian thinking thing, i.e. the mind. Within the mind, the real and thought were linked and yet mutually exclusive. They emerged from the same place, a place the real could return to but that the thought could not. Lacan pointed out that Freud originally applied this analysis of *Wiederholen* to the treatment of hysterics. Freud believed that women suffering from hysteria and repetitious remembering revealed that "the desire of the hysteric was the desire of the father, to be sustained in his status."[37] Hysteria mimicked the relation between the real and thought: the wandering uterus, having left its rightful place in the body, could not return and must repeatedly circle this place, seeking to return there even as it continues to avoid the "same place." In the case of the artist, the imbuing of her biography into her work brought about the real and in so doing, produced the thought in the form of symptomatic imagery. Lozano's repetition of the phallus in the early drawings was a form of repeated remembering. The place that produced both real and thought in the early drawings was

[35] Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, Trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1978), 49. I have also consulted *The Basic Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. Dr. A. A. Brill (New York: Random House, 1938).
[36] Lacan, 49.
[37] Lacan, 50.

the phallus at the point of penetration. By situating the place in a liminal state, Lozano sustained herself in the status of the father. The point of penetration existed at the beginning and the end of intercourse with the phallus just about to enter or just about to pull out of the penetrated, thus representing both the desire for the father and its fulfillment. Lozano desired the father in the form of successful participation in the male-dominated art world. However, the "father" could not accept her as a woman so she had to find a way to appropriate a phallus as a sign of her right to the privileges of the art institution. As she worked through her sexual obsession in the drawings, she recalled the phallus in the form of penises, airplanes, and noses. In repeatedly returning to the male aspect, she denied her femininity in taking on a symbolic phallus in her art. Having made herself androgynous, Lozano replaced the wandering uterus with a wandering phallus. The phallus was constantly moving around the body and around the picture plane. The phallus took on many forms, but in the form of the airplane, it had the most freedom of movement. Yet the boundaries of paper and canvas kept the wandering phallus from escaping. The picture plane itself was the 'same place' where the real phallus could always be found and where the thought of longing for the phallus originated.

The repetition of the image pointed to the fetishization of the object. Lozano seemed compelled to represent phallic penetration in terms that removed it from normal sexual function. As in the airplane drawings, the machine became the sex object. The airplanes had the same shape and potential to penetrate space as the penis did. Lozano repeated this phallic image of the airplane until it lost its meaning as a threatening penetrator. She made these drawings at a time when she was the most free from phallic domination: she was divorced, living alone in her studio, and able to create the art she wanted without the interference of a man. It was almost as if

Lozano was performing a parody of masculinity by turning the airplane from a virile machine of war to an impotent toy.

Captioned Drawings

Lozano combined language and art in some of her drawings. These drawings continued to demonstrate her obsession with sex and were closely linked to later conceptual works. The integration of text varied from quickly scrawled captions to block-lettered headlines that dominate the image. In an untitled drawing in graphite and colored pencils on paper from 1962-1963, Lozano incorporated a scrawled caption into a depiction of a penis thrusting out of the collar of a nice button-down shirt with a tie (Fig. 9). She gave the penis ears in order to reinforce the replacement of the head with the head of the penis. In the top right corner, Lozano wrote "man w/ cocked head." The double entendre of the sentence reflected not only the motion of the penis-head as it cocked to the side, but also the literal replacement of the head with the penis. She used grey graphite as outline and shadow. A black colored pencil adds depth to the shadowy areas and darkens the line delineating the head of the cock and the slit at the end. Lozano applied a fleshy pink-red tone to the shaft and a darker red color on the head and ears. The irreverent humor of these early drawings spoke to the kind of silly humor found in Conceptual art. The drawings also reveal insight into her sense of humor. She used coarse, sarcastic language in the captions that is very similar to how she later wrote in her sketchbook-diaries. Lozano adopted the crude slang to highlight the absurdity of the image.

The use of language foreshadowed later practices in Conceptual art, as in the work of Joseph Kosuth. Kosuth played with language as a sign, using it to critique notions of meaning. Lozano also had an interest in language. Although she did not use language extensively until the

late sixties, her use of text in these drawings predated Kosuth's interest in language.[38] She too played with words and created new meanings for them. In the drawings, captions are marked by the vulgarity of the language used, adding further elements of sex and violence to her already rough drawings. Lozano took the captions from advertisement slogans and popular sayings in order to enhance the visual puns in the drawings. She also varied how the image and the words relate to one another in order to comment on sex roles. The words may directly reflect what is being depicted or may work to illuminate an enigmatic drawing.

A captioned drawing from 1961 is one of the crudest Lozano made and demonstrates how she plays with text in images (Fig. 10). Done in graphite and crayon on paper, the image appears quickly sketched. Lozano depicted an advertisement at the corner of a building. Bright colors highlight the central scene. An androgynous mustachioed figure wears a yellow shift dress and high heels. It only has one arm and holds in its hand something disgusting, drippy, and brown. It could be a cigar or a piece of shit; it is difficult to determine what the vaguely phallic shape is meant to be. A childishly drawn orange sun illuminates the scene. The wire trash bin partially filled with waste and the traffic light indicates that the figure is in a cityscape. However, what is actually being pictured is an advertisement poster. Lozano took some time to draw the bricks of the building on which the poster is pasted. Across the top of the ad poster is the phrase "9 out of 10." The number nine is green while the rest of the phrase is in black. The one of the ten has been crossed out to make it seem like the sign reads nine out of zero. The zero seems vulnerable to penetration, like a vagina. Below the ad poster on what would be the sidewalk, Lozano had scrawled "eat cunt for mental health." A section of the phrase is scratched out and what it originally said impossible to decipher. Lozano likely deleted the subject who does the eating.

[38]Guggenheim Museum, "Joseph Kosuth: Biography", http://www.guggenheimcollection.org/site/artist_bio_79.html (Accessed 28 March 2008)

Taken all at once, "9 out of 10 eat cunt for mental health" reads like a chewing gum or over the counter drug advertisement. This kind of appropriation of well-known ideas from popular culture foreshadows what would later come to be one of the defining features of Conceptual art. Lozano also poked fun at the use of sex in advertising. She had appropriated the charming feminine spokeswoman and removed all her charm and femininity. The figure has no firm gender, but is in a liminal third sex. Lozano kept the aspects of sex, but turned them from flirtatious to threatening.

Looking again at the mysterious brown object after reading the caption, it now could be a cunt rather than penis and the androgynous figure is about to insure good mental health by ingesting it. The figure is indefinable: a man in drag or a woman with unfortunate facial hair? Lozano did not distinguish whether it is men or women who eat cunt for mental health therefore implying that both should do so. Although highly charged with crude sexuality, the drawings are imbued with a confusion of gender: "Lozano's aversion to any one-sided gender dichotomy is already clear. Instead, strange, cryptic sado-masochism shimmers through, standing up for an aggressive phallic femininity, while showing a certain intolerance toward what she interpreted as female weaknesses, weaknesses that result from playing the victim in response to discrimination, a role for which Lozano had little time."[39] Folie found the perfect turn of phrase to describe Lozano's gender: "aggressive phallic femininity." Lozano adopted a masculine stance that combined with her female sex to create androgyny. She became a parody of a woman. By becoming more like a man, Lozano effaced female weakness and victimization as well as mocked those characteristics in other women. At the same time, she refused to acknowledge herself as a submissive gender, thereby raising herself up to a dominant one.

[39] Folie, 20.

Lozano again punned on the word cock and well-known phrases in an undated drawing with the caption, “let them eat cock” (Fig. 11). A caricaturized Marie-Antoinette dominates the drawing. Wearing a huge wig and wide-skirted dress, she stands for the cake/cock. Her torso is reduced to a blue cone topped by pastry-like breasts. The bright red nipples stand out like cherries, the color matching her red-lipped mouth. Those two points of red are the only bold colors in a composition of blues, grays, greens, and browns. The caption is written in cursive script along the bell of the skirt. Slices of bread and cake seem to zoom into the picture on either side of Marie-Antoinette’s vapid face. She lacks all features except a gaping mouth that displays a toothy smile. The black hole made by missing teeth hints at the orifice beyond into which the bread and cake will go. The blackness suggests that Marie-Antoinette is a void inside, that beneath the gown there is nothing. The drawing is composed of round forms: the full skirt, bulbous wig, and decorative bows. There is a distinctly feminine quality to the composition, which is jarred by the caption and the sharp-edged cake. The slice of cake is a wedge that will cut into the body and pry it open. The insinuation of fellatio connects the literal eating of cake and the figurative eating of cock. Lozano visually aligned the drawing and the word. As in the airplane drawings, there is a blending of the sexes. Male and female coexist and merge together in order to create androgyny.

The captioned drawings could also have an aspect of violence. “I’ll punch you in the nose” and “I got fucked in the ass by ConEdision” represent Lozano’s anger (Fig. 12 and 13). The drawings are from 1962. In both of them, the text appears like a newspaper headline across the top. Lozano carefully formatted the block letters and they dominate the paper. In the former, a fist erupts from a smoking penile gun. The lines of movement suggest that the fist expanded to its current size after being shot from the gun. In the latter, the nose of a grotesque face elongates

and becomes a burner, blue flame licking out of the end. Behind the nose, are all the appliances that ConEdison powers: a radiator, boiler, refrigerator, and light bulbs.[40] The small, almost unnoticeable addition to the caption, reminds the viewer of that ConEdison supplied gas and electric: a small "g" is inserted in front of "ass." The playfulness found in the earlier drawings is lacking here. Rather than seeing the phallus as a toy, the phallus has become a menace threatening assault and (financial) rape. Lozano lashed out at what she perceives as oppressiveness.

The captioned drawings fall into two categories: In one, the text is dominated by the image and in the other, the text dominates the image. It is difficult to determine which type came first. Most of the headline-style captioned drawings were done in 1962. However, captioned drawings of the other type were also made in 1962 and continued to be made through 1963. The large text occupied most of the picture plane and it works to illuminate how to read the image. Drawings would be enigmatic without the text to give them meaning. This is not the case with the later captioned drawings. The text is not integral to the image in quite the same way. Rather than relying on text to give meaning, the image has meaning and the text, often a pun, adds another level of interpretation. As in the case of "Let Them Eat Cock," even without the text, anyone familiar with Marie-Antoinette's famous saying could have read the style of dress and linked the images of cake and bread to come up with the phrase, "let them eat cake." However, by the addition of the altered text, Lozano challenges assumptions about interpretations of sex.

[40] This would not be the last time Lozano criticized ConEdison. In her later sketchbook-diaries, she complained about the high prices of her bills and the company's general corruption. She was not the only person to take issue with ConEdison. George Metesky, the Mad Bomber, was a disgruntled employee who terrorized the company in retaliation between 1941 and 1957.

Captioned drawings were also part of Dadaism, a movement that Lozano had learned about during her art education.[41] Both Duchamp and Picabia used captions to give or enhance the meaning of an image, particularly a sexual meaning: "Everywhere the phallus was put into play, entered into the scene of representation, grasped, pointed, appended, displaced."[42] Probably the best known captioned drawing by Duchamp is *LHOOQ*, a poster of Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* on which he drew a beard and mustache (Fig. 14). The defiling of a great masterpiece speaks to the anti-art practices of Dadaism. Duchamp further debased the *Mona Lisa* by giving it a caption that when pronounced phonetically sounds like: *elle a chaud au cul*, that is "she has a hot ass." Picabia also used the caption to add sexual innuendo to his art. *Parade Amoureuse* depicts a jumble of interconnected machine parts (Fig. 15). The caption at the bottom of the image transforms the machines from inanimate objects to sexual beings. These pieces prefigure the work of Lozano and other conceptual artists who played with language in order to produce greater meaning.

