

DENNIS ADAMS (b. 1948 Des Moines, Iowa)

***PATRICIA HEARST – A thru Z*, 1979**

170 Black and white photographs bracketed by two armed guards

Each : 20 x 16 in.

Collection of Lenbachhaus, Munich

Exhibitions:

Minneapolis College of Art and Design, 1979

Neuerwerbungen 1990-1992. Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, 1992

Notes:

Surfacing in the wake of Vietnam and Watergate, the images of Patricia Hearst circulated through our consciousness like psychological fallout, replaying America's identity crisis via the multiple and contradictory personas of a young newspaper heiress turned revolutionary terrorist. The image of Patricia Hearst – invented and reinvented by her parents, the SLA, the FBI, lawyers, and psychiatrists and then filtered through a media blitz – overloaded the circuits of representation.

For the third in a series of three exhibitions that framed the image of Patricia Hearst, I alphabetized twenty-six head shots that trace the events of her transformation, from her Communion at thirteen through her marriage to her bodyguard. These image/letter units were then combined to form twenty-six alphabetized words that were displayed across two perpendicular walls in the form of a run-on sentence that lamented the end of America. Two armed policemen were employed to stand guard, parenthetically framing the installation.

Literature:

Staniszewski, Mary Anne. *The Architecture of Amnesia*. New York: Kent Fine Art, 1990, pp 18-19.

Bex, Florent. *Transactions*. Antwerp: Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen, 1994, pp. 20-21.

Patricia Campbell Hearst is born in San Francisco. The granddaughter of William Randolph Hearst.
Founder of the Hearst Publishing Empire.

1971-72

Hearst earns straight A's at Menlo College, an elite junior college where she is named best student of the year.

July 1973

A group of revolutionaries calling themselves the Symbionese Liberation Army is founded in Berkeley under the leadership of Donald Defreeze, an escaped convict and Black Nationalist.

November 6, 1973

The SLA is brought to public attention with their slaying of Marcus Foster, The first black superintendent of schools in Oakland.

February 4, 1974

Defreeze and 2 SLA collaborators abduct Hearst from her apartment in Berkeley where she is living with her fiancée Steven Weed. For the next 57 days she will be kept bound and blindfolded in a closet undergoing an extreme type of thought reform characteristic of Maoist cult groups.

February 12, 1974

As ransom for Hearst's release, the SLA demands that her father finance a massive free food program for the poor.

April 3, 1974

In a taped communiqué Hearst announces that she has joined the SLA of her own free will and has taken the name Tanya.

April 15, 1974

The SLA robs the sunset district branch of the Hibernia Bank in San Francisco. Surveillance photographs of Hearst brandishing a carbine are seen on the television evening news and United States Attorney General William Saxbe labels her a "common criminal."

May 16, 1974

When SLA members William and Emily Harris are reproached for shoplifting at a sporting goods store in Los Angeles, Hearst fires a barrage of bullets and the 3 of them escape to a motel room across the street from Disneyland. There, they watch on television the shoot-out between the police and their SLA comrades that ends in the burning of the SLA safehouse and the deaths of 6 SLA members.

Summer/Fall of 1974

Hearst, the Harrises, and Jack Scott, a sportswriter and activist, drive across country in early summer and hideout until returning to Sacramento in the fall.

February 25, 1975

With a small band of new SLA recruits, Hearst, Scott and the Harrises rob the Guild Savings and Loan association in Arden Plaza, just outside Sacramento.

April 21, 1975

The SLA robs the Crocker National Bank in Carmichael, near Sacramento. One customer is killed. Hearst drives the getaway car.

Summer 1975

The SLA carries out a series of police car bombings in and around San Francisco, Marin County and Los Angeles.

September 18, 1975

The FBI closes in on the two SLA safehouses in Los Angeles; Patricia Hearst is arrested.

February 4, 1976

Trial opens in which Hearst is charged with robbing the Hibernia Bank on April 15, 1974. The case is being tried in U.S. District Court in San Francisco with Judge Oliver J. Carter presiding. The main defense lawyer, F. Lee Bailey, contends that Hearst, a vulnerable, frightened 19-year old girl, was brainwashed, terrorized and sexually assaulted.

April 12, 1976

Hearst is found guilty on charges of armed robbery and the use of a firearm in the commission of a Felony in the Hibernia Bank case. She is provisionally sentenced to maximum terms of 25 years for the former charge and 10 for the latter. She still faces trial in Los Angeles on a number of state charges, including armed robbery and kidnapping.

September 24, 1976

Hearst's final sentence is two concurrent terms of 7 years each.

November 19, 1977

After 14 months in prison, Hearst is freed on bail pending appeal, but will be reincarcerated in May 1978 after the U.S. Supreme Court declines to hear the case.

January 29, 1979

President Jimmy Carter commutes Hearst's sentence.

February 1, 1979

Hearst is freed.

April 1, 1979

Hearst marries Bernard Shaw, a San Francisco policeman she had met in 1976 when he was assigned as one of her bodyguards.