

Grief & Gratitude

A CELEBRATION OF KATHY BUDD'S ART

Grief & Gratitude

A CELEBRATION OF KATHY BUDD'S ART

TYLER ART GALLERY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, OSWEGO
OCTOBER 21ST – NOVEMBER 19TH, 2011

The catalog and exhibition are dedicated to Kathy's family and the many students and friends whose lives she touched.

Haleh Niazmand, Guest Curator

Dr. Lisa Seppi, Catalog Essayist

Dr. Maureen G. Shanahan, Catalog Essayist

Michael Flanagan, Assistant Gallery Director

Cynthia Clabough, Art Department Chairperson

These former Kathy Budd students have generously lent artwork for the exhibition:

Heather Bivens

Dawn Exton

Michael Lupa

Melissa Newcomb

The catalog and exhibition are supported by
ARTSwego, Auxiliary Services and SAEC/Student Association

*In keeping with Kathy's concern for the environment, this catalog is printed on "green" paper.

A STATEMENT FROM THE CURATOR:

Never before in history has tackling the issues related to exploitation been more pressing. In reality, as collective members of this world, we have been rushing to a crossroad, where the path that we take will determine our final fate. Can we as a global community think beyond self-interest, no matter how inconvenient? Do we have the will to change our personal attitudes on consumption? Do we have the passion to mobilize and hold the institutions of power accountable? Do we have the courage to end our collective denial and face what the future may hold for our children? Are we on the brink of total annihilation of our habitat, or can we generate the will to transform our environmental, social, and economic conduct before it is too late? These are just a few of the questions one may ask when observing Kathy Budd's provocative artworks.

In an era when much of the dominant art is preoccupied with the creation of spectacles, and the artistic productions have relinquished their centrality to cultural responsibility, fewer creative people have dared to join the margins of socially accountable artists. However, for over a decade and a half, Kathy Budd's art has brought to viewers' attention the truth about work and exploitation within social and environmental frameworks. In her art, Budd narrated the rigors of life for those who shoulder the work of producing our mass-consumed goods. She presented the ignored

labor of a housewife, the impoverished workers of the global economy, the hardships of both blue-collar and white-collar workers, and the commercial exploitation of honeybees to near extinction. In her artistic productions, Budd embraced the recycling of industrial waste and discarded tools, modifying them and utilizing their history to create allegorical narratives, while also taking part in reducing our environmental impact by turning waste into thought-provoking and emotionally charged artworks.

My curatorial selection for this exhibit has been narrowed by the availability of the pieces and the feasibility of displaying them together in the limited space, and so does not reflect the complete depth and breadth of Kathy Budd's art. I have also included four pieces of art created by her former students that demonstrate close threads to Budd's artistic interests.

My choice of title for this exhibition reflects the artist's immense regard and gratitude for the working individuals, while simultaneously bringing to bear their cruel conditions. On a personal level, this title also echoes my own appreciation for Kathy Budd's contribution as an artist and a colleague, while grieving her loss as a close friend and a remarkable human being. Finally, I am thankful to the Department of Art at SUNY Oswego for giving me the opportunity to curate this exhibition and to Michael Flanagan for facilitating access to the necessary material and contacts.

Haleh Niazmand
August 2011

Threshold (2003)
*Steel, Latex, Honey, Transparencies,
Petri Dishes, Magnifying Glass
Dimensions Variable*





Part cultural criticism, part protest, my art seeks to lay bare unrecognized and undervalued aspects of the production cycles of commonly used consumer goods, to reconnect my audience with the human realities embedded within these production cycles, and to inspire viewers/ consumers to act on their understanding of these realities. Sweatshop practices, corporate slavery, outsourcing, labor-related stereotypes, invisible and exploited workers, and the complexity of laborer and consumer relationships with the production cycle are topics I have addressed throughout the past ten years.

Driven by Susan Willis' cultural critique in *A Primer For Daily Life*, I choose to relate the mundane details of a specific worker category—the metal shavings produced by a machinist in the course of her routine daily work, for example—to the worker's near-invisible role, both within the production cycle that uses the tiny machined product she produces and within our society as a blue-collar worker.

I examine the complexity of work social structures and the unseen lives of laborers by drawing parallels between beehives and human society. Referring to the work of Karl von Frisch on bee communication and to the philosophy of Rudolf Steiner, my work on bees attempts to reveal a spiritual anonymity within the construction of work relationships and inherent to a closer connection between production and consumption.

I create each piece with found objects and materials that are connected through their history of use in the everyday experience of work. By using tools, garments, techniques and waste from production processes within and outside the home, I seek to recognize the people whose lives they were a part of and to question our society's perceptions of work and consumption, and the values we place on these.

Using a visual approach to social challenge inspired by Alfredo Jaar, my current works link iconic corporate logos with representations of anonymizing work tasks to question the labor practices of American-based corporations throughout the world in their production of consumer goods primarily for American sale and consumption.

Kathy A. Budd

ARTIST STATEMENT

Two main activities dominate both our daily lives and our culture as Americans—work and consumption. Work enables consumption, but rarely of the products of our labor: few Americans consume products resulting from our personal labor, and in general, we are dramatically disconnected from production of the consumer goods we buy and use. Nor is the labor of many Americans—particularly those in blue-collar occupations—directly recognized as a valuable commodity, other than through periodic paychecks. Yet we are all defined socially largely by our work and our consumption.

