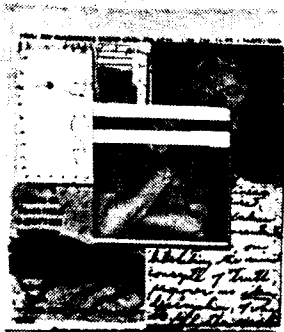


PICK

Mixed Messages: Collages were big in the 1930s and '40s, when artists made paste-ups to depict a chaotic, frag-

mented world. They got hot again during the Pop Art phase, when it seemed that everything worth saying had already been said, so why not just rearrange it? The problem with most of these works is that they say too much in too small a space. But Janet Maher has taken the collage and given it a narrower, more human scope—herself. Her new show, *Un-guided Tour*, is an abstract autobiography in mixed media, a series of collages combining printed texts, classical images, and other add-ons for affixing those personal fixations. Check it out at the Non sequitur Music Gallery on 5th Street. Shows Oct. 1 through Nov. 30. Call 224-9434 for more information.



WEEKLY ALIBI • SEPTEMBER 27 TO OCTOBER 3

JANET MAHER

UNGUIDED TOUR: COLLAGES

NONSEQUITUR MUSIC GALLERY
317 5TH ST. SW, ALBUQUERQUE

...before we can become conscious we must be able to know that we are unconscious, and where, when, and to what extent.
—James Hillman, *Anima—An Anatomy of a Personified Notion*

Some time ago I read the statement that the 20th century is the century of collage as an art form. Increasingly, viewers of art are likely to see collage techniques used to make paintings, sculpture, works on paper, and installations, as well as video and computer-manipulated images. Collage, montage, assemblage, bricolage. The bricoleur is one who combines materials—someone who cobbles together a whole from disparate parts, and it doesn't matter whether the parts are entirely conceptual bits and pieces or the physical remains/remembrances of things past.

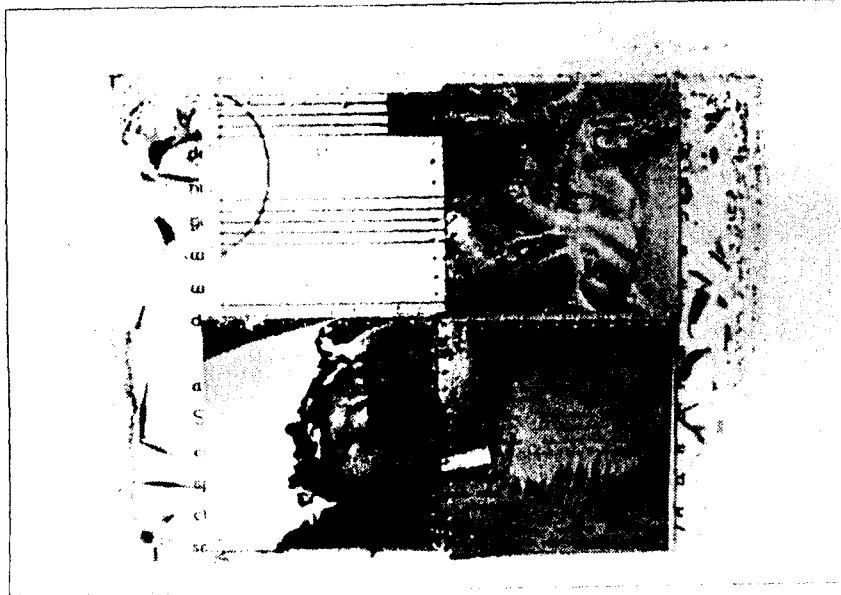
Most individuals engaged with collage techniques, such as Albuquerque artist Janet Maher, find themselves pulled along by the slipstream of symbolic materials. The artist finds her or himself awash in affinities, fascinations, flirtations, and obsessions with images of all sorts—as if, by

these visual attractions (or repulsions), the nature of her or his psyche could be partially revealed. Maher makes collages that reflect the process of the psyche's attempt to fathom its own depths. She combines all types of mainly two-dimensional materials including photographs, stamps, fragments of text, and images of a clay mask of her own face. All of this information sends the viewer's thoughts in many directions at once.

Maher's collages are slivers of soul—echoes of her psychological "subtle body," fragments of her unconscious, perceptions of differences within the slippery fabric of the self. Radiating from the images are only hints and shadows of the essentially fugitive state of the psyche from one moment to the next. In addition, despite Maher's laborious efforts to stitch together her fascinations and obsessions, there is a spontaneous air surrounding her images, as if Maher were continuously, but unself-consciously, taking notes regarding her states of mind, and then visualizing them in relationship to other people and to the world.

Maher often recycles and reworks her images from one year or one decade to the next, and as the artist states, her collages may become "reseeded into future pieces." Although Maher's collages tend to be small and fragile looking, they manage to sidestep the appearance of being overly precious. Many of her compilations of visual and poetic moments will most likely go under the artist's knife and reappear as other stackings, layerings, and amplifications of obscure objects of psychic desire.

DIANE ARMITAGE



Janet Maher, *Untitled # 28*, mixed media, 4' x 5 1/2", 1995