



## MARNIE WEBER

*"When I was a child, the first pivotal art piece I saw that really affected me was Keinholz's Back Seat Dodge '38 at the LA County Museum. My father took me - it was getting quite a bit of attention in the press because it was so dramatic so when we got there, there was a long line to see it. Even then, I thought it was interesting that people lined up to see a piece of art. Finally, we got up to see it. There were two figures in the back seat of a Dodge, entwined and made up of chicken wire and assemblage. It so moved me emotionally. I took that away and kept it in my memory bank for many years."*

Artist Marnie Weber was raised in Bridgeport, Connecticut, moving to Taiwan at age 10 after travelling through east Asia with her family. Eventually relocating to southern California, there Weber studied art at University of Southern California, later receiving a B.A. at University of California, Los Angeles, where she worked with the performance and installation artist Chris Burden, assemblage sculptor George Herms, and collagist Alexis Smith. Her multidisciplinary approach to art making is defined by the rich, mythological ideology she has created throughout a practice that encompasses performance, film, video, sculpture, collage, installation, costuming, and music.

Weber began as a musician, emerging into the heady punk music milieu of 1980s Los Angeles; she evolved into a solo performance artist. Driven by an interest in theatrical experimentation, her performances are amplified by a complex narrative structure and extravagant costuming that coalesces around a pastiche of memory and the subconscious, with related film work reflecting a technological restraint and visual candor.

Aspects of Weber's performative work and film extend to her collage and sculpture practice, both of which are informed by the character development, symbolism, and dramatic content held within each tale. Conjuring elaborate allegories drawn from personal and cultural histories, fantasy, folklore, ritual, and a deeply eccentric sense of the spiritual, the stories remain liquid as they morph into various hybrids. Half-animal/half-human figures, dolls, clowns, and monsters recur in surreal fictions that touch on death, transformation, and catharsis. Her collage and sculptural works embrace a baroque sense of artifice, yielding only to the fantastical creatures and logic-defying sympathy, humor, and uneasiness they evoke.

Marnie Weber was the subject of a retrospective at Le Magasin (Centre National d'Art Contemporain) in Grenoble, France and a 25-year survey at the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain, in Geneva, Switzerland. Her work has been exhibited internationally at galleries including the 2020 Busan Biennale in South Korea; Simon Lee Gallery in New York, London, and Hong Kong; Gavlak, Los Angeles; Boone Family Art Gallery, Pasadena City College, Pasadena; and Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France. Her art is represented in numerous public and private collections,

among them the Hammer Museum, The Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in California; Fond National d'Art Contemporain, Paris and Musée d'Art Contemporain de la Haute-Vienne, both in France. Her solo album releases include *Woman with Bass*, 1994 and *Cry for Happy*, 1996. A compilation of her work, *Songs Forgotten: The Best of Marnie 1987-2004*, was released in 2004. She lives and works in Milford, Connecticut.

Marnie Weber was interviewed for The Artist Profile Archive in 2019 at the Boone Family Art Gallery, Pasadena City College, Pasadena, California during her exhibition, *Twisted Refrain: The Work of Marnie Weber*, and at Simon Lee Gallery in New York City at her exhibition, *Marnie Weber and Justin John Green*, also in 2019.





"I started playing in bands when I was 19, and we got rather successful and put out some records and toured in London and the UK and in New York – places like Danceteria and the Pyramid Club. The band broke up in the mid-80s, and I wanted to do solo performance art, utilizing music and theatrical costuming. I started to dress as different characters and perform my own music. Some of the characters I performed as were an old woman, a flower, a bunny, an outer space person."

— MARNIE WEBER











“When I was in a band, I didn’t wear a mask, but when I became a solo performer, I felt the need to wear one. In fact, I was having a great deal of stage fright, so I took an acting class. We had an exercise – if you were having trouble connecting to the emotion of a character, you would put on a plastic mask. It was amazing to see the person behind that mask just let loose the feelings within that had been held back when worn by their actual face. In order to find the most emotional impact from my character, even if it’s in a collage, I still put a mask on the character because it signifies a dramatic emotional moment for me.”

— MARNIE WEBER







“I think the Depression was very prevalent in the psychology of my family. I was raised in a very academic, scholarly family. It was always quiet. I wanted to explore the Depression era and how it affected my life, so I researched it, and I read about the Dust Bowl. My grandparents were coal miners – my family – we were all coal miners. I thought their home must have been very dark and full of coal dust, but my grandmother found a crystal in the mines that I inherited from her. I thought it was important to have something magical – something that sparkles – to counteract the darkness.”

— MARNIE WEBER











**PRODUCTION FOR THIS PROFILE**

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**SPECIAL THANKS**

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