



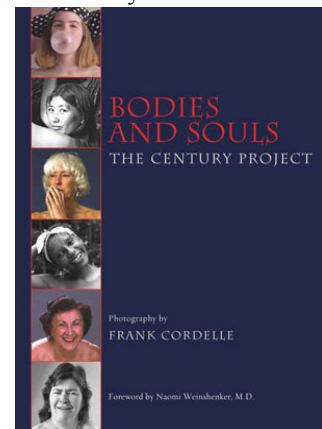
'Century Project' opens a portal into the physical and spiritual realm of 'The Nude'

by Elisa Winkelman

The topic of the female nude is not a new one in art history. In the beginning, the nude was only portrayed as famous religious and mythological figures. A prime example of this was the classical rendering of Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* (1485) in which the female form is highly idealized. Later the idea of the nude went beyond religious and mythical beings and expanded to include recognizable people. Artist Titian received some scathing criticism in his 1538 nude representation of a living woman in his piece *Venus of Urbino*; this was later explained as the goddess Venus in order to be socially accepted. The nude became a shocking concept in Eduard Manet's *Luncheon on The Grass*, an impressionist painting of 1863 featuring a recognizable nude women staring pointedly at the viewer.

Controversy regarding the nude and content has been seen as recently as 1975 when Carolee Schneemann performed *Interior Scroll*, a piece relating "interior knowledge to womanhood." During this "Happening" Schneemann unravels and reads a scroll by slowly extracting it from her vagina.

Today the nude is once again making headlines. This time photographer Frank Cordelle has received much notoriety with his candid depiction of the "female nude." His *Century Project* is a twenty-five-year art piece in progress featuring photos of women, all nude, in various states, forms, and ages. The project chronicles the story of being a woman and the toll time and life's passage takes on the body through each truthful snapshot.



Recently the *Century Project* has transformed into the 2006 book, *Bodies and Souls: The Century Project*, depicting 98 of Cordelle's subjects.



Frank Cordelle, photographer

"The project chronicles the story of being a woman and the tolls time and life's passage take on the body through each truthful snapshot."

The women featured come in a variety of packages and stories. Cordelle tackles women's issues including body image, eating disorders, sexual violence, women portrayed in media, the pornography, and disabilities. One photograph introduces a woman with one breast; the caption accompanying it gives the woman's personal account of her survival against breast cancer. The bodies are honest and reveal women suffering from anorexia, rape, and even self-inflicted wounds. Many people have found comfort in *The Century Project* and release from their own torments of self image. This book, *Bodies and Souls*, has been used by many women's groups on retreats. Interestingly, Cordelle's images have created quite a stir. Some individuals question if this is an exploitation of women's bodies as well as their suffering; others are concerned at the nude depiction of young girls and adolescents. While controversy has been a catalyst in Cordelle's career, *The Century Project* has continued to heal. Likewise, over time Cordelle has been approached by women who want to be a part of *The Century Project*.

One of the main factors causing these women to seek Cordelle out is the fact that he is male. They mention how it is refreshing that a man would attempt to break the stereotypical representations that are often displayed regarding women and their bodies. Cordelle mentions future projects in which he would like to photograph women in their 60s and beyond.

Cordelle's *Bodies and Souls* has infiltrated many bookstores. The book has even received praise in a review by "O," the Oprah Magazine, in an article entitled "The Naked Truth" that appeared in the March 2007 edition. *Bodies and Souls* will be available on loan at the Women's Center Library section after April 1.

As part of the KU Diversityfest Women's History Month Celebration, *The Century Project* comes to Kutztown from Monday, March 24 throughout Friday, March 28 in McFarland Student Union 250 from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Don't miss Frank Cordelle when he speaks and answers questions about *The Century Project* and *Bodies and Souls* on March 26 at 7 p.m. in the Multipurpose Room 218, McFarland Student Union.

Visit Frank Cordelle's website to learn more:
<http://www.thecenturyproject.com>

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The 'Divine Feminine' lingers in the wind by Elisa Winkelman

Lydia Ruyale explores the world of “the Divine Feminine”—which she describes as the Goddess and the missing half of God—through her own depictions of the global goddesses on unique, vibrant, and telling banners.

