

## Angela Ellsworth

LISA SETTE GALLERY  
4142 North Marshall Way  
January 8–January 31

In her first solo exhibition with the gallery, slyly titled “Underpinnings,” artist Angela Ellsworth mines two seemingly dissonant genealogies—a lineage of influential female performance artists and her own Mormon heritage—to produce an unholy hybrid. This strange convergence is articulated in several different ways, the most immediately eye-catching of which is a series of three scintillating “Seer” bonnets (all works 2008) that hang from the gallery’s ceiling. Each sculpture is made up of thousands of corsage pins stuck through the cap’s frame, forming dense, nacreous patterns on the work’s exterior surface—a sharp contrast to the bonnet’s interior, which is filled with the needles’ pointed ends, like a maw of tiny swords.

Lining the wall of the gallery are twenty white paper napkins; ten are embroidered in black thread with an iconic image from a seminal performance by a woman artist. There’s *Sister Wife Valie (Action Pants: Genital Panic, 1969)*, a portrait of Valie Export holding a machine gun and wearing her fabled crotchless jeans, and *Sister Wife Marina as Joseph (Seven Easy Pieces, 2005; How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare, 1965)*, which depicts Marina Abramovic’s reenactment of Joseph Beuys’s infamous pedagogical action. The other ten napkins are stitched with what Ellsworth terms the “Tools of Translation” used by each artist: Export’s gun, Abramovic/Beuys’s hare, the flashlight with which Annie Sprinkle invited viewers to examine her cervix, Adrian Piper’s discomfiting mouth cloth from *Catalysis IV, 1970*. At the show’s opening, young women roamed the gallery wearing the ankle-length pastel dresses and demure updos that are now, thanks to shows like *Big Love* and news footage of police raids of the FLDS Church, inextricably linked with Mormonism. In a gesture both powerful and a little bit scary, these women pantomimed the depicted performances, uncannily imbricating art and religion, chosen and inherited traditions.

— Deborah Sussman Susser



Angela Ellsworth, *Sister Wife Carolee (Up to and Including Her Limits, 1973–76)*, 2008, black thread on paper napkin, 7 1/2 x 8 1/2".