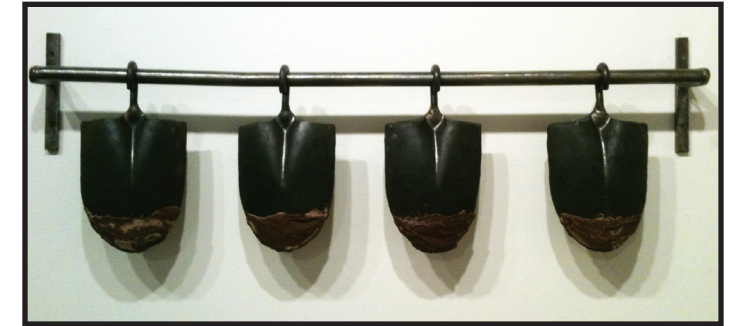
My art explores this obscuration of commodity production processes by social and economic disconnective forces. Cultural uncoupling of what one does (work) from what one consumes (products) through specialization, stratification and other “civilizing” processes has historically defined “advanced” industrial cultures. Thus, exposure to materials and tasks that threaten to reveal these hidden processes is viewed unfavorably by the ever-more-sophisticated American consumer. And with our products increasingly being produced in “developing” nations by workers who can purchase little of what they produce for wealthier consumers, we export this pattern along with many less desirable facets of the production process.

Title. Name. Position. How we identify ourselves to others is the first demarcation of one's adult identity. One's rank, job title, or position becomes an important signifier of that identity, but it also denotes status or lack thereof and consequently a sense of individual and collective cultural value. Artists, it seems to me, are called upon to engage in a self-critical scrutiny of their identity (as well as the society around them) that is oftentimes ongoing and requires a degree of self-naming or self-fashioning that most of us never approach or become aware of. Unlike many other professions where one's right to adopt a particular title comes with employment, when does an artist achieve the necessary prerequisites to call himself or herself an artist? Is it upon completion of their MFA degree, their first juried exhibition, academic post, or is it a self-proclaimed mindset, a calling or sense of duty that occurs long before the three events just mentioned?

Artist. Kathy Budd. Professor. Or, should the list read: Professor. Kathy Budd. Artist? As a professor of art at SUNY Oswego for eleven years, Budd was engaged with the task of training artists – training students to think of themselves as artists. She was also committed to creating socially involved and globally conscious individuals. As an artist Budd's own sculptural work examined cultural attitudes and assumptions about work titles, specifically the gender bias and the racial or economic stereotypes associated with certain jobs or names like blue-collar or white-collar worker. She scrutinized labor practices and corporate social responsibility. Her work asks the viewer to contemplate how their own consumption negatively impacts the environment and the larger global community. Kathy Budd's work has a message and it is critical by nature, but it is not a stridently “political” art. Back in 1996 she stated, “I'm not a politician, I'm an artist. My work is like planting seeds and making people think.”¹ Her work did just that; it beseeched us to ask questions, to think and engage in our own form of self-critical and socially considerate introspection. As one exhibition reviewer noted back in 1996, “the works of Kathy Budd were one of the few islands of meaning in a sea of prettiness.”²

From the very beginning of her career Budd's work dealt with the blue-collar worker, skilled and unskilled members of the working class who perform manual labor for an hourly wage such as building and construction, maintenance and manufacturing jobs, electricians and plumbers, and mechanics to name a few. Through works like *Payday* (2002), first exhibited

in 1996, Budd addressed the culturally engrained attitudes and ideas we have about certain types of work and the values and assumptions placed upon those manual jobs and the people who do them. “I'm interested in addressing what it actually means to be considered blue-collar or white-collar in our culture and how it actually feels,” said Budd, “how we're expected to dress, what gender, race or class we're expected to be, and who people think we are because of the work that we do.”³



Payday (2002)
Cast Iron, Found Hooks, Steel, Chocolate
56 3/4" x 18" x 5 1/2"

Although the current version of *Payday* contains only four shovel blades, the sculpture was comprised of five standardized, cast iron shovel blades hung from found hooks in a linear row along a steel bar. The tips of each shovel are coated with chocolate. The five shovel blades allude to the five days of the workweek while the chocolate stands for the reward for that work, a paycheck. As Budd explained back in 1996, “I've worked labor jobs on and off my whole life. It's a way to survive and feed yourself. Your payday is an important day, the only day that really matters with that kind of job.”⁴

The industrial and manual workers *Payday* references are historically a lower socio-economic class of individuals with minimal education, typically a high school diploma and/or trade school. Born in 1965 in Waconia, Minnesota, Budd grew up in a working class household. Budd's father died of cancer before she was a year old. As a consequence her widowed mother raised her and her two siblings. Budd went on to receive her BFA from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis in 1990 and her MFA in sculpture at the University of Washington in 1996. Academic credentials aside, between her upbringing and her studio practice (woodworking, foundry work, sewing, starching, metal casting, and welding) Budd's interest in and commitment to speaking about the blue collar worker went beyond topical material to make art about. It was who she was.

The same personal connection and commitment to her subject matter was also demonstrated in her choice of materials, which often times were chosen because they related to the working class. Budd frequently worked with common and found materials, taking into account the significance of the materials in terms of history and memory. Budd stated, "Materials possess histories"⁵ and as such they are connected to place, the everyday lives of actual people, and work. In *Elizabeth's Field* (1995), Budd used a found metal pitchfork, cloaked it in coarse fabric and cast iron, and presented it as if being dragged across a bed of wheat flour. In works like this one and *93 Cups* (2001), she targets women and their work.

Elizabeth's Field is dedicated to strong working class women, rural farmers responsible for feeding their families by toiling in the fields and in the kitchen. Similar associations appear in *93 Cups* where copper and tin gelatin dessert molds (more popularly known as Jell-O molds) reference a woman's work in the kitchen, while the wheelbarrow they're used to create references work outside the home in the yard or fields. In sculptures like these it's the mundane details associated with a particular kind of work that Budd wanted to emphasize through materials, like the drudgery of being a homemaker. Vintage Jell-O molds, now kitschy collectibles, harken back to stereotypical gender roles epitomized by idealized images of happy homemakers once perpetuated in women's magazines like *Ladies Home Journal* and *McCalls*, that is until Betty Friedan's influential 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*.

