

POSTMASTERS

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for immediate release:

February 18 – March 24, 2012
opening reception Saturday, February 18 6-8 pm

MARY KELLY



Mary Kelly, *MIMUS: Act II*, 2012, compressed lint, 83.5 x 61 x 2 inches

Postmasters Gallery is extremely pleased to announce an exhibition of new works by Mary Kelly, her first solo show in New York since 2005.

On view: *Habitus*, 2010, first presented at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, and *Mimus*, 2012, which will have its premiere at the gallery.

Kelly's project-based work has addressed questions of sexuality, identity and memory for more than four decades. Her large-scale narrative installations, including *Post-Partum Document*, 1973-79, *Interim*, 1984-89, *The Ballad of Kastriot Rexhepi*, 2001 and *Love Songs*, 2005-07, have blurred the boundaries between the personal and the political by visualizing the impact of historical events on the precarious nature of everyday life. The new projects continue to mine the reservoir of collective memory and examine the claim it makes on the present.

Habitus, made in collaboration with Ray Barrie, recounts memories of the generation born during, or just after, the Second World War. The sculpture itself is based on the Anderson Shelter, a mass-produced bomb shelter designed for home use during air raids in Britain. The worldwide preoccupation with shelters persisted throughout the Cold War and further resonates with the security obsessions of the present day.

The shelter is 'corrugated' with anecdotal texts that are legible only by looking 'underground' into a mirrored floor, merging the uncanny domesticity of the garden shed with the hallucinatory space of nuclear annihilation. *Habitus* looks back to what Kelly calls 'the political primal scene,' that is, to the question of origins beyond the sexual scenario, and asks how transformative, and often violent, world events shape identity in the first few years of life.

Presented as a mini docu-drama in three acts, Kelly's second project, *Mimus*, taps into the farcical underbelly of Cold War ideology epitomized by public hearings in the era of the House Un-American Activities Committee. The work takes the ephemeral form of compressed lint. It involves a durational process in which individual units are cast in the filter screen of a domestic dryer over several months and hundreds of washing cycles, then assembled as large panels of intaglio text.



Mary Kelly and Ray Barrie, *HABITUS: Type I*, 2010, laser cut acrylic, mirror and wood, 48 x 96 x 96 inches

The dialog in *Mimus* is based on the testimonies of Blanche Posner, Ruth Meyers and Dagmar Wilson, activists in Women Strike for Peace, who initiated lobbies, petitions, vigils, and most famously, demonstrations against nuclear testing in sixty U.S. cities on November, 1, 1962. Their efforts were instrumental in prompting President Kennedy to sign the Test Ban Treaty of 1963, and the hearing led to widespread ridicule of McCarthyism in the media. Perhaps most importantly, WSP's inclusive "unorganization," as they called it, set a precedent for the non-hierarchical strategies of second wave feminism as well the Occupy movement today. The radical peace initiatives of women in the early post-war period have been largely forgotten, and Kelly's excavation of the hearing (U.S. Doc. 2.791) is a performative act of remembering that concerns the materialization of historical affect as much as fact.

Mary Kelly's most recent solo exhibitions include *Words are Things*, curated by Milada Slizinska at the Center for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, Poland (2008), *Four Works in Dialogue*, curated by Cecilia Widenheim at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden (2010), and a large scale retrospective, *Mary Kelly: Projects, 1973-2010*, curated by Maria Balshaw and Dominique Heyse-Moore at The Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, UK (2011).

Kelly was represented in the 2008 Biennale of Sydney and Documenta 12, Kassel, 2007, as well as *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2007. Forthcoming group exhibitions include, *This Will Have Been: Art, Love and Politics in the 1980s*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 2012, and *Ends of the Earth*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2012.

Postmasters Gallery located at 459 West 19th Street between 9 and 10 Avenues is open Tuesday through Saturday 11 – 6
 Please contact Magdalena Sawon or Paulina Bebecka with questions and image requests
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<http://www.postmastersart.com>