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SPECIAL PEOPLE ISSUE

FILE goes to a party with
**DIEGO
CORTEZ**

**MR. PEANUT,
COLORED DOGS,
PORNOGRAPHIE,**
and other books by artists.

after a fashion?
GEEK/CHIC



BZZZ BZZZ
BZZZ BZZZ
BZZZ BZZZ
page 58

FILE

VOL. 3, NO. 3, SPRING, 1977, \$3.00



Katharina Sieverding
“I like to look at America
and America likes to look at me.”



"Its cover is a full-sized replica of LIFE's." P. Marchand, *Toronto LIFE*, 1975 /
"Canadian Dada all wrapped up in a glossy exact-size replica of LIFE." Marci Macdonald,
Maclean's Magazine, 1975 / *"A magazine that looks like LIFE."* *Esquire*, 1974 / *"FILE magazine
emerged in Canada with LIFE's logo."* *Art Direction Magazine*, 1976 / *"FILE started out
looking like a parody of LIFE,"* *Toronto Star*, 1976 / *"Looks like LIFE and is billed as FILE,"*
Village Voice, 1973 / *"Il gruppo pubblica così FILE che risulta speculare in formato e copertina, a
LIFE."* Germano Celant, *Domus*, 1974 / *"FILE is an anagram of LIFE."* Joan Lowndes, *Vancouver
Sun*, 1972 / *"The LIFE-like covers are brilliant,"* Walter Klepac, *Books in Canada*, 1974 / *"FILE
usa el formatao de LIFE,"* *el Nacional*, Caracas, Venezuela, 1975 / *"LIFE has bitten the dust,
but if LIFE is dead, long live FILE."* *Studio International*, 1973 / *"FILE is a convincing
imitation of a 1948 issue of LIFE."* *Art in America*, 1973 / *"FILE looks like a parody of LIFE."*
Robert Fulford, *Toronto Star*, 1973 / *"FILE resembles the LIFE magazine of the 40's."* *Art Forum*, 1974.

EDITORIAL

FILE SIMULATES LIFE

In June 1974, the editors of FILE Magazine were informed by registered mail sent by an Assistant Councilor for the legal department of TIME/LIFE Incorporated that they had before them the February issue of FILE (Special Artist's Directory Issue with cover by Robert Cumming) which they said "simulates the cover of a publication of TIME Inc., LIFE Magazine and that unauthorized simulation of the cover of LIFE constitutes trademark infringement and unfair trading upon and appropriation of the goodwill and reputation of LIFE Magazine." They went on to demand: "Immediately discontinue any and all such trademark infringement and cease and desist from any further use of all copies of the offending and unlawful material; and that all materials including mats and artwork making use of our trademarks which you have in your custody be destroyed."

INTIMIDATION OF LIFE

FILE published this legalese correspondence as letters to the editor in the 1975 Glamour issue which proved to be the breaking point for the legal department at corporate headquarters in Rockefeller Center. Mentions in the media about the 'remarkable similarity of formats' continued to pile up. FILE attained the legal status of competition to LIFE as the bureaucracy geared up and careened towards a real-LIFE climax in the courts. "It's the greatest piece of institutional stupidity I've ever heard of," said Robert Hughes, TIME's Art Director, with unabashed incredulity at the "appalling literalness of the American corporate mind. It's extremely embarrassing to be associated with this. As a critic I can say for the record that this is one of the most fatuous pieces of litigation I've ever heard of." (Noe Goldwadder Scoop's, The Village Voice, March 15, 1976)

LIFE STIMULATES FILE

It was real LIFE. Judgement was at hand. The bill was rapidly approaching one thousand dollars for legal fees, long distance telephone calls and press releases. LIFE was taking its toll in the TIME-honoured tradition of economic pressure. The editors of FILE in conference with their lawyers released a provisionary cover for the NYC edition. Time was stalled but not for long. FILE was served by TIME LIFE INC. . . . that is served with a 'Notice of Motion' filed in the Federal Court of Canada in the City of Ottawa. FILE submitted a new cover design and logo to TIME/LIFE selected from the hundreds of

entries received after the International FILE logo contest. It was 'different' and was accepted. FILE lawyers then presented 'Minutes of Settlement' to TIME/LIFE in response to their 'Notion of Motion'.

1. 'Art Official Inc. and its officers, employees and agents agree and undertake that they shall, when using the word "FILE" or any other colourable imitation of the trademark "LIFE" in the title of a magazine or any other printed publication, not use the word "FILE" or any other colourable imitation of the trademark "LIFE" in plain, block letters on a small rectangular background, or in any other combination of letters of white or red on a background of red or white.
2. The action herein shall be dismissed without costs.

FILE GETS LIFE SENTENCE

"Boards Syndicates Governments of the earth PAY — pay back the COLOR you stole — "Pay back the red you stole . . ." William Burroughs, Nova Express.

FILE chose life over LIFE. FILE agreed to stop simulating LIFE in capital letters and to pay back red and white to Boards Syndicates Governments of the earth. FILE wanted to continue with a life of its own, conserve its depleting resources and continue to circulate. Token battle with the media giant on a platform of Artistic Freedom promised to be a melodramatic suicide that you'd never read about in FILE. The legal battle merely punctuated a change of vision that was already occurring for FILE. The look-alike contest had run its course. The LIFE hook had been sapped (see opposite page). FILE was entering the no-no-nostalgia age in preparation for 1984 and in deeping abreast of the TIMES was becoming increasingly concerned with PEOPLE.

FILE LIKES PEOPLE; PEOPLE-LIKE FILE

This issue of FILE, heavily laced with PEOPLE is the result of a foray into the glamo world of International Art Fairs. Last summer FILE editors visited Bologna and Basel and brought back some of the PEOPLE who have prepared themselves in advance for media exposure. These German, Swiss and Italian Artists enjoined with Canadian and American Artists expose their personal mythologies personally tailored for magazine reproduction. These are the artists who comprise this SPECIAL PEOPLE ISSUE of FILE MEGAZINE. ■

PUNK
'TIL YOU
PUKE!

FILE

VOL. 3, NO. 4, FALL, 1977, \$3.00



NAZI DOG & THE VILETONES

PLUS

SEX PISTOLS
RICHARD HELL
ROUGH TRADE
PATTI SMITH
TALKING HEADS
DEAD BOYS
THE CURSE
DAMNED

and featuring
**I LOVE
LUCASTA**
with
THE DISHES



Debbie Harry, the blonde in Blondie, in the pink. (See centrespread.)



EDITORIAL

What do you mean by 'effective' art?

Obviously art that has effect.

Obviously art that affects an audience.

Obviously being effective requires an audience.

Obviously art that has effect is art that has an audience.

To win a mass audience does not require art appreciation classes or longer gallery hours or lower prices. Consider a full-scale campaign aimed at the consumers' needs. To have effect, art must reposition itself in competition with other mass audiences. The Vega-matic is a more effective object than the entire output of art-objects in the 70's. Look around you . . . look how boring it is . . . look how bored we all are . . . Once and for all let's kill the alienation myth, the existentialism myth, the angst myth.

The voltz stop. Elegance & alienation stop. Compelling frailty stop. A distant voice stop. Sombre & earnest stop. International darkness & deprivation stop. And black cloud rumour stop. Um yess I find the idea of entropy fairly exciting stop. We're not interested in entertaining any cultural con games stop. No I don't think of myself as an entertainer out to undermine the underground. Thankyou.*

Curiously, while art struggles to emerge

into a relevant cultural position, the Rock 'n' Roll avantgarde is struggling to disentangle itself from the centrally prominent dominant music industry, while still retaining effectiveness. Let the music industry play the part of the museums — you'll see it's really just the same game, only the consumer is different.

ARTISTS OF THE WORLD — SELL OUT — SELL OUT BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

In Toronto and New York they fiddled with performance and fled to punk. Art/Rock 'n' Roll crossover was the original theme of this issue: Throbbing Gristle at the ICA; the Poles at the McLaughlin Gallery; the Dishes and the Talking Heads at A Space; the New York Dolls at the Mercer Arts Center; Talking Heads at the Kitchen; CEAC and the Crash & Burn.

Now every concert is an event. Alan Suicide is a musician, or is he? Michael Berman is an artist, or is she? Robin Lee Crutchfield is an ———, or is he? Patty Smith is a poet, or is she?

The sentimentalism of late sixties early seventies essentially surrealistic aesthetic has been replaced by a certain pragmatic anarchy which is now the theme of this issue:

"It's cheap . . . it's easy . . . go do it!"**

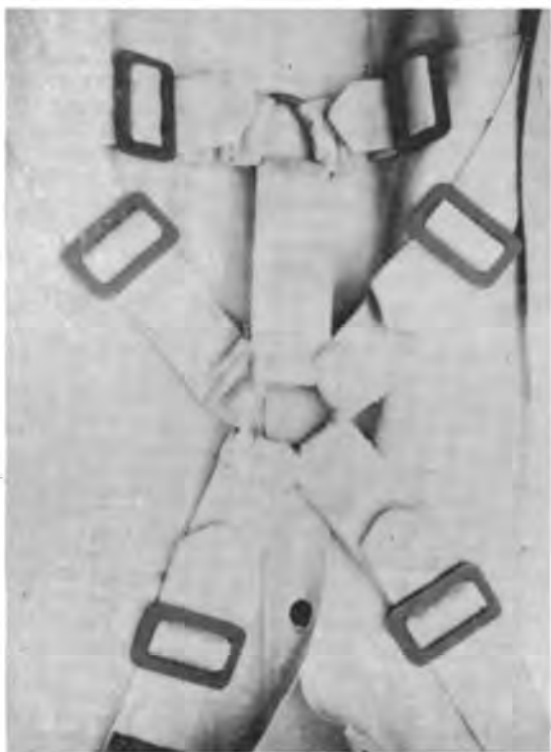
A punk-pourri of new faces washed up by the new wave: (1) Michael Jordana of the Poles, (2) Terry Ork of Ork Records, (3) Nazi Dog of the Viletones, (4) Lucasta Rochas of the B-Girls, (5) Paul Simonon of the Clash, (6) Leggs McNeil of Punk Magazine, (7) Jorge Zontal of General Idea, (8) Johnny Thunder of Heartbreakers, (9) Sliv Bators of the Dead Boys, (10) Mark P of Sniffin Glue, (11) Mickey Skin of The Curse, (12) Lux Interior of the Cramps, (13) Nick Latzoni of All The Young Dudes, (14) Wayne County, (15) Susan Springfield of the Erasers, (16) Debbie Harry of Blondie, (17) Carole Pope of Rough Trade, (18) Jordan, (19) Felix Partz of General Idea, (20) Kevin Staples of Rough Trade, (21) Diego Cortez, (22) Alan Suicide, (23) Eric Mitchell, (24) Jimmy de Sana, (25) Murray Ball of the Dishes.

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Any Phillips: 5, 10
Chris Stein: 14
Eddie Steiner: 1

* Crash & Burn News.

** Desperate Bicycles on their single of the same name.



The pogo dance is a simple extension of tweeters and woofers. He amplifies the sound psychologically and visually. These vertical pistons amplify time beating on his mind. Amplification drives a vertical wedge between mind and body — the wedge of repeated movement.

The pogo dancer doesn't create sound, he doesn't hear sound; he is part of the pumping machine composed of musicians, equipment, dancers, all enclosed in a shell of sound.

When the action is hot, the fans become the sounding board, the psychological emotional sexual amplifying system that drives the audio back through the performers and into the system. The result is a simple feedback buildup. Like Tinguely's machines, the punk machine self-destructs, smashing equipment, slashing skin, decorating the general milieu with broken beer bottles and safety pins. The dancers 'strangle' each other without breaking stride. Spitting at the band completes the electric circuit, becoming the highest compliment.

Desire is anti-capitalist. Present economies of production and distribution do not allow for an economy of desire. Nevertheless, 'the bureaucrat strokes his files.'

But as capitalism's complex resonance amplifies strange new need, its mushrooming electronic communications gadgetry creates hushing spots in tangled circuitry for perverted modern lovers:



Two men, two telephones and certain electronic circuitry (established for entirely different reasons) combine to form a simple desiring machine. The gay connection is particular here, because gay eroticism is group eroticism (as distinct from group sex).

So, too, the punk machine: 200 fans in a closed environment pump and strain in pogo rhythms, sex pistons, an essential component of the musician/audio equipment/audience desiring machine. Spitting provides the electrical connection that bypasses the contained sexuality of the family to power this group desire.

This is an anarchist motion by definition: decision-making is not a reflection of hierarchical control of groups or masses (Capitalism/Fascism) nor of theoretical Marxist equalities. In anarchy desire is restored to its central orchestrating role.

The patterns of desire are networks riddling the logics and the hierarchies of our capitalist/socialist superstructure. As the superstructure weakens, these patterns become apparent. With its lack of confidence in Britain, for example, the unemployed working-class youth become vacant territory. A working-class desiring machine, like a vampire, takes form through their bodies. Punk rock is the visible, readable, codable and decodable desiring machine from which a new

politics, a new economics must be erected. The strength of capitalism in Britain is dependent on its ability to recognize and utilize (manipulate) this existing desiring system. The strength of punk is dependent on its ability to generate new economies of production and distribution corresponding to the pattern of desire it has revealed. Hence the self-produced record, the fanzine.

Punk is anti-family. God Save the Queen (Mother). These prodigal sons and daughters do not want to go home. The tyranny of the family is not incorporated into this intensely pragmatic game-structure. Sentimentalism — the swamp in which capitalism breeds its docile subjects — is replaced by the magnetic/electric attraction/repulsion of active and passive, the slave and the conqueror.

Like S & M punk involves the body in a complete and brilliant desiring machine. Punks act out of necessity rather than fantasy. The mode of dress is characterized by the use of parts of the body in a complex of motifs or emblems (unlike high fashion, which deals with the decorated body, i.e. applied arts). The use of rips and zippers to isolate parts of the body, the manipulation of bruises, cuts, white flesh, ragged hair combined with leather, safety pins, loose ties, stiletto heels, pointed toes and exposed seams forms a language rather than a picture. In fact, words themselves join in that ragged grammar: not sentences, or even ideas, but emblematic tattoos beat out on the drums of punk bands . . . 'NO FUTURE'.

The safety pin is a double image, and dualities are the key to punk. The safety pin pierces and mends, is at once domestic and savage, destructive and constructive. To a lesser or greater degree, all the punk emblems display this obsession with the domestic and the savage, the active and the passive. It is clear that chains may bind, but they are also weapons. Black leather may suggest bondage, but also declares the aggressive anarchy of motorcycle gangs. Bruises and cuts are at once wounds and battlewounds. Even the baggy suit jacket and loose tie suggests a capitalist authoritarianism on its day off . . . or is that skinny tie a hangman's noose?

Fanzines are the paperwork of this semiotic punk-machine. Like inter-office memos these quik-kopy gossip-sheets become tomorrow's toilet paper, like toilet paper completely contemporary, completely disposable. Hundreds of fanzines in small editions going everywhere interlace to recreate the web of desire . . . and alter it too, amplify it, provide the taste to hook you on the habit. Image is virus. Fanzines describe the motion of the aesthetic, making visible the virus making progress through the world.

* * *

Postscript:

In conclusion, a reservation: the working-class structure of British punk bands is not only a reflection of working-class reaction to inexcusable living standards, government policies and economic conditions in Britain. It is also, in true British spirit, a closed club. In reaction to class structure the punk scene has recreated the very system it set out to upset. If you don't speak a working class lingo you're an outsider, an intruder, you're cutting on airs. Hence the ex-Biba's set haven't a chance, thank God, but neither have I.

AA Bronson

General Idea's ... HOT PROPERTY!

WINNIPEG — For only \$5.00 (members \$4.50), the Winnipeg Art Gallery is offering a one-time only chance to experience General Idea's notorious rehearsal for the 1984 Miss General Idea Pageant. The gallery will be turned into a giant T.V. studio and the event will be recorded.

On Saturday, October 22 at 8 p.m., includes a performance followed by a party scene with music by Toronto's hottest punk band **the Dishes**, and a bar provided by the gallery. A surprise ending promises to bring the house down in flames. General Idea has been working together since 1968. The first Miss General Idea, chosen Mimí Paige, was chosen

will rehearse the audience, the contestants, and the musicians for the 1984 Miss General Idea Pageant in front of the studio cameras. The performance includes personal appearances by General Idea...



The Winnipeg Art Gallery

300 MEMORIAL BOULEVARD, WINNIPEG CANADA R3C 1V1

General Idea *Towards an Audience Vocabulary*



Rodney Werden

A pre-cast 32 member group of extras occupied 32 numbered seats on stage directly facing the audience. The seats were arranged in a ziggurat shape that was an extraction from the overall seating plan designed for the 1984 Miss General Idea Pavillion (32 seats x 62 sections = 1,984 extras). The sequence of events the extras responded to followed the format of a Miss General Idea Pageant. The raising of the curtain scene with appropriate audience reaction started the performance, which proceeded in sequence to the finale. A narrator fleshed-out or set the scenes, the director indicated what reactions were desired and conducted the enactment. General Idea played the parts of narrator, director and still photographer. The decision to present this taping in performance rather than in the studio arose out of a hoped-for mirror-image effect between the two very different audiences. The role of the audiences were equally but differently isolated from the usual stimuli. The "real" audience enacted a traditional audience vocabulary in response to the extras' performance of the "real" vocabulary once removed. Mirrors mirroring mirrors. It was hoped that the gap between the audience and stage would blur into endless reflections.

Centerfold, December 1978

Edited by Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker and rewritten by General Idea

Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker interviews AA Bronson, Felix Partz, and Jorge Zontal of General Idea:

JBD: I'm sure you noticed that the "real" audience was pretty restless during the performance.

AA: Well, we realized restlessness would be a possibility because the piece wasn't directed to that audience, it was directed to the stage. There were two audiences necessary for the piece to work, but all our attention was directed to one and not the other. It was a perverse situation. On the other hand, if the physical setup of the space had been different, if it had been a normal theatre situation where the "real" audience was right up next to the stage, then the whole relationship of the two audiences would have been much clearer. The space was a problem.

JBD: What relationship between the two audiences were you trying to explore?

FP: The relationship between audiences and the stage or focal point in performance situations. . .

JZ: . . . and the relationship between a forcibly de-activated audi-

"A good artist doesn't have to be loved. There are so many lovable, ineffectual artists. . . . This is not to suggest that art should be grating or irritating or hated to be effective. . . . We are quite aware of the fact that the main objective of one's work is not to win friends, not to win praise and attention, but to get the public to act on the basis of your work. In the process you may not endear yourself to some people but you have become an effective generator of cultural information that warrants consumer attention."

Excerpt from General Idea's *Prize Conference* (videotape/performance), The Western Front, Vancouver, 1976.

ence and a forcibly activated one. Between active and passive as well as active and re-active.

FP: We did this by attempting to set up a mirror-image situation. Our performers, our stage audience, were called up to the stage from the "real" audience. In fact they sat through the previous performance as part of the "real" audience. They were called up over the p.a. Their names and seat numbers were announced. This was the initial "act" of our performance. It was an intended *blunt* gesture. We wanted to underline the separating of the audiences. We wanted to set up two distinct yet similar behavioural situations in the same room.

JZ: Once they assembled on stage the show began. The "extra" audience reacted to a hypothetical narrative intended to provide a context for the reactions we required. These reactions are what we consider a basic audience vocabulary. Again, the "real" audience's vocabulary was *bluntly*, and quite literally up-staged. All they could do was lip-sync. They were once removed and their role was called into crisis.

JBD: So in other words you

were exploring the dialectics of a "real" audience that would have nothing to do and a stage audience that would be entering into the traditional vocabulary of the audience.

AA: Yes, our focus wasn't on the "real" audience. The "real" audience were left to their own devices. Although we attempted to appear to be excluding them we had indeed considered their role. We were also exploring what "real" audiences do indeed do, what expectations they have, what involvement they require and of course what they do when their scenes are stolen.

FP: The dialectic was left to find its own level. Any addressing of the "real" audience, any introductions, any acknowledgement would have weakened the situation we were attempting to set up. We contrived the alienation.

JBD: And you had your backs turned to them?

JZ: Yes, of course we did. Another blunt decision. But also for practical purposes. We were working, directing. The cameramen also had their backs to the audience. So do band leaders, or choir-masters, which is sort of the part G.I. was

playing on stage. Someone mentioned that the "turned-back-stance" broke the first rule of theatre. Was the "real" audience anticipating theatre? But there were 32 people on stage, directly facing the "real" audience and performing for them.

JBD: You said you anticipated a negative reaction.

AA: No, I never said a negative reaction. We really didn't know what to expect. It was exciting, titillating, . . . a certain tension. We were definitely interested in what would happen. It was something new for G.I. to allow the unexpected to happen in a performance situation. But, yes, a negative reaction was a possibility.

JZ: There were other reactions. During the "movie" section the stage audience was requested to act out the viewing of an engrossing film. The lighting crew provided effects to simulate the appearance of audience faces in a darkened theatre with a flickering light motif. The "real" audience vocally provided a sound track for that situation. Their hooting, applauding and stomping of feet became quite articulated and ended right on cue when the lights

went up. This was an attempt to create a role for themselves since their usual role had been removed.

JBD: Would you wish for audiences in general to have more control, or a more direct relationship to what is being performed? Is that not an issue for you?

AA: Well, it is a definite issue for us. As you know we have been working with audiences, concentrating on them and involving them in our productions for some time now. Their desires as audiences in performance situations and how they go about fulfilling those desires are issues for us. We find it desirable to involve audiences in a manner in which their role, their involvement, their expectations, their vulnerability becomes topical. We want audiences to sit on the edge of their seats, becoming both extras and viewers, active and passive at once.

JBD: If you are concerned with the way in which people are manipulated and are forced to be passive viewers, why would you subject them to it?

AA: For us it is a form of investigation of these issues. We want



to know more about how manipulation operates. We presume others are interested as well. We operate in a controlled situation. Like a laboratory. We assume we are working with sophisticated patients with patience. We attempt to articulate the issues. They were the subject matter of our performance.

FP: It is not our style to take the podium and deliver manifestos about the heartbreak of exploitation, manipulation and alienation. This is an entry into the topics but not ours. We don't deal with these situations with a ten foot pole. Turning off the TV creates a short-lived relief from TV manipulation. We're not into abstinence. We're into the thick of it. It's dangerous and we try to maintain a borderline stance. It's really a tension point in all our work and a lot of people express their concern.

JBD: *And yet you yourself pointed out that virtually the same audience, an equivalent audience, a few days later was asked to engage in cliché reactions which they thoroughly enjoyed.*

AA: Yes, at David Buchan's *Fruit Cocktails*. In fact I thoroughly

enjoyed it as well. But we were all very conscious of the situation. It made you conscious of what the cliché was, and how you were reacting to it. You did it, enjoyed it, but you were never sucked into it. You were maybe manipulated by it, but by agreement between you and it.

JBD: *Was it the consent element that was missing from your dialectic between the "real" audience and the stage audience?*

AA: Yes, that's what was missing. That's what we decided to eliminate. It was simply a different type of performance than David's *Fruit Cocktails*. We didn't ask or cater for consent. It was left up in the air. Again, if the audiences had been in direct physical confrontation this issue may have developed more extremely.

FP: Yes, if that had been the case, the visual contact could have in a sense provided the traditional entertainment quotient that perhaps some people found lacking. On the most banal level it would have been interesting to see what so-and-so was wearing or how so-and-so in particular was reacting. This was probably difficult from 60 feet away.

JBD: *One member of the audience remarked that they saw the performance as essentially a videotape production and the indifference to the "real" audience as something of an insult.*

FP: Obviously that is one way to deal with it. Perhaps the most basic. Perhaps the least interesting. It would have been quite simple to shoot the tape in a studio situation. It would have been simpler for us, the crew and probably the performers. But it was conceived as a performance before a live audience and the interest we expected to generate was not that of watching a TV show being shot. I felt the taping and the performance before the "real" audience was totally integrated, but in this performance the taping was only a device, a found format.

JBD: *So then comes the question: for which audience were you performing?*

AA: We didn't perform. We worked. The stage audience performed.

JBD: *For what audience was the stage audience performing?*

JZ: They were performing for

Jorge Zontal



Centerfold, December 1978

three audiences essentially: for the "real" in-house audience; for whoever is going to see the tape; and of course for us. Also let's not forget the other performance that was coinciding with this activity. I mean the "real" audience's performance.

JBD: Another element particular to your "real" audience was the large number of people from the social-political video community whose response was pretty negative.

FP: Perhaps you also noted the art community's reactions to some of the social-political video community's tapes. Pretty negative. Obviously there is a certain split between these two groups. The conference was an interface situation for these two groups in particular. In some cases there are common objectives involved, but the methodology is usually extremely different. But the possibilities of overlap are increasingly seductive.

JBD: One comment that was made was that the stage audience was made up of an in-group.

AA: It was for sure.

JBD: This is a criticism that has been leveled at G.I. for as long as I can remember.

JZ: Yes, it does sound familiar.

AA: We could have requested 32 volunteers from the "real" audience but we specifically wanted what we have begun to call our Art Support System. People who have supported us in the past and continue to support us and who we presume are forming the audience for 1984.

FP: Also we definitely wanted to get a tape out of it. We weren't into just trying it out. We had objectives. We chose people who we felt would do it, do it well, who we would feel comfortable working with, and of course people who can deal with being on camera and come across. As you said, this in-group thing is often leveled at G.I. It's a rather confusing issue for us. It's obviously a projection. We're not sure exactly where the problem comes in. We selected an extremely diverse group. Does the in-group paranoia imply they have been chosen simply because they look good, are easy to manipulate, we're hustling them, they're gold-digger exhibitionists? Are they simply in-groupies? Jo-Anne, you've participated in one of our videotapes. You've written about our work on numerous occasions. You've in-

cluded us in your exhibitions. We've been seen together socially. Would you accept the label of being one of the in-group? I would hope so. Remove the negative connotations and it's simply working and being with interesting people. If this really is a problem for anyone then they should examine the individual members of the group and discover why we find them interesting. Actually I find it a total insult to the people we work with, to the 32 people on stage, to reduce them to in-groupies, objectified with no identities outside of the group. A lot of this type of criticism is rooted in personal insecurity and jealousy and I think it's a dead issue.

JBD: One of the obvious elements of the performance was its discontinuity as a functional element of the filming-taping process. The resultant videotape is a discontinuous experience which through editing becomes "reality" or "continuity".

AA: Unless we chose to present it as a discontinuity. We swing both ways, depending on the context.

JBD: I was wondering in this particular case, if continuity was a central issue.

JZ: I think the performance was





Jorge Zontal

what is normally thought of as a discontinuous experience presented in a manner that in fact was quite sequential and continuous. The performance did have five distinct scenes. We started from scene one and went right through. There were almost no technical interruptions. It had a strong narrative that developed. We never shot out of sequence. It had a climax. Actually, in performance I think it was quite traditionally structured.

JBD: Perhaps, but it was still discontinuous and I did wonder if the audience's reaction was as much against this discontinuity of experience as it was against their personal lack of involvement.

AA: In all our performances we play with discontinuity. You're here now, but you're also in 1984. You're watching a performance, but it's actually a videotaping. You really are the audience, but you're also extras. This performance was an extension of these concerns. An extreme extension.

FP: I doubt that the resultant videotape you refer to will misrepresent the "reality" of the initial performance situation. The discontinuity angle will probably be heighten-

ed.

JZ: There were several things we wanted from this project. The performance, the still photos — which incidentally were of a high priority for another project — and then of course the tape. The tape was conceived as "stock footage". This could have been the title of the performance. We realized the possibility of a beginning-to-end real time documentary of the performance. The tape could also be cut up and paced faster but still be a factual document. We fantasized about editing right down to the various audience reactions and arranging them chorally like a choir performing a scored piece. Sort of like the Hartz Mountain Canaries. We will also definitely be incorporating sections into our *Hot Property* tape which we're now editing. As in most of G.I.'s work, I'm sure this material will continue to spin off and resurface for years.

JBD: An interesting point for me in seeing the performances during the conference was the apparent impact of your particular relationship to the media, style and glamour — the influences of G.I. on some of the other performances. I don't

know if you felt it.

FP: Of course, in some cases quite strongly. In other cases they were dealing with similar issues in different manners. I just think that artists' relationships to the media, style and glamour are topical issues at this moment.

JBD: The irony was seeing G.I.-style performances, and there was G.I.'s audience pouring out the doors.

AA: Well, I guess it was fortunate for us that we secured a very attentive, receptive, attractive and entertaining 32 member audience that we could count on to endure the show.

FP: Really, Jo-Anne! We hardly emptied the hall. Most people did manage to resist the lure of the bar and chit chat.

JBD: What relationship do you see between your gallery exhibitions, media productions and performances? Are you exploring the same issues, or are you exploring different issues in different media?

AA: There is a whole vocabulary of issues that are interrelated. I think in performance situations we tend to focus on concerns that come

out of performance. Thus the audience was subject matter in this performance. We get very involved with the media we are using. File for example is a prototype magazine. It's a found format.

JZ: Obviously we have a very formalized central theme: 1984. Everything revolves around that as subject matter. Whatever media situation we create or find ourselves in, we attempt to co-opt its effective qualities.

JBD: You mentioned File. Do you feel that the Punk issue crossed the very delicate line between commenting on glamour/star/style and participating? I'm saying that less from the point of view of how popular it was as an issue (which it obviously was — you couldn't even fill the orders you had for it) than how the material was presented. Many of the other issues of File involved highly satirical articles on glamour and some promotion, but it seemed

to me that this particular issue was much more involved in participating in the process of evolving a style rather than commenting on it.

AA: I think we always try to participate in it.

FP: If you mean did it just cross over and become R 'n' R hype, the answer is no. The content of that issue was the Punk/New Wave music scene which at that time was surfacing. Most people's exposure to it was through the popular media which of course dealt with it expectedly as a new marketable product. A lot of the music was dealing with issues that touched-a-soft-spot-in-our-hearts, issues such as glamour/star/style/promo-hype/relationships audiences/cults/selling-out and of course the BIZ. We found it compatible with our work and extremely energizing to be in contact with it and still do.