While teaching art history at the University of Northern Colorado, Ruyale began the search for the stories behind the female image. This was when she realized this well was deep, and awaiting for someone to tap its fresh, sensual waters. As a result she was compelled to do a little digging into “herstory.” This path of exploration expanded as Ruyale used her own artistic energies to chronicle goddesses throughout time and all across the continents.



Black Madonna of the Andes

Ruyale’s book “The Goddess Icons: Spirit Banners of the Divine Feminine” depicts her banners of goddesses and female icons which have been appropriated and re-spun into a blend of folk art merged with ancient tapestries. Beginning with the Black Madonna, the book traces the appearance of this religious icon throughout the world.

Each banner is displayed with a short description referencing the images’ history. The Black Madonna is associated with earth, fertility, life, and death. An image of The Black Madonna from the Andes is a strong representation of Ruyale’s work and depicts a stout figure riding a crescent moon, bathed in a rainbow prism of light and holding the Christ child. The stepped pyramid on her head acts as a crown displaying symbols of insight and empathy.

Ruyale also appropriates the famous emblem of The

Venus of Willendorf, an image more than 30,000 years old that has the voluptuous figure radiating fields of rainbow planes out to the banner’s edges. She explores Egyptian legends capturing Iris and Horus in between twin palms of black and white, staring forwardly at the viewer. Ruyale fragments the tale of Mary of Magdalene embracing and intertwining the imagery together with the legend of Lilith. Lilith is the first wife of Adam; her rebellious behavior results in the creation of Adam’s second and more subdued wife, Eve. Since 1995, her banners circulate and span the globe across Germany, Greece, South Western U.S., Mexico, and Japan. Ruyale shares the values, beliefs, and cultures of Hawaiian people in her tapestries of the Goddess Pele (volcano goddess) Kahuna Aumakua a stark goddess with tribal features and opulent pearl-shelled eyes who serves as a protector to “huna” (knowledge of the sacred healing tradition of the islands). The book is a visionary narrative based on legends, myths, and religious beliefs; it is one woman’s willingness to struggle, search, and document the essence of feminine power through her prowess as an artist and story weaver.



Venus of Willendorf

Lydia Ruyale works in a range of media including drawing, watercolor, oils, acrylics, fibers, sculptures, and printmaking. Ruyale currently teaches an art history course called *Herstory of the Goddess*. She continues to pursue the demand for more expressive knowledge on “the Divine Feminine.” Her book is available in The Women’s Center lending library.

Fitch’s newest novel delivers fresh characters and dark sequences

by Elisa Winkelman

Janet Fitch’s second book, *Paint it Black*, speaks with a subtle flair. Aptly named after the Rolling Stones song, Fitch’s angst-ridden characters are soaked in an onyx world of viscous tar. A strong debut after the success of her first book and later full length film, *White Oleander*, Fitch takes the reader on a physical journey of thick, smoky atmospheres, twisted characters, and a taste of the erotic undercoating of Los Angeles’ thriving arts and rock scene.

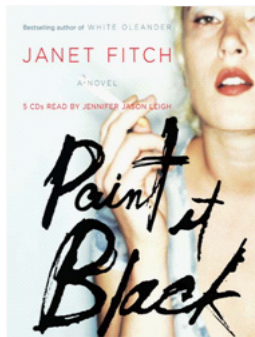
This dark tale, set in the early 80s, it follows the escapades of Josie Tyrell, a twenty-year-old art model and run-away. The novel commences coldly with Josie’s reflections on John Lennon’s murder. It precedes to go into detail on her own bohemian lifestyle of simplicity and culture which she shares with her Harvard dropout boyfriend Michael, a painter. Josie’s world quickly implodes and deteriorates with a caustic call from the morgue asking her to identify Michael’s corpse.

Propelled into a blizzard of confusion and grief, Josie must come to terms with sentiments of self pity, guilt, and the revival of her own broken, splintered identity. Through her struggle, she locks horns with Michael’s dynamic and terrifying mother, Meredith, a famous pianist. Fitch develops an off-kilter relationship between Josie and Meredith in which both characters seek each other out to convict and, at times,

comfort one another. Meredith is depicted as dominating and jealous. She goes as far as to blame Josie for Michael’s death and displays violent tendencies. Oddly enough, though she is laced with poisonous charm, Meredith both captivates and repulses Josie.

