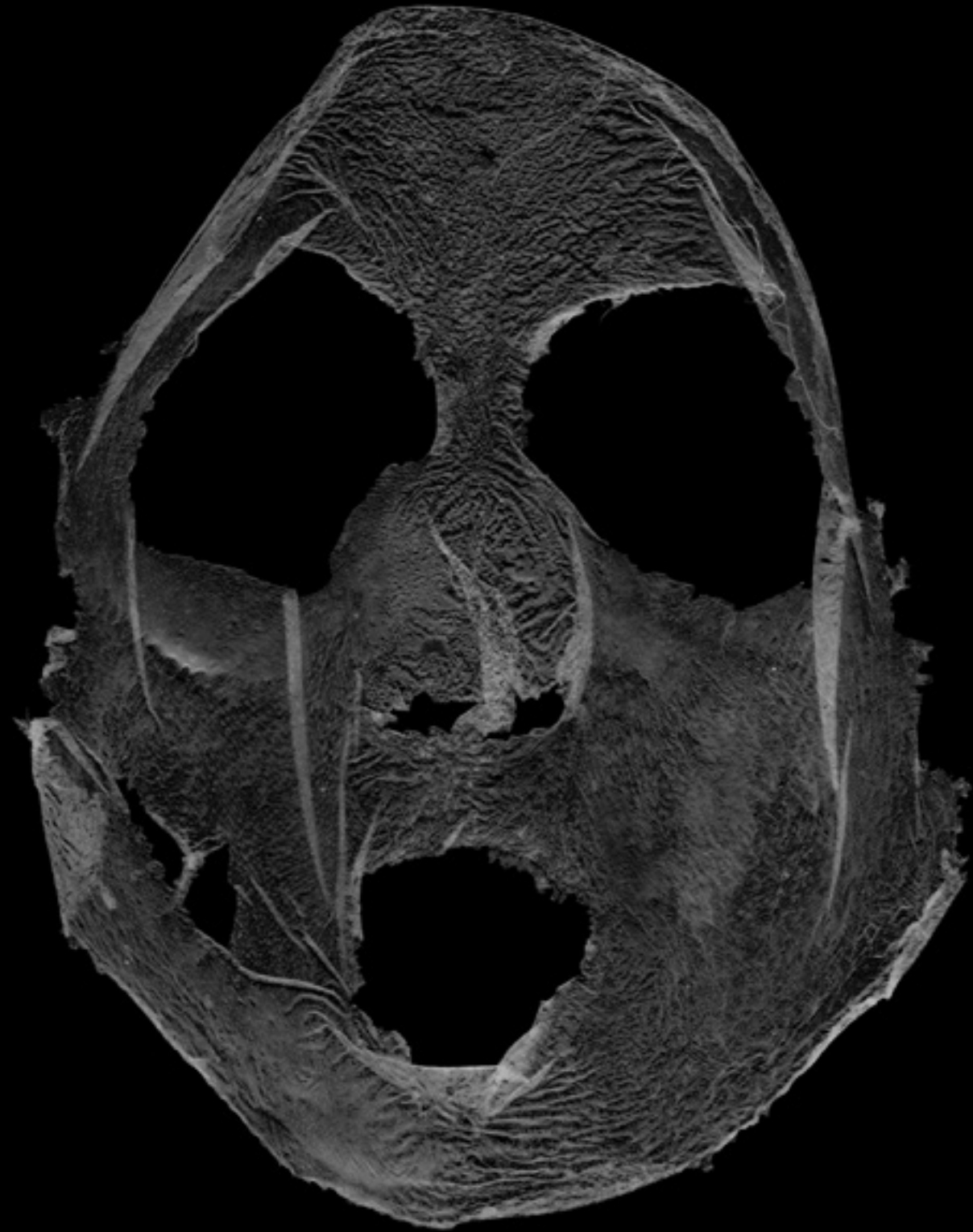




**BARBARA  
ASTMAN**  
*I AS ARTIFACT*





*I as artifact #1*

**BARBARA  
ASTMAN  
*I AS ARTIFACT***

*Curated by Catherine Elliot Shaw*

*Essays by Georgiana Uhlyarik  
and Catherine Elliot Shaw*

*April 17 – June 7, 2014*

*McIntosh Gallery*



From the photobooth series 1970-1976

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Untitled self-portrait in the studio with an *Untitled, I was thinking about you...series* 1979-1980

## FOREWORD

McIntosh Gallery is pleased to present *Barbara Astman: I as artifact*. The gallery has a long history with Astman, who is represented by eleven works in the McIntosh collection dating from 1978 to 1990. Coincidentally, it was during this key period in her artistic practice that I became familiar with her work.

In the 1970s, Astman had already achieved acclaim for her exploration of Polaroid technology and Xerography, and began exhibiting at public galleries. But it was in 1980 that an entire generation of young music fans took notice when Astman created the cover art for the Canadian band Loverboy's debut album. By typing lyrics directly onto a still-wet, developing Polaroid self-portrait, Astman brought a new level of immediacy and intimacy to photographic practices decades before the selfie's ascent within popular culture. Technically innovative and provocative, this iconic image combined personal narrative and conceptual art strategies while breaking down barriers between the rarified world of contemporary photography and popular culture. 1980 was also the year that the Toronto band Rough Trade issued their second album *Avoid Freud*, with the cover designed by General Idea. I was an art history student at the time, and was excited that the contemporary artists I was just learning about were collaborating with the musicians I was listening to. Perhaps this is why I always respond to Astman's works as if they were old friends whenever they have fortuitously appeared during my curatorial career, whether in the dark vaults of collection storage or in

the many exhibitions she has had throughout Canada over the past 30 years.

In 2004, I finally had the pleasure of working with Barbara, curating *Barbara Astman: Clementine Part I* for the Art Gallery of Windsor. The entire exhibition was based on a newspaper photograph of a large group of war orphans arriving in Canada in 1947. Astman was struck by their apparent happiness in relation to their traumatic experiences as survivors of war. As with much of her work, including the remarkable images featured in *I as Artifact*, *Clementine Part I* revealed her uncanny ability to navigate the complex terrain between public persona and personal identity. Barbara is always present in her work, but so too are we, both situated in the larger arena of public representation and the discursive spaces that comprise it.

At Western University, I am indebted to Catherine Elliot Shaw who, as McIntosh curator has maintained a professional discourse with Barbara Astman for over three decades. Catherine's dedication and experience have made the production of this exhibition and publication seamless from the initial concept to the end result. I thank McIntosh curatorial intern Kelly McKenzie, a Department of Visual Arts MA candidate, for her assistance in research and catalogue organization in addition to conducting the interview with the artist included in this publication, which was beautifully designed by Louise Gadbois of Western's Graphic Services department.



From the photobooth series 1970-1976

I am grateful to Georgiana Uhlyarik, Associate Curator, Canadian Art, Art Gallery of Ontario for her insightful catalogue essay and collegial support. Also at the AGO, I thank Dr. Amy Marshall Furness, Rosamond Ivey Special Collections Archivist, and Jim Shedden, Manager of Publishing, for providing access to the Barbara Astman Archival Collection.

Finally, I extend my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to McIntosh donor Mrs. Winona E. Elliot for her generous financial support, which made the realization of this exhibition and publication possible.

James Patten  
Director/ Chief Curator



she anxiously awaited his reply

trying to remain calm

yet filled with expectations

he laboured over his reply

knowing she would soon lose patience

he had to be sure of his answer

Untitled, Visual Narrative Series 1979





Untitled, from the Red series 1981

## PERFORMING PRIVATE ALCHEMY

*I have a crazy,  
crazy love of things.*

...

*many things conspired  
to tell me the whole story.  
Not only did they touch me,  
or my hand touched them:  
they were  
so close  
that they were a part  
of my being,  
they were so alive with me  
that they lived half my life  
and will die half my death.*

- Pablo Neruda, *Ode to things*, 1954

Barbara Astman is holding things in her hands. There are things pinned up around her, suspended. She takes turns holding them. These are things made doubly hers when she spray-painted them all singularly red. She is performing their function so that she can get to know them – so that we may get to know how to use them. This is how you water the pineapple. This is how you hold a ball. This is how you talk on the telephone and hold a mug. Her many red things conspire to tell us the whole story, as Neruda claims. There is a truth in the experience of common things – a fulsome kind of accounting that can be known and shared. T.S. Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock measures out his life in coffee spoons; Lisa Steele recounts her life in the order in which she acquired her scars. The world of things is made to our measure. A handmade world is intended to be held and sometimes to

## Georgiana Uhlyarik

be passed on. Astman has been getting to know the world by holding things in her hand: postcards, fabric, cigarettes, lint, newspapers – and especially her Polaroid SX-70 camera. "Materiality is what drives me," she has said. After all, she trained as a silversmith. She has been negotiating the world of things and her own self in relation to it ever since she can remember.

This engagement with things and its foregrounding may be a surprising prelude to a consideration of Astman's practice which has long been discussed – and paradoxically, marginalized – as rooted in the image of the self, specifically of the female self. It is not meant to undermine the evocative centrality of the performative self – on the contrary, it is a claim to relocate the self in an ongoing relationship within the material world as the primary position from which each of us performs and gains awareness.

We are held before we can hold.

As an initial attempt to locate herself in the world Astman begins, intuitively, with herself. Among the first images she makes are single photo booth portraits in which she is holding an uncut strip of photo booth portraits of herself in each hand. These are documents of private performances in a sequestered public space, recorded sequentially in palm sized photographs. Astman literally holds her multiplied self in her hands. Thus, she claims her image as her own; she is both subject and object, creator and the created. In the classic

tradition of portraiture, where subjects are surrounded by and hold objects as attributes of their status and ambition, Astman's root attribute is her own image.

In constructing images such as *Untitled, self-portrait with Rose* (pictured page 28) or *Untitled, self-portrait with apple and cherry* (both 1975) (pictured opposite) through appliqué and in-camera collage, Astman makes explicit both the objectification of the female face by replacing it with a flower or a fruit (beauty and fecundity) and the public masks assigned to efface our private self. These works are not an homage to the familiar René Magritte portrait whose face is obscured by a green apple, painted just over a decade before Astman replaces her own with a red one. The apple in her work is a heavily burdened fruit, a warning, no matter how cute and innocent that decal sticker might first appear. Considered again, this time through the lens of this early work, Astman's crossed-arms pose, which appears in at least one of the annotated panels in each of her *Visual Narrative Series* (1978-79) (pictured page 9), can now be read as a defensive posture and also as a self-embrace.

Naturally, in lieu of another holding us, we hold ourselves.

Astman's project of sticking seemingly fun, colourful things to her black and white images of a young long haired brunette posing for a hungry camera can be compared to the contemporaneous work of Hannah Wilke,

specifically her *S.O.S. - Starification Object Series* begun in 1974. Wilke's enticing fashion model poses are disturbed by the soft sculptures chewed by her audience and then collected to be affixed like prosthetic hives erupting on her skin. In the photo booth strips, Astman alternates between wrapping her face in her hair and wearing comic masks which she then colours by hand (pictured pages 18 and 22-23).

Four years later, she cohesively refines into one image her compositions of poses, expressions, colours, textures and a range of everyday life objects in the *Untitled, I was thinking about you... series* (1979-80). Each appears to be a letter to a close friend and begins the same way: "dear \_\_\_\_\_, i was thinking about you...". The typewritten text of the previous *Narrative* works has now spread and imprinted itself all over the image – Astman's own scarification as each typebar letter carved out its own shape in the drying Polaroid emulsion as it struck. The force of her thoughts became permanently incised into her own image – her own reimagining of the Rosetta Stone. In Astman's case however, she is the author, the narrator and the translator of a tender and raw message of how memory becomes truth. In some of these works she holds things as though they are private hieroglyphs: a light bulb, a red sandal, a notebook.

Considering Astman's early work alongside Wilke reveals a shared struggle. Much like Wilke was accused by critics of being too attractive in her naked photographs and



*Untitled, self-portrait with apple and cherries* c.1975





*Scenes from a movie for one, #9* 1997

performances, so was Astman first subjected to a description of her looks in reviews before a consideration of her work. Wilke persisted in what Amelia Jones has described as the “reiterative performance of the self as an elusive promise of authenticity,”<sup>1</sup> as the artist chose to perform in public and sustain the dangerous tension between her exposed self and the things that surround her (for example, the many guns which corner her in *What Does This Represent (pink)*, (1978)). Astman opted for the private act of delving into the deep recesses of the self in search of authenticity – a kind of excavating beneath the level of awareness – a process Betty Goodwin referred to as a burrowing. “I have an inner world and it is about the inner world that I want to make my images about,” Astman has always maintained.

In *Scenes from a movie for one* (1997) (pictured opposite) she uses her image to evoke an emotive narrative rooted within her consciousness and based on her own lived experience and completed in the viewer’s imagination. She began transforming images shot 15 years earlier first by taking Polaroid close-ups of the black and white copy negative prints. She then manipulated and scratched the emulsion, drawing red out of black and white photographs. It is no longer the external violence of the typebar scarring her image; in *Scenes* the distress is internal, it is psychic. The resulting serial images of her distorted face and naked upper body are individually ghostly yet cumulatively assertive. Astman’s figure is resolutely self-determined and self-aware. Throughout her career, Astman has shared

her own deeply felt knowledge of being in the world absorbing information that comes to her through all her senses and then in an act of private alchemy she performs her understanding in her attempt to open up a space of engagement between her and us – between the self and the many others. She has recruited instant camera technology to mine her inner psyche and thus usurp the tools of new technologies into handmaidens for a homemade vision of the world and our individual selves in it.

In her latest work, *It’s All about Style* (2014), Astman returns to that original gesture of lifting colourful found images and building new arrangements of her own making. They recall her mid-1970s xerography work in which she instantly transported a figure into exotic locales from famous paintings to famous sites, by collaging them into the picture. In these recent works her own image has disappeared – as it has many times over the years – but not her hand. Astman created large photo murals by digitally stitching grids of individual groupings of newspapers and postcards arranged by hand in her *Newspaper Series*, (2006 and 2008) and *Wonderland* (2008), and she cut and paste and then digitally scanned her *Daily Collages*, (2009-2011). However, in *It’s All about Style* (pictured page 17) she makes images by using packing tape to peel off strips of glossy photographs from *The Globe & Mail’s Style* section, and re-adheres them, scrambled, into a pair of squares. Significantly, these works are unique; she does not re-photograph them to re-present them. Instead, Astman transforms



image into material, so that she may hold it in her hand and really get to know it.

Barbara Astman has always been an image maker, with the emphasis on maker. In *Ways of Seeing*, published in 1972, John Berger wrote:

“We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice. As a result of this act, what we see is brought within our reach – though not necessarily within arm’s reach. To touch something is to situate oneself in relation to it.”<sup>2</sup>

Looking back, we are now able to recognize that Astman has spent the last four decades unravelling all the cues that were present in her youthful days acting out in the photo booth: the unique print of the instant camera, the predetermined grid, the invitation to perform, the implicit narrative in the sequence, and most importantly, the self-awareness that comes from holding things in your hand.

Georgiana Uhlyarik is Associate Curator, Canadian Art, at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

#### Notes

All Barbara Astman quotes are from interviews with the author, held February 12, March 2 and March 29, 2013, in Toronto.

- 1 Amelia Jones. “Everybody Dies ... Even the Gorgeous: Resurrecting the work of Hannah Wilke” in *Mark(s)* volume 4.01, March 2003; accessed online February 3, 2014. <http://markszine.net/401/ajind.html>
- 2 Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972), p. 8



*It's All About Style* 2013



From the photobooth series 1970-1976



Patriotic Portrait 1975





Untitled from the *weather balloon* series 1973

## INTERVIEW WITH BARBARA ASTMAN

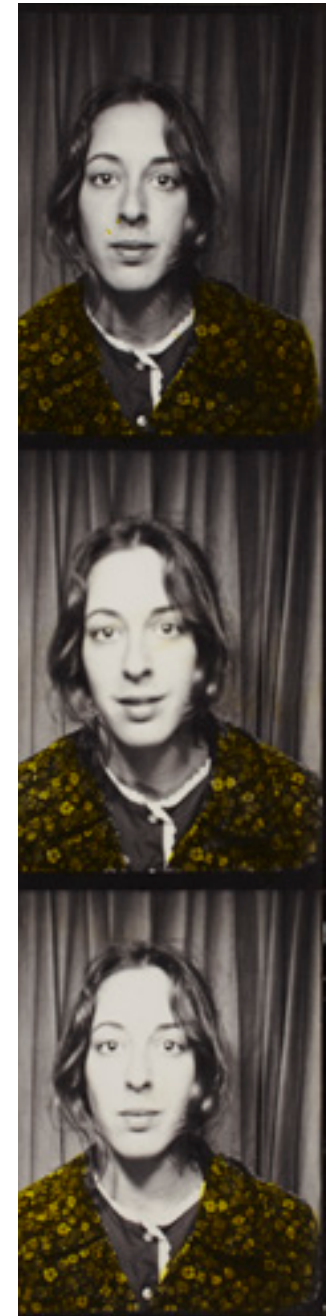
### Kelly McKenzie

Barbara Astman's studio, located in a converted school in downtown Toronto, is filled with light in the late morning. Her desk occupies the centre of the room where she has her computer, a printer, and various stacks of papers. On one wall the windows dominate, providing a warm glow to an already inviting space. Adjacent is a collection of works-in-progress pinned up in groups, each at a different stage in its creative development, including nine smaller prints from the series *I as artifact*. A few examples of tape transfers used in her recent work, *It's All About Style*, are also present adding a shot of colour and abstraction to the collection. Others are test projects in their infancy, a few of which are discussed in the conversation below.

The remaining walls are used for storage, all uniquely designed to provide Astman with a versatile space. Everything is built for ease and mobility. The configuration of the space can change on a whim to accommodate any project Astman might tackle. The studio is a home-away-from-home, equipped with anything an artist like Astman may need, including printers of varying sizes, boxes and stacks of photographic prints and other materials—even a couch and a three-piece washroom.

Astman greets her guests warmly as friends, calling for us to enter informally. She offers us tea as she sips from a blue and white cup. After a tour of her space and a relaxed chat, she invites us to settle into a comfortable place in the centre of the room where we can begin the interview.

**Kelly McKenzie:** In a 2004 interview with Robert Enright for *Border Crossings*, you discussed the photographs where you have covered yourself with a weather balloon. You said "It was about taking myself outside my own culture and my own



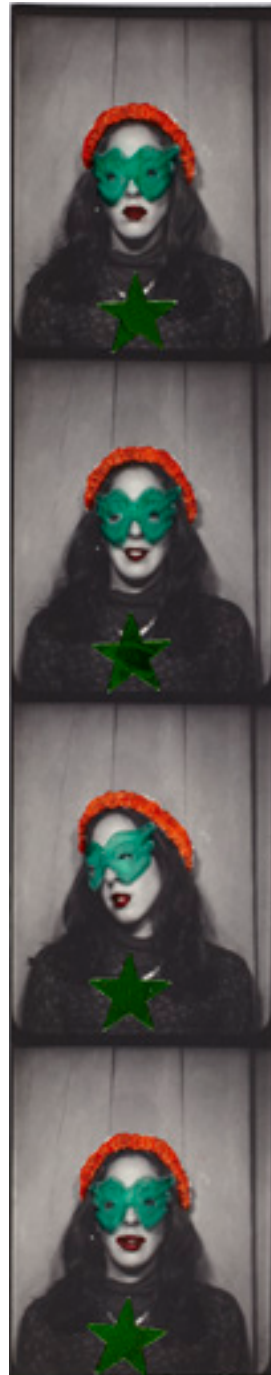
From the photobooth series...1970-1976

persona, and trying to become somebody else. I saw that through a combination of dressing up and covering up, you can be whoever you want to be.” Does this hold true with *I as artifact*? Are you covering up and becoming something else through the masks?

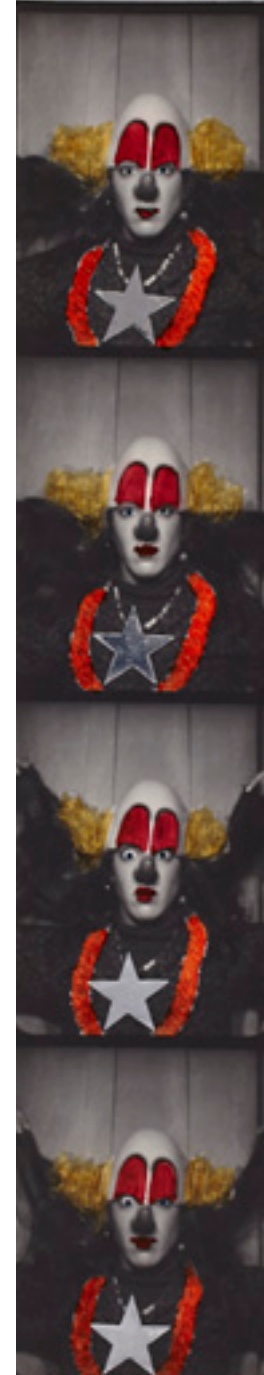
**Barbara Astman:** I’m revealing more than covering up. I’m revealing something that I don’t think I’ve ever revealed before. Although some people might not see them as that intimate, they’re really very intimate images of my face because they have every pore, every mark, every little hair, every wrinkle, every little thing that’s on my face is there. It’s embedded right in that mask. So it’s actually more public than private.

**KM:** In some of your earlier works, such as the *Red* series, *Scenes from a Movie for One*, and *Dancing with Che*, you insert yourself in the work, as you’ve said, using yourself as a model and/or subject. In those works the audience never gets to see your face. It is cropped or blurred. In some cases, the audience only sees one part of your body. Have you ever considered that by effectively dismembering yourself through cropping and blurring, you are making it easier for your audience to see your body as an object? Does that make it easier to objectify your body?

**BA:** I see it differently. By removing the eyes, I’m removing the whole sense of portraiture—of what portraiture is about. Portraiture is supposed to talk about what we look like and the gaze. I wanted to remove what I looked like and the gaze. I don’t want somebody thinking: “what does that person look like?” I want it to just be figurative, just a figure. And, in some cases, people thought it was a neutral gender in some of the early work because it’s not a highly feminine shape. They thought it could be an androgynous kind of shape.



From the photobooth series 1970-1976



From the photobooth series 1970-1976

It’s not like I’m nude. It’s not like I’m wearing provocative clothes. So I don’t think I’m objectifying myself that way. I think what I’m doing is denying you the whole pleasure of portraiture. That frustrated people. I like this denial and not allowing anybody in because it’s so personal to me. Once you see my face and my eyes it’s so personal. Then we’re making some kind of connection. I didn’t want that. I wanted it to be more anonymous too.

I like the idea of anonymity. I don’t want it to always be about what Barbara Astman looks like and unfortunately that’s what people talk about—what you look like rather than what the idea is. So it’s less about turning the body into something for the viewer to gaze at. I want them to look at the objects I’m holding. I want them to look at the text over the body. Or in *Dancing with Che*, I want them to look at how my body is used to transform Che like a poltergeist, like I might make him come alive just by moving. It’s not really about my body, it’s about how I move my body in space to make him swirl and dance and move around. So it’s really more about the use of the body rather than presenting my body out there for people to look at.

**KM:** Especially in the case of *I as artifact*, it is possible for audiences to read the images as a comment on the pressures many women feel to stay young and beautiful forever. Was the ideal of beauty particularly salient for you while working on this series?

**BA:** Well, it all grew out of beauty. I was using a female facial mask product and yes, that was trying to make my skin look better. But once I pulled the mask off, that idea was gone. Now I just wanted to start making all these masks because I knew this was going to take me somewhere else. And really, they were almost scary, almost hideous, like peeling flesh off of someone’s face. Rather than make me think about beauty, it made me think more about what we leave behind.



I don't like people to automatically think they're death masks but it's kind of like the dust we leave behind, the particles we leave behind, everything that's left behind is right there in those masks. So it grew out of my own post-middle age attempt to use some kind of mask to tighten my skin. But in the end, it wasn't really about that at all. In the end, they're really more like topographical masks of the world.

**KM:** So, what drew you to the masks as an object or subject for the series?

**BA:** Seeing the very first one and then quickly making another mask. You're not supposed to use the product so often but I was kind of compelled to see another face, another face. And each time you pull it off, it's somewhat different.

