What a celebration! Have we forgotten that before Nancy Spero was shown at MoMA, in 1976 she was picketing the place, demanding that an exhibition include fifty percent women? Now she is a floating goddess among a heavenly host of winged women artists—as owls, bees, and humming birds—in Mary Beth Edelson’s wonderful Untitled (2015). This wall collage, around an arch, celebrates her sisters in art, many deceased. Two photographs celebrating female spirituality are also shown: Woman Rising / Sky (1973) and Woman Rising / Spirit (1973). Edelson, breasts bared, portrayed the goddess: heavenly, dematerializing, and even demonic. Part of a history eclipsed by minimalism and a market that supported the guys, Edelson has produced a complex and highly intelligent body of work in photography, painting, performance, and writing. My Christmas wish would be for Edelson to have a long overdue retrospective, and for Heresies to be reprinted.

Strangely, the work I found the most disturbing was also by Mary Beth Edelson: Kali Bobbit (1994). Reminiscent of Edelson’s silkscreen series of pistol-packing mamas avenging violence against women, this work references Lorena Bobbitt, an abused woman who cut off her sleeping husband’s penis. My period revenge fantasy would be directed at art-world darling Allen Jones for his women as furniture, equally tacky mannequins in S & M gear. Kali is dual-natured: destructive but also bringing forth new life. This work flattens the archetype, and fuels male castration fears. We have enough chopped body parts with ISIS; we need Aphrodite’s Eros and women artists to serve her cause.

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