A Feminist?

Lozano was unlike other women artists from the early sixties. When most women were creating (proto)feminist works devoted to the idea of the essential feminine, Lozano eschewed representing the female body. There are drawings of the female form that exist certainly, but as with her drawings of men they have been manipulated and mechanized to remove their sex, as in her representation of a woman whose vagina has become an electrical outlet. Lozano produced art that seemed to lack any kind of ideological agenda, unlike the highly sexual work of her

[41] See Roger Gilmore ed., *Over a Century: A History of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago 1866-1981* (Chicago: School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1982). He describes the development of curriculum at the school and notes the prejudice against so-called European styles of art that were being taught after World War II.
[42] George Baker, *The Artwork Caught by the Tail: Francis Picabia and Dada in Paris* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 111.

feminist contemporaries. According to Judith Barry and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis' categorization of woman artists, Lozano fell into the group of women artists who "cannot be said to have a feminist strategy because they do not view themselves as artist engaged in feminist struggle."[43] That was not to discount the drawings. They were just as personal as works by feminist artists and addressed issues of gender. Sex, both as biological identity and as intercourse, was the common denominator for many women artists, especially feminist artists seeking to critique society and art institutions. This preoccupation with sex during the sixties and early seventies reflected the Sexual Revolution, when repressive and antiquated notions of sex as "bad" were overturned by new codes of sexual behavior that advocated the power of love and the beauty of sexual intercourse. Research by Alfred Kinsey a decade earlier helped to pave the way for better understanding of sexuality. Lozano participated in this discourse around sex, but not as a means of asserting herself as feminist. She wished to show the gender struggles that both men and women faced. In so doing, she placed herself in the androgyny between the binary sexes. Her work "performed" her identity with a third sex.

It was important to remember the social-historical context of Lozano's career. The move to New York marked an important turning point in her life: she was no longer a student or a wife. Having shed the stigmatized identities of novice and chattel, Lozano could now forge her own way in the art world. She could be defined only in terms of herself and not in terms of her relationship to men. The problem of artistic identity was one faced by women artists at the time and is discussed in Lucy Lippard's feminist essays. Lippard wrote about women's issues during the late sixties and early seventies, but the gender dynamics that defined the art world had been in play for many years beforehand. Women artists were discriminated against in terms of their

[43] "Textual Strategies: The Politics of Art Making" in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, Amelia Jones eds. (London: Routledge, 2003), 57.

sexuality and marital status. Lee Krasner and Helen Frankenthaler were both women artists who had fallen in the shadow of their more famous artist husbands.[44] Lozano had been in a similar situation during her marriage. As had Krasner, Lozano claimed her own studio once she was freed from marriage.

Lippard pointed out the discrepancies between the treatment of male and female artists: "Men are somehow 'professional' artists even if they must teach a twenty-hour week, work forty hours as a carpenter, museum guard, designer or any of the other temporary tasks with which most artists are forced to support themselves in an unsympathetic society. Women, on the other hand, especially if they are married and have children, are supposed to be wholly consumed by menial labors."[45] Lippard went on to discuss the state of married women artists in her essays. The married woman artist was invariably referred to as the wife of some man, especially if he too was an artist, and her art was marginalized. This was likely a scenario Lee Lozano herself would have experienced during her own marriage: Lee, the wife of designer Adrian Lozano and a student of art. One could imagine Lee Lozano chafing at these patronizing epithets. However, once in New York, Lozano was free to develop fully her work in the solitude of her studio without the input of teachers or other artists, unless she asked for it. As much as possible, Lozano took on the persona of a male artist. She had begun to create this persona in 1960, when she first started to wear the same outfit everyday and eat the same foods, as she later noted in her sketch-book diaries in 1969. Her behavior mirrored that of Joseph Kosuth and Andy Warhol in that she too developed an artistic identity for herself. She removed her identity as a woman and adopted

[44] Caroline A. Jones discusses the sexism of the studio in *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). I will leave aside discussion of Lozano's studio for now as it is more relevant to her later works.
[45] Lippard, *From the Center* (New York : Dutton, 1976), 33.

that of an art-making machine. Lozano challenged the limits of her body and its functions in her attempt to create.

Chapter 3

Challenging the Limits of the Flesh:
Art and Science in the Wave Series

"IF I WERE AN OLD FASHIONED MAN I WOULD SAY THAT ART WAS MY WIFE BUT SCIENCE (PHYSICS) WAS MY MISTRESS." ~Lee Lozano, August 6, 1968.

Lee Lozano trained as a painter at the Art Institute of Chicago in an abstract expressionist style in the early fifties. Even after moving to New York, she continued to paint, as discussed in the previous chapter. The paintings Lozano made from 1964 onward became progressively more minimal. By 1967, Lozano had become entrenched within the New York art world and the symbolic lack of the phallus that characterized her early career was rectified. She began exhibiting her work in prominent New York galleries. She became acquainted with the leading avant-garde artists and spent time with Sol LeWitt, Dan Graham, and Robert Morris among others. Contact with these artists motivated Lozano to examine her artistic identity and she began to adopt conceptual art practices. These practices allowed her to work through issues of what it meant to be an artist and how she wanted to be defined. Lozano continued to struggle with her identity as a woman and an artist. As she began to settle into her androgyny, she continued to question her artistic self in relation to the prominent artists she knew. The contact she had with conceptual artists led her to develop pieces within the same vein. In working on the *Wave Series*, Lozano addressed the notion of the artist as machine and the place of industry in aesthetics. Unlike many of the artists she associated with, Lozano did not farm her work out to factories for production. An essential part of her art practice was her body and its connection to the work. The *Wave Series* participated in the dialogue of Conceptual art and the theories surrounding it. Lozano had reached the height of her career in the late sixties when the series was undertaken. Through the ambitious series, Lozano found a means by which to define her artistic identity.

When Lozano began the *Wave Series*, she was actively participating in the New York avant-garde. She had exhibited works at the Green Gallery in 1964 and 1965. Sol LeWitt and Robert Morris were good friends of hers; she even gave Morris a nickname, "Moose." At this time, Lozano was also involved in an on-and-off relationship with Dan Graham, who was some years her junior. In her sketchbooks-diaries, Lozano recalled that Graham had originally started dating her because he believed she could give him entrée into the avant-garde scene. She admits to having dated him for the same reason. Regardless, it is interesting to consider that Lozano held such a high place in the art world that she could attract hangers-on. She used her androgyny to position herself within the male hierarchy of the art world. Her works were displayed in exhibitions at the Bianchini and Paula Cooper Galleries several times during the late sixties, notably in the exhibition, *Number 7,* curated by Lucy Lippard at Paula Cooper. She also participated in solo and group exhibitions in the US and Europe.[46] As noted in the previous chapter, Lozano did not adopt a feminist ideology for her work. Her artistic identity was tied into her belief that she was not like other women. Despite her female body, Lozano placed herself above women on the gender hierarchy by aligning herself with male power. Her androgyny bordered on parody, calling into question the exclusivity of power as the cultural privilege of men.

The *Wave Series* was one of many conceptual projects that Lozano undertook. The series represented the fullest extent to which Lozano mechanized her body in the pursuit of creativity: "Lozano's interest in the body as a holistic intellectual, psychic, and visceral apparatus was perfectly synthesized in these pieces, which are at once expressive, hard-edge, and conceptual

[46] See Appendix for full listing of exhibitions.

(they're indebted to the physics of color)."[47] She worked on the series between 1967 and 1970. Lozano became increasingly mentally unstable in the late sixties and the process she developed for the *Wave Series* gave her a small portion of control over her unraveling life. Her repetitious and rigid conceptual method of production marked an obsessive compulsive element in her degrading mental state. The method reduced her body to little more than an art-making machine thus enhancing her androgynous identification. It also connected with machine imagery in her early drawings, the external representation now becoming an internal process. Since her body had to be part of the process, she could not send her work out to be produced by a factory. Therefore, she made her studio the factory and her body the machine needed for artistic production.[48] The *Wave Series* represented a major transition and transformation in Lozano's career: she became removed from her sexed humanity and from the world around her.

Lozano had long had an interest in science. She had studied it in college and after graduating, she continued to keep abreast of what was happening in the scientific community by reading current journals. Lozano wrote extensively about science and scientific phenomena in her sketchbook-diaries while she lived in New York. She admitted to preferring science to art: "ART IS FUN TO DO, IT IS PLEASURABLE TO LOOK AT OCCASIONALLY AND THEN ONE FORGETS ABOUT IT, BUT SCIENCE IS ON MY MIND ALL THE TIME AND WHEN I THINK ABOUT IT I GET HOT PANTS."[49] This kind of sexual interest was a parody of masculine rationality and empowerment. Science offered systematic understanding of the universe, but Lozano disrupted its logic by linking it with sexual desire. Rather than gain power

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[47] Helen Molesworth, "Reviews: Lee Lozano" *Artforum* September 2006 http://www.artforum.com/inprint/id=11498 (Accessed February 5th, 2008).

[48] Lozano certainly would have known of Andy Warhol and his Factory, but her studio consisted only of herself.

[49] Sketchbook #1, 25. I will use all caps when quoting Lozano's sketchbooks as she wrote in block capitals and I want to capture as much as possible, her style of writing. I will discuss the history and contents of the sketchbooks more in depth in the next chapter.

and control through science, she became irrational and distracted by thoughts of arousal. Lozano commonly referred to subjects that interested her in sexual terms. Even though she would mechanize her androgynous body through her artistic practice, sexual energy continued to occupy her thoughts. She simultaneously occupied the extremes of the sex continuum: sexlessness in body, hyper sexuality in mind.

As with her art, she took her own unique approach to science. She had an interest in physics, especially astronomy. Lozano also looked into astrology. She knew the zodiac and the movement of the sun and moon through the different houses. In her sketch-book diaries, Lozano discussed how her sign, Scorpio, impacted her life. In addition, she also had an interest in the ancient Chinese text on cosmology and philosophy, the *I Ching* or *Book of Changes*. She believed equally in the more academic sciences and the holistic astrology and cosmology. Lozano certainly would have been tuned into the Age of Aquarius.

Scientific Paintings

The *Wave Series* combined Lozano's interest in scientific phenomena and art. Her interest in science is not altogether surprising considering the period in which she was working. She came of age at the beginning of the Cold War. In addition to an arms race with Soviet Russia, the United States was engaged in the space race to put man on the moon as well. Science and mathematics were pushed to the fore of American education as the country sought to outpace its communist rival. The first moon landing occurred in the midst of Lozano's work on the *Wave Series*. Lozano would have been well aware of the scientific advances being made at the time. As noted earlier, Lozano subscribed to *Scientific American*, a journal that was also a favorite of her friend, Carl Andre.