After I made about 20 faces, I think I let them sit, dry for a while, and then I didn't touch them for nearly a year. I had to think about it. I would pull them out. I would look at them. I would handle them. I'd feel almost creeped out. Then I thought I wasn't ready to do this. I was just carrying it with me, thinking about it while doing all sorts of other art projects with things in my life. And then one day I just pulled the file out and thought: "I'm ready to try something." I'm going to scan them. I'm going to see what happens. And then I took a long time to decide: do I leave it pink, do I leave it white? But I realized I wanted it to almost appear as though you were peering into this darkness, peering into this void and seeing

this face floating in there, transparent, where you could almost see through the face to the black void behind. It's like looking at the night sky when you're in the country where you have that deep, deep black and you see these little sparkling lights in the night sky. To me, there's magic in that and I wanted this to have that kind of magic.

It took a long time to come to the point of understanding what I wanted to do with it. But I knew that they held a lot of significance.

**KM:** These masks appear very animated with open mouths and wide eyes. It's almost as if they are about to move, speak, or sing. Was this intentional?

**BA:** The moment I printed some of the small tests I thought of Joyce Wieland's *O Canada*. I thought: "oh my god, the face is singing to me!" There's its mouth moving up and down and sideways and disfigured, and I thought it feels as though it's trying to say something to me and I don't know what it is. But that's something that attracts me to them too. When I have them up on the wall, I think, what are you trying to say? And then I think, let that go because you really start reading into that when it's your own face.

**KM:** Do you think these masks can take on a life or identity of their own?

**BA:** Sure. I don't think it's really important for every viewer to understand that it's my face.



Study for *Untitled, I was thinking about you...* series c. 1978



People know as soon as they see the open sockets of the eyes and its nose and mouth to identify it as a face. Look at emoticons. They're just two dots and a line. You know that's a face. Or your mind reads it as such.

So you don't have to know it's me. You don't have to know anything about me really. You could just look and see this really strange face floating in this black void and yet it's white and clear, almost like a jellyfish. It's just kind of floating there, just hovering in this blackness. I know it's my skin particles, my DNA, my traces, but it could be anybody's. I hope it's read in a more open way.

**KM:** Why did you choose to scan them as opposed to photograph them?

**BA:** I think of my scanner as a camera. The same as a colour copy machine was a camera to me too. There's a lot of similarity between all that colour Xerox work and all my scanner work, all the different things I put on the scanner. It's a more direct way to put it right down. If you photograph it, you could have the consequences of your lighting and your shadows and other things. With the scanner, it's just so hyper-real that I thought it was going to be a much better solution than going back and re-photographing them.

**KM:** In *I as artifact*, you decided to use a square format, which is reminiscent of your earlier pioneering work with Xerox, colour photocopy, and Polaroid. Is there a relationship between this series and your previous work?

**BA:** I think there's a relationship between all of my work because there's a performative aspect. As soon as you put yourself in the image, you're performing, not just for yourself but for the world too. I would say the performative aspect and the self-portraiture aspect would be the connection between the past work and my real struggle to understand and make sense of what this means. What's my purpose in life? What's my function? I think about those things.

People say: "well god, you seem to jump from newspapers to this to that." But it's this inquisitiveness about the world—what it means to exist in this world. To me, in the end, that's what all this work is about. I see a direct correlation between this work and *Dancing with Che* and all the more performative works where I'm performing for the camera. But this time I didn't actually stand there and perform for the camera. I created these masks to then create the artwork.

**KM:** Most of the work you have done independently to date has been done in series. What attracts you to working in multiples?

**BA:** I think I have an obsessive-compulsive kind of personality. The hardest thing for me is to stop. For every series I've done, you have to force yourself to find a point where you have to say it's done because I hate finishing things. I just want it to keep on going. I just want to enjoy the process so much. Once you say it's done, then it's about the work involved to make these things, of cleaning up all the images and the files and doing the printing. That's



Untitled self-portrait with transfer and sewing c. 1974



Untitled self-portrait with rose c. 1975

not the fun part. The fun part is exploring and discovering what this image is. That's where you get so excited. All these other tasks I needed to go through to get me to what this image needs to be. And then it comes down to the hard work.

**KM:** How much does technology influence your work as a whole?

**BA:** I'm always a little afraid of it. But once I get it, I actually have a lot of fun. I love seeing the prints coming out of the printer. It's magic just seeing this thing—this image—appear before your eyes. It's really almost like being back in a darkroom and seeing the picture appear before you in the developer.

I'm also interested in the constraints of it. You can push it and push it, but at what point does it tell you that you have to work within those constraints. That's part of the creative problem solving: making a lot of decisions that hopefully suit the purpose of your final concept.

**KM:** What was your favourite part of making *I as artifact*?

**BA:** The favourite part in any project is all of a sudden you see the image you wanted. You go through this whole process and you try this and you try that and that's always enjoyable, but once I finally inverted one of the masks and made the black really dense and lightened up the light on the face and blew up a big test print so I could see all these pores and cells, it was like seeing my DNA. And that gives you the energy to go in and put in all the work you need

to do the other 19 and to make them look like that too. Seeing the way you hoped it would look but you're never exactly sure how it's going to look until you actually go through the process.

**KM:** Would you say *I as artifact* is finished or do you think you might come back to it at some point?

**BA:** I can tell by what's happening in the darkroom right now with the small photogram images of the original faces that I'm still interested in trying something with it. They always look so very, very different each way you do it because analog imaging is very different from digital imaging and it gives you a different feel. I have that kind of mind that wants to keep exploring and exploring and exploring.

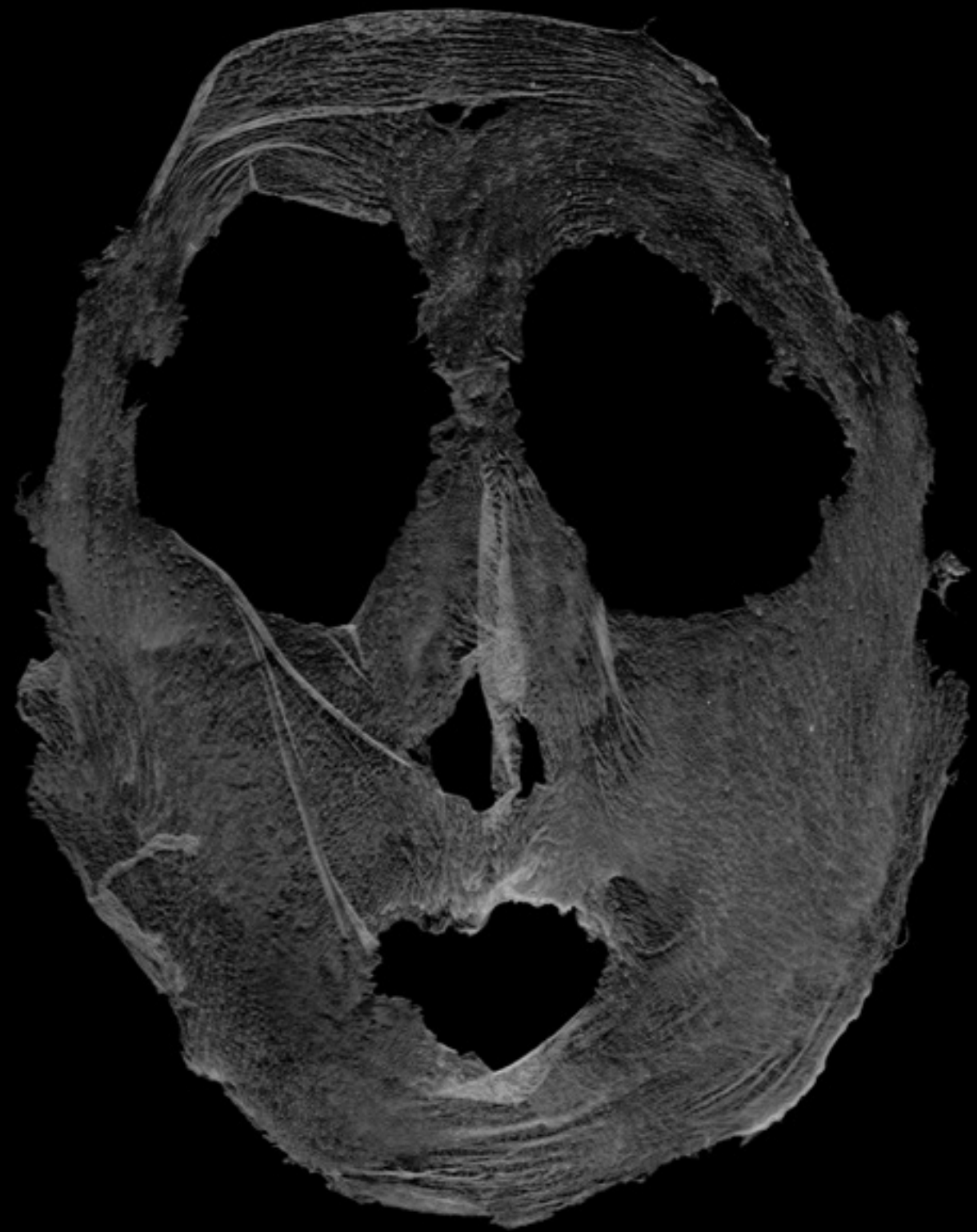
McIntosh Gallery intern Kelly McKenzie is an MA candidate in the Department of Visual Arts, Western University.

Next three pages in sequence:

*I as artifact* #2

*I as artifact* #3

*I as artifact* #4







## BARBARA ASTMAN / AS ARTIFACT

*I celebrate myself, and sing myself,  
And what I assume you shall assume,  
For every atom belonging to me as  
good belongs to you...*

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

The human face: why does it captivate our attention? A compelling fascination to seek similarity or discern difference? After all, a topography that has remained essentially unchanged for generations conveys the same familiar spectrum of attributes. Even as babies, we learn to recognize and decipher facial expressions, searching features for presumed insights into character or signals of possible threat. And, we have learned to judge based on superficial appearance believing perhaps, with Cicero, that “the countenance is the reflection of the soul”. Certainly, the nineteenth century French artist, Honoré Daumier, aligned his caricatures of bankers, shopkeepers and butchers with the postulations of contemporary physiognomists. Such universal “truths” have persisted to the present day with inferences of someone’s honesty, warmth or intelligence confirmed or denied by the fullness of a lip or the wideness of the eyes.

Ancient Greek theatre understood and incorporated physiognomic principles into its stagecraft, relying on masks to accentuate and project the stereotyped characteristics associated with each actor’s role. Their use also allowed one actor to assume several persona in the same play, much as each of us adopts an assortment of masks to bridge the inner self

Catherine Elliot Shaw

to an outer reality. So many identities—partner, parent, child, sibling, worker, friend—are demanded by daily life. Some are required to affirm communal compatibility and facilitate entrance into and ongoing interaction with various societal situations. Others are borne of cultural traditions and expectations while some reside in the unique qualities of personality. They mediate our associations and protect from psychological attack. Whatever the application, all require a wearer and an audience to activate the symbiotic relationship. However, as Lou Benson observes: “When the need to maintain the mask becomes so crucial that the individual begins to lose sight of his real needs and desires, he has lost the ability to discriminate between this image and his real self.”<sup>1</sup> The focus then becomes validation of the mask.

In her *I as artifact* series, Barbara Astman presents a collection of arresting, face-like constructions isolated by a dense void of deepest black. Bearing no specific markers revealing gender, race, or age, the features are intimated by the negative space encased by patterned skin textures. Dominating them are the eyes or, more precisely, eye sockets, their angular holes not unsighted but instead protective veils against complete self-disclosure. Noses, suggested by intensified folds flattened here or narrowed there, provide dimension to the otherwise compressed surface. It is the mouths, however, open in diverse labial positions, that complete the animation of these images. Pausing

momentarily in speaking, singing, exclaiming, there is an almost overwhelming cacophony of resounding silence. And it is in this moment that their individuality appears.

They loom out of the dark and command the entire picture space to create a universal micro-world. The dynamic tension is made especially palpable by the indeterminate vantage point. Are we witnesses to these translucent forms or are we in fact inhabiting them? In encountering other beings, we would normally use learned, socially-acceptable inquiry to detect the underlying nature of the character. If the mask is ours, then, like all masks, it becomes an extension of the face, a protective barrier against others reading the multitude of innate consistencies and contradictions. Implicit in this anonymity is the potential catalyst into a secret cosmos of psychological fantasy. According to Robert J. Weber, one construction of self-image occurs when the individual enters another realm of experience in impersonating gods or heroes, an act that transfigures the identity as it adopts another persona for a short time.<sup>2</sup> And it is the interpretation imposed on this experience, including the memories we choose to keep or discard, which ultimately defines the persona between existing self-image and future identities.

Curiously, Astman's *I as artifact* is both a continuation of, and a departure from, her previous iconic series. The familiar and exacting intimacy of the SX-70 format frontal

pose has been subsumed entirely by a directed shift of emphasis to the relationship between singular object and viewer. There is no constellation of image, body language and narrative text to particularize its meaning. Rather, the abstracted facial elements, though presented in their entirety, avoid any specific personal identification or associations. Previous visual seduction by luscious colours, either in background details or floating objects, is eliminated here, allowing more intensive focus on the fascinating linear detail.

While perhaps not immediately evident, the exploration of self-awareness as a discipline is still at the core of this work. Ironically, the medium recording all the pores, flaws, and even the DNA of the artist's face, is a commercial cosmetic preparation for skin enhancement. The corresponding confirmation of aging, far from foreshadowing a death mask, raises questions about the aesthetics of ongoing decay, its ephemerality and permanency. American astrophysicist Harlow Shapley once theorized that the argon molecules present in each intake of breath have been recycled over hundreds if not thousands of years. These in turn circulate around the world until, according to Shapley, every person's subsequent breath contains about 15 molecules from the exhalation one year before. Based on these calculations, this inert yet life-sustaining element can be traced back to the dinosaurs and will, in turn, permeate life forms in forthcoming millennia<sup>3</sup>.

In a similar manner, Barbara Astman's images assume a timeless quality in linking past and future artifacts, hers and ours. Intimidating, friendly, haunting, engaged, immediate yet somehow inaccessible, this sea of monumental faces challenges us to look beyond the observable world. Imbedded in the Janus-like gaze are the accumulating complexities of the human continuum.

Catherine Elliot Shaw, Curator  
McIntosh Gallery

#### Notes

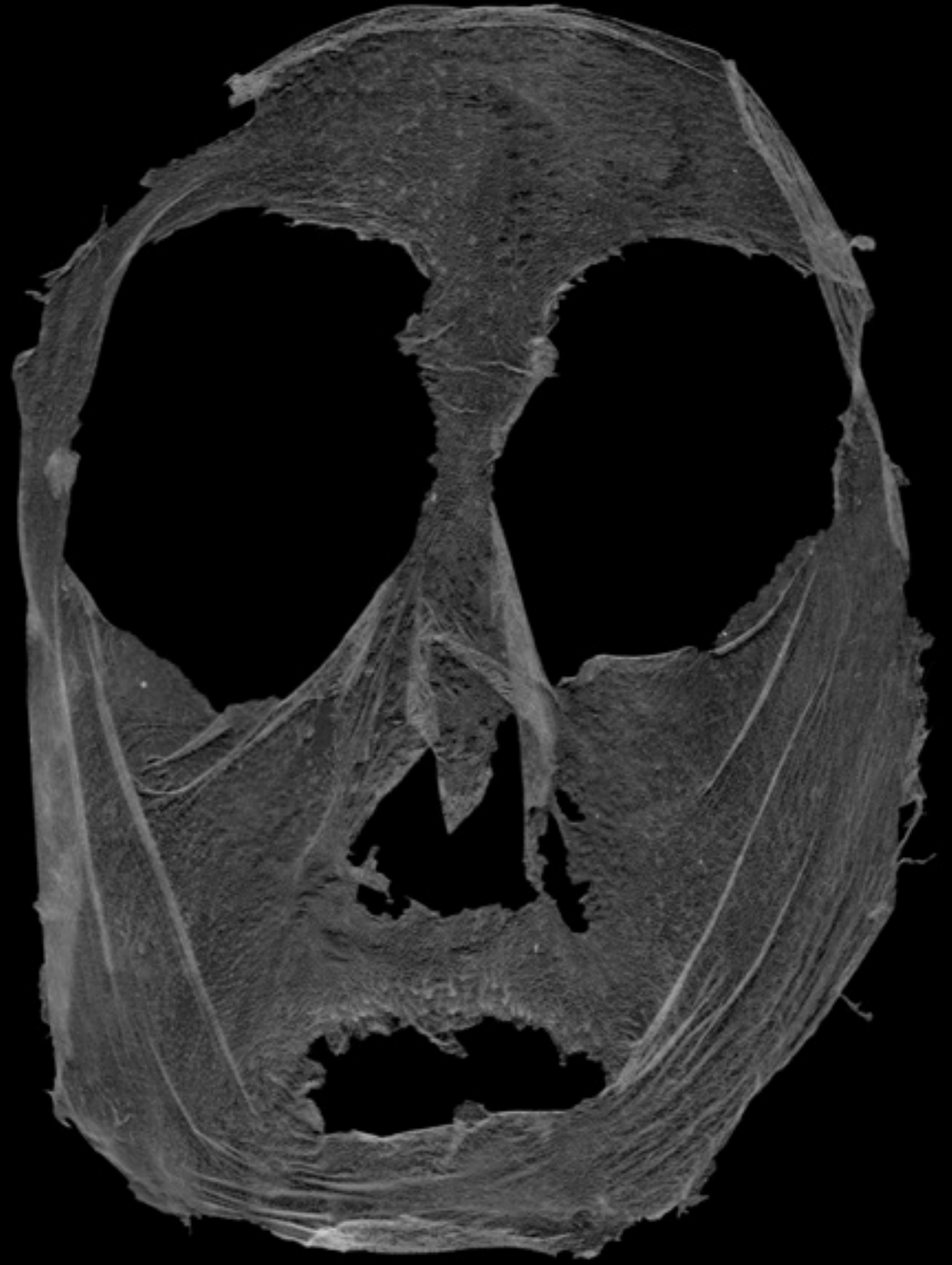
- 1 Lou Benson. *Images, heroes, and self-perceptions: the struggle for identity—from mask-wearing to authenticity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), p. 4.
- 2 Robert J. Weber. *The Created Self: reinventing body, persona, and spirit* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), pp. 129, 190.
- 3 David. Suzuki. "The Challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Setting the Real Bottom Line – part 3" in *The Epoch Times* May 16, 2008; accessed online March 6, 2014 <http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/8-5-16/70748.html>



From the photobooth series...1970-1976

From the photobooth series...1970-1976





Right: *I as artifact #5*



Right: *I as artifact #6*



Right: *I as artifact #7*

Right: *I as artifact #8*





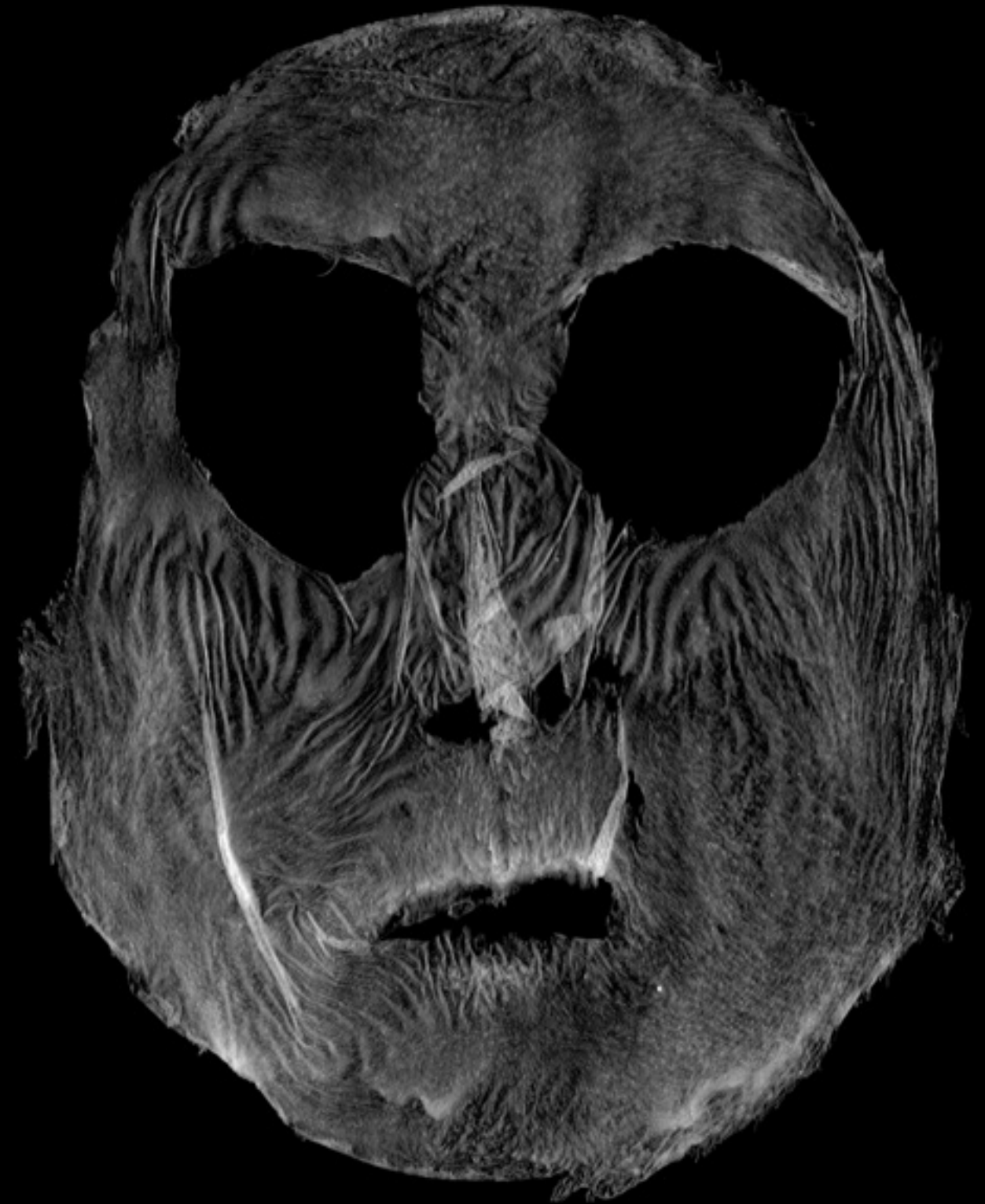


Right: *I as artifact #9*





Right: *I* as artifact #10



Right: *I as artifact #11*



Right: *I as artifact #12*





Right: *I as artifact #13*



Right: *I as artifact #14*



Right: *I as artifact #15*

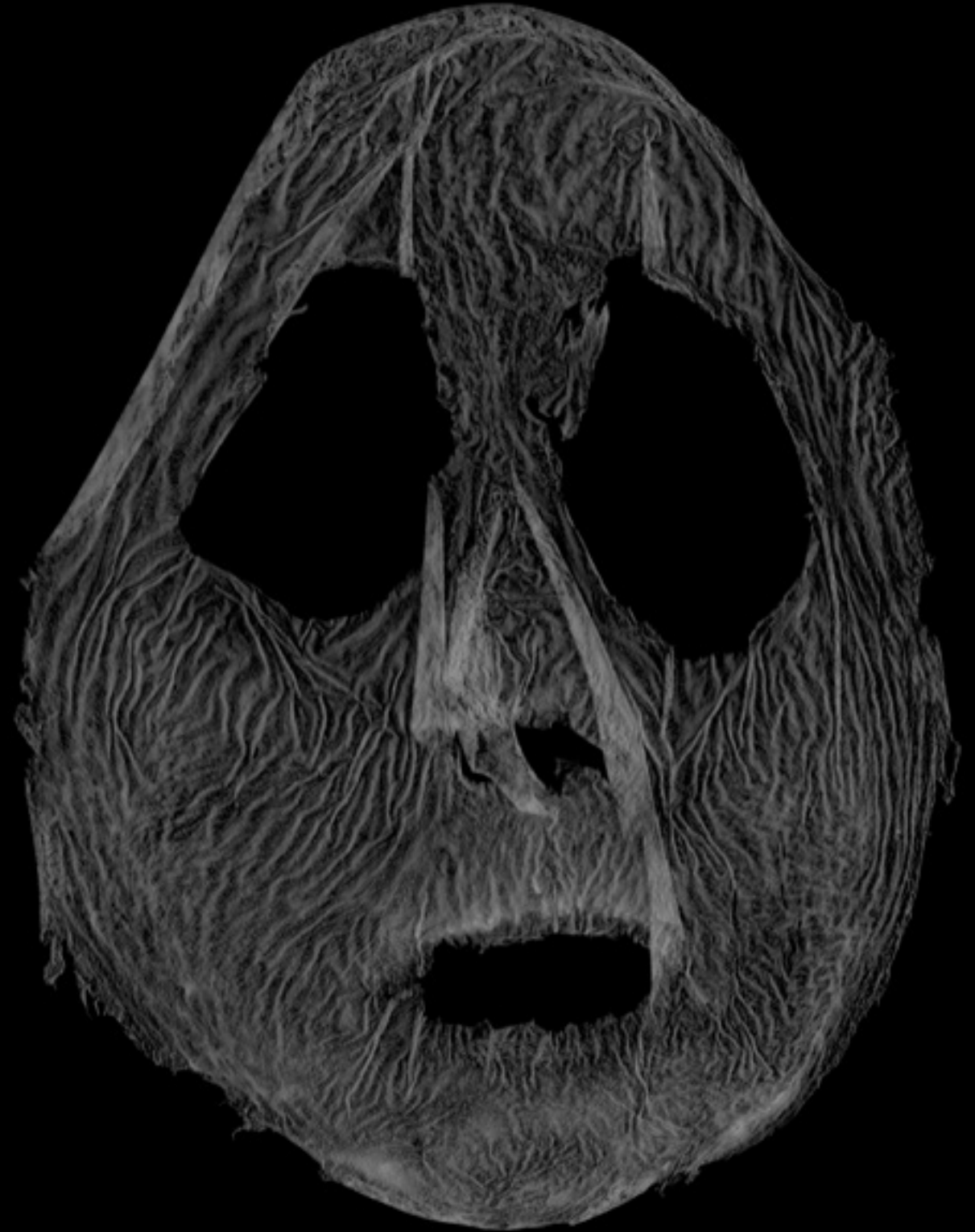




Right: *I as artifact #16*



Right: *I as artifact #17*



Right: *I as artifact #18*





Right: *I as artifact #19*



Right: *I as artifact #20*

## BARBARA ASTMAN RCA

This curriculum vitae records selected works and events that occurred since 1994. Please consult the 1995 Art Gallery of Hamilton publication *Barbara Astman: Personal/Persona A 20-Year Survey Exhibition for additional achievements.*

