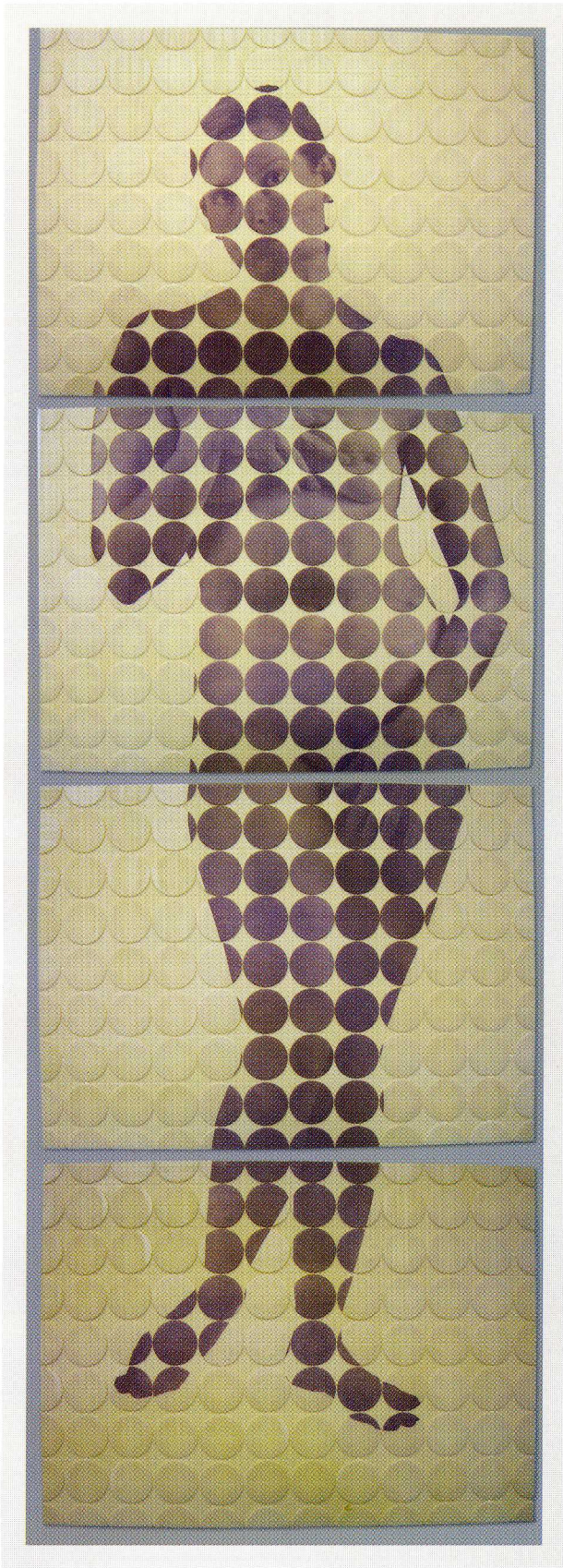
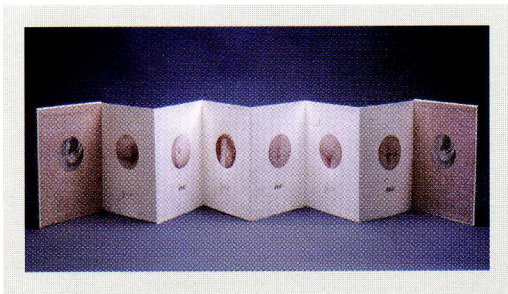


CYNTHIA THOMPSON
RECUMBENT

february 27 - march 24, 2004
clough-hanson gallery, rhodes college, memphis, tn



Prone



Body Language

Breathing is an important aspect of Cynthia Thompson's work. Breathing, when paired with the beating heart, gives the human body its own rhythm; it is the same rhythm that guides Thompson as she works her handmade paper pieces with a quiet, natural give and take. As she breathes in, Thompson moves to cover and conceal, then as she breathes out, she moves to unearth and reveal. She patiently adds rich layers to her object while at the same time washes them clean to remove unnecessary parts. This gentle give and take in the way Thompson layers materials and meaning is at the core of her process.

