

University of Waterloo Art Gallery
East Campus Hall 1239

Hours:
Tuesday–Saturday, 12:00–5:00 pm
or by appointment

Driving:
263 Phillip Street
Waterloo, ON
(Located behind University Shops Plaza
Use South Entrance to ECH across
from Chemical Engineering 1)

Parking:
Meter parking is available behind ECH
Visitor parking is available at Lot N
and Lot UWP or Lot B after 3:45 pm
www.uwaterloo.ca/map/index.php

Mailing:
University of Waterloo Art Gallery
200 University Avenue West
Waterloo, ON Canada N2L 3G1

Contact:
Ivan Jurakic, Director/Curator
ijurakic@uwaterloo.ca
519.888.4567 ext. 36741
uwag.uwaterloo.ca

**UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO**

uwag

**SEASON
ONE**

“Your face, like a lone nocturnal garden in Worlds where Suns spin ‘round!’”

When is a garden not natural? Susy Oliveira’s mixed media installation fuses her interest in combining sculpture and photography with an interest in natural forms. “*Your face, like a lone nocturnal garden in Worlds where Suns spin ‘round!’*” includes multifaceted two and three dimensional artworks that reference the garden.

Oliveira’s lengthy title is a citation from Jean Genet’s *Our Lady of the Flowers*. Published in 1943, the novel was a fictionalized account of the writer’s incarceration and his fixation with criminals as objects of his sexual desire. Genet remains one of the 20th centuries enduring literary outlaws. Openly homosexual, he was a scandalous public figure who flagrantly exploited his past as a male prostitute and prisoner to create writing that was theatrical, outrageous and rich with poetry.¹

While Genet is a literary influence, Oliveira’s sculptures obliquely suggest the manner of the French formal garden. The tradition of the *jardin à la française*, which dates back to the 17th century, is predicated upon symmetry and the principle of imposing order onto nature. Symmetry and order are a necessary part of Oliveira’s process of texture mapping photographic images onto multifaceted sculptural forms.

For example, in the sculpture *Breeding violets*, a pair of flowers (one erect, one flaccid) are set amidst a spiky black lawn. Oliveira exaggerates the sexual symbolism commonly attributed to these forms but the polygonal character of the artifacts denies easy interpretation. They are less about sexuality and desire than they are about virtuality. This garden is no earthly paradise. Guarded over by the hypnotic gaze emanating from a détourned photo of an objectified male figure, every aspect of this unnatural world seems to have been tamed. Like satin flowers or Astro Turf, these facsimiles suggest a world that is increasingly predicated on the false and the fake.

Oliveira’s domesticated garden is a clever decoy, one that no longer needs to be mowed, pruned or watered. At best, it mimics the appearance of the natural. Each element functions as its antithesis, just as it does in Genet’s writing. Oliveira’s work suggests the increasing artificiality of the environments we inhabit, whether actual or virtual, and her imaginary garden begs the question: which is more real? “*Your face, like a lone nocturnal garden in Worlds where Suns spin ‘round!’*” uses artifice to challenge our rosy assumptions.

Ivan Jurakic

1. *Genet: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Peter Brooks and Joseph Halpern (editors), Prentice-Hall Inc., New Jersey, 1979.

List of Works

The sun also shines on a pile of twigs, 2009
C-prints on archival card and foamcore
63.5 x 56 x 13 cm

Breeding violets, 2009
C-prints on archival card and foamcore with flocking on panel
91.5 x 61 x 35.5 cm

To the onanist, 2009
C-prints on archival card and foamcore on panel
91.5 x 61 x 25 cm

Centre of your world, 2009
C-prints on archival card and foamcore on panel
91.5 x 61 x 10 cm

