

press quotes

DREAMS (breathe/don't breathe) OF HOME and THE BEGINNING OR THE END

"[In 'Dreams of Home'] Arsem brings both a clear, stark sense of visual design and a strong performance presence to her work. Her direct approach to the audience is as engaging as it is unsettling."

-Robert Hurwitt, **San Francisco Examiner**

"['Dreams of Home'] could be described as part creation myth and part mountain woman meets the grim reaper....For me, this presentation was full of humor, though there were definitely dark undertones....Ms. Arsem's joyful, wise expression took the chill off this performance, even with all the references to death."

-Susan Broili, **The Durham Sun** (North Carolina)

"Among the high points [of the Cleveland Performance Art Festival] were nationally known veterans Marilyn Arsem, whose 'Dreams (breathe/don't breathe) of Home' was an oddly beautiful and bizarre analysis of our relationship to death and nature and home..."

-Amy Sparks, **High Performance** (Los Angeles)

"In 'Dreams (breathe/don't breathe) of Home Boston performer Marilyn Arsem transforms the stereotypically feminine tasks of cooking, sewing, and child care from drudgery to alchemy, playing along the boundary between life and death."

-Amy Parker, **Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory** (New York)

"Arsem's mixture of child-like glee and ritualistic madness created an incredible tension between charm and the grotesque....With the kind of fixated cheeriness of either a child at play or a mad scientist hard at work on a ground-breaking experiment, Arsem began to meticulously sew... The suggestion of repeating cycles of eating/destruction and birth/transformation was quite clear, and Arsem's genuine charm as a performer gave her ritualistic actions a truly frightening edge."

-Jeff Abell, **New Art Examiner** (Chicago)

"It's always been intriguing to figure out exactly what state of mind Arsem is in while creating these creatures for an audience....It has often seemed to me to be a mild state of possession: by a North American urban creator goddess, or by the creature itself that she transforms with her bare hands. ...Whether its possession or advanced clowning, Arsem's state in performance is altered, neither shaped by acting techniques nor confined to mundane authenticity....These performances were viscerally engaging. Its an unpretty, direct use of elemental materials - flesh, food, body parts - and at times Arsem seemed less a performer than an alchemist. The winged and footed fish didn't really come alive, but the creation and destruction in 'Dreams' and 'The Beginning or the End' imitated the work of a goddess, which is one part of what ritual in performance is about."

-David Miller, **High Performance** (Los Angeles)