Lozano used paint in order to explore the properties of wavelengths defined by the laws of physics. Waves are transfers of energy in oscillation around a fixed point.[50] To aid in her exploration of wave phenomena, Lozano systematically devised a strict method of production for the series. Her conceptual method encompassed all aspects of the artistic process from the type of paint she used to recreational drug use during production. In the *Wave Series*, Lozano worked out her own formula for wavelengths based on factors of the number ninety-six. She did not produce paintings for every factor. Rather, she chose to paint only those factors which she conceived of as mathematically elegant. She experimented in sketches with number, length, and height of the waves before settling on the following eleven factors: two, four, six, eight, twelve, sixteen, twenty-four, thirty-two, forty-eight, ninety-six and one hundred ninety-two. Lozano doubled ninety-six in order to come up with the number of waves for the last panel. The canvases for all the paintings measure ninety-six by forty-two inches. This allowed her to easily measure the distance of each wavelength. Each panel depicts progressively narrower waves from forty-eight inches long to half an inch in the final canvas.

Although each panel in the series is different, they do share some characteristics. Lozano prepped the canvases with gesso and drew a guide line for the waves in pencil. She then painted color in two layers: horizontal strokes across the whole canvas and over these horizontal bands, she painted the vertical waves. The base horizontal layer of paint is often thick at the edges with deep visible brushstrokes. Moving toward the center, the paint thins and the strokes become less pronounced. The top layer of vertical wavelength strokes vary depending on the length of the wave. The low frequency waves are worked up across the canvas from thin layers to a rough high ridge of paint on one side. The horizontal strokes are often visible through the thinner paint. As a result of the wave pattern, the higher frequency wave panels appear to have bands of matte

[50] See H. J. Pain, *The Physics of Vibrations and Waves* (Chicester, NY: Wiley, 1999)

and shiny pigment. In her sketchbook-diaries, Lozano wrote: "AS WAVELENGTHS OF ENERGY GET LONGER, THE ACTION SOLIDIFIES, THAT IS, TURNS INTO MATTER. HOPE THE WAVE SERIES MAKES THIS EVIDENT."[51] Lozano succeeded at this task. The first paintings in the series have rough textured surfaces. As she progressed through the series, the surfaces became more and more refined. This contrast highlighted the transition from matter to energy that Lozano sought to achieve.

When it came to aesthetic choices, Lozano was largely indifferent. She chose colors arbitrarily and resisted adopting a color theory, as was consistent with conceptual art practices.[52] She used inexpensive Shiva brand paint that approximated the quality of metal in tone. Shiva brand was not popular among artists, but Lozano liked that it had the "quality of science."[53] She worked with ferrous synthetic iron oxide pigments, which she noted were discontinued in May of 1969. She pondered what the effect of this would be on her work and determined to continue production until she ran out of paint. The colors she chose are dull, somber, and rusty. The first six canvases in the series incorporate two colors, but Lozano later decided that multiple colors detracted from the effect she wanted. She felt that monochrome panels were more in line with the stringency of her method. For the remaining canvases, she used only one color. She wrote in her sketchbook on March 29th, 1969: "TO AVOID BOREDOM I MADE EACH CANVAS ONE OR TWO DIFFERENT ARBITRARY COLORS. THIS WAS ALSO TO LEARN MORE ABOUT COLOR. 1970: AS THE WAVE LENGTH SHORTENS, THE COLOR TENDS TO GET MORE DECADENT, LIKE THE FORM, LIKE THE IDEA."[54] Despite the monochrome palette, Lozano achieved great variations in composition and texture. The waves in the early

[51] Sketchbook #9, May (?) 1970, p. 13.
[52] In 1970, Lozano did some experiments with emotionally based colors, metaphorical colors, and color puns. Discussed in Sketchbook #11.
[53] Szymczyk, 103.
[54] Sketchbook #11. Lozano did not number all the pages of her sketchbooks.

canvases are more sensuous because of their large size, but this was belied by the rough texture of their surfaces. The greater frequency of waves concentrated the form and resulted in a seductive richness of paint.

Given the demanding physical process she proscribed for herself, it is not surprising that Lozano was unable to complete the final canvas. Lozano dictated that she must complete each painting in one continuous session. She made the paintings in her studio and she also dictated that she had to be as stoned as possible on marijuana while she painted. She used the same three inch wide bristle house paint brush on all the heavy cotton-duck canvases. Lozano came up with questions that she hoped to find answers to in the series, such as: "WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WAVE OF PAINT GET SHORTER AND SHALLOW?"[55] The answer is clear: the wave nearly disappears. Lozano spoke of the scientific principle that stated that as the frequency of the wave increases, the wave becomes closer to a straight line. This phenomena is seen in the series. Particularly the later canvases, the shorter and shallower waves of paint coalesce into a shimmering mass, more reminiscent of energy than of matter.

Lozano finished *2 Wave* (Fig. 16) on March 12th, 1968.[56] The panel is beige with greenish brown accents in the wave. The brown color is prominent on the right side and fades as the wave moves left. This is the largest wave. The larger wave pattern creates greater contrast with the vertical brushstrokes. The horizontal strokes are visible on either side of the wave and they are at a slight downward angle. The wave strokes are thick and rough. The wave thickens as it bends and narrows at the top and bottom. A similar arrangement occurs in *4 Wave* (Fig. 17), finished December 16th, 1967. The wave fades from grey to green as she painted left to right. The green

[55] Sketchbook #11.
[56] It is impossible to capture the subtle variations of texture on the canvas in photographs. These reproductions do a good job of showing the color and shape of the waves, but one can only fully appreciate the subtlety of texture when viewing the panels in person.

paint is laid on more thickly and has a rougher texture than the grey underneath. The color contrast creates the illusion of greater contours on the surface. The horizontal strokes are not as deep and are blended away by the wave.

6 Wave (Fig. 18) is a unique case. Lozano finished the original canvas on February 5th, 1968. On September 3rd of that year, Lozano wrote in her sketchbook-diary:

> STONED ON GRASS, HASH, WINE, AND SNIFFIING INCENSE I MAY HAVE SOLVED A DANGLING PROBLEM RE WAVE SERIES: DO NOT REPAINT ANY, JUST PRESENT THEM AS THEY WERE PAINTED AND LET THE WORK PRESENT ITS OWN DEVELOPMENT TO THE OBSERVER…I AM GOING TO DESTROY 6-WAVE TO DO PIECE ### PAINT ANOTHER 6-WAVE SOON.[57]

She had decided that *6 Wave* was unsuccessful and needed to be redone. It is unclear which piece the original panel went to as Lozano did not discuss her decision in depth in her sketchbook-diaries. She remade the canvas in May 16th, 1970. She chose yellow-green and brown paints, using the brown as an accent in the wave. The horizontal strokes at the edge are deep. The texture of the wave becomes rougher from left to right. The ridged paint between the horizontal and wave strokes is less pronounced compared to the earlier paintings. The surface is nearly smooth in some areas which contrast with the overall rough texture of the wave.

In *8 Wave* (Fig. 19), Lozano began to move toward monochromatic canvases. The panel was completed on February 16th, 1969. A high ridge of paint demarcates the wave strokes from the horizontal strokes. The horizontal lines are visible underneath the lines of the wave. She used a dark and light shade of grey. The color fades from dark to light moving left to right. The dark grey covers the light grey in thick heavy strokes. Lozano discussed her color choice in her sketchbook-diaries during April of 1968. She wanted a light brownish grey, but also mentioned a rust red pigment the value of which was not relevant. She questioned whether to use the same

[57] Sketchbook #4, 30. Lozano does not name the specific piece and scratched out part of the sentence, represented by the pound signs.

light grey color for the air, by which she likely meant the wavelength. She was not sure whether to use the same value but a different color mix.

Later in the same diary entry, Lozano mentioned a *10 Wave* panel for which she was also thinking about color. This factor never became a finished painting because in studies the ten waves were not visually pleasing. *12 Wave* and *16 Wave* (Fig. 20 and 21) were the last canvases to incorporate two colors and were finished May 9th, 1968 and January 15th, 1969, respectively. The wave became thicker as she painted left to right. As with *8 Wave*, Lozano chose colors from the same tonal family. Using a single color reduced the disruption of the painting caused by multiple pigments. In working on *12 Wave, 16 Wave*, and *24 Wave*, Lozano realized: "THE WAVE SERIES SERVES THE FUNCTION OF THOROUGH VALUE AND COLOR INVESTIGATION."[58] This seems somewhat contradictory given that Lozano had originally started the series with no color theory. However, she had a good intuition and allowed the series to reveal insights. This was a key component of conceptual art as defined by Sol LeWitt. The artist's intuition should be the guide to creation.

The first wholly monochrome canvas in the series is *24 Wave* (Fig. 22). Lozano completed the panel on March 19th, 1969. Painted a rusty red color, *24 Wave* achieved variegated texture in monochrome. The horizontal strokes are thick and deep on the edge of the canvas and become smoother as they approach the wave. The wave strokes are again laid on top of the horizontal ones. They are more blended with the horizontal strokes on the right side. The compression of waves on the surface creates alternating bands of matte and shiny color. Due to this illusion, the matte sections appear to be red mixed with blue and purple.

32 Wave (Fig. 23), finished on July 26th, 1969, also has matte and shiny bands created by the wave stroke in the dull orange paint. Lozano built up a ridge of paint on one side of the wave

[58] Sketchbook #1, 25.

to differentiate from the horizontal base. The lines of the horizontal strokes are visible in the matte bands within the wave. The bumps of the wave have the coarsest texture. She worked on this panel for eighteen and half hours and was high on hashish the whole time.[59]

By *48 Wave* and *96 Wave* (Fig. 24 and 25), the wave is barely distinguishable from the layer of base paint. These panels were finished the fall of 1969 and in 1970, respectively.[60] The tight repetition of the wave blends each bump into the horizontal base creating a much smoother texture overall. The wave stands out in bands of shiny and matte color on the duller surface of the base. In these last paintings, texture comes from the reflection of light on the surface of the paint versus the early paintings where texture comes from the thick building up of paint on the canvas.

Lozano began mixing the paint for *96 Wave* in November of 1969. She worked on the panel for three days straight with only the briefest of recesses. This was the only panel for which she had made a decision about color that had to do with creating an emotional response in the viewer. She chose the rich purple color because she believed it was elegant and she wanted the viewer to appreciate this. It was the only panel for which Lozano made a value judgment about color: "You wouldn't say it was purple or violet, but it had just a suggestion of that high energy color. I usually didn't want the color to have a literal reference. But with that one I just couldn't resist."[61] *192 Wave* was never completed (Fig. 26). Lozano only took the time to prep the canvas and draw the wave guide lines in pencil. The panel was beyond her physical abilities to complete.

As a result of the strictly imposed conditions of the series, Lozano spent more and more time on each painting: "LENGTH OF WAVE PAINTING SESSION INVERSELY

[59] Sketchbook #2, 90.
[60] Lozano did not have the exact dates for these panels in Sketchbook #11.
[61] Szymczyk,103

PROPORTIONAL TO LENGTH OF WAVE. METHOD STRINGENCY CAUSE OF ELIMINATING 2ND COLOR AFTER 1ST 6 PANELS (PATCHINESS OF COLOR?) IN SHORTER WAVELENGTH."[62] She realized that the physical demands of the series impacted her use of colors. She had to change her instructions on color as she went along in order to ease the method of production and insure that the series be as complete as possible.