JZ: There is also the group situation as well. I mean R 'n' R is strongly group oriented. We're interested in groups. As work units. G.I. is a group — not a band yet, but, well... hold your breath.

JBD: To what extent is G.I. image-bound and to what degree is it glamour-struck?

AA: How do you measure that?

Rodney Werden



THE PRESIDENT



TODAY I WENT TO SEE THE GENERAL IDEA SHOW AT THE CARMEN LEMON GALLERY. I UNDERSTAND THIS SAME SHOW HAS BEEN HANGING FOR TEN YEARS, I'M SORRY I MISSED IT BEFORE, BUT YOU KNOW HOW BUSY I'VE BEEN. I WAS SLIGHTLY EMBARRASSED BY THE SEX IN THE SHOW, NORMALLY I DON'T MIND IT, BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING UNNATURAL ABOUT THEIR DISPLAY. THESE MEN WERE WEARING TRIANGLES WHERE THEIR ZIPPERS SHOULD BE, WHY? JIM SAID IT WAS BECAUSE THEY USE THEIR PENISSES FOR OTHER USES. I ASKED MR LEMON WHAT THEY WERE, BUT HE WOULDN'T TELL, ONLY ANSWERING THAT ART MAKES YOU THINK. AND IT CERTAINLY DOES, DOESN'T IT? I MIGHT NOT BE RIGHT, BUT I THINK THEY'VE READ JORGE ORWELL'S 1982. I UNDERSTAND THAT CALIFORNIA IS GOING TO FALL INTO THE OCEAN THAT YEAR & THAT'S PROBABLY WHY THEY PLAN TO HAVE THEIR FABULOUS MISS GENERAL IDEA PAGEANT SHOW HERE IN TORONTO. PICTURES OF THEIR PREVIOUS PAGEANT SHOW THEY KNOW HOW TO MAKE THE AUDIENCE HAVE A WONDERFUL TIME ON CUE, JUST LIKE WHEN I WAS ON LETS MAKE A DEAL DRESSED AS A SHEEP & I LAUGHED VERY LOUD WHENEVER THEY SAID LAUGH.

JIM & I HAVE BEEN HAVING AN ARGUMENT WHETHER THEY ARE A SUBSIDIARY OF GENERAL FOOD OR OF GENERAL MOTORS. I HOPE THEY ARE A PART OF GENERAL FOODS BECAUSE I HAVE SOME WONDERFUL GENERAL IDEAS TO MAKE NICE CAKES FOR THESE BOYS & THEIR 1983 CAKE PAGEANT.

Exhibitions



General Idea, "Consenting Adults" installation

photo: The Carmen Lamanna Gallery

Consenting Adults

GENERAL IDEA AT CARMEN LAMANNA GALLERY

Toronto, January 27 — February 15, 1979

reviewed by Clive Robertson

(Clive Robertson who wrote the catalogue introduction for General Idea's "Reconstructing Futures", 1978, also reviewed the exhibit "Reconstructing Futures" (Centerfold, Vol. 2, 2 & 3, 1978), and published an interview "General Idea: Architects on the Run," (Centerfold) Vol. 2, 7 & 8, 1977).

General Idea made a decision in 1971 to be exhibiting artists, complementing their performance, video and publishing activities. In Canada the exhibits have taken the form of near-annual reports at the Carmen Lamanna Gallery. 1972: *Light-On*, 1974: *Luxon V.B.*, 1975: *Goin' Thru the Notions*, 1977: *Artists and Models*, 1978: *Reconstructing Futures*, and this year *Consenting Adults*. While they have

exhibited elsewhere in Canada (Montreal, Vancouver, Kingston, Calgary), only in Toronto has there been any available sense of continuum. From 1973 onwards General Idea has made self-organised expeditions to Europe (see *Centrifuge*), more often than not waving the fetish rather than the flag. Never having been present at such occasions I can only assume that the European curiosity is a mixture of genuine interest blended with a mutual transatlantic love of the exotic — the "foreign" remnants in the western corporate world.

Ephemeral artists, like any other artists, make collectable art to earn a living — or at least that is the premise or is it the promise? The National Gallery of Canada this year after some consideration decided not to

buy a major work of General Idea's, just one more sloppy curatorial decision by a public art institution. In the context of Canadian art, General Idea are artists of stature and accomplishment (a fact that even the artist-beloved Art Bank fails to act upon) and the overall vitality of the work, in my opinion, far surpasses just any Molinari, Gaucher, or as a "group" comparison, the Rabinowitch brothers.

I cannot subscribe to the notion of artist as hero, national or otherwise, but considering the ongoing imbalance within this country's king-art makers I would go further and say that the developing European interest in General Idea — as inter-medial artists — is the first worthy acknowledgement¹ since the deserved attention given to Michael Snow.

Having said that, I wish to return to the focus of their recent exhibits, the second time in two years that a European tour has fol-

1. Since this review was written I learned that G.I.'s show at Samangallery, Genova, Italy, sold out on its opening night.

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lowed a spring launch from their Toronto base. I wish to look at the show and its premise critically, avoiding locating contradictions for argument's sake but nonetheless disagreeing with what I can only assume is a rational development.

In a recent article (*The Economist*, 24-30th March, 1979) subtitled "British Rail pension funds halting their excursion trips into the art-market," a harsh lesson on art-investment was reported. British Rail decided to put 5 per cent of their cash flow of 160 million pounds (sterling) a year into works of art, so far spending 28 million pound (sterling) on 1,600 separate items. "The lack of income, compounded over a period of years, becomes an arithmetic millstone," the report stated. "Just to match the risk-free performance of tap-stock, which yield 12.6 per cent until redemption in 1999 a painting, for example, would have to appreciate more than tenfold and that is before allowing for 20 years of insurance, storage, restoration and other costs." The art purchased by British Rail included works like Picasso's "Blue Boy". Whether or not this places a huge question mark on the accepted mythology of the investment potential of any art, let alone contemporary art, is debatable. It does perhaps shed some documented light on buying art and its connection to that illusive attribute: artist-fame.

"We knew great art did not bring

Glamour and Fame

We knew we had to keep a foot in the door of art

We were conscious of the importance

of berets and paintbrushes.

We made public appearances in painter's smocks.

We knew that if we were famous if we were glamorous, we could say

"WE ARE ARTISTS" and we would be.

We did and we are.

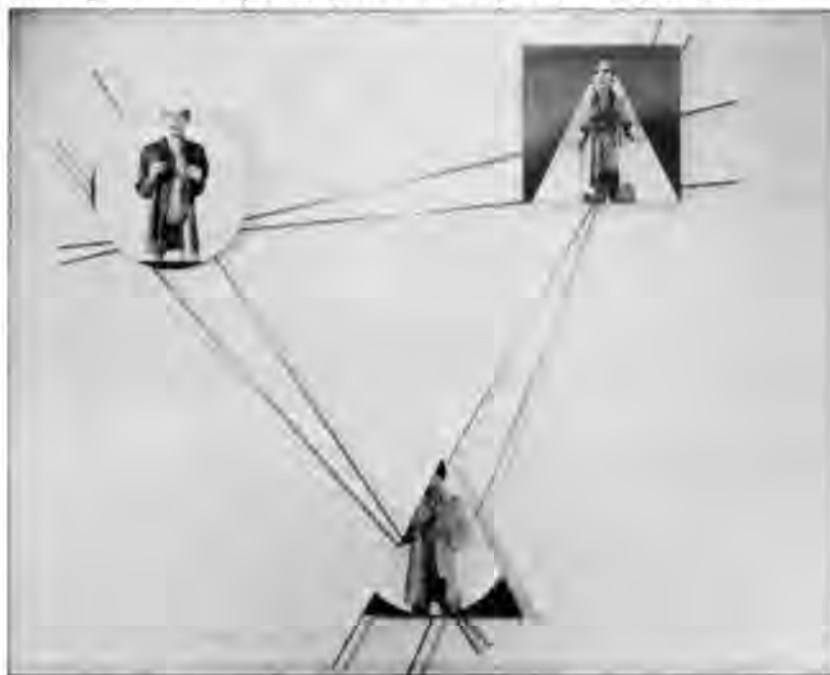
We are famous, glamorous artists."

(General Idea, *Glamour File*, 1975)

Since their formation in 1968, General Idea have valued and made use of the power of suggestion. Knowing the mechanics of the pop culture they worked on the assumption that such positive thinking and audacious posing can produce results

in the form of Fame and Glamour. The above quote is not complete; apart from wanting to be famous, wanting to be glamorous, they also wanted to be rich. We can assume that success in only one or two out of the three categories would be considered a theoretical failure. We can also assume that for practical purposes any advancement of any of the three would be a success relative to their starting point. Anything to get out of the bear-hug of the middle class! Glamour at this point can be discarded, we can say for argument's sake that it has been achieved. Within the context of *Consenting Adults*, can we deduce that artist-fame is (forgetting for a moment British Rail's pension funds) directly con-

print and a limited edition artist publication, the selling price of each card is \$200-250. Apart from General Idea's performances and videotapes the continuum of sensibility and 'vision' resides mainly in these cards, the magazine *FILE* being more sporadic. Which is not to suggest here that G.I. are producing objects to make fast money. The projected model of fame-object in their case can be illustrated perhaps by pointing to Beuys or Warhol where the very interface between artist and material produces a saleable item whether it's the artist's grocery list or just his signature. The fantasy (see "Architects on the Run", *Centerfold*, 7 & 8, 1977) of mass-produced knick-knacks remains



"Geometry of Censorship", General Idea, 1979

photo: The Carmen Lamanna Gallery

nected or at least connectable to economic success?

The endorsement that much of *Consenting Adults* concerns itself with is the production of the object to sell. Up to this point in time the art-objects of General Idea's that I assume sell most consistently are their showcards. The showcards consist of photo-illustrations, with ambiguous but functional subtitles and explicit-exploitative texts; exploitative in the sense that such texts stir up interest. To date there are over three hundred such cards (perhaps more). Their function is mid-way between a limited edition

for the artist just that: a fantasy.

The pivotal question for me is, does any of this time-consuming market planning and market-development have any substantial economic advantage over the mere production of an effective art? Or are the time-consuming activities of General Idea's self-marketability worthy of what could be considered a Duchampian paradox: "We wanted to be famous, glamorous and rich. That is to say we wanted to be artists." The study of such a paradox, artists as a group being mostly unknown, physically uninspiring and poor would not after all be such a com-

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plete waste of time.

In *Press Conference*, 1977 a performance-for-videotape work General Idea made another set of explicit statements. The statements presented at the *Press Conference* could have been sardonic; after all, the questions and answers had been rehearsed. However if General Idea can be said to ever make statements of position, which I think they undoubtedly do, then I can justifiably introduce their own notions of "effective" art; because by using their own criteria we can perhaps look more decidedly at their recent exhibit: *Consenting Adults*.

In discussing "What is effective art?" during the press conference Jorge Zontal offered a few definitions. He said that some people think that effective art is art that receives grants and awards. Others, he continued maintain that it is an art that makes people think. And yet others consider that art that is talked about in the media and on the social circuit must be effective. He then states General Idea's position: "For us it is the presentation of a cogent, persuasive idea — stripped of all irrelevant or distracting material — that not only sells the sensibility or vision of the artist but also sells that art object itself (as well)." Felix Partz at the same press conference says that this magic combination is illusive. General Idea would no doubt be the first to admit, forgetting for a moment the selling clause, that not all of their work, as defined by them, is effective.

Consenting Adults consists of a number of wall reliefs, geometrical outlines made by metal-sections supporting photo-pieces, reliefs of large photo-cut-outs and a number of showcards in series.

The first piece as you entered the gallery was entitled "Proposed Video Surveillance System for The 1984 Miss General Idea Pavillion." 12 photos placed in a Mondrian-like frame are shots off a video monitor which itself displays a photo image. As a proposal, the content does not have to be significant and it isn't. As an execution of a proposal the work certainly did not receive as careful attention as did the floor plans and other proposals for the Pavillion.

Alongside it is a work entitled "A Clean Well-Scanned Space", three photos, three texts. One of the texts is a quote from Michel Foucault

(see *semiotext(e)*, Vol. III, No. 2, 1978) which suggests that once the notion of surveillance has been planted and recognised, the individual reaches the economical, non-violent state of self-surveillance. Whether or not this precludes the necessity of having a surveillance system in the proposed 1984 Pavillion is unimportant, what is interesting is that General Idea had already written something along the same lines in 1972 ("Manipulating the Self"): "The act is now complete. Held, you are holding. You are subject and object, context and content, viewed and voyeur." Foucault may be a current hero, but in this case he has nothing to add.

Another work titled "Anatomy of Censorship" consists of nine showcards, each card having two photos and a text. Of all the works presented in *Consenting Adults*, this piece is stripped of all irrelevant and distracting material. The photos are similar if not the same as those used in the original Body Politic Performance. In that performance, though I have not seen a transcribed text, there is a direct reference to a section in Roland Barthes' *A Lover's Discourse*, from the section "The Other's Body" (p. 71): "I catch myself carefully scrutinizing the loved body . . . certain parts of that body are particularly appropriate to this observation: eyelashes, nails, roots of the hair, the incomplete objects. It is obvious that I am then in the process of fetishizing a corpse." Again the general information is not new to General Idea but the material did give rise to a radical performance. Whereas the performance dealt more with the politics of sexuality, the showcard piece is more ambiguous, filling that broad interpretative synonymy that G.I. revels in:

"What can you do but dish yourself up. I want you — to have and to hold and to keep on holding. Sign yourself over to me."

(from "Anatomy of Censorship") In a FILE editorial (Summer 1978) General Idea wrote: "under your gaze we become everything from frivolous night-lifers to hard core post-Marxist theoreticians." Ambiguity could be argued as being both attracting and distracting, whether or not G.I. are post-Marxist or post-George Woodcock is a dormant ques-

tion that can be saved for a later date.

One of the wall reliefs takes the photos from "Anatomy of Censorship" and trivializes them into the object "Autopsy". Another wall relief titled "A Geometry of Censorship" makes use of three photos of nude males (they are wearing open shirts) covering their genitals, one for each, with a square, a circle and a triangle.

Two observations about these pieces can be made. Firstly, "Autopsy" is a very obvious attempt to make a very decorative piece of art, if you compare it a) with the general functionality of the showcards and b) with the specific functionality of the images as used 1) in "Anatomy of Censorship" and 2) in The Body Politic Performance. Secondly, given the public's confrontation with The Body Politic Trial and the discussions of male sexuality and homosexuality that ensued "A Geometry of Censorship" as an object of confrontation is somewhat retrograde. It is not a vision considering that the public trial reportage itself exhibited male sexual censorship. The location of the piece does not help. If it had been on exhibit in a shopping center no doubt the same objectification of censorship would have been challenged. Instead the piece hangs in a relatively private gallery.

"Does this exercise in self-indulgence have any redeeming social value? (I like the picture of Scott, but come on, let's see it) —Glen." This friendly wrist-slapping was a comment written in the gallery guest book in direct reference to "Anatomy of Censorship". The comment however does suggest a certain conservatism in the object itself.

To make reference to the other works would not be productive. The other card pieces are not arbitrary collections but they are not very fresh ideas. One other photo piece should be mentioned. Three photos of penises one masked by a triangle, the second by a circle, the third by a square with titles, "The Graduated Cock", "Slice of Life", "Father Knows Best" are reminiscent of Nam June Paik's Penis Symphony. These photo-pieces play the part of the gay comic strip in the show and as such are successful.

The wall pieces themselves can be dealt with collectively. One interpretation could be that they are

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the kitsch art to hang in the lobby of the Pavillion. Another interpretation is more related to the central theme, if it's discernible, of this review, which is: How much were these reliefs created to function as recognisable works of art that could sell?

AA Bronson ended the 1977 Press Conference by saying: "It's a shame that so many artists are only just beginning to understand what we've known all along, it isn't art unless it sells." In some ways it's a solid thesis: a starving artist is not much use to anyone, let alone to the

artist him/herself. However, whether or not an artist can pre-plan a work that will sell and can still maintain its other effective components remains a fragile proposition. In contrast with the large blow-up photo collages of the "Pavillion Fire" and "The Iron Curtain", a sculpture in last year's *Reconstructing Futures* show, much of *Consenting Adults* was not effective as a vision. Whether either of the shows sold or didn't sell, in critical terms is of little significance.

There is so much that is *not* art that sells on the assumption that it

is art, often an art which panders to its "please me" audience. It is not a sophisticated paradox and is definitely one that should be passed by. *Consenting Adults* seemed to occur at an awkward time for General Idea, the new material was honed too quickly. Having said that, it was a refreshing excursion into censorship and sexuality; there are times when the Pavillion and the Pageant should continue underground. ■

Clive Robertson, performance and video artist, lives in Toronto and is an editor of Centerfold.

Video



photo: Colin Campbell

LaMonte (David Buchan) and Robin (Colin Campbell) from "Modern Love"

Modern Love

THE RECENT VIDEOTAPES OF COLIN CAMPBELL

reviewed by Tim Guest

In a sense 'modern love' is the perfect title, an idea so 'apropos' for an artwork. Say it a hundred times it still sounds good. It's after all, what so many of us want: to be modern, to be in love. A goal so elusive it's impractical, so romantic it's at once the peak of sophistication and the dumbest pretention. Which is the story of Colin Camp-

bell's latest videotape. . . "Modern Love".

The tape is loosely structured around two parallel love stories: Robin and La Monte, Heidi and Pierre. The plot evolves simply enough as a couple of cartoon romances which Colin amplifies by portraying all the characters in drag. For his role as Heidi, Rodney

Werden is transformed into a stunning blonde, a fragile German frau-lein who wears tight sweaters, too much makeup, and a man's watch. Susan Britton plays the sultry play-boy Pierre, a slightly greasy Frenchman who chain-smokes. La Monte del Monte is David Buchan in a different sort of drag — no cross-dressing, just outrageously tasteless apparel, the failed showbiz smoothie. And Robin, played by Colin himself, is the simple-minded punkette from Thornhill who's too easily impressed.

Despite the extremity of the characters their portrayal is quite suitably low-key. That has something to do with television images, which tend to turn everybody into gray-scale (literally). There are certainly no big production numbers, and the home-made quality of video makes for a nice tension when dealing with such exotic subject matter. But more than that the drag in this tape is very different from the kind you see in "drag-shows". The role-switching doesn't assume a total identification with another (external) image. And while Colin and friends obviously enjoy the reversal it doesn't come across as an obsession. This isn't to say Colin's drag is just a theatrical device; rather any role-switching implies more of a departure from a role than a switch. What's left is an ambiguous identity, one with a heavy emphasis on artifice, a conscious superficiality. Gestures become loaded with meaning, but the meaning is ironic, paradoxical, and banal.

So to make a long story short (in this case it's easy), Robin meets La Monte at the Beverly Tavern where Martha and the Muffins are playing. Robin gets picked up, falls

"DANCER FROM THE DANCE RELATES
IN ONLY THE MOST PERFUNCTORY WAY TO THE
POLITICAL REALITIES OF THE WORLD AROUND US.
HOLLERAN HAS CREATED A WORLD THAT IS NOT
AROUND US, OUT OF HIS OWN IMAGINATION.
THAT, I'D MAINTAIN, IS THE ONLY EXCUSE
FOR WRITING A NOVEL.
ART, IN THE END,
IS ITS OWN EXCUSE."

"TO TELL A PARTIAL TRUTH IS OFTEN
TO TELL A LIE: MERCENARY JEWS AND
"HYSTERICAL" WOMEN DO EXIST, BUT TO
DEVOTE ENTIRE WORKS TO THESE TYPES WITHOUT
COMING TO GRIPS WITH THE SOCIAL CONTEXT
WOULD BE RACIST, OR SEXIST.
IN THE END, ART IS NOT ITS OWN EXCUSE.
AFTER THE WITCH-BURNINGS AND THE
CONCENTRATION CAMPS, YES, WE MUST INSIST
THAT ARTISTS BE RESPONSIBLE."

Do artists owe anything to others or is it their duty to
express private visions? Where is the line between individual expres-
sion and social irresponsibility? Between political relevance and agit-
prop? Between critical censure and cultural censorship?

In the June issue of *The Body Politic*, American activist Scott
Tucker looks at these questions through the filter of two popular
"gay" novels, *Faggots*, and *Dancer from the Dance*. His answers,
strong and subtle, demand attention, reflection, and response.

Also in this issue: Jane Rule on teaching sexuality to children; a
look at the hidden agenda behind the new "science" of sociobiology;
battling macho hype at, of all places, ballet school; cruising the
parks; fending off the porn squad, and a report from the inside on
the home of annihilation by blandness, the Netherlands.

THE BODY POLITIC.

We do it ten times a year. You can subscribe by sending \$7.50 for ten
issues (\$10.00 outside Canada) to TBP, Box 7289, Station A, Tor-
onto, ON M5W 1X9. Make sure to give us your full mailing address.

Letters

Mail correspondence to be published
to LETTERS, Centerfold, 2nd floor
217 Richmond St. W., Toronto, Can-
ada M5W 1W2.



What do you consider effective art?

Here are a few details that might add
extra information to your insight into
the work:

1) *Press Conference*, our videotape of
1977, was more concerned with the
language of power than with 'effective
art'. The piece is a re-work of an ad-
vertisement for an advertising agency
in *Fortune* magazine. As such its im-
plications are somewhat broader than
you suggest. Using it as a critical base
for your article is interesting, but
could be argued.

2) The sculptural piece 'Proposed
Video Surveillance System' is compos-
ed of two alternating sets of photo-
graphs set into a grid system. The first
set of photos are installation shots of
completed fragments from the 1984
Miss General Idea Pavillion, including
the Luxon VB, the Escalier d'Honneur,
the room from the Pavillion presented
in *Reconstructing Futures*, and so on.
The second series of photos scans the
human body in isolated close-ups.
Similarly to *An Anatomy of Censor-
ship*, images of public control are jux-
ta-posed with images of the lover's ob-
session, images of public surveillance
with private surveillance.

3) The sculptural piece *Autopsy* was
completed before *An Anatomy of
Censorship*, and not after, as you sug-
gest. As such, *An Anatomy of Censor-
ship* was an elaboration of the original
piece.

Letters

4) Eighteen texts were used in *An Anatomy of Censorship*. Three of these were rewritten from the performance piece for the showcard piece. One of the original texts paraphrased the text you quote, and remained unchanged in the second version.

5) The sculptural piece *Geometry of Censorship* is not intended as 'an object of confrontation'. The male nudes have their genitals cut out, rather than covered, to reveal the stainless steel on which the photos are mounted, behind. Another piece, which remains incomplete, was planned to incorporate the cut-out geometric cocks as design elements. In day-to-day conversation we referred to this piece as 'the European version'

6) You've ignored those objects in the show which did not relate to the contents of the last issue of *Centerfold*. The sleeping piece, especially, we consider one of the key pieces in the construction of the show as a whole, and we are surprised you do not mention it. It's description of group context and negation of the myth of the individual genius seem to us important issues.

7) Yes, all the pieces were designed as 'objects for sale'. Whether they immediately sold or not was not important. The fact that they successfully isolated and utilized the language of 'being available for purchase' was initially our first concern. (In lighter moments we considered installing tape-recorded messages, such as 'Buy me, buy me!', and 'Pssst, Pierre, I'm over here!') Of course we realize that the true success of these objects must finally be judged by their buyability over the next five years.

8) We notice with interest that you discuss neither aesthetics, nor sensibility; also your repeated interest in 'functionality' and social unity. What do you consider effective art?

General Idea
Toronto

... Suggests the disturbing source

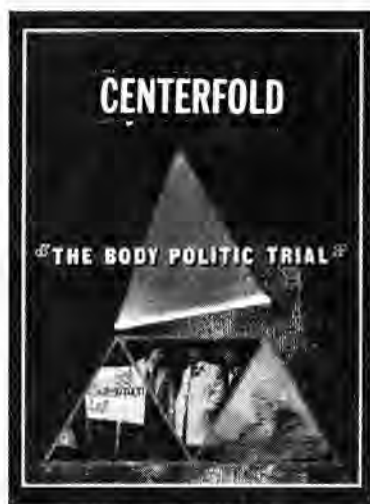
Just read the 'Women and Infanticide' article. I sit here childless and supposedly 'liberated', going through my morning mail which does include the *New York Review of Books*, as well as *Centerfold*, wondering how many people will read your article. I think it's excellent from every point of view — I suppose one couldn't really publish something which actually says something and suggests the dis-

turbing source of the problem in a more 'popular' magazine? There's the trap — that's part of the syndrome too. Anyway, congratulations.

I recently read about a volunteer agency in the U.S. for battered children — their techniques do not involve further punishment of the parents by taking children away etc. Anyway perhaps you know about it — are there Toronto chapters?

Jessica Bradley
Ottawa

(Ed. Note: In Toronto there is a chapter of Parents' Anonymous, a self-help group for parents who abuse their children. But the already-limited efficacy of this group will be further restricted by the new Child Welfare Act just passed in Ontario (see *Centerfold*, p. 223.)



... after the verdict ...

Coverage of the *Body Politic* trial by *Centerfold* could not have been more informative or enlightening. It reached part of the community that *TBP* would not have for social-sexual reasons. Freedom was and is being attacked: freedom of the press, freedom of women to control their own bodies, freedom of expression, etc. Those guardians of our very varied society who instigated the proceedings against *TBP* assumed that the article (*Men Loving Boys Loving Men*) more than objectively described sex and emotional relationships between men and boys. Rather, it was construed as encouraging pedophilia. The

rest is history and excellently covered in your pages.

Sociobiology, the study of the genetic aspects of behaviour, proposes to pull from sociology the belief in kin selection. Basically, we help our kin: parents help their offspring, aunts help their near relatives and the Canada Council helps artists. Each community finds support within itself. *The Body Politic* fills this role in the Canadian gay community. When we are attacked by critics we need support. At the time the article was printed, gays were being attacked in one form or another by the media. "Pedophilia" and "molestation" of children were bantered about in uniformed ways. People refused to dissociate the gay community with some of its variants; in fact all gays were suspect. Doubt was everywhere. "Men Loving Boys Loving Men" was an attempt to clarify the facts and fallacies of pedophilia to the gay community.

It was all a question of conformity.

Artists whose work may not meet what the artistic community considers acceptable should still be free to create. There should never be any question of conformity. In fact, a select group may find this freedom extremely innovative. I can recall several shows in Toronto that received the ire of the morality squad. Hopefully, the artistic community rallied in support.

What is freedom? Should there be license in expression and of information? Most definitely yes! The verdict of the trial supported this.

Alan Miller
Canadian Gay Archives

ERRATUM

In the May 1979 issue, "Channel Irons" from Open Series Group, Kingston was credited to Michael Bélanger. In fact, Michael Bânger wrote the piece. Our apologies.

DEADLINES

for August/September: July 16, 1979
for October/November: Sept. 16, 1979

Articles and reviews to be considered for publication in *Centerfold* should be accompanied by photographs and/or appropriate illustrations.

**SPECIAL
TRANS-
GRESSIONS**

**ISSUE:
FORBIDDEN
SENSIBILITIES,
INSECT LOVE,
AND MODERN
FAIRY TALES**

with
**KATHY ACKER
PASOLINI
JIMMY DE SANA
JEAN GENET**
and
DAVID BYRNE
of the Talking Heads.

**THE DAY
THE CLICHETTES
SAID: I DO!
I DO! I DO!**



**BZZ BZZ
BZZ BZZ
BZZ BZZ**
page 56

FILE

Vol. 4, No. 2, Fall, 1979. \$3.00



Billy wears a moustache at the Colour Bar Lounge. See page 17.



EDITORIAL

ROCK THE BOAT PEOPLE!

To tell art's story consistently and well, to keep art in the top-of-the-mind segment of public attention – these are the artists's first responsibilities. The artist's ability to fulfill this responsibility depends inevitably on his expertise in the use of the mass media. And yet, ironically, too much mass media expertise and the artist becomes . . . yccccch! . . . trendy.

These days a friend visiting General Idea is likely to be served a new drink – 'trendy responsibility'; a ratio, a balance, a borderline case, one of the many effective cocktails available at General Idea's newly opened Colour Bar Lounge (see page 56).

A lot of people ask us for the recipe, so we have assembled this special issue of FILE about this new concoction. You, the art lover, can now mix your own effective cocktails at home.

Yes, 'trendy' is a word to be grappled with, as 'glamour' once was. Certainly there is one peak moment when trendiness rises to its most effective, when it becomes a powerful tool for dealing with existing structures. It blooms for a night or a season, and then is consumed by what many call Capitalist chaos. And what name shall we give that distance that separates the trendy from the avant-garde?

Note: a responsible trendy is never consumed. S/he is consummated. Letting oneself be consumed is sheer irresponsibility, like developing a drinking problem. Our role? Like customs agents on the borders of acceptance, we smuggle transgressions back into the picture, mixing doubles out of the ingredients of prohibition.

Solve your drinking problems with trendy responsibility, the drink which builds residual effects and yet still lets you see double. All of this without the slightest taste of stale rhetoric.

Interested? Mix together a few of the ingredients found on the following pages – we call them transgressions. Cultural, social, political, sexual, take your pick. Here's mud in your eye! Cheers. Salut. Chin chin. Zivelo.

Mr. Bill wears a mustache in General Idea's upcoming TV special currently in production on location in Amsterdam. Mr. Bill knows that fascism is a bottomless cup but he's liable to forget the unquenchable thirst for this intoxicating brew. To help him remember we've introduced this new cocktail.

We call it Nazi Milk. The recipe? Nothing exotic. Something found in most homes. A basic ingredient with an oedipal undertaste, preferably white. Yes, milk was the vehicle for our message. This issue of FILE milks a whole new meaning out of this common nourishing substance. For more cocktails see page 56.



