

Catherine Sullivan was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1968. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Acting from the California Institute of the Arts in 1992 and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Post Studio Art from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena in 1997. Sullivan lives and works in Los Angeles.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2003

"Catherine Sullivan: Five Economies (big hunt/little hunt)," Metro Pictures, New York; FRI-ART Centre d'Art Contemporain, Fribourg, Switzerland

"Catherine Sullivan/MATRIX 149: 'Tis Pity She's a Fluxus Whore," Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT

2002

"Catherine Sullivan: Five Economies (big hunt/little hunt)," The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, Chicago, IL; UCLA Armand Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Rubell Family Foundation, Miami, FL

2001

"Gestus Maximus (Gold Standard)," Galerie Christian Nagel, Cologne, Germany

Selected Group Exhibitions and Performances/Theatre Works

2002

"Crisp," Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York, NY

2001

"Nouvelles Scènes," Le Consortium, Dijon, France

"New Writing From Los Angeles," UCLA Armand Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA

2000

"L.A.-ex," Museum Villa Stuck, Munich, Germany

"New Music Forum," University of Southern California, San Diego, CA

1999

"LA Edge Festival," Biltmore Hotel, Los Angeles, CA

1998

"Still and Otherwise," Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

"Lines of Sight," site-specific project at the California Aqueduct, Lancaster, CA

"Let the Right Be a Vision of the Left," Trapdoor Theatre, Chicago, IL

Selected Screenings

2001

"Cosima von Bonin," Kunstverein Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany

"Unspoken Evil III—Rites of Ascension and Obscurity," Catherine Bastide, Brussels, Belgium

1999

"The Chirologic Remedy," Galerie Christian Nagel, Cologne, Germany; The Secession, Vienna, Austria

Selected Bibliography

Ferguson, Russell and Hamza Walker. Catherine Sullivan, *Five Economies*. UCLA Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, and The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, Chicago, 2002.

Sullivan, Catherine. "Through the Scattered Glances." *Spring Journal*, 2000, vol. II, 38–41.

———. "A Spectacle of Ruin and Doubt." In *Fama & Fortune Bulletin*, ed. by Peter Pakesch and Johannes Von Schlegelbrügge. Wien/Köln: Distribution Schlegelbrügge, December 1999.

———. "Grisly Notes and Tones (A Strawman's Excerpt)." *Spring Journal*, 1998, vol. I, 33–43.

Work in MATRIX

The Chironomic Remedy, 1999/2003

Performance

15 minutes in length

Composers: Catherine Sullivan and Sean Griffin

Please Note:

The Chironomic Remedy will be performed on Sunday, March 16, at 3 p.m. and will be followed by a talk by the artist.

Designed to highlight the prevalence of contemporary artists who are fascinated with the ephemeral, the transitory, and the temporary, miniMATRIX is a series of single-work exhibitions. Catherine Sullivan/MATRIX 201d is the final of four miniMATRIX exhibitions.

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COVER:

Catherine Sullivan: *The Chironomic Remedy, 1999/2003*; performance; courtesy of the artist.

INSIDE (LEFT TO RIGHT):

Catherine Sullivan: *The Chironomic Remedy, 1999/2003*; performance; courtesy of the artist.

John Bulwer: from *Chirologia or the Natural Language of the Hand, 1644*; courtesy Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

John Bulwer: from *Chironomia or the Art of Manual Rhetoric, 1644*; courtesy Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.



Catherine Sullivan/MATRIX 201d

The Chironomic Remedy

March 16, 2003

**University of California
Berkeley Art Museum**



ENCOUNTER CULTURE





Catherine Sullivan: Gestural Abstraction

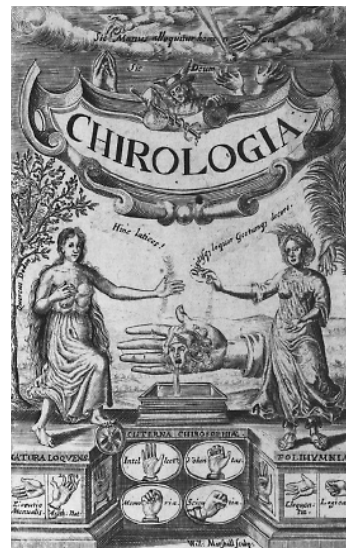
In his hand are the deep places of the earth.

Psalms 95:4

Catherine Sullivan's hybrid artistic practice emerges from a profound engagement with both performance and the visual arts. These interests are reflected in her education: Sullivan earned a degree in acting before undertaking a master's degree in post-studio art at Art Center College of Design in Los Angeles. She creates theater works that she writes, designs, and directs (often combining trained and untrained performers), as well as video installations and photographs that are thematically related to each other. Since graduating in 1997, her performances and video installations have drawn on an unusually wide array of theatrical genres and acting styles. The performance *Dad's Ham* (1992/97) incorporated Greek tragedy, medieval miracle plays, commedia dell'arte, Restoration comedy, and television comedy; *Grisly Notes and Tones* (1997/2001) was inspired by the sensationalist television documentary series *When Animals Attack*; Oscar-winning performances in Arthur Penn's movie

The Miracle Worker provide the basis for *Gold Standard* (hysterical, melancholic, degraded, refined) (2001); a racy Jacobean drama and a 1964 program of Fluxus actions are the antithetical sources for *'Tis Pity She's a Fluxus Whore* (2003). In these works, and in the Berkeley Art Museum's mini-MATRIX201d presentation of *The Chironomic Remedy*, Sullivan investigates the complex ways in which communication takes place through manipulation of the

human body.



Acting, as exemplified in the majority of contemporary films and television series, aspires to a state of transparency. The demands of narrative realism—today's dominant cultural mode—conspire to disguise the artifice of performance. The desire for a credible experience in television is so strong that “reality TV,” a genre of performance that elides its own particular kind of acting, has become the most important recent development. Catherine Sullivan's work takes an antithetical position, insisting upon the presence of acting, broadly understood, in every kind of perfor-

mance, from an Yvonne Rainer minimalist dance to a Hollywood audition. Her work is intended, in fact, to reveal acting, to make it impossible not to consider that a performance is taking place. For Sullivan, “acting” is not only the formally codified practices of traditional theater. She is generally interested in the ways that bodily actions and their physical context generate meaning in all manner of performance.

The Chironomic Remedy, first performed in 1999, exemplifies Sullivan's method of working with existing texts—albeit, in this case, very obscure—and transforming them through the infusion of her own logic of performance. Sullivan's research began with John Bulwer, a seventeenth-century physician, psychologist, and rhetorician who attempted, in the empiricist spirit of the times, to describe and systematize the full range of physical gestures used in human communication. Bulwer's *The Chirologia or the Natural Language of the Hand* and *Chironomia or the Art of Manual Rhetoric* (1644) is a two-part investigation that sought to identify an essential meaning for every gesture, and to educate those interested in perfecting the arts of rhetorical persuasion. Writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Gilbert Austin elaborated the idea of “chironomia,” applying Bulwer's figures to “Night Thoughts,” a darkly Romantic poem by Richard Brinsley Sheridan.