



**Judith Ostrowitz *Rebis* (2017)**  
**Digitized Imagery on Plexiglas**  
**56" W X 48" H X 1 ½" D**

The manipulation of imagery and media in *Rebis* parallels the many transformations that are a part of the alchemical process. Written about for centuries by ancient philosophers, alchemy is now a subject of great interest among modern psychologists. Although it is widely understood to be a proto-scientific process whereby lead might be turned into gold - certainly provocative as a commercial operation - many scholars, notably the psychologist Carl Jung, have suggested that alchemy is, in fact, a sort of roadmap to personal transformation and self-realization. Some have referred to it as “the yoga of the West.”

In *Rebis*, I have focused on the conjunction of male and female principles (Jung called these animus and anima) that is required as a part of this effort to achieve wholeness, health, or even rebirth. This is meant to be a unification of spirit and matter, heaven and earth, conscious and subconscious functions. I have attempted to carry out this theme in several ways. The setting in this piece combines vast mountain ranges that reach upward to a clear sky where clouds, pushed by winds, fly across the horizon, together with a deep and rocky canyon, the very depths of the earth. At the center of the image, a billowing white textile is printed with male and female figures from a seventeenth century engraving. The woman points to my drawing of a rooster confronting a serpent or dragon. These creatures refer to two aspects of the vital force that must be combined in order to achieve the desired state of unity. These are the “sulphur and mercury of the sages” discussed in alchemical literature.

The installation of this Plexiglas piece allows light to pass through it, reinforcing the idea that this process takes place in the mind’s eye, that it begins as a mental and spiritual operation that ultimately transforms the body and the physical world.

For more information, please visit [judithostrowitz.com](http://judithostrowitz.com)