Photographer Jimmy de Sana has a nice eye for transgressions. Here he mixes insect love with a liberal dose of sexual aberration and suburban aesthetics. The result? A new book titled 'Submission', with an introduction by William Burroughs. For more insect love, turn the page.





Getting into the spirit was easy at the special preview opening of General Idea's Colour Bar Lounge as **MICHAEL LACROIX** dished out cocktail music. The music flowed-like-honey-in-all-directions as guests noted Michael's pose which thoughtfully included that old G.I. favorite, the Negative Stiletto Motif. Hoping to fill that gap with something with body, G.I. debuted the Young Artist Cocktail featuring **ROB FLACK** as the young consumer. Hot on the heels of the Cinderella saga, Rob sized up the cocktail and submitted that it was a very demanding initiation into the art and spirit worlds. **KEVAN (Bar-fly-weight) STAPLES** was also into foot work as he dazzled guests with a display of disco-boxing which is knocking them out on the west coast. Getting a bit punch drunk after a few rounds Kevin boasted that Rough Trade's recent simulcast on T.V. and FM was an O.K. K.O. in T.O.

Fashion designer **MARILYN KIEWIET** of **ROBIN** struck another blow for glamour despite an unexpected loss of



altitude. She had been teetering deliciously all evening until some heel brought her down. Several guests were dying to get under foot as Colour Bartenders poured on the charmed. RENE BLOUIN participated in the christening of an adult cocktail The Champagne Experience and between gulps leaked news of his recent appointment at the Canada Council.

After a heady round of nightcaps many guests retired to the hide-a-bed section of the Colour Bar Lounge. As a late night snack they sank their teeth into the new Blondie platter, 'Eat to the Beat', which CHRIS STEIN and DEBBIE HARRY had brought along as a lounge-warming gift. Lounge

wizard, PAUL WONG had over imbibed as usual and had to be handcuffed to a bed.

"this place is more like an orgy room than a . . ."

said Paul before they gagged him.

PAUL ROBINSON also went bottoms up but not before informing all of a possible Diode reunion in the recording studios this fall. **MISS MIMI PAIGE**, Miss General Idea





MARSHA RESNICK



1968 1968 1968 1968 1968 1968 1968 1968 1968 1968

1968 curled up with her man-sized teddy bear and compared notes with a copy of 'Memoirs of an Ex Prom Queen' while the Screamers from L.A. restaged a pillow fight they had performed for NYC shutter bug MARCIA RESNICK whose new book Bad Boys they hoped to appear in.

Time gentlemen please punctuated the air as the always up to the minute DAVID BUCHAN put in one of his timely appearances. With time on his hands Mr. B. told guests about his up coming show slated for the Glenbow Art Gallery in Calgary. Although David sported a limp-wrist watch he denied he was dallying with surrealism. What was Dave's fav. drink at the bar . . . ? anything in an hour glass of course.

MARGARET DRAGU, co-star with JOE BOTTOMS in the film Surfacing squeezed in the Colour Bar Opening and performed one of her Salutes to service industries. Margaret reminisced about the old days when she was either slinging hash or peeling clothes to make ends meet.





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"it really kept me on my toes which made it difficult to keep my balance" said Margaret. Perhaps balance would have been easier for Margaret if she had utilized the Colour Bar Lounge's Magic Serving Pallettes, the ones with the magnetized aluminum cups clinging to mirrored pallettes.

test . . . test . . . test
. . . one . . . two . . .
three . . . In the endless quest for the most popular yet most effective cocktail, G.I. unveiled the Colour Bar Lab. Everyone was invited to mix freely, experiment and create their own Generic Cocktails. ANYA VARDA, File cover girl was as anxious as ever to play the guinea pig. She eagerly donated her palette to art and occupied a booth. Anya said she had unusual tastes and wanted a Trendy yet Responsible Cocktail. The sleek GRANADA GAZELLE, Miss General Idea 1969 said she loved the new watering hole as she exchanged slimming secrets with STEVEN DAVEY of the Everglades. Steven was struggling to stay solvent but somehow managed to run up a \$1000.00 tab at the bar.





SUSAN BRITTON, of Toronto's new nitery, the Cabana Room went mental when GREG of the PARROT restaurant ruffled her feathers with hints of his future foray into the nitery scene. Susan countered with news of an entirely new entertainment concept she's pioneering. It's an underground, armour plated video bunker with bullet proof glass. Model MAGGIE ?? caught in the cross fire said she thought there could never be too many nite spots. COLIN CAMPBELL, getting tipsy on the tubes, outlined the plot of his new video serial Bad Girls set for fall screenings at the Cabana Room. STEPHEN LACK, hot from the success of his Rubber Gun Show film denied rumours of an on again off again on and off screen romance with new co-star SALLY KELLERMAN. Anya Varda burst into tears at the mention of the other woman and continued sobbing as Steven confessed that his favorite cocktail was the Young Artist. SANDY STAGG toasted a clinched deal which will see four Colour Bar Lounge cocktails retailing at her uptown eatery, the FIESTA.

Fashion designer LEIGHTON BARRETT of EXCEL claimed a worlds record for constructing the worlds largest tube dress with the most darts per square inch. Bombshell DIVINE, looking like she was dropped by a B 52 squeezed into the sausage skin and said it fit like a glove. Leighton has also packaged Debbie Harry but this was definitely his biggest account yet.



GENERAL IDEA

An Anatomy of Censorship



Everybody wants to be a fascist.
In the corporations, in the media, in the super-
markets, in the schools, in the family.



The laws focus attention on parts of her body
by outlawing public exposure. Censorship of
her body transforms desire into fantasy . . . let's
call it neurosis.



*You looked like love at first sight — and
somehow my first arrested sight froze into a cer-
tain way of containing you.*



*Your recurring image brings back alive my con-
suming cannibal hunger. I want to capture you
and wolf you down over and over.*



Video surveillance makes every public place a hospital ward. Human bodies become possible locations for disturbance of the peace, whether through disease or disorder.



What can you do but dish yourself up? I want you — to have and to hold and to keep on holding. Sign yourself over to me.

**ACT LIKE A BABY!
ACT LIKE A BABY!**

I WANNA GO PEEPEE.



The family is the basic unit of totalitarian control. We were all taught a little self-discipline. We all know about 9 to 5.



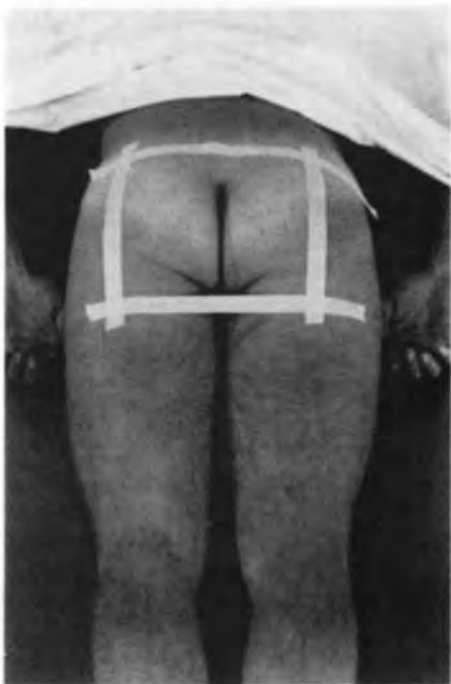
It was a political decision to call obsession abnormal. The control of public desire was taken away from the police & given to the psychiatrists.



So what? I feast my eyes on you. So? So, they're bigger than my stomach. What do I do? Diet? Push myself away from your tableau? Cling free?



So I'm attached, should I cut you off? Or is it cut me off you? Maybe abstinence... self-control... discipline... a little distance.



Even the most modern techniques of police surveillance cannot monitor the perverse mutations of today's specialized minority groups. Culture no longer reproduces . . . it multiplies.



So what if I don't want to repress my obsessions? So what if I want to ride them out? Are you listening? I — don't — want — to — want — not — to — want — you.

**TALK LIKE A BABY!
TALK LIKE A BABY!**

I LOVE YOU, DADDY.



Everywhere the totalitarian machine searches for found formats to inhabit; discos, singles bars, therapy groups, open marriages, gay liberation groups. Everybody wants to be a consumer statistic.



We all like to excite ourselves by breaking the law. Minor censorships allow the law to be safely broken. The human taste for scandal is limited, yet fulfilled.



Look at me — look at me when I'm looking at you. You can look . . . just like me . . . when I'm looking at you . . . and I can look like you, looking at me.



This autopsy makes you go to pieces. You come apart at the seams. I struggle to juggle the pieces as I fall head over heels until once again . . . it figures.



We survey a lover's body, focusing on the details of thighs, nipples, wrists, the roots of the hair. It is by such surveillance that we transform lovers into corpses.



As I chart your territory with my eyes, my fingers, and my at-long-last silent tongue, it all seems momentarily within my grasp as I grope to envelope the spreading of my desire.

**WHOSE BABY ARE YOU!
WHOSE BABY ARE YOU?**

I WANT MY MUMMY!

TEST TUBE

**A VIDEOTAPE BY GENERAL IDEA
PRODUCED IN AMSTERDAM, 1979
WITH DE APPEL FOUNDATION
28 MINUTES, COLOUR**

BY ROBERT HANDFORTH

When the three artists known as General Idea returned to Toronto in early December, they brought with them a major new work, a 28-minute colour videotape entitled *Test Tube*, mastered on the one-inch European standard in professional commercial television studios and created during a three-month stay in Amsterdam sponsored by the De Appel Foundation. It represents a first attempt by De Appel to independently produce artists' works to commercial standards for sale to broadcast television. *Test Tube* now exists in Dutch and in English versions, with French and German dubs being planned and an Italian translation under consideration for its showing at the Venice Biennale. Though the entire project was undertaken on 'spec', the potential market was assessed in advance and sales are now being pursued.

Financed by the Dutch government, De Appel has been in operation for five years. Though modest in scale and resources, its converted warehouse located in a reputable, renovated canal row in the centre of Amsterdam has hosted an international selection of artists

presenting work in print, performance, film, video and installation formats. Among them one would find most of the younger, currently active artists whose work is known outside their country of residence, and many more who have broadened their following by appearing there.

De Appel's acquisition of this halo of renown owes something certainly to the centrality of cosmopolitan Amsterdam—it's an inevitable stopping-point for Northern European travellers. But it owes as much or more to the efforts and intuitions of Wies Smals, a shrewd, energetic and heroically stubborn woman who has managed the foundation since beginning it in 1975. Her previous experience in museums and the success of her own private gallery is evident in her ability to give equal attention to the concerns and meanings of artists, the responsibilities of management, and the fine points of art politics and cultural diplomacy. A mix of independent curatorial work and collaboration by Smals, Aggie Smeets and Josine van Droffelaar maintains in De Appel a programme of great variety in scale and subject matter. While some projects and series are deliberately left open-ended, the majority are thoroughly researched in advance, accompanied by educational background or reference material, and subsequently documented in tapes and publications.

Simultaneously with the taping of *Test Tube* in September 1979, for example, De Appel was presenting *Words & Works*, a ten-day programme of lectures, discussions, performances, installations, films, video screenings, historical documentation and a photographic exhibition featuring several dozen artists from East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, as well as contemporaries from Holland and Great Britain. Research had begun some eighteen months beforehand: most of the artists were unknown in Holland or anywhere outside Eastern Europe. Cultural and linguistic barriers demanded a symposium-style format. Activities were spread over five locations, and integrated into the programming of the Holland Experimental Film Foundation, the independent Fundatie Kunsthuis and the state-operated Stedelijk Museum. Besides arranging accommodation for participants, De Appel hosted a daily dinner for them (usually attended by upwards of 40 people), a virtual necessity given Amsterdam's expensive and unpredictable restaurant fare. The programme also demanded considerable liaison with consulates and government officials, and netted a 20-minute national television feature on performance art which found De Appel's van Droffelaar sparring boldly with an unsympathetic interviewer. In

the confusion of unexpected visitors, messages and last-minute rearrangements, De Appel was also in the middle of another project, a heterogeneous film festival, each selection made by a different invited artist. Coping with the logistics of the latter, the foundation had by November almost lost track of the travelling International Feminist Art exhibition opening at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague; the film and video portion of the exhibition had already been organized and presented by De Appel in early 1979.

Such practice, adopted from the beginning, of breaking new ground and operating outside its own immediate facilities had led early on to the exploration of broadcast television as a forum for artists' videotapes. The responses of programming executives had been predictably negative: the

and screened at De Appel at the time, must have convinced her that the Canadian trio was the best choice of available artists for the inaugural gamble. (Venezuelan-born Michel Cardena, whose works display high technical quality, and Raul Marroquin, a devotee of media culture, were lined up for the second and third productions.) *Pilot* presents General Idea as very much at home in the television medium; in fact, the tape is a good deal more lively and sophisticated than the offerings to be seen in the five or so daily hours of two-channel programming which entirely constitute national Dutch TV.

It was almost a year later when planning began in earnest, following tentative approval of government funds. Budgets were refined and finalized in correspondence, the total being a little over \$22,000 with the largest part going



technical quality required for an acceptable (to them) broadcast signal excluded virtually all artist-produced tapes. Smals was determined to meet this familiar objection; other arguments against air time for art tapes were secondary, less defensible, and could eventually be defeated.

At a March 1978 performance by General Idea in Amsterdam, Smals broached to the three artists a proposal that they create a broadcast-quality videotape under De Appel's sponsorship, the first of three she hoped to finance with specifically requested government funds, speculating that subsequent television sales revenues could be reinvested in a continuing series of artists' TV productions. The title as much as the heavily self-promotional content of General Idea's *Pilot* (1977), a colour videotape produced and frequently aired by the TV Ontario educational network

for studio costs. The order of procedure was somewhat dubious, since no script was in existence at that point, but the artists were willing to design their new work within the budget limits. The potentially thorny question of who would own the product was vaguely resolved with an informal agreement: General Idea would forego the substantial fees they might command as commercial television writers, directors and designers in exchange for a small advance against a percentage of future sales or rentals and for the privilege of showing the tape independently and privately in the context of their various artistic works.

The three artists set to the challenge of creating a scenario when they returned to Toronto from their (what seems now annual) art fair junket and related European showings, in June 1979. The writing progressed slowly and with

difficulty, and did not always find them in agreement, charged as it was with a considerable scope of opportunity and the responsibility of initiating a continuing series. The working pattern of debate and revision persisted up to and after the actual taping, solutions to unresolved problems improvised in the studio and dialogue (designed for multilingual post-production dubbing) rewritten after reviewing and editing the video recordings.

The tape was visually plotted and colour-coded on TV layout boards but the rough draft was still without an ending when the artists arrived in Amsterdam late in August. The script had developed an almost architectural structure of cross-referenced episodes, settings and embellishments, but the complex collaboration was pulling in several different directions and had not quite located its core.

The importance of finding its resolution gave way to more mundane concerns upon their arrival. The subsistence allowances initially agreed upon were low. The group was housed in two locations kilometers apart, the better of them a spacious but otherwise minimal studio supplied by the Stedelijk Museum; neither location equipped with a telephone. Despite Amsterdam's bilingualism, friendliness and familiar urban density, a persistent culture shock set in; transplanted working habits didn't work well in the new environment, and accomplishing routine errands frequently proved impossible. Prices for everything, especially services, were high; taxis and telephones hard to find, hours and sources of supply unpredictable. The De Appel staff, occupied day and night with *Words & Works*, could offer little assistance.

The first of a few boosts out of this initial discouragement was success in tracking down an imposing-looking woman, spotted in a café, who agreed to play the lead role in the tape's connecting 'story'. Then a sympathetic and capable production assistant was hired to clear a path through the project's mysterious delays and impediments. Despite lingering confusion, schedules were drawn up, scripts copied, set-pieces constructed, cue-cards prepared, costumes, props and performers found.

The actual tapings fell far short of the artists' dreams of professional practice. It soon became evident that the good commercial reputation of the Cinevideogroep Holland studios was built on film and not video. The operator was less than fully acquainted with the capabilities and limits of his equipment; the enthusiastic cameraman was an expert lighting designer, but his meticulous care and double duty as floor manager slowed the pace; and no one had

foreseen the need for a sound recordist. The shooting script designed to accommodate limited space and hardware dangerously fractured continuity. The easy-going atmosphere tolerated frequent breaks and irrelevant interruptions. The one outdoor shooting day, in a seaside field full of cows, was overcast and bitterly cold.

Somehow, though, by mid-October, a week's delay later, General Idea was back in the Stedelijk studio reviewing four hours of time-coded tape dubs and deciding that twenty-eight presentable minutes of visuals could be extracted from the material. Translating the punning, multi-layered script into Dutch, a language poor in media-inspired neologisms, brought translator Louwrien Wijers back to them several times with pages of queries. After a fruitless search for suitable facilities, a

lation. Parts of the photo/sculpture "Colour Bar Lounge", the intended center-piece of a hastily-scheduled exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum, failed to arrive from Naples; the artists' Italian dealer couldn't be reached, and the showing had to be postponed for two weeks. Plans to complete the final edit of an earlier tape, *Hot Property* (1976), also promised for the Stedelijk show, were eventually abandoned. (The editing facilities were to be made available at Videoheads, but this long-lived commune and production centre was predictably in chaos, caught up with the financing and renovation of The Bank, a wired-for-video café-bar-restaurant whose opening date kept advancing into the future.)

Through it all, the fatalistic nonchalance of the Dutch repeatedly produced blithe assurances that every-



sound recording studio composed of mattresses, blankets and borrowed equipment was improvised in the De Appel gallery; Dutch and English speakers were lured into its womb-like booth. Tightly budgeted time demanded that the final edit be completely prepared on paper in advance, along with synchronized sound tracks ready for mixing, before returning to the commercial studios. When no affordable subtitling services could be located in Amsterdam, the tape was taken to Erasmus University in Rotterdam for a session on the character generator in the medical school's video installation. And after all that, there were technical foul-ups and lasting imperfections in transferring the one-inch master tape to cassettes.

Simultaneously, publicity deadlines were hurrying along photo sessions, layout work, more writing and trans-

thing would ultimately turn out more or less satisfactorily, and this conviction held for the evening of November 8th. The amply publicized première reception for *Test Tube* at De Appel brought artists and arts scene hangers-on out in force to mingle with TV executives, journalists, and government cultural officials. They watched the tape in two languages, in three separate rooms, on cassette and one-inch machines, sipping from test tubes filled with refreshments furnished (with a little arm-twisting) by the Canadian Consulate. In the diverse crowd, rock princess Nina Hagen and filmmaker Rosa von Praunheim didn't get much attention. Interviewers circulated unobtrusively, surveying the guests with a questionnaire on their art viewing habits. The audience lingered; screenings were repeated several times. Reaction was mixed, confusion more prevalent than either disapproval or enthusiasm.

photos courtesy General Idea

but everyone had something to say.

Reviews and features appeared in several newspapers. Dutch TV programmers didn't rush to air the tape, but they didn't say no. Over the next ten days, *Test Tube* was screened frequently during De Appel's regular hours; and viewers had more opportunity to examine props, scripts, story-boards and photos that had been fashioned into a sort of documentary exhibition. In between clearing up business and financial details, Wies Smals took the videotape to New York and General Idea took it, along with some performances, to several art schools, galleries and universities in Holland and Belgium — connections to these institutions had been initiated or renewed throughout their stay. The next to last of these European showings was something of a gala presentation at the Raffinerie du Plan K, an arts centre, in collaboration with the energetic Soldes group in Brussels. The Canadian Cultural Centre there, presumably pleased to make a rare connection, through the Dutch-Flemish translation, with English-speaking Canada, co-sponsored the event. A few days later, the trio was back in Toronto, much relieved finally to put some distance between themselves and an exhausting three months' effort.

As a title, *Test Tube* is a synonymous sequel to that of the earlier broadcast work, *Pilot*. It means also to suggest some experimental tests of the television medium: can it withstand General Idea's fusion of conventional TV syntax with esoteric art content, and vice versa? Will it accept or resist the germ of De Appel's proposed artist series? Is the medium simply an aspect of (or vehicle for) culture, or has it turned the tables?

The familiar laboratory test tube containers, filled with coloured liquids and lined up in rows, are featured in the tape's periodically flashed signature. The array of coloured tubes is a direct visual reference to the vertical stripes of the television test pattern — the colour bar. The Colour Bar Lounge is the cocktail bar in the 1984 Miss General Idea Pavillion. The Lounge, as depicted in *Test Tube*, features a drink service bar framed in the cut-out silhouette of a television screen against the chroma-keyed background of — what else? — the colour bar test pattern. Like many another, the Colour Bar has for the entertainment of patrons a television set, neatly recessed into its immutable walls. And in the opening scene of the videotape, the camera finds AA Bronson, Felix Partz and Jorge Zontal of General Idea sitting convivially in this environment, sipping coloured cocktails out of test tubes. Viewing the tape, one

may apprehend all this in a few seconds. The troublesome verbal description, though, serves to point up the mind-boggling cross-play of verbal and visual puns and references which are a key stylistic feature of *Test Tube*.

This highly structured videotape has five 'chapters' or cycles, each a sequence in three modes. First, and periodically framing the rest, are the artist-hosts, 'discovered' in the electronically synthesized Colour Bar, talking to the camera and to each other; they discuss art, television, culture and ideology while playing out staged vignettes of 'at home' behaviour — competing at darts, ordering drinks, surveying the other guests, calculating their expenses. When they divert their attention, and the camera's, to the Bar's television set, the tape shifts to its second mode: a stylised soapy drama which focusses on the daily

it up, the final chapter violates the tape's earlier structure by bringing together its modal elements: Marianne, presumably moved by the commercials which she, too, has seen on television, finds herself at the Colour Bar Lounge along with General Idea and others, sipping and quietly considering all the test tube cocktails. Images from her recent past are replayed on the Lounge's electronic walls while she tries to decide which drink (read: ideology) is her favourite.

What's her choice to be? The answer, if it's there, is all in code.

The last of the five commercials is promoting a solution to "drinking problems": it advertises a pretty palette-shaped metallic tray fitted with magnetic cups of several hues (one of several references in the tape — another is the hugely successful Nazi Milk image — to the "Colour Bar Lounge" photo/sculp-



photo courtesy General Idea

troubles and inner conflicts of Marianne, an ethereally glamorous and prototypically modern Woman Artist — wife, mother, and commercially successful painter. And at thoughtful pauses in the drama it cuts to a commercial, the third mode of the tape. The various commercials are familiar in their selling strategies, but they're all advertisements for unlikely drinks available at the Colour Bar Lounge. And so, after the signature, back to General Idea.

Each cycle through each of these three modes is tied together by making reference — usually obliquely, sometimes flippantly, or simply through imagery — to a particular socio-political ideology. In the drama, in the banter of General Idea, and most recognizably in the commercials, communism, fascism, capitalism and cultural revolution are batted around in bewilderingly diverse and amusing ways. Ingeniously wrapping

ture). The tray is a container for cocktails: a context for ideologies. The commercial message encourages the thoughtful to fill these artistic cups with diverse contents and change them around at will, in the confidence that they can, accidentally or deliberately, spill some or all without shattering or losing hold of the containers; conventional beverages in conventional containers can't ever provide the same combination of flexibility and assurance.

And General Idea ends off their last session talking in wild, quasi-military lingo about 'responsible trendies', cultural scouts who reclaim forgotten territories but are always moving on, no region being too remote to escape their reconnaissance.

Whether this oblique advocacy is intended seriously to challenge the tape's audience is almost irrelevant. *Test Tube* abounds with points of view, and skitters

among them at dizzying pace. It also abounds with colour, some of it purely electronic, all of it electric. The vividness of its palette owes something to professional lighting and the superior quality of one-inch PAL standard AMPEX recording, and perhaps something else to the current fashion for bright, solid, saturated colours which had overwhelmed trend-conscious Amsterdam at the time design choices were being made.

Equally startling, and contributing to an overall glossy-mag patina, is the tape's defiance of the frequently acknowledged, inherently 'sculptural' quality of video. Much of *Test Tube* is composed in static and utterly two-dimensional images. Solid colour, bright, even light and chroma-key technique conspire with camera framing and directorial discretion to eliminate depth almost completely. The graphic impact is something like slow-scan telephone transmissions fused with colour cartoons. The simplified but fully articulated look is bold and arresting.

Sound, however, is not distinguished by the same care of composition. The wordy embellishments of the script are a jarring contrast to the elegantly reduced visuals. The accents belonging to some of the dubbed-in voices sometimes obscure the clever convolutions of the lines rather than ornamenting them with continental colour, as was presumably intended. On the other hand, music is absent and atmospheric effects and sound transitions are few. The technical sound quality is acceptable, but noticeably uneven. And there's a subtle damaging effect to all this. Few, on first listening, could claim to apprehend everything spoken. While an earful of missed words and phrases aren't crucial, reaching to recall them aggravates an abusive feeling of failure in comprehending what seems — visually, at least — straightforward and clear. The average television viewer, perhaps dulled and debilitated by his habit, may well translate his response to the tape's brisk pace, complex structure and near excess of wit into a sense of being played with unsympathetically, even of being bullied.

Seasoned art video viewers, likely to see *Test Tube* well before television audiences encounter it, may not find it easy going, either. Some may abhor its studio artificiality, deplore its equivocating rhetoric or isolate its numerous minor faults and mistakes, but its vigor and confidence are distinctive and indisputable. Among contemporary North American video artworks, *Test Tube* displays an original, eclectic and fully developed style — a Portrait of The Artist Looking into the Eighties. ■

Robert Handforth, a free-lance writer currently living in Ottawa, conducted the research for this article in Amsterdam.

January 8 - 19

**Sorel Cohen
Theodore Wan**

January 22 - February 2

**Stephen Horne
André Jodoin**

February 5 - 16

**Paul Hess
Douglas Kirton**

February 19 - March 1

**Ian Murray
Tom Sherman**

March 4 - 22

George Trakas

March 25 - April 12

Peter Hill

April 15 - May 3

**David MacWilliam
Renée VanHalm**

Mercer Union Front

Mercer Union has opened a small 15 X 19 exhibition space with 34 running feet of wall area, at the front of the existing gallery. Shows are now being curated on an as-they-come basis with scheduling about two to four weeks prior to installation.

Locations

Mercer Union is curating a catalogue exhibition of site specific artworks in locations throughout Toronto for the month of May. Funding towards the catalogue costs and artists' fees has been applied for, and proposals are now being accepted.

MERCER UNION

29 MERCER STREET, TORONTO, CANADA M5V 1H2 (416) 368-0230

K Missing Associates

page 197 *Missing in Action 1 (1978)*
page 209 *Missing in Action 2 (1979)*

\$0.25

MISSING **IN** **ACTION!**



May I have this dance?

Darf ich Sie um diesen Tanz
bitten?

issue 1

REPRINT, NOV/77

VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH CHARLOTTE HILDEBRAND AND LE GROUPE DE LA PLACE ROYALE (AND ETC.) REFLECT THE DISEASED STATE OF CANADIAN DANCE



Charlotte Hildebrand

(Disease: An abnormal condition of an organism or part, esp. as a consequence of infection, inherent weakness or environmental stress, that impairs normal physiological functioning.)

Infection: Invasion of a bodily part by pathogenic microorganisms.

Invasive: 1. To enter by force in order to conquer or overrun. 2. To encroach or intrude upon. 3. To infect. 4. To enter and spread from (through).

OR, COMMENTARIES DERIVED FROM THE SELECTION OF PERFORMERS FOR "LOOKING AT DANCE—LIVE" AT THE ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

("This program was never intended as a survey of Canadian dance. As a matter of fact, the Canadian audience, were, strictly put, not the target. It was, in fact, funded primarily by the government of Canada; it's our responsibility to throw in a couple of Canadian acts." STRICTLY HYPOTHETICAL STATEMENTS.)

Let me make my position on dance clear. I hate it. That's why I'm trying to replace it with something else. The dancer prototype is perfectly described in this passage from HAKAURI by Jochi Yamamoto (written in the early 1600's in reference to Samurai):

"A man who carries a reputation for being skilled at a technical art is idiotic. Because of his foolishness in concentrating his energies on one thing, he has become good at it by refusing to think of anything else. Such a person is of no use at all."

Le Groupe de la Place Royale embodies this concept (along with the National Ballet, Toronto Dance Theatre, etc.). The administrators of these organizations have one motivation: MONEY (and the power which its possession implies). THAT'S ALL. Anything else they say is SHIT.

Anyway, before diverging too far, I should state that this is intended as a general overview of dance (though and not a comprehensive review of the A.G.O. dance scene).

(Interesting, the selection, though—two-thirds of the program consisted of foreigners.)

I only went to the performances with the Canadian group Le Groupe de la Place Royale; and the American, Charlotte Hildebrand. Triha Brown I'd seen a couple of times in the United States previously.

I have to diverge here. The following are general instructions on how to form a New York style avant-garde dance group. First of all, it's best to be born in the States. For, unlike Americans arriving here, a Canadian has absolutely no rights, privileges, or access to government funding. In Canada, however, you can feel free to lift American ideas indiscriminately since their style is not yet firmly entrenched here. Take a few classes with Merce Cunningham or one of his former students—that's a must. You have to be a girl (though a trendy variation here is to throw in a little Steve Paxton type contact improvisation)—do try to keep your figure nice and trim—the coterie you are, the better. Devise a series of moves particularly suitable for your body, and put them together in such a way that your dance will have a structured look (it's the key they're craving actually). That's important because you really don't have anything else to communicate. (Though there is the Yvonne Rainer variation in which you throw in allusions as to how fucked up your love life is.) Now find a group of girls who don't look nearly as good as you do, or move as well—and have them memorize your repertoire of moves. Don't worry, they won't be in your league in touring audience attention.

Now, the look: recognizably dancey, you know, maybe leotards and terry cloth pants (as a rule, everyone should wear matching outfits), and maybe running shoes. After all, Twyla Tharp is into Adidas, you know.