In *Safety First* (2000 and 2008), Budd's targets switched from blue-collar workers to white-collar workers, largely salaried, educated professionals who perform administrative, managerial, or office work and are required to wear white collared dress shirts. Comprised of thirty starched white oxford shirt collars

Elizabeth's Field (1995)
Found Pitchfork, Cast Iron, Flour
64" x 17 1/2" x 1 1/4"



93 Cups (2001)
Jell-O Molds,
Wheelbarrow Frame, Hardware
50" x 27 1/2" x 24 3/4"



Safety First (2000)
Oxford Shirt Collars, Starch
13" x 11" x 2"

hung on a large hook, *Safety First* of 2000 "alludes to the yoke of the white collar worker who often takes his or her work home and can scarcely get away from the office."⁶ The thirty collars or yokes reference the thirty days in the month. Although in reality white-collar workers aren't required to work thirty days, Budd wanted to account for the impact of layoffs and similar job concerns that might cause one to bring their work home on the weekend. The shirt collars are layered on top of one another creating an inverted u-shape. Starched, stacked and connected they symbolically read like stacks of unfinished paperwork that one is hesitant to leave behind on their desk at the weeks end. Budd similarly addresses the white-collar workers dilemma in *Always* (2006). In this work Budd creates a wood sculpture of the word "always" and covers it with screen printed labels -- t-shirt tags -- alluding to the middle class worker who opts to work seven days a week out of fear or necessity, not drive or desire.

As in *Elizabeth's Field* and *93 Cups*, here too in *Safety First* and *Always* the materials themselves hold significance. As Budd stated, "As an artist, I choose to work with found objects and materials that are connected through their history to use in the everyday experience of work. By using found tools, garments from labor or professional positions, and raw materials from jobs in and outside the home, I hope to recognize the people whose lives they were a part of . . ."⁷ The repetitive layers of neatly folded, stiff white collars in *Safety First*, the official attire of mostly male white collar desk workers back in the early twentieth century, also speaks to conformity in the work place where one must look and act the part, and cultural stereotypes about the kind of people who hold these jobs. One's appearance, creating the impression they belong, becomes as important as their credentials for employment. One dresses and acts the part because that is the cultural

expectation. But oftentimes society and employers don't consider the individual, the real life circumstances of the individual doing the job. As Budd stated, with the "expectations about the work we do come the values we place on it. We place value on product, on position, on labor itself. These values are often predefined by our cultural expectations."⁸ Budd's work compels us to think beyond the job, the stereotype, the work itself, to consider the real life individual, the human being, whether they be male or female, desk worker or manual laborer, educated or uneducated, and the professional toll work may or may not have upon the quality of one's personal life.



Nikified (2007)
Flexiglass, Laminated World Maps, Eyelets, Shoelaces
91" x 31"

In several works Budd goes beyond the worker to target labor itself and big corporations. In *Nikified* (2007), a large seven-foot long plexi-glass sculpture shaped like the well-known Nike sportswear logo is reversed and laminated with world maps interconnected by vibrantly colored shoe laces. Nike has been criticized for using sweatshops, factories in overseas countries where the working conditions are considered dangerous, exposing workers to harmful materials and unsafe working conditions that include long hours for extremely low pay by U.S. standards. The criticism of Nike's practices reached an apex in the 1990s when the company was accused of using child labor. In the 2000 BBC report by Paul Kenyon, which uncovered instances of both child labor and poor working conditions in a factory Nike and the Gap contracted in Cambodia, and again in Christine Fabric's 2005 publication, *Nike's Use of Child Labor*, these claims were further substantiated. Amidst mounting public protest and scrutiny, Nike installed a code of conduct for its factories and began attempting to audit the overseas factories it contracted to produce its sportswear apparel and equipment.

There is no doubt that *Nikified* is a response to the critical coverage regarding Nike's longtime use, if not exploitation of cheap labor in places like Indonesia, China, Taiwan, India, Pakistan, and Vietnam. It responds to global concerns regarding unfair labor practices in free trade

zones, the outsourcing of production to locations where labor is cheaper, as well as corporate social responsibility. It also addresses commodity fetishism in America, where products and brand name logos are valued more than people. When Andy Warhol created *Marilyn Diptych* back in 1962, he presented the recently deceased Hollywood glamour girl in a diptych format, the format previously reserved for Christian religious altarpieces, and in doing so suggested that Americans worshipped celebrity icons, not saints, spiritual leaders, or others whose work contributed to improving society. Not only did Americans worship movie stars like Monroe and athletes like Joe DiMaggio, but they worshipped the mass media manipulated image of the person, their public persona, for superficial qualities like glamour and beauty, superstardom and financial success, not the real individual or the virtues describing their character. Warhol's ironic commentary about American culture in the 1960s is echoed in Budd's *Nikified* in that it questions, as Budd stated, "the labor practices of American-based corporations for the production of consumer goods through the use of corporate logos, which are now seen as cultural icons."⁹

Not that long after Warhol's created *Marilyn Diptych*, Guy Debord published *Society of the Spectacle* in 1967 in which he argued that any kind of authentic experience to modern social living had been replaced with representation, that "being" had declined "into having" and having into merely "appearing."¹⁰ According to Debord, it begins with the "economy's domination of all social life" and culminates with real genuine activity, living, relationships, and human interactions being replaced with the spectacle, the image.¹¹ Celebrities or "media stars" he wrote, "are spectacular representations of living human being, distilling the essence of the spectacle's banality into images of possible roles." Being a star means specializing in the seemingly lived or the "falsification of life."¹² In a similar vein the semiotician Jean Baudrillard examined the cultural authority and aura added to objects by advertising, which in turn encouraged consumers to purchase products as aids to one's personal identity and value.¹³ The consumer product confers status. The consumer of Nike products assumes the status and athletic prowess of the various athletes Nike sponsors, like Michael Jordan, or university sports teams. The object denotes prestige and worth. Moreover, the individual wearing Nike shoes is more important than the Cambodian factory worker producing them, the latter of which cannot afford to purchase the

products they produce. By redirecting our attention to the worker, Budd asks us to consider labor itself, the worker not the product, as a “valuable commodity.”¹⁴