Lozano produced another series of paintings beginning around 1963. Known as the tool paintings, they usually depicted a tool, like a hammer or screw. Lozano used rich creamy pigments and layers the paint thickly on the canvas. The images were sensual in their execution and the tools contained a latent sexual energy. Some of the paintings also showed the morphing sexual imagery of the early drawings. The texture of the paint made the tools seem alive. An untitled painting from 1963 from the tool series depicted the head of a hammer bending toward a long thick screw (Fig. 27). Lozano used oil on canvas and the colors were dull metallic tones. The shaft of the screw took on a double meaning; the hammer also became a sexual menace. Despite the cold colors, Lozano created a feeling of sensuality through the broad brushstrokes. The pendulous hammer head resembled nothing so much as a penis as it enveloped the screw. Together the two tools created a dialogue that communicated the sexual possibilities of being hammered and being screwed, in the colloquial sense. The *Wave Series* in comparison seems sterile. The low frequency panels approximate the sensuality of the *Tools* in their curving waves. However, as the frequency of the wave increases, sensuality is replaced by tension. The compression of the curving waves negates the materiality of the paint, leaving in its place a seething energy field.

Other conceptual artists also produced painting series. Sol LeWitt created a series of *Wall Drawings* beginning in the late sixties. The first drawing LeWitt made himself at the Paula

[62] Sketchbook #11.

Cooper Gallery in 1968. Unlike Lozano, LeWitt did not require that he be the creator of each drawing. Rather his instructions would guide a draftsman in the creation of the drawing. An example from this series is *Wall Drawing #65 Lines Not Touching* (Fig. 28) that LeWitt defined as follows: "Lines, not short, not straight, crossing and touching, drawn at random, using four colors (yellow, black, red, blue) uniformly disperse with maximum density covering the entire surface of the wall."[63] Occasionally, LeWitt did make the wall drawings himself, but more often they were done by others. The same principles of the series apply regardless because the executor of the drawings is the draftsman. The draftsman makes decisions within the plan outlined by LeWitt. Each time it is made, the drawing is different due to each person's individual interpretation of the plan. LeWitt insists that even if the same person were to make the drawing twice, the outcome would be different both times. LeWitt also defined what happened if the draftsman deviated from the plan: "The wall drawing is the artist's art, as long as the plan is not violated. If it is, then the draftsman becomes the artist and the drawing would be his work of art, but art that is a parody of the original concept."[64] The execution of the drawings took a physical and psychological toll on the draftsman. David Schulman was the first draftsman of *Wall Drawing 65* at the Guggenheim, New York in 1971. He kept notes on the process. He found the phrase "maximum density" ambiguous and hoped that his financial concerns would not influence how much time he spent on the drawing. He drew one color at a time until he felt that he had represented a quarter of the maximum density. Although not as strenuous a process as the one Lozano made for *Wave Series*, the production of the drawing caused discomfort. Taking this as a cue to break, Schulman would step back to relieve the strain and take in his progress. Despite the arduousness of the drawing, Schulman found some respite in the task: "Doing the drawing I

[63] Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966-1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 201.
[64] Lippard, *Six Years,* 201.

realized that totally relaxing my body was only one way of reaching a deep level of concentration. Another was in the mindless activity of doing the drawing. Keeping my body totally active in an almost involuntary way—in a sense totally relaxed my mind. When my mind relaxed, thoughts would flow at a smoother and faster pace."[65] Lozano likely reached a similar state in the midst of painting, particularly in the later panels when she worked for days at a time.

The Conceptual Art Process

Lozano began the *Wave* series of paintings in 1967 and stopped work on it in 1970. She completed the first five panels out of sequence order, but the last six panels were done in numerical order from low to high frequency waves. The piece was classically conceptualist and reflected the influence of Sol LeWitt.[66] The series has many of the elements that LeWitt prescribed for conceptual art. Lozano had set herself a task: she used a mathematical formula of her own making to recreate wavelengths of light through painting. Each of the eleven paintings in the series had increasingly more wavelengths and each had to be produced in one sitting. The number of wavelengths increased according to a variable she included in the original formula. The first painting, *Wave 2*, took eight hours to complete. *Wave 96,* the last completed work in the series, took three days of non-stop production. Lozano stopped the series when it became physically impossible for her to carry out the demands she had set for herself with *Wave 192*, which she started in 1970. She had transformed her body into an art-making machine, but she had pushed the machine to the limits of its abilities. The early wave paintings had two colors and the body worked smoothly as a machine. As she went on with the project and it became more physically demanding, Lozano decided to make each one monochrome and purposefully chose

[65] Lippard, *Six Years*, 202
[66] Specifically, LeWitt's *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art* and *Sentences on Conceptual Art*.

dull muted tones, indicative of the cold and industrial. Monochrome made execution slightly easier, but the increased wavelengths took much longer to complete. She had to stop before the body-art-machine broke down.

The *Wave Series* is one manifestation of her conceptual painting. She also worked on a series entitled *Sober Drunk Stoned* during the late sixties. The series comprised different sets of images. Each set had three paintings of the same images, which Lozano completed in the states of being sober, drunk and stoned over a set period of time. She wished to explore what impact her mental state had on her work. Again, she set herself a scientific task. The sober canvas acted like a control piece to which the drunk and stoned paintings would be compared in order to determine the effect. Both *Wave* and *SDS* series were similar in that Lozano used them as a means of exploring her physical limitations. Lozano did not take *SDS* to the extremes that she did the *Wave Series*. She wrote extensively about the *Wave Series* in her sketchbook-diaries whereas she did not discuss the *SDS* in as much detail. She discussed how she wanted to execute the series, but she did not have instructions about what materials to use or how to display it as she did with the *Wave Series*.

These two series reflect the impact of Conceptual art on Lozano. She knew the leading artists in the movement personally and stayed abreast of their writings on their work. Sol LeWitt is the most obvious influence on her work. His *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art,* and the later *Sentences on Conceptual Art,* defined the parameters the emerging art movement:

> When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art. This kind of art is not theoretical or illustrative of theories; it is intuitive, it is involved with all types of mental processes and it is purposeful. It is usually free from the dependence on the skill of the artist is a craftsman. It is the objective of the artist who is concerned with

> conceptual art to make his work mentally interesting to the spectator, and therefore usually he would want it to become emotionally dry.[67]

LeWitt discussed the importance of seriality and the setting of a task. Lozano adopted some of the conventions that LeWitt set out, but she could not divorce herself so completely from her art. She followed her intuition in letting the series reveal insights as she worked through it so that the conceptual process became a means of exploring her scientific hypothesis. The canvases were prepped in a traditional manner with gesso and the well-formed lines point to her artistic skill. The private nature of her work differed markedly from the distance LeWitt advocated. She did not present her series as instructions for others to follow. Lozano had defined the parameters of the scientific experiment to be proven via a conceptual painting series and the tasks are for her alone to be executed in the solitude of her loft studio.

She had very specific directions for displaying the *Wave* series, which she amended over the years. Her thought process was drawn out so as to consider every aspect of display. On September 29th, 1969, Lozano had a revelation:

> OVER SEVERAL WEEKS NOW THE IDEA HAS FORMED ITSELF: A) BECAUSE OF THE NATURE OF THE WAVE SERIES IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY THAT IT BE SHOWN AND I HAVE AIMED TO SHOW IT UNDER THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE CONDITIONS AT A N.Y. MUSEUM. I HOPE THAT SEEING THE WAVE IN SERIES WILL REVEAL SOME 'STARTLING NEW INFO TO ME.'[68]

The paintings had to be placed in the order of frequency from low to high. They were not to be hung on the wall; rather they ought to be placed on the floor leaning against it. However, she also stated that the paintings had no one orientation and therefore could be hung either vertically or horizontally. The room in which they were displayed had to be dimly lit and painted black. She also suggested that the room be completely dark. Visitors would be given flashlights with which

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[67] Sol LeWitt, *Paragraphs on Conceptual Art* in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), 12.
[68] Sketchbook #4, 45.

to navigate the gallery. Her motivation in prescribing the exhibition of the series in this manner was to emphasize the connection between the viewer and the work. At one point, she decided to limit the exhibition of the series in order to keep it private so that she could control who viewed it.[69]

During the creation process, Lozano would isolate herself in her studio. She would take short breaks to eat, use the bathroom and smoke more marijuana, but otherwise she worked continuously. She was very much attached to the series and did not wish to sell it. However, if and when it should sell, Lozano ordered that all eleven panels of the series should remain together.[70] She also wanted the series to always be exhibited as a whole, never in part. The series has only been on display in its entirety three times. The series was first exhibited at the Whitney in 1970 and only some of Lozano's instructions were followed. A second exhibition of the series in 1983 did not follow her instructions either. The third exhibition took place in 1998 at the Wadsworth Atheneum, which currently owns all eleven panels. Three were donated by individuals; the rest came from her dealer, Jaap van Liere. The Wadsworth worked closely with Lozano to make sure that the exhibition met her approval.

On October 27, 1969, Lozano discussed her view of the series: "MY CANVASES ARE PUNS ON 'SUBSTANTIAL,' THE GREAT MIDDLE CLASS VALUE. THE PAINTINGS WEIGH MORE, THE PAINT IS NOTICABLY AS SUBSTANCE BECAUSE OF THE TEXTURE I GIVE IT, I USE LEAD WHITE FOR GROUND, ETC. I LOVE MATTER AND I HATE OBJECTS."[71] Also in 1972, Lozano realized that "MUCH OF MY NEW WORK SEEMS TO CONCERN ITSELF WITH CONSUMPTION, INCL. CONSUMPTION OF TIME, LIKE

[69] *Painting Piece*, Fig. 12.
[70] This was not to be the case. Three of the panels were sold individually.
[71] Sketchbook #4, 62. Lozano revised this section later in 1972, stating that she no longer loved matter.

ONE THING THE (WAVE) PAINTINGS, ARE CONCERNED WITH."[72] Although not the main focus of her work, class issues played a role in Lozano's art. As with the airplane drawings, there was an underlying concern for middle class values in the *Wave Series*. Her concern for these values coincided with a flagrant disregard for them. Lozano's lifestyle of booze, drugs, sex and conceptual art could not have been further removed from the middle class values with which she was raised. However, her upbringing within these values instilled an awareness of class and this was reflected with the highly personal nature of her art. Her hatred of objects reflected the middle-class dislike of uselessness. The pun on substantial related to her love of matter: the purposeful, oddly moralistic, need to create an (anti-)monumental work that still stood as a scientific achievement.

Her Body, Her Self

Lozano was unique among conceptual artists in her emphasis on herself. A leading practice for conceptual artists of the sixties was to separate themselves from the production of their work. The artist would come up with the idea and have it executed by others. Sol LeWitt made "paintings" in that he came up with instructions for an image that would then be executed by others. He dictated size and color choice, giving instructions for the process, but leaving room for individual interpretation. These works were still credited to the artist despite the fact that he had no hand in the actual production. His contribution of a driving creative idea allowed him to claim authorship. Lozano's work differed in that her active participation was essential to the execution of each piece. She did not farm out her work to others for manufacture. Each piece came directly from her hand: "her active working body has become the eroticized tool, the

[72] Sketchbook #2, 18.

embodied and sexualized agent of production."[73] Her direct involvement in the production of her work was essential. She could not merely give instructions and then stand by while others executed her vision.