In comparison to her earlier novel, *White Oleander*, this is a similar story of a young woman’s search for identity and power. The candor of *Paint it Black* is also familiar in relation to Fitch’s first novel. In contrast to the main character from *Oleander*, Josie is like graphite, sooty and tarnished on the pages of her youth. Josie connects with the reader through her keen observational powers.

The novel is brimming with secrets exploding over the rim like smoothly brewed ale. Fitch once again plays her cards as the queen of eloquent prose and offers her readers a taste of the seedy dungeons of Los Angeles’s vibrant punk landscape as well as the sophistication of a debutante’s candy-coated layering.



‘RAD’ fights insecurity by Elisa Winkelman

It’s been a long night at work and you can’t wait to get home, put up your feet, and watch that episode you recorded on TiVo. Sure, it’s dark and nobody’s around, but it’s Small Town, USA and nothing ever happens there. You’re five feet from your car when you get a text message. As you start to respond, someone grabs you from behind, choking you. Do you panic as you begin to see spots? Or do you know how to break this hold and go “Chuck Norris” on your attacker?

The Rape Aggression Defense (R.A.D.) class enables women to walk away with defensive skills and heightened powers of observation. This is a free program offered by Kutztown University’s Public Safety police officers. Any woman (whether enrolled at KU or not) may participate. There are a limited number of seats, so it is first come, first serve. [This is a beneficial program, one that you should take advantage of.] Before R.A.D. I believed that if knocked and held down by an aggressor’s weight, I was done. I would have thrown in the towel and admitted defeat. R.A.D. teaches an option out by using leverage and the power of the female hip. This class gives you confidence as well as shatters misconceptions about your body’s limitations.

Our class was small in number and there were only five women (including myself). The officers explained the class numbers increase after news of rapes occur on campus.

R.A.D. is three nights of training, both physical and verbal lessons. The first night began with an introduction of possible situations. You start by understanding where an attack can take place and how to prevent an encounter. Be observant. Is the guy coming towards you out for a jog or looking for trouble? Officers teach you to trust your instincts and embrace the power of women’s intuition. From here we move into the physical realm, which is the majority of the class.

We learn to establish a defensive stance, in which you have balance and a good starting point for offensive maneuvers. The officers give each woman helpful feedback. Then you get to beat an already abused, duct-taped mannequin’s head. You learn how to cripple, knock out, or (worst case scenario) kill your attacker with various jabs and punches. One of the most important defensive powers is your vocalization. The officers state that a clear, powerful “no, get back” is necessary to sometimes scare your attacker away and attract possible witnesses to the scene. The first night is a lot to take in, so basic punches and the

defensive stance are all the physical techniques learned the first night.

The next night we did a bit of review and then moved onto more defense techniques. There are three basic kicks used as a quick strike or a stronger push off. You learn all about holds and being grabbed from behind. This was also another area which concerned me; being five foot tall and under 125 lbs. I am very aware of my size in contrast with many people. By the end of the night, I successfully learned how to break bear hugs, get out of choke holds, and do a fair bit of damage to my assailant. We learned to defend ourselves from the ground against multiple attackers and defend ourselves in our homes. The officers are supportive, jovial, and offered individuals feedback for improvement.

The final night is the most unnerving of the three. Each person is placed in diverse scenarios and then “attacked.” You begin by gearing up in red padding on your elbows and knees; you also wear gloves and a helmet. We faced off against an officer who looked like a slightly, smaller version of the marshmallow puff man from *Ghostbusters*. The first scenario is a “walk through.” You have to walk the outside of the room and have an encounter with either another person out for a walk or an aggressor. The officers are hidden so you do not know where they are coming from.

After I resisted my initial instinct to run away, I carried out some of the basic defense skills including the push-off kick. You are allowed to strike the officer anywhere except his face and knees. Yes, we are highly encouraged to hit “the forbidden zone” or as one officer quipped, “All roads lead to Rome.”

The following scenario is “The ATM Hold-up.” Each woman pretends to be at an ATM and is attacked from behind in one of the various holds. When it was my turn, “the attacker” actually picked me up in a hold from behind. My immediate thought was “not fair,” but someone who is abducting you will not play by the rules. I had a hard time kicking with my feet off the floor, but managed to break the hold with an elbow and some intense twisting.