Gallery Representation: Corkin Gallery, Toronto

### Education

1973	Graduate, Ontario College of Art, Toronto, Ontario, A.O.C.A.
1970	Associate Degree, Rochester Institute of Technology, School for American Craftsmen, Rochester, New York

### Academic Appointments

2002 - present	Professor, Faculty of Art, OCAD University
2001 - 2002	Professor, Chair, Photography, Faculty of Art, Ontario College of Art & Design
1975 - 2001	Faculty, Ontario College of Art & Design, Toronto

### Community Involvement

2011 - 2013	Canadian Curatorial Committee, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
2009 - 2013	Board of Trustees, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
2006 - 2011	Art Committee, Baycrest Hospital, Toronto, Ontario
2006 - 2010	Arts on Track Committee, Toronto Community Foundation, Toronto, Ontario
1999 - 2000	Educational Advisory Committee, Education Department, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario

### Curatorial Practice

2007 - 2010	<i>The Emergence of Feminism: Changing the Course of Art</i> , Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, co-curated with assistant curator, Georgiana Uhylarik for <i>Transformation</i> AGO, featuring work from the 1960s and 1970s by Joyce Wieland, Suzy Lake, Lisa Steele, and Barbara Astman.
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### Selected Solo Exhibitions

2014	<i>It's All About Style</i> , Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
	<i>I as artifact</i> , McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario (upcoming)
2013	<i>dancing with che: enter through the gift shop</i> , Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario
	Untitled, Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2012	<i>dancing with che: enter through the gift shop</i> , McMaster Museum of Art, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
	<i>dancing with che: enter through the gift shop</i> , Museum of Contemporary Art, Calgary, Alberta
2011	<i>dancing with che: enter through the gift shop</i> , Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna, British Columbia
	<i>Daily Collage</i> , Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2009	<i>Wonderland</i> , Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2007	<i>The Newspaper Series</i> , Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2006	<i>Clementine Part I, II, III</i> , Koffler Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2005	<i>Revisiting Red and The Clementine Suite</i> , Corkin Shopland Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
	<i>Clementine Part I, II &amp; III</i> , Yukon Arts Centre, Whitehorse, Yukon
2004	<i>Barbara Astman: Clementine Part I</i> , Art Gallery of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario
2003	<i>dancing with che</i> , Corkin Shopland Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2001	<i>Paris Postcard</i> , Jane Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
1999	<i>Dreaming Impressionism</i> , Jane Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
1998	Modern Fuel Gallery, Kingston, Ontario
1997	<i>Scenes from a Movie for One</i> , Jane Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
1995	<i>Barbara Astman: Personal/Persona: A 20-Year Survey Exhibition</i> , Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario, travelled to Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops, British Columbia, Kitchener/Waterloo Art Gallery, Kitchener, Ontario, and Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta

### Selected Group Exhibitions

2013	<i>We're in the Library</i> , Koffler Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
	<i>Light My Fire: Some Propositions about Portraits and Photography, Part I</i> , curated by Sophie Hackett, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
	<i>Flowers &amp; Photography</i> , McMaster Museum of Art, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
2012	<i>Re-Story: Works from the Permanent Collection</i> , Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops, British Columbia
	<i>Some Things Last a Long Time: Seeing the Self in Autobiographical Art</i> , McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario
	<i>Freedom of Assembly</i> , Oakville Galleries, Oakville, Ontario
	<i>Flowers &amp; Photography</i> , Art Gallery of Peterborough, Peterborough, Ontario
	<i>125 &amp; 45: an interrogative spirit</i> , McMaster Museum of Art, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
2011	<i>Becoming: Photographs from the Collection of John and Ginny Soule</i> , Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario
	<i>New Acquisitions</i> , Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts
2010	<i>Art at Work: Corporate Collecting Practices Today</i> , Art Gallery of Mississauga, Mississauga, Ontario
	<i>Natural Disaster</i> , McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario
	<i>Art School (Dismissed)</i> , Shaw Street School, Toronto, Ontario
2009	<i>Still Revolution: Suspended in Time</i> , Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario
	<i>Beautiful Fictions, Photography at the AGO</i> , Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
	<i>Dancing While Driving</i> , Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2008	<i>CLICK</i> , Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia
	<i>The Luminous Body</i> , Art Gallery of Peterborough, Peterborough, Ontario
	<i>The Presence of Portraits</i> , Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
	<i>Story Time: Narrative in Contemporary Art</i> , Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario

2007

*Nexus: Histories and Communities*, Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna, British Columbia

*Out of Body*, Deutsche Bank, New York, New York

*Framed: the Art of the Portrait*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario

*Flat*, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

*Impulse Archaeology*, WHITE BOX, New York, New York, travelled to Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario

*Reading the Picture*, Confederation Centre of the Arts, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

2006

*A Century of Art in Canada*, Art Gallery of Peterborough, Peterborough, Ontario

*Expressions*, Kitchener/Waterloo Art Gallery, Kitchener, Ontario

*On Paper 2: Ideas of Order*, University of Toronto Art Centre, Toronto, Ontario

2005

*Les Revenants*, Le Mois de la Photo, MAI, (Montreal, arts interculturels), Montreal, Quebec

2004

*Identities: Canadian Portraits*, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario

2003

*Absolute Shape: Celebrating 50 Years of Collecting*, Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan

*The Found and the Familiar, Snapshots in Contemporary Canadian Art*, TPW Gallery, Toronto, Ontario, travelled to Confederation Centre of the Arts, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Gallery Connexion, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Art Gallery of Bishop's University, Sherbrooke, Quebec

2002

*Docu Lomo*, Gallery TPW, Toronto, Ontario

*Celebrating 60 Years*, McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario

*Three Artists: Barbara Astman, John Massey, Reinhard Reitzenstein*, Excelsior@tor, Toronto, Ontario

2001

*Osmosis: the passage*, Kitchener/Waterloo Art Gallery, Kitchener, Ontario

*Taking on Colour: Technique in Colour Photography*, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Ontario

*Woman of Substance: Images from the Collection*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario

*The Art of Mentoring*, Lieutenant Governor's Suite, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario



- 2000 *From the Collection: Flowerpieces*, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Ontario  
*Photos géniques*, Maison des arts de Laval, Montreal, Quebec  
*Reflections on the Artist: Portraits and Self Portraits*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario  
*IMAGES, Photo Works From the Collection*, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario
- 1999 *By Invitation*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario  
*The Portrait*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario  
*The Fine Line*, Jane Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario  
*The Photography Lesson*, York Quay Gallery, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, Ontario
- 1998 *Home Base*, Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops, British Columbia
- 1997 *Narrative*, Archive, Toronto, Ontario  
*Beyond the Frame*, Joseph D. Carrier Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
- 1996 *Looking Back II*, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge, Alberta
- 1995 *Barbara Astman/Jiri Ladocha*, Art Gallery of North York, North York, Ontario  
*How Red Works*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario  
*Que sont Les Pionnières Devenues*, Galerie Arts Technologiques, Montreal, Quebec
- 1994 *Suspensions*, McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario
- Public and Corporate Collections**
- Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario  
Andrew White Museum, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York  
Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta  
Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario  
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario  
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France  
Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, Ontario  
Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Ontario  
Confederation Centre of the Arts, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island  
Connor, Clark & Lunn, Toronto, Ontario and Vancouver, British Columbia  
Department of Foreign Affairs, Ottawa, Ontario  
Deutsche Bank Collection, Berlin, Germany  
The Government of Ontario Collection, Toronto, Ontario  
International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House, Rochester, New York  
John Labatt Limited Collection, London, Toronto, Ontario  
Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops, British Columbia  
Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna, British Columbia  
Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan  
McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario  
McMillan Binch, Toronto, Ontario  
Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Boston, Massachusetts  
Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki, Finland  
Museum Würrth, Künzelsau, Germany  
Nova Corporation, Calgary, Alberta  
Osler Hoskins and Harcourt, Toronto, Ontario  
UBS, Switzerland  
University of Toronto Art Centre, Toronto, Ontario  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England  
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut

**Public Art/Commissions, Awards and Related Activities**

- 2007 National Magazine Award, Silver Award for the *Newspaper Series* as presented in *Prefix Magazine*, Toronto, Ontario  
Private Commission, *Present Tense*, Christian Keese, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- 2006 - 2010 The Murano on Bay, Toronto, Ontario
- 2005 Loblaw's Headquarters, Brampton, Ontario
- 2003 Canadian Embassy in Berlin, Germany
- 2000 Centre For Jewish Campus Life, University of Toronto, in collaboration with Susan Friedrich Architect Inc.
- 1999 The Portal Project, Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care, Toronto, Ontario
- 1995 Simcoe Place Public Art Project, Cadillac Fairview Corporation, Toronto, Ontario
- 1994 Police Service Award, Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police, Hamilton, Ontario
- 1994 Simcoe Place Public Art Project, Cadillac Fairview Corporation, Toronto, Ontario

**Selected Bibliography (Reviews, Articles, and Books)**

- 2014 Errett, Benjamin. "It's all about style." *The National Post, Arts & Life*, p.1, January 27.  
Uhlyarik, Georgiana. "A Movie for One." *Canadian Art*, Spring, p. 110-116.
- 2013 Aang, Ashley. "One-on-One with Barbara Astman." *Lomography International Magazine*, Toronto.  
Cooley, Alison. "Old School is New Again in Artscape's Latest Revamp." *Canadian Art* online.  
Jager, David. "Che on the body." *Now Magazine*, Art Reviews, July 4-11, Volume 32, Number 44, p. 48.
- 2012 Whyte, Murray. "Freedom of Assembly, Oakville Galleries." *Toronto Star* online edition, July 7.  
Wylie, Liz. "Barbara Astman." *Canadian Art*, Spring, p. 120.
- 2011 Moser, Gabrielle. "Barbara Astman, Corkin Gallery." *Artforum.com/critics'* pick, *ARTFORUM*, October.  
Prieger, Portia. "Barbara Astman: Feature Preview," *Galleries West*, Summer, Volume 10, Number 2, p. 30.

- 2009 Blaikie, Fiona. *CANADIAN ART/WORKS: A Resource for Primary, Junior, Intermediate and Senior Teachers*. Thunder Bay: Lakehead University, Canadian Society for Education through Art, pp. 73, 114, 195.  
Dault, Gary Michael. "Barbara Astman and Sharon Switzer at the Corkin Gallery." *The Globe and Mail*, December 5, p. R17.  
Liss, David, and Bonnie Rubenstein. *Still Revolution: Suspended in Time*. Toronto: Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Contact Catalogue, pp. 16-33.  
Uhlyarik, Georgiana. *Highlights from the Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario*. ed. Jim Shedden, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, p. 289.  
Whyte, Murray. "Barbara Astman's Wonderland at Jane Corkin." *Toronto Star* online edition, November 16.
- 2007 Rhodes, Richard. "Toronto NOW." *Canadian Art*, Volume 24, Number 4, Winter/December, pp. 67-68.  
Sandals, Leah. "Questions & Artist, the better way to recycle newspaper." *National Post*, April 19, p. 5.
- 2006 *Canadian Portraits*. ed. Sharona Adamowicz-Clements, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.  
*Carte Blanche Photography 1*. Toronto: The Magenta Foundation, pp. 14-15.  
Dault, Julia. "A light on survival, loss and the future." *National Post*, January 12, p. AL 10.  
Holubizky, Ihor. *The Clementine Suite*. Toronto: Koffler Gallery, January.  
Mays, John Bentley. "Canadian Embassy in Berlin." *Canadian Architect*, February, Volume 51, Number 2, p. 33-38.
- 2005 Langford, Martha. "Image & Imagination." *Montreal: le Mois de la Photo à Montréal*, pp. 185-190.  
Vaughan, RM. "The Big Picture." *National Post*, April 30, p. TO 11.
- 2004 Enright, Robert. "Three Photographers: Barbara Astman, Ruth Kaplan, Lori Newdick." *Border Crossings*, Volume 23, Number 1, pp. 44-50.  
Grant, Vanessa. "The life and inspiration behind the photos of Barbara Astman." *Centre of the City* (Toronto), Volume 1, Number 5, November/December, pp. 89-91.

- 2003 Wylie, Liz. "Barbara Astman." *Canadian Art*, Fall, Volume 20, Number 3, p. 139.
- 2001 Mays, John Bentley. "The secret life of picture postcards." *National Post*, September 8, p. F8.
- 2000 Coleman, A.D. "Letter from Toronto/New York, No. 86." *Photo Metro*, Volume 18, Issue 157, San Francisco, California, pp. 30-31.
- Penalzo, Si Si. "Toronto, An Art Scene Not to Be Missed." *Art News* (New York), Volume 99, Number 9, October, pp. 113-120.
- Sykes, Claire. "Barbara Astman, Insider Profile." *Photo Insider*, New Jersey, Volume 21, November /December, pp. 36-39.
- 1999 Murray, Joan. *Canadian Art in the Twentieth Century*. Toronto, Dundurn Press, pp. 167-170.
- 1998 Holubizky, Ihor. "Barbara Astman-Jane Corkin Gallery." *art/text*, Australia, Number 60, February-April, p. 97.
- Mastin, Catharine M. *Changing Spirits: Canadian Art of the 1960s and 70s*. Kamloops: Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops, 1998, pp. 8: 31-32.
- 1996 Liss, David. "Montreal, Copy Art: What Happened To The Pioneers?" *artfocus*, Winter, Volume 4, Number 2, pp. 20-23.
- Siebert, Sherrill. "Artist Astman gets personal with persona." *Sight lines*, *Loops Magazine*, February.
- 1995 *Contemporary Photographers*. Detroit: St. James Press.
- Fulford, Robert. "Photography and its discontents." *Canadian Art*, Spring, Volume 12, Number 1, pp. 56-65.
- Hlynsky, David. "Like Smoke through a Keyhole: Symbolism and Metaphor in Contemporary Photography." *BLACKFLASH*, Summer, Volume 13, Number 2.
- Klages, Gregory. "Explore Yourself." *id Magazine*, May 25 – June 7, Volume 4, Number 15, p. 32.
- 1994 Swain, Robert. *Hidden Values, Contemporary Canadian Art in Corporate Collections*. Introduction by R. Fulford. Toronto/Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, pp. 84, 141.

#### Exhibition Catalogues

- 2013 Art Gallery of Peterborough/McMaster Museum of Art, Ontario. *Flowers and Photography*, curated by Carla Garnet, essays by Edward Colless, Sally McKay and Carla Garnet.
- Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario. *Barbara Astman dancing with che: enter through the gift shop*, essay by Liz Wylie.

- 2012 McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario. *Some Things Last a Long Time*, essay by Matthew Ryan Smith.
- 2011 Art Gallery of Mississauga, Ontario. *Art at Work: Corporate Collecting Practices Today*, essay by Geraldine Davis.
- Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna, British Columbia. *Barbara Astman dancing with che: enter through the gift shop*, essay by Liz Wylie.
- Nicol, Heather. *Art School Dismissed*. Toronto, Ontario: Lakeview Press.
- 2007 Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna, British Columbia. *Nexus: Histories and Communities*, essay by Liz Wylie.
- 2006 Koffler Gallery, Toronto, Ontario. *The Clementine Suite*, essay by Ihor Holubizky.
- 2005 *Image & Imagination, Le Mois de la Photo a Montréal, Montreal*, essay by Martha Langford.
- 2000 Maison des Arts de Laval, Quebec. *Photo Géniques*, essay by Monique B Weinmann.
- Stacey, Robert. *Into The Deep End, The Art of Mentoring at the Ontario College of Art & Design*. Toronto: Lieutenant Governor's Suite, Queen's Park.
- 1995 Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario. *Barbara Astman: Personal/Persona A 20-Year Survey Exhibition*, essay by Liz Wylie.

#### Selected Lectures and Workshops

- 2014 Koffler Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
- 2013 Glendon College, Toronto, Ontario
- Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
- Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario
- Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
- Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario
- Women's College Hospital, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario
- Koffler Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
- 2012 McMaster Museum of Art, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
- Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
- 2010 Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
- 2009 Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
- University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario

- 2005 Klondike Institute of Art & Culture, Dawson City, Yukon
- 2004 Photo Educators Forum, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario
- Yukon Art Centre, Whitehorse, Yukon
- Koffler Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
- Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
- Art Institute of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio
- 2003 Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow, Scotland
- 2001 Bishop Strachan School, Toronto, Ontario
- Irondequoit High School, Rochester, New York
- Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia
- 1995 Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario
- Vernon Public Art Gallery, Vernon, British Columbia
- Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops, British Columbia
- University College of the Cariboo, Kamloops, British Columbia
- Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta
- University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta
- Grant MacEwan Community College, Edmonton, Alberta
- 1994 Gallery/Stratford, Stratford, Ontario
- McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario
- 1993 The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Ontario
- Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
- 1992 St. Lawrence College, Saint-Laurent Art Gallery, Kingston, Ontario
- Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- Art Gallery of Peterborough, Peterborough, Ontario
- Laurentian University Museum and Arts Centre, Sudbury, Ontario
- 1986 London Regional Art Gallery, London, Ontario
- University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California
- 1981 Hamilton Art Gallery, Vistas Conference, Hamilton, Ontario
- Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey
- Powerhouse, Montreal, Quebec

- University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware
- University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario
- 1980 Emily Carr College of Art, Vancouver, British Columbia
- Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York
- New York University, New York, New York
- Canadore College, North Bay, Ontario
- University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware
- Laurentian University, Art Gallery and Museum, Sudbury, Ontario
- Canadian Centre of Photography, Toronto
- Alfred State University, Alfred, New York
- The Richard F. Brush Art Gallery, (formerly known as the Bruce Art Gallery) St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York
- Visual Studies Workshop, SPE Conference Rochester, New York
- 1979 Emily Carr College of Art, Vancouver, British Columbia
- Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario
- Dundas Valley School of Art, Dundas, Ontario
- 1978 Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec
- The Banff Centre, Banff, Alberta
- International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House, Rochester, New York
- Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick
- 1977 Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Nova Scotia
- 1976 The International Center for Photography, New York, New York
- The Women's Interart Center, New York, New York
- St. Lawrence College, Kingston, Ontario

## ARTIST'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank James Patten, Director/Chief Curator, McIntosh Gallery at Western University for his ongoing support and encouragement over the years. I wish to especially thank Catherine Elliot Shaw, Curator, McIntosh Gallery, for her guidance, support and initial vision for this exhibition, essay and catalogue. A special thanks to Kelly McKenzie, MFA candidate and intern to Catherine, for her efforts and energy towards realizing this project. I further wish to extend a very heartfelt thank you to Georgiana Uhlyarik, Associate Curator of Canadian Art, Art Gallery of Ontario, for her insightful essay and continual support both personally and professionally. I also wish to thank Dr. Amy Marshall Furness, Rosamond Ivey Special Collections Archivist, Art Gallery of Ontario, for generously accommodating our access requests to my archives held at the AGO.

## LIST OF WORKS IN EXHIBITION

The *I as artifact* series of 20 works was produced from 2008 to 2011.

Each work is a digital print on Epson, Ultrasmooth Fine Art Paper, 88.9 x 88.9 cm.

Courtesy of the artist and Corkin Gallery.

I as artifact #1	I as artifact #11	I as artifact #19
I as artifact #2	I as artifact #12	I as artifact #20
I as artifact #4	I as artifact #13	
I as artifact #9	I as artifact #18	

I tend to create in isolation, but it takes a team to keep my career moving in a forward direction. For this I thank Jane Corkin, Corkin Gallery, and her very helpful and energetic team.

Loving thanks to my husband Tony Baker and daughters Laura and Amy for constantly reminding me of the important things in life.

My gratitude must be expressed to my high school art instructor, Mr. Harvey Brockley, for his encouragement and belief in me. I also wish to thank my Uncle Isadore Meisel for letting me spend hours watching him create with precious metals.

This catalogue is dedicated in loving memory of my parents.

