

366 DAYS, 52 BOOKCOVERS,  
AND 1 HAPPY COUPLE



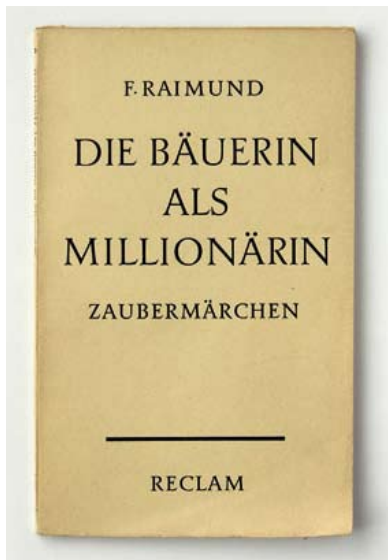
WORKS BY DANIELA COMANI

## 366 DAYS, 52 BOOKCOVERS, AND 1 HAPPY COUPLE

Charlie James Gallery is delighted to present the first American solo exhibition of Berlin-based artist Daniela Comani. Comani, b. 1965 in Bologna, Italy, will be exhibiting at the 54th Venice Biennale this June in the San Marino Pavilion at the Palazzo Riva del Vin, San Silvestro, San Polo 1097, Venice, and we're delighted to have her work up concurrently at the gallery.

Comani has several key preoccupations that inform her work. She seeks to show us where women are not in 20th century history, in the western literary canon and in organs of the popular media. She also seeks to show us the postures and manners of the married couple as a kind of ritualized gender template, which she then seeks to subvert. And she has a concentrated interest in removing the distance one conventionally feels when reading historical texts. The show will feature work from Comani's New Publications series, her Happy Marriage series, and her It Was Me - Diary work. The New Publications series consists of fifty-two archival pigment prints of iconic western literary masterpieces distributed evenly across English, French, German and Italian, in which the gender assignments within each title have been reversed. Comani shows the most important novels of world literature in an entirely new way, and in so doing seems to have rewritten them entirely. The Happy Marriage series consists of digital photographs of a happily married couple where Comani plays both the man and the woman. This series demonstrates the clichés of the heterosexual couple - forming a template of registered poses and postures across married men and women. Lastly the It Was Me - Diary 1900-1999 presents one hundred years of history out of any chronological order in the first person. Effectively, Comani has written a diary of the twentieth century as though all the events actually happened to her. From one day to the next, from one report to the next, she is a passive witness, then an activist, then victim, then perpetrator. In this way she is seemingly the initiator of these twentieth-century historical events. Like A Happy Marriage, Comani is playing with roles again, and again we see where women are not, and how to see things differently.

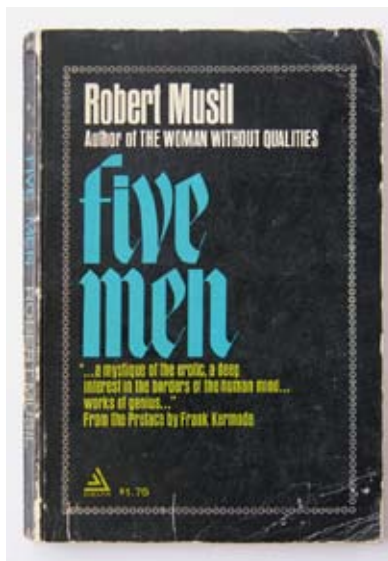
Daniela Comani was born in Bologna, Italy in 1965. Since 1989 she has lived and worked in Berlin. Her work is in many notable permanent collections, including the Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and the Museum on the Seam in Jerusalem. Comani will exhibit in the San Marino Pavilion at the 54th Venice Biennale this summer. This is her first solo show in the United States.



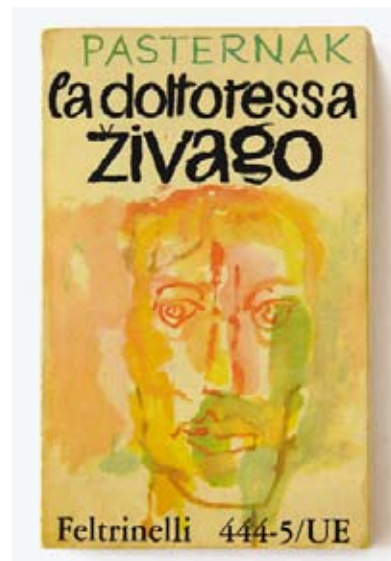
Die Bäuerin Als  
Millionärin  
Archival Pig-  
ment Print  
11" x 8"



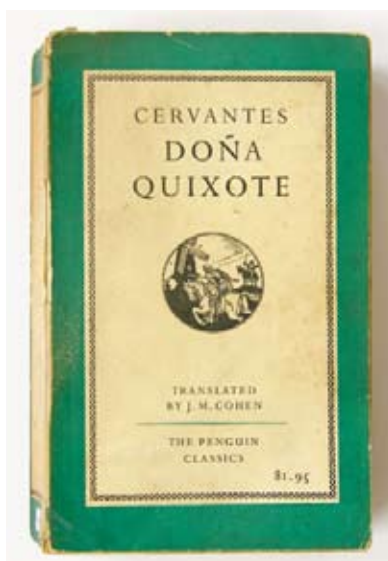
La Cavaliere  
Inesistente  
Archival Pig-  
ment Print  
11" x 8"