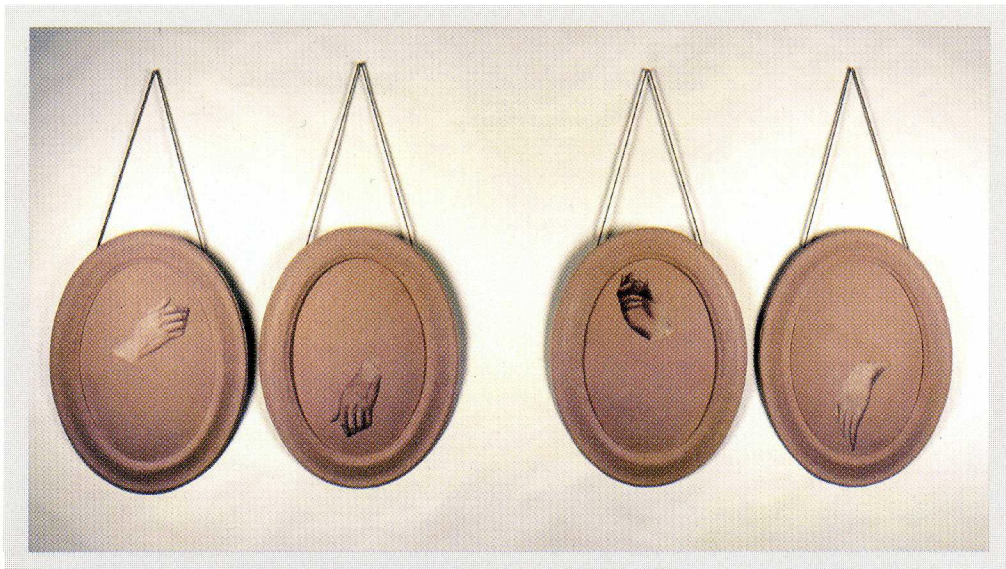
When spending time with Thompson's pieces, one is struck by their physicality in the same way that a person knows there is another person in the room. Their stability and solidity give them an almost eerie, human presence. The work has a level of care and an organic quality that allows the viewer to easily identify and connect with them. Moreover, the physical presence of the pieces is integral to the artist's desire to draw attention to the human body's wonder and beauty, while examining its imperfections and flaws.

Another aspect of duality in Thompson's work lies in her connection between tradition and modernity in the process of paper and printmaking. The artist's work exemplifies the importance of being rooted in a craft's tradition as well as being able to explore contemporary approaches. In addition to using age old techniques such as embossings, letterpress and watermarks, Thompson also employs decidedly contemporary image making techniques to her craft. She uses digital images, photo-polymer prints, and injects images with mold.

Thompson extends the notion of give and take to include natural attraction and repulsion in reference to the human body. In the *Whisper* triptych, she uses materials as a metaphor for skin and flesh. The artist creates an intricate series of layers in making the paper. While the viewer is seduced by the blemish-free paper, delicate watermark, and embossed letters "y-e-s", the viewer is also repulsed with the same force by the layer of active mold injected into the paper itself.



Afterglow



Heirlooms

In *Afterglow* the artist uses the meaning of the materials in their literal sense. The shape of the flocked, powdered soap halo refers to the communion wafer, and the purity of the soap parallels the divine body of Christ—all of which references the viewer's and/or artist's impure, human bodies that contain the communion host.