Barbara Astman

## ADDITIONAL CATALOGUE ILLUSTRATIONS

### McIntosh Gallery Collection:

*Untitled, Visual Narrative Series* 1979  
Ektacolour mural mounted on masonite  
76.2 x 101.5 cm  
Gift of Barbara Astman, 1994

*Untitled, from the Red series* 1981  
Ektacolour mural mounted on masonite  
125 x 122 cm  
Gift of John Labatt Company Limited, London 1994

### Art Gallery of Ontario Collection:

All works are promised gift from the artist to the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, unless otherwise noted.  
All photography © Art Gallery of Ontario

*From the photobooth series* 1970-1976  
photobooth black and white photograph  
20.5 x 4 cm

*Untitled, from the weather balloon series* 1973  
selenium toned black and white photograph  
21.6 x 27.9 cm  
Barbara Astman fonds, E.P. Taylor Research Library & Archives. Gift of Barbara Astman, 2012

*Untitled, self-portrait with transfer and sewing* c. 1974  
art paper, black and white image transfer, colour image transfer, acetate, thread  
19.2 x 24 cm

*Patriotic Portrait* 1975  
black and white photobooth images, marker pen, paper rose sticker, cloth flag, plastic laminate  
16.3 x 24 cm

*Untitled, self-portrait with apple and cherries* c. 1975  
photobooth black and white photograph, paper stickers, plastic laminate  
14.5 x 20.3 cm

### Courtesy of the artist and Corkin Gallery:

*Scenes from a movie for one, #9* 1997  
Ektacolour print 58.8 x 61 cm

*It's All About Style No. 19* 2013  
tape transfer collage on stonehenge paper  
55.9 x 76.2 cm

*Untitled, self-portrait with rose* c. 1975  
photobooth black and white photograph, paper stickers, plastic laminate  
13.8 x 18.5 cm

*Untitled, from the mural Karl and Barbara in Florida* 1976  
colour Xerox on paper  
21.6 x 27.9 cm  
Barbara Astman fonds, E.P. Taylor Research Library & Archives. Gift of Barbara Astman, 2012

*Study for Untitled, I was thinking about you...series* c. 1978  
15 SX-70 Polaroid images on black construction paper  
40.8 x 50.6 cm  
Barbara Astman fonds, E.P. Taylor Research Library & Archives. Gift of Barbara Astman, 2012

*Untitled, self-portrait in the studio with an Untitled, I was thinking about you... series* 1979-80  
black and white RC photograph on paper print  
20.3 x 25.3 cm  
Barbara Astman fonds, E.P. Taylor Research Library & Archives. Gift of Barbara Astman, 2012





*Untitled from the mural Karl and Barbara In Florida 1976*

*Barbara Astman I as artifact*

Curator: Catherine Elliot Shaw

Essay: Georgiana Uhlyarik

Design: Louise Gadbois

Research Assistant: Kelly McKenzie

Photography: Barbara Astman and the Art Gallery of Ontario

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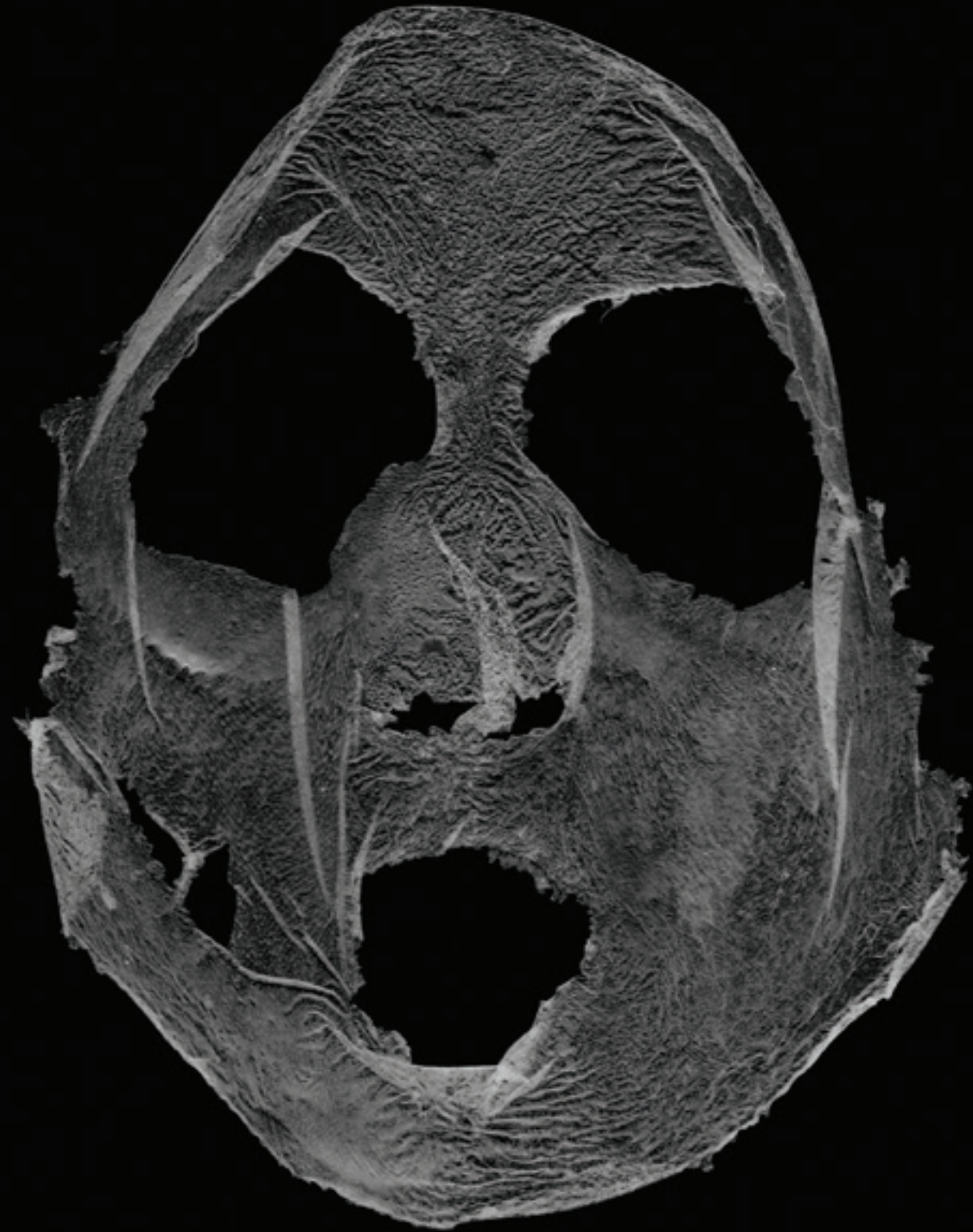


From the photobooth series 1970-1976









*I as artifact #1*

**BARBARA  
ASTMAN  
*I AS ARTIFACT***

*Curated by Catherine Elliot Shaw*

*April 17 – June 7, 2014*

*McIntosh Gallery*



From the photobooth series 1970-1976

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Untitled self-portrait in the studio with an Untitled, I was thinking about you...series 1979-1980

## FOREWORD

McIntosh Gallery is pleased to present *Barbara Astman I as artifact*. The gallery has a long history with Astman, who is represented in the McIntosh collection by eleven works dating from 1978 to 1990. Coincidentally, it was during this key period in her artistic practice that I became familiar with her work.

In the 1970s Astman had already achieved acclaim for her exploration of Polaroid technology and Xerography, and began exhibiting at public galleries. But it was in 1980 that an entire generation of young music fans took notice when Astman created the cover art for the Canadian band Loverboy's debut album. By typing lyrics directly onto a still-wet, developing Polaroid self-portrait, (pictured opposite), Astman brought a new level of immediacy and intimacy to photographic practices decades before the selfie's ascent within popular culture. Technically innovative and provocative, this iconic image combined personal narrative and conceptual art strategies while breaking down barriers between the rarified world of contemporary photography and popular culture. 1980 was also the year that the Toronto band Rough Trade issued their second album *Avoid Freud*, with the cover designed by General Idea. I was an art history student at the time, and was excited that the contemporary artists I was just learning about were collaborating with the musicians I was listening to. Perhaps this is why I always respond to Astman's works as if they were old friends whenever they have fortuitously appeared during my curatorial career, whether in the dark vaults of collection

storage or in the many exhibitions she has had throughout Canada over the past 30 years.

In 2004 I finally had the pleasure of working with Barbara, curating *Barbara Astman: Clementine Part I* for the Art Gallery of Windsor. The entire exhibition was based on a newspaper photograph of a large group of war orphans arriving in Canada in 1947. Astman was struck by their apparent happiness in relation to their traumatic experiences as survivors of war. As with much of her work, including the remarkable images featured in *I as artifact*, *Clementine Part I* revealed her uncanny ability to navigate the complex terrain between public persona and personal identity. Barbara is always present in her work, but so too are we, both situated in the larger arena of public representation and the discursive spaces that comprise it.

At Western University, I am indebted to Catherine Elliot Shaw who, as McIntosh curator, has maintained a professional discourse with Barbara Astman for over three decades. Catherine's dedication and experience have made the production of this exhibition and publication seamless from the initial concept to the end result. I thank McIntosh curatorial intern Kelly McKenzie, a Department of Visual Arts MA candidate, for her assistance in research and catalogue organization in addition to conducting the interview with the artist included in this publication, which was beautifully designed by Louise Gadbois of Western's Graphic Services department.



From the photobooth series 1970-1976

I am grateful to Georgiana Uhlyarik, Associate Curator, Canadian Art, Art Gallery of Ontario, for her insightful catalogue essay and collegial support. Also at the AGO, I thank Dr. Amy Marshall Furness, Rosamond Ivey Special Collections Archivist, and Jim Shedden, Manager of Publishing, for providing access to the Barbara Astman Archival Collection.

Finally, I extend my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to McIntosh donor Mrs. Winona E. Elliot for her generous financial support, which made the realization of this exhibition and publication possible.

James Patten  
Director/ Chief Curator



Untitled, Visual Narrative series 1979





Untitled, from the Red series 1981

## PERFORMING PRIVATE ALCHEMY

*I have a crazy,  
crazy love of things.*

*...  
many things conspired  
to tell me the whole story.  
Not only did they touch me,  
or my hand touched them:  
they were  
so close  
that they were a part  
of my being,  
they were so alive with me  
that they lived half my life  
and will die half my death.*

- Pablo Neruda, *Ode to things*, 1954

Barbara Astman is holding things in her hands. There are things pinned up around her, suspended. She takes turns holding them. These are things made doubly hers when she spray-painted them all singularly red. She is performing their function so that she can get to know them – so that we may get to know how to use them. This is how you water the pineapple. This is how you hold a ball. This is how you talk on the telephone and hold a mug. Her many red things conspire to tell us the whole story, as Neruda claims. There is a truth in the experience of common things – a fulsome kind of accounting that can be known and shared. T.S. Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock measures out his life in coffee spoons; Lisa Steele recounts her life in the order in which she acquired her scars. The world of things is made to our measure. A handmade world is intended to be held and sometimes to

## Georgiana Uhlyarik

be passed on. Astman has been getting to know the world by holding things in her hand: postcards, fabric, cigarettes, lint, newspapers – and especially her Polaroid SX-70 camera. "Materiality is what drives me," she has said. After all, she trained as a silversmith. She has been negotiating the world of things and her own self in relation to it ever since she can remember.

This engagement with things and its foregrounding may be a surprising prelude to a consideration of Astman's practice which has long been discussed – and paradoxically, marginalized – as rooted in the image of the self, specifically of the female self. It is not meant to undermine the evocative centrality of the performative self – on the contrary, it is a claim to relocate the self in an ongoing relationship within the material world as the primary position from which each of us performs and gains awareness.

We are held before we can hold.

As an initial attempt to locate herself in the world Astman begins, intuitively, with herself. Among the first images she makes are single photo booth portraits in which she is holding an uncut strip of photo booth portraits of herself in each hand. These are documents of private performances in a sequestered public space, recorded sequentially in palm sized photographs. Astman literally holds her multiplied self in her hands. Thus, she claims her image as her own; she is both subject and object, creator and the created. In the classic



tradition of portraiture, where subjects are surrounded by and hold objects as attributes of their status and ambition, Astman's root attribute is her own image.

In constructing images such as *Untitled, self-portrait with Rose* (pictured page 28) or *Untitled, self-portrait with apple and cherries* (both 1975) (pictured opposite) through appliqué and in-camera collage, Astman makes explicit both the objectification of the female face by replacing it with a flower or a fruit (beauty and fecundity) and the public masks assigned to efface our private self. These works are not an homage to the familiar René Magritte portrait whose face is obscured by a green apple, painted just over a decade before Astman replaces her own with a red one. The apple in her work is a heavily burdened fruit, a warning, no matter how cute and innocent that decal sticker might first appear. Considered again, this time through the lens of this early work, Astman's crossed-arms pose, which appears in at least one of the annotated panels in each of her *Visual Narrative Series* (1978-79) (pictured page 9), can now be read as a defensive posture and also as a self-embrace.

Naturally, in lieu of another holding us, we hold ourselves.

Astman's project of sticking seemingly fun, colourful things to her black and white images of a young long-haired brunette posing for a hungry camera can be compared to the contemporaneous work of Hannah Wilke,

specifically her *S.O.S. - Starification Object Series* begun in 1974. Wilke's enticing fashion model poses are disturbed by the soft sculptures chewed by her audience and then collected to be affixed like prosthetic hives erupting on her skin. In the photo booth strips, Astman alternates between wrapping her face in her hair and wearing comic masks which she then colours by hand (pictured pages 18, 22 and 23).

Four years later, she cohesively refines into one image her compositions of poses, expressions, colours, textures and a range of everyday-life objects in the *Untitled, I was thinking about you... series* (1979-80). Each appears to be a letter to a close friend and begins the same way: "dear \_\_\_\_\_, i was thinking about you...". The typewritten text of the previous *Narrative* works has now spread and imprinted itself all over the image – Astman's own scarification as each typebar letter carved out its own shape in the drying Polaroid emulsion as it struck. The force of her thoughts became permanently incised into her own image – her own reimagining of the Rosetta Stone. In Astman's case however, she is the author, the narrator and the translator of a tender and raw message of how memory becomes truth. In some of these works she holds things as though they are private hieroglyphs: a light bulb, a red sandal, a notebook.

Considering Astman's early work alongside Wilke's reveals a shared struggle. Much like Wilke was accused by critics of being too attractive in her naked photographs and



*Untitled, self-portrait with apple and cherries* c.1975



*Scenes from a movie for one, #9* 1997

performances, so was Astman first subjected to a description of her looks in reviews before a consideration of her work. Wilke persisted in what Amelia Jones has described as the “reiterative performance of the self as an elusive promise of authenticity,”<sup>1</sup> as the artist chose to perform in public and sustain the dangerous tension between her exposed self and the things that surround her (for example, the many guns which corner her in *What Does This Represent (pink)*, 1978). Astman opted for the private act of delving into the deep recesses of the self in search of authenticity – a kind of excavating beneath the level of awareness – a process Betty Goodwin referred to as a burrowing. “I have an inner world and it is about the inner world that I want to make my images about,” Astman has always maintained.

In *Scenes from a movie for one* (1997) (pictured opposite), she uses her image to evoke an emotive narrative rooted within her consciousness and based on her own lived experience and completed in the viewer’s imagination. She began transforming images shot 15 years earlier first by taking Polaroid close-ups of the black and white copy negative prints. She then manipulated and scratched the emulsion, drawing red out of black and white photographs. It is no longer the external violence of the typebar scarring her image; in *Scenes* the distress is internal, it is psychic. The resulting serial images of her distorted face and naked upper body are individually ghostly yet cumulatively assertive. Astman’s figure is resolutely self-determined and self-aware.

Throughout her career, Astman has shared her own deeply felt knowledge of being in the world absorbing information that comes to her through all her senses and then in an act of private alchemy she performs her understanding in her attempt to open up a space of engagement between her and us – between the self and the many others. She has recruited instant camera technology to mine her inner psyche and thus usurp the tools of new technologies into handmaidens for a homemade vision of the world and our individual selves in it.

In her latest work, *It’s All about Style* (2014), Astman returns to that original gesture of lifting colourful found images and building new arrangements of her own making. They recall her mid-1970s xerography work in which she instantly transported a figure into exotic locales from famous paintings to famous sites, by collaging them into the picture. In these recent works her own image has disappeared – as it has many times over the years – but not her hand. Astman created large photo murals by digitally stitching grids of individual groupings of newspapers and postcards arranged by hand in her *Newspaper Series*, (2006 and 2008) and *Wonderland* (2008), and she cut and pasted and then digitally scanned her *Daily Collages*, (2009-2011). However, in *It’s All about Style* (pictured page 17) she makes images by using packing tape to peel off strips of glossy photographs from *The Globe & Mail’s Style* section, and re-adheres them, scrambled, into a pair of squares. Significantly, these works are unique; she does not re-photograph them to



re-present them. Instead, Astman transforms image into material, so that she may hold it in her hand and really get to know it.

Barbara Astman has always been an image maker, with the emphasis on maker. In *Ways of Seeing*, published in 1972, John Berger wrote:

“We only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice. As a result of this act, what we see is brought within our reach – though not necessarily within arm’s reach. To touch something is to situate oneself in relation to it.”<sup>2</sup>

Looking back, we are now able to recognize that Astman has spent the last four decades unravelling all the cues that were present in her youthful days acting out in the photo booth: the unique print of the instant camera, the predetermined grid, the invitation to perform, the implicit narrative in the sequence and, most importantly, the self-awareness that comes from holding things in your hand.

Georgiana Uhlyarik is Associate Curator, Canadian Art, at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.

#### Notes

All Barbara Astman quotes are from interviews with the author, held February 12, March 2 and March 29, 2013, in Toronto.

1 Amelia Jones. “Everybody Dies ... Even the Gorgeous: Resurrecting the work of Hannah Wilke” in *Mark(s)* volume 4.01, March 2003; accessed online February 3, 2014. <http://markszine.net/401/ajind.html>

2 Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972), p. 8



*It's All About Style* 2013





From the photobooth series 1970-1976



Patriotic Portrait 1975



Untitled from the *weather balloon* series 1973

## INTERVIEW WITH BARBARA ASTMAN

### Kelly McKenzie

Barbara Astman's studio, located in a converted school in downtown Toronto, is filled with light in the late morning. Her desk occupies the centre of the room where she has her computer, a printer, and various stacks of papers. On one wall the windows dominate, providing a warm glow to an already inviting space. Adjacent is a collection of works-in-progress pinned up in groups, each at a different stage in its creative development, including nine smaller prints from the series *I as artifact*. A few examples of tape transfers used in her recent work, *It's All About Style*, are also present adding a shot of colour and abstraction to the collection. Others are test projects in their infancy, a few of which are discussed in the conversation below.

The remaining walls are used for storage, all uniquely designed to provide Astman with a versatile space. Everything is built for ease and mobility. The configuration of the space can change on a whim to accommodate any project Astman might tackle. The studio is a home-away-from-home, equipped with anything an artist like Astman may need, including printers of varying sizes, boxes and stacks of photographic prints and other materials.

Astman greets her guests warmly as friends, calling for us to enter informally. She offers us tea as she sips from a blue and white cup. After a tour of her space and a relaxed chat, she invites us to settle into a comfortable place in the centre of the room where we begin the interview.

**Kelly McKenzie:** In a 2004 interview with Robert Enright for *Border Crossings*, you discussed the photographs where you covered yourself with a weather balloon. You said "It was about taking myself outside my own culture and my own persona, and trying to become somebody else. I saw that



From the photobooth series...1970-1976

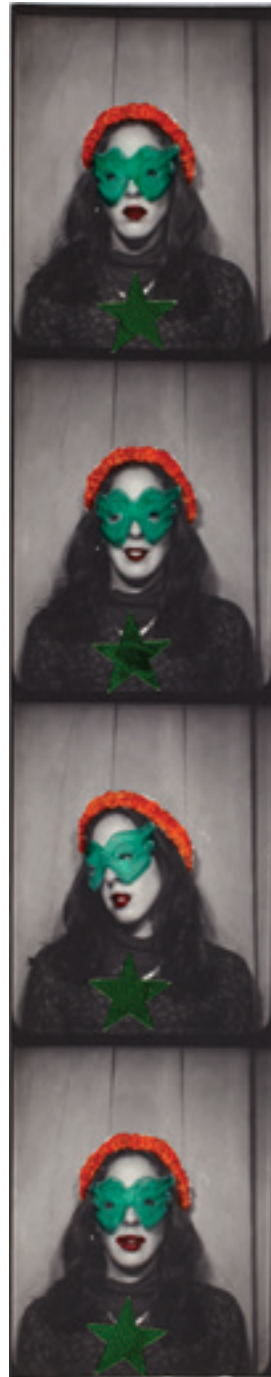


through a combination of dressing up and covering up, you can be whoever you want to be.” Does this hold true with *I as artifact*? Are you covering up and becoming something else through the masks?

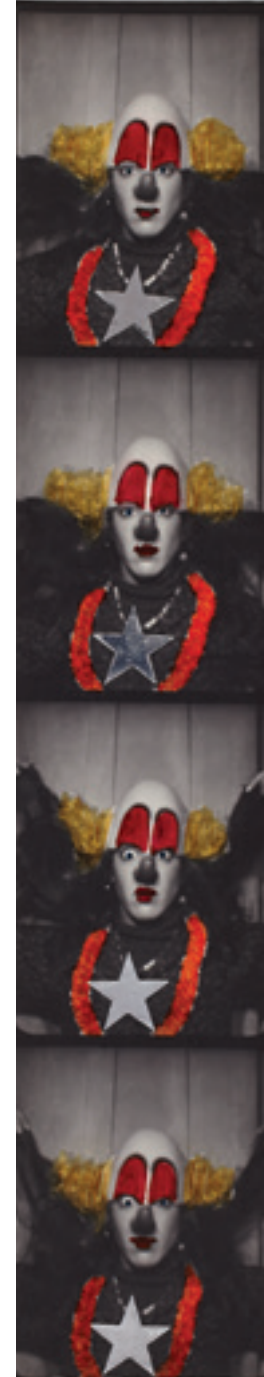
**Barbara Astman:** I’m revealing more than covering up. I’m revealing something that I don’t think I’ve ever revealed before. Although some people might not see them as that intimate, they’re really very intimate images of my face because they have every pore, every mark, every little hair, every wrinkle, every little thing that’s on my face is there. It’s embedded right in that mask. So it’s actually more public than private.

**KM:** In some of your earlier works, such as the *Red* series, *Scenes from a movie for one*, and *dancing with che*, you insert yourself in the work, as you’ve said, using yourself as a model and/or subject. In those works the audience never gets to see your face. It is cropped or blurred. In some cases, the audience only sees one part of your body. Have you ever considered that by effectively dismembering yourself through cropping and blurring, you are making it easier for your audience to see your body as an object? Does that make it easier to objectify your body?

**BA:** I see it differently. By removing the eyes, I’m removing the whole sense of portraiture—of what portraiture is about. Portraiture is supposed to talk about what we look like and the gaze. I wanted to remove what I looked like and the gaze. I don’t want somebody thinking: “what does that person look like?” I want it to just be figurative, just a figure. And, in some cases, people thought it was gender-neutral in some of the early work because it’s not a highly feminine shape. They thought it could be an androgynous kind of shape.



From the photobooth series 1970-1976



From the photobooth series 1970-1976

It’s not like I’m nude. It’s not like I’m wearing provocative clothes. So I don’t think I’m objectifying myself that way. I think what I’m doing is denying you the whole pleasure of portraiture. That frustrated people. I like this denial and not allowing anybody in because it’s so personal to me. Once you see my face and my eyes it’s so personal. Then we’re making some kind of connection. I didn’t want that. I wanted it to be more anonymous too.

I like the idea of anonymity. I don’t want it to always be about what Barbara Astman looks like and unfortunately that’s what people talk about—what you look like rather than what the idea is. So it’s less about turning the body into something for the viewer to gaze at. I want them to look at the objects I’m holding. I want them to look at the text over the body. Or in *dancing with che*, I want them to look at how my body is used to transform Che like a poltergeist, like I might make him come alive just by moving. It’s not really about my body, it’s about how I move my body in space to make him swirl and dance and move around. So it’s really more about the use of the body rather than presenting my body out there for people to look at.

**KM:** Especially in the case of *I as artifact*, it is possible for audiences to read the images as a comment on the pressures many women feel to stay young and beautiful forever. Was the ideal of beauty particularly salient for you while working on this series?

**BA:** Well, it all grew out of beauty. I was using a female facial mask product and yes, that was trying to make my skin look better. But once I pulled the mask off, that idea was gone. Now I just wanted to start making all these masks because I knew this was going to take me somewhere else. And really, they were almost scary, almost hideous, like peeling flesh off of someone’s face. Rather than make me think about beauty, it made me think more about what we leave behind.



I don't like people to automatically think they're death masks but it's kind of like the dust we leave behind, the particles we leave behind, everything that's left behind is right there in those masks. So it grew out of my own post-middle age attempt to use some kind of mask to tighten my skin. But in the end, it wasn't really about that at all. In the end, they're really more like topographical masks of the world.

**KM:** So, what drew you to the masks as an object or subject for the series?

**BA:** Seeing the very first one and then quickly making another mask. You're not supposed to use the product so often but I was kind of compelled to see another face, and then another. And each time you pull it off, it's somewhat different.

After I made about 20 faces, I think I let them sit, dry for a while, and then I didn't touch them for nearly a year. I had to think about it. I would pull them out. I would look at them. I would handle them. I'd feel almost creeped out. Then I thought I wasn't ready to do this. I was just carrying it with me, thinking about it while doing all sorts of other art projects with things in my life. And then one day I just pulled the file out and thought: "I'm ready to try something." I'm going to scan them. I'm going to see what happens. And then I took a long time to decide: do I leave it pink, do I leave it white? But I realized I wanted it to almost appear as though you were peering into this darkness, peering into this void and seeing

this face floating in there, transparent, where you could almost see through the face to the black void behind. It's like looking at the night sky when you're in the country where you have that deep, deep black and you see these little sparkling lights in the night sky. To me, there's magic in that and I wanted this to have that kind of magic.

