

Sarah Wells



I started *M/E/A/N/I/N/G*, a journal of contemporary art issues, in 1986 with Susan Bee, my co-editor. We had come back to New York City from a summer in Provincetown and felt more than usually repelled by the prospect of re-entering the art world. And it seemed that everyone we knew felt the same way. By the mid '80s the art world was completely overtaken by its forms of Reaganism. There was a totally materialistic atmosphere; it was the height of Neo-Expressionism and Neo-Geo; a cool, ironic, media- and language-oriented "postfeminism" had overtaken the feminist ideas we'd been involved with. There seemed to be a sudden invasion of theory into the language of art criticism. Many artists, particularly artists who had come of age in the late '60s and early '70s, felt excluded and estranged by this approach to art making and art writing. At this time I retooled myself, schooled myself in the language of theory in order not to feel intimidated and victimized by it. I began to write, just for myself at first.

My first essay was on the depiction of women in the work of David Salle. I went to school with him at the California Institute of the Arts. In fact I was on his graduate admissions committee! I can't remember if I voted for him, but I think so. Obviously, he got in.

I was in the Feminist Art Program at Cal-Arts, run by Miriam Schapiro and Judy Chicago. It was the first of its kind in the country, and, looking back, I realize that it was not just boot camp for feminists, which is what I've always called it, but also a leadership training program if one wanted to take it that way. We received focused political training within an art framework. It set me on a path of trying to intervene, first, into the way visual art is taught.

# MIRA SCHOR

## on shoestring publishing, feminist phallic power and gender revenge

Mira Schor: *Bridging the Gap*, 1985  
40" x 112", oil on canvas