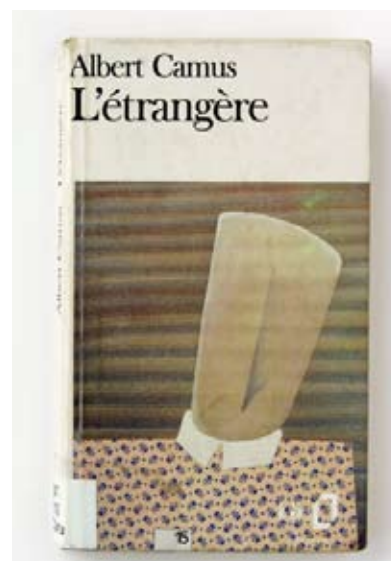
Five Men  
Archival Pig-  
ment Print  
11" x 8"



La Doltoressa  
Zivago  
Archival Pig-  
ment Print  
11" x 8"



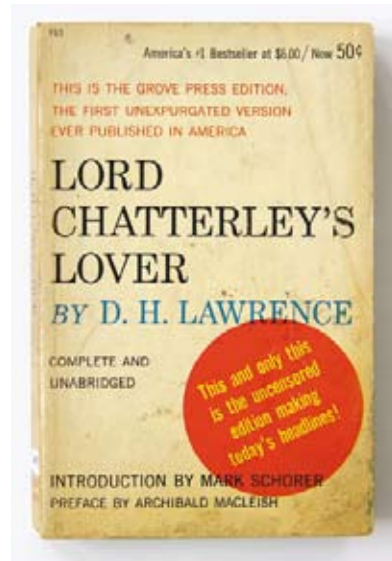
Doña Quixote  
Archival Pig-  
ment Print  
11" x 8"



L'étrangère  
Archival Pig-  
ment Print  
11" x 8"



L'homme rompu  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



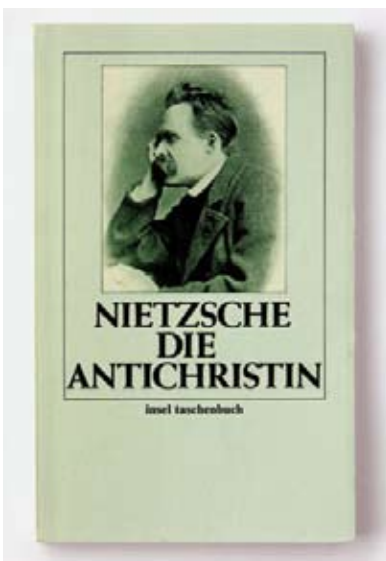
Lord Chatterley's Lover  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Tante Vanja  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Die Sandfrau  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"

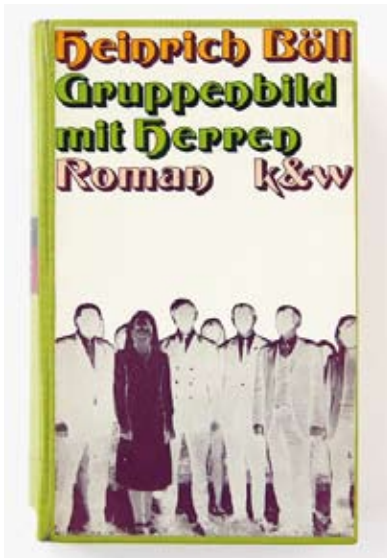


Die Antichristin  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"

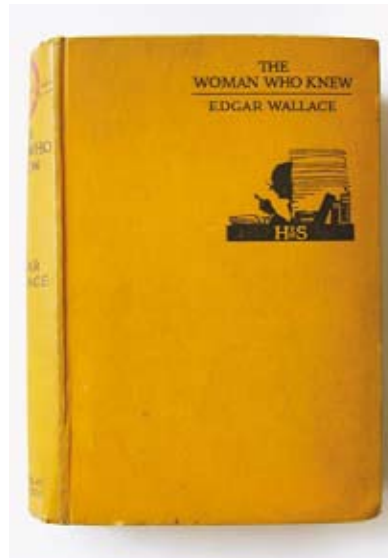


Die frau ohne Eigenschaften  
Roman  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"





Gruppenbild mit Herren  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



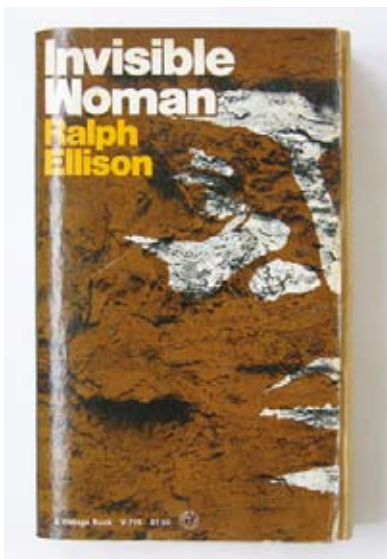
The Woman Who Knew  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



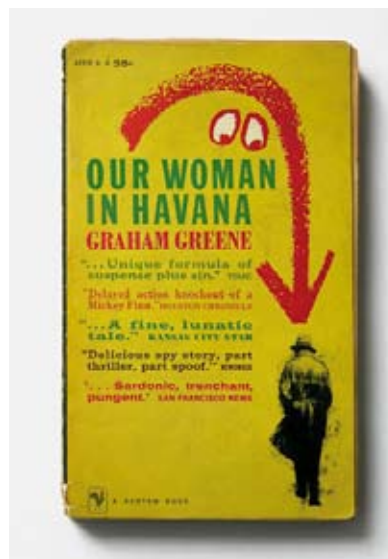
Le Beau et La Bête  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



