

ABOVE:
LOV U (installation view; vault), 2012

COVER:
LOV U (installation view; main gallery), 2012

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Notes: Dimensions are in inches, height x width x depth. All artworks have been made available courtesy of Senga Nengudi and Thomas Erben Gallery. All installation photographs are courtesy of David Broda.

SENGA NENGUDI:

LOV U, 2012

Multimedia installation, dimensions variable

VAULT:

Five photographs by Senga Nengudi, 26.5x40; 31.5x40; 40x26.5; 40x28; 40x30.25, seventy photographs by the Syracuse community, dimensions variable, shelf, 67x23x6, incense holder, wind chime, metallic elephant figurine, red beaded mat, mirror, three framed photographs, chapbook 8.5 x 5.5, photobook, 10.5 x 8.25, and sound.

MAIN GALLERY:

Two television monitors featuring videos **Hands**, 2012, 1 min 6 sec and **Dance Card**, 1986, 1 min 23 sec, one photograph printed on fabric attached to wooden flagpole 70 x 45, two illuminated light bulbs with hanging cords attached (dimensions variable), two blue wall drawings made out of painters' tape, 120" diameter, two white wall drawings made from masking tape, two wrapped columns covered in masking tape 115 x 38, heart shrine on ledge 48 x 22 x 11, large heart sitting on beam attached with fishline to ceiling and painters' tape to wall 108 x 72, two plastic found objects, 18 x 7, two found glass spheres on heart shaped mat located on pedestals, curtain made out of tape with microbraid hair extensions, 51 x 47, and sound.

THE WAREHOUSE GALLERY

Syracuse University
350 West Fayette Street
Syracuse, NY 13202

The Warehouse Gallery is an international contemporary art venue of the SUArt Galleries at Syracuse University. The gallery's mission is to present exhibitions and programs by artists whose work engages the community in a dialogue regarding the role the arts can play in illuminating critical issues of our life and times.

EDITOR

Jessica Reed

DESIGNER

Rainer M. Wehner

GALLERY STAFF

Anja Chávez—Curator of Contemporary Art
Rainer M. Wehner—Exhibition Designer and Preparator

GALLERY ASSISTANTS

Nikki R. Binders—Intern
Marielle Brown—Gallery Assistant
Marika Martinez Cleto—Gallery Assistant
Mariano di Guglielmo—Intern
Sarabeth Honor Fera—Gallery Assistant
Kathryn Kelly—Gallery Assistant
Hikari Ito Matsu—Gallery Assistant
Greg Mawicke—Intern
Shavon McKinstry—Assistant Preparator
Kiri Rowan—Gallery Assistant
Ana Thor—Intern
Shelby M. Zink—Gallery Assistant

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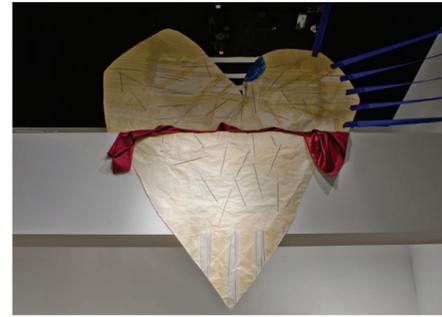
Colorado-based Senga Nengudi is a key figure of the Black Arts Movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Known primarily for performance-based art installations, her work focuses on movement and the human body, is multidisciplinary in nature and international in scope, with cultural references to Africa, the African Diaspora, and Asia. For her multimedia, performance-based exhibition *Lov U* at The Warehouse Gallery, Nengudi explores the physical senses of being human, and includes photographs and video to reflect on the essence of love. Drawn to discarded, everyday materials, the ephemerality of Nengudi's work is a metaphor for life's transience.



SENGA NENGUDI: LOV U

13 SEPTEMBER – 27 OCTOBER 2012

THE WAREHOUSE GALLERY
GUIDE #18



THE BODY AS RESOURCE

BY

ANJA CHÁVEZ

"**Lov U** is an exhibit exploring the meaning of love... pure love.... the essence of love."

— Senga Nengudi, September 2012

Over the past four decades, Senga Nengudi has created an exceptional body of work that has yet to be discovered by the larger public. Though not all of her ephemeral works have survived, Nengudi is best known for her performance-based installations and sculptures dating back to the 1970s that focus on the female body; cultural references spanning Africa; the African diaspora, and Asia, as well as experimentation, improvisation, audience involvement and her background as a dancer and choreographer.

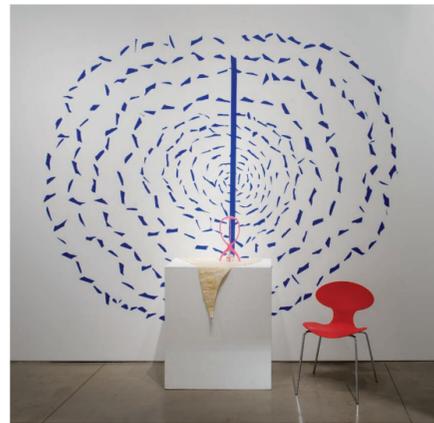
Lov U (2012), Nengudi's new site-specific installation at The Warehouse Gallery is no exception to her past work. For her first solo museum exhibition since her 2007 residency at Philadelphia's Fabric Workshop, Nengudi focuses on cosmic and everyday love through the senses of sight, hearing, touch, and smell.

