

## Vickie Walker / PORTRAIT OF AN ARTIST AS A DINNER TABLE

*The four illustrations here are from a six-part self-portrait: an invitation to feast upon the table/persona of the artist. A traditional theme is shaken into new possibilities.*

### IMAGES

*Portrait of the Artist as a Dinner Table*, plate of feathers, doorknobs and stars, lifesize, mixed media, 1975.

*Portrait of the Artist as a Dinner Table*, plate of hearts, lace & roses, lifesize, mixed media, 1975.

*Portrait of the Artist as a Dinner Table*, nude plate, lifesize, mixed media, 1975.

*Portrait of the Artist as a Dinner Table*, plate of lips, lifesize, mixed media, 1975.

*Portrait of the Artist as a Dinner Table* is a self-portrait, an expression of the woman-artist-child-poet-teacher that I am. The plates which are collages & assemblages, include lace, satin, vinyl, feathers, wool, coloured pencil, graphite, pastels, felt, poems, acrylic, etc. & they are basically sewed on an old Singer machine, & some are glued together. The silverware is cotton, sewn & stuffed with foam & kapok.

At the time I was working into these, I kept thinking about what Kline sd: "Now, if I paint what I know, that bores me, if I paint what you know, that bores you, so I paint what I don't know & I paint very little of what I do know because that's a repetition of what's already at hand." (This comes out of my journal & the exact ref. is uncertain.) With that in mind, plus W. C. Williams' poetry & the fact that he found location in difficulty & built up around it, I looked to my own personal history which is an early familiarity with fabrics, sewing, quilting, weaving, making garments, knitting, etc. "O.K.," I sd, "use this stuff & create something unlike anything you know." As I worked on them I never knew what would happen next or how or when they would finish themselves. I worked simultaneously on all six plates.

I wanted to make a "setting" of my feminine psyche. This piece is a ritual, like eating is. I imagined six guests sitting down to my table, set in the woods, & eating, in a figurative sense, the food each one of these plates offered up. Perhaps it all has to do with eating one another, & that idea, comes from Brian Fawcett who got it from Creeley I believe, & sent it to me in a letter four years ago.

— VICKIE WALKER