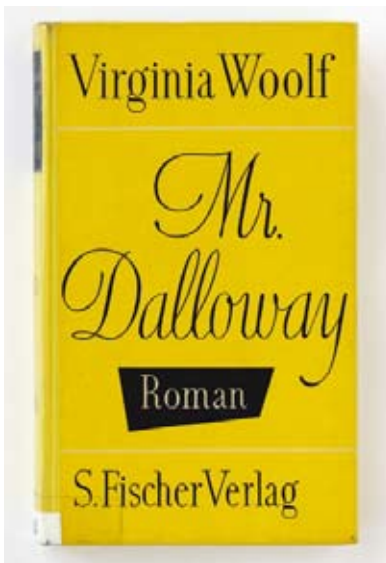
Die Spielerin  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Invisible Woman  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Our Woman in Havana  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



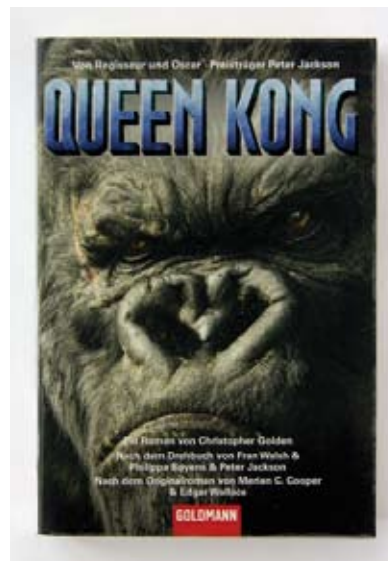
Mr. Dalloway  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Il Deserto Delle Tartare  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Wittgenstein Nichte  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Queen Kong  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



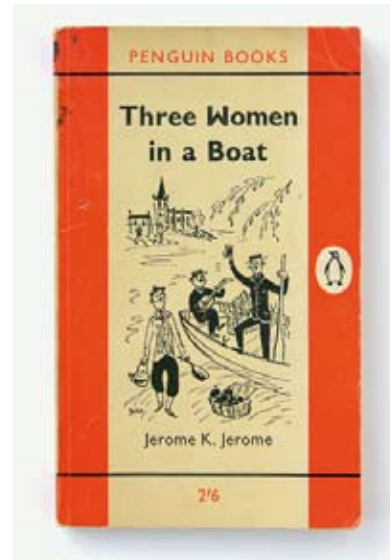
Die Päpstin und der Hexer  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



La Gattoparda  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Une Captive Amoureuse Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



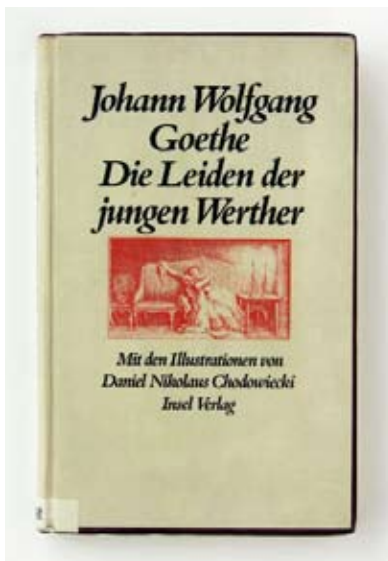
Three Women in a Boat Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Die Erwählte Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Professorin Unrat Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Die Leiden der jungen Werther Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"

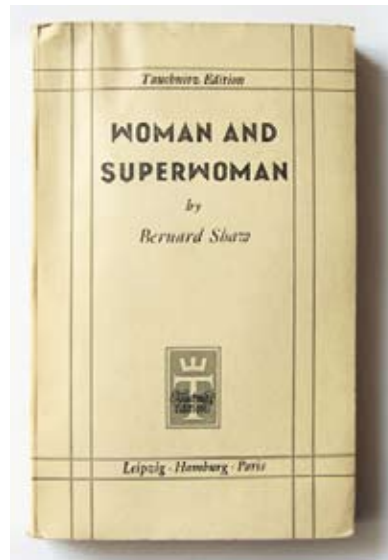


Le Monsieur aux Camélias Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"





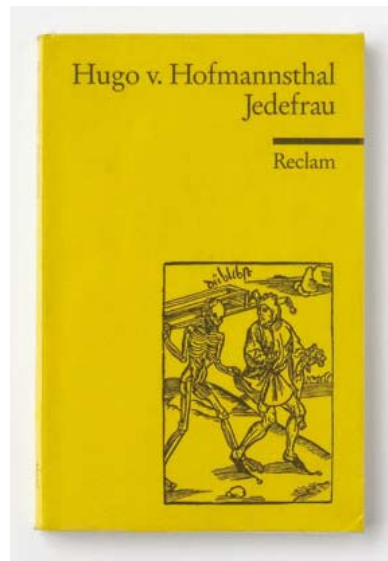
Die Legende von  
der heiligen  
Trinkerin  
Archival Pig-  
ment Print  
11" x 8"



Woman and  
Superwoman  
Archival Pig-  
ment Print  
11" x 8"



Die Steppen-  
wölfin  
Archival Pig-  
ment Print  
11" x 8"



Jedefrau  
Archival Pig-  
ment Print  
11" x 8"



Das Tagebuch  
der Verführerin  
Archival Pig-  
ment Print  
11" x 8"