She struggled with the idea of self reflexivity in the work of art and reacted to recently published articles by her peers. One entry from April 17th, 1968, related her views of painting in response to Robert Morris's "Anti-Form" in *Artforum*:

> ONE CONCEPT OF PAINT IS IT'S BEING MATTER IN LIQUID STATE. TWO PAINTERS WHO THOUGHT OF IT THIS WAY WERE POLLOCK AND LEWIS, MOOSE'S [Morris's] CURRENT TWO PAINTER HEROES. ANOTHER CONCEPT OF PAINT IS ITS BEING MATTER IN SOLID STATE. A PAINTER WHO THINKS OF IT THIS WAY IS LEE LOZANO, WHOSE BOWELS FUNCTION MAGNIFICENTLY. ANY KIND OF ART CAN UTILIZE MATERIALS IN ANY STATE OF MATTER, ENERGY TOO. ANY KIND OF PAINT, WHEN DRY AFTER APPLICATION BY ANY KIND OF PROCESS, IS IN SOLID STATE.[74]

Even when discussing the materiality of paint, Lozano could not leave aside her body. Her bowels represented a mechanical system. Her internal functions were part of her artistic machine. Jumbled together with these passages on art were others about the cosmos, particularly having to do with astronomy and, to a certain extent, astrology.

Repetition again played an important role in Lozano's work. Whereas in the drawings, there was a repetition of imagery, in the *Wave Series* there was a repetition of motion and form. Lozano painted for hours on end methodically moving her brush across the canvas, mimicking the convex and concave form of the wave over and over. Already high on marijuana, the process was probably hypnotic. The eight foot tall canvases were mostly likely turned horizontally in order to best facilitate uninterrupted sessions of productions. Moving from end to end, up and down, Lozano could easily have lost any sense of her self. The repetitious motion creating a

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[73] Molesworth, *Reviews: Lee Lozano*
[74] Barry Rosen and Jaap van Liere, eds., *Lee Lozano Drawings: Which One Are You?* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press: 2006).

record in paint. As the wavelengths became shorter and it took longer to complete each panel, Lozano would have been pushed further until any sense of her physicality was erased. Painting non-stop for three days in order to complete *96 Wave* must have been a transformative experience.

The faintly feminine qualities she still retained in 1967 are gone by 1970 when she completed the *Wave Series*. The early paintings in the series have large waves. These sensuous curves are reminiscent of the feminine body, suggestive of hips and breasts. This is especially true of the first painting in the series, *2 Wave*. The wave seems like the abstracted body of a vampy curvaceous woman. It calls to mind the pre-historic fertility goddess statues. However, as the wavelength shortens, the image becomes tighter, more like a straight line than a wave. The reference to human form is soon lost and replaced by a shimmering column of pure energy. The series is a systemic transformation over three years of Lozano's own physicality. She has translated into paint the performance of gender:

> Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*. The effect of gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gesture, movements, and styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.[75]

The repetition of gesture in the production of the *Wave Series* allowed Lozano to hone her gender identity. She brought together masculine and feminine in her artistic process in order to create androgyny. The stereotypically masculine rationality of math and science synthesized through her body as an art-making machine resulted in feminine imagery. The curving form of the wave, particularly in the high-frequency paintings, seemed to relate unintentionally to feminist core imagery made by artists like Judy Chicago. The vibrating red column of waves in *24 Wave* especially resembled nothing so much as a pulsating vaginal canal.

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[75] "Bodily Inscriptions" in *The Judith Butler Reader*, 114.

With each completed painting, Lozano moved further away from her identification with a female human body. Through repetitive and grueling work, she rid herself of all humanity. She made her body a machine, completely divorced for sex. Defined now by her sexlessness, she was truly androgynous. She could not completely leave behind her female sex but she de-emphasized that part of herself in her work. However, in her sketchbook-diaries, she wrote often and candidly about her genitalia: "BODY GOES THROUGH SUCH VIOLENT CHANGES POSSIBLY BECAUSE: DUE TO LARGENESS AND WELL-FORMEDNESS OF GENITALS (CUNT, OVARIES, ETC,. CLITORIS AND OTHERS) (DUE TO ACCIDENT OF SCORPIO BIRTH ETC?) THE GENITALS SEND MORE INFO TO THE MIND, A QUANTITATIVE FACTOR."[76] She was also interested in the effect of orgasms on her body and used the word "wave" to describe the intense feelings of pleasure:

> A new kind of Orgasm completely relaxed body. Relax cunt (must be tumescent and well lubricated, use spit if necessary to get it going). Think of orgasm as love-waves going out. Think of transmitting love-info to the universe. Orgasm (giving) starts in brain, is tidal wave out from genital. Starts with little ripples that build in volume/intensity to a big roll over spin forward crash wave or a waterfall wave or a strong force wave thrust. A come wave. Different each time.

As much as her work pushed her body to its physical limits, she could not discount the power of her sex completely. She drew on her femininity as necessary and she certainly saw it as a source of inspiration.

However, her interest in her body and her sex had a limit. Her sex may have aided her creative process, but it was her body, working like a machine, that created the final product. Her work did not conform to some essentially feminine motif, as was the case with many feminist women artists at this time. She created for herself a third sex, combining the body of a woman, waiflike as that was, with an aggressive phallically oriented mind. This is not surprising given

[76] Sketchbook #4, November 27th, 1969, p. 85.

her affinity for the company of men. As her ex-husband noted, women did not like her, but men found her intriguing.[77]

The series also required Lozano to cut herself off from the rest of the world. She had to focus all of her thoughts and energy on painting each canvas. She did not allow herself any distractions or contact with the world outside her studio. This kind of solitary work was a common part of Lozano's artistic practice in the late sixties. The periods of isolation had a negative impact on Lozano's mental state. She wrote in her sketchbook-diaries about intense feelings of paranoia that arose when she did not interact with other people, feelings likely enhanced by her heavy use of marijuana. Her comments on June 21, 1969 revealed that she was well aware her of mental issues: "THE LAST THREE DAYS HAVE BROUGHT OUT MY INSANITY NEATLY. I THINK EVERYBODY IS A LITTLE TOO INSANE TOO, BUT I REALIZE TONIGHT THAT MY IMAGE OF HOW THE WORLD IS, IS INACCURATE. PART OF MY INSANTIY IS VIOLENT PARANOIA ATTACKS.[78] Her decision to purposefully isolate herself for certain projects, like the *Wave Series*, likely fed into these feelings. Although she recognized her mental instability, she continued to pursue work that contributed to her deterioration. Over the course of the series, she began to withdraw from the art world through some of her other conceptual pieces. The *Wave Series* was finished two years before she left New York once and for all.

[77] Wilonsky, 2.
[78] Sketchbook #2, 80. Her isolation is part of her language pieces as well and will be discussed further in the next chapter

Chapter 4

The Ordering of Life:
Language and Performance in the Conceptual Pieces

"I am willing to die in the course of experimenting with my ideas" ~Lee Lozano, 1970

Beginning in the mid 1960s, Lee Lozano kept journals. She considered them sketchbooks and her writings in them drawings. In the sketchbooks, she wrote about art, ideas for projects, and her life. The sketchbooks were incredibly personal at times and were not meant to be shown in public. If a piece described in the sketchbooks was to be displayed, she would make a formal write-up for the exhibition. Her candid, diary-like writings in the sketchbooks reveal great insight into Lozano's life and art. In reading the sketchbooks in chronological order, it becomes clear that Lozano was battling psychological problems. Her handwriting, at first crisp and even, becomes increasingly wild over the years. Her once clearly articulated ideas turn into flow-of-consciousness ramblings. She seemed to be losing control of herself. The performative conceptual pieces she conceived of attempted to give her some degree of power over her actions as she continued to struggle with her artistic and gender identity. However, this power was an illusion and only worked to further her symptoms as her pieces forced her to move between extremes of behavior. Her performance pieces relate to the work of artists like Vito Acconci and Carolee Schneemann. Despite the critique inherent in her work, she could not escape the oppressiveness of the art institution and society itself. She did not like the consumerism of the gallery/dealer system nor did she want to sell her works, but was forced to do so by financial straits. Lozano chafed at the quotidian responsibilities of paying bills and rent. These final conceptual art pieces completely divorced Lozano from the world around her.

The body was central to Lozano and her work. Her body and its functions fascinated her; she seemed to delight in challenging the limits of her flesh. Although Lozano had always used

her body to create drawings and paintings, with the conceptual performance pieces her body became the site of the art. Lozano documented these performances in her sketchbooks beginning in 1968. These were private, a fact she emphasized by writing "Private, man, PRIVATE" on the cover of Sketchbook #8.[79] In as much as these sketchbooks were documents, they also gave Lozano a medium through which to define her life. As a scholar, the sketchbook-diaries offered a wealth of information about Lozano and how she filled her days. She wrote about her art, her love life and even reflected on the psychological issues with which she struggled. She revealed insight into her unconscious: "the Freudian unconscious is situated at that point, where, between cause and that which it affects, there is always something wrong…For what the unconscious does is to show us the gap through which neurosis recreates a harmony with a real—a real that may well not be determined."[80] Lozano recognized some of her neurotic behavior and she wrote about the paranoia she felt when she isolated herself from the world. The sketchbooks were a way for her to determine the real, as much as possible. They offer a glimpse into her mind. Given her heavy alcohol and drug use, they likely served as an anchor to reality, holding her fleeting thoughts in place. She could come back to them as a touchstone, knowing that her thoughts had been safely captured by pen and paper. Yet, the stability offered by the sketchbooks became more and more tenuous over the years. Lozano battled with two sides of herself: one that wanted love and companionship, the other that wanted isolation despite the psychic costs.

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[79] All of the sketchbooks, eleven total, are held currently by Hauser and Wirth in Zurich, which handles a portion of Lozano's estate. My experience with the sketchbooks was intense. I had only two days to read all them and look at some of Lozano's drawings. Having been fully immersed in her writing helped me to gain a greater understanding of her work. Given the private nature of the sketchbook-diaries, I am inclined to take them as genuine. Lozano comes across as a multi-faceted, quixotic and vulnerable person. I felt like a voyeur, especially while reading about her troubled relationships with men. Her emotions seemed too real to be part of a performance. I have taken her writings as a true indication of her thoughts and feelings.

[80] Lacan, 22.

Life as Art

By 1970, nearly every aspect of Lozano's life had been regimented within a conceptual art piece. She documented her consumption of food and drugs. At the same time as keeping her more diary-like sketchbooks, she also kept sketchbooks in which she recorded every phone call she made and received.[81] While some of her conceptual pieces were painting series, she also engaged in performance art of a kind. With the performative pieces, there was no separation between art and everyday life. The two had become inextricably intertwined. Lucy Lippard identified Lozano as one of the first people to achieve life as art:

> Lozano's 'conceptual' work, conceived simultaneously with the end of a large series of paintings on wave phenomena, combine art and life to an extreme extent. Unlike most 'instruction' or 'command' pieces, for example, Lozano's are directed to herself, and she has carried them out scrupulously, no matter how difficult to sustain they may be. Her art, it has been said becomes the means by which to transform her life, and, by implication, the lives of others and of the planet itself.[82]

The final statement may be reaching too far. Lozano certainly sought a personal transformation and to an extent envisioned one for the world. However, she did not create pieces that were directed at transforming others.