It took a long time to come to the point of understanding what I wanted to do with it. But I knew that they held a lot of significance.

**KM:** These masks appear very animated with open mouths and wide eyes. It's almost as if they are about to move, speak, or sing. Was this intentional?

**BA:** The moment I printed some of the small tests, I thought of Joyce Wieland's *O Canada*. I thought: "oh my god, the face is singing to me!" There's its mouth moving up and down and sideways and disfigured, and I thought it feels as though it's trying to say something to me and I don't know what it is. But that's something that attracts me to them too. When I have them up on the wall, I think, what are you trying to say? And then I think, let that go because you really start reading into that when it's your own face.

**KM:** Do you think these masks can take on a life or identity of their own?

**BA:** Sure. I don't think it's really important for every viewer to understand that it's my face.



Study for *Untitled, I was thinking about you...* series c. 1978

People know as soon as they see the open sockets of the eyes and its nose and mouth to identify it as a face. Look at emoticons. They're just two dots and a line. You know that's a face. Or your mind reads it as such.

So you don't have to know it's me. You don't have to know anything about me really. You could just look and see this really strange face floating in this black void and yet it's white and clear, almost like a jellyfish. It's just kind of floating there, just hovering in this blackness. I know it's my skin particles, my DNA, my traces, but it could be anybody's. I hope it's read in a more open way.

**KM:** Why did you choose to scan them as opposed to photograph them?

**BA:** I think of my scanner as a camera. The same as a colour copy machine was a camera to me too. There's a lot of similarity between all that colour Xerox work and all my scanner work, all the different things I put on the scanner. It's a more direct way to put it right down. If you photograph it, you could have the consequences of your lighting and your shadows and other things. With the scanner, it's just so hyper-real that I thought it was going to be a much better solution than going back and re-photographing them.

**KM:** In *I as artifact*, you decided to use a square format, which is reminiscent of your earlier pioneering work with Xerox, colour photocopy, and Polaroid. Is there a relationship between this series and your previous work?

**BA:** I think there's a relationship between all of my work because there's a performative aspect. As soon as you put yourself in the image, you're performing, not just for yourself but for the world too. I would say the performative aspect and the self-portraiture aspect would be the connection between the past work and my real struggle to understand and make sense of what this means. What's my purpose in life? What's my function? I think about those things.

People say: "well god, you seem to jump from newspapers to this to that." But it's this inquisitiveness about the world—what it means to exist in this world. To me, in the end, that's what all this work is about. I see a direct correlation between this work and *Dancing with Che* and all the more performative works where I'm performing for the camera. But this time I didn't actually stand there and perform for the camera. I created these masks to then create the artwork.

**KM:** Most of the work you have done independently to date has been done in series. What attracts you to working in multiples?

**BA:** I think I have an obsessive-compulsive kind of personality. The hardest thing for me is to stop. For every series I've done, you have to force yourself to find a point where you have to say it's done because I hate finishing things. I just want it to keep on going. I just want to enjoy the process so much. Once you say it's done, then it's about the work involved to make these things, of cleaning up all the images and the files and doing the printing. That's



Untitled self-portrait with transfer and sewing c. 1974





Untitled self-portrait with rose c. 1975

not the fun part. The fun part is exploring and discovering what this image is. That's where you get so excited. All these other tasks I needed to go through to get me to what this image needs to be. And then it comes down to the hard work.

**KM:** How much does technology influence your work as a whole?

**BA:** I'm always a little afraid of it. But once I get it, I actually have a lot of fun. I love seeing the prints coming out of the printer. It's magic just seeing this thing—this image—appear before your eyes. It's really almost like being back in a darkroom and seeing the picture appear before you in the developer.

I'm also interested in the constraints of it. You can push it and push it, but at what point does it tell you that you have to work within those constraints. That's part of the creative problem solving: making a lot of decisions that hopefully suit the purpose of your final concept.

**KM:** What was your favourite part of making *I as artifact*?

**BA:** The favourite part in any project is all of a sudden you see the image you wanted. You go through this whole process and you try this and you try that, and that's always enjoyable, but once I finally inverted one of the masks and made the black really dense and lightened up the light on the face and blew up a big test print so I could see all these pores and cells, it was like seeing my DNA. And that gives you the energy to go in and put in all the work you need

to do the other 19 and to make them look like that too. Seeing the way you hoped it would look but you're never exactly sure how it's going to look until you actually go through the process.

**KM:** Would you say *I as artifact* is finished or do you think you might come back to it at some point?

**BA:** I can tell by what's happening in the darkroom right now with the small photogram images of the original faces that I'm still interested in trying something with it. They always look so very, very different each way you do it because analog imaging is very different from digital imaging and it gives you a different feel. I have that kind of mind that wants to keep exploring and exploring and exploring.

McIntosh Gallery intern Kelly McKenzie is an MA candidate in the Department of Visual Arts, Western University.

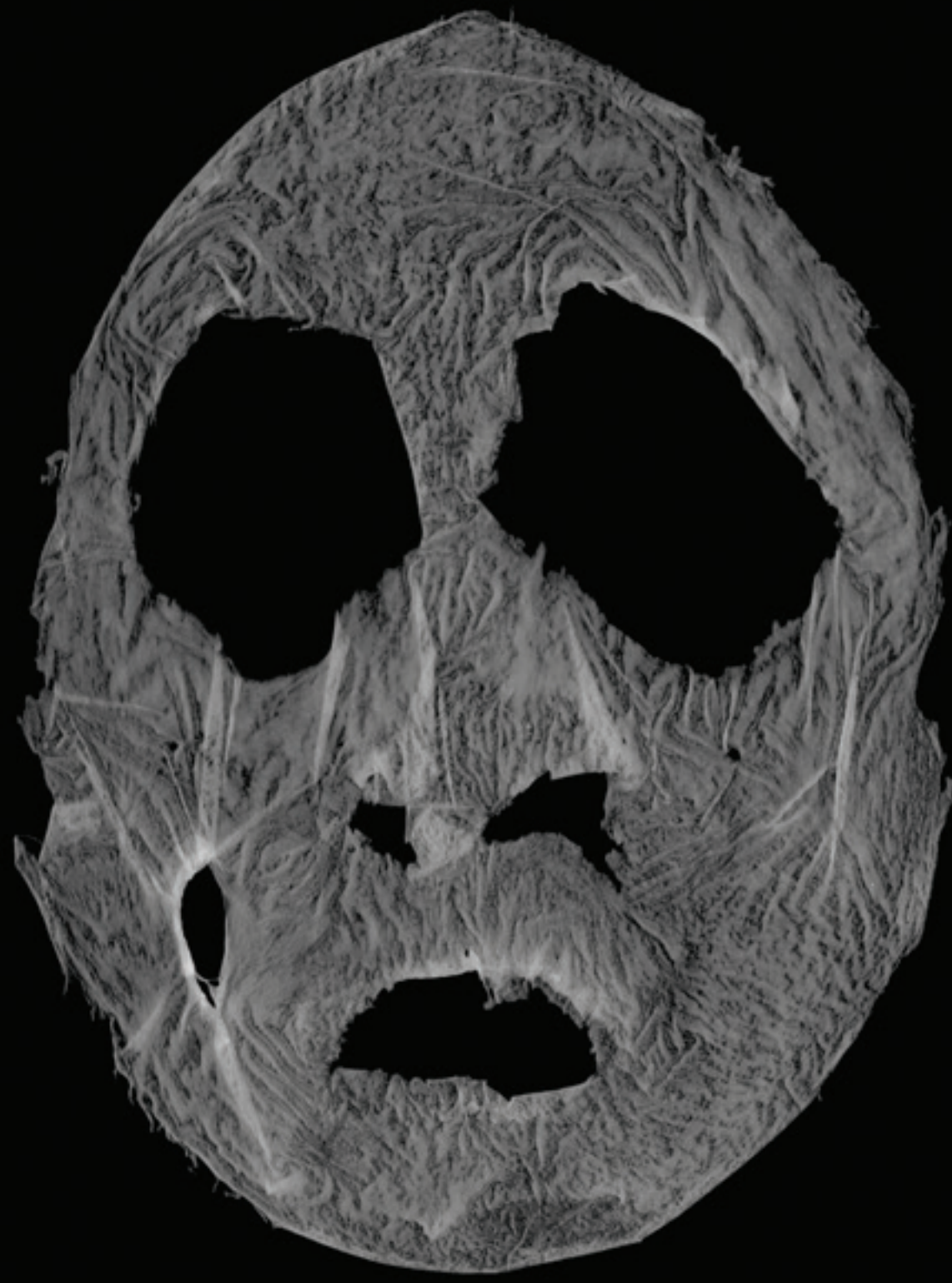
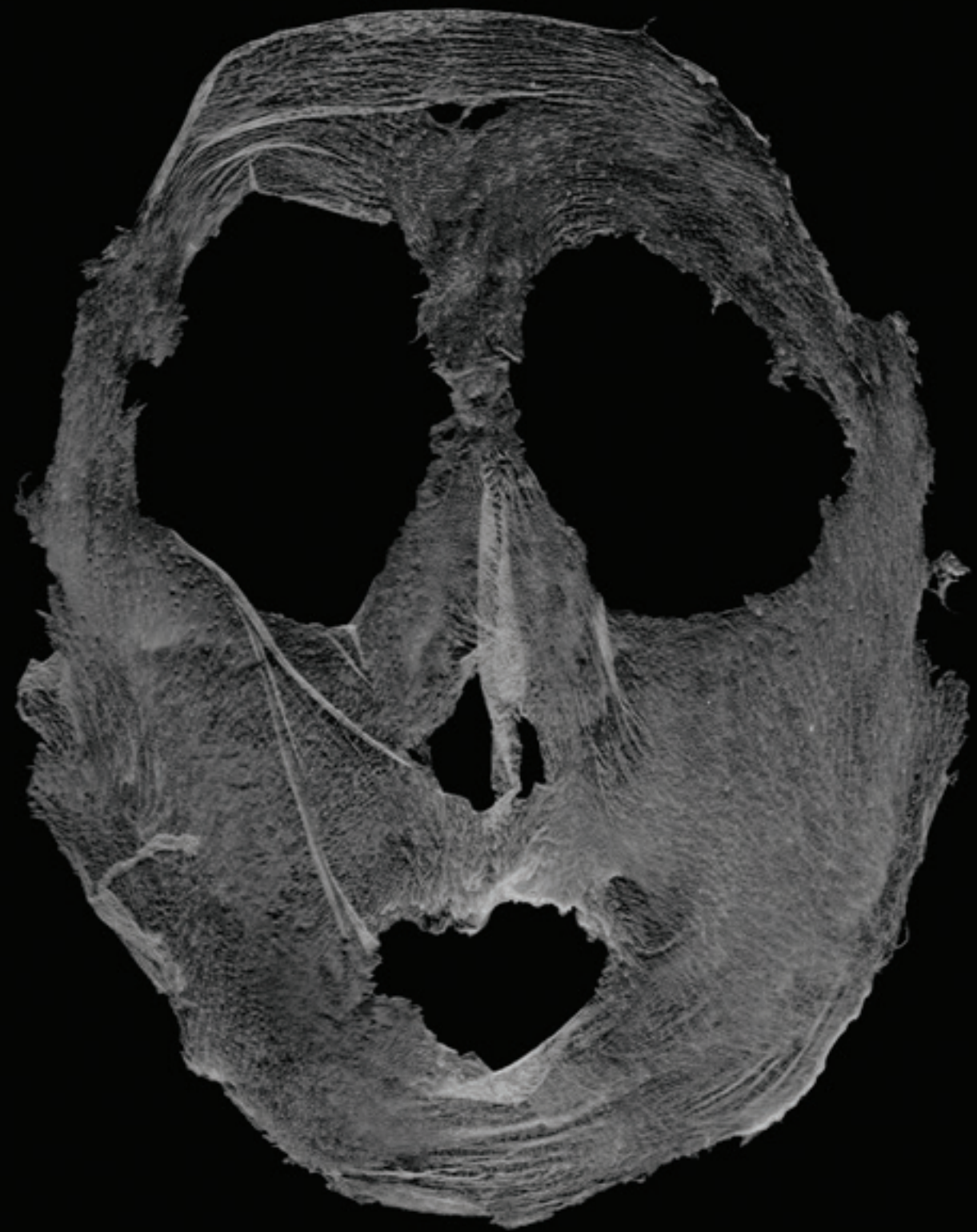
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*I as artifact #2*

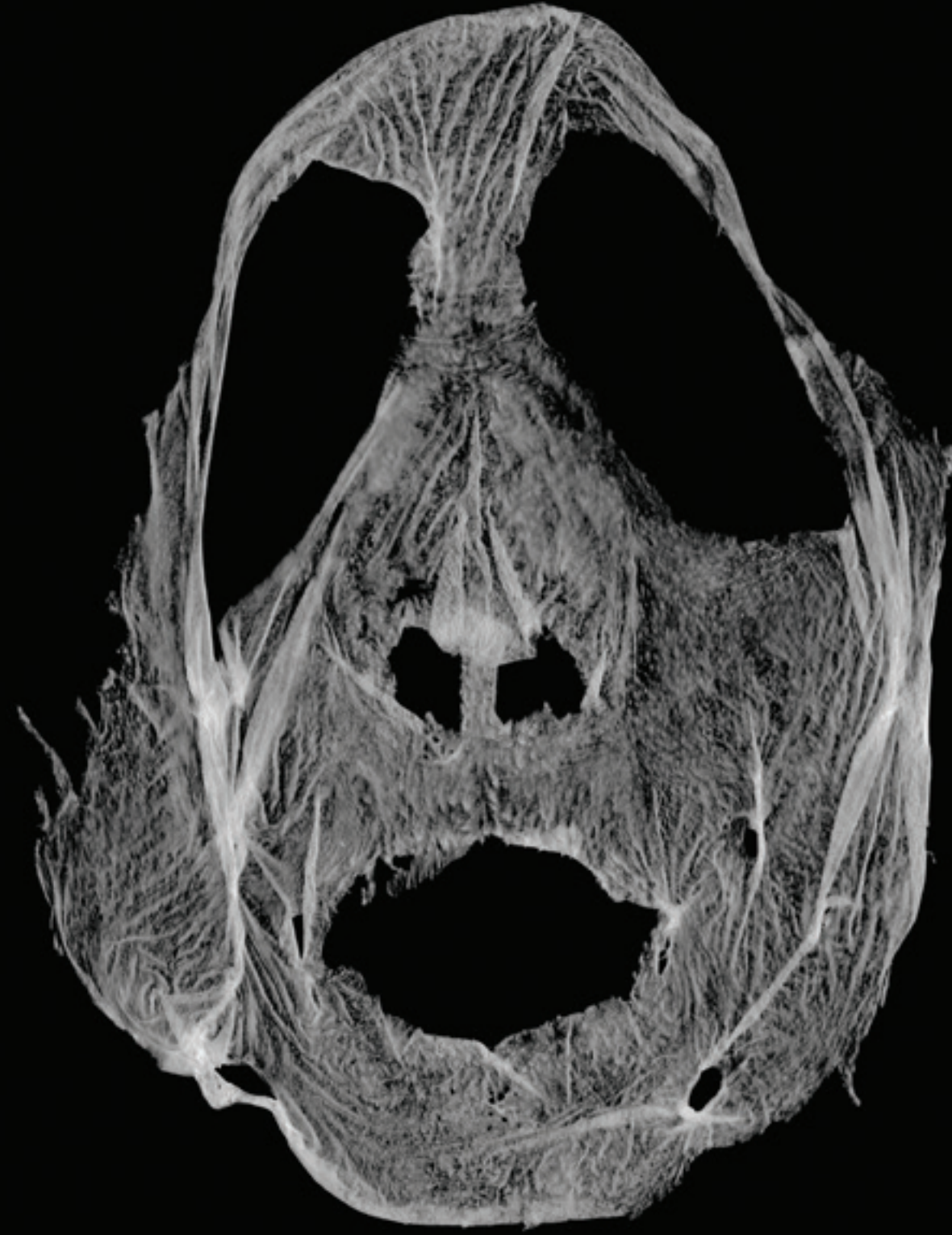
*I as artifact #3*

*I as artifact #4*









## BARBARA ASTMAN / AS ARTIFACT

*I celebrate myself, and sing myself,  
And what I assume you shall assume,  
For every atom belonging to me as  
good belongs to you...*

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

The human face: why does it captivate our attention? A compelling fascination to seek similarity or discern difference? After all, a topography that has remained essentially unchanged for generations conveys the same familiar spectrum of attributes. Even as infants, we learn to recognize and decipher facial expressions, searching features for presumed insights into character or signals of possible threat. And, we have learned to judge based on superficial appearance believing perhaps, with Cicero, that “the countenance is the reflection of the soul”. Certainly, the nineteenth century French artist, Honoré Daumier, aligned his caricatures of bankers, shopkeepers and butchers with the postulations of contemporary physiognomists. Such universal “truths” have persisted to the present day with inferences of someone’s honesty, warmth or intelligence confirmed or denied by the fullness of a lip or the wideness of the eyes.

Ancient Greek theatre understood and incorporated physiognomic principles into its stagecraft, relying on masks to accentuate and project the stereotyped characteristics associated with each actor’s role. Their use also allowed one actor to assume several persona in the same play, much as each of us adopts an assortment of masks to bridge the inner self

Catherine Elliot Shaw

to an outer reality. So many identities—partner, parent, child, sibling, worker, friend—are demanded by daily life. Some are required to affirm communal compatibility and facilitate entrance into and ongoing interaction with various societal situations. Others are borne of cultural traditions and expectations while some reside in the unique qualities of personality. They mediate our associations and protect from psychological attack. Whatever the application, all require a wearer and an audience to activate the symbiotic relationship. However, as Lou Benson observes: “When the need to maintain the mask becomes so crucial that the individual begins to lose sight of his real needs and desires, he has lost the ability to discriminate between this image and his real self.”<sup>1</sup> The focus then becomes validation of the mask.

In her *I as artifact* series, Barbara Astman presents a collection of arresting, face-like constructions isolated by a dense void of deepest black. Bearing no specific markers revealing gender, race, or age, the features are intimated by the negative space encased by patterned skin textures. Dominating them are the eyes or, more precisely, eye sockets, their angular holes not unsighted but instead protective veils against complete self-disclosure. Noses, suggested by intensified folds flattened here or narrowed there, provide dimension to the otherwise compressed surface. It is the mouths, however, open in diverse labial positions, that complete the animation of these images. Pausing

momentarily in speaking, singing, exclaiming, there is an almost overwhelming cacophony of resounding silence. And it is in this moment that their individuality appears.

They loom out of the dark and command the entire picture space to create a universal micro-world. The dynamic tension is made especially palpable by the indeterminate vantage point. Are we witnesses to these translucent forms or are we in fact inhabiting them? In encountering other beings, we would normally use learned, socially-acceptable inquiry to detect the underlying nature of the character. If the mask is ours, then, like all masks, it becomes an extension of the face, a protective barrier against others reading the multitude of innate consistencies and contradictions. Implicit in this anonymity is the potential catalyst into a secret cosmos of psychological fantasy. According to Robert J. Weber, one construction of self-image occurs when the individual enters another realm of experience in impersonating gods or heroes, an act that transfigures the identity as it adopts another persona for a short time.<sup>2</sup> And it is the interpretation imposed on this experience, including the memories we choose to keep or discard, which ultimately defines the persona between existing self-image and future identities.

Curiously, Astman's *I as artifact* is both a continuation of, and a departure from, her previous iconic series. The familiar and exacting intimacy of the SX-70 format frontal

pose has been subsumed entirely by a directed shift of emphasis to the relationship between singular object and viewer. There is no constellation of image, body language and narrative text to particularize its meaning. Rather, the abstracted facial elements, though presented in their entirety, avoid any specific personal identification or associations. Previous visual seduction by luscious colours, either in background details or floating objects, is eliminated here, allowing more intensive focus on the fascinating linear detail.

While perhaps not immediately evident, the exploration of self-awareness as a discipline is still at the core of this work. Ironically, the medium recording all the pores, flaws, and even the DNA of the artist's face, is a commercial cosmetic preparation for skin enhancement. The corresponding confirmation of aging, far from foreshadowing a death mask, raises questions about the aesthetics of ongoing decay, its ephemerality and permanency. American astrophysicist Harlow Shapley once theorized that the argon molecules present in each intake of breath have been recycled over hundreds if not thousands of years. These in turn circulate around the world until, according to Shapley, every person's subsequent breath contains about 15 molecules from the exhalation one year before. Based on these calculations, this inert yet life-sustaining element can be traced back to the dinosaurs and will, in turn, permeate life forms in forthcoming millennia.<sup>3</sup>

In a similar manner, Barbara Astman's images assume a timeless quality in linking past and future artifacts, hers and ours. Intimidating, friendly, haunting, engaged, immediate yet somehow inaccessible, this sea of monumental faces challenges us to look beyond the observable world. Imbedded in the Janus-like gaze are the accumulating complexities of the human continuum.