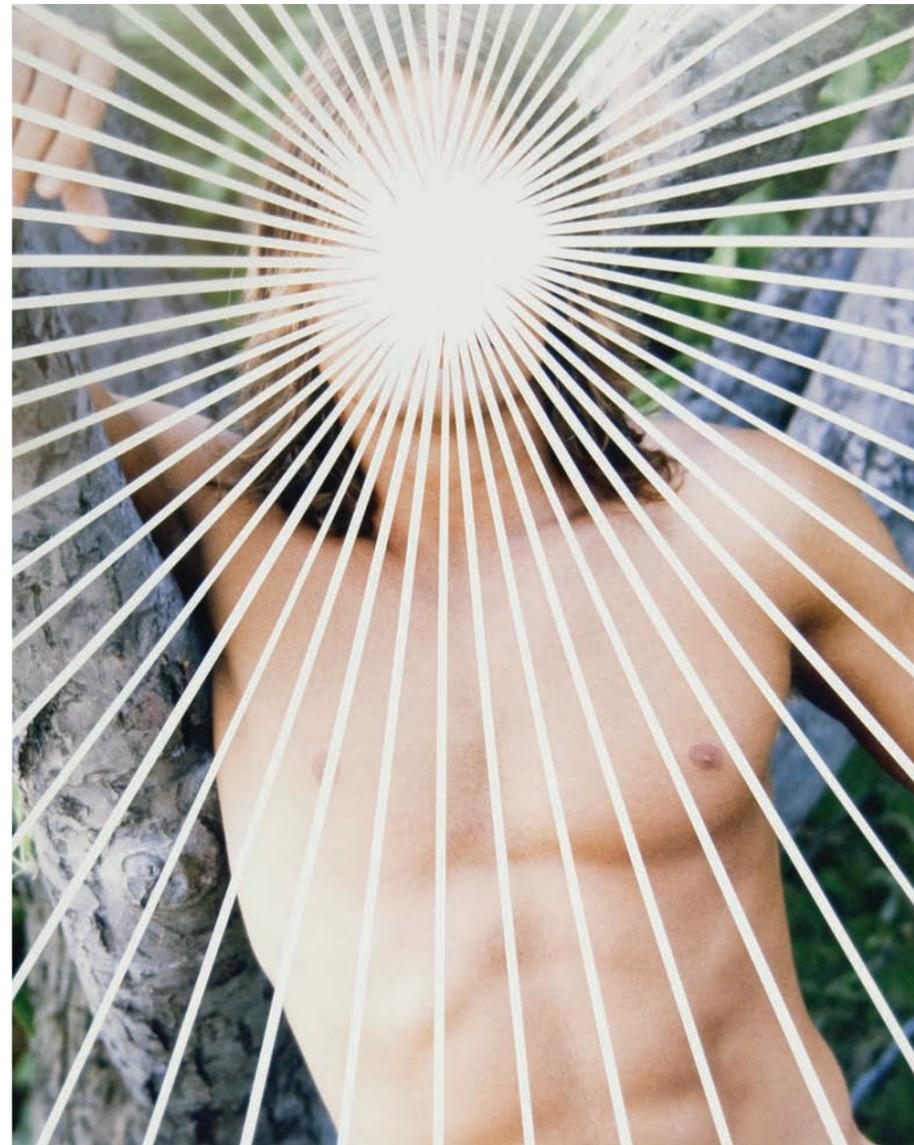
Time keeps, 2009
C-prints on archival card and foamcore on panel
61 x 61 x 35.5 cm

*“Your face, like a lone nocturnal garden in Worlds where
Suns spin ‘round!’”*, 2009
Collage, 61 x 46 cm

