

# Samson Projects announces a new arrival

## Trendy moms-to-be meet hip video art at South End gallery

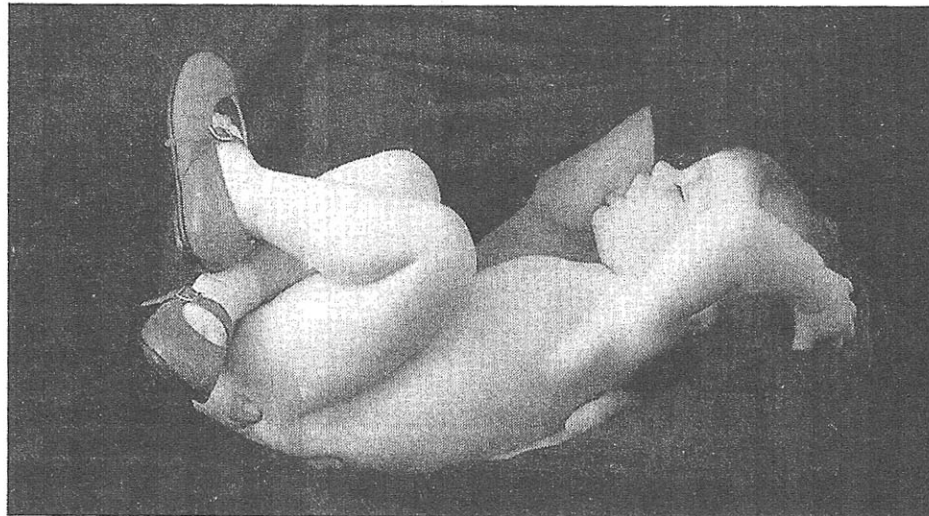
BY D'LYNNE PLUMMER  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Isn't every day that you hear of an art exhibit in New York being pulled or censored for provocative content—it's hard to imagine what galleries, stores and theatres *wouldn't* dare to present. Well, what about a woman breastfeeding? Hardly the most shocking thing New Yorkers have ever seen, yet enough to spur a controversy and to inspire one local gallery and Newbury Street store to have... a fashion show.

The Ferragamo family commissioned the highly regarded artist Amy Jenkins to create artwork to showcase in the Salvatore Ferragamo Gallery last May, leaving the content to the artist's prerogatives. Choosing baby Ferragamo shoes to don her daughter's feet, Jenkins created a 20 minute video of maternal care documenting a sometimes sleeping, sometimes nursing baby in her mother's arms, its rich and warm colors echoing centuries of Old Masters' paintings. Accused of containing "sexual and controversial content," the video, entitled "Audrey's Samsara," was never exhibited.

Until tonight.

"I never imagined my first fashion collaboration in Boston would be with maternity fashionistas," said Camillo Alvarez of the Samson Projects. But when Katie Tagliavia, owner of the maternity clothing store 9 Months, began following the Jenkins story she desired to spotlight the artist's video at her next maternity clothing fashion



Amy Jenkins's "Audrey's Samsara"

event. After all, nursing a baby and sustaining that life is a natural extension of pregnancy. After tracking down Jenkins, all Tagliavia needed was the right venue. Camillo Alvarez of the Samson Projects also animates his exhibits with public events, presenting programs that extend the import of his shows. And this is how Jenkins' "controversial" video happened upon Boston, premiering tonight at the gallery currently committed to "Notorious Impropropriety"—an exhibit that questions and reveals society's biases and apprehensions, naughty behavior and politically incorrect disarray.

"Anticipation: A Collaboration of Art and Fashion" starts at 6:30 p.m. and, in honor of Fashion Week, Samson Projects will be less of white cube than ever before, sporting a catwalk with pregnant models recruited from Tagliavia's expecting clientele and the

premiere showing.

Since Demi Moore graced the cover of *Vanity Fair* in '91 with her very naked and very pregnant self, the trend to hide the bulging belly has been slowly turning upside down. Women were once expected to hide their signs of pregnancy in the workplace, and maternity fashion played along with the trend to mask the growing curves with yards of fabric. Those days have come and gone, replaced by looks that highlight rather than hide a pregnant woman's body. At 9 Months, now on Newbury Street, Katie Tagliavia keeps women proud of expanding waistlines whilst keeping them in style.

"Pregnancy becomes a year of a woman's life. They are pregnant for ten months, not nine, and then there is a postpartum period of two to three months. Maternity clothes occupy a year of your life! So the designs we

carry are extensions of the current fashion trends." Accommodating what is en vogue, these fashion-savvy maternity clothes inspire confidence.

So the ever-growing trend to accentuate the ever-growing figure is a relieving and celebratory contrast to the dark days of hiding the bulging-belly that carries and nurtures life. But what about the world that finds a softly-rendered video portrait of sustaining life postpartum offensive?

"For Ferragamo to drop the artwork and to not compensate the artist is an absolute breach of contract. And to call the work sexual—now that's crazy," Alvarez claims, suspecting that Bostonians may actually be more open-minded. "It all reminds me of the sexual revolution and the bra-burning of the 70's." I wonder if women have to do it all over again as a reminder that these barriers were, supposedly, already broken.

Regardless of socio-political statements and controversy, if you or someone you know is expecting an addition to the family, the 32 exciting maternity outfits are well worth seeing, modeled tonight on a range of pregnant beauties. Meanwhile, on the plasma screen TV and surrounded by video stills for sale, bright Ferragamo shoes adorn a feeding baby completely unaware of all the excitement. The combination of art and fashion may just inspire a wave of maternity leaves.

*"Anticipation: A Collaboration of Art and Fashion" takes place Thursday, October 21 at 6:30 p.m. at Samson Projects, 450 Harrison Avenue, Suite 63.*