The scope of her work was confined to her body and her studio. This was a different approach to conceptual pieces than those made by other artists.[83] Lozano conceived of her work as an extension of herself. She had to perform the prescribed actions. The instructions were not meant for others to enact at some later date, but were part of her daily life. The performances ranged from private acts like masturbation to interactive pieces such as conversations with other artists. Even if Lozano sought to involve others in her performances, she kept the encounters intimate, with no more than one or two people interacting with her at a time. Most of the pieces

[81] Part of Sketchbook #1 and the whole of Sketchbooks #3 and #10 contain lists of her telephone conversations.
[82] *Six Years*, 98.
[83] Sol LeWitt, for example, created pieces that were meant to be executed by others and did not involve him as the artist beyond the formation of the idea.

described in the sketchbooks actually depended on interaction with Lozano in order to be whole and complete. Several of the pieces described in the sketchbooks took place over a period of time; some even went on at the same time. Many of her written pieces described altering her state of consciousness as a means of art. She took or abstained from drugs, sex, or contact with other people.

The strict control Lozano placed on her interactions with her surroundings prefigured in some ways the work of Adrian Piper in the 1970s. Piper used her body as the site of her art and explored how people reacted to her in strained situations. Her pieces were based on political, racial, or philosophical ideas, whereas Lozano's came across as more arbitrary. Lozano did not prescribe to any kind of agenda beyond her own wish-fulfillment. However, both Lozano and Piper shared an interest in documenting their interactions with other people as a part of their work, though in different ways. Piper relied more on photography and would often have help from an assistant in documenting her pieces as in the Catalysis series. Lozano on the other hand rejected any kind of interaction with another person, preferring to write by hand all documents of her art. In her article on meta-art, Piper articulates a definition of art and the artist that speaks to Lozano's work:

> …the nature of art is necessarily aesthetic and not epistemic, while an artist is both of these and more. An artist is aesthetic in his or her personhood; in being unique, particular, uncategorizable, inscrutable, ultimately opaque. But also we are conceptualizing, discursive, cognitive creatures. And to the extent that we can successfully analyze, identify and ascribe properties to ourselves, we forfeit that aesthetic quality and become what might be called 'epistemically transparent': We can be known. This implies a second difference. Whereas an artwork is always a third-person object which we can never penetrate, an artist has privileged access to himself or herself: We can know *ourselves*.[84]

Lozano's pieces can be read as personal investigation in order to know herself. She was almost methodical in her documentation of her pieces and did have insights into not only her art but also

[84] "In Support of Meta-Art" in *Out of Order, Out of Sight: Selected Writings in Art Criticism 1967-2002 Vol. II* (Cambridge MA: The MIT Press, 1996), 20-21.

herself in these pieces. Piper's proposition about artist's knowing themselves did not seem to be important to other Conceptual artists. LeWitt, Kosuth, and others were interested in removing the artist's hand from art. They wanted pieces that were equally accessible to all viewers. In particular, they were objecting to abstract expressionism, which relied heavily on how the artist felt. LeWitt especially promoted art that was free of all aesthetic principles and wholly about the idea. Lozano's *Wave* series met some of these criteria in part. However, she emphasized much more the participation of her body in the making of the art.

Lacan pointed to the use of language in regimenting the mind: "The unconscious is constituted by the effects of speech on the subject, it is the dimension in which the subject is determined in the development of the effects of speech, consequently the unconscious is structured like a language."[85] In this way, Lacan sought to unite semiotics and psychoanalysis. The keeping of sketchbook-diaries related to Lozano's mental instability because they gave her a measure of control over her mind. At first, Lozano numbered all of the pages and dated each entry in her sketchbook-diaries, using it to give structure to her jumbled thoughts. However, she became less careful about pagination and dates as her mental state deteriorated. Lozano played with language in the sketchbooks and created new meanings for words or created new words all together in order to give form to her ideas. For example, she used "sex" as a verb and redefined mass as "mmmmmmmm, ass." Humor abounded in her writings. However, she often came across as quite vulnerable, especially when discussing her relationships with men. In one entry, she described how her current lover was calling on her to be a woman and she was calling on him to be a man.[86] She very much wanted to find love and happiness, but at the same time, she seemed to loathe herself for being so conventionally female as to be such a romantic.

[85] Lacan, 149.
[86] Sketchbook #1 April 20, 1968, p.22. Lozano must have been in a more pessimistic mood when she edited this entry because she commented that this was bullshit.

Documenting her life became a way for her to focus her mental and emotional energy. This focus allowed her to work out creative problems and issues of sex. She manipulated her body in the search for androgyny as if to deny her very nature.

Amelia Jones argued that performance and body art arise from a political statement the artist was trying to make. In her discussion of body art, Jones also critiqued Lippard's ideas on the dematerialization of art: "for those who wish to privilege performance or body art for its merging of art and life, its delivery of the body/subject of the artist directly to the view, the body must be seen as an unmediated reflection of self whose presence guarantees the redemptive quality of art as activism."[87] Jones viewed body and performance art as especially suited to communicating a political message when it merged life and art, as with Lozano's work. However, there did not seem to be a political message inherent in Lozano's performative art. As shown above, Lippard tried to ascribe to Lozano a political mission of "change the world", but a reading of her lesser known works undermined Lippard's conclusions. There were certain pieces that critique art institutions and politics, but more often, there was no overt agenda apparent in her performances. Lozano was most interested in herself, almost to the exclusion of all else. Although she did yearn for a massive social and cultural revolution, she did not take steps in her work to achieve that goal for the world at large. Her main concern was making such a revolution occur for herself. Only then, might there be hope for others to follow her lead.

Seeking the Extremes

The majority of Lozano's conceptual-performance pieces took place over an extended period of time. These pieces reflected Lozano's interest in extreme behaviors and actions. In her sketchbook-diaries, she stated that she wanted to seek the extremes because that was where all

[87] *Body Art/Performing the Subject*, 35.

the action was. The exploration of extremes was what made her work so compelling. The middle ground was hinted at, but held no interest for her. Extremes pushed the limits of convention. *Grass Piece* and *No-Grass Piece* were two examples of how she moved between radically different experiences. For *Grass Piece*, Lozano smoked marijuana everyday for thirty-three days because that was how long the marijuana she bought for the piece lasted. She followed it with *No Grass Piece* in which she sought to abstain from marijuana for the same amount of time. She wrote down the effects of the drug or the lack of it, particularly how it influenced her thoughts and feelings. When she finished the pieces, she made formal write-ups. These were the only record of the pieces. She did not use photography or video as other body and performance artists did in order to document her work. Before starting out on the piece, Lozano came up with instructions for herself: "MAKE A GOOD SCORE, A LID OR MORE OF EXCELLENT GRASS. SMOKE IT 'UP' AS FAST AS YOU CAN. STAY HIGH ALL DAY, EVERY DAY. SEE WHAT HAPPENS."[88] She tried to stay continually high while awake. During sleep and the time in the morning immediately after waking were the only times she was not high. She documented the physical changes that took place due to the massive amount of marijuana she smoked. At the end, when all the marijuana had been smoked, she ate the remaining seeds and stems. As a result of this piece, she felt lethargic and ill.

Due to her poor state of health at the end, Lozano followed *Grass Piece* immediately with *No-Grass Piece*: "GO WITHOUT GRASS FOR THE SAME AMOUNT OF TIME AS GRASS PIECE, WHICH TURNS OUT TO BE 33 DAYS."[89] For this piece, Lozano attempted to abstain from smoking marijuana for the same time period as she had smoked for *Grass Piece*. She was not as successful, since she would often accept offers from friends to get high. However, she did

[88] See Fig. 30.
[89] Folie, 98.

drastically limit her intake compared to what it had been before and she again documented the physical side effects in her sketchbooks. During *No-Grass Piece*, she described herself as being incredibly paranoid all the time, a feeling she did not have during *Grass Piece* and one she did not care to experience.

Just as she had explored extremes of drug use, Lozano also investigated sexual extremes. Sex continued to occupy Lozano's mind throughout her career. Ironically, it is in her pieces devoted to sex that we see the middle ground. Rather than forcing herself to the extremes of masculinity and femininity, Lozano worked to define her body between those two polarities. She was at once both female and male, yet also neither. In *Masturbation Investigation*, Lozano documented incidents when she masturbated, what she thought of, and what objects she used, if any.[90] This piece took place simultaneously with *Grass Piece* and *General Strike Piece*. The investigation took place over three days, April 3rd-5th, 1969. On the first day, Lozano masturbated while fantasizing about real and imaginary people, then while looking at pictures. The second day found her using various objects: "HARD RUBBER MOTORCYCLE PEDAL, FEATHER, CARROT,* PHALLIC LIGHTBULB…*IT WAS A SEXY CARROT & AND BEING ORGANIC WORKED BEST OF ALL THE OBJECTS USED." Here, Lozano seemed to acknowledge her female sex. She was penetrated by the phallic objects. The piece culminated with her looking at a reflection of her genitals in a small mirror. She described the changes that came over her body: "OBSERVE TUMESCENCE, TURGIDITY, COLOR CHANGE FROM LIGHT RED TO BRIGHT RED, VIOLENT EJACULATION OF LUBRICATION FROM DUCT NEAR CLITORIS, & VIBRATION DURING ORGASM." Her close examination of her genitalia reflected feminist ideas about knowing one's body. Yet, the words she used to describe her sex were masculine. Tumescence and turgidity could also describe penises. She further

[90] See Folie, 97.

androgynized herself through the act of ejaculation. If it were not for the mention of her clitoris, one would think she was describing a male orgasm. *Masturbation Investigation* was arguably her most personal piece. Although sexuality and the body were central aspects of her work, sex acts as such were not. There was a voyeuristic quality that came through this piece that was not present in the others.

In looking at Lozano as a performance artist, comparisons can be drawn with Vito Acconci. A body and performance artist, Acconci incorporated an interest in his physical being into his work. Some of his early pieces were linguistic in nature: "From the mid to late 1960's Acconci was a writer, primarily a poet, one who was interested in the physicality of language and writing itself. From the late 1960's until 1974, Acconci worked in the 'real' space of performance, sometimes integrated with video and film. During this period, Acconci conducted a series of artistic experiments that typically used his body as one of their elements."[91] He considered his hand-written poems works of art. He later rejected them in order to produce performance art. He manipulated and subjugated his body in various pieces of art. Like Lozano, Acconci also executed a masturbation piece, *Seedbed,* in 1972. He preformed the piece in public: "Acconci was hidden beneath a low wooden ramp in the Sonnabend Gallery, New York. Three times a week, for eight hours a day, visitors would listen to Acconci as he moved about, voicing the sexual fantasies set off by the sounds of those above into a microphone and masturbating."[92] He was also interested in sexual identity. He did not just androgynize his body, but rather he worked to make himself feminine. In his three-part piece *Conversions* from 1971, Acconci attempted to make his body more feminine by burning away his body hair and massaging his chest. He also tucked his penis between his legs in order to simulate the look of the female pubis,

[91] Frazer Ward, Mark C. Taylor, and Jennifer Bloomer, *Vito Acconci* (London: Phaidon Press, 2002), 19-24.
[92] Ward et al, 40.

creating a "mangina." Acconci and Lozano developed similar artistic sensibilities, but Acconci's work was much more concerned with the public exhibition space. If Lozano had continued to work, she likely would have continued the linguistic conceptualism and kept it active at the same time as private performance pieces. She would probably have continued the investigation of her body and sexuality, separate from the greater dialogue on gender in art. For Acconci, he had to reject writing and turn to body and performance art to best communicate his critiques of gender and its institutions. Lozano knew Acconci when she lived in New York; she described meeting him with a group of friends at a restaurant. Since her work predated his, it was tempting to point to her as an influence on him.