Nocturnal Garden, 2009, edition of 5
Chromira print, 61 x 40.5 cm

Nocturnal Garden, 2009, edition of 5
Chromira print, 61 x 40.5 cm

Nocturnal Garden, 2009, edition of 5
Chromira print, 40.5 x 61 cm



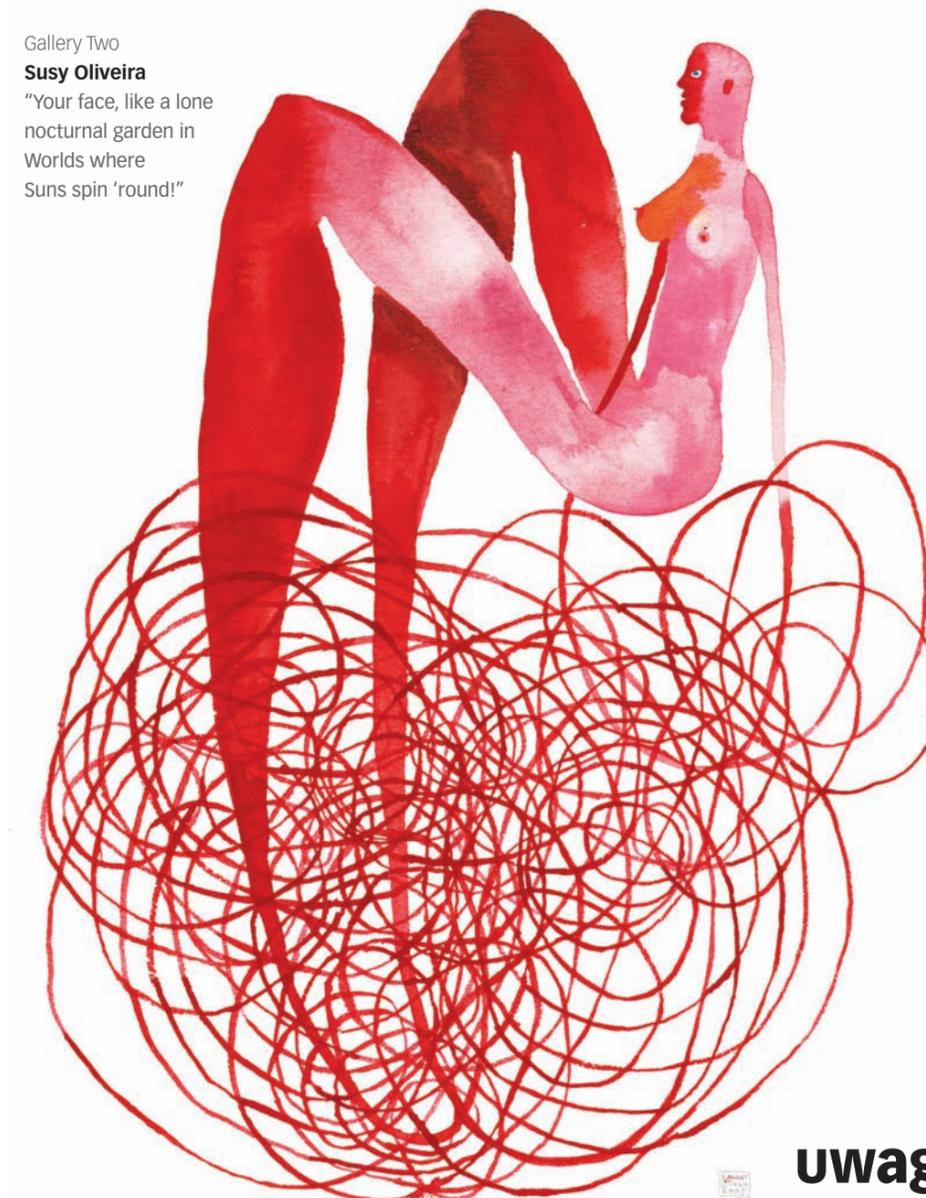
Artist Biography

Susy Oliveira (Canada, 1977) lives and works in Toronto. She received her MFA from the University of Waterloo and is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art & Design. She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally with recent exhibitions at the Khyber, Halifax; PLATFORM centre for photographic + digital arts, Winnipeg; Graphic Design Festival Breda, The Netherlands; The New Gallery, Calgary and Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto. She is the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including grants from

January 13–March 5, 2011

Gallery One
Balint Zsako
Works on Paper 2000-2010
Featuring Drawings from the
Bernardi Collection

Gallery Two
Susy Oliveira
“Your face, like a lone
nocturnal garden in
Worlds where
Suns spin ‘round!’”