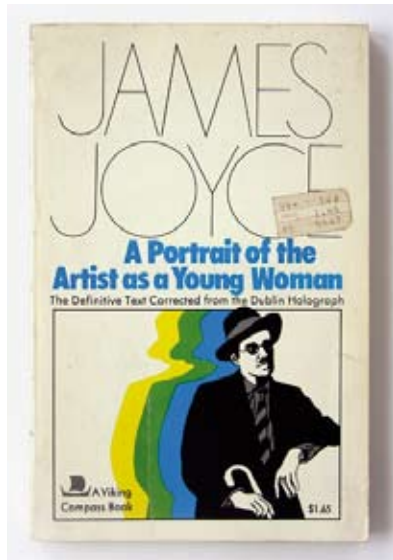


Fr. Dr. Jekyll  
und Mrs. Hyde  
Archival Pig-  
ment Print  
11" x 8"

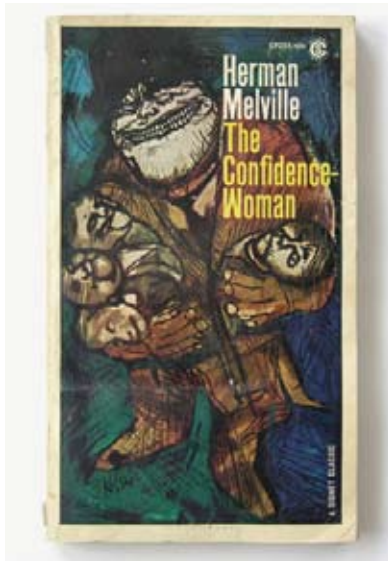




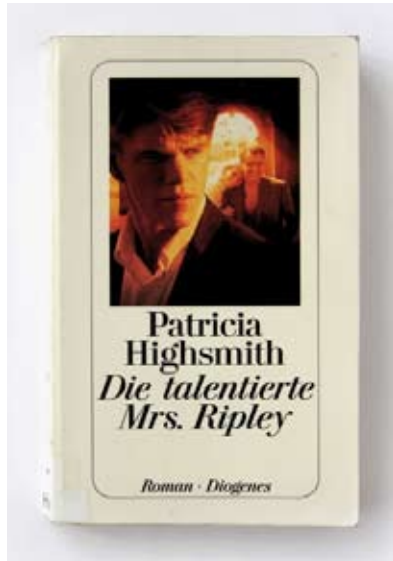
La Petite Princesse  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



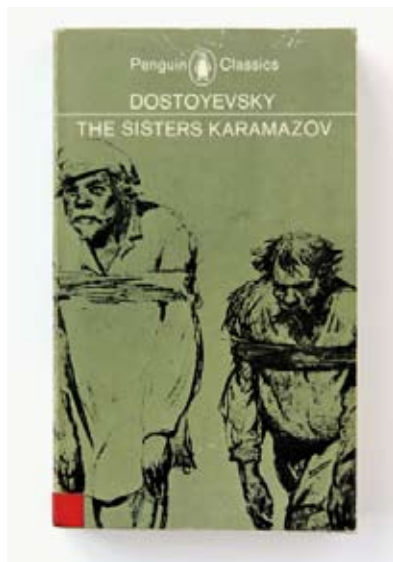
The Confidence Woman  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Die talentierle Mrs. Ripley  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



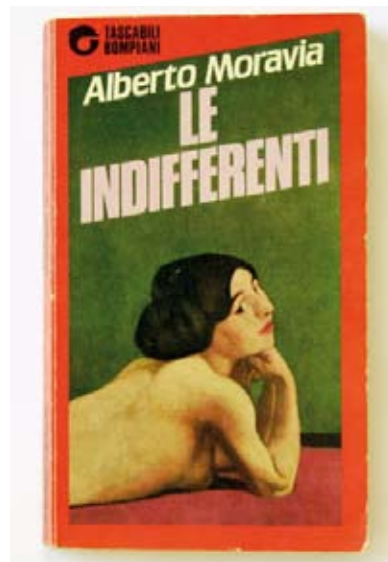
Was geschah, nachdem Nora ihre Frau verlassen hatte?  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



The Sisters Karamazov  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Sei Personaggi in Cerca d'Autrice  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



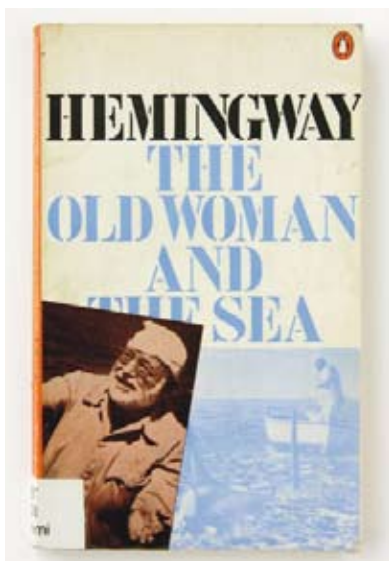
Le Indifferenti  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



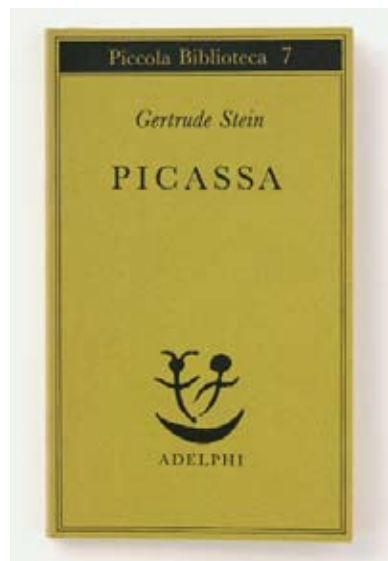
Die dritte Polizistin  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Ragazze di vita  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



