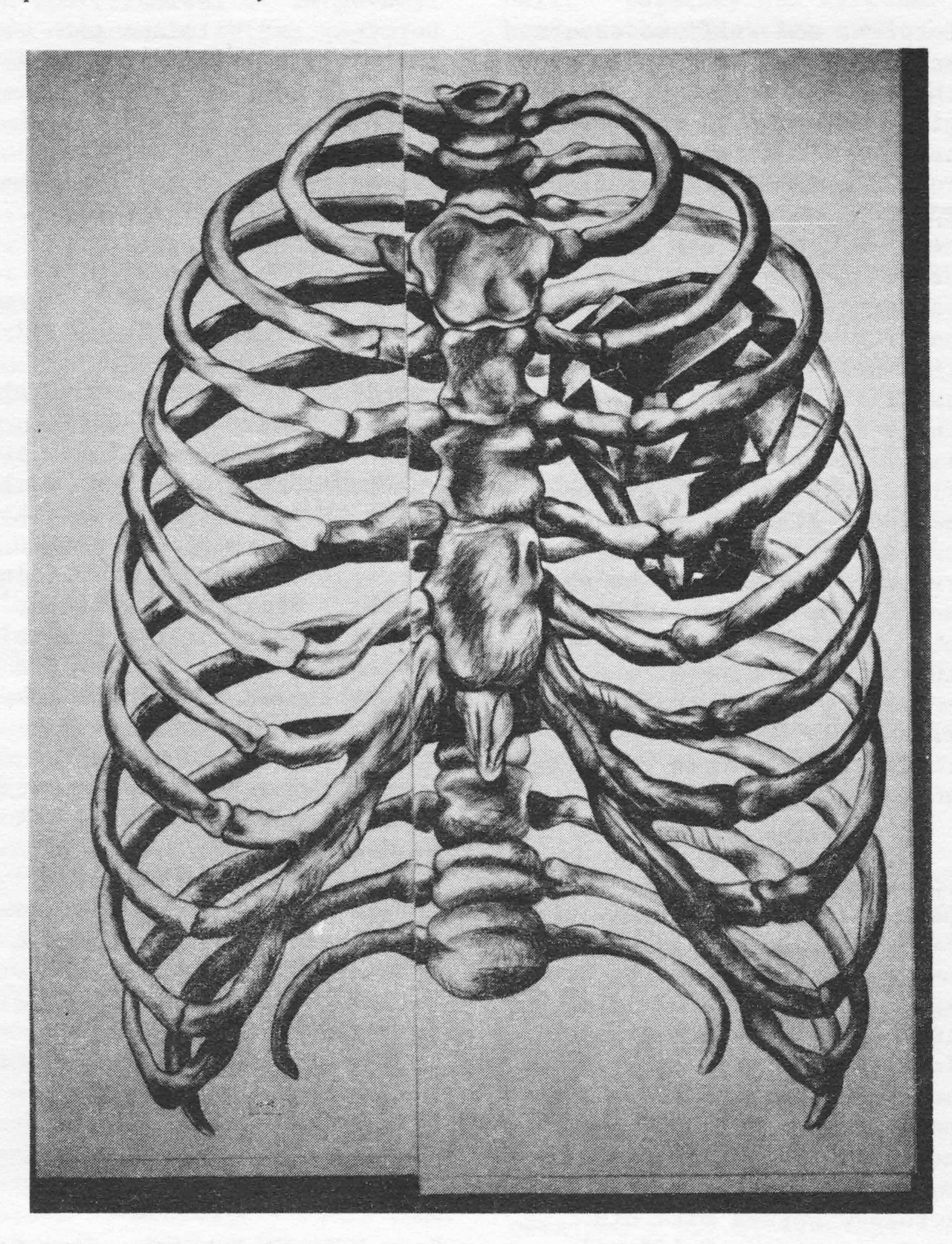
Untitled Installation, 1978 (detail). Grease pencil and latex paint on two offset parrallel walls, 147" x 113".



MATRIX 10 is the product of a collaboration between two artists, Jon Borofsky and Megan Williams. Their approach to art making is completely unrestrained: natural objects, string forms, cardboard cutouts, and two-dimensional images, drawn from opaque projections, are combined. The result is an energetic environment of personal images.

Borofsky and Williams create an environment that envelops the viewer in the psychological meanderings of a free associative situation. Toward this end, the gallery space in which the environment is located has been dealt with as a totality rather than as a series of hanging walls; each part of the whole space is activated as if it were a canvas. Three-dimensional illusionism is casually mixed with flat images to enhance immediacy, pictures bend around corners or are rhythmically repeated throughout the space, and almost no work is found at eye level. According to the artists, a total and unencumbered approach to space reproduces the atmosphere of their studios where greater energy and flux exists.

Collaborations have in the past been methods to divide . large commissions among a cadre of artists and craftsmen; usually, overall direction was given by one person. In the twentieth century, however, collaboration has more often represented the merger of individual egos. During the Spring of 1978 Borofsky worked with his students at the California Institute of the Arts on a large collaborative effort of this kind; the MATRIX exhibition developed from

this experiment. Like Dada and Surrealist collaborations, Borofsky and Williams contribute equally and spontaneously toward often unexpected conclusions. Together in the gallery for eight days, following several months of preparation, the artists worked on each other's images in the manner of participants in a jazz rhythm section who respond to one another's musical thoughts, alternately leading or following. For Borofsky and Williams the goal is a similar meshing of imaginations, as in one part of the installation in which a ruby is located within a rib cage; this image combines themes invented by Borofsky and Williams respectively.