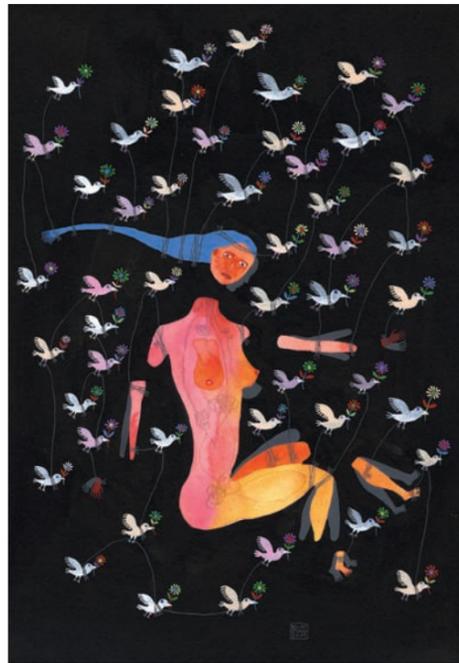
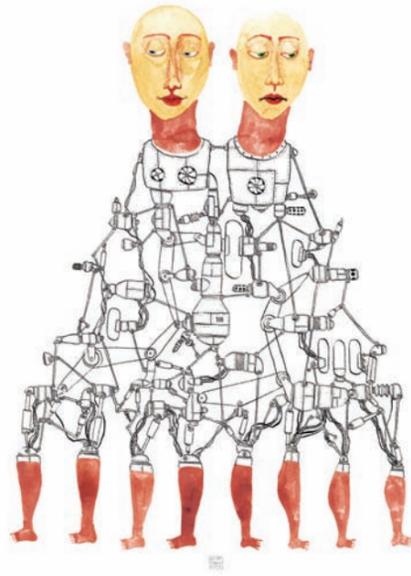
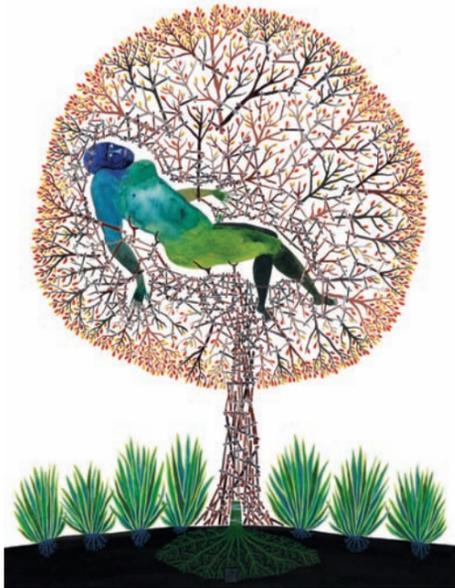


the Ontario Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts. She lives in Toronto. Susy Oliveira is represented by Peak Gallery, Toronto.
www.susyoliveira.ca

The artist would like to acknowledge the support of the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Image: “*Your face, like a lone nocturnal garden in Worlds where Suns spin round!*”, 2009.

uwag



Drawings from the Bernardi Collection
30.5 x 23.9 cm each
Signed and dated by the artist
Collection of Roy Bernardi/Elsa Sewell

1. *Untitled (long neck)*, 2004
Ink on paper, RB01
2. *Untitled (monument)*, 2005
Watercolor, pencil and ink on paper, RB02
3. *Untitled (red cracks)*, 2005
Ink on paper, RB03
4. *Untitled (flower hands)*, 2005
Ink on paper, RB04
5. *Untitled (bouquet)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB05
6. *Untitled (two heads and four flowers)*, 2005
Watercolor, pencil and ink on paper, RB06
7. *Untitled (carried away)*, 2005
Watercolor, pencil and ink on paper, RB07
8. *Untitled (tongues and snakes)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB08
9. *Untitled (wheels)*, 2005
Watercolor, pencil and ink on paper, RB09
10. *Untitled (many birds and one snake)*, 2005
Watercolor, pencil and ink on paper, RB10
11. *Untitled (cage lady)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB11
12. *Untitled (threesome)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB58
13. *Untitled (weighed down)*, 2004
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB53
14. *Untitled (loops woman)*, 2005
Watercolor on paper, RB12
15. *Untitled (loops man)*, 2005
Watercolor on paper, RB13
16. *Untitled (green bird, red bird)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB14
17. *Untitled (three headed green woman)*, 2004
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB15
18. *Untitled (pink pleasure)*, 2005
Watercolor, pencil and ink on paper, RB18
19. *Untitled (emission)*, 2003
Ink on paper, RB16
20. *Untitled (garden)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB17