For **Lov U**, Nengudi has separated the main gallery from the vault by a curtain made out of tape containing African American hair extensions pointing to the artist's own cultural heritage. Two large columns in the main gallery are covered with masking tape, while two oversized hearts (above and in the corner) equally made out of tape echo the exhibition's overall theme. Against the backdrop of the main wall and flanked by two bare light bulbs that are lit though they appear unplugged,

a large photograph of the artist's hand reaches out to grasp the sky, while clouds appear to float through the main gallery.

The musical component of **Lov U** is an invitation to the public to dance; an invitation punctuated, once daily, by a Tibetan chant that underscores the themes of meditation and the sacred. **Lov U** also includes two videos: **Hands** exploring love through the body language of hands, and **Dance Card** which again points to love and to Nengudi's often witty performance art.

Nengudi performed twice during her ten days at the Warehouse Gallery. She turned her on-campus lecture into a group performance, prompting the audience to improvise and perform solo or in groups that reimaged uses of space, movement, sound, and the human body. For her public performance on the opening night of her exhibition, chairs were set up throughout the gallery and envelopes with drawn images of body parts were handed out to the public. The artist's goal was to create a "dance band" where the audience formed an orchestra grouped together by body parts (mouth, hand, leg, etc.)



instead of instruments and, with cues from Nengudi, directed to improvise and respond through movement. Near the end of her performance, Nengudi introduced a member of the Syracuse community, a barber, who discussed his life while shaving Nengudi's head bald and whose clear expression of what he loved—the art of barbering—again highlighted the exhibition's main theme. The artist's humble demeanor throughout made her performance a nod to cleansing rituals in African and Asian cultures, echoed in her use of the color blue (both in **Lov U** and in her video **Hands**), which evokes love, divinity, and the cosmos.

Returning to the Vault through the curtain of taped hair, five large photographs of Nengudi and her family are surrounded by smaller photographs taken by Syracuse community members (more will be added throughout the exhibition) that reflect who or what they love. The whole sets the tone for myriad everyday feelings of love and family that by now have become imbued with the larger, sometimes more mysterious senses of love on display in the main gallery.

Love Makes You Brave.
Love Makes You Smile from the Inside.

Lilly Bea Moor

Love is being together and being happy with someone you want to be with forever.

Azaylah, age 10

l'amour, comme la poésie, "le désir demeuré désir."

Jim Petterson



Peter
"I love this place as much as my dog Rosco."

Photo credit: Greg Mawicke



Drew
"I love clothes more than anything because it is the only constant in my life. I enjoy designing and making clothes more than anything, and I make money by screen printing."

Photo credit: Ellie Brown



Ischete
"I love my cats because they are a true family."

Photo credit: Mariano di Guglielmo

Love is allowing the beloved to be who they are, it is embracing, desiring, accepting, forgiving, trusting, understanding, supporting. Love is a willingness to let go of expectations of what should be in order to embrace the honest experience of what is. When one embraces their beloved in love, they embrace the known and the unknown, the desired and the undesired, the strength and the weakness, the captivating and the irritating.

Journey where two come together in a slow dance across time; one moment embraced in close tenderness, another drifting into distance only to be drawn back to each other in the energy of their connectedness. Love ebbs and flows like the waves of the ocean. It grows and deepens. It weathers with age just as the beloved partners themselves transform in their movement from the passion-filled fire of youth with its dramatic sparks and flashes to the smoldering embers of age that burn slowly and assuredly into the darkness.

Love is letting go trusting that the freedom of the other does not mean rejection of the self. It is celebrating in the midst of uncertainty that the love in this dance of life extends to eternity. The transformation of the bodies will not destroy the embrace of the souls.

With love,
Robert Bixler

LEFT PAGE: **Lov U** (installation views; main gallery), 2012

ABOVE: Excerpts from Senga Nengudi's chapbook **Love Be...** (2012)

RIGHT: Excerpts from Senga Nengudi's photography book

BELOW: **Lov U** Installation view; vault

RIGHT: Images from Senga Nengudi's performance at The Warehouse Gallery (September 13, 2012)
Photo credit: Kiri Rowan and Maren Hassinger



ARTIST STATEMENT

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Pure love grows us, keeps us flexible and balanced while off balance.

This installation explores that.

Since birth, I've been most fortunate to experience mother-love, family-love, friend-love, mating-love, love from strangers, even love from the one and only. It's been mutual. Giving love back or the exchange of "Ahs" that reflects mutual love makes one conscious of the instrument every human is equipped with... the pounding, rhythmic heart.

There is a fragrance to love, a taste, a sound, a body shift, an eye contact where all is known [without knowing], with no need for the verbal.

"What do you love?" and "Who do you love?" photos cover the Vault gallery walls. My photos of family members are the larger. The other photos are provided by Syracuse residents sharing their loves.