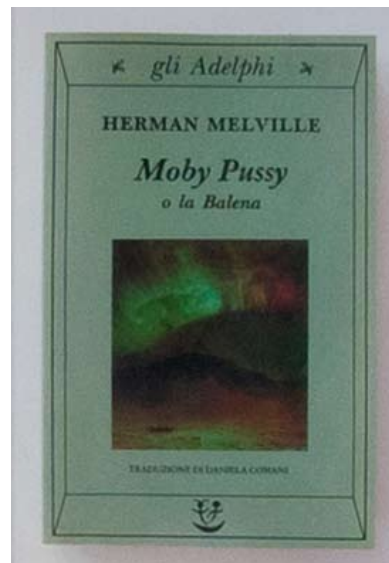
The Old Woman and the Sea  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



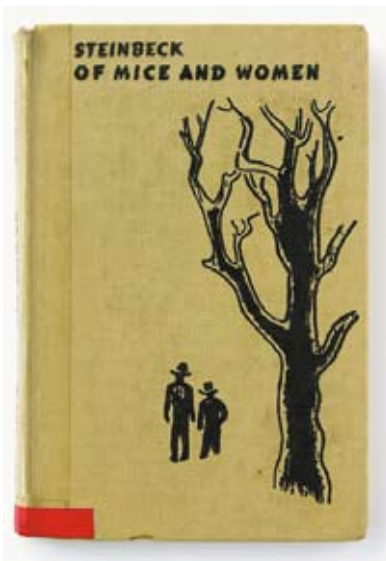
Picasso  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



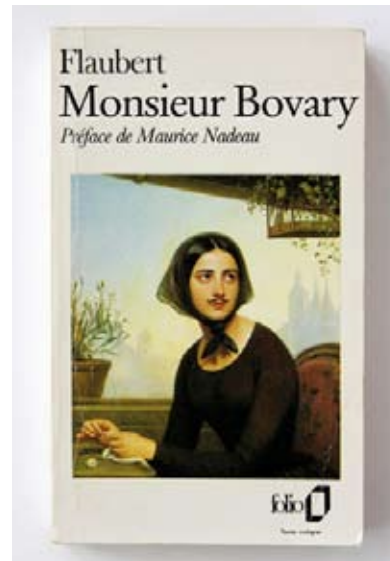
Le Promesse Spose  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Moby Puss  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Of Mice and Women  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"



Monsieur Bovary  
Archival Pigment Print  
11" x 8"







