

HUDSON VALLEY CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 2009



**HVCCA to present gallery talk with artist
Mierle Laderman Ukeles
Sunday March 1st, 2009 at 4:00pm**

Peekskill NY - The **HVCCA** will host a gallery talk with artist **Mierle Laderman Ukeles**, Sunday March 1st at 4pm. Ukeles' work is currently part of the exhibition *Origins* on view at the HVCCA through July 26th, 2009.

'Ukeles focuses on sanitation workers whom she feels are stigmatized because the public is generally unwilling to recognize that the individuals who take the garbage don't make the garbage.'

Ronald Feldman Gallery press release.

Open to the public; \$10 members, \$12.50 non-members.

About the Artist

Ukeles involvement with the **Department of Sanitation** dates back to the time when she was establishing a family. She had been an active artist and suddenly, when her children were born, she was reduced to being '**a garbage collector**', changing diapers, cleaning and maintaining a household, keeping order. As she pushed her babies in their carriages, and saw the sanitation trucks, there was a sudden 'epiphany' that as she was a nurturer, as she maintained order and turned bedlam into sanity, so did they.

In 1977 Ukeles accepted an unsalaried position as artist-in-residence for New York City's Department of Sanitation. The conversations she had with sanitation employees, "sanmen", about the negative stereotypes of garbage and the public perception of their jobs were documented in the photographs *Touch Sanitation* and videos *Waste Flow* and *Sanman Speaks*, displayed in *Origins*. The project ended with a multimedia installation show at Ronald Feldman Gallery in New York City five years later. According to the press release: 'Ukeles focuses on sanitation workers whom she feels are stigmatized because the public is generally unwilling to recognize that the individuals who take the garbage don't make the garbage.'

Sanitation, Ukeles points out, is not the same as garbage. Sanitation creates order out of chaos, and in that way it is art-like.

Her various performance pieces, including *Touch Sanitation* in which she crisscrossed the streets of New York shaking the hands of san-men and then using their gloves to create a sculpture, as well as her videos of the recycling of trash in the back of the garbage trucks, as well as installations at the Freshkill's Land Fill site in Staten Island, have received wide acclaim. It is artists such as Mierele Laderman Ukeles to whom we are indebted for bringing attention to the beauty that resounds even in the most unexpected of places.

About HVCCA

The **Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art** opened to the public in June 2004. Founded by the **Marc** and **Livia Straus** family, the not-for-profit center is dedicated to the development and presentation of new art, exhibits and interdisciplinary programs that enrich our

understanding of contemporary art, its contexts, and its relationships to societal issues. The Center is committed to the enrichment of Peekskill, a multicultural community, which has recreated itself as a major center for art and culture.

For more information please contact: Dr. Livia Straus, President / Acting Director 914.788.0100, liviastraus@hvcca.org

Image Credit: Mierle Laderman Ukeles, *Touch Sanitation*, photograph 2007
Courtesy of Artist and Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York