

PEARL VAN GEEST

If someone let me kiss your honeyed
eyes, Juventius, all I pleased,
I would kiss them three hundred thousand
times and never feel replete,
not if our kissing's harvest should
outnumber ripened ears of wheat.

Catullus – Poem 48



ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
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Ontario Arts Council for its financial support.*

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TAMMY RATCLIFF & PEARL VAN GEEST

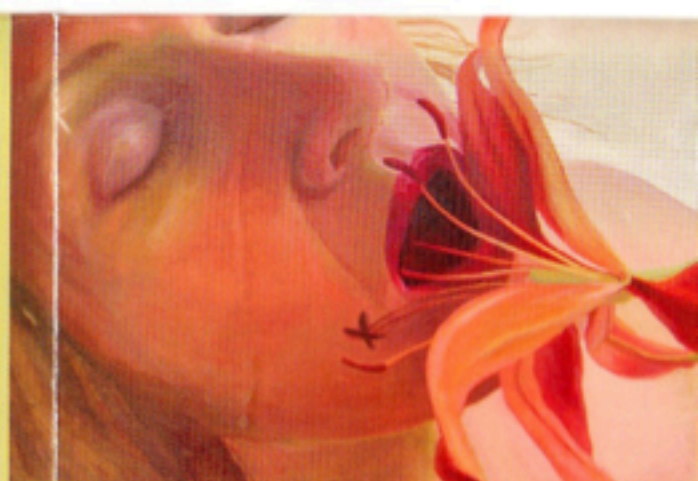
The newest body of work by Pearl Van Geest can be seen to continue from a mytho-erotic tradition as ancient as myth itself. Throughout cultures and civilizations many of the earliest stories concern the amorous adventures of (mostly) gods, goddesses and deities inextricably joined with imagery from the natural world. Indeed, often in the moment of rapture or consummation the event is characterized by the transformation of one or more of the lovers into a flower or plant. Historically, and especially during the Victorian era, flower imagery would be used to suggest sexual themes and ideas that would not be considered "appropriate" if overtly depicted.

Van Geest's paintings are ripe with this divine erotic energy. The viewer is given a viewpoint that is highly charged yet never explicit or graphic. Instead, as well as passion, Van Geest gives us romance and by doing so she heightens the experience and feeling within her work. With ambiguous body parts "kissed" by lush and exotic flowers, the act of love is baptized or blessed with a shower of "kiss prints" bestowed upon the lovers by many varied people. These kiss prints delicately animate her surface and evoke a number of references. The cascade of kisses could represent the kisses passed between the lovers, kisses from the past, or even the power and presence of Eros. The kiss-totem situates itself as a physical marker, a demonstrable sign of love and desire, positioned within the suggested landscape of imagination, emotion and bliss. Van Geest's canvases are ultimately timeless celebrations of physical and metaphysical acts of passion.

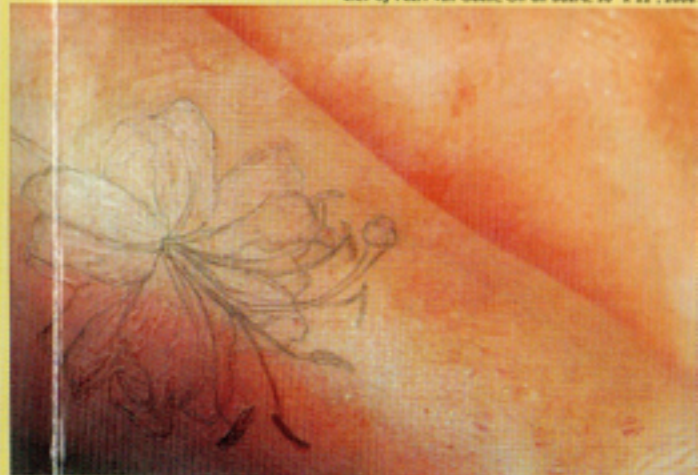
DOWN THE GARDEN PATH

ESSAYS by Virginia Eichhorn

DESIGN by Candace Sepulis / Ballyhoo Media
GALLERY STRATFORD, 2006



LILY by Pearl Van Geest, Oil on board, 30" x 22", 2004



POLLEN STAINS ARE PERMANENT by Pearl Van Geest,
Charcoal, lipstick and acrylic on giclee print on canvas, 24" x 36", 2005