

"Photography." *The New Yorker* (Table of Contents), 24 April 1989, p. 17.



THE NEW YORKER

---

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APRIL 24, 1989

### PHOTOGRAPHY

FOR a long time, the heart seemed too corny a subject for high art. Not anymore. In the last few months, we've noticed many hearts in the galleries, most memorably an opened heart by Francesco Clemente and a heart robbery—a man literally taking a woman's heart out of her body—by Barbara Kruger, who gives the work an ironic spin by including the New York City car owner's warning to thieves: "NO RADIO." Now Sarah Charlesworth is adding to the heart works. In her new show, on two floors at the Jay Gorney gallery, there is a red diptych with the anatomy of a heart chamber on one side and a pair of locked antlers on the other. As delicate and as meticulously constructed as a layer of living tissue, it is one of a number of pieces in which Charlesworth finds her own kind of pictographs, many of which refer to the body.

Charlesworth is another artist in the ecological vein, who takes already existing photographs from magazines and books and re-presents them in new arrangements. Her uses of color and of layout technique in the downstairs works have a hip style and a contemporary urbanity that cut to the culture's quick as neatly as Pedro Almodóvar does with his use of graphic design in the opening section of "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown." Of all the non-picture-taking artists whose medium is photography, Charlesworth has the most rarefied sensibility. Didacticism has sometimes crept into her work, but now she is less aesthetic and more personal. In the upstairs portion of the show, seeping through all her media know-how is a capacity for expressing something about being a woman, with imagery that is at once exquisitely autobiographical and broadly historical. These pictures don't look like anybody else's—they are totally hers: a synthesis of head, heart, and experience.