21. *Untitled (say rain)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB45
22. *Untitled (bird keeper)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB46
23. *Untitled (three cracked heads)*, 2004
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB41
24. *Untitled (birds on her shoulder)*, 2004
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB47
25. *Untitled (twins)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB42
26. *Untitled (pyramid)*, 2005
Ink on paper, RB50
27. *Untitled (organs)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB51
28. *Untitled (three faces, two animals)*, 2004
Ink on paper, RB52
29. *Untitled (a man and his birds)*, 2004
Ink on paper, RB57
30. *Untitled (forked tongue)*, 2005
Ink on paper, RB43
31. *Untitled (the blind gardener)*, 2003
Ink on paper, RB28
32. *Untitled (in three acts)*, 2003
Watercolor and pencil on paper, RB29
33. *Untitled (kiss me)*, 2004
Watercolor, pencil and ink on paper, RB59
34. *Untitled (snake hair)*, 2004
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB33
35. *Untitled (breasts)*, 2005
Watercolor and pencil on paper, RB34
36. *Untitled (rain man)*, 2005
Watercolor, pencil and ink on paper, RB31
37. *Untitled (blooming man)*, 2004
Ink on paper, RB32
38. *Untitled (white forest)*, 2005
Ink on paper, RB20
39. *Untitled (snakes grow)*, 2005
Ink on paper, RB21
40. *Untitled (pink bird)*, 2004
Watercolor on paper, RB35
41. *Untitled (rolling tree)*, 2004
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB36

42. *Untitled (fluid collector)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB38
43. *Untitled (stilts)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB39
44. *Untitled (bird kiss)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB37
45. *Untitled (supported)*, 2004
Ink on paper, RB40
46. *Untitled (the lake)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB48
47. *Untitled (wheelchair)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB49
48. *Untitled (visionary)*, 2005
Pencil, watercolor and ink on paper, RB22
49. *Untitled (the drink)*, 2006
Watercolor, pencil and ink on paper, RB23
50. *Untitled (the nipple)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB56
51. *Untitled (full circle)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB55
52. *Untitled (cloud man)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB24
53. *Untitled (temptations)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB25
54. *Untitled (sad girl)*, 2003
Watercolor on paper, RB26
55. *Untitled (the hanging)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB27
56. *Untitled (bird lady)*, 2005
Watercolor, pencil and ink on paper, RB19
57. *Untitled (the gray heads)*, 2002
Ink on paper, RB54
58. *Untitled (monkey)*, 2004
Watercolor on paper, RB44
59. *Untitled (your imagination)*, 2004
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB60
60. *Untitled (holding hands)*, 2005
Watercolor and ink on paper, RB30

Works on Paper 2000–2010: Featuring Drawings from the Bernardi Collection

Balint Zsako's artworks depict a fantastical world populated by forms and figures pulled from his subconscious. The artist has built a growing body of work that includes drawing, watercolour and collage. The common denominator is a passion for the human figure. He doesn't begin with a preconceived notion of what he wishes to draw exactly, but over the years has developed a visual vocabulary that has evolved to include a recurring inventory of figurative, avian and arborescent imagery.

Produced during the last decade in Toronto and Brooklyn respectively, these works seem as if they could just as easily have been created during an earlier epoch. While the drawings and collages suggest the precedent of the Surrealist movement in the 1920s and 30s, they also elicit the elegant simplicity and flattened perspectives commonly found in medieval manuscripts, Inuit drawing, printmaking and folk art.