Neat and austere—that's what you're striving for. (Admittedly, there is the Meredith Monk variation, heavy on theatre. Consider voice lessons for you and your crew.) Some makeup would look good under the lights.

Stuff up an Lucinda Childs, the aforementioned Triha Brown, Laura Dean, and so on. (If you were American and had their earning potential, you might even be taken on by Performing Arts Services in Westchester, their mutual manager.) Be a bit disdainful of Twyla Tharp since everyone knows she's sold out.

But, about Triha Brown specifically. Remember the article about Triha in Artscanda a couple of years back. Artscanda, huh? Anyway, on the night of her performance of the same old stuff she's been doing for

for years it was a question of either going or watching the Shanghai Ballet who at least seem to have a good reason to be doing what they're doing, on television. So I didn't go.

Maybe I should put things in order. Triha (nice, my career was supported by my mother, upper middle/ bourgeois class name) wasn't first on the program. David Farle, Danny Grossman (New York, American), and members of the Toronto Dance Theatre were first. As you might well guess from my intro, I gave up on them I don't know how many years ago. Actually I should partially credit them with confirming my decision to get involved with choreography. It was an "anything I can think of has to be better than this" reaction.

Danny Grossman—yes, well last time I saw him he was sucking on (to an Ontario Arts Council officer to stomach) excess. I'm sure she would have been on his knees, but the officer was a lady. I have this idea that a choreographer's everyday integrity in his work. So look Danny Grossman.

(BY THE WAY, I DON'T MEAN TO POINT HIM OUT AS AN UNUSUAL CASE.)

Next on the program: Sara Ruder (American), who ever she is. Apparently she danced with Twyla Tharp (note the running shoes in Sara's photo on the poster). Let's imagine this conversation:

—We could get Sara Ruder.
—Who's she?
—Well, I don't know anything about her work, but according to her management, the word is she with Twyla Tharp.
—Well, then, she must be good. Think we could get her for a thousand plus expenses?

I looked at her photo and thought, "a typical New York choreographer who gets a bunch of girls together who don't look as good as...," then, "it's not really fair to assume all this from a so-called photo". Never saw the performance though, it was sold out.

Speaking of sold out, the American Charlotte Hildebrand was on the next program with Le Groupe de la Place Royale. Charlotte is the typical case of the American with insufficient talent to make it back home who comes to Canada where the derivations in her work aren't immediately recognizable by most.

(I know you're going to get pissed off at me for what I'm saying about you, Charlotte. But, fuck it, it's true.)

Charlotte's piece was basically the New York stereotype, with mostly Meredith Monk variations. Cliche props: chair, television, hanging light bulbs (I wonder if she'd borrowed one of the light bulbs from Elizabeth Chitty who'd used a similar set-up a couple of years ago). A few leaps were thrown in to impress the audience. Badly done, ah, well. A few lines were recited with southern American accents. "When I was a young girl, I thought that love", sorry, it was more like, "When ah was by...". (Basic Yvonne Rainer variation.) The most entertaining aspect of the piece was that a couple of the dancers with bigger tits than your standard dancer model (refer to Standard Female Dance Physique, 1977 by George Balanchine) tended to hounce quite a bit when they got moving—but we're not supposed to notice this. The other part I liked was the flash of a car's headlights through a crack in the curtains. I think Charlotte could have improved the piece dramatically by turning the TV set around so the audience could watch it while she and the girls played around.

Some audience members applauded mildly at the end though they didn't know what the fuck was going on, but figured that there must have been something in it because it was programmed by the A.G.O. and in a place as big as the A.G.O. they must know what they're doing.

I'd predicted earlier that strategically it was a bad move for Charlotte to be billed with Le Groupe de la Place Royale. They would outclass her technically, and audiences generally recognize and love technique. What distracted from the pleasurable elements in Le Groupe's physical display was the fact that the piece was obviously choreographed and performed by mimes. They played around and made funny noises like happy, carefree natives on an island somewhere in the South Pacific. It was tedious. Most of my acquaintances left, they COULD NOT TAKE IT. I forced myself to stay, thinking, "I can't believe how bad this is, but if I force myself to sit through it (and it went on, and on, and on), the more justified I can feel in weakly vengeance. And these assholes deserve it."

By the way, Le Groupe de la Place Royale recently moved to Ottawa where the Canada Council is, and away from Montreal where the Quebecois are.

Anyway, back to the piece (I can't describe it in detail, I can't). Apparently it had comic implications, because as the performers exited, the choreographer kept saying things like, "Alpha Centauri is a trillion light years away. Andromeda is..." I wanted to say, "Jean Pierre Perreault is a jerkoff, and he's only several meters away." But, I didn't. I really regret that.

Some of those that remained applauded enthusiastically because they felt the rest of us couldn't appreciate "avant-garde" concepts. What a laugh.

BUT WITHOUT THESE CHANGES, QUEBEC—AS ALL THE REST OF CANADA—CANNOT AVOID HEADING TOWARD ANNEXATION TO THE UNITED STATES. ECONOMICALLY THIS ANNEXATION IS FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES ACCOMPLISHED.

CULTURALLY THE PROCESS IS WELL UNDER WAY. POLITICALLY, IT IS ONLY A QUESTION OF TIME.

NO, THE CANADIAN UNITY CRISIS IS NOT CAUSED BY THE LEVESQUE GOVERNMENT, NOR BY QUEBECQUS NATIONALISM. IT IS THE RESULT OF THE COLONIZATION OF CANADA BY THE UNITED STATES.

Pierre Vallières
U.S. "colonialism" is more a threat to Canada than the PQ.

Toronto Star, Nov 16/77

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU BELIEVE THIS COULD ACTUALLY HAPPEN IN THE ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

Lily Eng and I had been scheduled to perform at 9:00pm on Thur Nov 17/77 at the A.G.O. We arrived—the program read 9:30pm. But, actually, we didn't get started until 9:45 because I had some film in the program, and the lights couldn't be turned off in the surrounding hallways of Walker Court until 10:00pm closing time.

As Lily entered to do her solo number, I reminded her to make it at least 15 minutes. A security guard asked the 2 martial artists in one of my pieces and asked what was wrong. Derek and Henry said, "Nothing." The guard then asked what THAT WOMAN (Lily) was doing. "Performing," they answered. "No she's not!" he responded, and stormed into Lily's performing area. She was lying on her back at the time. He said something and tried to grab her arm. She pulled away, her lips moving. All I could make out was "Get the fuck out of my performing space!" He drew back (he seemed to be contemplating changing his), noticed the 130 or so people staring at him, then exited, so to speak.

Lily went on a bit, then laughed maniacally a couple of times. Again she continued, throwing in a few Bushy moves to demonstrate that she can do anything she wants. Then she addressed the audience:

Every time I come into this fucking place the fucking security guards harass me. Well if you want to get me out you'll have to fucking come and drag me out!

This was soon followed by an announcement over the loudspeaker system that the gallery was closing immediately.

A small girl began imitating Lily by rolling around in the carpeted hallway. A security guard rolled her to cut it out.

With the lights at last off, I showed Crash Points 2, at the Berlin Wall, the details of which I don't want to go into because I'm tired of it.

Lily went into Graham's Surgical Supplies in the Medical Building at Bloor and St. George on Monday morning to be measured for a spinal brace. It was ready Thursday morning. We whipped together some ideas on the afternoon of the performance, and called the piece, Labor and Management (in the developing stages).

When she was set I roundhoused Lily quite loudly in both ribcages, moving her a couple of feet to each side in each instance, then sidekicked her in the small of the back where normally it really hurts. The steel pieces in the brace took most of the shock, and the leather binding helped emphasize the sound.

I noticed that Grant State who's presently teaching at York University left after this piece. I was embarrassed last time I met him because I couldn't remember who he was.

A friend of mine, Margaret, said something that triggered off an idea for another piece:

Lily looked quite uncomfortable as if she were in a strait-jacket.

Then it went on to the sporting match with Henry and Derek. In contrast to the vicious intent of their actions, I mentioned afterward that I really liked the part in the film segment of the piece where they put their arms around each other. It was a simultaneous projection, 2 screen film with a left and right soundtrack. The performers' actions had been filmed from opposite sides with 2 cameras (actually a third camera was involved in the shooting, but this footage is being reserved for version 2 of this piece which is called PENETRATED). The 2 images and soundtracks are supposed to begin in sync, and then separate increasingly further with each edit in the film. The last part of the film has 2 completely different sequences juxtaposed. The movement is so fast and furious that as the images separate you have to resort to listening to screaming on the left speaker, followed by the same scream on the right to piece movements together. It's a simultaneous flash forward, instant replay situation.

Derek's cocoa skin tones and dreadlocks, contrasted with Henry's Asian features are really nice; part 3 will have Lily Eng taking on another female.

The conversation took place at the end. It's interesting to note that we were the first performers ever at the Art Gallery of Ontario to draw in working class persons (including Chinese from the surrounding community) along with the usual A.G.O. audience, and yet we're the most advanced choreographers in this country. We're also the only Toronto choreographers to come from working class families.

I initiated the whole thing by asking if there were any immediate questions about the preceding pieces, which there weren't because there usually aren't many immediately. So, I mentioned something about second class treatment of independent Canadian choreographers in their own country to give people time to think.

The bureaucrats took off immediately, and not just A.G.O. bureaucrats.

America started screaming with someone about the people looking down on us from the numbers lounge with drinks in hand, and being middle class; but left soon afterwards because he found it hard to resist the urge to punch her. John Fatchney said he felt a fight would have made everything perfect.

Somebody asked if the last film should have been in sync at the beginning. I said yes it should, that it was equipment failure, but that I edited with non-sync projectors in mind because usually they were all I could get. We just weren't given time to test anything.

It's ironic that I ended up using these projectors because they were initially built for Michael Snow's Two Sides to Every Story, in which I'd performed, and they would never have built them for me. (Wyn and somebody else mentioned afterward that they thought Crash Points 2 was the best 2 screen projection film they'd seen since Andy Warhol's Chelsea Girls. Admittedly, it's true.)

I think I also mentioned something about the inability of Canadian choreographers to deal with social reality. And of how it was generally assumed that dancers should be inarticulate. And of how dancers were usually presented as mythological beings aloof (and in their own minds, disdainful) from an audience.

As soon as it was obvious that we'd finished, Kate McCabe, superintendent of the live events, approached me from the outer lobby and said with her eyes askance:

I heard from someone that you said that we didn't give you as much publicity as the others.

I replied:

That wasn't what I said. I said that I assumed the gallery had given us all the same sort of publicity, but that certain major media such as the Star had chosen to pass on information about everyone on the program but us. It was an example of how Canadian independent choreographers, as opposed to American, get second class treatment in the media.

I couldn't believe it. Not 5 minutes after the discussion, I was getting inquisitor from the person who was officially supposed to have witnessed the whole thing. (I seriously hope they don't fire her. She's uncertain a lot, but her intentions are basically good, and that's the most important thing.)

I forgot (to add to my reply that though we may have had equal publicity, we (and Charlotte Hildebrand, who's presently residing in Toronto) were paid less than the imported choreographers on the program. This has to be corrected in future.

Afterwards I sat in the members' lounge briefly with one of the persons who had fled:

I enjoyed your show, but I had to leave at the conversation part because it got into money, and I'm tired of people talking about money. As a matter of fact, I was talking about money, but it was video money, all day today.

I don't remember if I said anything immediately, but I do remember thinking when it was too late, that I should have said right then:

Oh, Lily thought it was because you were afraid of her.

Just to see what sort of reaction it would get.

There was something else I said in reply to an earlier question. I said that individuals and public institutions should at least be willing to listen and reply to criticism. That criticism, even when apparently mean and nasty, can be a revitalizing force.

And that the practices of anyone unwilling to face that interchange were highly questionable.

And that we need artists with attitudes of strength.

PETER DUDAR

Bruce made a joke the other day: he suggested kidnapping a couple of A.G.O. administrators for ransom, collecting the money, and then killing them anyway.

I said they'd probably just put extortion money on their next request from the Canada Council.

Dance in Canada

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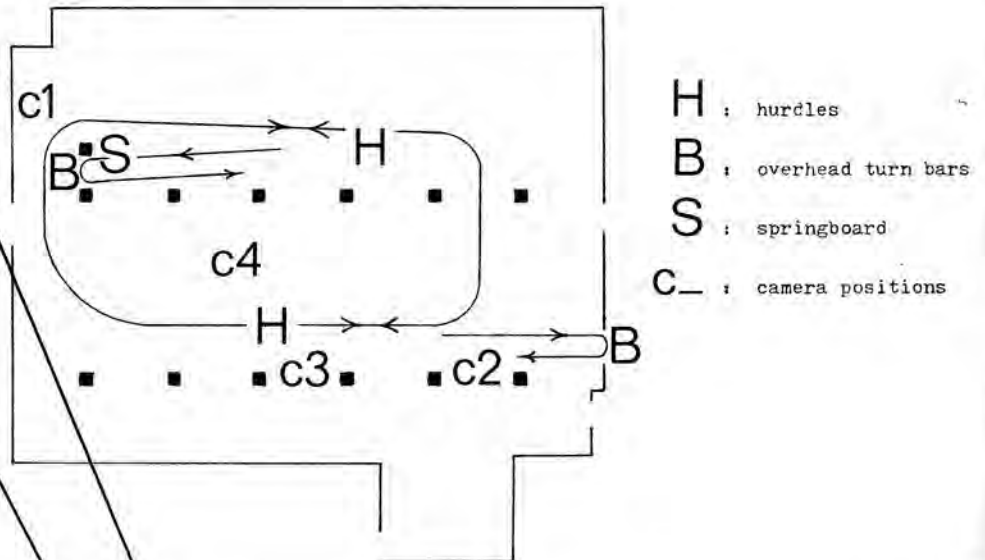
Looking at Dance— Live, On Film, As Video

Art Gallery of Ontario
Toronto

19 October–24 November 1977

A certain degree of self-indulgence in the arts can be tolerated, but, when it goes under the guise of social or political awareness, it's objectionable. *Crash Points 2* for instance, consisted of more film footage of Peter Dudar running around a room accompanied by a woman. The two of them ran halfway around the room, knocked over a stick which had been balanced on two sawhorses, ran the rest of the way around the room, jumped up and swung from a bar, then turned around and repeated the whole process. Why didn't Dudar just call his piece something descriptive, instead of trying to invest it with a significance it didn't have?

MARY JOHNSTON



Still 14: Linda has just knocked the metal tube from off the lightweight metal tripods. It crashes to the floor.

POST-PERFORMANCE (2)



“WE ARE JUSTIFIED” FUCKING WITH FATE • THE RISING SUN

"Military men in Japan, unlike their Western counterparts whose pleasures tend to focus on wine, women and slaughter, have evinced a remarkable taste for poetry; and throughout the long centuries of warfare their respect for things artistic did much to redeem the pervasive brutality of samurai life. Unlike the West, where there has traditionally been a debate concerning the comparative virtues conferred on a man by arms and the arts, Japan has never regarded the two as incompatible."

Ivan Morris, *The Nobility of Failure*

An anarchist assassin named Bresci eliminated King Humbert of Italy on July 29, 1900. His act was intended to trigger an uprising of the populace, thereby leading to social revolution. Never happened though.

Humbert's successor wanted to stay round. And to that purpose he followed this dictum: "Do anything that compromises enemies or wins friends." He initiated a long period of appeasement of the lower and middle classes, numbing somewhat the conditions causing social unrest, and progressively eliminated the revolutionary forces. The state framework ABSORBED two major outside elements: the Catholics, whose stance to this time had been non-participatory, and the Socialists, "who embarked on their long career of hypocritical and exploitive collaboration."

"I like to remember that all things spring from movement, even music; and I like to think that it is our supreme honor to be minister to the supreme force...Movement."

Gordon Craig, "The Artists of the Theatre of the Future."

The Mask 1908

The militant art of the Futurists came up snarling in the pages of *Le Figaro* (Paris) on Feb. 20, 1909.

MANIFESTO OF FUTURISM

1. We intend to sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and fearlessness.
2. Courage, audacity, and revolt will be essential elements of our poetry.
3. ...We intend to exalt aggressive action, a feverish insomnia, the racer's stride, the mortal leap, the punch and the slap.
4. We affirm that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath - a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot is more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace.
5. Except in struggle, there is no more beauty. No work without aggressive character can be a masterpiece...
6. We will glorify war—the world's only hygiene—militarism, patriotism, the destructive

gesture of freedom-bringers, beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for women.

10. We will destroy museums, libraries, academies of every kind, will fight moralism, feminism, every opportunistic or utilitarian cowardice...

...So let them come, the gay incendiaries with charred fingers! Here they are! Here they are!
F.T. Marinetti

Marinetti had shrewdly picked a time to STRIKE.

Italy's prestige image was tied to the past: ROME

Her "new culture" was imported.

Italy was the refuge of hypercritical complainers and backstabbers. And various all mouth but no action types. The lethargic bourgeois, the soft humanitarians, the pacifists, the international socialists, the poets who "solved" all problems with yet another poem. And the rapacious male sexist ("The two different sexual levels are the cause of unending trouble. The assumed inferiority of woman generates that powerful charge of amorousness so disturbing in Italian society." R.C.) The Italians welcomed their denunciation. It mattered little whether the Futurists were totally rational: they were warlike patriots who exalted action.

The latest foreign art fashions had lost their

glamour. They signified cultural inferiority.

And the Futurists, vulgar boys that they were, were deliberately that way. Their vulgarity was employed systematically against the so-called respectability and refinement of their conservative contenders.

It must be said to their credit that the Futurists were fully aware of the social problems of the day. In fact they, more than their opponents, were apt to stress the fact that great forces were about to be released from below, and that the social pyramid would soon be turned upside down.

Rosa Trough, *Futurism, The Story of a Modern Art Movement, A New Appraisal*

The Futurists intensified their activities between August 1914 and Italy's declaration of war. On Sept. 15, at the Dal Verne Theatre in Milan, Umberto Boccioni shredded an Austrian flag and threw pieces into the orchestra as Marinetti

furiously waved the Italian tricolour. The next day, an anti-Austrian demonstration in the Galleria and Piazza Del Duomo resulted in numerous arrests. In February, Marinetti, Bruno Corra, and Settlemelli hit twelve cities with Synthetic Futurist plays prefaced by violent interventionist speeches. Marinetti and Mussolini were arrested in Rome on April 12 in one of the last pro-war demonstrations.

THE PURITY OF HIS INTENTIONS IS REVEALED IN ACTION, USUALLY OF A DANGEROUS NATURE; TALK, UNLESS REFLECTED IN DEEDS, IS ALWAYS A MARK OF INSINCERITY AND HYPOCRISY.

Ivan Morris, *The Nobility of Failure*

A good number of Futurists went down in the war. It was heroic stuff. The French loved them.

Boccioni ("We wish to remove from the heart of our countrymen the spectre of artistic isolation...") died in Sorte. Architect Antonio Sant'Elia fell at the head of his company. Luigi Russolo of the Alpini, and Mario Carli of the shock troops were awarded silver medals for

having received severe wounds. Marinetti was awarded two silver medals and a citation: "In command of a machine gun squad, with exemplary courage, impetuous patriotism, and inspiring enthusiasm he was the first to enter Tolmazzo. He captured the town's entire command, overcame all attempts to counter-attack and subsequently destroyed all the enemy's communication lines."

"His ethical code must resolve itself into the practice of heroic virtues. Such is Futuristic life and such must be the subject of Futuristic Art."

Rosa Trillo Clough, *Futurism*

In October 1926, a young anarchist named Zamboni made an unsuccessful attempt on Mussolini's life. This was used as a pretext by the government to ban not only the anti-fascist press, but the independent press in general.

→
anarchy, art, fascism, death
anarchia f, arte f, fascismo m, morte f
anarchie f, art m, fascisme m, mort f
anarchie f, kunst f, fascismus m, tod m
anaki, bizyutu, fashizumu, shi
capitalism↑, marxism↑

Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto 1910

WE DECLARE

1. That all forms of imitation must be despised, all forms of originality glorified.
2. That it is essential to rebel against the tyranny of the terms 'harmony' and 'good taste'.
3. That the art critics are useless and harmful.
4. That all subjects previously used must be swept aside in order to express our whirling life of steel, of pride, of fever and speed.
5. That the term of 'madman' with which it is attempted to gag all innovators should be looked upon as a title of honor.

WE FIGHT:

3. Against the false claims to belong to the future put forward by the secessionists and the independents, who have installed new academies no less trite and attached to routine than the proceeding ones.

Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carra, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini

And now the reactions of the traditionalists are poured on my head in all their fury. I laugh serenely and care not a jot.

Balilla Pratella

The Exhibitors to the Public 1912

In order to make the spectator live in the centre of the picture, as we express it in our manifesto, the picture must be the synthesis of what one remembers and of what one sees.

... This decomposition is not governed by fixed laws but it varies according to the characteristic personality of the onlooker and the emotions of the onlooker.

... With the desire to intensify the aesthetic emotions by blending, so to speak, the painted canvas with the soul of the spectator, we have declared that the latter must in future be placed in the centre of the picture.

He shall not be present at, but participate in the action. If we paint the phases of a riot, the crowd bustling with uplifted fists and the noisy onslaughts of calvary are translated upon the canvas in sheaves of lines corresponding with all the conflicting forces, following the general law of violence of the picture.

Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carra, Luigi Russolo, Giacomo Balla, Gino Severini

The Plastic Foundations of Futuristic Sculpture and Painting 1913

We reject any a priori reality; this is what divides us from the Cubists and places us Futurists on the extreme fringe of the painting world. In Italy we are the only artists today who are trying to give art those attributes which have always been characteristic of Italian art, during its best periods: style and reality.

Umberto Boccioni

The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism -Futurist Manifesto 1913

Speed has given us a new conception of space and time, and consequently of life itself; and so it is perfectly reasonable for our Futurist works to characterize the art of our epoch with the stylization of movement which is one of the most immediate manifestations of life.

... I ...foresee the end of painting and of the statue. These forms of art, in spite of our innovative spirit, curb our creative freedom and contain within them their own fates: museums, collectors' galleries, all equally bogged down in the past.

Gino Severini

The Variety Theatre 1913

We are deeply disgusted with the contemporary theatre (verse, prose, and musical) because it vacillates stupidly between historical reconstruction (pastiche or plagiarism) and photographic reproduction of our daily life; a finicking, slow, analytic, and diluted theatre worthy, all in all, of the age of the oil lamp.

FUTURISM EXALTS THE VARIETY THEATRE because:

4. The Variety Theatre is unique today in its use of the cinema, which enriches it with an incalculable number of visions and otherwise unrealizable spectacles...
12. The Variety Theatre is the only school that one can recommend to adolescents and to talented young men, because it explains, quickly and incisively, the most obtruse problems and most complicated political events. Example: A year ago at the Folies-Bergeres, two dancers were acting out the meandering discussions between Cambo and Kinderlen-Watcher (sic) on the question of Morocco and the Congo.
15. The Variety Theatre destroys the Solemn, the Sacred, the Serious, and the Sublime in Art with a capital A. It co-operates in the Futurist destruction of immortal master-works, plagiarizing them, parodying them, making them look commonplace by

**“I WANT SUNG CHIANG
AND EXPLAIN WHY HE**

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"The imperial affairs are in disorder," replied Sung Chiang (to General Kuan Sheng), "and corrupt officials are in power; loyal men are ignored; and covetous men are employed. This results in the suffering of the people. We are the agents of heaven, and have no personal aims."

Kuan Sheng shouted, "It is clear that you are a brigand. Which heaven has appointed you? My troops carry out the Son of Heaven's wish, but you have only fine words on your side. If you don't dismount at once, I will have you cut into many pieces."

Upon hearing this Chin Ming was angry, and dashed from the rear on horseback. At the same moment Lin Ch'ung did the same. Kuan Sheng however, stood his ground, and fought with the two. The three horses circled around like a small whirlwind. Sung Chiang called to the gongs to summon the two leaders to come back, and when they returned Chin Ming protested, "We could have captured that man. Why did you stop us?"

Sung Chiang replied in loud voice, "We are honest and upright, and we do not like to see two men attacking one. It is not fair. If you had captured him you could not capture his mind. He is a

**G TO COME FORWARD
HAS REBELLED.»**



2 DEADLY WOMEN, 1978

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loyal and devoted official, and the spirits of his ancestors must be very proud of him. If we could win him over I would immediately resign in his favour."

"Sung Chiang, commander of Liang Shan Po, replies to Tseng Lung, headman of the Tseng T'ou Shih. It has always been a fact that a country without confidence among the people must become extinct in the end; without propriety soon become of no account. Unjust gains must be robbed, generals without bravery must soon be defeated. These are definite laws. Liang Shan Po and your village had no enmity before, and we both guarded our domains respectively. But recently you did a wicked thing, and so we are now enemies. If, however, you wish to have peace then you must return to us the horses you stole, and also hand over to us Yu Pao-ssu who stole the horses. You must also give money to our men. If you are sincere you must not treat lightly the proper procedure."

Shih Nai-an, Water Margin, 1250?

stripping them of their solemn apparatus as if they were mere attractions.

F.T. Marinetti

Weights, Measures, and Prices of Artistic Genius - Futurist Manifesto 1914

OBSERVATION NO. 1. Every human activity is a projection of nervous energy. This energy, which is one of physical constitution and of action, undergoes various transformations and assumes various aspects according to the material chosen to manifest it. A human being assumes greater or lesser importance according to the quantity of energy at his disposal, and according to his power and ability to modify his surroundings.

Bruno Corradini, Emilio Settimelli

The Futurist Synthetic Theatre 1915

As we wait our much prayed-for great war, we Futurists carry our violent antineutralist action from city square to university and back again, using our art to prepare the Italian sensibility for the great hour of maximum danger. Italy must be fearless, eager, as swift and elastic as a fencer, as indifferent to blows as a boxer, as impassive at the news of a victory that may have cost fifty thousand dead as at the news of a defeat.

War - Futurism intensified - obliges us to march and not to rot (*marciare, non marcire*) in libraries and reading rooms. THEREFORE WE THINK THAT THE ONLY WAY TO INSPIRE ITALY WITH THE WARLIKE SPIRIT TODAY IS THROUGH THE THEATRE.

Dynamic, simultaneous. That is, born of improvisation, lightning like intuition, from suggestive and revealing actuality. We believe that a thing is valuable to the extent that it is improvised (hours, minutes, seconds), not extensively prepared (months, years, centuries).

Every night the Futurist theatre will be gymnasium to train our races' spirit to the swift, dangerous enthusiasms made necessary by this Futurist year.

F.T. Marinetti, Emilio Settimelli, Bruno Corra

The Futurist Cinema 1916

4. CINEMATIC SIMULTANEITY AND INTERPENETRATION of different times and places. We shall project two or three different episodes at the same time, one next to the other.

F.T. Marinetti, Bruno Corra, Emilio Settimelli, Arnaldo Ginna, Giacomo Balla, Remo Chiti

Some Episodes from the Film Futurist Life

4. Morning gymnastics - fencing, boxing - swordplay between Marinetti and Remo Chiti - discussion in fencing gloves between Marinetti and Ungan.

Futurist stroll. Study of new ways of walking - caricature of the neutralist walk interpreted by Marinetti and Balla. Interventionist walk sketched out by Marinetti - creditor's walk, sketched by Balla - debtor's walk, sketched by Settimelli. Futurist march interpreted by Marinetti, Setti, Balla, Chiti, etc.

F.T. Marinetti

Manifesto of the Futurist Dance, July 8, 1917

the Futurist dance can have no other purpose than to immensify heroism, master of metals, and to fuse with the divine machines of speed and war.

DANCE OF THE SHRAPNEL

DANCE OF THE MACHINE GUN

DANCE OF THE AVIATRIX

The danseuse will dance on top of a large, violently coloured geographical map (four meters square) on which will be drawn in large, highly visible characters the mountains, woods, rivers, geometries of the countryside, the great traffic centers of the cities, the sea.

The danseuse must form a continual palpitation of blue veils. On her chest, like a flower, a large celluloid propeller that because of its very nature will vibrate with every bodily movement. Her face dead white under a hat shaped like a monoplane.

Movement 1: Lying on her stomach on the carpet-map, the danseuse will simulate with jerks and weavings of her body the successive efforts of a plane trying to take off. Then she will come forward on her hands and knees and suddenly jump to her feet, her arms wide, her body straight and shivering all over.

F.T. Marinetti

"I adore originality and original people so please won't you the creature of Futurism come to my house New Year's Eve and there'll be just the two of us I hope you won't be bored."

Isadora Duncan, from Marinetti, Selected Writings

ARTHUR CRAVAN

Arthur Cravan liked to say things like: "Every great artist has a talent for provocation." He'd originally expressed himself publicly with his fists, as a professional boxer engaged in title bouts throughout Europe.

Hardsome, unpredictable, photographed more often in tights than fully clothed, Cravan had an ebullience that carried him into belligerent defiance of convention. In its systematic provocation, his writing resembles a literary transposition of boxing techniques.

Roger Shattuck, The Banquet Years

In 1913, in Paris, he started publishing a one-man magazine called *Maintenant* (forerunner of *Picabia's 391* and other aggressive postwar publications), which he distributed around sports arenas and subway entrances. A 1914 issue carried a searing review of the *Salon des Independents*:

Exhibition at the Independents (1914)

"You must absolutely get it through your head that art is for the bourgeois, and by bourgeois I mean a monsieur without imagination.

... I have no idea what milieu he frequents, but I am convinced that it is bad. His name tells me that he is noble and his painting that he is distinguished. Distinction is bounded on one side by the toughocracy, and on the other by the nobility. Hence it is in the middle and like all things in the middle, it is mediocre. Every noble has something of the tough in him and every tough has something of the noble in him, because they are the two extremes.

To judge by his latest canvases, this painter who gave a certain promise at first, is today nothing but little masses.

His futurism - I don't say this to annoy him for I believe that nearly all great painting from now

... art, in the mysterious state corresponding to form in a wrestler, is situated more in the guts than in the brain...