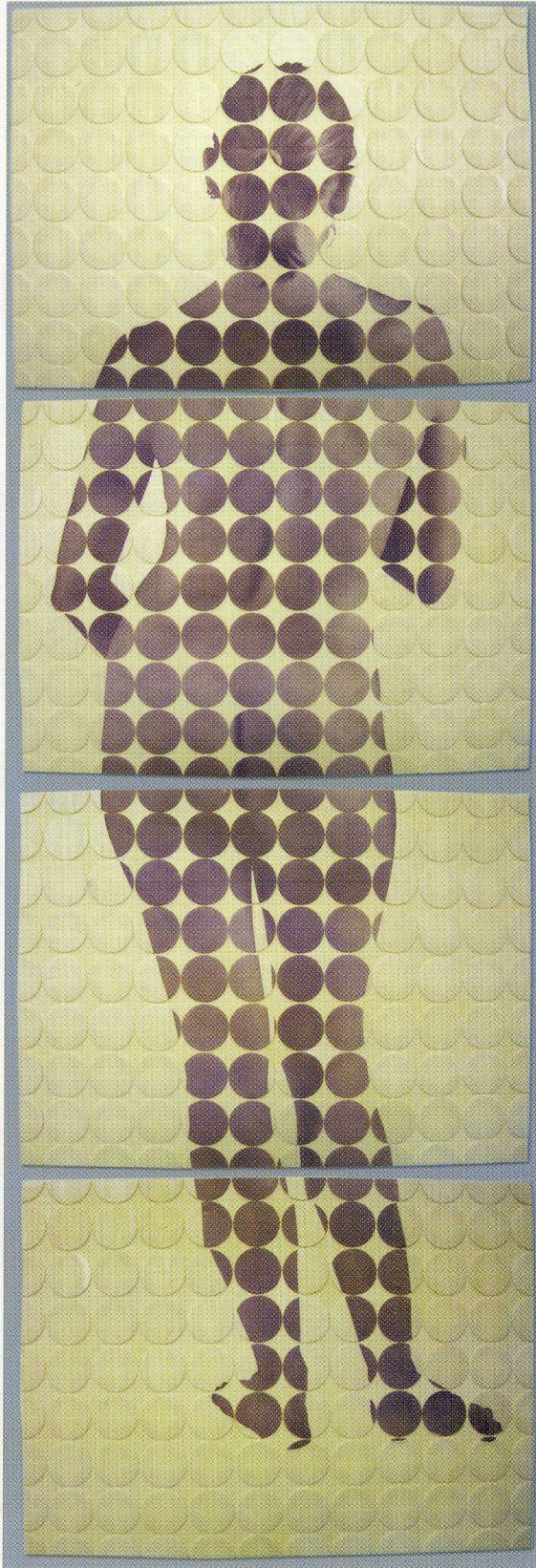
Heirlooms, Detail



Whisper

The meanings to be found in Thompson's work are as richly layered as the materials she employs. Coupled with the artist's pared down aesthetic, the rhythm in Thompson's process allows her to provide the viewer with the quiet space necessary for contemplation and rumination. This brings to light the importance of not only breathing in and out but pausing in-between.

- Hamlett Dobbins
Director, Clough-Hanson Gallery



Prone

PRONE

Photo polymer print on communion wafers
88" x 30" each

HEIRLOOMS

Cast paper pulp, digital images, cord
18" x 22" each

AFTERGLOW

Letterpress on handmade paper flocked with powder soap, etched glass 30" x 30"
each

WHISPER

Watermark, mold, embossed text on handmade paper 22" x 22" each

RECUMBENT

Digital print, lithograph, embossing on handmade paper 15" x 22" each

CONCEAL

Letterpress on handmade paper
7" x 11"

SWEET NOTHINGS

Digital print on handmade paper with watermark 8" x 10"

BODY LANGUAGE

Artist Book
Letterpress on handmade paper
8" x 18" open

UNTITLED

photo polymer print on host
5 1/2" diameter

RHODES

Clough-Hanson Gallery, 2000 North Parkway, Memphis, TN, 38112