Georges Bataille
The Promise and Limits of the Impossible

Volume 2, Issue 1
Spring 2011
Georges Bataille’s engagement with the female form followed and advanced the long tradition of misogyny in Western artistic practice. The female body acted for Bataille as the base for the transition into what he called the beyond or the impossible. The misogyny of his works is therefore complicated by the prospect of transcendence. His misogyny debased the female figure while simultaneously privileging it by placing it at the center of his project. Ironically, from this problematic pedestal, the marginalized/centralized female figure can propose a reconfiguration of his work.

Bataille’s paradoxical use of the female body therefore challenges artists to continue to represent her form by seeking ways of breaking the power of misogyny while capturing the overwhelming power of the figure, even if only for a fleeting instant. My work offers one of many possibilities in that engagement by actively confronting the problematics of representing the female form. I continue the dialogue and open up the complicated questions of objectification and romanticization of the female figure as two aspects of the same patriarchal violence enacted on the female body. My bricolage attempts to call into question more general notions concerning subjectivity, relationality, and possibility—or impossibility—of community. The female form is offered as a means to inspire reimaginings and reconfigurations of the dominant representation of the feminine. Though such attempts will continue to fall prey to the problematics of representation, I hope these images open up and add to the questions that will eventually dislodge and transform the widespread problematic discourse surrounding representations of the feminine today.

Agne Jomantaite’s artwork is displayed throughout this issue:

Subject 1, 2010, 20” x 13”, bricolage
Subject 2, 2010, 20” x 13”, bricolage
Encounter, 2010, 20” x 13”, bricolage
Community, 2010, 20” x 13”, bricolage