

time. Going back with two children, you realize that it's something that can never be repeated. So I decided I'd better hurry up and do all the things I had always wanted to do, because pretty soon the chances to do so were disappearing. It never really dawned on me before that time is passing away.

The consciousness of time is something that Lupe feels everyone approaching mid-life (she is now thirty-three) must eventually come to terms with. It is a topic that she has explored and discussed with the friends and people close to her, ultimately translating it into her recent work.

My new show, "Decisions-Transitions," [Leo Kamen Gallery, May 1987] applies to me and to the people I know. The paintings of 1986 have taken on a whole new personality. The solitary animal has extended beyond itself to human confrontation. The paintings are dotted with passageways — exits and entrances — marking time and decisions, while the animals confront, explore, move away from and move closer to each other.

Confident and self-assured, Lupe explains:

I've gone through my transition. After having my children, I've regained myself and I'm working again in this new role I've already accepted. I think when you get close to thirty, it's a time when you're confronting life. Whereas before you could say, in the future I have lots of time, now you're aware you don't have it anymore. I've talked to a lot of people about it and they all seem to feel that, if they don't make a move now, they never will. What I want to talk about is the pressure to do that. That's big. That divides territories and it really divides friendships. All these issues combined have made me do paintings that are more about the passing of time and decision-making. They are also about how people communicate and do not communicate; how they avoid each other and go different routes; how they are pressured by their peers and the roles we have as human animals.

This exploration of relationships in Lupe's art is evident in the fact that the bulls in the landscapes are no longer solitary figures: "I no longer crave to be alone because I now I can be alone. My kids are older and I have help with them. I am no longer trapped in the constant mother role which I was for awhile. I also have more financial freedom because my work is selling. And we all know that helps a lot!"

The depiction of relationships in her

recent work is also marked by distinctly sexual overtones. The bulls in the landscapes are often engaged in a kind of sexual foreplay, attracted and repelled by each other at the same time. Lupe smiles and says:

I'm big on talk about sex lately. Suddenly, "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" makes sense to me — the whole issue of female sexuality at its prime. Sex, to me, is the ultimate act. Once you take that step sexually, everything changes. And it's such a hard step to take because you know the consequences will always be different from the day before. I did a few paintings where the animals are smelling each other and the one in the foreground is almost mounting the one in the background. The one in the background is getting ready, but it's not quite happening yet. This is the point of transition. We don't know if it's going to happen. I just thought this was a very good analogy for everything we do in life. We're always hesitating and once we take that step there's no looking back. And it takes a lot of guts to do that.

Is it a rediscovery of her own sexuality, a recognition of herself as a passionate, involved and enriched human being after the experience of motherhood? "It's phenomenal," Lupe grins, "you regain yourself with all this added ammunition, with this confidence! It's like you suddenly know what you want and you can still be a sexual being." She muses: "Even though you do get older, you just feel so much better about life, because every moment is rich and the work becomes richer with time. My work is so much stronger now than what I did five years ago."

This interview has taken place at Lupe's recently-acquired studio. Her canvasses hang on the walls. She is wearing black pants, a black sweater, and a wide black belt with a bronze elephant-head buckle, cinched around her waist. Her feet are in bright red boots and a red ribbon is wrapped around her thick, black hair. She is striking. She exudes an intensity, a vitality and a smoldering sensuality that is the trademark of her art.

Eyes piercing, nostrils flaring, lips widening into a brilliant smile... Lupe Rodriguez is ready to charge!

WAITING

Despite progress and new ways of thinking about many things women still must spend too much time waiting.

They wait
for husbands
for children
for quitting time
for workmen
for messengers
for death
and for
the potatoes to boil.

They wait in
maternity clothes
sit in
waiting rooms
get on
waiting lists.

In the waiting room
it is difficult to
occupy the children
they read Donald Duck
and shuffle
their feet.
Behind the door is
the unpredictable
the unruly
the unbounded
the unforeseen.

The man in
the white
gown
who only does
it once
in a while
maybe something
about odd and
even days of the month
you must not
say it outright.

He turns many
away
it costs three
hundred kroner
if he is willing.

You are nauseous
and eat
licorice while
you wait.

Life is
narrowest in the middle
at about
fifty
it expands again
the grand-
mothers say.

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