Epitomizing the artists' collaboration is the union of two-dimensional images, which are Borofsky's usual method, with three-dimensional formats, which Williams has used in the past. For instance, Borofsky's running man is placed within the spatial setting of Williams' spiral. Similarly, Williams' string head creates a tangible ambience in which is located the self-portrait by Borofsky. The relationship of these heads, like the images of interlocking bones and chains in the exhibition, is an apt evocation of the Borofsky/ Williams collaboration. "Megan & Jon '78" on the concrete wall near the skylight further characterizes the collaboration. Essentially, love and its concommittant emphasis on two psyches uniting is the principal subject of several of the images in the environment.

From 1968-75 Borofsky showed scraps of paper and wall drawings that directly narrated dreams he had had. These fragments were not altered

in any way or made more "finished" in appearance during this time. But in 1976 Borofsky isolated a few of the dreams and developed some drawings which raised the anecdotal element in his work to a more archetypal level; the figure of the running man, another self-portrait, developed at this time. Borofsky's turn to collaboration further alters his early emphasis on the dream unrestrained. Now dreams and other fragmentary images are subject to modification by being joined with the less subconsciously-founded imagery and forms that Williams has created. In keeping with Borofsky's turn to archetypal situations in 1976, the works in MATRIX contrast with the early narrative works by having a symbolic or emblematic quality. For example, Borofsky freely relates the ruby with a heart. Indeed, he now says that he attempts to will his dreams to become more archetypal in nature.

An awareness of societal issues has always been present in Borofsky's dreams, for instance the conflict between races is a frequent subject. In this Borofsky's stance is completely at odds with the romantic isolation of earlier figures such as Van Gogh. Rather, Borofsky evinces an integration with society in his work. While no dreams of that kind appear in MATRIX, evidence of a concern for social issues is, nevertheless, present. Borofsky and Williams attempt a collaboration in which each artist plays an absolutely equal role. By doing so they integrate one of the significant social issues of the period-equal rights--with the endeavors of their art.

While Borofsky and Williams indicate a commitment to one aspiration of their epoch the overall stance of the work in MATRIX is a denial of all expectations concerning contemporary or historical art. Emphasizing this characteristic is the one dream in the exhibition: "Dear Jon, There is very little difference between the commonplace and the avantgarde. Very Truly, Salvador Dali." Borofsky and Williams have stated that they seek to avoid the "look of art." The rough hewn, primitivistic style, which is a hallmark of Borofsky's earlier works, is in keeping with this goal, as is the placement of objects and images everywhere except the normal eye-level of painting, a quality typical of Williams' previous work. Adding to the declaration of this attitude are various eclectic and unfashionable techniques such as tromp 1'oeil shadows, use of real objects (sea horses and leaves) and the general atmosphere of a fun house. Furthermore, the prominent employment of mandalas is an intransigent gesture of anti-Western spirituality at a time when such gestures are considered retarditaire.

Jon Borofsky was born in Boston in 1942. He received a B.F.A. from Carnegie Mellon University in 1964 and an M.F.A. from Yale University in 1966. In 1977 the artist moved from New York to become a faculty member at the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia. He is represented by the Paula Cooper Gallery in New York. Megan Williams was born in Ohio in 1956, and obtained a B.F.A. from the California Institute of the Arts. She resides in Los Angeles.

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Selected group exhibitions (Borofsky): Seattle Art Museum (also Vancouver Art Gallery), 557,087, '70; Dwan Gallery, NYC, Language Show IV, '70; University of Guelph, Canada, Narrative in Contemporary Art, '75; Fine Arts Building, NYC, Lives, '75; Downtown Branch, Whitney Museum of American Art, Antogeography, '75; Fine Arts Building, NYC, Style and Process, '76; Venice Biennale, Italy, International Tendencies 72-76, '76; Akademie der Kunst, West Berlin (also Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark), Soho, '76; California State University, Los Angeles, New Work/New York, '76; New York State Museum, Albany, New York: The State of Art, '77; Holly Solomon Gallery, NYC, Surrogates/ Self-Portraits, '77; University of California, Santa Barbara, Contemporary Drawing, New York, '78; Protetch-McIntosh Gallery, Washington, D.C., Minimal Image, '78.

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179 (March 1970), p. 95.

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Smith, Roberta. Artforum, vol. 12, no. 5 (Jan. 1974), pp. 75-76.

Lippard, Lucy. "Jonathan Borofsky at 2,096,974," Art-forum, vol. 13, no. 3 (Nov. 1974), pp. 62-63.

Rosenthal, Mark. MATRIX
18: Jon Borofsky (Hartford:
Wadsworth Atheneum '76).

Deitsch, Jeffrey, "Before the Reason of Images: The New Work of Jon Borofsky," Arts, vol. 50 (Oct. 1976), pp. 98-99.

Thomas Morgan. "Jon Borofsky's Dream Language," Artweek, vol. 8, no. 17 (April 23, 1977), p. 4.

Bourdon, David. "Discerning the Shaman from the Showman," <u>Village Voice</u>, (July 4, 1977), p. 83.

Smith, Philip. "Jon Borofsky," Arts, vol. 52 (March 1978), p. 13.

Plous, Phyllis. Contemporary Drawing/New York,
(Santa Barbara: University of California Art Museum '78).

Statements in the text attributed to the artists were taken from conversations with the author in June, 1978.

Selected one-person exhibitions (Borofsky):
Paula Cooper Gallery, NYC
'75; Wadsworth Atheneum,
Hartford '76; Paula Cooper
Gallery, NYC '76; University
of California, Irvine '77;
Protetch-McIntosh Gallery,
Washington D.C. '78; Thomas
Lewallen Gallery, Los Angeles
'78.

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