The monumental scale of Budd’s Nike logo, mounted at eye level, along with the stunning red, green, and blue shoelaces and colorful glistening maps, compels us to join in the worship of this brand name logo, this icon of consumer culture, this modern fetish. But slowly our idolization begins to wane as we realize the logo is reversed and the world maps that could signify power and wealth, might also signify global exploitation, self-serving capitalist arrogance, and an industry that sponsors the valuation of material possessions and brand names – titles -- over people. And if the viewer is sensitive to debates about the commodification of art where aesthetic value is subordinated to commercial value and market sales, debates that began in the 1970s and resulted in what Lucy Lippard referred to as the “dematerialization of the art object,”¹⁵ they would further understand Budd’s commitment to examining how we, as a society, assign cultural value to titles, things, and jobs. As Budd stated in 1996 after her MFA show, “Historically, it’s often the case that art is driven by market value. There is an audience that buys art, and corporations that buy art. The artist is making a choice between selling and not selling.”¹⁶ For Budd, creating meaningful art was more important than creating artwork that focused solely on visual aesthetics or beauty that would appease the popular art market. She dealt with cultural concepts surrounding work and labor, titles and status, and through a subtle chain of ideas and images sought to elicit cerebral and emotional responses from a society that doesn’t always want to be asked to think deeply about our values and ideals. In a way Budd epitomizes Ezra Pound’s assessment of artists back in 1934, “Artists are the antennae of our race, but the bull-headed many will never learn to trust their great artists.”¹⁷ Budd’s artwork served as a social sensor offering us views into ourselves. So, rather than ignore the message like Pound’s bull-headed many, shut up, sit down, and listen.



Herding the Silenced (2004)
Altered Table, Cast Iron, Cast Bronze, Salt
31 1/2" x 54" x 29 1/2"

¹ Doug Collins, “The Meaning of a Day’s Work: Not Just Another Pretty Sculpture,” *The Washington Free Press*. (Number 23, September/October, 1996), 25.

² Collins, “The Meaning of a Day’s Work,” 25.

³ Kathy Budd, Artist’s Statement, 2003.

⁴ Collins, “The Meaning of a Day’s Work,” 25.

⁵ Jared Beckel, “Blue collar workers subject of Kathy Budd’s art exhibit,” *The Pirates Log* (March 21, 2008), n.p.

⁶ Amanda Pierre, “Gallery Subversive addresses current social issues,” *Des Moines Register*, 2004, 19.

⁷ Kathy Budd, Artist’s Statement, 2003.

⁸ Kathy Budd, Artist’s Statement, 2003.

⁹ Kathy Budd, Artist’s Statement, 2008.

¹⁰ Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 16.

¹¹ Debord, *Society*, 12-24.

¹² Debord, *Society*, 38-45.

¹³ See Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (St. Louis, MO: Telos Press, 1981); Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (The Body, In Theory: Histories of Cultural Materialism (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

¹⁴ Kathy Budd, Artist’s Statement, 2008.

¹⁵ See Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973).

¹⁶ Collins, “The Meaning of a Day’s Work,” 25.

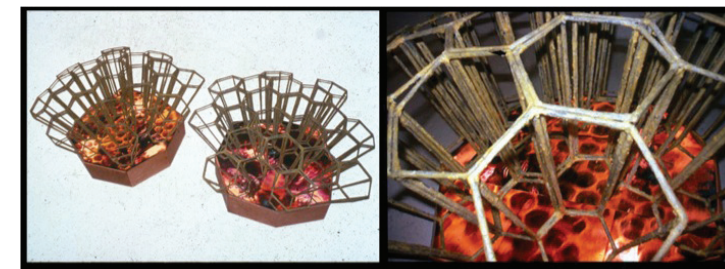
¹⁷ Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (New York: New Directions, 1934), 73.

“KATHY BUDD: SWEETS, PAY, LOVE”

By Maureen G. Shanahan

Kathy Budd’s work deals with labor and labor conditions in the global market, from the child worker abused by modern forms of slavery to the hierarchical structures of the socio-economic order to the cancer-ridden throat choked from speech. Her perspective is that of a working class kid grown up to be a first world artist, a citizen and critic of the nation that is still the world’s dominant military and economic actor. Her gaze casts a critical eye on consumption and oppression without resorting to didacticism. Her style is conceptual, often minimalist, metaphoric and highly allusive. Her art often functions as a voice for the voiceless and at times a Ginsbergian howl against the destruction of human potential and the environment. This exhibition is a commemoration and tribute to Kathy and to her work. This essay recognizes the historical context and material conditions of her life, while acknowledging that the meanings generated by art often exceed or do not match the artist’s intent or biography and are, instead, contingent upon multiple social, political, linguistic, psychological and other contexts. Despite resonances between Kathy’s art and her tragic early death on December 22, 2010, due to complications arising from alcoholism and diabetes, we should exercise caution in interpreting Kathy’s work primarily through the lens of her suffering. And yet the productive Kathy Budd, whose work deals with consumption, sugar, addictions and diabetes, may provide lessons, consolation, or even a voice for the Kathy we lost.

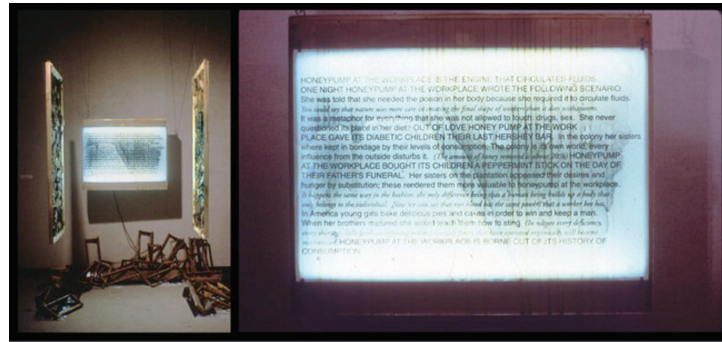
Kathy Budd was born and raised in a working class family by a single mother; her father died when she and her two siblings were toddlers. She developed an artistic practice arising from craft and blue collar practices: sewing, metalsmithing, woodworking. Her artmaking engages with assumptions, expectations and stereotypes about class categories and types of labor. She stated: “I’m interested in addressing what it actually means to be considered blue-collar or white-collar in our culture and how it actually feels – how we’re expected to dress, what gender, race or class we’re expected to be, and who people think we are because of the work that we do.” She used found objects and tools with the aim of unsettling these categories. She sought to demystify the commodity fetish by calling attention to its labor histories and by ascribing it a kind of agency: “Materials possess histories,” she claimed, and “they speak with their familiarities and estrangements.” In making such a claim, Budd de-centers the Cartesian subject and foregrounds the object’s uncanny powers.