I'd rather stay under water two minutes than face to face with this painting.

A bit of good advice: take a few pills and purge your spirit; do a lot of fucking or better still go into vigorous training: when the girth of your arm measures nineteen inches, you'll at least be a brute if you're gifted.

There is something in your painting (that's nice), but one has a feeling that it still owes a good deal to little discussions on aesthetics in the cafes. All your friends are still little simpletons (that's nasty, isn't it).

on will derive from futurism which also lacks a genius, since the Carras or Boccionis are nonentities - has a great quality of effrontery...

P.S. Unable to defend myself in the press against the critics who have hypocritically insinuated that I was related either to Apollinaire or Marinetti, I hereby warn them that if they repeat this I shall twist their private parts.

One of them said to my wife: "What do you expect, Monsieur Cravan doesn't spend much time with us." I wish to state for once and for all: I do not want to be civilized.

The article devoted to the Independent Exhibition in Paris in 1914 made him famous, and unleashed a tempest of protests. He attacked the most outstanding names. The women painters, no less than the men, were the object of his insolent commentaries, which were all the more irritating as they were characterized by an irresistible verve and drollery. And although everybody said it was outrageous, they could hardly control their chuckles. But he did go too far, nonetheless... Those who were insulted, it must be said, did not cut a very brilliant figure, either, when they made a little group of ten or twelve - union makes strength and waited for him before the Independent Gallery, where he had come to sell copies of his review, like a news vendor. The encounter

PLAZA DE TOROS MONUMENTAL

DOMINGO 23 ABRIL DE 1916

GRAN FIESTA DE BOXEO

6 interesantes combates entre
notables luchadors, 6



JACK JOHNSON

ARTHUR CRAVAN

PENETRATED, 1977

NEGRO DE 110 KILOS Y EL CAMPEON EUROPEO BIANCO DE 106 KILOS

ended at a police station, not to Cravan's advantage.

Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, Arthur Cravan and American Dada, 1938

He struck again in July with a performance in which he fired a pistol, boxed, danced and lectured the audience in an insulting manner, maintaining that sportsmen were superior to artists: "Genius is nothing but an extraordinary manifestation of the body."

Fleeing conscription, he ended up in Madrid, where on April 23, 1916, he attempted to take on former heavyweight Jack Johnson while reeling drunk. Adhering to contract stipulation, Johnson waited three rounds, then pounded him.

(Cravan usually introduced himself before matches as the nephew of Oscar Wilde, which he was: not the best of circumstances though, for making this revelation.)

Francis Picabia and Marcel Duchamp, the 1914

Paris scandal in mind, arranged a lecture for Cravan at the Grand Central Gallery in New York, where he'd resurfaced without a cent in 1917. On his big night he staggered through the audience decorated with Fifth Avenue hostesses, looking for the speaking platform. There at last, he began stripping down. As he leaned over the table cursing his onlookers, the police came at him from behind and hauled him off in handcuffs.

"What a wonderful lecture!" said Duchamp.

Conscription was coming to America - Arthur left. He hitchhiked north, ending up in Newfoundland. But Canada was just as boring then as it is now. Eventually he made it to Mexico, where he founded a boxing club. Unfortunately, he somewhat damaged his credibility by being beaten to a pulp in a match with a local adversary.

Then he disappeared altogether, presumed drowned in the Gulf of Mexico.

Especially after the disaster at Okinawa most members of the suicide units, and certainly the more clear-headed among them, seem to have realized that, while their forthcoming sacrifice was not without honor, it was most certainly without hope. The Lieutenant Nagatsuke recalls his last rambling thoughts as he sat in the cabin of his K1-27 fighter.

Do I really believe that suicide attacks are effective? Aren't they, in fact, a foolhardy enterprise for flyers like us without any escort planes or any armaments of our own?.. Is it true that self-sacrifice is the only thing that gives meaning to death? To this question the warrior is obliged to reply "yes", while knowing full well that his suicide mission has no meaning.

... This is the spirit of the popular kamikaze song:
Never think of winning!

Thoughts of victory will only bring defeat.
When we lose, let us press forward, ever forward!

Ivan Morris, The Nobility of Failure

JACQUES VACHÉ

I think I remember that, mutually, we had agreed to leave SOCIETY in an amazed half-ignorance till the psychological moment for some satisfactory and perhaps scandalous manifestation.
Lettres de Guerre, 1919

The start of Surrealism is sometimes pinned to the "fortuitous encounter" of Andre Breton and Jacques Vaché in a military hospital at Nantes in early 1916.

Jacques Vache was a past master in the art of attaching little or no importance to everything... In the streets of Nantes, he strolled sometimes in the uniform of a hussar, an aviator, a doctor.

Occasionally he would pass and not seem to recognize you and go on his way without turning around. Vache never held out his hand to say hello or good-bye...

They met infrequently afterward. Breton writes of June 24, 1917:

'It was at the Conservatoire Maubel that I met Jacques Vache again. The first act had just ended. An English officer was making a great racket in the orchestra: it had to be

Vache. The scandal of the performance had excited him. He had come into the theatre with a revolver in his hand, and was threatening to fire into the audience.'

Besides, Art of course doesn't exist... So we neither like Art or artists....
Lettres de Guerre, 1919

Little by little, he imparted his secret to his new friends. The secret was nothing more than a definition of humor, carried to its furthest consequences, to the point of abolishing even the feeling that life was worthwhile... 'Humor is a sense of the theatric and joyless futility of everything, when one is enlightened.'...

The essential thing was to put into practice this singular philosophy: as we have seen, Vache himself succeeded very well. But the latter's triumph was his death at Nantes, some time before the Armistice.

He committed suicide in a formidable and humorous fashion, by taking, and forcing two of his comrades to take, a large overdose of opium, although he knew very well what the proper method of employing the drug was...

Bouvier, The Dada Painters and Poets

"Japan will be defeated, Yakota," he told me. I was shocked. I didn't know what else to say at the moment, for I had never heard anyone in the military discuss this possibility before, so I came back with, "Then why did you volunteer to die?" "A man must do what he can for his country," was his simple answer. His death meant nothing, he added. "Japan will be defeated, of this I am sure. But she will be born again, and become a greater nation than ever before." (He) went on to explain that a nation had to suffer and be purified every few generations, so that it could become stronger by having its impurities removed. Our land was now being bathed in fire, he said, and she would emerge all the better because of it.

If only we might fall
Like cherry blossoms in the spring -
So pure and radiant!
Kamikaze pilot of the Seven Lives Unit, 1945
Ivan Morris, The Nobility of Failure

What I sought was the struggle as such, whichever way it might go. I had no taste for defeat - much less victory - without a fight. At the same time, I knew only too well the deceitful nature of any kind of a conflict in art. If I must have a struggle, I felt I should take the offensive in fields outside art; in art I should defend my citadel... The goal of my life was to acquire all the various attributes of the warrior.

Mishima Yukio, Sun and Steel



LONDON, 1977

MISSING IN ACTION
• Peter Dudar
Toronto, Canada
March, 1978

**COME LIKE THE WIND,
GO LIKE THE LIGHTNING.
Sun Tzu, The Art of War**

MISSING

IN

ACTION



'Cry "Havoc" and let slip the dogs of ~~war~~ dance.'
William Shakespeare

issue 2

PETER DUDAR'S

THE DOGS OF DANCE

Featuring

LILY ENG

HENRY KRONOWETTER

PETER KRONOWETTER

JIM ROSS

Cameras

ANTHONY CURRIE

FRIEDER HOCHHEIM

KEITH LOCK

Sound

DAVID ANDERSON

CAM ROBERTS

Research assistant

CORINNE PALMER

A CRASHPOINTS PRODUCTION

***Unless otherwise credited, the text of this film
has been paraphrased from the following
sources:***

The Art of War, Sun Tzu

Red Star Over China, Edgar Snow

Yu Chi Chan (Guerilla Warfare), Mao Tse-Tung

...movement is the most powerful and dangerous art medium known.

Martha Graham, A Modern Dancer's Primer for Action



"I WANT SUNG CHIANG TO COME FORWARD AND EXPLAIN WHY HE HAS REBELLED."

"The imperial affairs are in disorder," replied Sung Chiang (to General Kuan Sheng), "and corrupt officials are in power; loyal men are ignored; and covetous men are employed. This results in the suffering of the people. We are the agents of heaven, and have no personal aims."

Kuan Sheng shouted, "It is clear that you are a brigand. Which heaven has appointed you? My troops carry out the Son of Heaven's wish, but you have only fine words on your side. If you don't dismount at once, I will have you cut into many pieces."

Upon hearing this Chin Ming was angry, and dashed from the rear on horseback. At the same moment Lin Ch'ung did the same. Kuan Sheng however, stood his ground, and fought with the two. The three horses circled around like a small whirlwind. Sung Chiang called to the gongs to summon the two leaders to come back; and when they returned Chin Ming protested, "We could have captured that man. Why did you stop us?"

Sung Chiang replied in loud voice, "We are honest and upright, and we do not like to see two men attacking one. It is not fair. If you had captured him you could not capture his mind. He is a

loyal and devoted official, and the spirits of his ancestors must be very proud of him. If we could win him over I would immediately resign in his favour."

"Sung Chiang, commander of Liang Shan Po, replies to Tseng Lung, headman of the Tseng T'ou Shih. It has always been a fact that a country without confidence among the people must become extinct in the end; without propriety soon become of no account. Unjust gains must be robbed, generals without bravery must soon be defeated. These are definite laws. Liang Shan Po and your village had no enmity before, and we both guarded our domains respectively. But recently you did a wicked thing, and so we are now enemies. If, however, you wish to have peace then you must return to us the horses you stole, and also hand over to us Yu Pao-ssu who stole the horses. You must also give money to our men. If you are sincere you must not treat lightly the proper procedure."

Shih Nai-an, Water Margin, 1250?



Photos: CORINNE PALMER

The purity of his intentions is revealed in action, usually of a dangerous nature; talk, unless reflected in deeds, is always a mark of insincerity and hypocrisy.

Ivan Morris, The Nobility of Failure



Do not press a dancer at bay. Wild beasts, when at bay, fight desperately. How much more this is true of people! If they know there is no alternative they will fight to the death.

Show him there is a road to safety, and so create in his mind the idea that there is an alternative to death. Then strike. This is the method of employing dancers.



It is military doctrine that an encircling force must leave a gap to show the surrounded troops that there is a way out, so that they will not be determined to fight to the death. Now, if I am in encircled ground, and the enemy opens a road in order to tempt my dancers to take it, I close this means of escape so that they will have a mind to fight to the death.

Government airplanes often dropped leaflets over Red lines offering from \$50,000 to \$100,000 for P'eng, dead or alive, but he only had one sentry on duty before his headquarters, and he sauntered down the streets of the city without any body-guard. While I was there, when thousands of handbills had been dropped offering rewards for himself, Hsu Hai-tung, and Mao Tse-tung, P'eng Teh-huai ordered that they be preserved. They were printed only on one side, and there was a paper shortage in the Red Army. The blank side of these handbills was used later for printing Red Army propaganda.

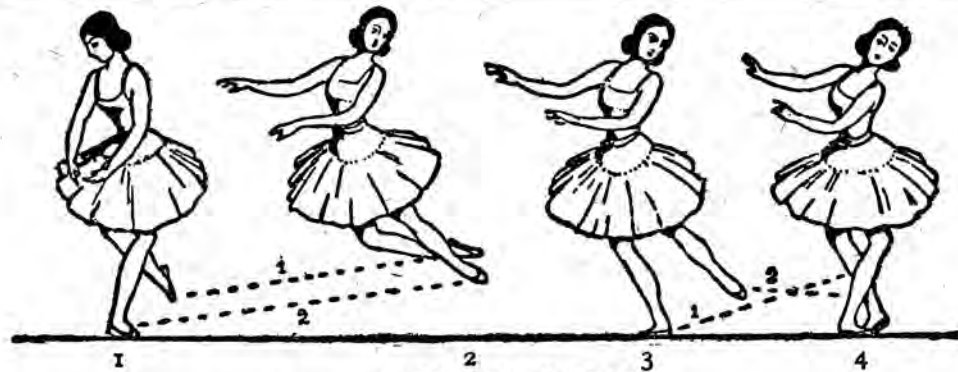
Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China



Where do you think you're going? You're an aggressor and you've committed unforgivable crimes! Yu-lan fires a shot at him.



With deep national and class hatred, Sister Tien raises her red-tasselled spear and plunges it into this enemy who dares to resist.



PAS DE CHAT



图 155

图 156

图 157

图 158
CAT STANCE

МАЯ ПЛИСЦКАЯ

There is no profound difference between the dancer and the soldier.

Pas de chat, grand. Large cat's step.
The step owes its name to the likeness of the movement to a cat's leap.

Japanese officers and soldiers captured and disarmed by us will be welcomed and will be well treated. They will not be killed. They will be treated in a brotherly way. Every method will be adopted to make the Japanese proletarian soldiers, with whom we have no

quarrel, stand up and oppose their own Fascist oppressors. Our slogan will be: 'Unite and oppose the common oppressors, the Fascist leaders.' Anti-Fascist Japanese troops are our friends, and there is no conflict in our aims.

Administrators and dancers captured and disarmed by us will be welcomed and will be well treated. They will not be killed. They will be treated in a brotherly way. Every method will be adopted to make the dancers, with whom we have no quarrel, stand up and oppose their own oppressors. Our slogan will be: 'Unite and oppose the common oppressors, the Imperialists.' Anti-Imperialists are our friends, and there is no conflict in our aims.

All dance is based on deception.

1978 - 79

L Philip Monk

- page 220 *Peripheral Drift: a Vocabulary of Theoretical Criticism* (Toronto: Rumour, 1979).
- page 228 "Terminal Gallery/Peripheral Drift," in *Spaces by Artists/Places des artistes*, ed. Tanya Rosenberg (Toronto: ANNPAC, 1979), 32–35.
- page 232 "Theoretical Dance: This Body is in Creation," *Only Paper Today*, 6:8 (October 1979), 18.

See also ...

- page 118 Philip Monk, "'Reading and Representation in Political Art,'" *Parachute* 16 (Autumn 1979), 49–50.
- page 141 Philip Monk, "Anorexial," unpublished.

PERIPHERAL/DRIFT

Philip Monk

PERIPHERAL/DRIFT
A Vocabulary of Theoretical Criticism

Philip Monk

Criticism is in a state of drift, out of control. Its loss, however, is willed; its drifting theoretical. Initially the question is: How is criticism presently adequate to its object? Yet, beyond this question, how is language itself adequate, as language is the role and "model" of criticism? Criticism as theory frees itself from its traditional object - the work of art; it is responsible - in its theoretical irresponsibility, i.e., in not answering, responding to the work of art - for its excess and loss. But in exceeding the object and losing it, is not this excess and loss, for itself, *jouissance*, its own bliss? Desire has no object - it is outside use, want and demand; and theory similarly no longer finds its impulses in the work of art, in an object, formerly its own object. It can still nominate a work of art, and say, "That's it for me," as part of the binary "That's it"/"So what"; but usually it says "What's in it for me?", or "How can I use this?"

Theory no longer assumes a subservience to its object (the prerequisite of a science) in a presumed secondariness of non-presence to the full presence of the work of art and the artist, the guarantor of that presence. Theory now, in a sense, is fictive. Nevertheless, as its own object, theory is not a metalanguage, which would return it to the formal, as a formal language. It is a drift. This drift is atopic, without a site: theory does not take itself to be central but peripheral (not centered in meaning, in society). Theory's displacement is the movement of its desire, the loss of its privileged site and meaning, its prescriptive and normative authority.

The following attempts to sketch a revaluation of the values (by disguise and theft) of art and theory through a critical vocabulary of intensive, shifting terms.

AMBIGUITY/AMBIVALENCE

ANUS

APHASIA

BODY/CONVULSION

BREAK

CONTENT

DEATH OF STRUCTURE

DESIRE

DRIFT

ECCENTRICITY AND DIFFERENCE

EXACERBATION

HERESY

INHABITATION

ISSUE

NETWORK

NOISE

PERIPHERAL

PERVERSION

SYMPTOM

THEFT

WRITING

Representation leads to a singular reading and meaning. A reading that does not go beyond itself is representation, contained within the frame and limit of one meaning. Multiple readings, ambiguity, would open the work to desire, but also to ambivalence. Any intervention, however, opens itself (increases the openings, the sites of eroticism and perversion) to this possibility of positive action/function, recuperation, or negative response and reactionary usurpation. Any art, any act, must be open to this lack of control, to the abandonment of the hierarchical distribution and unification (univocality) of meaning, to the release of a mechanism from which desire issues.

What is this disgusting term "anus" but an inversion of values? In this drift, the Phallus loses its constitutive role as the social distributor of identity. Since the Phallus assures identity, the loss of identity means the inability to know the value or social and sexual function of the sexual organ, whether phallus or anus. And since the anus does not distribute identity, the knowledge of one's sex, male or female, is uncertain. This drift between sexual postures is an acceptance of - an indifference to - uncertainty, the refusal of identity, as is the theoretical notion of celibacy (e.g., celibate machines).

What would an art of the anus mean (as opposed to the socially acceptable art of the phallus), an art that escaped its social and civilizing status as sublimated anality? And what would an art be that hid the anus beneath the phallus, in fact, confused the anal with the phallic or, indeed, disguised the anus as the phallus?

APHASIA

BODY/CONVULSION

The aphasic is outside any presence (the ideal presence of apodicticity and tautology). The aphasic, suffering from a similarity or decoding disorder, cannot select or identify. The code is damaged in focusing on the context. Unable to act as a subject (initiate a subject in a sentence), the aphasic is outside identity and exchange.

The apodictic, on the other hand, gives certitude of subject. But the apodictic does not "speak" so much as assert. Marcel ("beauty of indifference") Duchamp expressed the desire to escape the condition: "dumb like a painter." Prescient as his desire was, no one has commented on the continued "dumbness" of paintings - not the act of painting, but the objects "in themselves," i.e., the apodictic (phenomenological) art object. How can paintings betray some intelligence and lose their "dumbness," their apodicticity, their inability to signify, and thus be interpreted (plurally), except as a "sign system on a single level of articulation"?

Through criticism I bring my body (my language) into crisis. What is my body to me but a representation, an image-repertoire, an identity? That is the representation I bring to my body as a subject. But I am also inscribed in representation from "outside": against the insistence of this recording gaze (a technique) I offer the resistance of the surface of my body. Yet against this representation, my body convulses; it breaks; it disarticulates this inscribed surface of representation and identity. It distends and extends itself; or rather, language/writing imposes a limit to the body, impels the body to the limit.

The "truth" of the body (its phenomenology) is an ideology (not natural but created, with its own history); its limit, this necessary fiction. Phenomenology cannot ensure the "truth" of the body. Its promotion of the experience of temporality is only the most recent of abstractions created from the meditative space of the art gallery, while outside I am condemned to the political technology of my body. Against this body, against the resolution of tension in the experience of the work of art, all that is left to me in my body is my own physical disgust and convulsion, my own control of my body in the willed loss of control and usurpation by cataclysmic desire.

The convulsive body is exemplary in its lack of control, as a usurper of intensive moments, displacing energy over the body onto the other, outside of any hierarchy, identity or coercion. It is an anoedipal organ.

BREAK

Desire flows through the break; its force creates it. What prevents the break from taking effect? Structure: that is why the break is first a question of structure, then of content. The play of difference in a work is the play of structure against itself, a process of disarticulation and decomposition that can be accelerated. Structure playing against itself producing a difference is *différance* - the same which is not identical. This is not merely a slippage in the sense of the structure repeating itself out of sync, but a return of the same, a return out of control (as a split in the subject).

What brings us to this disarticulation of structure?: force, which through excess, fissures structure, and desire which issues through/from it as content. But this force and meaning of content has been repressed by structure, in that structure is the formal unity of form and content, but content formalized and subsumed within the structural. In the pretence of content in formalist art, content is brought to another order in its erasure - to the formal, structural - whereas form and structure achieve their "natural" order in transparency. In effect, transparency (including identity and tautology) reduces the gap which is the locus of the opening to and issue of content. The break, as a return within the structural, acts positively in the gap. It locates itself as an effect in disarticulating that structure, but its positive force is indifferent to it.

DEATH OF STRUCTURE

The disarticulation of structure, or to accelerate the process, degeneration and dissolution, is perhaps the drift of death - an impulse or an indifference, not an instinct, an impulse out of order; not repetition which would be that order of structure. Drift as the death of structure and identity.

CONTENT

The necessary correlative of the death of structure (if that death can ever be announced totally outside a new economy) is the radical non-identical and disjunctive relation of content to form. To prevent content being recuperated to the substantive, we must use it disjunctively: as an a-formal force it is a completely different matter and issue.

Content is not traditionally conceived meaning or subject matter. Rather, it is the process and force of interpretation, an intensive issue of energy. What is the relation between content and energy? In one word, desire.

Likewise, the movement of interpretation forbids a substance or subject to rest within the act: "We have no right to ask who it is who interprets. It is interpretation itself, a form of the will to power, which exists (not as a 'being' but as process, a becoming) as passion." (Nietzsche)

DESIRE

Desire is without object, consequently, without need and demand. Its positive force precludes any lack, however. Like theory without its object, desire is not a metalanguage; it is only a motion, without origin or end. It is outside representation: as a force, it cannot stabilize in a structure. Thus, the problem of its knowledge outside this force. Where to locate its condensations and displacements? It moves through the symptoms of the critical designations of this writing.

DRIFT

Drift as historical, as the drift of desire towards the periphery of indifference, as an index of indifference, but positively, as the opening to differences, to plurality.

"Drifting occurs when I do not respect the whole . . ." (Roland Barthes)

ECCENTRICITY AND DIFFERENCE

"Peripheral drift" - as one used to say eccentricity and difference. Still, eccentricity and difference are aside, peripheral to the centre (there is no centre) and to the notion of identity. They are an acceleration towards dissolution and exacerbation of the Same. Eccentric, that is decentered; different, that is, the same which is not identical.

EXACERBATION

Exacerbation seemingly is against the grain; finding the grain of its voice, it exacerbates. In exacerbating its own language, its position and identity, it exacerbates society which must retain secure identities for their social (capitalist) exchange value. To exacerbate is to take on society's symptoms, develop them intensively, obsessively and logically (i.e., perversely) and re-present them to society, as society's own desires - whether positive or reactive - freed from their ideological cover. This exacerbation is not an intention, but an effect - the effect of its own movement of desire.

HERESY

It seemed that he was engaged in a perversion that went against the whole modernist enterprise. His first heresy was to claim the mutual basis of Modernist and Minimal (phenomenological) art in formalism, that is, not an opposition but a complementarity. His second heresy was to call for content against form and structure: content as force and desire. His third heresy, after intentionally misinterpreting art to develop his own ideas (the critic must write about art and objects, society and artists both demand), was to fictionalize theory.

INHABITATION

Roland Barthes, writing on the ideological systems of language and literature, admitted that "To keep these spoken systems from disturbing or embarrassing us, there is no other solution than to inhabit one of them." In assuming these systems for ourselves, in inhabiting them through a disguise, we disturb them.

The codes of these sites of inhabitation are complex and syphonable. For example: production inhabits technology as concepts inhabit language. The ideology of production enters the ideology of language through concepts (reproduction). Technology and language, however, are the two fluid currencies that we possess and inhabit, the two that we can use (abuse). Theory (as theft) can inhabit language as language inhabits production, the fictional of production. The intelligence of theft is the theoretical inhabitation of production through language; to be peripheral, and yet inhabit, anonymously.

NETWORK

A network seems to coalesce as the "site" of the peripheral drift, composed as it is of shifting subjects, subjects created through the inscribed symptoms of recording techniques. The network is an eccentric and differentiated plurality of indeterminate entries and perverse connections: perverse because peripheral to use and predetermined response; perverse because it does not serve or seek to communicate a meaning. Nor is it expressive: it is performative. It only desires to proliferate and implement itself with force.

For example, "The Perverse Telephone Network": "A sub-network sending and receiving interactive pornography using new audio, video, and facsimile transceivers and the existing telephone system. This network, with its open and shut nodes, is impossible to locate; the hardware shifts or falls apart, is easy to build or repair on principles of theft and bricolage, as it is composed of widely-proliferating surveillance tools. The network per se is the telephone system. The individual participants are interchangeable."

Judith Doyle, "Model for a Prose Algorithm."

ISSUE

What is wrong, paradoxically it seems, is the way we stand in front of a work of art, the way we allow ourselves to stand in front of art, an act which creates an identity and constitutes a subject: the inescapability of perspective and representation, even in abstract art.

This facing of the work of art, this basic and unconscious physical presupposition of our understanding, is a symbolic relationship, whereby two things - work and spectator - are brought together - in identity or confrontation. But how is this symbolic relationship between work and spectator displaced to one of contiguity, where we are peripheral to the structure, as an event, sliding along it as a separate but contiguous part, parallel and asymmetrical to the work, instead of direct and identical?

Symbol as intention restores subject and substance. Intention is detention in meaning, just as the symbol detains the spectator in presence in front of the work of art. To drift, meanwhile, is to be outside even contention.

NOISE

Noise is a drift. In any signal there is a tendency towards noise. Taken as a value, noise is this drift from meaning and use, a drift towards perversion and desire. Noise is the intermingling of pluralities, an exacerbation and the grain of technology's voice: its pleasure in the perversion of communication.

PERIPHERAL

The peripheral is the locality of the drift, but not its end, just as there is not an origin to the drift, only a simple stepping aside, alongside. How is the peripheral a site when it is an atopic shifting non-site? And what coalesces at the periphery to make a limit-work? The limit and the periphery have no commerce with boundaries as the site of oppositions. The boundary is the metaphorical site and source of the dialectic, identity, symbol, and anything that we face and attempt to understand and use within its terms or those of society. Dialectic, identity, signification, communication: all imply use and want, and univocal meaning. Peripheral to these, there is only the implementation of experimentation, which is not yet a practice.

PERVERSION

My perversion is peripheral; but it is not transgressive. Transgression, since it concerns itself with the code in subverting it, returns to the centre, like eroticism. Perversion, as criticism, is decoding - an analysis of the code. Yet, perversion is also indifferent to any employ, perhaps even to abuse: hence, decoded as no code. Perversion is outside codes, peripheral to them; or, maybe, adrift in them (as an acceptance of the symptomatic).

SYMPTOM

While seeming to abandon society, I inhabit its symptoms at their limit. I inhabit through simulation which is ideological expression/representation, but also the condition of my disguise and my desire. My ability to simulate is a matter of desire and intelligence; intelligence as a disguise for desire (as in repression), and the companion to desire in its displacement. Since symptoms are, at once, both collective and individual, it is easy for me to anonymously disguise myself within society's symptoms by accepting them as a means and a site. The individual is no more a subject than society; to speak of symptoms is to conceive the subject; to accept symptoms is to deny the subject, to make it a fiction.

The symptom, I could say, is distributed by capitalism, but it is actually configured between the conjecture of desire and the conjecture of repression and ideology. It is more than a compromise (in the psychoanalytical sense); it is devious in creating a network, in "representing" desire in its own pleasure, in creating a network through displacement for desire's motion/flow. Desire is atopic, mobile and a shifter; so is the subject. This subject is produced only in the connecting network, as a symptom of perverse desire in the network.

THEFT

Theft (theory) acts through the revaluation of language, by distortion and disguise. Communication is the site of this endeavor; however, disguise is the opposite of communication. While appearing to signify, disguise diverts, devalues. Communication is eminently serious: its purpose is to relay a message that has a meaning. Any signal, however, tends to noise; and this noise is a drift from the use and meaning of communication. To reduce the signal-to-noise ratio to this drift allows desire to move disguised in noise, to distort the code for its own perverse pleasure and to assume its content within the guise of the code.

"In fact, today, there is no language site outside bourgeois ideology: our language comes from it, returns to it, remains closed to it. The only possible rejoinder is neither confrontation nor destruction, but only theft: fragment the old text of culture, science, literature, and change its features according to formulae of disguise, as one disguises stolen goods." (Roland Barthes)

WRITING

This writing breaks the codes of decorum and criticism. Desire issues through these breaks, as the multiple traces of writing. And my self as a subject/trace, not a self-constituted ego, is created in this writing, which is more adequate to my description than the so-called presence of the work of art. In the loss of its object, theory/writing (and my self) asserts itself as a positive force, not reactive criticism.

PERIPHERAL/DRIFT

A Vocabulary of Theoretical Criticism

by Philip Monk

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RUMOUR

31 MERCER ST.
TORONTO ONTARIO
M5V 1H2

4 Terminal Gallery / Peripheral Drift by Philip Monk

Criticism is in a state of drift, out of control. Its loss, however, is willed; its drifting, theoretical. Initially, the question is: How is criticism presently adequate to its object? Yet, beyond this question, how is language itself adequate, as language is the role and model of criticism? Criticism as theory frees itself from its traditional object — the work of art; it is responsible — in its theoretical irresponsibility, i.e., in not answering, responding to the work of art — for its excess and loss. But in exceeding or transgressing the object and losing it, is not this excess and loss, for itself, *jouissance*, its own bliss? Desire has no object — it is outside use, want and demand; and theory similarly no longer finds its impulses in the work of art, in an object, formerly its own object. It can still nominate a work of art, and say, “That’s it for me,” as part of the binary “That’s it” / “So what”; but usually it says “What’s in it for me?”, or “How can I use this?”

Theory no longer assumes a subservience to its object (the prerequisite of a science) in a presumed secondariness of non-presence to the full presence of the work of art and the artist, the guarantor of that presence. Theory now, in a sense, is fictive. Nevertheless, as its own object, theory is not a metalanguage, which would return it to the formal, as a formal language. It is drift. This drift is atopic, without a site: theory does not take itself to be central but peripheral (not centered in meaning, in society). Theory’s displacement is the movement of its desire, the loss of its privileged site and meaning. No longer is it prescriptive or normative. It drifts towards the periphery of indifference, as an index of indifference, but positively, as the opening to differences, as plurality, which is the condition of art.

