

# Thanks

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# Iron Maidens

an installation by

Amanda Piasecki

March 29, 2003 3pm

March 30, 2003 6pm

Mills College Music building, north wing

## Iron Maidens

This project began in July 2002 when I discovered a depression-era method of making dress forms. The subject is wrapped in three layers of gummed paper packing tape, which conforms to the body when moistened. The tape is dried, and then the model cut out and the form resealed. I was so mesmerized when my partner and I made the first form, of my body, that I wanted to wrap up everyone I could find. I was particularly interested in using large women as models both because of the socio-political implications of re-framing the conventional western beauty standard and because the technique works better on bigger people.

The forms are decorated with mosaics and collages that were somewhat inspired by the art car culture of the Bay Area. I'm a big fan of an obsessive aesthetic and I also wanted each sculpture to reflect the multi-dimensionality of the women I wrapped, although the treatments are probably more reflective of aspects of my own personality than the models'.

The audio component of the installation is intended to make the sculptures alive. The audio is triggered by the motion of the viewers in the exhibit space—the sculptures only come to life when you pass them by. The counterpoint created by the sculptures' breathing is a composition performed entirely by the audience.

## Artist's Statement

I am an interdisciplinary artist working primarily in audio, visual, and performance media. I've been a musician for most of my life, but am now less interested in conventional music-making and more focused on manipulating the psycho-acoustic aspects of sounds in the service of conceptual artworks. Lately I make sculptures, strip, fasten bathroom scales to myself with chains, dress in silverware, knit hats, watch TV while I solder electronics, sew costumes, drill holes, wrap women in tape, bake, and re-configure pop songs. I also work as a teacher and an administrator, go to school, and hang out with my partner and her baby.

The character of my work is highly influenced by my interest in identity politics and cultural criticism. I identify strongly with outsider and proletarian aesthetics, but am also interested in new technologies, which has often placed my work between ideological and aesthetic worlds. My life has embodied a lot of seemingly irreconcilable contradictions and extremes. I'm a country girl living in the city, an anti-capitalist with debt, a fat former anorexic, a dyke homemaker, a sane child of a schizophrenic, a spoiled poor person, a cancer survivor—I'm a regular post-postmodern poster child. As I develop my work I find myself trying to ride the disparities out and make the results into something else altogether.