Work Social Structure (2005)
Steel, Digital Transparencies, Plexiglass,
Beeswax, Light Box
46" x 45" x 31"

In *Spoonings* (2001), *Threshold* (2003), *Labors of the Virgin Brood* (2004), and *Work Social Structure* (2005), Kathy Budd turns to honey and the beehive to think about labor and social relations. The beehive is a longstanding metaphor for an ideal society, while honey and beeswax often stand for sweetness and productivity possible with an efficient division of labor. In 1840, the caricaturist George Cruickshank first created *The British Beehive*, a lithograph illustrating and justifying the rigid social hierarchy of Great Britain, with the queen and constitutional monarchy at top, followed by the houses of Parliament sustained by democratic principles, which are in turn built upon rungs of learned professions, tradesmen and unskilled laborers layered according to class status, all of which are undergirded by the army and navy. Absent and thus disavowed, of course, is Britain’s global colonial system extending from India to Africa. The beehive continues to serve as a powerful model. It has been an architectural paradigm for modernist architects from Gaudi to Le Corbusier, and researchers in artificial intelligence have turned to honeybees for their problem-solving abilities. The beehive can stand for one person’s utopia as in the Cruickshank’s vision of the British Empire or another’s dystopia, exemplified by Victor Erice’s haunting film about Francoist Spain, *The Spirit of the Beehive* (1973). In Kathy Budd’s interpretations, the beehive is sometimes a metaphor for desire, curiosity, and human possibility. In *Threshold*, petri dishes embedded with text and filled with honey tumble out of a cornucopia. A magnifying glass lies alongside two of the petri dishes. The text describes an experiment showing that bees have a “threshold of acceptance” before a sweet solution is sweet enough for them to drink, and they have a “threshold of perception” based on their sense of taste compared to humans who rely on sight. What is sweet drives our curiosity, our desire to taste, to organize, to live, but it must be sweet enough. Kathy’s installation offers the human viewer a magnifying glass, the

naturalist's tool, to cast a curious and desiring gaze upon the honeyed text. A honey stirrer entices you to taste. Where *Threshold* takes the viewer inward into analysis, introjection and ingestion, *Work Social Structure* offers fantasies of construction and replication. *Work Social Structure* uses a light box image of a magnified wax honeycomb as a base out of which sprouts conical steel hexagons, as though inviting the viewer to become the bee and continue the construction of the hive outward into the gallery space.



Labors of the Virgin Brood (2004)
Light Box, Duratrans, Plexiglass, Honeycomb,
Wood, Hive Screens, Honey
Collaborative work with artist Matthew Friday

In *Labors of the Virgin Brood*, Kathy Budd collaborated with Matthew Friday, formerly of SUNY Oswego and now at New Paltz, to create an installation organized around signs of social collapse. Three hanging panels configured like three walls float above piles of abandoned rectangular beehive frames dripping with honey. The central panel, a light box hung on the gallery wall, contains a text covered in crystallized honey. The text alludes to Joseph Beuys' *Honeypump at the Workplace* (1977), an installation project for documenta 6 that pumped over two tons of honey for the one hundred days of the exhibition. Yet, where Beuys' project is a metaphor for a potentially utopian social structure based upon the energies and ideas generated at the documenta event, *Labors of the Virgin Brood* takes a dystopian view. In Budd and Friday's text, *Honeypump* is sign of toxic consumptions and addictions: "*Honeypump at the workplace* is the engine that circulates fluids. . . *Honeypump* was told that she needed the poison in her body. . . [and] gave its diabetic children their last Hershey bar." *Honeypump* is a kind of mechanical queen presiding over a collapsed pile of beehive frames and a non-reproductive "*virgin brood*," yet she teaches her young to sting, permitting revolutionary potential. As a sign of social collapse, the installation points to contemporary environmental disasters resulting from industrialized societies. In the past decade, scientists have raised the alarm about the worldwide phenomenon of the decline in honey-bee colonies, which are responsible for pollinating 70% of

the world most important food crops, a phenomenon attributed to habitat degradation, pesticides, air pollution, and parasites. Many of Kathy Budd's projects cast a critical gaze upon the hypocrisy and contradictions of our culture and history and our economic-social-military order. *Liberty* (1999), a sculpture of aluminum work overalls cast in the shape of a female body, invokes heroic imagery from U.S. history: Lady Liberty, the immigrant's welcome via New York harbor; and Rosie the Riveter, the World War II factory worker idealized by Norman Rockwell's 1943 Saturday Evening Post cover. Kathy *Liberty* is an un-idealized body, a small-breasted, wide-hipped figure, neither a toga-clad Roman goddess nor a modernized Michelangelesque prophet. The overalls cling like archaic wet drapery to reveal the nipples and the hollow of the navel, like the female worker whose body frequently becomes the object not of erotic desire and pleasure but sexual harassment or assault. Kathy's *Liberty* dismantles icons and iconic histories and functions as an interrogation into Roland Barthes'