The effectiveness of theory (and art), literally as an *effect* (in its psycho-physical sense) is in the acceptance of *peripherality* as the fluid site of its activity, i.e., the only place it can act as an affect/effect, outside control or acceptance (or acceptance as control), simulation and ideology; and the willingness of a *drift* from use and meaning, i.e., outside communication and signification. This acceptance assumes a willingness to acknowledge a symptomatic condition, to inhabit society and language through its collective and our individual symptoms. It necessitates a revaluation of language, a theft through revaluation (by distortion and disguise, as noise) of what we can use (abuse) in our peripheral drift.

A *network* seems to coalesce as the “site” of the peripheral drift, composed as it is of shifting subjects, subjects created through the inscribed symptoms of recording

techniques. The network is an eccentric and differentiated plurality of indeterminate entries and perverse connections. It cannot be a model, as the model implies a structure and the possibility of representation. It can only find its equivalence in desire and perversion, as desire and perversion.

How is the peripheral a site when it is an atopic shifting non-site, and how is it an effective locale for art to act? More importantly, how is the peripheral a limit? What coalesces at the periphery to make the network a limit-work? It seems to me that the limit and periphery have nothing to do with boundaries as the site of oppositions. The boundary is the metaphorical site and source of the dialectic, identity, symbol, and anything that we face and attempt to understand and use within its terms or those of society, all of which are refused in the drift which is outside intention, detention and contention. There is no origin or end to the drift, only a simple stepping aside, alongside.

Dialectic, identity, signification, communication: all imply use, want, and univocal meaning. The limit is outside use and want: it is invention; non-functional, it is experimental. There is no order at the limit, only the implementation of experimentation, which is not yet a practice. There is no hierarchy, only experimenters. (Can there be theft at the limit? Order and value have not been distributed at the limit so it is a matter of who can use the technology: there is no sense of abuse yet. The thief therefore is free to act as a syphon, where law has not yet set its own limits.)

Advanced technology in its experimental state of implementation is an example of this limit. Technology in war is the ultimate limit. One can see that there is no value or law at this limit, only the residue of ideology that creates the contradictions. There is only pure experimentation, pure machinic experimentation. It seems outside use and want, and appears to be its own desire out of control. This implemented technology is the limit and sum of society's symptoms, perverse because outside use and want, perverse because it does not seek communication nor meaning. It only desires to proliferate and implement itself with force. This limit is an extreme example, but the network likewise is non-communication — it does not seek to communicate a meaning; and, certainly, non-expressive — it is not an expression of a message: it is performative.

Parallel galleries should take their presumed peripherality (the word "parallel" seems to imply a degree of peripherality) to the level of *meaning* itself: drift from meaning; and not simply reproduce a concept of art within a network that is counter, but has a parallel aesthetic to "high" culture (the art of the centre): both can still fall into "representation". Parallel is outside, while alongside, open to the peripheral drift. To be parallel is to be open to the possibility of a rupture with structure (instead of reinforcing it in parallel) as soon as that drift effects itself. This peri-

pherality seemingly is against the grain; finding the grain of its voice, it exacerbates. In exacerbating its own language, its position and identity, it exacerbates society which must retain secure identities for their social (capitalist) exchange value. To exacerbate is not to bring something through the work of art to society, a Promethean romantic illusion, but to take on society's symptoms, develop them intensively, obsessively and logically (i.e., perversely) and *re-present* them to society, as society's own desires — whether positive or reactive — freed from their ideological cover.

Eccentricity, allied to anonymity, “colludes” with the centre through these symptoms and desires, but disarticulates the centre's value and stable identity (on the individual level it acts on the notion of the subject). In other words, the peripheral is not an ineffectual or remote site. The art of the centre, itself, is effectively controlled in its “meaning” in the value-conferring precincts of the art gallery/museum; the institution both confers and communicates value — it does all the labour of art. To be central is to retain a structural position: in identity and meaning, protected from the intrusion and confusion of content. One must abandon all privileged sites of meaning, even the privilege of meaning itself. But we cannot escape society (post-industrial urban society); nor should we want to since it gives us both our tools and our content, as it gives us our symptoms.

To be outside society's values by reconstituting those values in the non-site of the peripheral drift is a consequence of inhabitation and theft.

Roland Barthes, writing on the ideological systems of language and literature, admitted that “To keep these spoken systems from disturbing or embarrassing us, there is no other solution than to inhabit one of them.” In assuming these systems for ourselves, in inhabiting them through a disguise, we disturb them.

The codes of these sites of inhabitation are complex, but decipherable and syphonable. For example: production inhabits technology as concepts inhabit language. The ideological of production enters the ideological of language through concepts (reproduction). Technology and language, however, are the two fluid currencies that we possess and inhabit, the two that we can use. Theory (as theft) can inhabit language as language inhabits production, the fictional of production. The intelligence of theft is the theoretical inhabitation of production through language. The intelligence of the network is its simulation, for its own perverse purposes, of the technological network, the communications technology network.¹ Our desire is: to be peripheral, and yet inhabit, anonymously.

Communication is the site of this endeavour, however, disguise is the opposite of communication. While appearing to signify, disguise diverts, devalues. Communications is eminently serious: its purpose is to relay a message that has meaning. Communications cannot be conceived outside use and meaning. Yet in any signal

there is a tendency towards noise. Noise then is a drift. Taken as a value by the theorist and thief, it is a drift from meaning and use, a drift towards perversion and desire. (Noise is the intermingling of pluralities, an exacerbation and the grain of technology's voice: its pleasure in the perversion of communication.) Reducing the signal (use and meaning) to noise makes the disguise a decoding (both de-coding and no code). Desire, as disguise, moves through the code (desire is always a movement), distorting the code of its own perverse pleasure, assuming its *content* within the guise of the code. And theft's disguise is also its indeterminacy: it enters at any point and creates its desire in a connecting network — this perverse network.

Our ability to simulate is a matter of desire and intelligence. Simulation is symptomatic; it is both intelligent as a disguise for desire (as in repression), and the companion to desire. Since symptoms are, at once, both collective and individual, it is easy for an individual to anonymously disguise himself within society's symptoms by accepting them as a means and a site. The individual is no more a subject than society: to speak of symptoms is to conceive the subject; to accept symptoms is to deny the subject, to make it a fiction.

The symptom, I could say, is distributed by capitalism, but it is actually configured between the conjecture of desire and the conjecture of repression and ideology. It is more than a compromise (in the psychoanalytical sense); it is devious in creating a network, in "representing" desire in its *own* pleasure, in creating a network through displacement for desire's motion/flow. Desire is atopic, mobile and a shifter; so is the subject. The subject (our multiple subjects, collective and individual) is produced only in the connecting network, as the network, as a symptom of perverse desire in the network. This network is disinvested of structure — both physical and metaphysical. That is, it need not exist physically in the form of an actual space, and it does not exist descriptively as a structure. I do not call it a model as that returns it to the structural. It is outside structure as the force of desire — our desire.²

¹E.g., the "Perverse Telephone Network": "A sub-network sending and receiving interactive pornography using new audio, video, and facsimile transceivers and the existing telephone system. This network, with its open and shut nodes, is impossible to locate; the hardware shifts or falls apart, is easy to build or repair on principles of theft and bricolage, as it is composed of widely-proliferating surveillance tools. The network *per se* is the telephone system. The individual participants are interchangeable" —(Judith Doyle, "Model for a Prose Algorithm", *Only Paper Today*, October 1979.)

²The Theory of Peripheral Drift is further displaced in *Peripheral/Drift: A Vocabulary of Theoretical Criticism*, Toronto, Rumour, 1979.

THEORETICAL DANCE: THIS BODY IS IN CREATION



Permanent Press

Celibate/Societal Convulsion
A Dance Performance by the A-Motile Dance Company

Part 1:

The celibate is on the periphery of society. He is a social danger -- a secret hysteric, a convulsive. Half respectable and acceptable, he is aside of society, marginal, bordering the demi-monde -- with criminals, delinquents, sexual deviants, pimps and madmen.

He is undesirable; hence, a celibate.

He is the true desirer; hence, the celibate.

Without family or conjugality, he is all the more social.

On the edge, he is all the more political.

Celibate, he is all the more perversely sexual.

He is a social traitor, a social danger, a social terrorist -- contagious, the carrier of a new plague.

He produces intensities. He proliferates by himself. On the periphery, he precipitates a series and makes convulsive connections. He is without cause and reason. Coming from the outside, he remains there. His social contagion spreads to the centre. This silent solicitor, he convulses. He is not a cause nor an effect. He convulses silently, productively, like a machine. He is not our cause. We convulse.

Intermission

Part 2:

Only Paper Today: What brought you to dance?

A-Motile: I learned to dance through looking at still photographs. My body was created through looking at photographs. It was the site of this choreography, rather than the site being a neutral space.

OPT: How does this create a body?

A-M: The gaze of the photograph, as a technique, comes from the outside and adheres to my body. It establishes a network there on the surface of the body, as one establishes a colony. It is essentially a recording technique, and the body, at that moment, in that

configuration, is created by recording. The gaze as technique cuts up my body; to its insistence, I gave the resistance of the recording surface of my body.

OPT: Why did you form an *a-motile* dance group? Doesn't that mean that there is no movement, hence, no dance?

A-M: *A-Motile* is theoretical dance, and, as such, a refusal of these necessarily essentialist conceptions and distinctions. One of my teachers, Merce Cunningham, once said that even when we are standing still, we are moving. I began to think about how the truth of our bodies is created, and I say truth in quotation marks. I began to think who or what creates the identity of the body, distributes its functions, organizes its behaviour. And for distributes, I might have said represses, and for organize: control. There are the givens of our bodies, their *a priori* limits, supposedly.

OPT: But, they *are* our physiological givens.

A-M: Not necessarily. Perhaps they are images that are controlled; but controlled by whom and what? Actually, I think our bodies are created by history and economy, invested and inscribed with the relations of power and domination. These confrontations occur on the surface of our bodies. But there are breaks there too...

OPT: You mean, there is an issue?

A-M: Yes, in the sense of an issue being a flow, not a contention. In reaction to the political technology of our bodies, against the body's destruction and collapse, all that is left to us in our bodies is our own physical disgust and convulsions, our own control of our bodies in the willed loss of control and usurpation by cataclysmic desire. As a celibate dancer, I open myself to this convulsive disgust. These symptoms are the locale and breaks of my desire.

OPT: Desire? Where does that act?

A-M: Well, let me first say that my performance as a dancer is a mechanism created between a simulation -- I could say an ideology, and those photographs I talked about are this simulation -- so between, as I was saying, the simulation and desire.

OPT: So it's a machine.

A-M: Desire isn't the machine. The machine is created as the performance/text/body

between the simulation and desire. What desire is...well, it only becomes recognizable in the machine when the machine takes a form, or the body assumes a symptom. But the machine only works by breaking down, and that breaking down, that rupture, releases desire. In order for us to escape capture by that simulation, by the ideology, we have to keep breaking down our bodies, rupturing them; because, you see, we are always building this machine within the simulation. We can't escape that. So it's not a matter of freedom, but only of an issue. We keep on the edge, look in, and move out. What we're doing is mapping a network, machinating a body.

OPT: But being on the edge is ineffectual.

A-M: No. You don't understand. We're all on the periphery -- there is no centre. We know we're peripheral so we become parasites of a sort, or scavengers. We build a machine on the larger social machine. It's great! They themselves give us the model for this. We build on its machine, repeat its structure, use its tools, its cast off or unprotected pieces and processes. We pervert its logic, or, rather, we develop, intensify and exacerbate its obsessions. So by inscribing this code and system on our ciphered bodies, we syphon the flow, but we syphon by rupturing.

OPT: But you still haven't defined desire.

A-M: I don't want to define it. It's a motion that I want to make flow. That's what my performance is about. I want to make an anonymous mechanism that is released into the social realm. It's the audience's desire I want to flow. I want them to convulse, to become the hysterics we all are. That's why I am a celibate, and that's why I don't move. I'm only a node in this network, and the performance is an impulse that creates the network. In its effect, it is an effect. Theoretical dance is the closest thing to desire that I know.

OPT: Do you have anything planned for the future?

A-M: Yes. I've completed a dance called 'Peripheral/Drift'. Through the peripheral non-site of an anonymous audio tape the work inhabits other dance performances and forces a drift from both expression and task.

OPT: Thank you. I feel a bit restless. I think I'll take a walk and convulse.

M Clive Robertson

- page 236 "A Letter from the Publisher," *Centerfold* 2:4 (April 1978), 5.
page 237 Clive Robertson, "Know No Galleries!," *Centerfold* 2:6 (Fall 1978) 93–94.
page 239 "Clive Robertson: A Beuys-Shaped Frame: A discussion with Clive Robertson by Vera Frenkel," *Centerfold* 3:1 (December 1978), 23–28.
page 245 Peggy Gale, "Explaining Pictures to Dead Air: The Robertson/Beuys Admixture," *Parachute* 14 (Spring 1979), cover, 4–8.
page 251 Clive Robertson, "Nationalism in The Visual Arts," *Centerfold* 4:1 (October/November 1979), 29–30.
page 254 Clive Robertson, "The Story Behind Organized Art," *Fuse* 4:6 (November 1980), 318–25.

See also ...

- page 013 Susan Britton, "Poison Pen Attack Gang of Four/You Want Know About Hegemony?: Review of May issue of *Centerfold*," *Artist Review* 2:16 (May 1979), 13–14.
page 078 Clive Robertson, "Casual But Continuous: David Buchan Modern Fashions," *Fuse* 4:3 (March 1980), 169–70.
page 163 Clive Robertson, "Consenting Adults: General Idea at Carmen Lamanna Gallery," *Centerfold* 3:4 (April/May 1979), 193–96.
page 331 "Tele-performance," *Centerfold* 3:1 (December 1978), cover, 46–57.
page 356 Clive Robertson, "And in the blue corner from Toronto, Canada." *Centerfold* 2:6 (September 1978), 110–11.
page 391 Vera Frenkel, "Performance at the Benefit," *Centerfold* 3:3 (February/March 1979), 104.
page 392 Tim Guest, "'Politic Performances Provide...," *Centerfold* 3:3 (February/March 1979), 105.

A letter from the Publisher

ARTON'S is moving to Toronto in early July to re-establish as an artists' publishing space. CENTERFOLD will adjust in its new format until by August we hope it will stabilise as a new magazine appearing six times a year. The formation of a critical magazine capable of definitive artist-statements in either a documentary or projectionary capacity we feel is somewhat overdue. CENTERFOLD plans to encourage substantial critical writings by artists and art writers conversant with interdisciplinary activities: to articulate its formats, philosophies, didactics and politics.

Artist/activist (any group that is non-passive) publishing will always form the shortest route between any two cultural points and Canada has not faltered in this kind of active contribution. Artist-collaborative publishers include 'Coach House Press', 'Lama Labs Publishing', 'Eternal Network Press', 'Art Official Inc.', 'Art Metropole', 'Le Sono', 'Art Communication Editions', 'Image Bank', 'Satellite Video Exchange', 'W. O.R.K.S.', 'Music Gallery Edition', 'B.C. Monthly' plus a number of artist-publishers that produce magazine and anthological literature.

Unlike most formalised publishers that deal with art as a tacked-on service industry, producing text books or magazines, artist-publishers also have substantial claims to ideological commitment - they do not negate or neutralise potential ideologies which formal art publishing continually does whenever confronted by its own definitions of market.

Publishing is, in the sense we use it, a paratroop of ideologies. Ideologies are 'the ideas and objectives (note the plurals) that influence a whole group or national culture, shaping their political and social procedure.' Ideology is also

the science that treats the origin, evolution and expression of ideas, therefore art-publishing cannot be left to be a paratroop in the ocean.

Intrinsically artists and artist-publishers (the collective process) are ideologists and ideopraxists, art-publishing should not be a series of empires but should be user-controlled. The user axis has to rotate from selling-control to

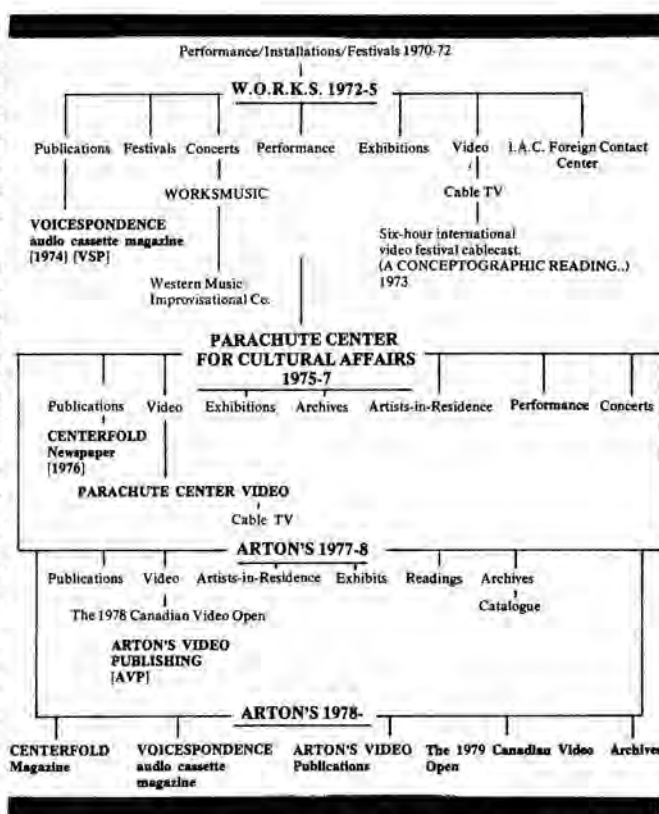
learning-control whilst at the same time not degenerating into minimal synthesis of learning-to-sell which, in some ways, is the primary experience for the artist who produces artist-publications. The empire is 'Idios' (Gk. 'own', 'private') hence the phenomenon - Idiots. Artists have never been able to leave the historication of their ideas to idiots no matter how articulate or complimentary those personages or institutions become.

Arton's will attempt to collaboratively publish in print, audio and video so that there can be more connection and less alienation of ideas from their source. The diagram opposite is included not to show 'what' or 'when' we did things but to make a functional connection to show how, as artists, we have reached our present priorities. In the past we have expended much energy and effort to make available the 'live' experience of art through the organisational innovations

Publishing projection...

of the listed 'umbrellas' (Parachute Center, W.O.R.K.S., and Arton's); we still believe that it is essential for artists to remain in control of the direct presentation outlet: the artists' space, but increasingly we know that other work must be done if any of it is to have its complete effect.

We know that publications can be resource modules rather than products, that they can be collaborative rather than co-optative - we also know that publications can be a primary art form.



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Know no galleries!

A statement:

"As the respected request of the author, this publication may be used in any way necessary for the promotion of its aims and/or content except as an exhibit in a public private or artist gallery."

As of the 1st. October 1978 I have decided that no object, videotape, artist publication or performance, including lectures or readings, shall be, with my knowledge, exhibited, enacted or viewed¹ in any public, private, educational or artist gallery.

The reasons for this decision come out of earlier decisions which were gestural when they should have been concrete. As an artist whose work content often deals with the social role relationships of artists and their working contexts it has become imperative for me to remove the gallery and its social dilemma from my list of concerns. It has for too long been a 'necessary compromise' based more on lazy habits and promised remuneration than being an unavoidable option.

In 1973 I nominated a one-block area of downtown real estate as 'The Something Gallery'. Unmarked, its shows, concerts and renovations were documented for the street activities that they were. The gallery is located between 2nd and 4th St. S.W. and 7th and 8th Ave in Calgary, Alberta. It is unstaffed, is open twenty-four hours a day, attracts a large non-conditioned public and will never close. Its greatest saving is its zero budget, almost zero publicity and the *exact average* of political interference.

In October 1973 as part of a W.O.R.K.S. project/exhibit a performance titled 'Gallery Isolation (University of Calgary Art Gallery)' was essentially an examination of what a gallery space was and what it was not, what it by consecration and tradition allowed and what it disallowed. The conclusions were many and included that any specialised, designated architectural space defines its own isolation. That the architecture, the closing of space and **subtraction of purpose** was the 'gallery's' greatest achievement.

Both of these studies of mine were examples of what could be called 'Heroic Conceptualism' where the artist 'solved' a framing problem by re-constituting the problem as a work of art.

Following these 'solutions' I opened

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a gallery in my house (The Immediate Gallery) and later spent three years as a director of an artists' gallery. The social problems of a gallery re-emerged and were largely ignored.

Now I see the function of a gallery as directly subverting artist intent and direct linkage with an inspirational constituency. Galleries exist as a control mechanism in terms of validation, censorship, consumer conditioning and more disasterously as public toilet training in the art of how to learn about art. The artist euphemism 'audience' describes for most cases a people entering a maze searching for after-dinner cheese, not hungry but with room for a little something — this is a phenomenon of all galleries not just museums or public galleries. Even the well-meaning notion of artist fees is somehow payment for taking part in this charade, even when the artist is absent, and it is this absence which makes it acceptable for the artist!

Whilst artists when producing their work sometimes need privacy, and when also 'product-testing' their work on other artists may also require privacy as soon as the artist wishes to make public and more pertinently political statements the outlet that is most easily available is the least relevant. The most that artists have ever been able to do with galleries is to shit in them, either literally or by flooding them, switching the lights off and turning the music on. It is no coincidence that the gallery wears the same social centralised uniform as the church, for the convenience of 'public ownership' and accessibility and **programmed interpretation**.

My conclusive objection and therefore decision is that the gallery has institutionalised itself to the point where it is now recognised and treated as a political control facility. The artist galleries in Poland are I suspect a case in point. "Make as much noise and mess as you like but do it in your own room, we're expecting guests." The gallery as an infant's playpen.²

With many good intentions the choice by artists to open their own galleries nevertheless in fact means that artists are voluntarily enforcing and policing their own removal from the rest of society. If art does indeed have an expandable, as well as contractable, social function it would seem necessary to prove it by closing galleries entirely or as in my own case, closing the galleries to my art. Performance

and video have always been two pieces of oversized furniture that have never quite fit through the doors anyway, and I don't think that custom-made art really defines the limits of our imagination.

Clive Robertson

¹ This includes rental and purchase but does not include production where the primary purpose of the facility is the production of art.

² Whilst 'infant' is not derogatory in a creative sense, it demeans the artist as a potential source of social action.

It was happening on both coasts,
It was also happening in the middle.

w.o.r.k.s. released their 'Performance' book in 1975, much of it was central to what has since developed as 'alternate space':

Collaboration + performance,
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November 1—5

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November 15—19

LISA STEELE (Birthday Suit: Scars and Defects, A Very Personal Story, The Ballad of Dan Peoples, A Life's Story)

November 22—26

NOEL HARDING (A Serene Composition Suggestive of Pastoral Repose)
RODNEY WERDEN (Typist)
TERRY McGLADE (Marriage)
SUSAN BRITTON (Love Hurts)

November 29—December 3

COLIN CAMPBELL (Sackville I'm Yours: An Interview with Art Star, True/False, Love-Life)

December 6—10

JUAN DOWNEY (Cusco One, Cusco Two)
JOAN JONAS (Good Night, Good Morning)

The Video programs will be on view in Orientation Room 4 at the Gallery, Wednesdays and Thursdays 7 to 9 p.m. and Sundays 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. Program tapes are also available on request for viewing in the Audio-Visual Centre weekdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (except on Mondays when the Gallery is closed.)

Art Gallery of Ontario

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Clive Robertson

A Beuys-Shaped Frame

A discussion with Clive Robertson by Vera Frenkel

The conversation that follows took place early in November, 1978, on either side of a tape recorder at Clive Robertson's desk at Arton's in Toronto.

The conversation was longer than it appears here, covering in more detail questions concerning the design of performance works for particular contexts; the inherently political nature of interdisciplinary art; common diseases of the communications media; cultural anachronisms; the grip of decade-consciousness (i.e., "the sixties", "the seventies"), and

so on, matters relating generally to Robertson's piece. However, given limited space, included here are the exchanges which deal more directly with the piece itself, its sources and intentions, with some focus on the process of choosing a "frame", in making and presenting art, and on the moral implications of such choices. This central question, especially in relation to the use and control of the communications media, is a theme in Robertson's work. In its various formulations this has always been a central question for artists, although confused sometimes, especially in this century, with the search for the new, one of its more

frantic expressions. It is a particularly crucial question today, when options for the choice and location of frames (formats, contexts, scales, durations) are so numerous, and determine so critically the impact of a work. Explaining Pictures to Dead Air seemed to me to raise precisely these issues, (issues Robertson has stated more polemically in his writing). Yet, unlike rhetoric, the work hovers alive and kicking in its self-generated mesh of paradoxes, as art must.

There are, in fact, two versions of Explaining Pictures to Dead Air, since it exists also as a videotape of the tele-performance, directed by Tom Sherman. The tape turns out to be a different version of the work rather than simply an event documented, and deserves separate discussion. Sherman's direction is unusually sensitive to shifts of emphasis during the performance, and finds throughout the right visual equivalents for these changes. It is the performance, however, that we are discussing in this conversation; the particular tensions of live presentation, the time/space/media relationships of all its component parts, and the things memory does afterwards.

Rodney Werden





VF: To set this in context, perhaps you could describe the component parts of the performance; — what was live, what was on tape, so that the things we're saying will connect.

CR: It consisted of a pre-recorded videotape which paced the performance, and was used to reveal certain immediate conclusions I was drawing while making the tape and preparing the performance. The tape consisted of me making telephone calls (which meant you could hear only half the conversation), which in turn were interrupted by two voice-overs, one of which was requested by me, — so you had the sense of watching something in production. As the tape proceeds it suggests that there is going to be a telephone conversation placed with Joseph Beuys. You are never too sure, as I wasn't sure, whether it was going to take place. Even in the performance itself, the audience doesn't really know whether it's Beuys' voice or an actor's voice.

The character of Beuys played the role of the evening news reader. Beuys was given air time on television's own terms — he is accepted as a legendary figure like Walter Cronkite. Beuys has his back to the audience, but by using closed circuit TV with two cameras, the audience sees Beuys' image being switched on two monitors on either side of where he is sitting. Beuys sits behind a structure made of saplings over

which is stretched a blanket which was made just strong enough to hold a few sheets of paper from which he reads, lip-synching the soundtrack of the evening news. He enters carrying this unrecognizable 'news desk' over his head. He stands still. The whole implication of this is that if Beuys had entered with such an object, he might have held it over his head for hours rather than for a few minutes, which is what I did. The stillness is a direct Beuys reference.

VF: So the audience sees you as Beuys, indirectly, on two black and white monitors once he's seated. And his face is gilded. Were both voice-overs your voice?

CR: Yes. *Explaining Pictures to Dead Air* is a pun on a Beuys piece, *Explaining Pictures to a Dead Hare*, which I had also performed in 1975, that consists of Beuys holding a dead hare cradled in his arms, looking at art works on a wall. In that piece, depending on what source you believe, his face was coated either with honey or fat, then covered with metallic dust. It's not gilded as a James Bond image, but related to his choice of materials, the insulating and energy-storing substances. The gold face and the title are from the same piece.

VF: I think the work succeeded so well because it derived so much of its energy from various kinds of transformation, and because it was set up as an interdisciplinary work in

which one could not help being introduced into the several playings of reality, manipulations of reality that were its subject. Revelation of that kind, in that it reveals underlying mechanisms which shape consciousness, is always more political than anything didactic, or martyred, or self-indulgent, or preachy which is typical of much that professes to be political art. I don't know if your work was always a successful vehicle for this experience, but this piece certainly worked for me. I'd like you to talk a bit, if you feel like it, about your choice of the figure of Joseph Beuys — what he represents to you, what he evokes in the people you addressed this piece to that was important. and also your use of other elements, such as the advertisements that involved meat and eating. The "mainly because of the meat" commercial, and the cat-food one. Then there were the modes of address. Was it coincidental that the stretch of news in one part referred to the provincial government in several different ways, 'Queen's Park', for example, which is what you described to us in the videotape as typical newscasting technique?

CR: I think the importance of Beuys being used in that context, apart from some immediate recognition for anyone who has even just heard about him, is the way, the form, that he has structured as a personality, to talk about issues. The most important or appealing effect is the transformation not only of a character and that character's totemic relationships, but that it is also a transformation of a strong specific European mentality transposed into a North American location. It includes an historical archaeological mentality that Beuys delivers: The way his actions function within an art context as opposed to the way in which Performance functions in North America, (with some exceptions, notably Terry Fox). The difference between 'Action' and 'Performance' is so great that it immediately sets up this mysterious situation which has all this indexing which we know something about.

VF: Indexing?

CR: Indexing of behaviour. Why is this man wearing this costume? That costume is not the product of a recent culture — not just the hat, the vest, but the fat, the bronze or gold powder is a product of an ancient culture.

The commercials were coinci-

Centerfold, December 1978

dental. They just happened to precede the news I was taping. It does show, however, that I am not speaking generally but that any TV news taped would provide similar juxtapositions, content structure, etc. Whilst I had used the institution naming as an example in the text, its placement in the tape of the news was again coincidental.

The soundtrack of the news in fact drops out about half-way through the tape so Beuys is left in the position of not even lip-synching the news, but talking without any hearable speech component. The performance was my contribution to the conference, not only because I didn't really attend (because of the performance series which I worked on), but because in my mind the relevance of such a statement had potentially a greater dynamic than getting up at the conference and making purely mono-statements. (Which, in fact, in the end I did as well.)

The performance structures a statement. It can contain rage instead of being contained by rage, which is what usually happens to me. It's one characteristic of Beuys that I don't have: I can't stand listening to a large group of people in conversation who continually are not listening to what the others are individually saying.