A Long Conversation

Dialogue Piece took place over a number of years and could have gone on indefinitely. For this piece, Lozano invited people over to her studio for conversations. She then recorded the name of the person she dialogued with and the time and length of the conversation in her sketchbook. The actual content of the dialogue was usually omitted out of respect for privacy. For her, it was not the content that was the important part of the piece, but the idea of the conversation and what creative directions it might take her. The dialogues she had stood alone in time and place as the art. Each dialogue was different and could not be replicated. The writings in her sketchbooks stood as a record of the event. She chose the participants in *Dialogue Piece* primarily from the art scene in New York in which she moved. From the sketchbooks, it seemed that she enjoyed this piece very much and the piece was constantly evolving. She wrote extensively about the merits of the piece in her sketchbook on May 19th, 1969:

> THE DIALOGUE PIECE COMES THE CLOSEST SO FAR TO AN IDEAL I HAVE OF A KIND OF ART THAT WOULD NEVER CEASE RETURNING FEEDBACK TO ME OR TO OHERS, WHICH CONTINUALLY

> REFRESHES ITSELF WITH NEW INFORMATION, WHICH APPROACHES AN IDEAL MERGER OF FORM AND CONTENT, WHICH CAN NEVER BE 'FINISHED,' WHICH CAN NEVER RUN OUT OF MATERIAL, WHICH DOESN'T INVOLVE 'THE ARTIST & THE OBSERVER' BUT MAKES BOTH PARTICIPANTS ARTIST AND OBSERVER SIMULTANEOULSY, WHICH IS NOT FOR SALE, WHICH IS DEMOCARTIC, WHICH IS NOT DIFFICULT TO MAKE, WHICH IS INEXPENSIVE TO MAKE, WHICH CAN NEVER BE COMPLETELY UNDERSTOOD, PARTS OF WHICH WILL ALWAYS REMAIN MYSTERIOUS & UNKNOWN, WHICH IS UNPREDICTABLE & PREDITIABLE AT THE SAME TIME, IN FACT, THIS PIECE APPROACHES HAVING EVERYTHING I ENJOY OR SEEK ABT ART, AND IT CANNOT BE OUT IN A GALLERY, ALTHOUGH SOME ASPECTS OF IT COULD BE 'EXHIBITED' IF SO DESIRED.[93]

In short, it was everything a conceptual artist would want a piece to be. She had an idea to extend it indefinitely and move to an exotic location, an island perhaps. She would invite people to visit her at her retreat for the conversation.

For Helen Molesworth, *Dialogue Piece* typified "the primary thrust of Lozano's work: the desire to use art to live a highly examined, and hence thoughtful, life. If one of art's traditional roles has been to consolidate and focus attention and perception on an object then Lozano used art to train her attention on the public and private functions of herself as an artist."[94] This idea of public and private was especially interesting. Lozano used her studio space, where she both lived and worked, to conduct her pieces as a means of reinforcing their artistic intent. She connected her self as artist with a space acknowledged by the art institutions as one where artistic creation took place. Yet, by insisting that her art remain in the studio, Lozano subverted the commodification of her work. The work only existed in that place and could not be taken out of it if it was still to be her art. This was an essential part of her artistic identity. She could not be separated from her work. This practice of keeping the work in the studio also kept the work in a constant state of production: "A work produced in the studio must be seen, therefore, as an object subject to infinite manipulation. In order for this to occur, from the moment of its production the

[93] Rosen and van Liere. ABT stands for about.
[94] "Tune In, Turn On, Drop Out: The Rejection of Lee Lozano" *Art Journal* 61 (2002), 66.

work must be isolated from the real world. All the same, it is in the studio and only in the studio that it is closest to its own reality, a reality from which it will continue to distance itself."[95] The work was somehow incorruptible if it stayed within the studio. Once introduced to the realm of galleries and museums, it was cheapened, removed from its ideal state of 'infinite manipulation.'

Lozano was reluctant for her art to leave the private studio space to be publicly exhibited. She did show her work in prominent galleries and even sold works out of financial necessity. However, she wrote extensively in her sketchbooks about her dissatisfaction with the trade of art. She thought about ways to regulate the pricing and sale of art.[96] On September 25, 1968, she decided that she was going to "boycott galleries and dealers too."[97] Lozano's boycott did not last long. Within a few months, she had sold some drawings to Paul Bianchini. However, she was left with a feeling of emptiness that she ascribed to "getting money" for her work.[98] She never took her work to a place outside the boundaries of the art world. Although Lozano wrote of moving to a Caribbean island and continuing to produce her *Dialogue Piece* from her home there, this still did not divorce her from recognizable artistic spaces. Her home would have been site of creative interactions and because of her presence as artist, would have been legitimized as a site for art making.

Alexander Alberro links Lozano with Dan Graham and Joseph Kosuth.[99] Graham's critique of site specific art spoke to Lozano's obsession with using her studio as the site of all her pieces. She was not interested in taking her pieces out to exhibition spaces. Rather she wanted to keep them in her studio almost as a means of preserving their content. The pieces were eternal within the space of her studio. She could control access to them as she saw fit, rather than

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[95] Daniel Buren "The Function of the Studio" trans. Thomas Repensek, *October*, Vol. 10 (Autumn 1979), 53.
[96] See Sketchbook #8.
[97] Sketchbook #1.
[98] From Rosen and Van Liere, Sketchbook #2, May 13th, 1969.
[99] See *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003)

subjugate herself to whims of a gallery owner or art dealer. Lozano and Kosuth communicated about a piece she had in mind that constituted taking out ad space in magazines for artistic purpose. Another piece from June 8th, 1968 points to the work of Graham:

> ONE CERTAIN WAY TO ALWAYS LOCK COMMUNICATION IS TO TELL THE TRUTH. TOO BAD. DAN GRAHAM: 'WRITE' AN 'ARTICLE' IN WHICH 'ALMOST EVERY WORD' 'IS' IN 'QUOTES.' 'ESPECIALLY' 'COULD BE' IN 'QUOTES' 'ADVERBS' '&' 'ADJECTIVES' 'TOO.' 'PROPER' 'NAMES' 'COULD BE' 'UNQUOTED,' 'SOME' 'ARTICLES,' 'PREPOSITIONS,' 'PRONOUNS 'ALSO.' 'CONJUNCTIONS' 'COULD BE' IN 'QUOTES.'[100]

Again, this piece showcased Lozano's unique humor and conceptual approach. She mocked the pretensions of artists and critics like Graham. This marked her growing dissatisfaction with the art world she would soon leave.

Isolation and Effacement of the Body

Boycott Women and *General Strike Piece* were two of Lozano's most famous works (Fig. 31 and 32). These two pieces defined the end of her art career. Molesworth discusses *General Strike Piece* and *Boycott Women* as two aspects of a single piece that pointed to the problems of art and society: "Lozano realized that just as you can't reform the art world by focusing only on museums, you can't alter patriarchy by bonding only with women"[101] Molesworth saw both pieces as being structured by the principle of rejection. Lozano first recorded her idea for *Boycott Women* on June 20th, 1969: "After dialogue with Ellen van Fleet which was pleasurable, interesting, satisfactory, in many ways I experience intense loneliness. This feeling relates to some old problem concerning women. I intend to investigate."[102] Lozano recognized that she did not get along well with other women, going back as far as art school. She began her investigation

[100] Rosen and van Liere.
[101] Molesworth, "Tune In", 70.
[102] Sketchbook # 2, 70.

of her feelings about women later that year. Lozano decided that for one month, she would not speak to other women and deal exclusively with men. She recorded some of the early actions that the boycott took in her sketchbook: "THROW LUCY LIPPARD'S 2ND LETTER ON DEFUCNT PILE, UNANSWERED. DO NOT GREET ROCHELLE BASS IN STORE…PAULA TAVINS CALLS AUG 11. TELL HER I AM BOYCOTTING WOMEN AS AN EXPERIMENT THRU ABT SEPT. THAT AFTER THAT 'COMMUNICATION WILL BE BETTER THAN EVER.'"[103] She extended this piece and supposedly continued it for the rest of her life. In the mid-nineties when retrospectives of her work were organized, she dealt only with male curators.

Observers of *Boycott Women*, like Sol LeWitt, posited that her aversion to women stemmed from a deeply rooted psychological issue. LeWitt described two different instances of the piece as examples of Lozano's social mal-adjustment. Once while the two were out at dinner, Lozano refused to speak or even look at their waitress. This created a very awkward situation for LeWitt and the waitress. On another occasion, LeWitt recalled a time when Lozano came by his apartment. His girlfriend answered the door and Lozano immediately turned around and fled the building.[104] Her aversion not just to speaking to women, but also to their very presence, struck many as odd to the point of insane. Butler argued that the questioning of gender to this extent has greater implications: "If human existence is always gendered existence, then to stray outside of established gender is in some sense to put one's very existence into question."[105] From this perspective, *Boycott Women* and *General Strike/Drop Out* piece dovetail as a single work of art.

Her pieces that deal with her perception of women were not part of an empowering sense of feminism but rather were a social critique. She did not see herself as a typical woman and her

[103] See Fig. 31. Notice that Lozano has crossed out and edited parts of sketchbook.
[104] Anecdotes taken from Folie, 34.
[105] "Variations on Sex and Gender" in *The Judith Butler Reader*, 27.

actions reflected that. One could argue that her unconventional behavior was in itself a feminist act. By rejecting stereotypically feminine behaviors, Lozano subverted the male hierarchy. Feminists rejected her work largely as anti-feminist. However, Molesworth argued that Lozano was feminist, just in her own way:

> Not to speak to women is to render daily life a constant struggle, and I would proffer that in that space of difficulty Lee Lozano was more attuned to the problematics, limitations, and systematized nature of gender and patriarchy than most people on most days. And that, as I understand it, its one of the aims of feminist critique, to disallow the status quo to be perceived as natural, to heighten our awareness, to focus our attention on the problems of gender.[106]

Molesworth insightfully recognized that Lozano's work did contain elements of feminist critique, but she was stretching her point in her enthusiasm to ascribe a purpose to the way Lozano addressed sexuality and power. Lozano did not consider herself a feminist and to call her so, especially during the height of the Second Wave of feminism, undermined the complex gender relations that her work challenges. Lozano dealt only with the powerful and influential people in the art world. At the time she was involved in the New York art scene, the people with the most power and influence were men. It is hard to see how this would have attuned Lozano to the problematics of patriarchy. Rather, Lozano embraced the system of gender dynamics and put it to work in her favor. From her stance in androgyny, Lozano participated in the patriarchy, thus avoiding the problematics faced by most other women.