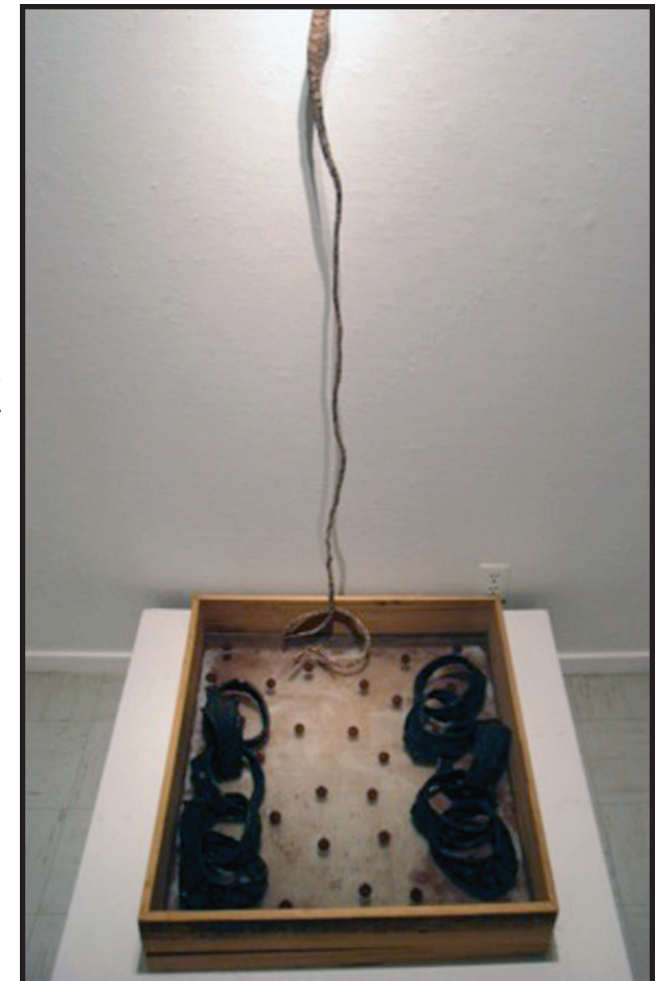
Liberty (1999)
Aluminum Cast



dictum about semiotics: the signifier is empty and the sign is full. The sculpture's aluminum body and riveted paper doll tabs resignifies the female body as vessel, making her a sign of mass production, re-production, and regeneration. Like an inorganic and infinitely replicating womb, aluminum, one of the most abundant metallic elements in the earth's crust and now used for aircraft, automobile, wire and drink cans, can be recycled indefinitely. It was first recycled in 1900, but aluminum recycling was extensively capitalized during Rosie the Riveter's historical time, World War II. Replication and seriality reoccur in *Payday* (2002), a row of five standardized steel shovel blades. Richly metaphoric, *Payday's* clothesline of shovels unites the non-mechanized labor of laundress, whose modern history is a tale of urban growth and global migration, with the ditchdigger, who spent the past century digging the trenches of the first mechanized war and the mass graves of many others. Aligned in a row like punch cards, the hanging shovels marry laundry and digging, their progeny the idiomatic expression: "being hung out to dry." The shovel tips mockingly transform the chocolate-dipped strawberry, a onetime luxury that is now a staple of the Sunday brunch in the U.S., suggesting a sweet reward at the end of pay day. But the linguistic associations generated by the installation (and Kathy's other chocolate-themed work) tell us otherwise.

Kathy's protest against unpaid and un-free labor caused her to respond to reports of child slavery in the production of chocolate. In *Clandestine* (2002), a wood crate, like a pauper's coffin, frames an anguished African face, a spectral image made of cocoa and overlaid with slave shackles and a fish-hooked piece of bar chocolate. A UNICEF report in 1998 and a Tulane University report a decade later documented abusive labor practices including 80 to 100 hour work weeks, daily beatings, little food, and no education. As a result, Hershey came under scrutiny for the abusive practices of its chocolate suppliers. But a hundred years earlier the focus was on London-based Cadbury Brothers, the hypocrisy of its Quaker values, humanitarian policies, and Anti-Slavery Society members. Cadbury has since become both a model of "fair-trade" and the basis for Roald Dahl's spectacle of sweets in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964). Last century's child laborers, documented in the U.S. by Lewis Hine's photographs of cotton mill workers, miners, cotton pickers, bootblacks, news boys, have not disappeared. They have merely been outsourced to other locations or new immigrants. As David Harvey has observed in his analysis of the current global economic crisis, capitalism never resolves its crises, it simply moves them around.

One hundred years ago, reform-era legislation introduced workplace mottos such as "Safety First," adopted as the title for Kathy Budd's *Safety First* (2000). One of her most successful pieces, it has been repeatedly exhibited including:



Clandestine (2002)
Wood, Cast Bronze, Cocoa Screen Print
on Plexiglass, Screen, Chocolate
25" x 27 1/2" x 6"

in 2004, at the Gallery Subversive in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in an exhibition entitled "A Question of Value" curated by Haleh Niazmand; and in 2006, in her duo exhibition with Jean Locey at the Munson Williams Procter Art Institute in Utica, New York, "An Occupational Hazard." Thirty starched white Oxford collars tightly compacted together and hung on a hook present an elegant minimalist design. Their compressed uniformity evokes both mass production in the factory context and rows of insurance agents in a 1960s

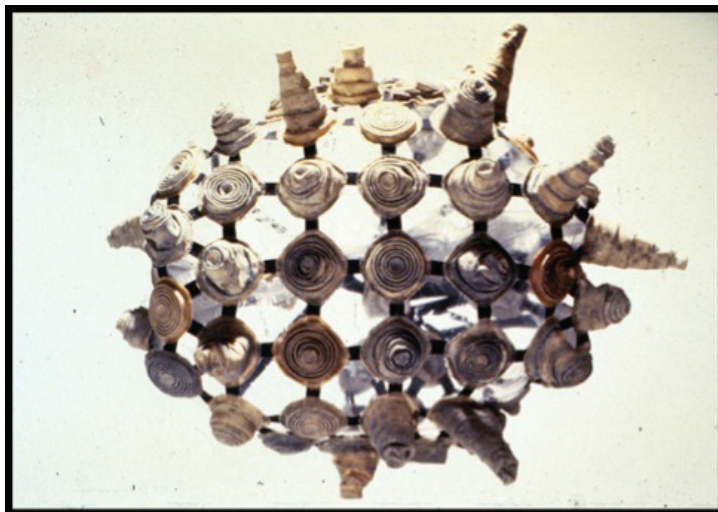
style office bull pen. The title's blue-collar factory labor caution applied to the white-collar context provokes interrogation into the more incremental and perhaps less life-threatening risks and safety precautions of office labor: bad posture, carpal tunnel syndrome, employment discrimination, thwarted creativity, conformity, alienation, depression.