Happy Marriage #09  
Edition of 5  
20 x 24 inches  
Archival Pigment  
Print



Happy Marriage #10  
Edition of 5  
20 x 24 inches  
Archival Pigment  
Print



Happy Marriage #12  
Edition of 5  
20 x 24 inches  
Archival Pigment  
Print



Happy Marriage #18  
Edition of 5  
20 x 24 inches  
Archival Pigment  
Print





Happy Marriage #50  
Edition of 5  
20 x 24 inches  
Archival Pigment  
Print



Happy Marriage #13  
Edition of 5  
20 x 24 inches  
Archival Pigment  
Print



Happy Marriage #16  
Edition of 5  
20 x 24 inches  
Archival Pigment  
Print



Happy Marriage #15  
Edition of 5  
20 x 24 inches  
Archival Pigment  
Print



Happy Marriage #02  
Edition of 5  
20 x 24 inches  
Archival Pigment  
Print



Happy Marriage #11  
Edition of 5  
20 x 24 inches  
Archival Pigment  
Print



Happy Marriage #06  
Edition of 5  
20 x 24 inches  
Archival Pigment  
Print

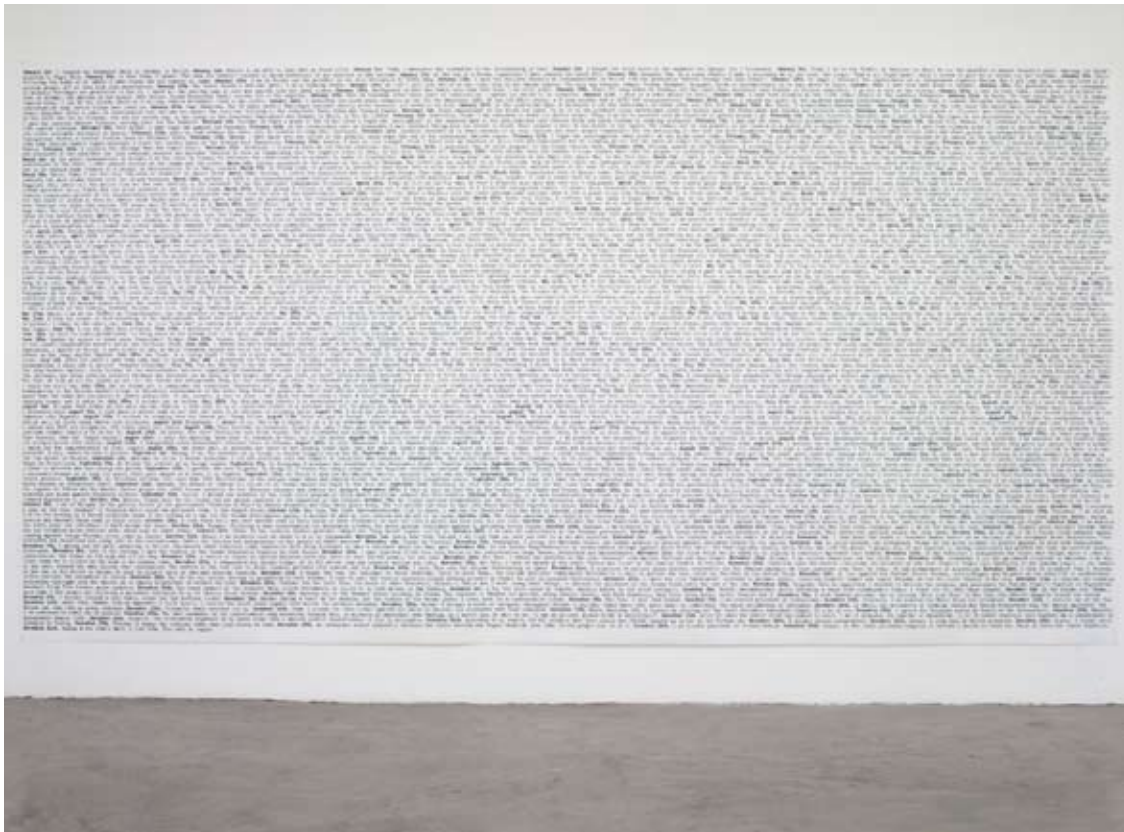


Happy Marriage #19  
Edition of 5  
20 x 24 inches  
Archival Pigment  
Print

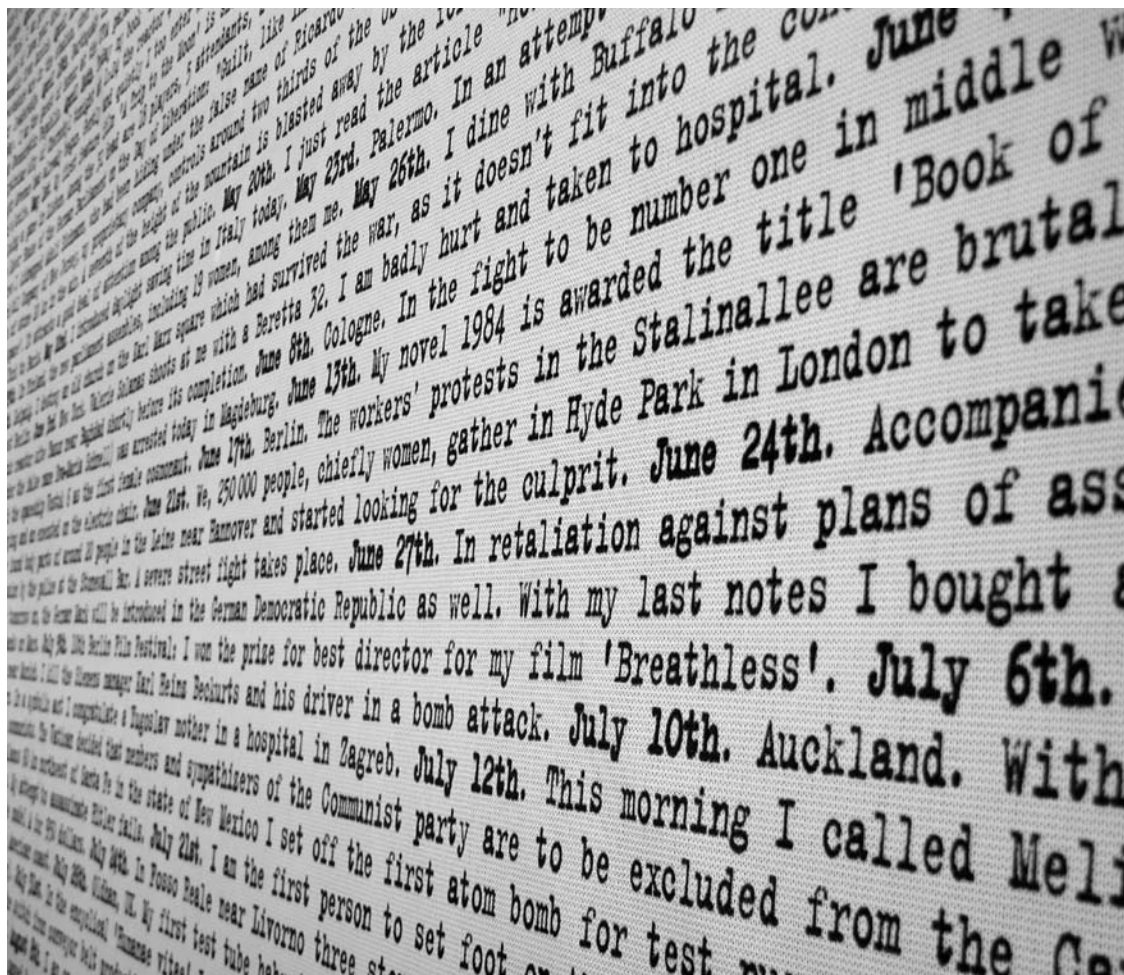


Happy Marriage  
Installation shots  
at Charlie James  
Gallery, April  
2011





It Was Me - Di-  
ary. 1900 - 1999  
119 x 267 inches  
Printed on net  
vinyl  
Edition of 5



It Was Me - Di-  
ary. 1900-1999.  
Detail close-up



# Public project by Daniela Comani: IT WAS ME. DIARY 1900-1999



54th Venice Biennale / The Pavilion of the Republic of San Marino  
June 4 - November 27, 2011 - Palazzo Riva del Vin, San Polo 1097, Venice  
Opening: June 3, 2011, 12 am

IT WAS ME. DIARY 1900-1999 presents one hundred years of history out of any chronological order presented in the first person. Effectively, Comani has written a diary of the 20th century as though all the events actually happened to her. From one day to the next, from one report to the next, she is a passive witness, then an activist, then victim, then perpetrator. In this way she is seemingly the initiator of these twentieth-century historical events. IT WAS ME. DIARY 1900-1999 is in the permanent collections of the Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna and of the Museum on the Seam in Jerusalem.