Some of the lines in the tape are now embarrassing in their flippancy such as wishing that Alvin Lucier would re-design the inside of my mouth so that I could articulate my speech pattern with a more interesting tonal range. That sort of processual response — I was listening to my own voice played back — was perhaps my way of sincerely depicting what I was thinking about, including banal details, whilst I made the presentation. So those elements are timely whilst some are timeless like the usage of Beuys whose 'role' is to make political statements, and the ways in which he is prevented from having a greater platform. He says in the telephone conversation it is very rare that he can appear on television even for a few moments. The horror which you mentioned earlier was for me projecting him into that Barbara Walters scenario, saying to him this would be the way that they would want you to do it. That came up in the text when I say, "I'm a Joseph Beuys fan, I've never missed a news-cast yet."

VF: *That's a chilling line.*

CR: One would think that Beuys would change the news, but the mechanism of access overrides literally anybody, including Begin, Sadat, Carter, or anyone who thinks they know how to play the media.

VF: *Your effecting this transformation of an already stylized character reveals something about both sets of assumptions; about the Beuys figure and about North America, and its media. The abrasion, or stretch effect set up by a shift in context is critical to your piece. I certainly felt that while watching it. But it seems to me that there were other levels of transformation as well. In fact, you transform him; you use the transformed persona of Joseph Beuys as a vehicle for your own transformed persona. So both you and Beuys meet in this hollow man that is mouthing received words.*

CR: There are other pertinent facts that come together within that action because I, in a performance, do not like to project my own personality, and never have, so my involvement with performance has been a method of working, not of personality projection. So by inhabiting Joseph Beuys I don't have to focus on myself in that construct.

VF: *What would be wrong with projecting yourself? What seems to you unnecessary about doing that?*

CR: In a sense, while I consider *Explaining Pictures to Dead Air* as a performance work, it wasn't work in the sense that I wasn't working; — it was a presentation of pre-recorded information, the videotape, the text, the figure of Beuys lip-synching the news, were all pre-planned.

VF: *Where were you during this presentation? Where was Clive Robertson?*

CR: I was just animating this character. My projection was pre-recorded through the tape of me having these fictional phone conversations. They were there to reveal the way in which the piece was being made, and how it related to my own analysis of television, artists and television, the performance mode, the video conference, my previous relationships with the work of Beuys, and the art politics of these compound phenomena. The Beuys character is not central to the piece, though it was the most highly visible component. Beuys was not used, as has been suggested, with intentional cynicism. I have a great admiration



for the man and his work. I don't think it's a literal comparison between Europe and North America, but I am interested that Beuys' emergence, (popular), in the sixties happened at a time when a folk culture of that intensity, that degree of actuality, rather than idealism, was not popular. The popular culture at that time was urban base. His archetypes were so different from, for instance, the pose of the Californian mystic. I see his action based upon direct experience with survival mechanisms rather than intellectually prescribed hysteria on, for example, at that time, such issues as, Ecology.

At the time of this performance I was also considering the phenomenon of political deception, and I think more upsetting for artists; cultural deception. Artists often feel that they are above being culturally deceived, at least on a popular level,

that they often use it but do not feel used by it. I believe that that is a total fallacy. We do not switch off mechanisms of that emotional specificity, even when we know their impetus is totally constructed and synthetic. If rock and roll makes you move, you cannot intellectually stand still because it happens to be disco music.

I have been looking recently at what I considered in the early seventies were projects of mine that really were not conceptualizations, but were supposed to evoke and transmit more than that, but now, looking back, I see they were in fact heroic conceptualizations, and while that 'heroicism' felt good, — what Beuys calls an 'evolutionary warmth' — it actually doesn't change the situation that much. What happens is that you unintentionally set up a closed circuit, even if you don't have anything to do with the art world. The content of working becomes repetitive or cul-de-sac'd, not that you are always dealing with the same things but that you socially reach the same point of solution: the artist 'solves' a social issue through an art work.

I think our immediate task is continuity. It's the same for people of Beuys's or Filliou's age group, or our own age group. We have to continue. Our lives didn't end in 1969 and so we have not only to find fresh optimism but to find a way of dealing with things which is not developed from a paranoia but which actual-

ly still contains rage, emotional intensity, because the loss of emotional intensity is to me the most frightening thing.

VF: *The figure of Beuys you enacted embodies that intensity. It becomes particularly forceful when we finally hear the real voice of Beuys in the tape, after all that preparation — not because it has been disembodied, not because it is distant, not because it's European with a different speech cadence, — it's precisely because the figure of Beuys you presented, with his face covered in gold paint, sweating hard and mouthing the news is a hollow sack. He's a Beuys-shaped sack. He's a manifestation of helplessness. The initiatives are elsewhere; either with the voice over, or with the telephone company or with the folks that are writing the commercials. At the same time, in the presence of that cipher reading the news, the voice has a startling vigour, because it issues from a context quite other than the bankrupt situation we are confronted with. We know that the figure we love or the folk hero or whatever that Beuys uniform in front of us may mean by now, we know that he's dead.*

CR: There was a very deliberate mechanism in the tape when it reaches our phone conversation — me talking to Beuys about artists and television, any individual and television: the mechanism was a split

screen with a photo of Beuys on one side and a video image of me standing still apparently listening to him through headsets on the other. In the photo of him his hand is cut off by the division of the screen down the middle. My hand is also cut off in the same place so that it appears we are holding hands. We are symbolically touching each other as we talk over the phone. For me it's a pivotal gesture. We are not telephone answering machines dumping information on each other. It's not the Americanization of Joseph Beuys as Davy Crockett. It is for me the antidote against the digestion of art history. Beuys is not a Duchamp that is dead. He is not a plastic figurine produced by mould injection, and yet that is what we are led to believe. That is what we are supposed to believe. Legends are dead people who are castrated by admiration, people who are intensified so that they can be defused politically. We are encouraged to be culturally deceptive and culturally deceived. That is the use of Beuys in this piece; if we consider him to be an anti-hero, dead news, then we can act. If we consider him a hero and imitate what we consider was his game plan for success, we will gain nothing.

VF: *You've written recently about art galleries and their validating function; that as forms of validation art galleries have now given up their last remaining role as cleansing agents. It seems to me that the validating function of an art gallery is a two-edged sword, or rather, like any framing device, a combination of camouflage and vehicle. The validating function, whatever form it takes, is also a permission, a support for the strange and difficult as well as for the accepted. At some level it is still possible for people to go to galleries, or read magazines, and be refreshed, enabled, with new insights made available to them. And this brings me the long way round, again to your use of Beuys.*

I think you use of Beuys is a very interesting sort of validation. I think it's only a somewhat wiser validation than art galleries can be. That is to say, you have chosen a figure, a very affecting figure, — whether it's someone who doesn't know his work, just the persona as it is visually manifest, or when one knows what he has come to represent in the art world — he is the frame. One of several, but a certain kind of frame for your work. He is therefore a form of validation. You enter him



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the way he reportedly entered the carcass of the animal that kept him alive. And like any agency of validation, Beuys here is simply a reference point. It is clear, despite your long-standing interest in these reenactments, that you are free to choose others.

CR: I agree with you and can only further say that I am aware how delicate Beuys as a vehicle is. As a framing device it is as dangerous as is the gallery. The difference is that you or I have a possibility of using that framing device constructively whereas with the gallery I don't think we do. We are being affected by such subliminal minute differences of illusion commercially that identity transfer has become a very common part of our language. For artists that cultural language decoding is often central which I have already said in this case is decoding their own use of cultural deception.

VF: This issue is an extremely interesting one. These aspects of framing and letting go are central to what art does. Choosing Beuys is your way of doing this, or one of your ways; as you say, the most visible. I think your use of Beuys in this piece was completely valid, certainly not cynical or exploitative, because it made possible what good framing does, and that is it allows you to embrace a phenomenon and then discard it. The problem with art galleries is that that whole process of taking in and giving out doesn't happen, or not very well. Your use of that figure, whoever it might be, "X", allowed people a vehicle to enter a work and then released them. All the while a lot of other things were happening as well. The only distinction I can make between Beuys as framing device, versus the news as a framing device, versus the monitor, the performance, the arena in which this all took place — all the nests of frames that interrelate — is that he is an iconic figure and by pointing that out you are again grappling with that two-edged sword, in fact raising the issue of framing as a moral question. There's no doubt that you will be criticized in just the way you have been. I think that's a risk you take, and I think it's useful. What I'm saying is that implicit in your use of the Beuys figure or persona is a level of moral responsibility that most art galleries can't address themselves to. In one's choice of what to validate and by what means lies the distinction between whether

VOICE 1

What you have just watched was a docudrama of how artists relate to the forms of television. A docudrama is the deliberate manipulation of fiction to create the illusion of reality, it is not as you might assume the manipulation of reality into a fiction.

If you like, the relationship between artist video and television shows how the intent of our work becomes carefully and violently misrepresented.

To dramatize this it was necessary to show how we become forces opposed to ourselves. The process of this performance was parodied to provide you with entertainment. The theatrical characterisation of Joseph Beuys in this instance was used to simulate the artist lip-syncing television's cultural propaganda. To give it documentary credibility Beuys was also co-opted to give his views. This is exactly how the media in general and television in particular manipulates what it doesn't own.

You can only sacrifice your own specific gifts of working as an artist when you choose to adapt your work to the up-tempo demands of what television calls "digestion without chewing".

Unless the video artist wishes to cross the boundaries and become a media-expert puppet, there is no present role for the artist in television. As this piece attempted to illustrate — we are exploited at the same time we are forced into exploitative relations with others.

Television unlike video is never a fun tool, it gets you when you're young, it gets you when you're ill, when you're tired and when you're down. The art market may want your body and your individualism but the TV market only wants your fingerprints.

VOICE 2

THIS HAS BEEN A FREE POLITICAL BROADCAST PROVIDED BY THIS STATION. NEXT WEEK WE WILL HEAR GAS STATION ATTENDANTS TALKING ABOUT TELEVISION FOLLOWED BY COMPUTER OPERATORS, AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS, BANK CLERKS, LAUDEROMAT OWNERS, SECURITY (voice fades out).

© 1978 Clive Robertson, Explaining Pictures to Dead Air.

one's work is life-enhancing or not. No matter how painful the revelation. The frames I see artists choosing on the whole are, (to give them the benefit of the doubt), naive, or self-serving, or, as you know, represent pockets of the culture that don't have valence. The choices you made raise these issues, and make it important to discuss framing and the location of the frame in the culture. We talk about Beuys because he's easy to talk about, but then you chose him for that reason. It's dangerous, but then paradox is dangerous. To

re-enact the work of that kind of figure in the art world is to place yourself in a very difficult position. To me it has some kind of primordial meaning, not only because of what you're re-enacting, or the shifts in context you engineer, but because the act of re-enactment itself implies that whole totemic thing you were referring to.

CR: Beuys as a framing device is for me using an anachronism as a framing device. Not that he is "slipping from the market" but that he exemplifies more than Cage, more

than Warhol, our recognition of "active time" versus "infinite time". Attempting to draw some metaphysical quality from the mythology of Beuys is made difficult because there's no factual information about him. . . it's not only iconographic, it's also a mythology which at an earlier period of time he was responsible for manipulating himself, as Warhol was responsible for manipulating his mythology. It wasn't that Beuys was manipulating in a self-serving way. I think he has always been suspicious about the growth of the science of sociology. He is against those protective mechanisms. Basically the impetus for his work is not so much a mystery, but getting the individual to click into some response that they just about know, which is archetypal, which is somewhere back in your memory that this person is eliciting a very early response in you, and yet you're not too sure what it is, but it's very, very important.

So, he is for me an anachronism in the sense that he exemplifies "active time" versus "infinite time". We as humans are not hockey players or baseball players that have a definite shelf-life.

VF: In general, consciousness of the decades and their passage, location in the century and what are the mandates and the urgencies of the sixties versus the seventies. . . the

so-called shelf-life of a work of art; I hear artists talk in those terms relatively often. It always startles me. It's not that it doesn't have its truth; it has, and I suppose you could call Joseph Beuys an anachronism in that temporal sense too, but to calculate . . . well, I don't think anybody that's any good really calculates, "what do the seventies need, or the eighties". I think that's quite unimportant. That people are attentive to that sort of thing and design their working lives accordingly is at some level very self-destructive and ultimately destructive of the art that is shared. Where the uses of time become important are at the archetypal level that you're talking about, when someone can, looking back and using his or her work, bring together forces that reveal, that enable people to connect with that thing that's at the back of the head that they don't quite know is there. Certainly that happens differently in every decade, but the guys who claim to know where it's gonna happen next are the ones to move away from. At this point I would like to ask you again, with reference to this piece, what you feel was expressly political about its interdisciplinary nature — as distinct from what was political in its content.

CR: I think the artist makes available to him; or herself, the formats of communication. We all

know that there isn't a mono format any longer. We're dealing with publications, television, performance — whether of local politicians or T.V. personalities or radio talk shows — there's a whole range of live and packaged communication forms which the artist has often chosen to neglect. I would suggest that this is a very unusual state of affairs. In previous times the artist was cognizant of, and reasonably articulate in, the major forms of communication of their time, as formats they used for their own work. The semi-mythology that was created in the 50's, that artists could not talk and could not write, and could only throw something at a material surface, has really stuck and the glue was pretty effective. Since that period of time we're dealing with a technological, socially-influencing development which is now out of the artist's hands. (Fourteen-year old children operate computers when artists struggle with outdated video equipment.) I'm not suggesting that all artists should be involved, but for any artist to take it so lightly when they're so totally illiterate in present forms of social communication — I mean *totally* illiterate — to me is well. . . a strange phenomenon. Artists may still be 'going on a date' with the rest of society, but there is an increasing possibility that the artist will be 'stood-up'. Now, is not the time for the artist to act as a dumb terminal. ■



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Explaining Pictures to Dead Air, 1978. Photo: Lisa Steele

EXPLAINING PICTURES TO DEAD AIR

The Robertson/Beuys Admixture

by Peggy Gale

The idea was to present a performance in the context of the Fifth Network/Cinquième Réseau video conference. A teleperformance, for live cablecast, September 8, 1978.

Enter the newscaster. He is on screen, but not yet on the air: bemused, bespectacled, he makes a few phonecalls, reads out some copy, goes about his preparations there at the desk for the evening newscast.

Enter Joseph Beuys, just at the edge of the lighted centre of the room. A dramatic opener: Beuys, gilded head under the characteristic old fedora, hunting jacket, you've all seen the pictures. He stands silent, head thrown back, arms holding aloft a mysterious structure of twigs and felt. Hold the pose.

Voice over:

You are tuned to CFTO, Channel 9 in Toronto, Cable 8.

Night Myth news, with Joseph Beuys.

Beuys lowers his sapling-structure, walks deliberately to the spotlight centre of the room, places it carefully. He sits at this now-desk, spreads his few papers, begins silently to mouth the news.

Voice over:

Hello? Hello? Hello, are you watching the news? So am I. I don't know if you're taping it, I am. Have you ever read this junk when it's transcribed? It's actually marginally clever. I don't know whether we've got to this part yet but they try to avoid using organisational names more than once in a story. The government will be called the provincial government, the Ontario government, Queens Park, and so on. I'm a Joseph Beuys fan. I would never miss one of his newscasts. We all thought the news would be different when the network announced his appointment. You know, give the news some metaphysical form, but it's the same as it ever was. He once started to talk about the dialectic between art and society leading towards the liberation of mankind, but they cut to an international symposium on woodcarving. He also once came on after the weather and finished up with "Language is indispensable. For me, the concept of language represents the entire content of information." We think that's why they hired him to read the news. We think they think they've got us where they want us.

Maybe they're right. I haven't missed a newscast in over two months. I keep thinking he's going to let the fat out of the bag, but he hasn't yet. Oh, just in case you don't know who Joseph Beuys is, he is indeed a very famous artist. He's as well known as Barbara Walters, only he doesn't do interviews. That is, he's interviewed, but he doesn't interview other people. That was also part of his contract, or at least that's what TV Guide said.

And on screen:

(dials)

Hi, George? Is Dick there? Dick? Good. Did you catch that last segment? What do you think? You don't think it was in bad taste. I'm worried about the phrase "let the fat out of the bag". Do you think it will hold ok? I can't get any closer than that. Dick, is John there? John! No, I haven't tried yet. There's a five-hour difference. I just hope he's at home....

The image on screen continues. The voice-over newscast continues. Beuys continues.

While the three are apparently discrete personages, all are in fact played by Clive Robertson. The characterisation becomes more complex as the on-screen newscaster lifts his phone, dials to Beuys himself in Düsseldorf, speaks:

CR: *Hello, Herr Beuys?*

JB: Ja.

CR: What could artists do about television news?

JB: Aña, ja. I cannot say it is a solution for this problem now, eh, I think I try to do my best if I have an opportunity to work with television, yes, I try to give the people information about as much as I know about ways of life coming out from the idea of this large understanding of art related to the whole of life, the normal life also, yes, included all the problems of the government, money, the agriculture, the ecological problems, the organisation (of) school problems, education problems, and all these things, that is what I try to do and what I call a large understanding of art and was related to the doings of the Free International University....

When one has the possibilities or means to speak on television, you know, it's very seldom. The structure of society is not intended to give people like me enough time to explore what one thinks about possibilities to change the structure.

At the end, a summary. The newscaster speaks directly to us, his voice tired:

What you have just watched was a docudrama of how artists relate to the forms of television. A docudrama is the deliberate manipulation of fiction to create the illusion of reality. It is not as you might assume the manipulation of reality into fiction.

If you like, the relationship between artist video and television shows how the intent of our work becomes carefully and violently misrepresented.

To dramatize this it was necessary to show how we become forces opposed to ourselves. The process of this performance was parodied to provide you with entertainment. The theatrical characterization of Joseph Beuys in this instance was used to simulate the artist lip-syncing television's cultural propaganda. To give it documentary credibility Beuys was also co-opted to give his views. This is exactly how the media in general and television in particular manipulates what it doesn't own.

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The news over at last, Beuys stands. He raises his desk again, reverted somehow to saplings and bound felt now that its usefulness had ended, and he moves slowly out of the light.

Voice over:

This has been a free political broadcast provided by this station. Next week we will hear gas station attendants talking about television followed by computer operators, agricultural labourers, bank clerks, laundromat operators, security (voice fades out)...

The effect was appropriately electric. Stunned silence as the lights were quenched. Then applause.

It was as if each person in the audience had been singled out for the message. Each of those who had come for the conference on video, its relationship to the mass media, the broadcast possibilities, the social and cultural context, had been reminded of the

realities too often forgotten in a daily romanticization of "media" and "communication". The conference had been peppered with complaints about insufficient access to the airwaves, about lack of interest on the part of buyers for institutions and the communications industry, about lack of support from the funding bodies. And here is Robertson spelling out "how the intent of our work becomes carefully and violently misrepresented", showing "how the media in general and television in particular manipulates what it doesn't own".

That message was clear, though perhaps the admiring audience responded more to the conciseness of the presentation, the complexity and subtlety of the text, the striking figure of Beuys there in the centre of the floor, the interplay between pre-taped video and audio and the many-monitored and live images. It is quite possible that the audience was impressed by the impact of the presentation, and hardly had a chance to assimilate the literal content and implications of the text.

And yet all of these diverse contents WERE there. The weary cynicism was not present in Beuys, co-opted (as Robertson had pointed out) to give his views in an at-the-time-unknown context, nor was it embodied in the figure of Robertson-as-Beuys there in the spotlight and on the monitors. Rather, that cynicism — or resignation — resided in the knowledge that this conference, this audience, was aimed at selling itself into the media, without knowing either itself OR its longterm aims or future. The commercial media here represented a generalized glamour rather than specific content, it represented a chance to make some money from past labours, and while these desires are not wrong, they are certainly incomplete or naive. Robertson had summed it up: "unless the video artist wishes to cross the boundaries and become a media-expert puppet, there is no present role for the artist in television." This to refute those who have stated, over and over, that the logical end of video is television, that broadcast is every reasonable artist's aim.

But where does Joseph Beuys fit into this scenario?

Clive Robertson has used Beuys before as persona and metaphor, and on each occasion to quite different effect. In 1975 he carried out a 21-hour performance at the Parachute Center for Cultural Affairs in Calgary (on the winter solstice) through which he attempted to assimilate something of Beuys' thoughts and working method; he created a series of objects and re-created what seemed to have been the actions that Beuys had performed on a similar occasion some ten years previously. The final 20 minutes of this extended experience were opened to the public, as Robertson/Beuys performed EXPLAINING PICTURES TO A DEAD HARE; this latter piece was also released as a videotape entitled WHAT ABOUT THE ART PERFORMANCE (1975, b/w, 30 minutes).

The original idea of identity transfer was to try to convey some meaning to myself about the types of materials he uses in a performance, the durations that he uses in a performance, the types of physical actions that he deals with, and through that to discover something of what he's dealing with mentally. I felt it to be very rewarding at that time....

In actual fact I failed in attempting to make a genuine transference; it was too difficult to overcome the difference between myself as a person and Beuys as a person. The gulf is enormous, and not only because of the fact that he's German, and the fact of the age difference. But there were things to be learned intellectually about what he's doing through his performances. It's a totally different process that no one, as far as I know, has ever penetrated. Beuys himself very rarely explains the underlying process of his actions. As an explanation of EXPLAINING PICTURES TO A DEAD HARE, for example, he simply said that he used a hare because it can turn around on a sixpence....

Whilst he'll very rarely talk about sociology, he'll talk about anthropology.⁽¹⁾

This extended action was carried out in private, with painstaking preparation required: first, to discover (through the limited number of texts available in English, supplemented by photo-documentation of completed sculptures and performances or "actions") the appropriate contents for such a re-creation; secondly, the preparation of the room itself, the gathering of materials, the detailed planning of tasks for each of the 21 hours.

Fetish Ad in File magazine (Vol. 3, No. 3, Spring 1977).



Reproduced from Joseph Beuys' Multiples, ed. Schnellmann & Küller.



Robertson, like many others, stands a little in awe of Beuys. Beuys understands the world in both historic and mythic terms, and has become a symbol for the integrated individual responsive directly to that world but also in control of it so that art activity and daily realities blend together to illuminate each other:

The constructs that he makes, the physical process and his actions are really extended artworks, in the sense that they're not performance, it really is a method of real work that is engaged. It's just that a group of people is allowed to speculate that method of work. ... The spaces that he uses, he is working in them in the same way that you and I work every day, and that connection parallels Filioiu. It's a real work process in the most ordinary sense, and there's never any division between working and not working. I think it's important because, in a Canadian context, and specifically here, performance isn't seen to be that type of activity, it's seen to be Performance, it's far more theatrical...⁽²⁾

In carrying out this first extended re-creation of Beuys'

activities, Robertson specified a link between himself and the European frame of mind, and beyond the aspects of homage to Beuys himself, there was a clear response to the more generalized aspects of this work method and perception of the world.

But the homage is ambiguous. The next piece in which he used the Beuys image was a photowork, published in *FILE* magazine (Vol 3 No 3, spring 1977). Dressed in fedora, jacket, standing next to a blackboard, Robertson sports a t-shirt with **FETISH** printed boldly across the chest. And on the blackboard, the rough lettering: **FAT + FETISH = FEHTISH.** In an insert, a witty take-off on fashion hype: "the academy professor this fall demands attention with his hunting vest trimmed in unfastened fur... For classroom magnificence or waistland performance this man is dressed for archetypal readiness". Where the first piece had been a sort of imbibing of the Beuys persona, a response to the inner man, this second acts as an ironic acknowledgement of Beuys' current fame and new fashionability in art circles. A little manipulation of the outer shell and voila, an amusing hybrid putting Beuys' remarkable charisma into a framework of mere topicality. It was as if a personal shaman had gone public, and implies a subtle dismissal of Beuys' real significance, at least to Robertson's own work as an artist.⁽²⁾

In **EXPLAINING PICTURES TO DEAD AIR**, Beuys makes a complex reappearance. He is there as enacted by Robertson, live, his apparent personality

and integrity restored through the silent, impressive deliberation of his actions. He is there in another literal sense, in the telephone conversation between him and Robertson taped and incorporated into the voice-over for the action. And finally, the punning on that earlier performance title recalls both the previous work (of Beuys as well as of Robertson) and specifies the media context of the current piece in blunt terms.

Dead air: a period of time without a broadcast signal.

Dead air: the musty smell of a room that has been closed up for some time.

Dead air: unresponsive, no feedback.

If a dead hare had been an unlikely candidate for an art lesson, dead **AIR** rules out anything but talking to oneself. There is no anima in an off-air studio, and the suggestion here is further that the utter lack of comprehension and response on the part of any home tv audience is about equal in its isolation and futility. Of course, it is no "pictures" that is being discussed in this context, but more generally the role of the artist and possible relationship to the mass media. We see Robertson on screen in a fairly realistic amalgam of artist-as-clerk, artist-as-joker, artist-as-newsman. We see Beuys almost as a tragic figure, the mysterious visitor cast in the role of puppet, his heroic presence reduced to banal commodity.

As Vera Frenkel pointed out in conversation with Robertson:

"The figure of Beuys you presented, his face covered in gold paint, sweating hard and mouthing the news is a hollow sack. He's a Beuys-shaped sack. He's a manifestation of helplessness. The initiatives are elsewhere; either with the voices over, or with the telephone company or with the folks that are writing the commercials..."

It is all the sadder to reach this realisation when referring to Beuys' own words about his role as artist:

"Objects aren't very important for me anymore. I want to get to the origin of matter, to the thought behind it. Thought, speech, communication — and not only in the socialist sense of the word — are all expressions of the free human being. ... I am aware that my art cannot be understood primarily by thinking. My art touches people who are in tune with my mode of thinking. But it is clear that people cannot understand my art by intellectual processes alone, because no art can be experienced in this way. I say to experience, because this is not equivalent to thinking: it's a great deal more complex; it involves being moved subconsciously..."⁽³⁾

The summary of Robertson's **EXPLAINING PICTURES TO DEAD AIR** might be that artists are utterly incapable of interacting positively with the communications media at this time, and that those who attempt to do so are in fact themselves used by its overriding systems and the power of its commonplaces and commercialism. An artist who wishes to retain his individuality on his own terms cannot expect a fair deal from the networks.

The Sculptured Politics of Joseph Beuys, 1975. Photo: Marcella Benvenuto



Clive Robertson's recent videotapes have dealt in other ways with commercial formats and their implications for content: a television monitor, in bed and swathed in bandages, evidently in the hospital for tests (IN VIDEO TRACTION, ACT 1, 1977) and finally interred, its eulogy spoken by off-camera newsmen as mourners slowly circle the flower-decked casket (IN VIDEO TRACTION, ACT 2, 1977). VIOLETS (1977), his most recent completed tape, questions the "truth" of newscasts, the interplay of fiction and manipulated fact in a complex and up-beat detective story complete with murder, motive and investigation incorporated into the evening news.

News, then, and the role of television are continuing concerns. Robertson moreover feels that an artist must relate effectively to the dominant communication formats⁵ or forego his ability to communicate at all in any meaningful way.

This combination underscores the sense of tragedy pervading EXPLAINING PICTURES TO DEAD AIR. Beuys himself had structured a form through his personal actions to talk about issues, and Robertson's 1975 performance in Calgary functioned as an investigation of that personality and those forms. While Robertson was hardly acting out a master-student relationship, the series of actions were nevertheless intended to be instructive and inspirational. The shift to casual humour in 1977 acknowledged Beuys as a man of "archetypal readiness" but in a clearly cheeky fashion: the older artist had been subtly dismissed as merely fashionable. His return in September 1978, then, recalls both of these earlier incorporations as well as whatever the audience may know of the "real" Joseph Beuys, to interact as newsmen, artist, hero, and fool. Cultural artifact and media manipulee.

Beuys has counterpointed Robertson's development of thought, and his "appearances" have charted or indicated the direction of his concern. In the silence and privacy of the early work, Beuys had remained the whole man, the mature artist. In one-page advertisement format the tone changed, although the scatter-shot comment (on advertisements, on artists' visibility, on making an impression) was incisive in its implications. This most recent persona, the hero hollowed out by context, taken over by the trivializers and manipulators, finally made "popular", is not a cheering development. Clive Robertson is a canny commentator, his mind is trained to investigate as it describes. EXPLAINING PICTURES TO DEAD AIR sums up current performance and video work as misguided and under-prepared in the most attractive and specific of fashions. And his message is spelled out in large summary letters.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Conversation between Clive Robertson and Peggy Gale, 28 September 1978.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Although Beuys is fully aware of his personal charisma, and has played with the idea of using his image as a kind of "advertisement" too.
4. Vera Frenkel, "Clive Robertson, A Beuys-Shaped Frame", *Centerfold*, December 1978, p. 26.
5. Quoted from "An interview with Joseph Beuys" by W. Loughby Sharp, *Artforum*, December 1969, pp. 4445.
6. Vera Frenkel, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

EXPLAINING PICTURES TO DEAD AIR

Voice over (... new chrome and other quality products sold in these stores.)

(It's mainly because of the meat. That's why more Canadians shop at Dominion, than at any other store, it's mainly because of the meat, mainly because of the meat, yes it's mainly because of the meeeeeet)

(It's new it's new... Miss Mew you are irresistible...)

V.O. (news) You are tuned to CFTO, Channel 9 in Toronto, Cable 8.

V.O. Night Myth news, with Joseph Beuys.

V.O. (news) Good evening. Two Toronto area men have died in the crash of a light plane near Quebec

City. The victims were identified as 44 year old Brian Alforth of North York and 47 year old Walter Carbide of Mississauga. Police said they were on route from Quebec City to St John New Brunswick yesterday. They were not heard from after checking in with the control tower at Bangor Maine. There's been a train derailment near Mount Albert, north of Toronto...

On screen Hello? No, there isn't anyone here by that name. This is 366-4781. I think you must have the wrong number. No, this number's just been changed. Try information. That's ok.

V.O. (news) August is usually a busy time for tourism in Metro Toronto but this year it's bigger than even. For one thing the Canadian National Exhibition centennial...

