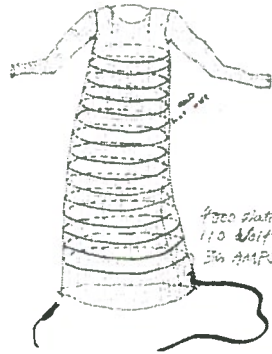




**"I Want You to Feel the Way I Do":
Drawings & Sketches of
Jana Sterbak 1975-2000**

Venue: Alvin Hamilton Room, Canadian Embassy in Beijing;
The Loft, Gongti beilu, Beijing

Date: October 13-Nov. 28, 2000



Jana Sterbak is an internationally renowned artist of penetrating creative vision. A true multimedia artist, Sterbak pushes beyond three-dimensional space by combining sculpture, video, audio recordings, photographs and many other forms of modern expression. By intertwining various media, her work springs forth in a symphony of provocation. At the crossroads between installation and performance art, Sterbak has won herself international recognition, and her works have been featured in galleries around the world.

Sterbak is perhaps best known for "Vanitas: Flesh Dress for an Albino Anorectic." Sewn together from 50 pounds of flank steak, the dress cures over a period of weeks from fresh meat to a dry skin, graphically demonstrating the transitory nature of our physical existence. Another well-known piece incorporating both sculpture and video elements is "Remote Control," an installation in which the sculptural component is a large metal armature in the form of a crinoline skirt on wheels. In the accompanying video a woman is lowered into the armature, the movement of which is determined by a remote control held by a woman, or alternatively, by a tuxedo-clad man. The woman derives great pleasure when she holds the power, yet it can be viewed as a metaphor for female dependency when the remote control is controlled by the man.

Both of these works reveal Sterbak's use of irony and black humour in dealing with serious subjects, a theme which relates to her Czech heritage and particularly to the influential

writings of Jaroslav Hasek. According to Sterbak, "The most important thing to be learned [from Hasek] is that serious subjects need not be treated in a humourless way . . . Czechs were seldom the ruling class and so a certain amount of humour was necessary in order to survive, and irony in order to communicate."

In 1955, Sterbak was born in Prague and later immigrated to Canada at the age of thirteen in 1968. Her multifaceted works are influenced by her early experiences of a new culture, language, religion and political system in Canada. Grounded in her memories of Prague, medieval myths, folk tales and the writings of Franz Kafka, Karel Capek and Hasek, the work of Jana Sterbak interweaves the abstract with emotion. She now lives in Montréal and Barcelona.

Jana Sterbak's work has been featured in galleries around the world. Over the last five years alone, she has held solo exhibitions at the Musée d'art moderne de Saint-Etienne; the Fundacio Antoni Tapies, Barcelona; the Serpentine Gallery, London; the Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark; and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

In a limited engagement, audiences in China will, for the first time, be able to experience 26 of Jana Sterbak's eclectic works. The first series is comprised of 9 drawings ranging in shades of light to dark grey, an abstract immersion into contemplation. These works have been shown only once in Vancouver during Sterbak's early beginnings in 1977. In the second series, 17 sketches of Sterbak's renowned installation and performance projects (1979-2000) will be on display. Some of these features include four sketches of *I Want You to Feel the Way I Do . . . (The Dress)*, *After Shakespeare*, and *Time-Space*.

Curator Louise Déry will be presenting Jana Sterbak's works in this premier exhibition. Ms. Déry is a professor of art history and the director of la Galerie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal which will hold this same exhibition in Spring 2001.

The Embassy would like to thank the artist, as well as the curator, for letting this exhibition first come to Beijing.