The 54th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale: Pavilion of the Republic of San Marino  
Exhibition: "Luce In-azione"

Artists: Dorothee Albrecht, Marco Bravura, Cristian Ceccaroni, Daniela Comani, Ottavio Fabbri, Verdiano Manzi, Patrizia Merendi, Omar Paolucci, Cristina Rondaro, Lars Teichmann, Thea Tini, Daniela Tonelli, Paola Turrone

Commissioner: Leo Marino Morganti. Curator: Valerio Pradal. Venue: Palazzo Riva del Vin, San Silvestro, San Polo 1097, Venice

Original language: German. Translations: Italian, English, French, Swedish, Chinese.

Courtesy: the artist, English version: Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles / Italian version: Galleria Studio G7, Bologna

IT WAS ME. DIARY 1900-1999 exists in three versions: as big digital print on vinyl cloth, as audio-installation and as book:  
<http://www.danielacomani.net/publications.html>

Coming soon: IT WAS ME. DIARY 1900-1999 as APP for iPhone: [e-art-apps.com](http://e-art-apps.com) (A project by Ivo Wessel and Gerd Harry Lybke)

# Los Angeles Times

## What if it were 'Mr. Dalloway'? Book covers revisited

**Jacket Copy: Books, Authors and all things Bookish**  
by Carolyn Kellogg

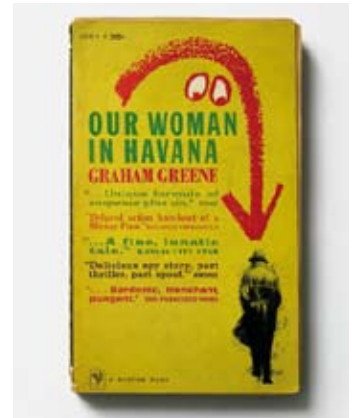
Imagine if Graham Greene's classic had been titled "Our Woman in Havana." How would the story of spies and intrigue have changed? Would readers expect dancing and romance rather than British agent trickery?

German artist Daniela Comani doesn't dig into these questions, but she raises them in her New Publications series, on exhibit now in L.A.'s Charlie James Gallery, her first solo show in the U.S. Much of Comani's art investigates the boundaries of gender; in the New Publications series, she brings her sensibility to literature.

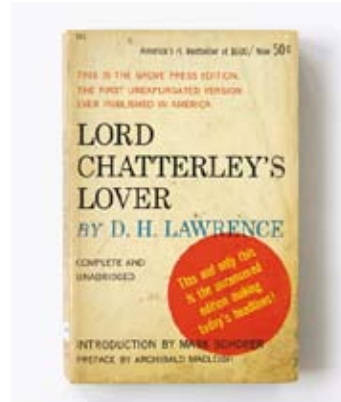
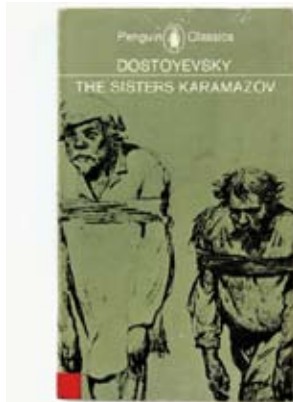
In the series, Comani retitles books by inverting gender-focused words in the titles: "La Petite Princesss" for "The Little Prince," "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Woman" in place of James Joyce's "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man." She uses images of vintage book covers and very closely recreates them.



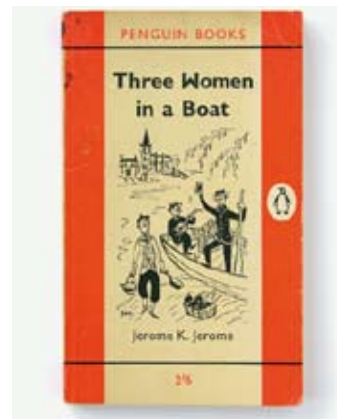
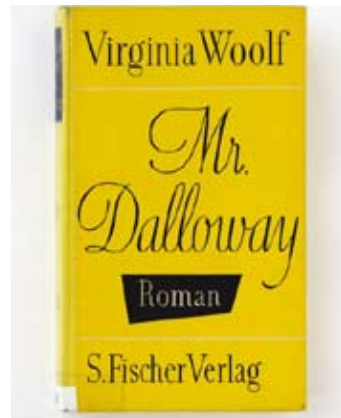
Jean Cocteau's "La Belle et La Bête" ("Beauty and the Beast") is transformed to "Le Beau et La Bête," a switcheroo that would be roughly translated to "The Handsome



Italian author Alberto Moravia isn't as well-known in the U.S. as British spymaster Graham Greene.



Above, Comani does Fyodor Dostoyevsky with "The Sisters Karamozov" and D.H. Lawrence with "Lord Chatterley's Lover."



In addition to retooling Miguel Cervantes' classic as "Don Quixote," Comani created Hermann Hesse's "Die Step-penwolfen" and Ernest Hemingway's "The Old Woman and the Sea." Not pictured: the fairly dirty feminized version of Herman Melville's "Moby Dick."

How would Virginia Woolf's feminist classic "Mrs. Dalloway" change if it were "Mr. Dalloway"? Would it be all about going to work on the day of a party?