Although a feminist reading of Lozano's work is appealing, it is not true to the artist's intentions or personal belief and belies the complexity of the gender dynamics at work in her art, particularly the adrogynization of her body. Lozano stated her beliefs in her sketchbook: "I am not a feminist. I speak to both men and women because I think both men and women are slaves

[106] Molesworth, "Tune In", 71.

in today's society."[107] Unusual for that time, she recognized that both men and women were oppressed by societal expectations. Also, to call her work feminist carries much weight at the moment of the piece. The feminist movement was characterized by women coming together to work for change and work to critique society. To call oneself a feminist implied a feeling of sisterhood with other women, a joining together to rise up. Lozano completely rejected this mentality. She did not see women coming together as a positive. When talking about a meeting of Women Artists in Revolution that she attended, Lozano described it as little more than a hen party with women making catty gossip and nothing of real substance being accomplished: "it was the same jibberjabber all cunt disorders as junior high school girls club days."[108]

That is not to discount the work of other women like Lucy Lippard, but in Lozano's view, rejecting women allowed her to participate in the dialogue of power in a way feminist groups could not. Feminist activists rallied around women in support of women's rights, but the powerful women in the feminist movement had yet to make a major impact on mainstream society. Lozano likely saw the movement as pointless since the male power-brokers dismissed the feminist movement. Women could not easily infiltrate the male system and the female power system they created in turn remained submissive to the male one. David Reed felt that Lozano cheated herself in rejecting women: "Women didn't have any power in the art world then, so she decided to just deal with the men, who did have the power. It points up that issue. But it's masochistic also, because she couldn't form dialogues with other women and missed out on the feminist movement of the '70s, when women in the art world did gain power by engaging and supporting each other."[109] Speculating on what course *Boycott Women* would have taken had

[107] Sketchbook #1 (1968), 25. In two years, Lozano would decide to never speak to women again in her piece *Boycott Women*.
[108] Sketchbook #11 (Feb, 1971).
[109] Katy Siegel and David Reed, "Making Waves: The Legacy of Lee Lozano" *Artforum* October (2001), 126.

Lozano stayed in New York is tempting, but pointless. Given her strident personality, she likely would have continued the piece regardless of the advances made by women. Her sense of self seemed to have been rooted in a deeper understanding of herself as somehow fundamentally different from other women.

Although Lozano did not espouse feminist ideology, she created work that shared traits with feminist art. Amelia Jones discussed at length the connection between narcissism and feminist art. Narcissistic artists, especially narcissistic female artists, used their vanity as a form of critique: "narcissism—the exploration of and fixation on the self—*inexorably* leads to an exploration of and implication in the other: the self turns itself inside out, as it were, projecting its internal structures of identification and desire outward. Thus, narcissism interconnects the internal and external self as well as the self and other."[110] Lozano's obsession with herself smacked of unmitigated vanity. Despite her intense narcissism, there was nothing in Lozano's work that spoke to an other. She seemed to embody both male and female in an overwhelming sexual androgyny. Her body was home to both the self and to the other such that there could be no pointing to their differences.

Carolee Schneemann was another artist who, like Lozano, created works in the sixties that were highly erotic.[111] Unlike Lozano, Schneemann took a feminist approach in her pieces. She created abstract expressionist paintings in the late fifties before turning to performance art. She used her body in performance to comment on gender and sexuality. Although Lozano's praxis lacked the feminist ideology, she shared much in common with Schneemann. Her performance work from the early sixties echoes the sexuality in Lozano's work. In *Meat Joy*, Schneemann staged a group performance of men and women having an orgy with meat. For

[110] Jones, *Body Art*, 46.
[111] Schneemann's book, *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002) is an excellent resource and covers all major parts of her career.

Fuses, she filmed herself and her lover having sex from her cat's point of view. These explorations of sex were common to feminist work of the sixties. Schneemann made sex into art, an approach that was highly controversial at the time. Lozano's playful sexual innuendo was not as overtly political as Schneemann's. She did not take a feminist approach, but still interrogated sex and gender. Lozano worked in a milieu of sexualized art and participated in it in her own way. Rather than making blatant assertions of her female sex, Lozano rejected it and took an androgynous stance. From that platform of sexlessness, she was able to make use of both male and female sex.

General Strike Piece was one of Lozano's last pieces and precipitated her leaving New York. Lozano set herself a series of tasks that will result in her retiring from the New York art scene. She stopped going to functions and participating in shows. She first thought of the piece on February 8th, 1969 and described it in her sketchbook as follows:

> GRADUALLY BUT DETERMINEDLY AVOID BEING PRESENT AT OFFICIAL OR PUBLIC 'UPTOWN' FUNCTIONS OR GATHERINGS RELATED TO THE 'ART WORLD' IN ORDER TO PURSUE INVESTIGATIONS OF TOTAL PERSONAL AND PUBLIC REVOLUTION. EXHIBIT IN PUBLIC ONLY PIECES WHICH FURTHER SHARING OF IDEAS AND INFORMATION RELATED TO TOTAL PERSONAL AND PUBLIC REVOLUTION.

She expanded upon this idea and wrote a statement that she intended to read at an open public hearing of the Art Workers Coalition. The piece officially began after she made the statement, calling for a revolution in art and society on April 19th, 1969:

> FOR ME THERE CAN BE NO ART REVOLUTION THAT IS SEPARATE FROM A SCIENCE REVOLUTOIN, A POLITICAL REVOLUTION, AN EDUCATION REVOLUTION, A DRUG REVOUTION A SEX REVOLUTION, OR A PERSONAL REVOLUTION. I CANNOT CONSIDER A PROGRAM OF MUSEUM REFORMS WITHOUT EQUAL ATTENTION TO GALLERY REFORMS AND ART MAGAZINE REFORMS WHICH WOULD AIM TO ELIMINATE STABLES OF ARTISTS AND WRITERS. I WILL NOT CALL MYSELF AN ART WORKER BUT RATHER AN ART

DREAMER AND I WILL PARTICIPATE ONLY IN A TOTAL REVOLUTION SIMULTANEOUSLY PERSONAL AND PUBLIC.[112]

Lozano felt that there could not be an art revolution in of itself. An art revolution could only occur if there were revolution in other fields, in society, and in individuals. Institutional critique could be read into her *General Strike Piece*.

The piece came about as Lozano was becoming increasingly disenchanted and annoyed with the New York Art scene. She found other artists' methods of institutional critique unsatisfactory in that they did not encompass the whole institution. Rather, they would attack one part of it, such as museums. Lozano believed that this approach would change nothing. Her frustration with what seemed a stultifying institution caused Lozano to create modes of expression that subverted and rejected the commodification of art. Since the pieces recorded in her sketchbook existed only in the instant of their making, they could not become art objects for sale. Even her formal write-ups lacked any real material value being done in pen on grid paper. She then set out to achieve her personal and public revolution within herself. She intended to perform this piece through the summer of 1969. In the end, *General Strike Piece* merged with *Drop-Out Piece*.

Lozano described it in her sketchbook-diaries as being inevitable that she come to *Drop-Out Piece* given the direction her work had taken her. By 1970, she had acknowledged and ominously foretold that the piece was about to "blow." She had long been struggling with how human interaction affected her mental state. She would often isolate herself in her studio for long periods of time to work on pieces until it got to the point where she must leave or else. However, she noted one instance on December 10th, 1969 where isolation exhilarated her: "For the first time achieve a state of euphoria from aloneness having peeled off everyone. The euphoria

[112] Folie, 100.

brought me to a new world I was just about to investigate when the phone rang and that was the end of my joy."[113] That was a unique occurrence. More often than not, periods of isolation brought her mental instability to the fore. She wrote of feeling paranoid and hysterical when the loneliness overwhelmed her. At the time that she began to seriously contemplate *Drop-Out Piece*, she also began to reevaluate what she called her emotional habits. She said that *Drop-Out* was the hardest piece she had done to date since it "involves the destruction of (or at least complete understanding of) powerful emotional habits."[114] Not only was she challenging her emotional dependence on others, Lozano also worked to diminish her consumption of food, drugs, energy and creativity. It was as if she sought to efface her very being, to disappear completely from the world. She nearly succeeded when she left New York for good in 1972 and relinquished her artistic identity.[115] However, the force of her personality left an indelible stamp on the art world.

Documents of the Ephemeral

Why write in the sketchbooks then? If she is so obsessed with her material being, why choose such a form as text to document her art? Much of her decision came from her conception of the written pieces as drawings in their own right. She made them, just as she made her paintings. She created this physical remnant using her artist's body. The sketchbooks stand for her body: "the imprint or trace is redolent with memory, absence and the artist's inner life,

[113] Sketchbook #5, 7.
[114] Sketchbook #8, 115.
[115] Molesworth points out that Lozano is similar to Duchamp in this aspect, as he refused to make art for much of his career. However, his refusal to make art is altogether different from Lozano's complete rejection of her artistic identity. Comparisons of how these artists "dropped out" is tempting, but dangerous. Duchamp stopped making art, but remained in contact with artists, dealers, and collectors, eventually returning to creative works later in life. Lozano, on the other hand, created no new work after 1972, but she continued to perform *Drop Out Piece* and *Boycott Women*. To take the comparison much further runs the risk of concluding that because Duchamp was a man, his status in the art canon was more secure. I do not think Lozano's sex had anything to do with her fall into obscurity, but rather it was the extreme degree to which she had absented herself from the art world

setting up a contrast between the body's physical manifestation and the spiritual or unconscious."[116] Also, by keeping the entries in her sketchbook she did not need to rely too strongly on others to help with her documentation. If she had chosen photography, then she would have needed an accomplice to help photograph herself and then there was the matter of developing negatives. The writing is also part of her goal to let the event be the art. The photograph would stand as a sign for an event and she did not want the sign to surpass the actual thing in importance. Lozano discussed the idea of the sign and the signified using the mirror as an example: "A mirror is perhaps as close as you can get to the idea of something being the same as something else, yet different."[117] Also, photographing her pieces would have violated the anonymity required for work like *Dialogue Piece*. Linguistics played a key role in Conceptual art strategies. LeWitt and Lawrence Weiner made several instruction pieces that consisted of the required steps to produce an art object. The instructions themselves also stood independently as art. That was very much how Lozano's written sketchbooks function. They pointed to the art object that occurred at a specific place and time; however, they are not the art object in themselves. By calling the collections of writings 'sketchbooks', Lozano relegated them to an inferior artistic place. They became more like studies for completed works. They did not make sense alone, but must be understood as pointing to a culminating piece.

The method Lozano used to document her work does not fit into the frame work of conceptual body and performance art defined by Jones. Written pieces were not uncommon as forms of documentation, but the writing was usually in the form of articles and essays exploring the work accompanied by photographs. The body and performance art took the form of events and the "ordinary activities of everyday life were also elevated to the status of art. Since the body

[116] Jones, *The Artist's Body,* 162
[117] Sketchbook #1 (1968), 5.

was presented as the material out of which the artwork was made, the art itself lasted only for the duration of the gesture, and the photograph was used to document this transitory work."[118] As previously discussed, this was not the case with the work of Lozano. Photography was not a viable means of documentation for her. Rather, the writings in her sketchbooks better served the purposes of her art process.

Lozano was in many ways an outsider and her body the only means of connection with the world. From her early paintings through to her conceptual art pieces, her body remained at the heart of her artistic practice. She willfully defied categorization as a feminist even though her performance pieces put her in dialogue with other feminist artists. Lozano sought the extremes in search of her gender and artistic identity. In the end, she relinquished both to be just E. Reed knew Lee Lozano when she lived in New York and recalled in an interview what has become Lozano's legacy: "The most direct contact would have been around 1971, after she had lost her loft on Grand Street. She was looking for places to stay and considering that process part of her work, and ended up staying with me. Lee was very moody, drinking a lot of cheap wine and smoking lots of dope. I was raising my young son and had to ask her to leave after a few days. I remember thinking that she was a kind of warning about what could happen if you mixed art and life too closely, that it could get very dangerous if you had no boundaries."[119]

[118] Amelia Jones, *The Artist's Body* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2000), 70
[119] Katy Siegel and David Reed, "Making Waves: The Legacy of Lee Lozano" *Artforum* October (2001), 122.