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## MADISON MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART PRESENTS *CHRISTINA RAMBERG: VERTICAL AMNESIA*, FEATURING CELEBRATED WORKS BY THE CHICAGO IMAGIST

### **Christina Ramberg** ***Vertical Amnesia***

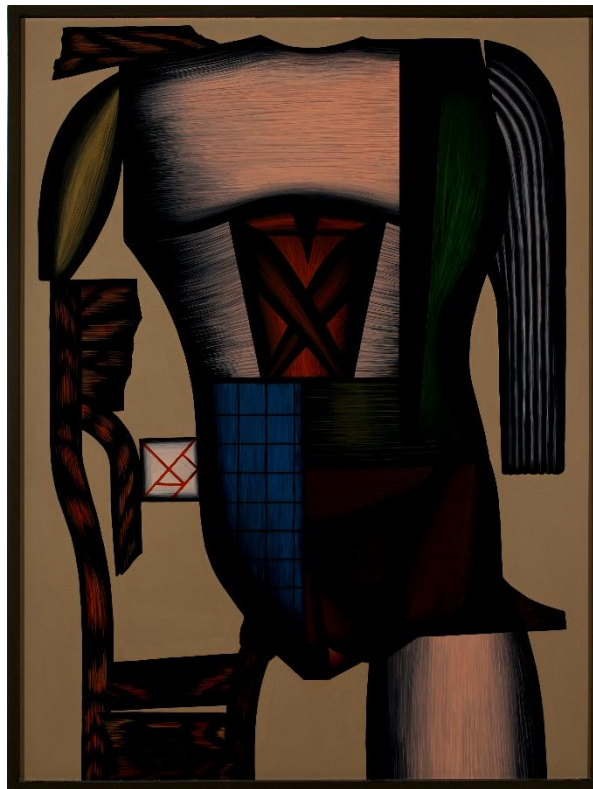
March 3-July 16, 2023  
Henry Street Gallery

Exhibition Preview  
March 2  
5-7 PM

MMoCA Cinema  
*Brainwashed: Sex-  
Camera-Power*  
March 2 | 7 PM

>  
Christina Ramberg,  
*Vertical Amnesia*,  
1980. Acrylic on Masonite,  
49 1/4 x 37 1/4 inches.  
Collection of the Madison  
Museum of Contemporary  
Art. Museum Purchase,  
through funds from  
George and Sally Johnson  
and the Rudolph and  
Louise Langer Fund.  
© The Estate of Christina  
Ramberg

MADISON, WI—Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (MMoCA) will present *Christina Ramberg: Vertical Amnesia*, featuring a selection of works by the artist. Providing a unique perspective on the world of women and their clothing, Ramberg's art has garnered great attention in recent years, for opening a gateway to discussing femininity, femme, and the gaze. The exhibition, on view March 3-July 16, 2023, couldn't be timelier, given the issues that women continue to face today regarding the perception and control of their own bodies.



Taking its title from one of the artist's signature works in MMoCA's collection, *Vertical Amnesia* centers Ramberg, a once nearly overlooked and at times forgotten artist within the Chicago Imagist group. Ramberg (b. 1946 Fort Campbell, Kentucky; d. 1995 Chicago, Illinois), has been gaining visibility in this contemporary moment with recent exhibitions dedicated to her practice and influence.

The artist utilized a dizzying amalgam of "found" visual materials—a singular cartoon cel, sewing patterns, fabric grains

and textures, girdles and cinchers, wisps of hair and fur—to create works that reveal the forgotten, concealed, or overlooked. Even her preferred substrate of Masonite allowed Ramberg to render her brushstrokes nearly invisible. Her technique recalls cinema's extreme close-up and hyper-focus on the clothes and physical features of femme fatales, yielding dissected yet armored bodies.

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Sarah Canright,  
*Shadow*, 1969. Oil,  
33 3/8 x 27 1/4  
inches. The Bill  
McClain Collection  
of Chicago  
Imagism, Collection  
of the Madison  
Museum of  
Contemporary Art.  
© Sarah Canright

Framed by feminist film theory, *Vertical Amnesia* engages in a dialogue with select women of the Chicago Imagist movement. In addition to Ramberg, Sarah Canright, Suellen Rocca, and Barbara Rossi acknowledged the raking gaze directed at the female body and disarmed it with humor and frank assessment. Unlike their male counterparts in the group, these artists were seeing very differently—not as “other” or object, but as reclaimed and reasserted subject. Often read as fetishistic representations, Ramberg described her work as stemming from her own interest in clothing and

how it can be used to talk about the female body. Pairing her work with film theory of the same era provides a resource for historically contextualizing the work and the issues Ramberg was engaged in addressing.

To date, programming accompanying the exhibition includes a MMoCA Cinema screening of *Brainwashed: Sex-Camera-Power*, in which filmmaker Nina Menkes illuminates the patriarchal narrative codes that hide within supposedly “classic” set-ups and camera angles, and demonstrates how women are frequently displayed as objects for the use, support, and pleasure of male subjects. The film screens March 2 at 7 PM. A public preview of *Vertical Amnesia* is available from 5-7 PM that evening.

## ABOUT MMOCA

The Madison Museum of Contemporary Art is always admission-free. Its vision is to be an organization that fosters the exchange of ideas and creates experiences that will inspire a wide audience; be a nexus for the work of emerging and established regional, national, and international

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artists; serve as a catalyst for the continued development of a vigorous community of artists; and provide a forum that will encourage people to be challenged by, reflect on, and make connections between art and the world around them.

The Museum includes four galleries and The Shop, a space to provide interactive contemporary art experiences and educational workshops to the community. The Rooftop Sculpture Garden provides an urban oasis with an incredible view which serves as a lovely venue for weddings, art openings, and cinema. The adjacent Rooftop Lounge is used for community and collaborative art pop-ups, as well as a reception area for Museum events. Please visit [mmoca.org](http://mmoca.org) to learn more.

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