Catherine Elliot Shaw, Curator,  
McIntosh Gallery

#### Notes

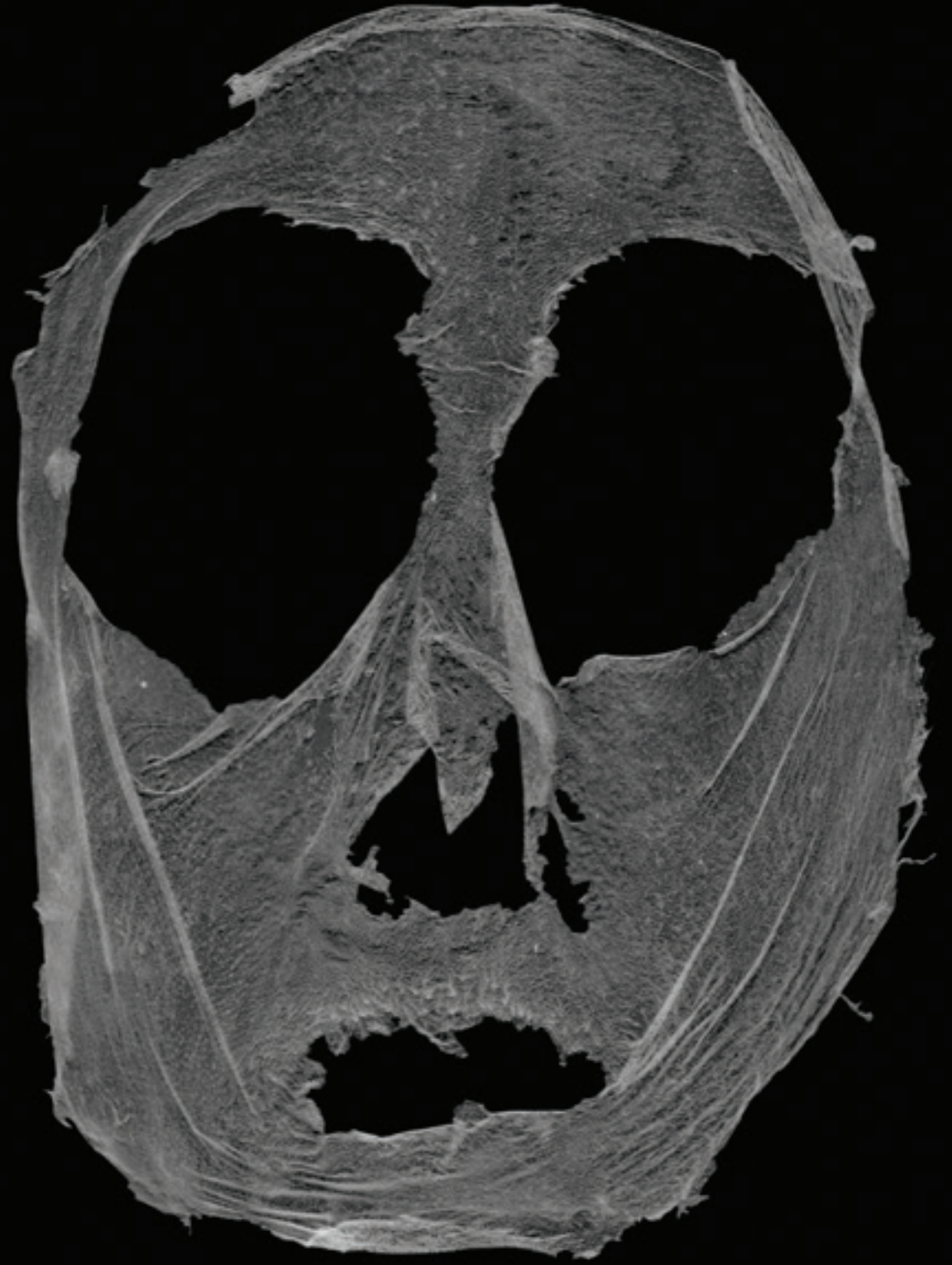
- 1 Lou Benson. *Images, heroes, and self-perceptions: the struggle for identity—from mask-wearing to authenticity* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974), p. 4.
- 2 Robert J. Weber. *The Created Self: reinventing body, persona, and spirit* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000), pp. 129, 190.
- 3 David Suzuki. "The Challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Setting the Real Bottom Line – part 3" in *The Epoch Times* May 16, 2008; accessed online March 6, 2014 <http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/8-5-16/70748.html>



