

**RECEPTION:**

October 30, 6pm-8pm

**GALLERY HOURS:**

Tu, We, Th, 12pm-7pm;

Su, 1pm-3pm

**GALLERY INFO:**

(609) 771-2198

111 Holman Hall

[www.tcnj.edu/~tcag](http://www.tcnj.edu/~tcag)



The College Art Gallery  
The College of New Jersey  
2000 Pennington Road, Box 7718  
Ewing, NJ 08628-0718

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Sponsored by the Department of Art, the School of Art, Media, & Music and the Committee for Cultural and Intellectual Community (CCIC) and made possible in part by the Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission through funding from the Mercer County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

This exhibit is a part of TCNJ's 2007-2008 program, "Religion, Culture and Identity." In addition to an interdisciplinary sequence of courses, this and the other events in the program highlight the evolution of personal and social identity as shaped by different global religions and their cultures, the varied expressions of religious experience in writings, art, film, and music, and its relation to other cultural, social, and political developments of the past and present. The events are co-sponsored by CCIC, the Religious Studies Committee, the School of Art, Media, & Music, and the School of Culture & Society.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

**PRESIDENT**

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Taras Pavlovsky

**DESIGN & LAYOUT**

Tom Gebauer

# ASSUMED IDENTITIES

OCTOBER 30 — DECEMBER 5, 2007

Robert Boyd | Coco Fusco | Jonathon Keats | Diane Nerwen  
Michael Oatman | Roxana Pérez-Méndez | Dulce Pinzón | Xiang Yang



AS PART OF TCNJ'S 2007-08 PROGRAM ON RELIGION, CULTURE & IDENTITY, THE ASSUMED IDENTITIES EXHIBITION EXAMINES ASSUMPTIONS AND ASSUMED ROLES. IT FEATURES WORK BY ARTISTS WHO DEVELOP PERSONAE, ALTER EGOS OR CHARACTERS (ACTUAL OR IMAGINED); EXPLORE MISCONCEPTIONS REGARDING IDENTITY; OR TAKE ON THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OTHER PROFESSIONS AS PART OF THEIR ART MAKING PROCESS.

*Operation Atropos*  
Coco Fusco



*Divine Taxonomy*  
Jonathan Keats



*The Great Yiddish Love*  
Diane Nerwen



In *The Virgin Collection*, Robert Boyd fuses icons and imagery adopted from the hooded garments of the Spanish Nazarenos and the KKK, Gap ads, misplaced neo-Nazi references to Pink Floyd, and wedding traditions and symbolism. The disconcerting result is a full-blown fashion collection and PR campaign featuring a hooded bridal ensemble modeled by the artist himself. Through biting humor and the use of mimicry, Boyd questions notions of purity and supremacy.

Coco Fusco's *Operation Atropos* documents the artist and her colleagues training to resist interrogation while becoming skilled interrogators themselves. The real life course, taught by former US military personnel, involved an immersive prisoner of war simulation including ambushes, strip searches, and brutal cross-examinations.

Using scientific standards and methodologies, Jonathon Keats attempts to determine God's place on the phylogenetic tree in *Divine Taxonomy*. To do so, Keats exposed cyanobacteria and fruit flies to continuous tape loops of prayers from the three major monotheistic religions. A control group from each species was exposed to talk radio. Dadaist in its' absurdity, Keats' piece is ultimately a thought experiment using extremes to determine "if faith and reason can peaceably coexist."

Set in Berlin and New York's Lower East Side, Diane Nerwen's *The Great Yiddish Love* stars the self-exiled Marlene Dietrich and her Nazi-endorsed replacement, Zarah Leander. Nerwen constructs a fictional love affair between the two women using appropriated footage from Hollywood and German Ufa films from the 1930s and 40s overlaid with audio from Yiddish films from the same era. The fabricated film confuses the original films' assumptions about the actresses themselves, the narratives, and their societies.

# ASSUMED IDENTITIES

*Achilles Standard*  
Michael Oatman



From the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew stories, Michael Oatman learned how to plaster cast footprints and police terms like *modus operandi* and *habeus corpus* ("have the body"). Inspired by detective work, *Achilles Standard* is a crime scene kit designed for "leaving" evidence rather than gathering it. By subverting the intent of this borrowed process, Oatman offers a poignant self-portrait suggesting the traces we each leave behind.

Roxana Pérez-Méndez's installation, *Encantada*, is a fictional construction of El Encanto, the tallest hotel in Puerto Rico. A symbol of all things new and shiny, El Encanto's dreamy façade is penetrated by the peepholes in a row of doors through which the hotel workers (played by the artist) are viewed in a disturbing mix of voyeurism and surveillance.

*Encantada*  
Roxana Pérez-Méndez



For Dulce Pinzón, the Mexican immigrant worker in New York is a perfect example of an unsung hero. *The Real Story of the Superheroes* series pays homage to these determined people who, without supernatural powers, withstand extreme labor conditions in order to help their families. In each documentary style photo, an immigrant at work is incongruously dressed as a superhero. The stark reality of the work environment is exaggerated in contrast with the playful costumes that, like their wearers, go unrecognized.

*The Real Story of the Superheroes*  
Dulce Pinzón



The threads on Xiang Yang's embroidered dual portrait, *Relationship (Red Desire)*, connect opposing images of Mao Zedong and Kim Jung Il. Via the intricate stitches and long stretches linking the two facing planes of the piece, Yang makes the political inheritance and "reincarnation" between the two Communist leaders literal - the viewer witnesses the metamorphosis from one man into the other.

Special thanks to Anita Allyn, Lex Bhagat, Ricardo Miranda, and Liselot van der Heijden for their creative input, introductions, and feedback. Thanks also to the Artist Pension Trust, Modernism and The Project for permitting and facilitating the exhibition of work by Robert Boyd, Jonathon Keats and Coco Fusco, respectively. Most of all, thanks to the artists for their enthusiastic embrace of the exhibition concept and their thought provoking work.

*Relationship (Red Desire)*  
Xiang Yang



Sarah Cunningham, Curator  
October 2007