

## SHERRY FRUMKIN GALLERY

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### Robin Kandel

EXHIBITION: June 30 – August 11, 2007

OPENING RECEPTION: Saturday, June 30, 2007 7 – 9 PM



SHERRY FRUMKIN GALLERY is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of work by Bay Area artist, **Robin Kandel**, opening Saturday, June 30, 2007 with a reception from 7 – 9 pm.

The untitled exhibition of videos, photographs, painting, maps and found objects is a child's eye view of how one comes to understand identity. Who am I? Where did I come from? Where do I fit into history? For most people these questions are answered in childhood through the stories families tell about themselves. What happens when they are only partly told?

In the September 11<sup>th</sup> aftermath Kandel was stunned when her father revealed the existence of audio interviews he had given in 1983 to a researcher of WWII survivors. "Listening to the tapes for the first time left me dazed," she wrote. It also led to several bodies of work that took her away from painting into video performance and installation. She tried to assimilate knowledge of her Ukrainian father as a boy in a Nazi labor camp: the back-breaking work and escape and nearly two years in the woods, hiding and on the run.

Robin Kandel's mother, born in Detroit and her dad, born in Ukraine, are cousins, but as kids growing up on opposite sides of the Atlantic, they were unaware of each other's existence. If not for WWII they might never have met. Her dad's childhood was a dramatic one of survival in the forests of Ukraine. Her mother's by contrast, epitomized the American WWII experience, except for her family's relation to the Purple Gang, a Capone-style Detroit gang of the Prohibition/Depression Era.

What to make of all this? The current exhibition includes the video "dress-up" in which Kandel takes on a number of characters who define her family's history - among them a woman with a purse, a 30's era gangster and a nazi who symbolizes the war the led to her parents' meeting. Having missed the opportunity to grow into her identity slowly over childhood, Kandel tries on all the costumes to get inside the people whose lives lead to her own. The unlikely assortment of images and objects she has collected in this installation are fragments of her parents' story. "I suppose it's my story as well. In the process of 'putting the pieces together' the ideas I'd formed in childhood about 'where I came from' didn't disappear, they expanded to encompass new information. This new information answered some questions and raised others. Now I'm wondering what is myth, what is fact, and are the two inseparable?"

Robin Kandel received her BFA in painting at the University of Michigan in 1983 and was awarded the Pollack-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2001. She has exhibited at Mirage Gallery, Tokyo, Japan; Gallery ef Tokyo, Tokyo, Japan; Sesnon Gallery, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA and the Slusser Gallery, Ann Arbor, Michigan. She is represented by Andrea Schwartz Gallery in San Francisco. This is her first exhibition with Sherry Frumkin.