## Happy Marriage, Center Stage

L.A. Expanded: Notes from the West Coast  
A weekly column by Catherine Wagley

Human Nature is the remarkably, almost assaultingly, immense title of Los Angeles County Museum of Art's current exhibition of art from its contemporary collection. But a walk through the galleries will quickly show you that immensity is actually far from the point. Unlike past exhibitions with similar sounding names—The Family of Man, MoMA's 1955 paean to unity, comes to mind—the point of this show is categories. The images and objects in it, all made since '68, are almost too tightly grouped. There's body-centered, identity-searching work by Hannah Wilke, Carlee Fernandez and Ana Mendieta all in a row; a nostalgic assemblage by Betye Saar right across from an equally history-heavy sculpture by Saar's daughter, Alison; pithy, politically charged text pieces by Mel Bochner, Glenn Ligon and John Baldessari hang together in the same room as Bruce Nauman's neon pinwheel of weighty adjectives, also called Human Nature and the loosely the inspiration for this show. When I visited the exhibition a week ago, I spent a particularly long time with a series of vintage portraits by agile, conscientious Brooklyn-based artist Lorna Simpson. The portraits dealt with categories in a way that seemed more compelling, and more human, than the show on the whole. They captured the amazing ability people have to become what they see in the world—to tailor themselves to categories—without making this proclivity for fitting in seem any less mystifying than it really is.

A few years ago, Simpson discovered some photographs from 1957, most of a woman, and some of a man. The couple posed in ways that recalled Hollywood pin-ups despite their modest domicile. Simpson restaged the images, playing the roles and adopting the poses of both man and woman herself. The resulting photos, on view at LACMA and efficiently titled 1957–2009 Interiors #3, show the artist beside a chess board or wielding a guitar, wearing a plaid suit, an Elvis-worthy white shirt and rolled up slacks, or a cleavage-stressing blouse with tight black shorts and black heels to match. The “couple” looks like the mingling of sleek gorgeousness that could have resulted had Nat King Cole and Lena Horne become a thing. Hung interspersed with the originals, Simpson's restaged photos don't “reveal” anything about their subjects. Instead, they drive home just how posed and idiosyncrasy-free home-made images can be.

I thought of Simpson when, last Saturday, I saw Berlin-based artist Daniela Comani's Happy Marriage project, a series of staged photographs on view at Charlie James Gallery in Chinatown. Like Simpson, Comani plays both male and female roles in digitally altered portraits of a marriage that, though cliché to extreme, feels wholly believable. If Simpson's series channels 50s pin-ups, Comani's channels present-day Bohemia. The couple reads classics in bed, wears plaid, buys wine and cheese and, I suspect, recycles religiously. That they are both women who have uncannily similar features is a surprisingly easy detail to overlook. Comani plays husband and wife so comfortably that what should be subversive—this happy marriage isn't just queer, but practically incestuous in its self-involvement—instead feels perfectly predictable.

The fabulously mannish writer Gertrude Stein and her more-or-less wife Alice B. Toklas, delicate and domestic despite her thin black mustache, had a marriage that, by most apparent measures, should have been deviant or at least unconventional. But they didn't see it that way.

When a young journalist named Robert Duncan asked Toklas whether she and Stein ever felt “set apart” (he was referring to their Jewishness, but Toklas' response can safely be extrapolated), she replied, “Never. We never had any feeling of any minority. We weren't the minority. We represented America.” And so they did, Alice with her French cooking tips (The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook preceded Julia Child's first by seven years), Stein with her by-the-bootstraps wealth and both with their pioneering sense of intellectual entitlement.

Neither Comani's nor Simpson's projects feature “the minority” either. They portray people who, at least in the way the pose themselves, live at the center of cultural convention.



Daniela Comani, “Happy Marriage #02,” Edition of 5, Archival pigment print, 20 x 24 inches.



Daniela Comani

1965 born in Bologna, Italy; lives and works in Berlin, Germany

Daniela Comani's multimedia installations engage in a dialog about history, language, identity, alienation and intimacy. Her work focuses on media images and text, which she manipulates through photography and video, and combines in her drawings and installations. Her work has been shown internationally and is included in the collections of Museum on the Seam, Jerusalem, Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bologna and Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin.

#### Selected Exhibitions

2010: Überblendungen, Shedhalle, Zürich; Courier, University Art Museum, University at Albany, State University of New York; C'était moi. Journal 1900-1999, Centre d'Art Passerelle, Brest (E); Press Art - Die Sammlung Annette und Peter Nobel, Museum der Moderne, Salzburg; 2009: Zeigen - Eine Audiotour durch Berlin, Temporäre Kunsthalle, Berlin; Kaléidoscope d'Italie, Centre national de l'audiovisuel, Dudelange, Luxembourg; 2008: Transmediale08 - conspire!, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; Heart-Quake, Museo on the Seam, Jerusalem; Focus on Contemporary Italian Art, MAMbo - Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bologna; Bildpolitiken, Salzburger Kunstverein, Salzburg; 2007: History will repeat itself, Hartware MedienKunstVerein, Dortmund und KW-Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin; Ich war's - In 32 Tagen um den Alexanderplatz. 1805-2007, NGBK - U2 Alexanderplatz, Berlin (E); 2006: Das Achte Feld, Museum Ludwig, Köln.

#### Selected Bibliography

2009 Neuerscheinungen hrsg. von Daniela Comani, Edition Patrick Frey, Zürich; 2007 It Was Me - Diary 1900-1999 / Sono stata io. Diario 1900-1999, Maurizio Corraini s.r.l., Mantova; 2000 Double Drawings, Vice Versa Verlag, Berlin; 1995 Speculum Absconditum, Wiensowski & Harbord, Berlin