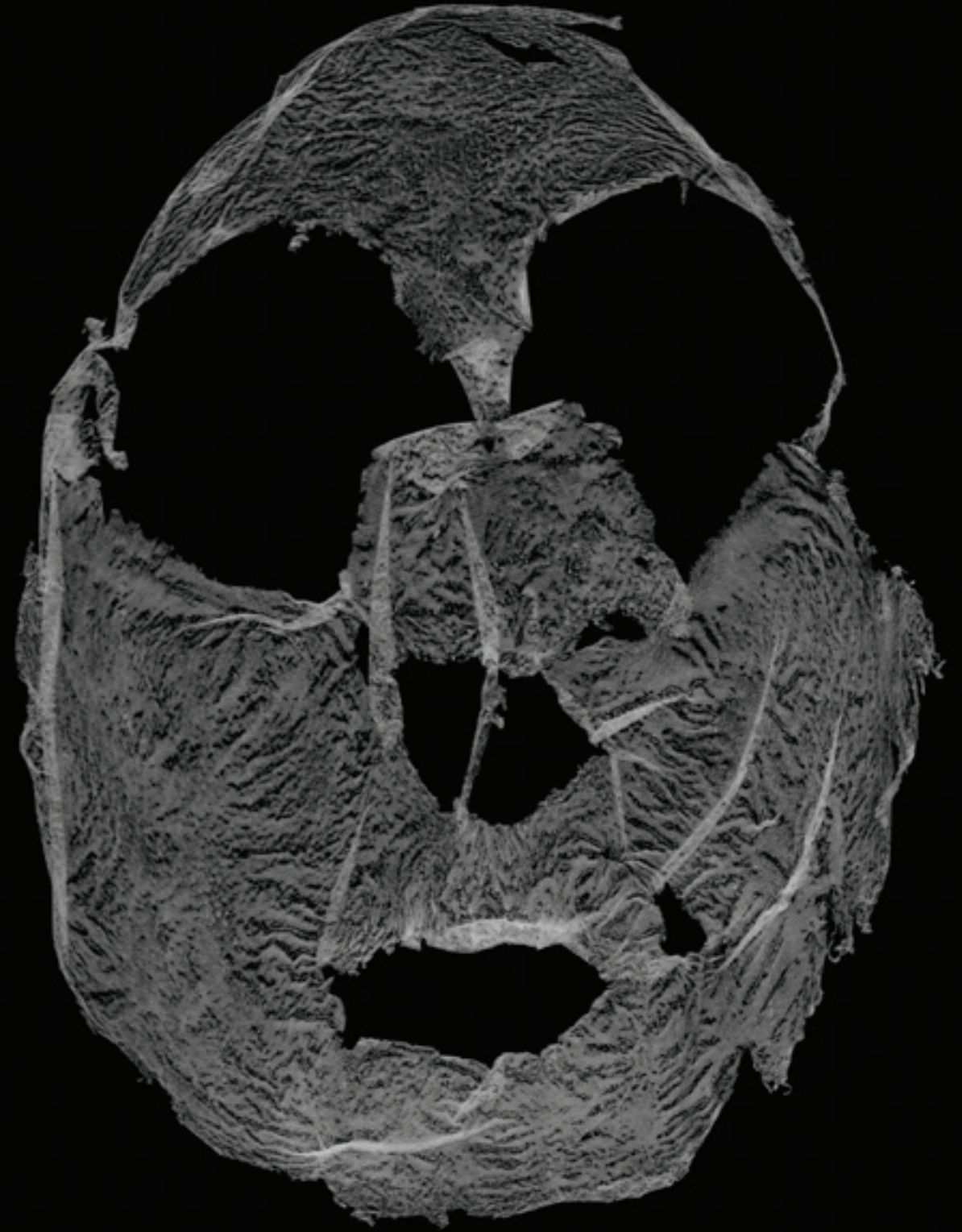
From the photobooth series...1970-1976

From the photobooth series...1970-1976



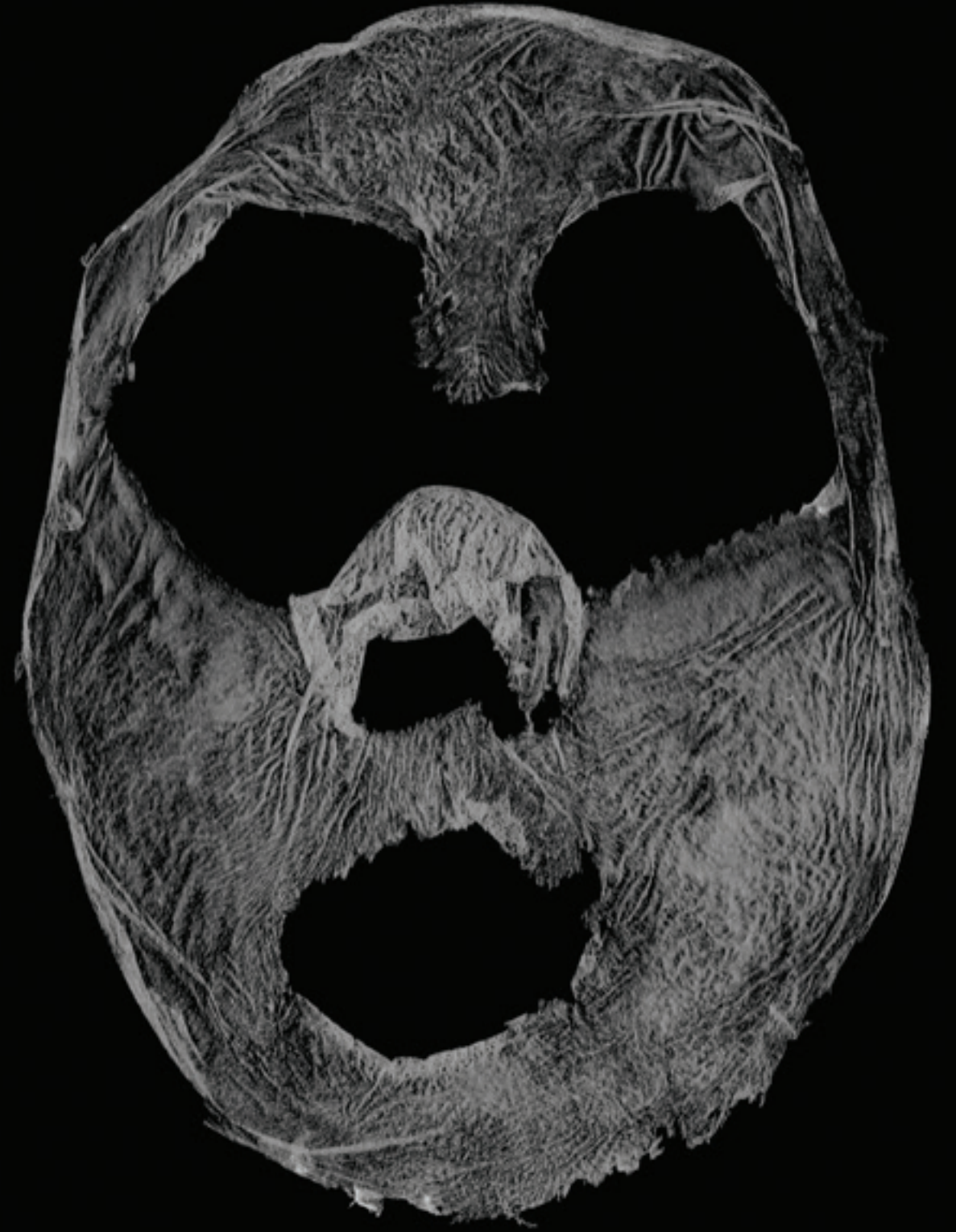


Right: *I* as artifact #5



Right: *I as artifact #6*

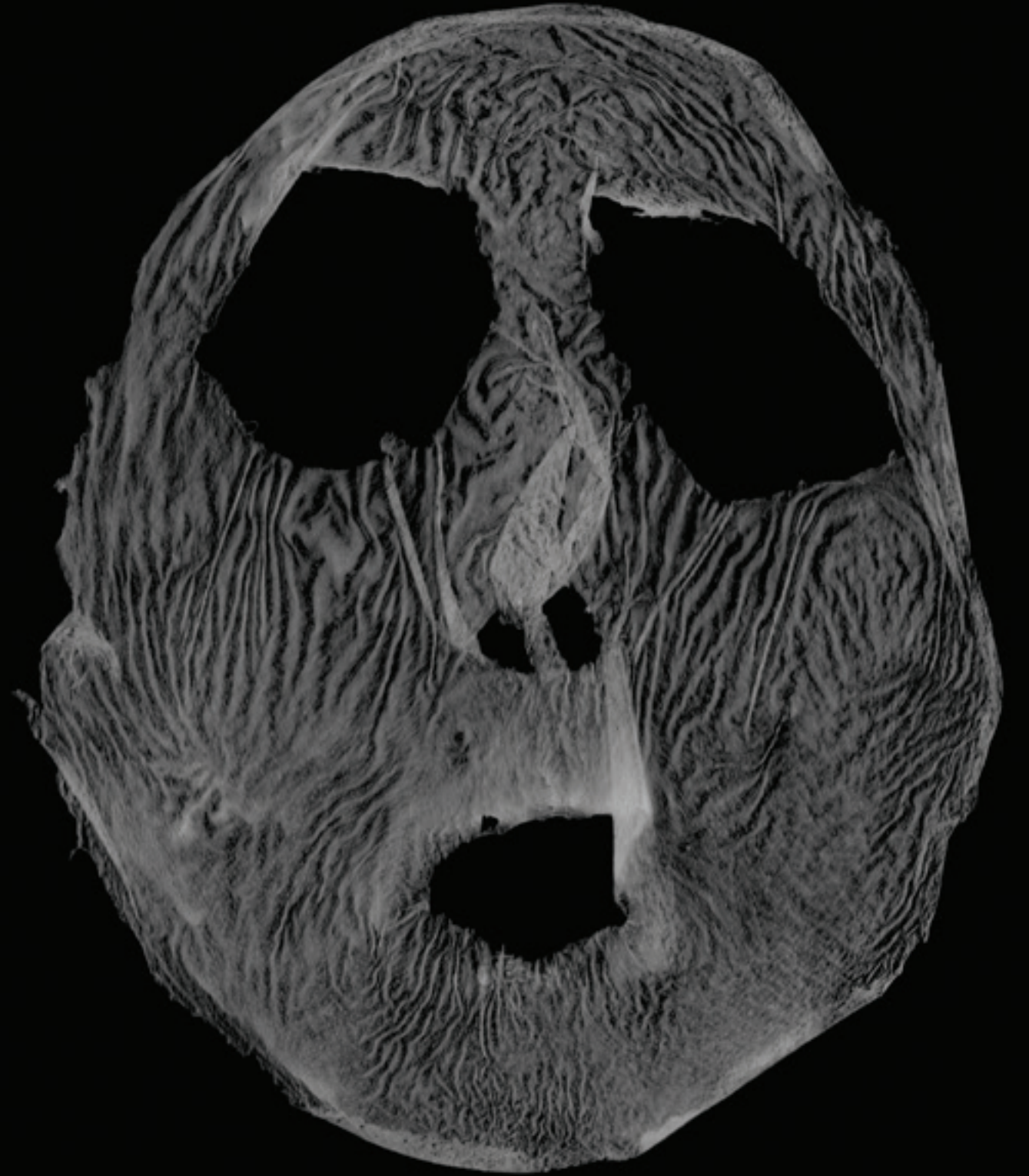


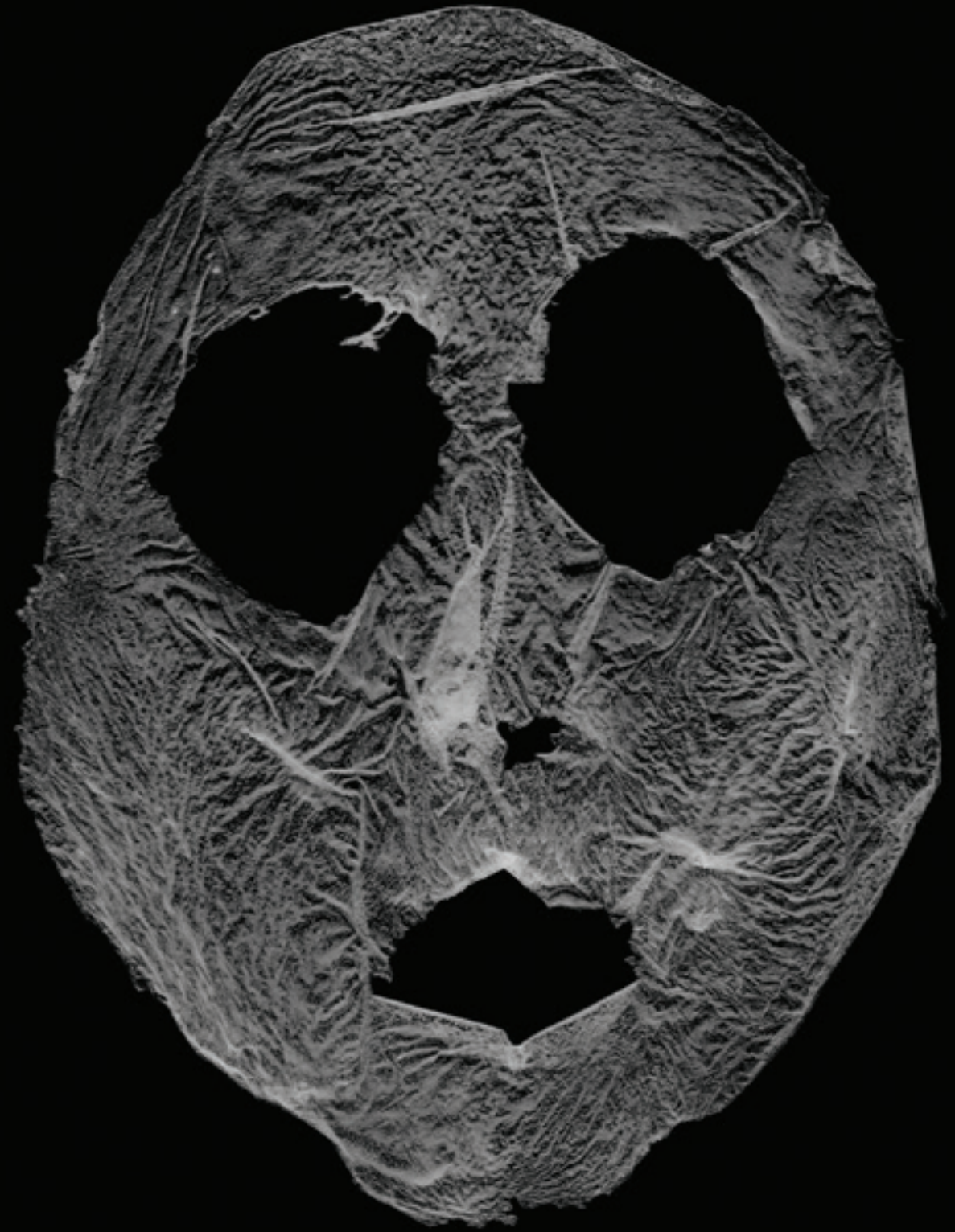


Right: *I as artifact #7*



Right: *I as artifact #8*





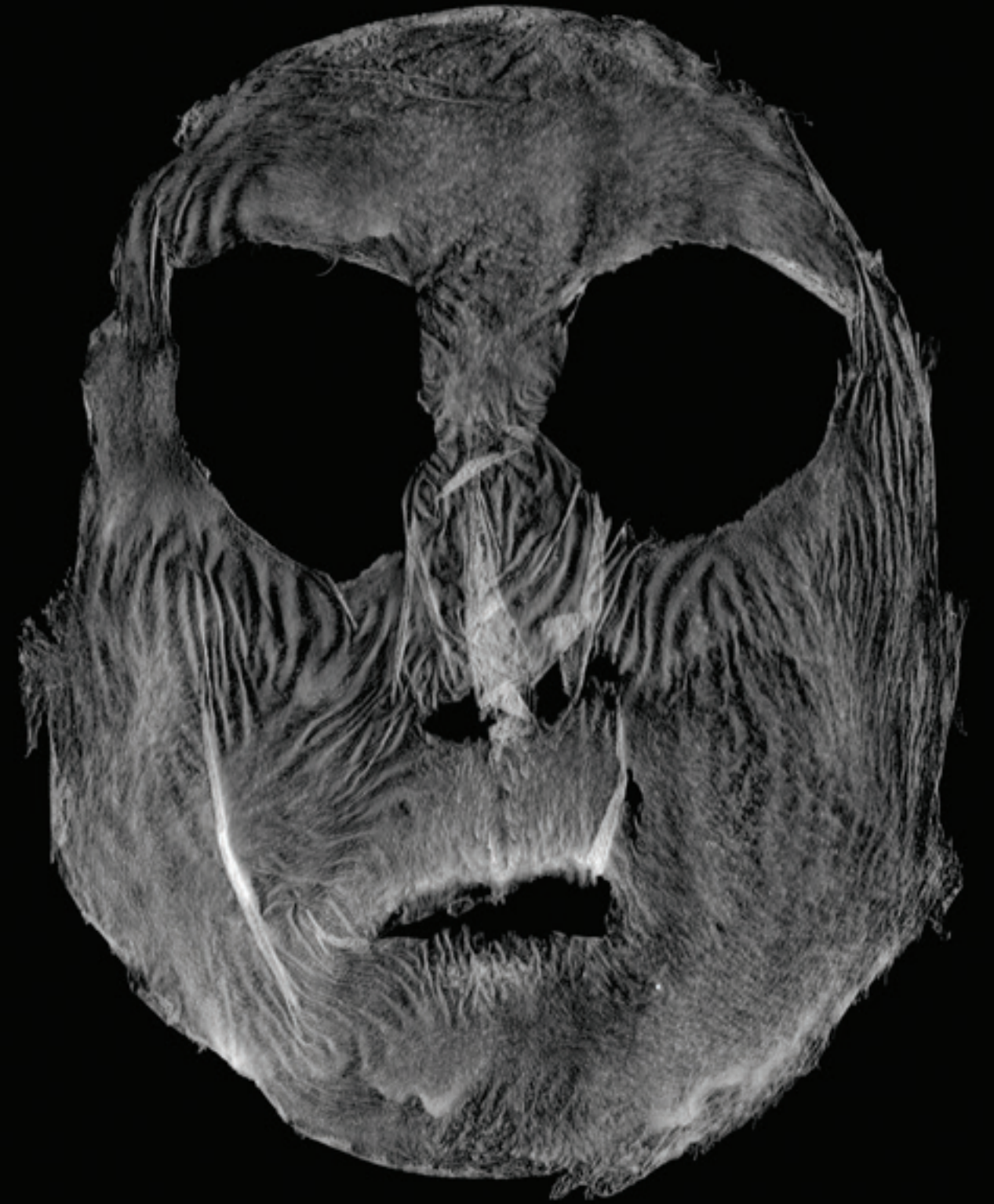
Right: *I as artifact #9*



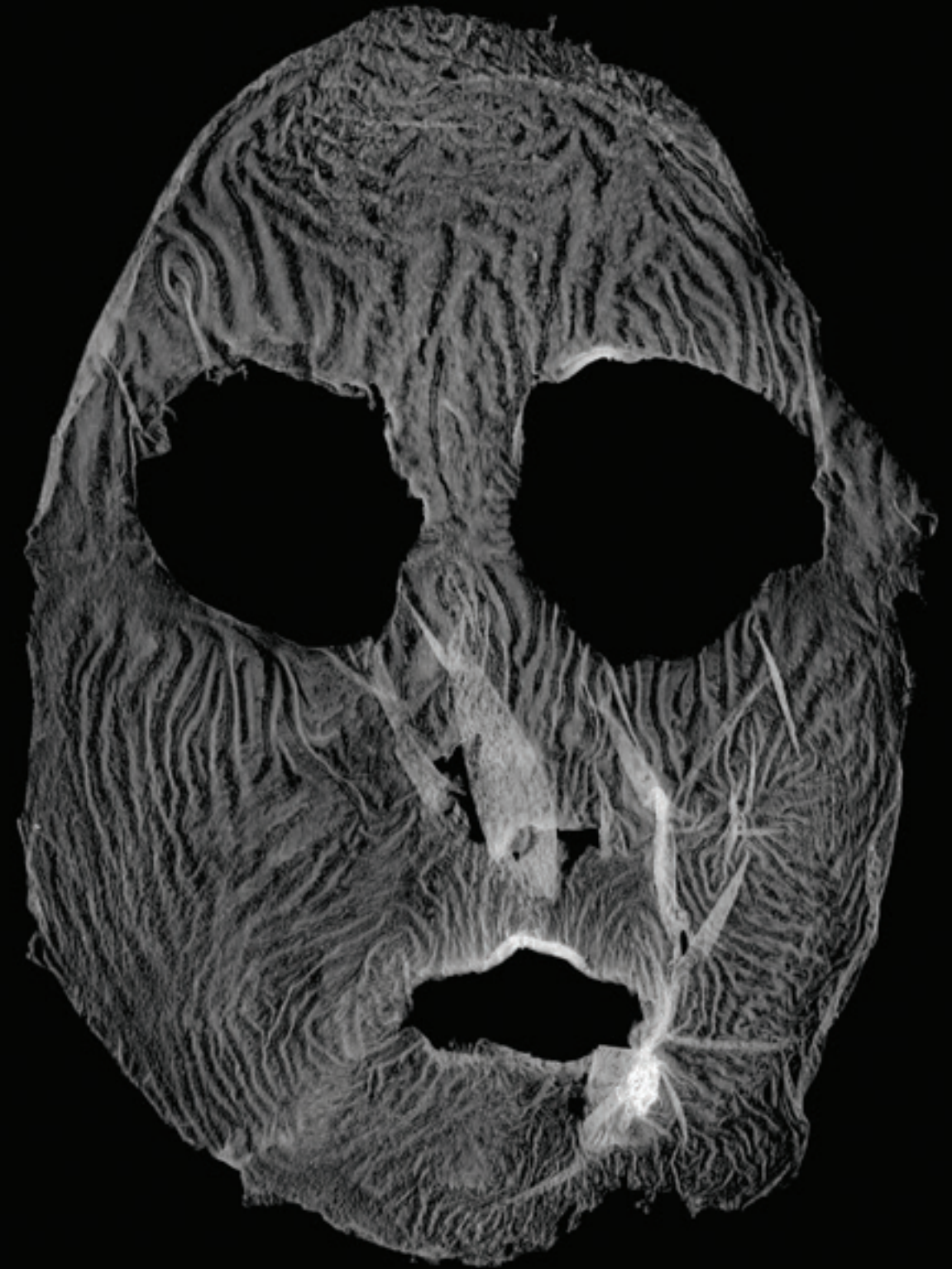


Right: *I* as artifact #10



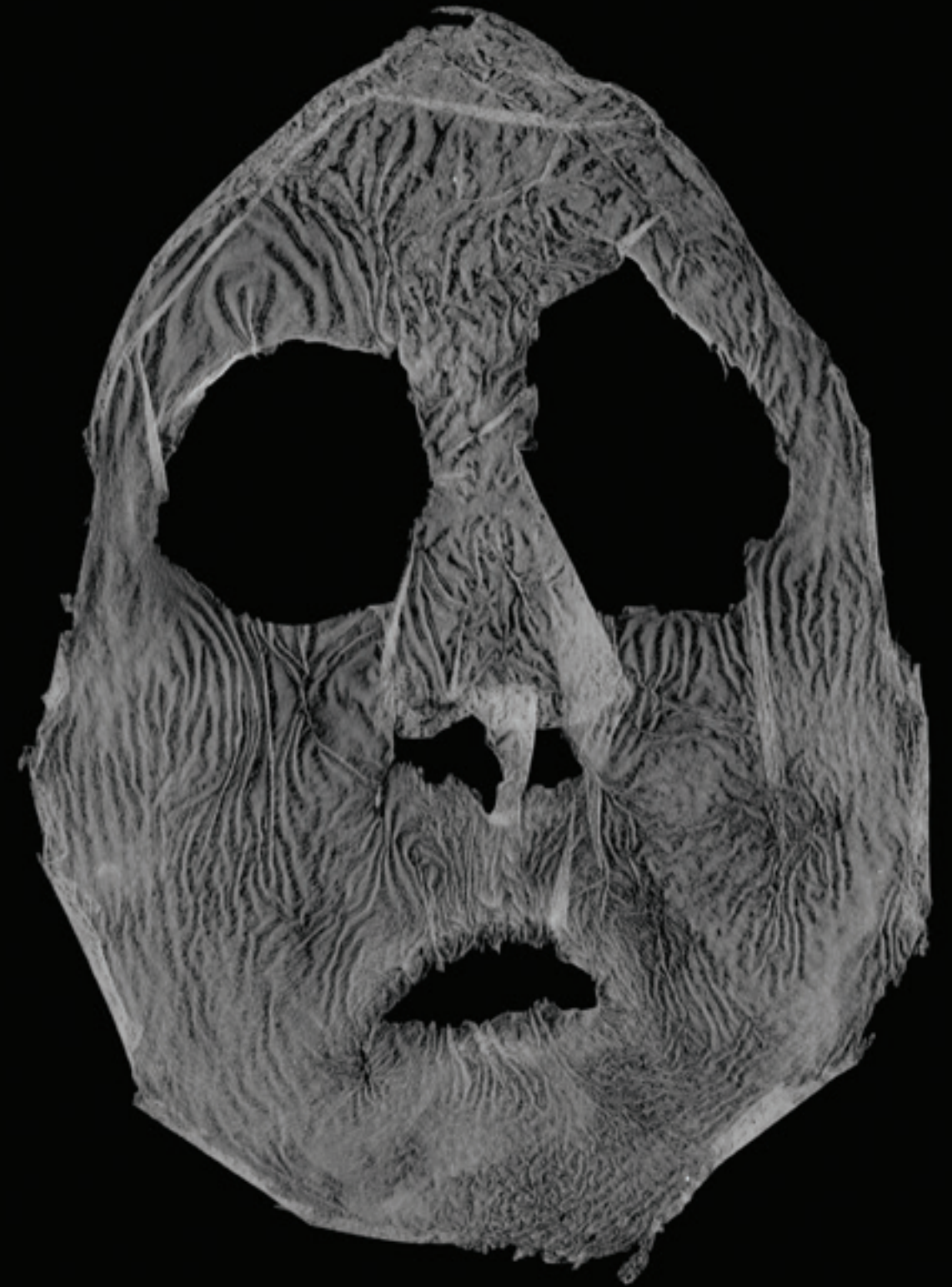


Right: *I as artifact #11*



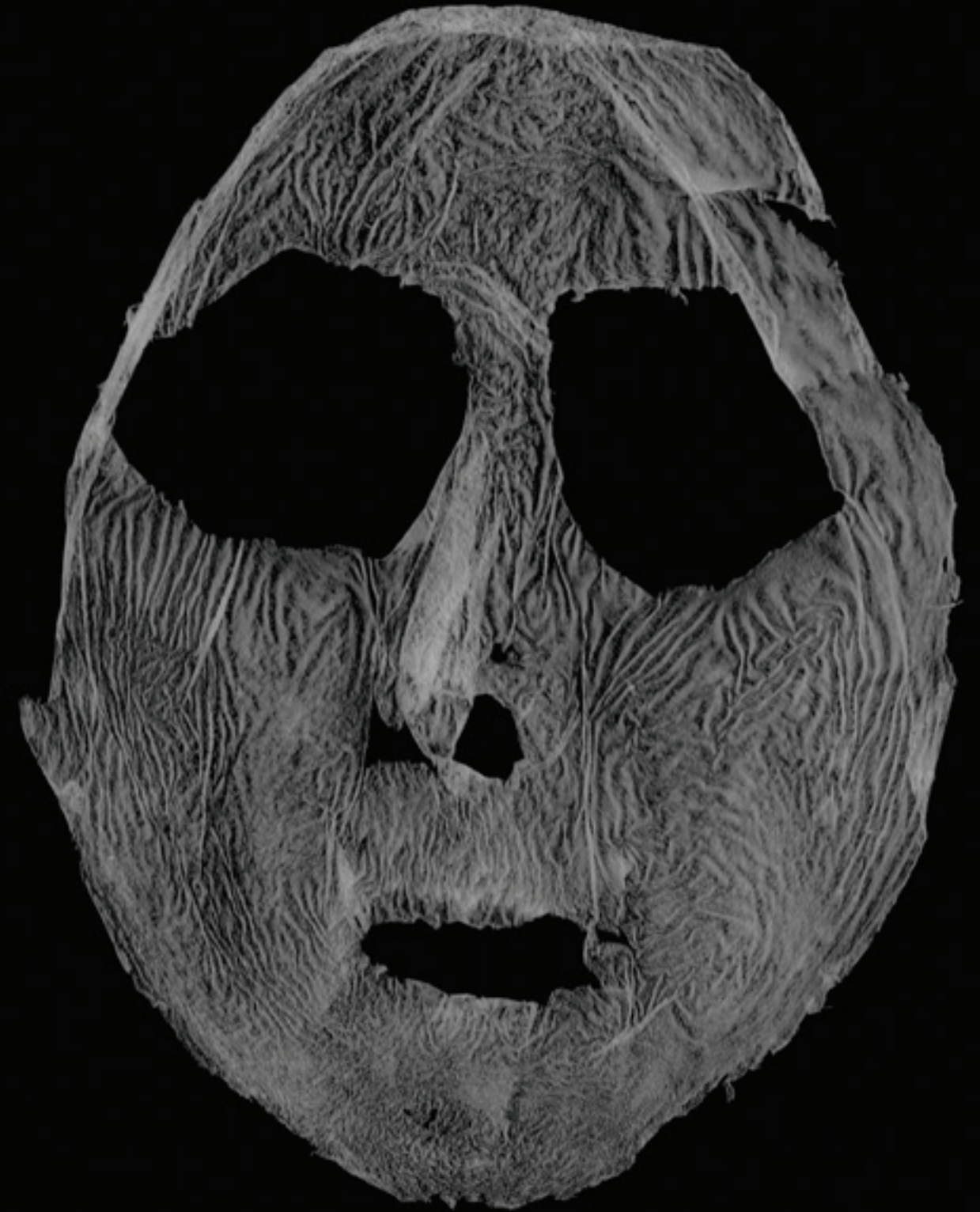
Right: *I as artifact #12*



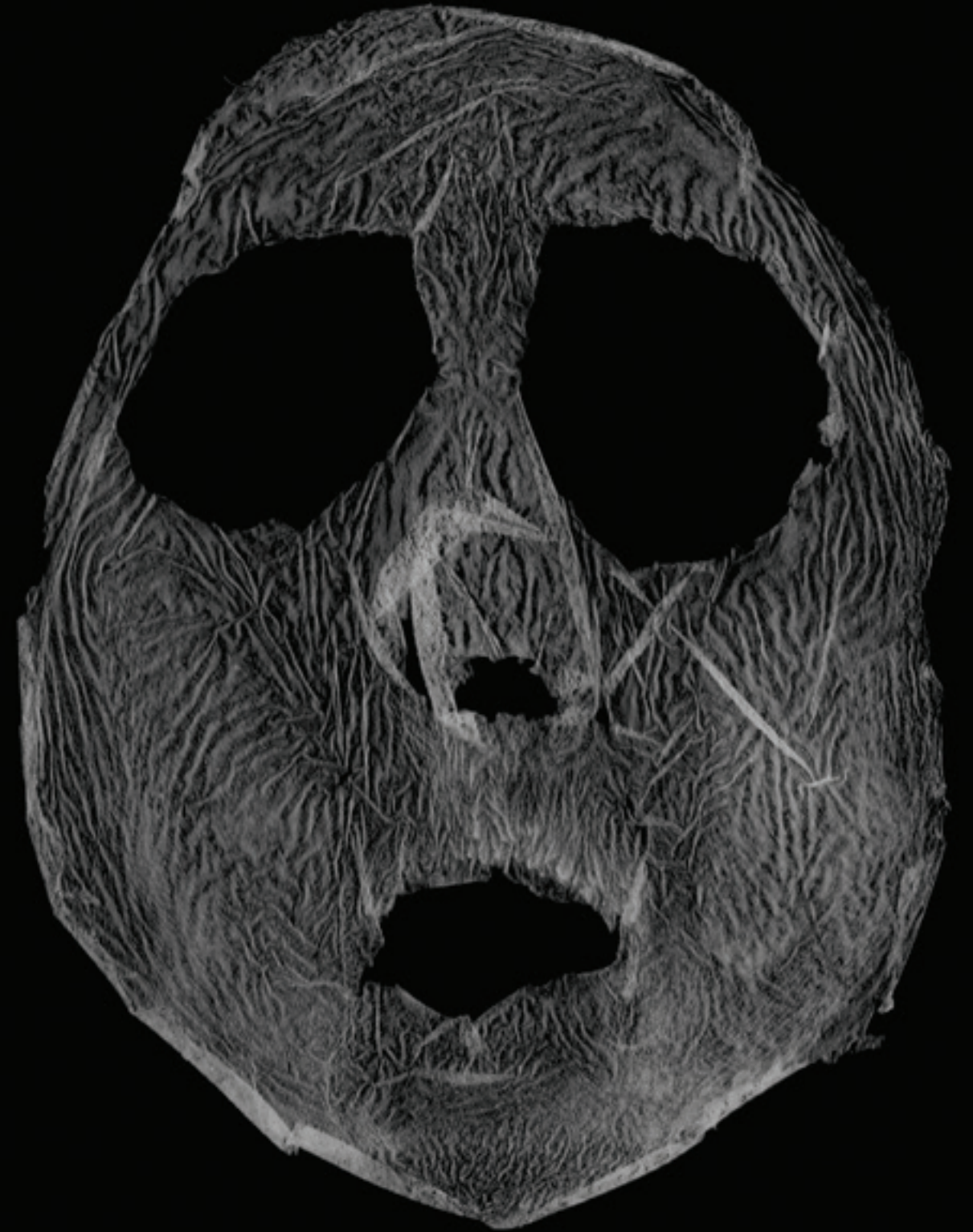


Right: *I as artifact #13*





Right: *I as artifact #14*



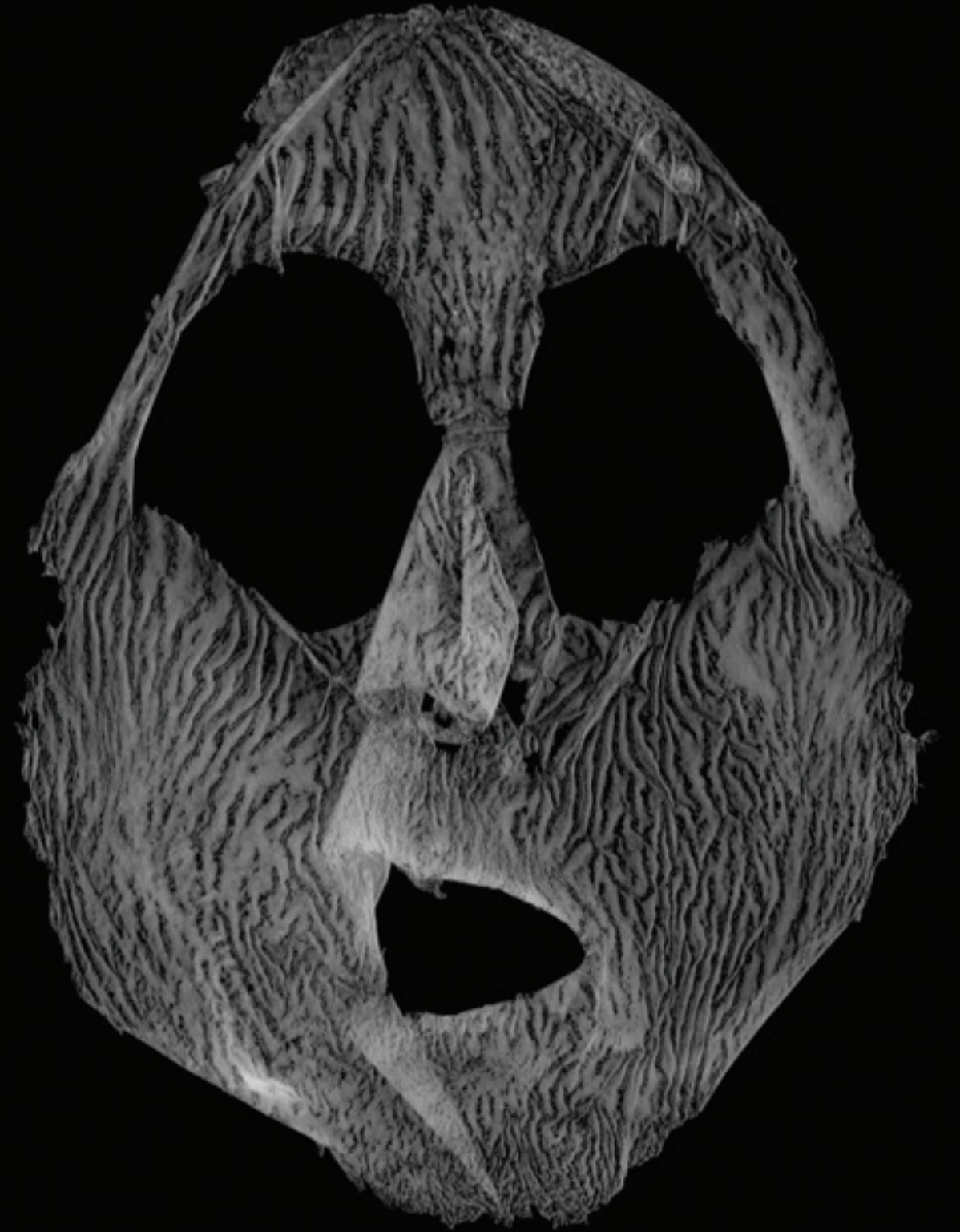
Right: *I as artifact #15*



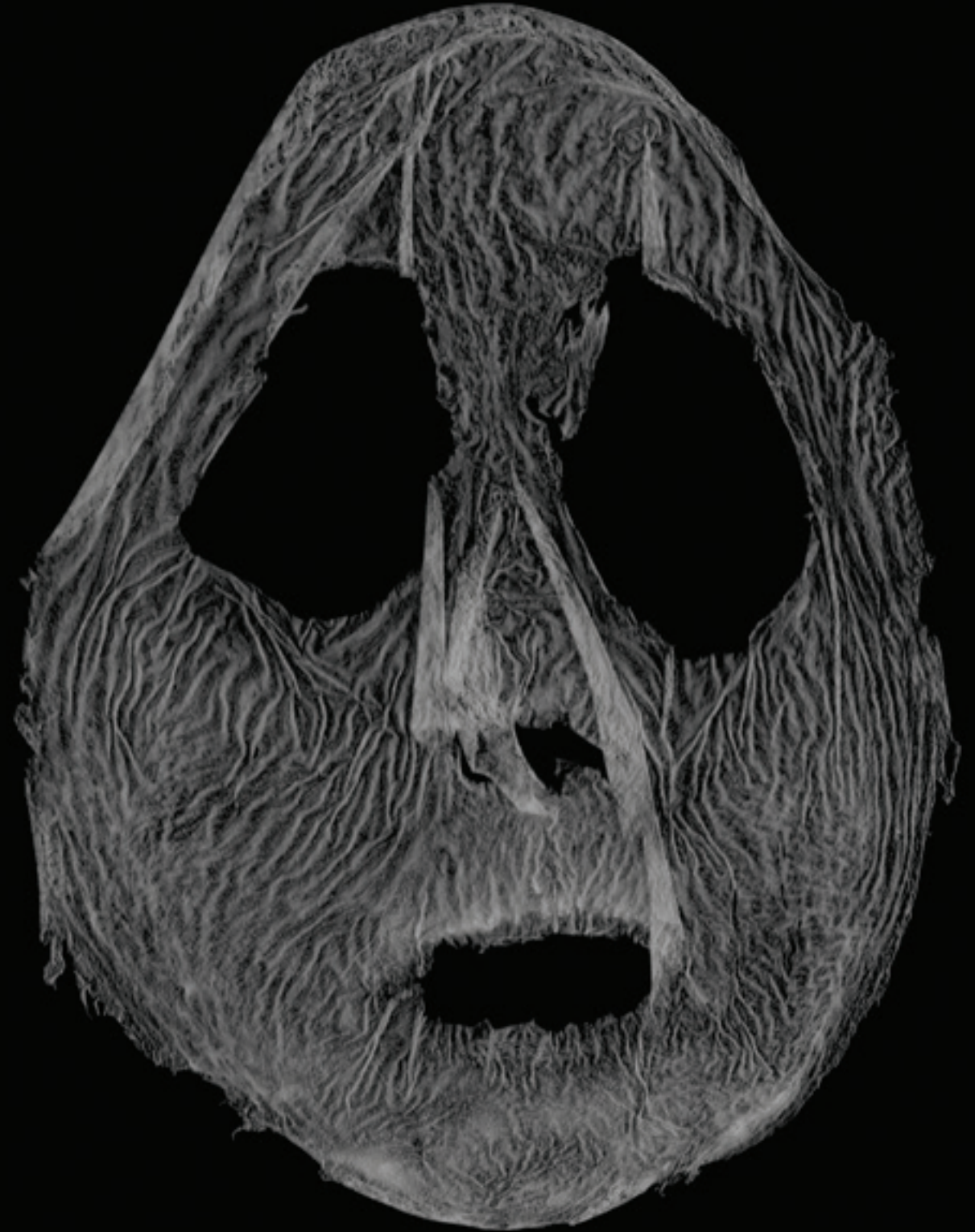


Right: *I as artifact #16*



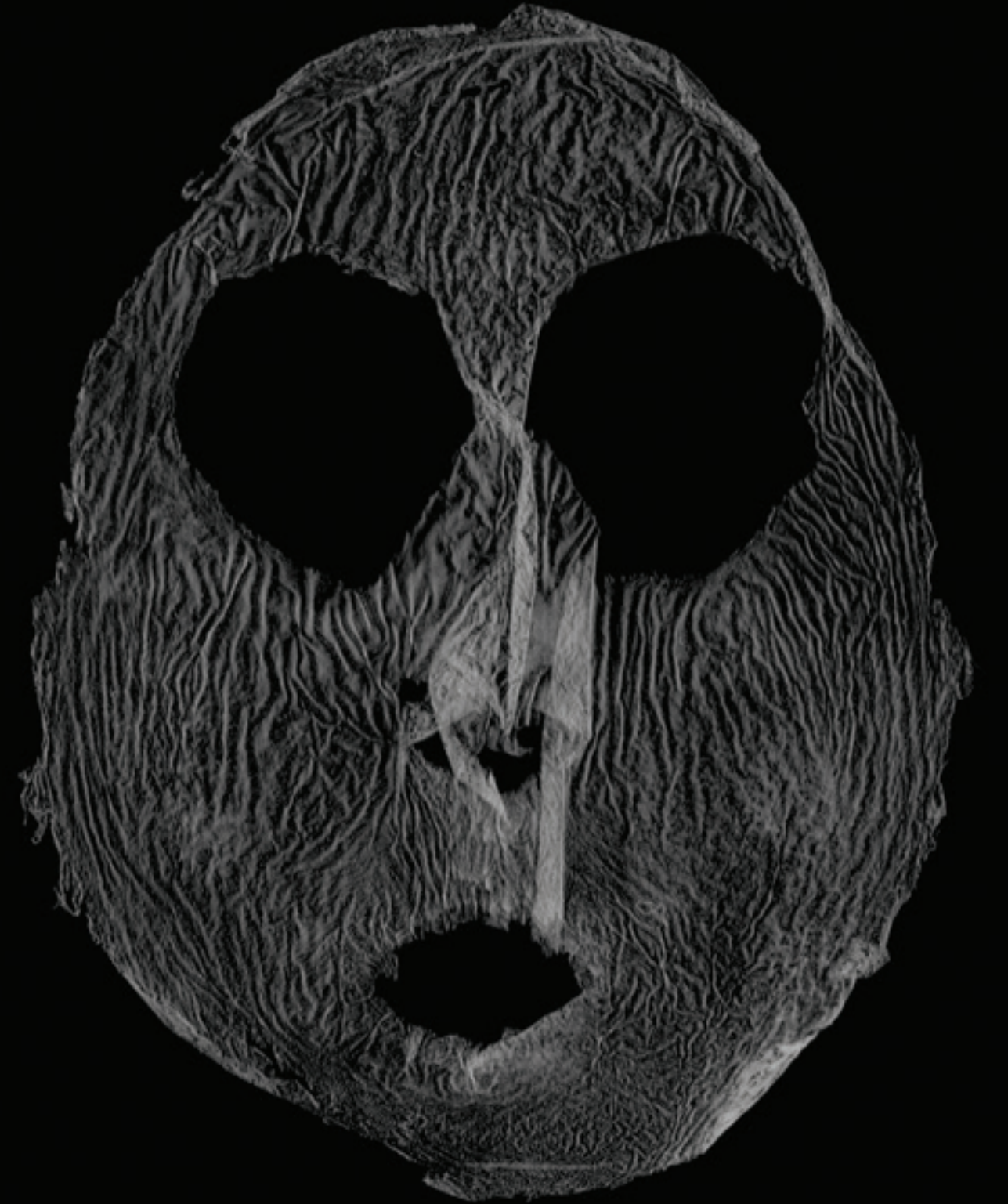


Right: *I as artifact #17*



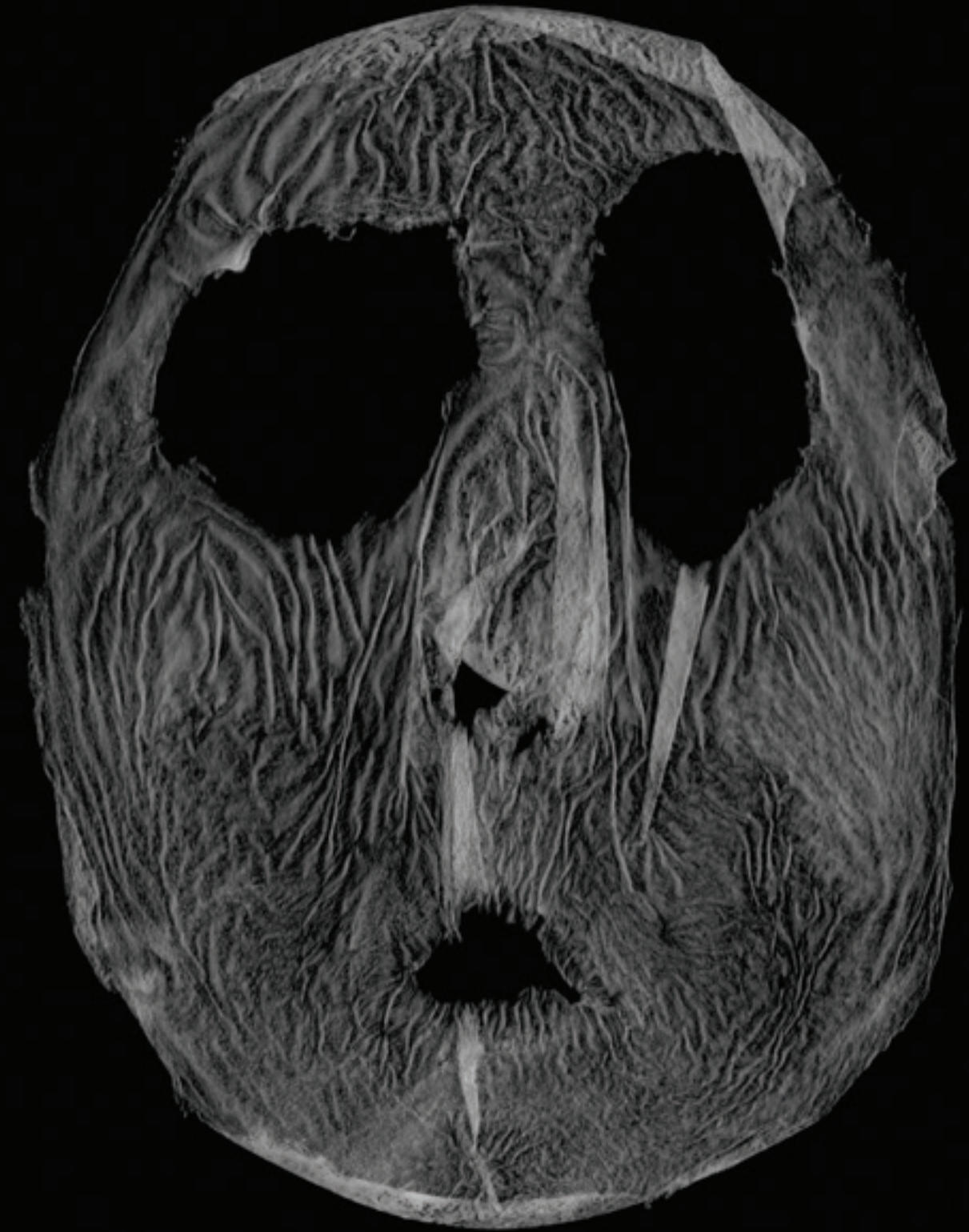
Right: *I as artifact #18*





Right: *I as artifact #19*





Right: *I as artifact #20*

## BARBARA ASTMAN RCA

This curriculum vitae records selected works and events that have occurred since 1994. Please consult the 1995 Art Gallery of Hamilton publication *Barbara Astman: Personal/Persona A 20-Year Survey Exhibition* for additional achievements.

