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TORTURE OF WOMEN: Nancy Spero's fierce and enduring contribution to contemporary art, to feminist thought and action, and to the continuing protest against torture and the abuse of power will be released by Siglio on April 30, 2010.

A pivotal piece by an American artist whose immense impact has yet to be fully examined / A work of art that instigates questions about the most pressing issues of social and political justice / A feminist inquiry into how to shift perspective and change the way the world is seen / And a new publication which makes this influential but infrequently exhibited work widely available.

THE ARTWORK (1976)

Artistic ingenuity coupled with boldly feminist and political intent, *Torture of Women* is a public cry of outrage and a nuanced exploration of the continuum of violence. While it vociferously protests torture, it also speaks to the solitary, individual experience of pain. While it decries the particular victimization of women, it also condemns the abuse of all power no matter who suffers at its hands. And as *Torture of Women* gives voice to what is often undocumented, officially denied, or left unspoken, it reveals the presence of the silent consensus which allows the violence to be state-sanctioned and eternally mythologized.

It is a work of art that, thirty years after it was made, has become even more powerful as it bears witness to the continuing practice of torture and state-perpetrated violence. *Torture of Women* is ever radical, raising provocative and urgent questions that cross the borders of art, politics, feminism, and human rights.

Groundbreaking in its potent and visceral juxtaposition of text and image, *Torture of Women* is a series of fourteen panels, totaling 125 ft. in length, that took Spero two years to make. On vast fields of space, Spero collaged startling imagery drawn from ancient mythology with hand-printed and typewritten words—first person testimony by women detailing their experiences at the hands of their abusers culled from Amnesty International reports, news items on women missing or dead, definitions of torture from the 20th and 13th centuries, as well as the retelling of violent Sumerian and Babylonian creation myths, such as Tiamat disemboweled by Marduk in order to create the heavens.

Spero's ambition to reshape universality through the exclusive representation of women is achieved in this astonishing narrative that collapses time, dissolves the boundaries of nations, and testifies to our boundless inhumanity as well as our human capacity for anger, grief, joy, and imagination.

THE BOOK (2010)

Siglio's publication "translates" *Torture of Women* into nearly 100 pages of detail so that the entirety of the work—with legible texts and vibrant color reproductions—can be experienced with immediacy and intimacy. The book was conceived not to simply catalog the work but to create a space in which the reader can fully engage it as it unfolds from page to page. While *Torture of Women* has played an important role in 20th century art, and while it has much to say about persistent issues, it is rarely actually "read." In the most literal sense, "reading" the work has been inhibited by its infrequent exhibition, by installations which stack the fourteen panels

floor to ceiling, as well as by catalog reproductions in which the text is simply too small. **The design of this book encourages multiple acts of reading *Torture of Women*—as an innovative and polyphonous narrative, as a feminist disquisition, as a register of political protest and outrage, and as a fierce and enduring work of art.**

Several additional texts intended to both deepen the reading of *Torture of Women* as well as to expand the conversations that the work ignites are included in the book: a selection of quotes from Spero, a passionate and thoughtful essay by curator Diana Nemiroff, an excerpt from *The Body in Pain* by Elaine Scarry, and a work of short fiction, “Symmetries,” by Argentinean writer Luisa Valenzuela.

Audiences interested in contemporary, American, and/or feminist art will be especially enthusiastic about the publication of *Torture of Women*. Readers who care about human rights, political and social justice, and/or feminist issues and women’s rights will find *Torture of Women* a compelling, thought-provoking work with much to contribute to the conversation.

TORTURE OF WOMEN by NANCY SPERO / Release: April 30

\$48 / Casebound / 156 pp / 96 full page color illustrations / ISBN: 978-0-9799562-2-5

With an essay by Diana Nemiroff, a story by Luisa Valenzuela, and a text by Elaine Scarry

Bound advance copies and digital media kits available now. Contact: Lisa Pearson, publisher@sigliopress.com

THE ARTIST (1926-2009)

NANCY SPERO is regarded as a pioneer in feminist art who has had a profound influence on subsequent generations of women artists. After working for almost twenty-five years in relative obscurity, her work received considerable international acclaim with more than a dozen solo museum exhibitions around the world, including a limited retrospective scheduled for Fall 2010 at Centre Pompidou in Paris. In addition to solo shows at the ICA in London, MOCA in Los Angeles, the New Museum in New York, among others, her work has been included in numerous group exhibitions including, most recently, *WACK: Art and the Feminist Revolution*, the *Whitney Biennial 2006*, and *Think with the Senses—Feel with the Mind: Art in the Present Tense* at the 52nd Venice Biennale. A retrospective catalog from Prestel is scheduled for publication later this year.

ROBERT STORR: ***Made almost thirty years ago Nancy Spero's Torture of Women is a seminal work in the history of contemporary art. A model of how appropriated words and images from multiple sources can be spliced and shaped into a forceful, coherent statement about the sexual, social, political, and existential dilemmas and dynamics of the modern world, Spero's piece is at the same time among the most significant precursors of the "intertextual" practices that are now regarded as quintessentially "post-modern." Alas, the on-going abuse of women in places where they openly contest patriarchy or are the unruly targets of its authoritarian impulses means that Torture of Women is every bit as current as it was when it was first made. Someday the hatred and cruelty inscribed in Spero's work may be a thing of the past, but so long as they blight the world, and so long as women confront state violence with the courage that Spero also commemorates, this work will be a testament to the fact that committed art can speak truth to power—and does so most effectively when speaking with the greatest formal, theoretical and poetic sophistication.***

SIGLIO is an independent press in Los Angeles dedicated to publishing uncommon books that live at the intersection of art and literature. Siglio books defy categorization and ignite conversation: they are cross-disciplinary, hybrid works that subvert paradigms, reveal unexpected connections, rethink narrative forms, and thoroughly engage a reader’s imagination and intellect. We believe that challenging work can be immensely appealing: our books are beautiful, affordable, and as much a pleasure to touch and hold as they are to read.

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