The final scenario was my least favorite because it was so unnerving. You are directed to stand in the center of the room with your eyes closed until you are pushed. Only then are you allowed to fight back. While you are waiting for the push, all the officers surround you and verbally abuse you. This is very uncomfortable and by the end of this scenario I had developed a rather foul mouth. Once I was attacked, however, my body began to respond subconsciously. The training kicked in and it became instinctive and reflexive, which is one of the main goals of the program.

R.A.D. is an excellent program and each person who takes it at KU receives a manual which is signed at the completion of the program. After your book is signed, you are officially certified and can take the program again for free anywhere in the United States. By the end of the program, I felt a confidence, a greater sense of awareness in my surroundings, and empowered.

Watch for advertisements about the R.A.D. program for Spring 2008.



A woman illustrates the defensive stance against an opponent.

Women's History Month:

**Tuesday, March 4
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

Experience the comfort and healing of a drum circle as part of KU's Health Fair.

**Tuesday, March 18
11 a.m., Rohrbach Library
Voices & Choices Gallery**
Retired English and Women's Studies faculty member, Dr. Angela Scanzello leads discussion about Isabel Allende's short stories: "Tosca" and "Letters of Betrayed Love."
Copies are available in the library and Women's Center.

**Wednesday, March 19
7 p.m., Boehm 145**
"Through the Looking Glass": Rene Lynch talks about her artwork and Metaphor Gallery in Brooklyn, N.Y.

**Monday, March 24
- Friday, March 28
9 a.m. - 7 p.m. MSU 250**
A week-long exhibit of Frank Cordelle's "Century Project."

**Tuesday, March 25
7 p.m., Schaeffer Auditorium**
Entertainer and Social Activist Rosie Perez presents "Women as Social Activists."

**Wednesday, March 26
10 am - 4:30 pm
MSU 218**
Cordelle speaks on Wednesday, March 26 at 7 p.m. in MSU 218.

**April and May
Thursday, April 3
7 p.m., MSU's Bear's Den**
"Take Back the Night"



About the Women's Center

The staff at the Women's Center welcomes telephone calls and visits from people seeking information and connection. We have a lending library. The lounge in the Women's Center has a television, playback media, Internet access, and a small snack preparation area for research and leisure time. Stop by and say, "Hi." The Women's Center has a friendly, laid-back atmosphere; we are always interested in meeting new people.



Emergency Numbers

Public Safety	610 683-4001
Safety Escort Service	610 683-4002
Anonymous Crime Tip Line.....	610 683-8477
Women's Center	610 683-4655
Health and Wellness Center	610 683-4082
Counseling Center.....	610 683-4072
Berks Women in Crisis.....	610 372-9540
Temporary Shelter.....	610 373-2053
Crime Victims Council.....	610 437-6611
Planned Parenthood	
Reading	610 376-8061
Allentown	610 439-1033

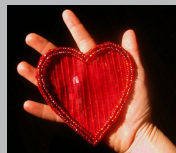


Opportunities to Make a Difference

Domestic violence and other emergencies are recurring problems for some Kutztown University students. In response to this problem, the Women's Center has established a Student Emergency Fund. If you are able to make a tax-deductible donation of any size at any time, please make your check payable to the Kutztown University Foundation and note: Women's Center Emergency Fund #0599.



A small group of faculty and staff has been funding this effort but seeks your assistance through the Foundation Fund. Also, donations to the Women's Studies Award Fund can be made to #578. For further information, contact Grace Hill or Elaine Reed at 610-683-4655 or via e-mail at hill@kutztown.edu or reed@kutztown.edu.



As an on-going, year-long initiative the Women's Center collects **used cell phones** and **personal care items** for Berks Women in Crisis and **printer cartridges** for Turning Point of Lehigh Valley.



If you are unable to make a donation, but you want to help, please stop by the Women's Center, Old Main 126, for information about other ways you can make a difference.



Thank you for your continued support and encouragement.



126 Old Main
Kutztown University
Kutztown, PA 19530
610-683-4655
Fax: 610-683-4749

Hours
Monday - Thursday
9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Friday
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Visit us at:
www.kutztown.edu/
womenscenter
and
www.kutztown.edu/
womens_studies

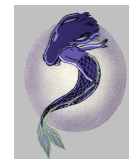
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