

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 22, 1984

MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES *TOUCH SANITATION SHOW*

MAINTENANCE CITY/SANMAN'S PLACE

RONALD FELDMAN FINE ARTS, 31 MERCER ST, NY

SEPT 9-OCT 5, TUES-SAT 10-6 PM

TRANSFER STATION TRANS FORMATION

NYC DEPT. OF SANITATION, MARINE TRANSFER STATION

WEST 59 & HUDSON RIVER, PRESENTED BY CREATIVE TIME

SEPT 9-30 WED-SUN 12-7PM

TOUCH SANITATION SHOW is a two part environmental art exhibition by artist, Mierle Laderman Ukeles. This immense multi-media installation celebrates daily urban survival by revealing New York sanitation as our primary maintenance system. Ukeles focuses on sanitation workers who she feels are stigmatized because we – the public – are generally unwilling to recognize that the individuals who take the garbage don't make the garbage.

Five years in preparation, this exhibition has resulted in a new kind of public art. This is the first time a public service agency has collaborated with such intensity in a serious cultural project. Virtually every unit of the Department of Sanitation has participated with the artist in the creation of these environmental art works.

The exhibitions portray the important relationships between culture and maintenance. The artist believes that the degree of a democratic culture's greatness is measured by its treatment of service workers. TOUCH SANITATION SHOW will take place in two locations: Ronald Feldman Fine Arts at 31 Mercer Street and the department of Sanitation Marine Transfer Station at West 59th Street and the Hudson River.

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Ronald Feldman Fine Arts is the site of a four part video environment utilizing thirty-four monitors, twenty-eight of which will be stacked into four 14-ft. high "TV Towers", running five different tapes in eight separate locations. The installation will also include a 1500 sq. ft. transparent map of New York City suspended overhead, a special print installation of clocks in 53 colors and work forms designed for

all the walls of the gallery, a reconstruction of two sanitation lunch/locker room facilities that have literally been taken out of the real work place—one old and one new.

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Transfer Station Trans Formation will take place in the West 59th Street Marine Transfer Station. This is the first art exhibition ever held in a real sanitation facility in the United States. This Transfer Station was built in 1901, renovated in 1934 by the WPA, and is now scheduled for demolition in October—immediately following the show. The installation will include a 350-foot light sculpture made from flasher panels taken from 60 condemned sanitation trucks; an array of sanitation vehicles and equipment including collection trucks, snowplows, mechanical sweepers, barges, a 60-cubic yard they Wagon, and a huge salt mound; a multi-track sound work with the voices of sanitation men and the sound of their vehicles; and a suspended container of work gloves collected from sanitation workers since last year.

OPENING PERFORMANCES, SUNDAY, SEPT 9

MARRYING THE BARGES, 1:30-2:30 PM, MARINE TRANSFER STATION

The term “marrying” is nautical jargon for barges that are tethered together. On opening day, six barges and two tugs will perform a “Barge Ballet” choreographed by the artist. Marrying the Barges will begin promptly at 1:30 PM Mayor Edward I. Koch will participate in the performance. The artist will produce a live videotape of the celebration.

CLEANSING THE BAD NAMES, 3-4 PM, RONALD FELDMAN FINE ARTS

The opening performance will continue outside Ronald Feldman Fine Arts from 3:00 to 4:00 PM. In this performance, New York City public officials will literally wipe out the bad names sanitation men have repeatedly been called by washing the graffiti-scrawled names off the from windows of the gallery.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mierle Laderman Ukeles spent eleven months from mid-1979 to 1980 creating TOUCH SANITATION, a public performance art work. She crisscrossed New York City ten times to reach all fifty-nine sanitation districts to face, shake hands with and thank every sanitation worker for “keeping New York City alive”. For eleven months she worked entire day and/or night shifts, following in the footsteps of sanitation workers, walking with them on their collection routes while talking, listening, often videotaping and recording. At the conclusion of the performance she was made Honorary Deputy

Commissioner of Sanitation and also Honorary Teamster Member of Local 831, United Sanitationmen's Association.

In 1982, Commissioner Norman Steisel appointed her official Artist-in Residence for the Department of Sanitation (unpaid). In 1983, she produced The Social Mirror, a sanitation collection truck completely clad in tempered glass mirror, and The Ballet Mechanique consisting of six mechanical broom trucks driven by department volunteers who performed various sweeping patterns for the Grand Finale of the New York City Art Parade. Fifteen years ago, Ms. Ukeles issued her Manifesto for Maintenance Art, 1969.

SPECIAL THANKS

The TOUCH SANITATION SHOW is made possible by the combined efforts of many agencies, individuals and corporations. A complete list will be available at the opening of the exhibition.

TOUCH SANITATION SHOW is made possible by and with support from:

New York City Department of Sanitation

Creative Time, Inc.

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, Inc.

New York Foundation for the Arts

New York City Department of Cultural

Affairs: Materials for the Arts

Apprenticeship Program

National Endowment for the Arts

Creative Artists Program Services (CAPS)

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Reflexlite Incentives

Theater Technology

Locus Communications

Rough Cut Studios

Artkraft Strauss Sign Corp.

Jerkens Truck and Equipment Co.

George Malves & Company, Inc.

Trius, Inc.

Mack Trucks, Maspeth

Air Metro Helicopters

Penske GM Power, Inc.

Rosenwach Tank Corporation

Weld Built Body

New York Telephone Company

Granada Television

Edwin A. Sheridan

Cornelius McDougal

TRANSPORTATION: There will be a special "Touch Sanitation