Gallery Representation: Corkin Gallery, Toronto

### Education

1973	Graduate, Ontario College of Art, Toronto, Ontario, A.O.C.A.
1970	Associate Degree, Rochester Institute of Technology, School for American Craftsmen, Rochester, New York

### Academic Appointments

2002 - present	Professor, Faculty of Art, OCAD University
2001 - 2002	Professor, Chair, Photography, Faculty of Art, Ontario College of Art & Design
1975 - 2001	Faculty, Ontario College of Art & Design, Toronto, Ontario

### Community Involvement

2011 - 2013	Canadian Curatorial Committee, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
2009 - 2013	Board of Trustees, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
2006 - 2011	Art Committee, Baycrest Hospital, Toronto, Ontario
2006 - 2010	Arts on Track Committee, Toronto Community Foundation, Toronto, Ontario
1999 - 2000	Educational Advisory Committee, Education Department, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario

### Curatorial Practice

2007 - 2010	<i>The Emergence of Feminism: Changing the Course of Art</i> , Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, co-curated with assistant curator, Georgiana Uhlyarik, for <i>Transformation AGO</i> , featuring work from the 1960s and 1970s by Joyce Wieland, Suzy Lake, Lisa Steele, and Barbara Astman.
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### Selected Solo Exhibitions

2014	<i>It's All About Style</i> , Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario <i>I as artifact</i> , McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario
2013	<i>dancing with che: enter through the gift shop</i> , Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario Untitled, Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2012	<i>dancing with che: enter through the gift shop</i> , McMaster Museum of Art, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario <i>dancing with che: enter through the gift shop</i> , Museum of Contemporary Art, Calgary, Alberta
2011	<i>dancing with che: enter through the gift shop</i> , Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna, British Columbia <i>Daily Collage</i> , Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2009	<i>Wonderland</i> , Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2007	<i>The Newspaper Series</i> , Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2006	<i>Clementine Part I, II, III</i> , Koffler Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2005	<i>Revisiting Red and The Clementine Suite</i> , Corkin Shopland Gallery, Toronto, Ontario <i>Clementine Part I, II &amp; III</i> , Yukon Arts Centre, Whitehorse, Yukon
2004	<i>Barbara Astman: Clementine Part I</i> , Art Gallery of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario
2003	<i>dancing with che</i> , Corkin Shopland Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2001	<i>Paris Postcard</i> , Jane Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
1999	<i>Dreaming Impressionism</i> , Jane Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
1998	Modern Fuel Gallery, Kingston, Ontario
1997	<i>Scenes from a movie for one</i> , Jane Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
1995	<i>Barbara Astman: Personal/Persona: A 20-Year Survey Exhibition</i> , Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario, travelled to Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops, British Columbia, Kitchener/Waterloo Art Gallery, Kitchener, Ontario, and Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta

### Selected Group Exhibitions

2013	<i>We're in the Library</i> , Koffler Gallery, Toronto, Ontario <i>Light My Fire: Some Propositions about Portraits and Photography, Part I</i> , curated by Sophie Hackett, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario <i>Flowers &amp; Photography</i> , McMaster Museum of Art, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
2012	<i>Re-Story: Works from the Permanent Collection</i> , Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops, British Columbia <i>Some Things Last a Long Time: Seeing the Self in Autobiographical Art</i> , McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario
2011	<i>Freedom of Assembly</i> , Oakville Galleries, Oakville, Ontario <i>Flowers &amp; Photography</i> , Art Gallery of Peterborough, Peterborough, Ontario <i>125 &amp; 45: an interrogative spirit</i> , McMaster Museum of Art, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
2011	<i>Becoming: Photographs from the Collection of John and Ginny Soule</i> , Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario
2010	<i>New Acquisitions</i> , Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts <i>Art at Work: Corporate Collecting Practices Today</i> , Art Gallery of Mississauga, Mississauga, Ontario <i>Natural Disaster</i> , McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario <i>Art School (Dismissed)</i> , Shaw Street School, Toronto, Ontario
2009	<i>Still Revolution: Suspended in Time</i> , Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario <i>Beautiful Fictions, Photography at the AGO</i> , Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario <i>Dancing While Driving</i> , Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
2008	<i>CLICK</i> , Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, Nova Scotia <i>The Luminous Body</i> , Art Gallery of Peterborough, Peterborough, Ontario <i>The Presence of Portraits</i> , Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario <i>Story Time: Narrative in Contemporary Art</i> , Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario

2007

*Nexus: Histories and Communities*, Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna, British Columbia

*Out of Body*, Deutsche Bank, New York, New York

*Framed: the Art of the Portrait*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario

*Flat*, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

*Impulse Archaeology*, WHITE BOX, New York, New York, travelled to Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario

*Reading the Picture*, Confederation Centre of the Arts, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

2006

*A Century of Art in Canada*, Art Gallery of Peterborough, Peterborough, Ontario

*Expressions*, Kitchener/Waterloo Art Gallery, Kitchener, Ontario

*On Paper 2: Ideas of Order*, University of Toronto Art Centre, Toronto, Ontario

2005

*Les Revenants*, Le Mois de la Photo, MAI, (Montreal, arts interculturels), Montreal, Quebec

2004

*Identities: Canadian Portraits*, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario

2003

*Absolute Shape: Celebrating 50 Years of Collecting*, Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan

*The Found and the Familiar, Snapshots in Contemporary Canadian Art*, TPW Gallery, Toronto, Ontario, travelled to Confederation Centre of the Arts, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Gallery Connexion, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Art Gallery of Bishop's University, Sherbrooke, Quebec

2002

*Docu Lomo*, Gallery TPW, Toronto, Ontario

*Celebrating 60 Years*, McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario

*Three Artists: Barbara Astman, John Massey, Reinhard Reitzenstein*, Exceler@tor, Toronto, Ontario

2001

*Osmosis: the passage*, Kitchener/Waterloo Art Gallery, Kitchener, Ontario

*Taking on Colour: Technique in Colour Photography*, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Ontario

*Woman of Substance: Images from the Collection*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario

*The Art of Mentoring*, Lieutenant Governor's Suite, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario

- 2000 *From the Collection: Flowerpieces*, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Ontario  
*Photos géniques*, Maison des arts de Laval, Montreal, Quebec  
*Reflections on the Artist: Portraits and Self Portraits*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario  
*IMAGES, Photo Works From the Collection*, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario
- 1999 *By Invitation*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario  
*The Portrait*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario  
*The Fine Line*, Jane Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario  
*The Photography Lesson*, York Quay Gallery, Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, Ontario
- 1998 *Home Base*, Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops, British Columbia
- 1997 *Narrative*, Archive, Toronto, Ontario  
*Beyond the Frame*, Joseph D. Carrier Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
- 1996 *Looking Back II*, Southern Alberta Art Gallery, Lethbridge, Alberta
- 1995 *Barbara Astman/Jiri Ladocha*, Art Gallery of North York, North York, Ontario  
*How Red Works*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario  
*Que sont Les Pionnières Devenues*, Galerie Arts Technologiques, Montreal, Quebec
- 1994 *Suspensions*, McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario
- Public and Corporate Collections**
- Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario  
Andrew White Museum, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York  
Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta  
Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario  
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario  
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France  
Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, Ontario  
Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, Ottawa, Ontario  
Confederation Centre of the Arts, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island  
Connor, Clark & Lunn, Toronto, Ontario and Vancouver, British Columbia  
Department of Foreign Affairs, Ottawa, Ontario  
Deutsche Bank Collection, Berlin, Germany  
The Government of Ontario Collection, Toronto, Ontario  
International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House, Rochester, New York  
John Labatt Limited Collection, Toronto, Ontario  
Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops, British Columbia  
Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna, British Columbia  
Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina, Saskatchewan  
McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario  
McMillan Binch, Toronto, Ontario  
Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Boston, Massachusetts  
Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki, Finland  
Museum Würth, Künzelsau, Germany  
Nova Corporation, Calgary, Alberta  
Osler Hoskins and Harcourt, Toronto, Ontario  
UBS, Switzerland  
University of Toronto Art Centre, Toronto, Ontario  
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England  
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut

**Public Art/Commissions, Awards and Related Activities**

- 2007 National Magazine Award, Silver Award for the *Newspaper Series* as presented in *Prefix Magazine*, Toronto, Ontario  
Private Commission, *Present Tense*, Christian Keese, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- 2006 - 2010 The Murano on Bay, Toronto, Ontario
- 2005 Loblaw's Headquarters, Brampton, Ontario
- 2003 Canadian Embassy in Berlin, Germany
- 2000 Centre For Jewish Campus Life, University of Toronto, in collaboration with Susan Friedrich Architect Inc.
- 1999 The Portal Project, Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care, Toronto, Ontario
- 1995 Simcoe Place Public Art Project, Cadillac Fairview Corporation, Toronto, Ontario
- 1994 Police Service Award, Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Police, Hamilton, Ontario
- 1994 Simcoe Place Public Art Project, Cadillac Fairview Corporation, Toronto, Ontario

**Selected Bibliography (Reviews, Articles, and Books)**

- 2014 Errett, Benjamin. "It's all about style." *National Post, Arts & Life*, p.1, January 27.  
Uhlyarik, Georgiana. "A Movie for One." *Canadian Art*, Spring, p. 110-116.
- 2013 Aang, Ashley. "One-on-One with Barbara Astman." *Lomography International Magazine*, Toronto.  
Cooley, Alison. "Old School is New Again in Artscape's Latest Revamp." *Canadian Art* online.  
Jager, David. "Che on the body." *Now Magazine, Art Reviews*, July 4-11, Volume 32, Number 44, p. 48.
- 2012 Whyte, Murray. "Freedom of Assembly, Oakville Galleries." *Toronto Star* online edition, July 7.  
Wylie, Liz. "Barbara Astman." *Canadian Art*, Spring, p. 120.
- 2011 Moser, Gabrielle. "Barbara Astman, Corkin Gallery." *Artforum.com/critics'* pick, *ARTFORUM*, October.  
Prieger, Portia. "Barbara Astman: Feature Preview," *Galleries West*, Summer, Volume 10, Number 2, p. 30.

- 2009 Blaikie, Fiona. *CANADIAN ART/WORKS: A Resource for Primary, Junior, Intermediate and Senior Teachers*. Thunder Bay: Lakehead University, Canadian Society for Education through Art, pp. 73, 114, 195.  
Dault, Gary Michael. "Barbara Astman and Sharon Switzer at the Corkin Gallery." *The Globe and Mail*, December 5, p. R17.  
Liss, David, and Bonnie Rubenstein. *Still Revolution: Suspended in Time*. Toronto: Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Contact Catalogue, pp. 16-33.  
Uhlyarik, Georgiana. *Highlights from the Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario*. ed. Jim Shedden, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario, p. 289.  
Whyte, Murray. "Barbara Astman's Wonderland at Jane Corkin." *Toronto Star* online edition, November 16.
- 2007 Rhodes, Richard. "Toronto NOW." *Canadian Art*, Volume 24, Number 4, Winter/December, pp. 67-68.  
Sandals, Leah. "Questions & Artist, the better way to recycle newspaper." *National Post*, April 19, p. 5.
- 2006 *Canadian Portraits*. ed. Sharona Adamowicz-Clements, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, Kleinburg, Ontario.  
*Carte Blanche Photography 1*. Toronto: The Magenta Foundation, pp. 14-15.  
Dault, Julia. "A light on survival, loss and the future." *National Post*, January 12, p. AL 10.  
Holubizky, Ihor. *The Clementine Suite*. Toronto: Koffler Gallery, January.  
Mays, John Bentley. "Canadian Embassy in Berlin." *Canadian Architect*, February, Volume 51, Number 2, p. 33-38.
- 2005 Langford, Martha. "Image & Imagination." *Montreal: le Mois de la Photo à Montréal*, pp. 185-190.  
Vaughan, RM. "The Big Picture." *National Post*, April 30, p. TO 11.
- 2004 Enright, Robert. "Three Photographers: Barbara Astman, Ruth Kaplan, Lori Newdick." *Border Crossings*, Volume 23, Number 1, pp. 44-50.  
Grant, Vanessa. "The life and inspiration behind the photos of Barbara Astman." *Centre of the City* (Toronto), Volume 1, Number 5, November/December, pp. 89-91.



- 2003 Wylie, Liz. "Barbara Astman." *Canadian Art*, Fall, Volume 20, Number 3, p. 139.
- 2001 Mays, John Bentley. "The secret life of picture postcards." *National Post*, September 8, p. F8.
- 2000 Coleman, A.D. "Letter from Toronto/New York, No. 86." *Photo Metro*, Volume 18, Issue 157, San Francisco, California, pp. 30-31.
- Penalzo, Si Si. "Toronto, An Art Scene Not to Be Missed." *Art News* (New York), Volume 99, Number 9, October, pp. 113-120.
- Sykes, Claire. "Barbara Astman, Insider Profile." *Photo Insider*, New Jersey, Volume 21, November /December, pp. 36-39.
- 1999 Murray, Joan. *Canadian Art in the Twentieth Century*. Toronto, Dundurn Press, pp. 167-170.
- 1998 Holubizky, Ihor. "Barbara Astman-Jane Corkin Gallery." *art/text*, Australia, Number 60, February-April, p. 97.
- Mastin, Catharine M. *Changing Spirits: Canadian Art of the 1960s and 70s*. Kamloops: Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops, 1998, pp. 8: 31-32.
- 1996 Liss, David. "Montreal, Copy Art: What Happened To The Pioneers?" *artfocus*, Winter, Volume 4, Number 2, pp. 20-23.
- Siebert, Sherrill. "Artist Astman gets personal with persona." *Sight lines*, *Loops Magazine*, February.
- 1995 *Contemporary Photographers*. Detroit: St. James Press.
- Fulford, Robert. "Photography and its discontents." *Canadian Art*, Spring, Volume 12, Number 1, pp. 56-65.
- Hlynsky, David. "Like Smoke through a Keyhole: Symbolism and Metaphor in Contemporary Photography." *BLACKFLASH*, Summer, Volume 13, Number 2.
- Klages, Gregory. "Explore Yourself." *id Magazine*, May 25 – June 7, Volume 4, Number 15, p. 32.
- 1994 Swain, Robert. *Hidden Values, Contemporary Canadian Art in Corporate Collections*. Introduction by R. Fulford. Toronto/Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, pp. 84, 141.

#### Exhibition Catalogues

- 2013 Art Gallery of Peterborough/McMaster Museum of Art, Ontario. *Flowers and Photography*, curated by Carla Garnet, essays by Edward Colless, Sally McKay and Carla Garnet.
- Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario. *Barbara Astman dancing with che: enter through the gift shop*, essay by Liz Wylie.

- 2012 McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario. *Some Things Last a Long Time*, essay by Matthew Ryan Smith.
- 2011 Art Gallery of Mississauga, Ontario. *Art at Work: Corporate Collecting Practices Today*, essay by Geraldine Davis.
- Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna, British Columbia. *Barbara Astman dancing with che: enter through the gift shop*, essay by Liz Wylie.
- Nicol, Heather. *Art School Dismissed*. Toronto, Ontario: Lakeview Press.
- 2007 Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna, British Columbia. *Nexus: Histories and Communities*, essay by Liz Wylie.
- 2006 Koffler Gallery, Toronto, Ontario. *The Clementine Suite*, essay by Ihor Holubizky.
- 2005 *Image & Imagination, Le Mois de la Photo a Montréal, Montreal*, essay by Martha Langford.
- 2000 Maison des Arts de Laval, Quebec. *Photo Géniques*, essay by Monique B Weinmann.
- Stacey, Robert. *Into The Deep End, The Art of Mentoring at the Ontario College of Art & Design*. Toronto: Lieutenant Governor's Suite, Queen's Park.
- 1995 Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario. *Barbara Astman: Personal/Persona A 20-Year Survey Exhibition*, essay by Liz Wylie.

#### Selected Lectures and Workshops

- 2014 Koffler Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
- 2013 Glendon College, Toronto, Ontario
- Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
- Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario
- Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
- Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario
- Women's College Hospital, University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario
- Koffler Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
- 2012 McMaster Museum of Art, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
- Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
- 2010 Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
- 2009 Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
- University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario

- 2005 Klondike Institute of Art & Culture, Dawson City, Yukon
- 2004 Photo Educators Forum, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario
- Yukon Art Centre, Whitehorse, Yukon
- Koffler Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
- Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ontario
- Art Institute of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio
- 2003 Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow, Scotland
- 2001 Bishop Strachan School, Toronto, Ontario
- Irondequoit High School, Rochester, New York
- Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia
- 1995 Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ontario
- Vernon Public Art Gallery, Vernon, British Columbia
- Kamloops Art Gallery, Kamloops, British Columbia
- University College of the Cariboo, Kamloops, British Columbia
- Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton, Alberta
- University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, Alberta
- Grant MacEwan Community College, Edmonton, Alberta
- 1994 Gallery/Stratford, Stratford, Ontario
- McIntosh Gallery, Western University, London, Ontario
- 1993 The Robert McLaughlin Gallery, Oshawa, Ontario
- Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
- 1992 St. Lawrence College, Saint-Laurent Art Gallery, Kingston, Ontario
- Thunder Bay Art Gallery, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- Art Gallery of Peterborough, Peterborough, Ontario
- Laurentian University Museum and Arts Centre, Sudbury, Ontario
- 1986 London Regional Art Gallery, London, Ontario
- University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California
- 1981 Hamilton Art Gallery, Vistas Conference, Hamilton, Ontario
- Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey
- Powerhouse, Montreal, Quebec

- University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware
- University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario
- 1980 Emily Carr College of Art, Vancouver, British Columbia
- Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York
- New York University, New York, New York
- Canadore College, North Bay, Ontario
- University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware
- Laurentian University, Art Gallery and Museum, Sudbury, Ontario
- Canadian Centre of Photography, Toronto
- Alfred State University, Alfred, New York
- The Richard F. Brush Art Gallery, (formerly known as the Bruce Art Gallery) St. Lawrence University, Canton, New York
- Visual Studies Workshop, SPE Conference Rochester, New York
- 1979 Emily Carr College of Art, Vancouver, British Columbia
- Trent University, Peterborough, Ontario
- Dundas Valley School of Art, Dundas, Ontario
- 1978 Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec
- The Banff Centre, Banff, Alberta
- International Museum of Photography, George Eastman House, Rochester, New York
- Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick
- 1977 Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, Nova Scotia
- 1976 The International Center for Photography, New York, New York
- The Women's Interart Center, New York, New York
- St. Lawrence College, Kingston, Ontario

## ARTIST'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## LIST OF WORKS IN EXHIBITION

The *I as artifact* series of 20 works was produced from 2008 to 2011. Each work is a digital print on Epson, Ultrasmooth Fine Art Paper, 88.9 x 88.9 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Corkin Gallery.

I as artifact #1

I as artifact #2

I as artifact #4

I as artifact #9

I as artifact #11

I as artifact #12

I as artifact #13

I as artifact #18

I tend to create in isolation, but it takes a team to keep my career moving in a forward direction. For this I thank Jane Corkin, Corkin Gallery, and her very helpful and energetic team.

Loving thanks to my husband Tony Baker and daughters Laura and Amy for constantly reminding me of the important things in life.

My gratitude must be expressed to my high school art instructor, Mr. Harvey Brockley, for his encouragement and belief in me. I also wish to thank my Uncle Isadore Meisel for letting me spend hours watching him create with precious metals.

This catalogue is dedicated in loving memory of my parents.

Barbara Astman

## ADDITIONAL CATALOGUE ILLUSTRATIONS

### McIntosh Gallery Collection:

*Untitled, Visual Narrative series* 1979  
Ektacolour mural mounted on masonite  
76.2 x 101.5 cm  
Gift of Barbara Astman, 1994

*Untitled, from the Red series* 1981  
Ektacolour mural mounted on masonite  
125 x 122 cm  
Gift of John Labatt Company Limited, London, 1994

### Art Gallery of Ontario Collection:

All works are promised gifts from the artist to the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, unless otherwise noted. All photography © Art Gallery of Ontario

*From the photobooth series* 1970-1976  
photobooth black and white photograph  
20.5 x 4 cm

*Untitled, from the weather balloon series* 1973  
selenium toned black and white photograph  
21.6 x 27.9 cm  
Barbara Astman fonds, E.P. Taylor Research Library & Archives. Gift of Barbara Astman, 2012

*Untitled, self-portrait with transfer and sewing* c. 1974  
art paper, black and white image transfer, colour image transfer, acetate, thread  
19.2 x 24 cm

*Patriotic Portrait* 1975  
black and white photobooth images, marker pen, paper rose sticker, cloth flag, plastic laminate  
16.3 x 24 cm

*Untitled, self-portrait with apple and cherries* c. 1975  
photobooth black and white photograph, paper stickers, plastic laminate  
14.5 x 20.3 cm

### Courtesy of the artist and Corkin Gallery:

*Scenes from a movie for one, #9* 1997  
Ektacolour print 58.8 x 61 cm

*It's All About Style No. 19* 2013  
tape transfer collage on stonehenge paper  
55.9 x 76.2 cm

*Untitled, self-portrait with rose* c. 1975  
photobooth black and white photograph, paper stickers, plastic laminate  
13.8 x 18.5 cm

*Untitled, from the mural Karl and Barbara in Florida* 1976  
colour Xerox on paper  
21.6 x 27.9 cm  
Barbara Astman fonds, E.P. Taylor Research Library & Archives. Gift of Barbara Astman, 2012

*Study for Untitled, I was thinking about you...series* c. 1978  
15 SX-70 Polaroid images on black construction paper  
40.8 x 50.6 cm  
Barbara Astman fonds, E.P. Taylor Research Library & Archives. Gift of Barbara Astman, 2012

*Untitled, self-portrait in the studio with an Untitled, I was thinking about you... series* 1979-80  
black and white RC photograph on paper print  
20.3 x 25.3 cm  
Barbara Astman fonds, E.P. Taylor Research Library & Archives. Gift of Barbara Astman, 2012



*Untitled from the mural Karl and Barbara In Florida 1976*

*Barbara Astman I as artifact*

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From the photobooth series 1970-1976