The drawings in particular exhibit an ahistoric quality. Peopled by ecstatic lovers, convulsive bodies and unnamed menageries they form the core of Zsako's art practice. His figures are mythic and elusive suggesting Jungian archetypes: the anima and animus captured in rich washes of yellow, magenta and green. In some cases, the bodies depicted are transparent and we can see their internal organs. Others are intangible and formless—aspects of the *informe*.¹

As such, forms merge and metastasize effortlessly. Bodies are bound using string, branches or scaffolding and bolstered by natural and artificial limbs. Lovers fornicate shamelessly with each other and multiple partners. Trees germinate inside of human orifices and circulatory systems. Gender and species become intertwined. Zsako's images are Rabelaisian in their disposition, united by their fecundity and excess.

Images teeter on the edge of transgression. Eroticism replaces rationalism, and this brings to mind the writings of George Bataille. For Bataille, *the erotic is specifically the point of tension between the animal body and the civilized body*, a notion pertinent to Zsako's work.² It suggests a desire to push the limits of socially prescribed notions of gender, sexuality and species in an attempt to explore a more fundamental state of being. Bataille refers to this as the *domain of the moment*, a state in which we have not yet been civilized nor separated from our base instincts and desires.³ If this unfettered state implies a derangement of the senses—a condition of consciousness once obsessively pursued by the Surrealists—it also elicits a state of ebullience, what Bataille describes as *an instinctive tendency towards divine intoxication which the rational world of calculation cannot bear*.⁴

While Zsako may court the irrational he remains fundamentally optimistic.⁵ In spite of the seeming chaos in his work everything is connected; birds, clouds, stones, branches and bodies are united, though often perilously so. Natural and artificial worlds are symbiotically bound together. Underlying the absurd and the obscene is an essential core of balance, connectedness and union. The artist populates his mytho-poetic Eden with exaggerated hopes, fears, dreams and desires. Life is propped up on fragile branches. Figures embrace intimacy. Blood and fluids bloom. Fragmented limbs fly.

Zsako makes metaphoric scaffolding out of his own imaginings. Taken in full, the works on paper suggest a cosmology in which the artist walks a tender line between eroticism and the grotesque, and in the process executes a precarious balancing act.

Ivan Jurakic

Endnotes

1. Paul Hegarty, *As Above So Below: Informe/Sublime/Subject; The Beast at Heaven's Gate*, Andrew Hussey (editor), Editions Rapodi B.V., Amsterdam–New York, NY, 2006, p. 75.
2. Paul Smith, *Bataille's Erotic Writings and the Return of the Subject; On Bataille: Critical Essays*, Albany State University of New York Press, 1995, p. 233.
3. *George Bataille—Essential Writings*, Michael Richardson (translator), Sage Publications Ltd., London, 1998, p. 51-52.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Robert Enright, *Interview; Balint Zsako Drawings from the Bernardi Collection*, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, 2008

Artist Biography

Balint Zsako (Hungary, 1979) has exhibited his work nationally and internationally. He has recently exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto; Galerie de L'UQAM, Montreal; Kenderdine Art Gallery, Saskatoon; d.u.m.b.o. arts center, New York; Fringe Gallery, Hong Kong and MuveszetMalom, Szentendre, Hungary. His work is in several public and private collections including MONA, Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania; Glenbow Museum, Calgary; Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt Collection, Toronto and Seneca College, Toronto. His first monograph *Balint Zsako: Drawings from the Bernardi Collection*, was published in 2008 by MOCCA, Toronto. He is the recipient of numerous grants and awards, including grants from the Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts and the du Maurier Arts Council. He lives and works in New York City.
www.balintzsako.com

List of Works

Heads

Untitled 1–48
Mixed media, 2003/2004
55.8 x 76.2 cm
Collection of the artist

Collages

Untitled 1–12
Collage, 2008
12.7 x 17.78 cm/20.32 x 25.4 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Katharine Mulherin Contemporary Art Projects, Toronto

Sketchbooks

Untitled
Mixed media, 2000–2010
Various sizes
Collection of the artist

Images: (cover): *Untitled (Loops Woman)*, 2005; (interior from left to right): *Untitled (Man in Tree)*, 2008; *Untitled (Twins)*, 2005; *Untitled (Carried Away)*, 2005; *Untitled (Heads)*, 2003/2004; *Untitled (Meat)*, 2008; *Untitled (Suicide)*, 2008.