

# T H E

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# CAROLYN SORTOR EXPLORES THE REAL STATE OF VIDEO ARTS

Carolyn Sortor is a woman of many dichotomies. Real estate attorney by day and artist all spare hours after, she works across a variety of media, but it's her work with video that captures the imagination and shatters boundaries that would confine her in still life. Her videos never cease to provoke or bewilder, with subject matters as diverse as a scene from *Hamlet* between the artist and a cat to a documentary on Cindy Sheehan and her protest of the Iraq War outside of President Bush's Crawford, Texas, ranch. More recently, Ms. Sortor was the featured curator (along with Charles Dee Mitchell and Bart Weiss) of *The Program*, a five-week video exhibition held at Conduit Gallery that showed fifty works by over forty artists.

## THE PROCESS

I like art that has lots of meaning on more than one level, that has multiplicitous intentions, or that deploys more than one strategy, and that addresses many kinds of issues. My work usually starts with a strong vision that comes more or less as a "whole" inspiration that I don't necessarily understand. After the work has been made, I usually realize it embodies a great deal of what I think I've learned in life. Stylistically, it might maybe be called something like, "quasi-narrative nouveau-surreal conceptual"?

## KNOWN WORKS

My best-known work is probably *Creamstress 6: The Centered Polenta*, a Matthew Barney parody/homage made shortly after his blowout exhibition at the Guggenheim following the release of *Cremaster 3*. *Creamstress 6* is a body of work including an editioned video, prints, and sculptures. The video is not online; but I did an online "catalogue" (parodic yet still an homage of the catalogue published by the Guggenheim).

## CONTEMPORARY ARTS IN DALLAS

Dallas is sophisticated enough to appreciate world-class work; yet, in many ways, it's still a frontier. We have the benefit of both an inspiring mix of influences and the openness and opportunity for anyone with talent to roll up their sleeves and make an impact. The diversity of influences is not just ethnic but also in the kinds of artists and organizations. The theater and music scenes are also strong. There are a lot of very talented people here working very hard and at a very high level of quality. That said, the financial side of life for many artists and organizations doing exciting work is simply grueling.

## ASPIRATIONS

I secretly long for more and better-adapted art exhibition venues for video and other media-based work. Most existing venues were, of course, built to let in lots of natural light, without the expectation of any need for lots of electrical outlets and with little concern for acoustics. Galleries that can show dozens or more paintings at a time are common, but venues that can comfortably and properly exhibit dozens of media-based works at once remain rare, especially in this part of the world. I've fantasized about a tower of projection rooms built in some abandoned silo or large elevator shaft. I'd also like Dallas to get the e-flux library.

To see works from Carolyn Sortor, visit [www.c-cyte.com](http://www.c-cyte.com). Ms. Sortor photos by David Lee Kelting. Imagery iStockphoto.com