Nikified (2007) sums up Kathy's concerns about unfree labor in the capitalist production system. An inverted Nike logo frames colorful shoelaces that tie together laminated world maps, signifying Nike's global resource, distribution and sales network. Since 1994, Nike, like many major corporations, has outsourced its commodity production to sites of cheap labor, often child labor, as documented in Christine Fabrics' Nike's Use of Child Labor (2005). As recently as 2006, Nike bought its soccer balls from a Pakistani company that used child labor. As in *Clandestine* (2002), one child's pleasure is another's pain. The message? Intoxicated with our phantasmagoria of Nikified consumer products, addicted to an supply of sweets and indifferent to the oppressive conditions of its production, erratic and criminally negligent in regulating the health of our collective body, the planet earth, we have already toxified our human relations and natural environment, creating "dead zones" and waste to last tens of thousands of years.

Yet several examples in the exhibition offer possible forms of redemption. In *Remains of the Day* (2005), recycled tire inner tubings and metal shavings create a beautiful gold, silver, red and black design. The title is borrowed from Kazuo Ishiguro's prize-winning novel about an English butler reflecting upon his life in the waning days of the British Empire. Turning to the residue of empire, the material waste of commodity production and the human substrata of the economic hierarchy, metamorphosis and beauty are possible.

Breathe (2003)

Used Respirator Filters, Latex, Elastic, Thread
29" x 29" x 27"



Remains of the Day (2005)

Rubber Innertubes, Metal Machinist Shavings, Thread, Grommets
76" x 54"

Breathe (2003) and *93 cups* (2001) suggest Kathy's wit. *Breathe* is a global grid of paper respirator masks as though the artist has taken a tip from OSHA regulations aimed at protecting workers from lung disease, cancer and other illnesses. *Breathe* comments on the crisis in air quality and proposes an absurdist solution, a makeshift air purification system to help a miniaturized earth breathe. In *93 cups*, Kathy brings together a mass of Jello molds piled into a wheelbarrow, as though heartland homemakers embittered by years of thankless desert-making are about to stage a rural protest and dump the tools of their craft onto the fields of tractor-driving spouses. Sweet-making can, it turns out, offer the revolutionary her protest tools.

Kathy Budd's work is informed by the economic orders and libidinal drives that motivate our formation of communities, our construction of hierarchies, consumption habits, and revolutionary potential. Her work assumes a global stage yet has local significance. The Oswego region is sustained by local orchards yet threatened by environmental disaster (the Nine Mile nuclear power plant), dependent on blue-collar labor and the chain stores of multinational corporations yet haunted by abandoned factories (Nestle, Coors) that outsourced their labor. The Oswego area, with its history of indigenous conquest and nation formation, runaway slaves and suffragettes may, like Kathy's work, offer clues to redemption, resistance and alternative communities. Sigmund Freud famously claimed that the communal life of human beings is contingent upon the compulsion to work and the power of love. With her work, Kathy Budd constituted community and enacted love.

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

93 Cups

2001, jello molds, wheelbarrow frame, hardware
50" x 27 1/2" x 24 3/4"

Always

2006, wood, screen printed labels, 46 1/2" x 26" x 5 1/2"

Clandestine

2002, wood, cast bronze, cocoa screen print on plexiglass, screen, chocolate, 25" x 27 1/2" x 6"

Elizabeth's Field

1995, found pitchfork, cast iron, flour,
64" x 17 1/2" x 1 1/4"

Herding the Silenced

2004, altered table, cast iron, cast bronze, salt
31 1/2" x 54" x 29 1/2"

Liberty

1999, cast aluminum,
49" h. with variable dimensions

Nikified

2007, plexiglass, laminated world maps, eyelets, shoelaces
91" x 31"

Payday

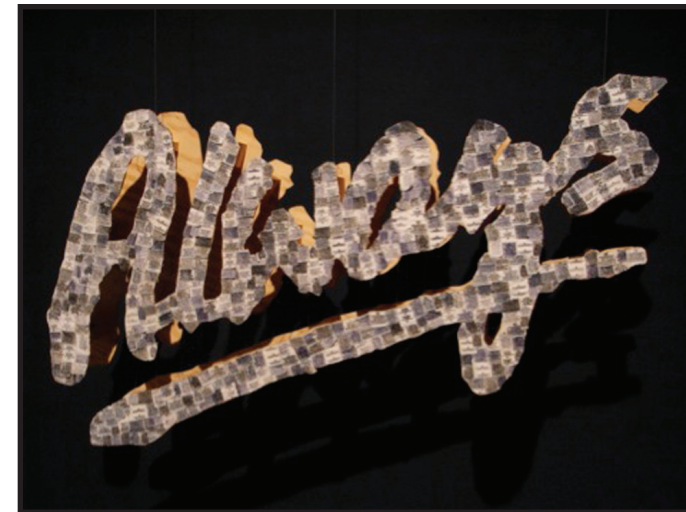
2002, cast iron, found hooks, steel, chocolate
56 3/4" x 18" x 5 1/2"
Remains of the Day, 2005, rubber inner tubes, metal machinist shavings, thread, grommets
89" x 55"

Threshold

2003, steel, latex, honey, transparencies, petri dishes, magnifying glass
dimensions variable

