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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pierre Molinier: Fetish Performance Photographs, Collages, Photomontages

September 7 – October 22, 1996

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Two exhibitions of the extraordinary fetish-dominated photographic work of **Pierre Molinier** (1900 - 1976) will open in New York on September 7, 1996. **Ubu Gallery**, 16 East 78th Street (through October 22nd) and **Wooster Gardens & Brent Sikkema**, 558 Broadway (through November 9th) will both present un-retouched and manipulated photographs, as well as the collages and photomontages, of this influential French gender performance artist.

Molinier was considered an outlaw artist in his native Bordeaux for his spiritually-infused and subversive paintings of the 1940s through 1974 which explore all manner of sexual gratification by and among women and hermaphrodites both real and imagined. Although never formally a Surrealist, Molinier began an association with André Breton and the group in 1955 and it was Breton - championing Molinier's impertinence and daring - who staged his first Paris exhibition in early 1956.

Although he had begun photographing himself seriously as early as 1950, in the 1960s Molinier created an obsessive photographic documentation of his private "male lesbian" fantasies. He realized these through the creation of a variety of fetish objects - including elaborate, life-size female doll parts and masks, as well as dildoes (*godmichés*) - with which he posed in his photographs. Often the photographs are retouched to emphasize his hermaphroditic ideal. Molinier continued making performance photographs of this kind until his suicide in 1976. His provocative and often sexually-explicit self-portraits constitute an oeuvre of significant influence on performance and body artists of the past twenty years.

Less known, but perhaps of even greater importance to Molinier himself, are the breathtakingly elaborate and sensual photomontages that can be seen at Ubu Gallery. These were created through countless, painstaking hours in the darkroom manipulating parts of photographs in order to produce new seamless "unreal" realities which reflect his fetishist obsession with legs, stockings and hermaphroditism. Through these photomontages Molinier was able to invent new desires and realize previously unfulfilled ecstasies.

Wooster Gardens & Brent Sikkema will exhibit a series of unique and exceedingly rare collages made as intermediary steps in the creation of elaborate sexually-explicit scenes - many of Molinier having sex with himself - which provide great insight into Molinier's working methods.

Ubu Gallery and Brent Sikkema & Wooster Gardens are open 11 AM to 6 PM, Tuesday through Saturday.

Receptions will be held at Wooster Gardens & Brent Sikkema on September 7th from 6 - 8 PM and at Ubu Gallery on October 2nd from 5 - 8 PM.

For further information, contact Adam J. Boxer at Ubu Gallery (212) 794 4444 or Brent Sikkema at Wooster Gardens (212) 941 6210. Press prints are available on request.