

Colette: Femme Fatale, 1977. Blue Satin, personal objects, audio sounds made up of contemporary pop music. Outside the text of Sleeping Beauty.

## Colette

*this part must included*

### «I MISS SOME KIND OF ROMANTICISM»

Q: Is there some relation between the romantic themes you use in your art and your life?

A: Yes, of course. I live in that year 1977. I am part of this world which is not romantic at all and I miss some kind of Romanticism. By romanticism I don't mean mad, foolish kind of emotion, but I mean more balance of the intellect and emotion. We are moving too fast, and we don't know what we are doing in this age and everything seems to center around the mind, even art, the conceptual art, which I have nothing against and I feel for that too, but I think we are going to fall one way and it's time to bring up the emotion. That's why I sometimes dramatize, that's why I am very theatrical. Because just like in the play, to make a point, you have to be dramatic, you have to exaggerate the emotions, to make a public feel and to make the things clear. That's why my work is so emotional. But at the same time it is conceptual, it's too real. Even my life is exaggeration, the way I dress myself. Well it's nothing new, life and art being together. I live practically on the stage, my apartment is a stage, it's all covered with silk.

Q: In your works you often quote romantic themes. What do they represent to you and how do you use them?

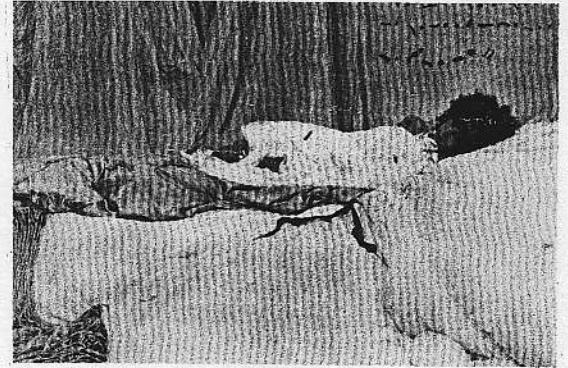
A: I use them in different times and so they have necessarily different meanings for me. The Homage to Delacroix (1970) was the first work of that kind. It's an imitation of Liberty leading people. It can be understood in different levels. First of all, it is for me the kind of image that I was talking about before. Delacroix was a romantic image, but at the same time he was misunderstood. He was not so crazy romantic, he was just trying to bring out the emotion to the surface. And also nostalgic reason, because I was born in Tunisia, and Delacroix one time went there. A lot of my influence comes from Tunisia, although I can't remember much. The image of Liberty is important for me too, because it was a woman. She symbolizes freedom, equality and liberty, the qualities women hardly had before. Another piece I have done is called «The Wake of Madame Récamier». It starts as an odalisque pose. I lay in the dark environment looking dead. All the women's movements are now involved in destroying the image of the woman just lying on the couch. That's also why I chose the title «The Wake of Madame Récamier». Here, there is a woman enclosed, and that is my interpretation of one being always in an enclosure, of one being repressed. I made an environment where I become a part of a box, that has something to do with human condition and specifically with the condition of women in our age. To create means to think and develop oneself in order to become free. As for the rest, I respect change, the only thing I don't

women are going to be aggressive. I understand the need for it, but I would like to be able to do feminine work. I express myself better with feminine material, feminine vision. Women are, as opposed to men, more emotional beings.

Q: Do you find some young artists in New York or in Europe who are influenced by you?

A: I see my influence in my use of romantic attributes, in the use of some materials, as satins, silk, lace, veils and also in my personal style of living. Lots of young women artists in New York have imitated my whole way of dressing and looking so that they can easily be mistaken for me.

Interview with Colette by Helena Kontová



From «If It Takes Forever I will wait for you». Sleeping performance at the Idea Warehouse — with slide projection and audio sounds, 1975.





apartment as it looks now (ten feet by forty five feet long) recycled parachutes and satin with fluorescent back lighting».



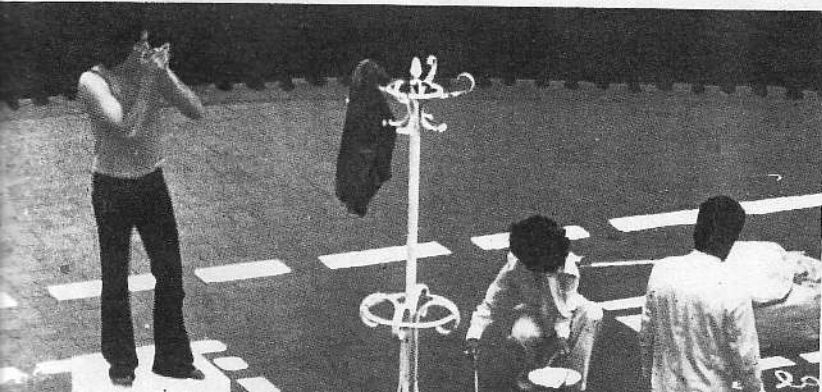


«Photo of me as Madame Récamier in the «Wake of Madame Récamier», July 1975 /  
di me stessa come Madame Récamier in «La veglia di Madame Récamier».



«One of the works shown in my last exhibition in New York at Eugenia Cucalon Gallery... Which showed documentation of my street works, and the reappearance of my symbols. The exhibition was called «It Reappears...» I did a special performance for the opening night. Street piece 111/1, called «Femme Fatale». I laid in a blue satin-covered box containing personal objects, asleep for three hours after having completed a street drawing around it. Audio sounds made up of contemporary pop music such as «I've loved you in the morning», and «What they've done to my song Ma...» came out of the box. May-June, 1977. / Un lavoro della mia ultima esposizione alla galleria Eugenia Cucalon di New York... Che mostravano la documentazione dei miei lavori per le strade, e la riapparizione dei miei simboli. La mostra era chiamata «Riappare...». Feci una speciale performance per la sera dell'inaugurazione. Street piece 111/1, intitolata «Femme fatale». Ero distesa in una cassa tappezzata di raso azzurro contenente oggetti personali addormentata per tre ore dopo aver completato attorno a essa il disegno di una strada. Dalla cassa uscivano suoni tratti da musica pop contemporanea, come «I've loved you in the morning», e «What they've done to my song Ma...».

«Documentation of street piece II/2. Florence, Italy, 1974».



«Documentation of Jamaican Kool-aid piece. Carving my symbols all along the sand and pouring colored kool-aid color (1972). / Documentazione dell'opera «Jamaican Kool-aid». Scolpivo i miei simboli nella sabbia e versavo kool-aid colorato (1972). (kool-aid è una specie di coca-cola)».