Work Social Structure

2005, steel, digital transparencies, plexiglass, beeswax, light box
46" x 41 1/2" x 24"



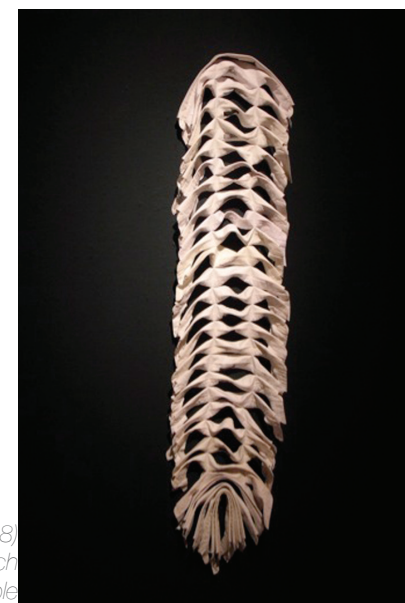
Always (2006)

Wood, Screen Printed Labels
47" x 26" x 5.5"



Craft Reproduction (2003)

Sawdust, Wood Glue, Hardware, Ink, Table
47" x 36" x 29"



Safety First 2 (2008)

Oxford Shirt Collars, Starch
Dimensions Variable

ARTWORK LENT BY KATHY BUDD'S FORMER STUDENTS

Heather Bivens, **Succulent Dress**, 2011, latex, 64 1/2" x 20"

Dawn Exton, **Metallic Steel Spike AR-15 Rifle Gun Essence**, 2010, altered toy gun, 7" x 28",

Michael Lupa, **Untitled**, 2011, cast bronze, 21 1/2" x 23"

Melissa Newcomb, **Untitled**, 2011, oil on canvas, 24" x 48"



DAWN EXTON

Kathy was very influential to me while at Oswego State University. While pursuing my BA in psychology, I was heavily involved in the arts program. I took her intro and mid-level art courses. One day I was talking to a fellow

sculptor who confided in me that she and Kathy had discussed my work and Kathy had told her that she did not know why I did not "drop whatever I was doing" and focus on art. At an early age, the art world was as daunting as ever and to have this genuine assurance from someone I respected so much is unaccountably instrumental in my later decision to focus on my art.

-Dawn Exton

After leaving Oswego, Dawn Exton went on to receive undergraduate and graduate degrees in psychology from the University of Buffalo. She also received a BFA with concentration in sculpture and design. Spending ten years in Buffalo, she was heavily involved in the arts community and in exhibiting her work in the area. She currently lives in the Chinatown section of New York and is the owner of The Lux Alchemist Handmade Art Jewelry Company where she sells her creations through vendors & boutiques throughout Manhattan & online at LuxAlchemy.com. Dawn is currently pursuing studio space and gallery representation in Manhattan.



HEATHER BIVENS

When I met Kathy, she changed the way I thought about art. She taught me the significance of making work that was driven by the ideas I am passionate about. She demonstrated through her own art the importance of remaining deliberate and artistically responsible. Through introducing me to the world of sculpture, she shared a larger picture of what art really was. I am a sculptor and teacher because of what Kathy taught me. I think about Kathy just about every time I make a mold or step into my classroom. I thank her for the permission she gave me to be the artist I am today and for believing in my ability to teach her lessons to other students.

-Heather Bivens

Heather Bivens received an MFA degree from Syracuse University in 2010 and is currently an adjunct instructor of art at Cazenovia College. Bivens works primarily with wearable sculpture, body art, digital imagery, installation and performance art. Her research interests include gender construction, identity, adornment, the female experience, myths and desire. Her current work consists of skin-like garments and body elements that are inspired by the seductive qualities of nature. These works explore our ability to produce false charm and the necessity to investigate the interstices of our physical and emotional needs.

I am so fortunate to have had Kathy Budd as my teacher, my mentor, and my friend. She taught me how to first be a craftsman and then to be an artist. Her teachings and her energy have guided me into the art world with skills above and beyond what I could have imagined; allowing me to enter the professional world with explosive enthusiasm and technical abilities. Although I feel a great loss with her passing, I am proud to have had Kathy in my life and the things that she has instilled in me I will carry on forever; passing along what she taught me to others throughout my artistic endeavors.

Michael Lupa received BFA and MA (2006) degrees from Oswego State. He lives in Hillsborough, North Carolina where he works as a sculptor both in ceramics and in metal casting. He also volunteers at the Liberty Arts Foundry, a not-for-profit organization that casts bronze sculpture and houses nine artists who also volunteer operating the Durham, North Carolina foundry. Michael also works as a contractor for Carolina Bronze Sculpture. Lupa's photograph recently appeared in Sculpture Magazine as he cast Tom Friedman's stainless steel sculpture Circle Dance while working with Polich Tallix Foundry.

MICHAEL LUPA



Student Work



MELISSA NEWCOMB

I reflect on my college experience very often as I currently teach in a college setting. Many of my art professors inspired me to experience and develop a passion for art in many mediums. I remember Kathy Budd as one of those professors that truly inspired me during my undergraduate experience at Oswego in sculpture. Taking Sculpture II in the foundry was completely out of my comfort zone as my strengths were in two-dimensional art. I knew I needed to take a course with Kathy before I graduated from Oswego or else I would have missed out on the full experience. Kathy Budd made my experience very comfortable through her unforgettable patience. I remember her guidance and words of encouragement as I overcame my anxiety in the course. I always admired Kathy Budd's energy, strength, and fearless nature. Kathy will never be forgotten for she taught me to be safe with the medium, strong, fearless, and most importantly patient.

-Melissa Newcomb

Melissa Newcomb is from Canandaigua, NY and I currently lives in Penn Yan. After receiving BFA and MA degrees at Oswego, she received an MFA degree from Rochester Institute of Technology. Melissa has served as an adjunct instructor at Finger Lakes Community College, Genesee Community College and Keuka College. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Art at Keuka College and continues to create and exhibit her artwork.