On screen (dials)

Hi. Sorry I didn't call back last week, we had problems getting this phone installed. I wanted to call you about that tape, and also if you could review those two publications? I think it's terrible, after the fuss about copy. It's squashed into two inches at the bottom. No,



Explaining Pictures to Dead Air, 1978. Photo: Rodney Warden.

it's not that important, it's definitely not worth fighting about at this point. Mhm, probably. Isn't it a good piece? He definitely was fascinated by the very thing that the others branded as vulgar marxism, or undialectical thinking. Me too. I was up late last night trying to rush this script, I wish I knew something about Thomas Paine. Oh, it's just that I wrote down this title for a Marx-Duchamp collaboration called "a real pane in the glass". No, not at all, it's not supposed to be a sitcom, but I must have somehow got off at the wrong stop. No, it's rushed as usual. But what do people really want from a performance? It's not like making a tape. Mhm. What? You mean using tv as a prop to prop up an otherwise collapsing form of bankrupt behaviour? I'll remember that! Please! I've got something for you here, how about this for cheap sleaze? If capitalism is what happens when you switch on a tv, and anarchism happens when you switch it off, is socialism what happens when you get it repaired, and communism what happens when you try and fix it yourself? No, wait, there's more. Is video fascism when you tell people that only video will change their lives? Isn't it crude? I wrote it. Under my own name, of course. They love my stuff and it's \$500, for three days work. Mhm. You mean this thing? No, I had nothing to do with it. They're so idealistic and greedy too, and their PR is so bad. The only real social action they've ever witnessed is seeing someone take a sh... Any way, I must go. Oh, the end of next week. I can't even think about typesetting yet. It's supposed to be out by the 15th. Ciao.

V.O. Hello? Hello? Hello, are you watching the news? So am I. I don't know if you're taping it, I am. Have you ever read this junk when it's transcribed? It's actually marginally clever. I don't know whether we've got to this part yet but they try to avoid using organisational names more than once in a story. The government will be called the provincial government, the Ontario government, Queens Park, and so on. I'm a Joseph Beuys fan. I would never miss one of his newscasts. We all thought the news would be different when the network announced his appointment. You know, give the news some metaphysical form, but it's the same as it ever was. He once started to talk about the dialectic between art and society leading towards the liberation of mankind, but they cut to an international symposium on woodcarving. He also once came on after the weather and finished up with "Language is indispensable. For me, the concept of language represents the entire content of information." We think that's why they hired him to read the news. We think they think they've got us where they want us. Maybe they're right. I haven't missed a newscast in over two months. I keep thinking he's going to let the fat out of the bag, but he hasn't yet. Oh, just in case you don't know who Joseph Beuys is, he is indeed a very famous artist. He's as well known as Barbara Walters, only he doesn't do interviews. That is, he's interviewed, but he doesn't interview other people. That was also part of his contract, or at least that's what TV Guide said.

V.O. (news) ... are honest. We've had no complaints and naturally we watch them fairly carefully. Everything is as it seems to be, in other words, if you...

On screen (dials)

Hi, George? Is Dick there? Dick? Good. Did you catch that last segment? What do you think? You don't think it was in bad taste. I'm worried about the phrase "let the fat out of the bag". Do you think it will hold ok? I can't get any closer than that. Dick, is John there? John! No, I haven't tried yet. There's a five-hour difference. I just hope he's at home. John, what are we going to do about the frame? I don't have time between now and Friday to stretch a skin on it. We could use felt, but the frame might not support the weight. I've got about another 12 hours' taping. Yup, ok. Talk to you soon. Oh, it's going reasonably well. I'm worried about the sound quality in that space. You know what narrative video's about. I should really get Alvin Lucier to re-design the inside of my mouth. Ok, keep in touch.

(dials)

Hi, is it patched in? I'm almost ready for another voice-over. No, not yet, this is getting close to real media hype. It's got all that corporate feel with John this, Dick that, said that. It's also too introspective. Mhm. No. Did you ever see that telephone piece of his? It's a telephone sitting next to a clod of earth complete with shoots and roots, that in appearance also looks like a phone. I think it was around 1962. Yeah, well at least this script is real. I don't know. I think it's clear at least in its rejection. OK, cut it in.

V.O. In case you are wondering about what the inferences are about, we are waiting to place a call to Joseph Beuys in Düsseldorf. At least that is the plan. Live broadcasts are always the most engaging part of television and whilst this is obviously pre-recorded, we are trying to set up some of the excitement that a live event can have. Of course, in a live context this is called colour commentary, that is, it is background information that leads in to the hook-up or event. The proposed conversation with Beuys has also been scripted, and hopefully soon you will at least hear the call being placed. Beuys has in fact already made a television multiple entitled "Enterprise", which consisted of two objects, one was a photo of Joseph Beuys and family watching Star-Trek, the other a sealed box-camera with its lens-hole plugged with felt. I think we're just about ready. No? no. We seem to be experiencing slight problems with the overseas operator. Now, the last time these two people talked to each other was in November 1975, just before the author performed a major retrospective of Joseph Beuys' performances. Whilst Beuys has been criticised as being part of the old dialectic between idealist goals and materialist process dressed in the latest fashion, his own history took place in war-ravaged Germany when his work stood against a large dose of materialist zeal which was being injected into the Rhineland by the victorious Americans. This was the time when West Germany was building and transforming itself into a second America. I think we're ready now.

V.O. (news) The Ontario government has stepped in again in another move to head off the sale of Nordair to Air Canada. A petition has been sent to the federal government urging it to scrap the 25 million dollar deal. Last week the provincial government made a similar appeal to the Canadian Transport Commission. Queens Park feels...

(dialing)

(rings)

V.O. J. Beuys.

CR: Hello, Herr Beuys?

JB: Ja.

CR: What could artists do about television news?

JB: Aha, ja. I cannot say it is a solution for this problem now, eh, I think I try to do my best if I have an opportunity to work with television, yes, I try to give the people information about as much as I know about ways of life coming out from the idea of this large understanding of art related to the whole of life, the normal life also, yes, included all the problems of the government, money, the agriculture, the ecological problems, the organisation (of) school problems, education problems, and all these things, that is what I try to do and what I call a large understanding of art and was related to the doings of the Free International University.

CR: Well, the statement you just made is going to be played to people who are at a video conference studying video and television, and I guess what concerns me is that television is very clever in the way that it deals with artists, even when artists get on television. And it seems to require a lot of concentration to un-

derstand what it is that you're being used for.

JB: Ja, I think it is in any case, the difficulty for artists to work with television, is not a radical idea about the whole question of humankind evolution. It's not a real complex view of all the difficulties for human evolution, you know, there I see the problem. I think it would be easier if more artists would be involved in, ja, I fear to speak about politics and all these things because even this is a dilemma therefore I try to overcome all these ideas of politics and so-called social ideas, social as far as they are already developed, and show already their ability to change, to be more effective for humankind's development, coming to a higher level of life and all these things, thinking power, creating power, all these things. But it's more once one comes deeper to all these questions and comes to complex theories of the open possibilities which are there, which exist, which could be developed also and thereabout one could inform people. Then it's no longer such a difficulty with the question of now to use such informing means like television. It could be very serious and this seriosity could be also joyful with humour and all these things. It could also be done with a kind of life and adventure. So now I say already perhaps too much for your needs, now in the moment or for your questions. When one has the possibilities or means to speak on television, you know, it's very seldom. The structure of society is not intended to give people like me enough time to explore what one thinks about possibilities to change the structure.

CR: Ok, well I'm really grateful for those few comments, and I will write to you later on and tell you what happens.

JB: That's wonderful, I thank you very much for all your interest and for all your activities and for all your sendings and so on. So, I thank you very much.

CR: Ok, b'bye.

On screen What you have just watched, was a docudrama of how artists relate to the forms of television. A docudrama is the deliberate manipulation of fiction to create the illusion of reality. It is not as you might assume the manipulation of reality into fiction. If you like, the relation between artist video and television shows how the intent of our work becomes carefully and violently misrepresented. To dramatize this it was necessary to show how we become forces opposed to ourselves. The process of this performance was parodied to provide you with entertainment. The theatrical characterization of Joseph Beuys in this instance was used to simulate the artist lip-synching television's cultural propaganda. To give it documentary credibility Beuys was also co-opted to give his views. This is exactly how the media in general and television in particular manipulates what it doesn't own. You can only sacrifice your own specific gifts of working as an artist when you choose to adapt your work to the up-tempo demands of what television calls "digestion without chewing". Unless the video artist wishes to cross the boundaries and become a media-expert puppet, there is no present role for the artist in television. As this piece attempted to illustrate — we are exploited at the same time we are forced into exploitative relations with others. Television unlike video is never a fun tool, it gets you when you're young, it gets you when you're ill, when you're tired and when you're down. The art market may want your body and your individualism but the tv market only wants your fingerprints.

V.O. This has been a free political broadcast provided by this station. Next week we will hear gas station attendants talking about television followed by computer operators, agricultural labourers, bank clerks, laundromat operators, security...

transcribed from the videotape by Peggy Gale
January 1979

8 Nationalism in The Visual Arts/Clive Robertson

In 1968 a Canadian institution was formed to protect the rights of self-defined "Canadian artists". CAR/FAC (Canadian Artists Representation) now mimics the organisation of a union (with locals, regionals and a national executive) though its operation was constituted as a artists' lobbying association. For the last eleven years CAR/FAC has progressively lost support from its constituency including the East coast, Quebec, British Columbia and centrally from Toronto. CAR's Nationalism Policy has been the central feature of its failure, coupled with the conservative nature of the organisation and lastly the hesitancy of artists to formulate a strong federal political organisation.

CAR has had a lobbying history with The Canada Council of attempting (and for periods of time succeeding) in denying artist immigrants their economic rights to make a living. This immigrant vs. citizen argument is shallow considering for a moment that CAR's position supports the common mythology that Canadian citizens whose colour is red, or black, or yellow are culturally protected "as Canadians".

The plain truth, which CAR and its founders have never recognised, is that both Nationalism and the more recent Multiculturalism cannot guarantee true cultural representation for all Canadians:

"If you want to be a real Canadian, you've got to change your name," so said a white friend to Chan Dun who just opened the Panama Cafe in Victoria, B.C. in 1910. For a while Chan Dun called himself Mr. Dun. Emigrating to Canada in 1890 at the age of twelve, it was not until 1947 at the age of 69 that he received the right to vote in British Columbian elections, the mark of Canadian citizenship. (Asianadian Vol. 1, No. 4, 1979).

CAR has failed the artist community over the question of Canadian identity in two major ways. Firstly it was founded on a wave of anti-Americanism, which though understandable in the mid-sixties, has never given way to a more positive attitude towards national identity. Secondly, CAR has always defined itself from the position of the male anglo chauvinist. British

imperialism in Canada has always been a dominant force, a factor upon which all official Canadian cultural history resides. CAR may have made the occasional resolution, but they have never visibly supported minorities. They have never supported the rights of women artists, native artists, Québécois artists, or gay artists to have official rights within the official culture, to be represented within exhibitions, The National Gallery, etc.. These minorities and others, without such support from CAR, are subsequently left to exist within the Culture in the vacuum of traditional isolationism (Folk Culture):

"In May 1978, Jane Martin did a survey of Canada Council juries in the visual arts: Women as members of juries ranged from 0 per cent to 39.2 per cent. The percentage of works by women in the permanent collections of major public galleries in Ontario are: Agnes Etherington 6.7 per cent; Art Gallery of Ontario 7.2

per cent; Art Gallery of Stratford 15.9 per cent; Robert McLaughlin Gallery 16.9 per cent; London Art Museum 17.5 per cent; in 1976. Then there are exhibitions in both public and commercial galleries, 47.5 per cent of CAR/FAC members are women. We are told that 'there are lies, damned lies and statistics'. There IS definitely SOMETHING WRONG!" (CAR, Toronto leaflet, Sept. 25. From a report made to CAR 1978, The first CAR report on the Status of Women Artists.)

CAR has historically refused to define its membership — relying on the self-definition of its individual members. The CAR artist has accepted the model of the artist as artist genius who, if committed to Nationalism, will ipso facto produce a Canadian culture. Anyone who is a member of CAR, so the logic would imply, will be a good Canadian artist, that is, an artist able to articulate the 'Canadian identity'. What about a true-blue

CARFAC NEWS!

CANADIAN ARTISTS' REPRESENTATION / LE FRONT DES ARTISTES CANADIENS

VOLUME 4, NO. 34 JULY 1979

Canada Council Conned by Office Boys

On June 27/79 The Canada Council released another brilliant example of its clearly defined role in developing Canadian culture. It reads as follows:

Canada Council News Release
Ottawa, June 27/79. At its twenty-second meeting, the Canada Council approved its priorities for the coming year. The priorities are: (1) to (2) to (3) to (4) to (5) to (6) to (7) to (8) to (9) to (10) to (11) to (12) to (13) to (14) to (15) to (16) to (17) to (18) to (19) to (20) to (21) to (22) to (23) to (24) to (25) to (26) to (27) to (28) to (29) to (30) to (31) to (32) to (33) to (34) to (35) to (36) to (37) to (38) to (39) to (40) to (41) to (42) to (43) to (44) to (45) to (46) to (47) to (48) to (49) to (50) to (51) to (52) to (53) to (54) to (55) to (56) to (57) to (58) to (59) to (60) to (61) to (62) to (63) to (64) to (65) to (66) to (67) to (68) to (69) to (70) to (71) to (72) to (73) to (74) to (75) to (76) to (77) to (78) to (79) to (80) to (81) to (82) to (83) to (84) to (85) to (86) to (87) to (88) to (89) to (90) to (91) to (92) to (93) to (94) to (95) to (96) to (97) to (98) to (99) to (100) to (101) to (102) to (103) to (104) to (105) to (106) to (107) to (108) to (109) to (110) to (111) to (112) to (113) to (114) to (115) to (116) to (117) to (118) to (119) to (120) to (121) to 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IMMIGRATION: DO YOU HAVE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE?

CAR has had a lobbying history with the Canada Council of attempting (and for periods of time succeeding) in denying artist immigrants their economic rights to make a living.

Canadian artist who paints in a N.Y. style? CAR is noticeably silent on that point. By not defining the workforce it supposedly represents CAR does not define management as it pertains to the production of culture. For example, anyone can be an associate member including curators. Furthermore CAR has spent most of its time dealing with government and state institutions. It has alluded to Canadian ownership within the corporate structure but has never defined the extent of the problem. CAR's constipated thinking has emerged from the narrow viewpoint of art existing only between the easel and the gallery. Again for example it has never questioned the problems that face the artist publication competing within hostile corporate distribution monopoly. CAR has never studied the other artist products that are effectively denied from reaching their own Canadian constituency.

The function of an organisation such as CAR is to fully represent those at the workplace, namely artists. To work in Canada, an artist, like anyone else, needs to obtain legal status. That is all that CAR should be concerned with. Questions of the particular nationality of such workers is the responsibility of specific government agencies. The question of foreign cultural domination is an issue that the organisation must take up not only with the government, but with

specific companies whose interest is to maintain foreign ownership of Canadian resources. CAR itself has added nothing to the debate on "Canadian content", never suggesting that the term itself denies the reality of where the culture originates. CAR has bought the official Canadian history which predominantly denies the Canadian role of Scandinavians, Asians, Blacks, Ukrainians and Italians. These early ethnic and racial groups have been assimilated into official anglo-history. The Group of Seven are an example of such a WASP establishment, rarified by a specific historical viewpoint. Greg Curnoe, longstanding CAR member, recently stated in Toronto that there is now a generation of Canadian painters taught by Canadians. This was in reference to the Sable-Castelli stable — Alex Cameron, David Craven, Paul Hutner, etc. To Curnoe, a Pontiac sedan must be an indigenous Canadian car — since several generations of the product have been assembled in Canada!

Insular Nationalism in the form of cultural patriotism is an issue without supportable logic. Currently 6 million immigrants have passed into Canada out of a total population of 23 million.

CAR has underwritten the status quo by stressing its nationalist position. If CAR would be willing, as an organisation, to concern itself with the breadth of Canadian history, then

collage: John Grayson

the whole question of national identity would take on a different character. Instead, in the recent issue of CAR/FAC's newspaper (July, 1979), we read an editorial demanding a rewording of The Canada Council's mandate as it appears within parliament's Canada Council Act. CAR has recommended that "Production of works in the arts" would become "Production of works in the arts of Canada"; "make awards to persons in Canada" would become "make awards to Canadians"; and lastly "sponsor works in the arts" will be "sponsor works in the arts by Canadians". The CAR Executive is only too aware that it could be challenged on such illiterate jingoisms. ANNPAC (Association of National Non-Profit Artists' Centres) has more members than CAR. This magazine has more artist/subscribers than CAR has members. An organization like CAR/FAC is going to have to work hard to earn its currently unjustified claim as being representative of Canadian artists. An artists union should exist. If CAR/FAC doesn't get its act together it will inevitably be replaced, hopefully by a coalition of minorities that collectively constitute the majority.

Within CAR itself there has always been the fear that the Executive would be non-national. They wonder, "What would happen?" Indeed, *what* would happen if a Blackfoot or someone of Japanese origin was the National Spokesperson? ■



THE STORY BEHIND ORGANIZED ART

THE NEW MUSEUMS • PART 2 • BY CLIVE ROBERTSON

Of all the recent recessionary layoffs and shutdowns in Canada, one example sheds strong light on the disposable value of human labour. When two hundred union members recently occupied Houdaille Industries, an Ontario auto-parts plant due to be closed on October 31st., it was reported that 38 of the workers had more than thirty years service with the company. Under a collective agreement, those over 55 with more than thirty years service could collect pension benefits of \$605 per month. One maintenance worker would have been eligible three months after the plant is due to close. He will now have to wait until he's 65, ten years later before he can get a basic pension of about \$350. Another employee would have been only six days away from retirement after working for 34 years. Bill Newman told the *Globe and Mail*: "We've never had a strike since I was hired in November, 1948. We gave the company more production and now we're given this treatment." Houdaille Industries received more

than \$500,000 from the Federal Government three years ago for experimental work on a chrome-plated aluminum bumper.

Houdaille illustrates a failure of long-term labour "partnerships", a fact that artists, particularly artists who work in artists' organizations could and should look at more closely. In Canada, the state through its various federal, provincial and civic funding agencies is often the "partner" for such organizations. Some of these artist-run spaces have already reached the first ten years of their service. During that period of time the funding agencies have themselves grown as they have received fresh validation from a younger labour force that has provided endless educational services and almost costless research. Some funding agencies, notably The Canada Council have prudently developed one-to-one relationships with these new artists' *Since 1971, Clive Robertson has worked within artist-run organizations as an artist, curator, publisher, producer and director.*

organizations and their representatives. And, because the visible artist community is small, informal negotiations have developed between artists' organizations and the funding agencies that could be said to be in place of union-management discussions. Of course there have been no real 'contracts'. Grants to artists' organizations could be seen as 'Public Tenders' — you make a competitive bid for funding and promise maximum service. And like all arts organizations this process is repeated annually.

For artists' organizations it is a very demeaning process and no matter what is presumed, there are far too few alternate funding sources either from the private, business or educational sectors. It is essentially a one-company town, and you take what you can get.¹ The new cultural 'industry' in Canada which is being 'exported' to Europe and the U.S. as a shining example of state generosity and creative invention has largely been possible through cheap labour and

self-exploitation from within Canadian artists' organizations.²

In this second of a series of articles on "The New Museum" I intend to show an evolution that began at the end of the Sixties, with community artist groups and community-based social service groups as an aspect of counter-culture that developed into a problem for the government in Canada at the beginning of the Seventies. This youth crisis was sedated by heavy government make-work funding. On this wave of 'experimental' projects many artist-organizations were born and as the make-work programmes dropped, a select group of artists' organizations survived with funding from The Canada Council. The new arrangement as I will attempt to demonstrate was politically weak for those organizations from the beginning. When an association of artists' organizations was formed in 1976 there was an opportunity to formulate a common strategy and strength based upon the considerable achievements of the individual structures and their constituent artists. What was possible and what factors prevented the development of a new artist-public structure that could have permanently changed the production and distribution of art in Canada?

ARTISTS AND ARTISTS' ORGANIZATIONS

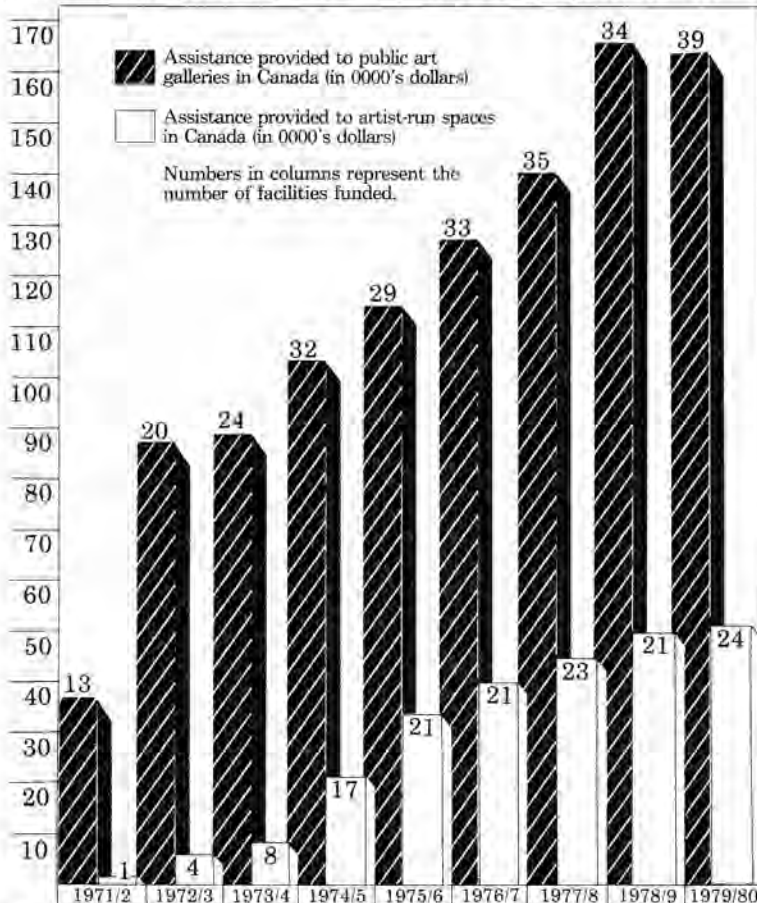
Historically artists, unlike artisans, have continually been linked with patrons, be it the church, the wealthy, or the state. Needless to say this historical relationship has coloured the social image of the artist as a quasi-intellectual bum, a perpetual adolescent, an opportunist and so on. The patrons and validators in turn have over-valued and mystified the social role of the artist within recent history. Much is said, most of it negative, of the 'privileged' position of the artist within society. While this 'privilege' could be said to occur in very special instances e.g. within institutionalized educational structures, for the most part artists' labour is unprotected. There is no privilege in being "self-employed" if that term is used to cover-up a state of being unemployed/underemployed. For many artists the self-description 'artist' is so associated with historical decay that they prefer

plain handles like writer, painter, musician, sculptor, or dancer. Many artists now call themselves 'independent producers' which is another term for "self-employed", still others prefer 'cultural-worker' which again suggests paid labour. But there has also been a change in what artists do, and while twenty years ago this multi-functional role was considered *avant-garde* it is now *ordinaire*. This 'new' work is not always so new. It is an admixture of older expressions with (often) new technologies. An artist may make video/audio tapes, write, build props or tools, give public performances and lectures, work both collaboratively and independently, self-organize exhibits, publications etc.. While all 'new' artists don't do all of these things, many do most of them. As can be seen many of these functions involve both distribution as well as production which should be remembered in the following definition of artists' organization.

So what are artists' organizations? Like the above broader def-

inition of artist, artists' organizations tend to be multi-functional. They are primarily shared production, display and distribution facilities, begun, organized and administered by artists. They could be as specialized as a video access centre, a photo-gallery, a women's co-operative or a film distribution centre.

The major impetus for the growth of artists' organizations was the failure of those public institutions that had been established supposedly to "encourage the development of the arts". The pre-1970 history of artist groups in Canada is badly documented. But there were a number of such groups who set out to replace the *function* of an inadequate public gallery, a stagnant art magazine, inaccessible funding sources, or to make the various (media) tools of production more available. This move by artists who saw the need to develop collectively has often been described as being necessary because the traditional institutions were not prepared to accommodate



In 1977, 18 artist-run spaces received \$412,100 in Canada Council funding while 18 public galleries got \$1,069,800 for programming alone.

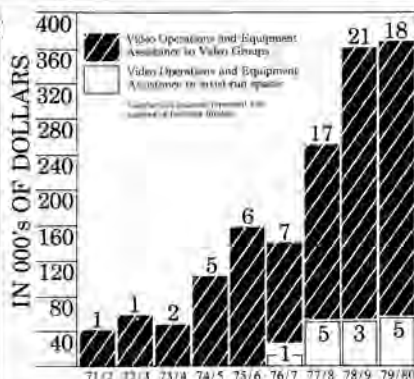
CHART: Bock, Robertson/FUSE

"experimental" activities. This explanation, while not being entirely false, does conveniently omit the need for structural and social changes. As these artist groups developed they discovered that many of the intermediary functions of gallery, critic, museum, art market magazine, were to put it simply, "in the wrong hands." Or, more directly: "It is surprising that so many uninformed and inexperienced agents (of the arts) can have so many prejudices and state them with such strong conviction."³

GOVERNMENT MAKE-WORK STIMULUS

Despite the counter-culture inspiration of early Seventies artists' spaces in Canada, much of which was idealistic if not bohemian, conversational if not inarticulate, there was still recognition of the need for a radical change. This challenge did in many cases grow into replacement not only of *function* but also of *structure*, with artists' organizations developing their own separate 'alternate' facilities. It was also realized that permanent access could be created by forming an alternate network that was *in theory* quite separated from the established cultural hierarchy. Of course many critical opponents of such a movement sat back and waited for that thrust to self-institutionalize and then proceeded to co-opt its purely aesthetic inventions into their larger cultural 'palaces'.

But artists were merely one part of the counter-culture. Concurrent with the development of small community-based organizations in the early Seventies, the Federal government initiated temporary employment programmes: LIP (Local Initiatives Projects) and OFY (Opportunities for Youth). OFY was begun in 1971, to provide jobs and "meaningful activities" to some of the more than 2.4 million university and high school students who would be out of school during the summer. OFY received \$24.7 million (of the total package of \$67.2 million) which was to be dispensed to "community-oriented" projects initiated by and employing youth.⁴ In practice both programmes were interchangeable: LIP projects ran through the winter and could be sustained through



The Canada Council's video funding.

the summer by employing the youth (under 25) component of the project. A number of existing artist groups received their initial funding from LIP or OFY and a large number of artists' organizations (here meaning alternate theatre co-ops, music groups, artist spaces, dance groups, etc.) cut their administrative teeth on such employment programmes. As Martin Loney documents in his essay, "A Political Economy of Citizen Participation",⁵ "the evaluators of the first year of OFY noted that, 'prior to 1970 (the government) has been forced to the recognition of a variety of potentially critical problems: summer employment among students, youth discontent, transiency, alienation and rebelliousness, the fear of revolution in Quebec, and the sudden increase in the demand for action on such issues as drugs, pollution, social welfare, poverty, discrimination against women, Indians, Eskimos and Blacks, and the Americanization of the culture and the economy'." (The federal government was so concerned about the volatile state of Quebec politics in 1971 that 40 percent of all OFY funding in the first year went to Quebec.) Students were the target group for these programmes that covered a wide range of social and cultural projects. The priority for OFY, Loney states, was not to alleviate employment or poverty. As he has documented, the real reasons for the programmes were neither disguised nor hidden: "There is nothing startling or even controversial in the claim that OFY was in many ways no more and no less in its conception than an elaborate strategy for social control and the incorporation of dissenting youth into the great liberal pluralist framework."

In talking with OFY staff workers Loney also confirms that "OFY was successful in employing a disproportionate number of activist youth since they were likely to be the ones with the 'good ideas' for projects and the initiative to get the project organized and funded."

MORE POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES?

To frame artists' organizations within their actual political context in Canada presents a useful if loaded juxtaposition. What was the relationship between The Canada Council's funding at the beginning of the Seventies and the federal (and provincial) government's concerns of a 'youth revolt'? The Canada Council repeatedly claims that it is at "arms-length" from the government, but Brenda Wallace, former Arts Officer (responsible for public art galleries, museums, and artist-run spaces) has admitted: "...my greatest disillusion with the Council was to discover that it is extremely involved in politics, politics that too often had very little to do with the real needs of artists."⁶ Quebec has been an inseparable aspect of such politics. The Canada Council's video programme chose to fund Vidéo-graphie, Montreal (a pioneer community video access centre) after the NFB (National Film Board) had supported this progressive organization. In fact from 1971-7 Vidéo-graphie was the major recipient of the new video programme's funding for organizations, and the sole recipient for the first two years. It is notable that the video programme developed out of The Canada Council's film programme, that the NFB in Quebec under the Société Nouvelle programme decided to use video instead of film, and that Vidéo-graphie was a recognized centre for *social action* productions. From the outside much can only be speculated. Was The Canada Council involved in more than just setting up a new programme? If so, was this used to demonstrate that despite The War Measures Act (1970) the federal government through The Canada Council supported cultural divergence in Quebec? Coincidentally, or not, there was a venue in which to get this message across in no less a place than France.

In 1973 at *Canada Trajectories*, a

large Canadian exhibition held at the Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, Vidéo-graphie set-up a free video workshop/demonstration: Le Mini-Vidéo-graphie. "Most French critics agreed it was video which had the greatest impact," wrote Joan Lowmes, reporting the event.⁷ Lowmes also quotes *Le Monde* critic, Jacques Michel's review: "The Canadian government... even runs the risk of liberally subsidising artistic 'research' without being sure of what will be found or whether it will actually agree with its views. You will be surprised to discover an atmosphere of social challenge throughout the works. It is institutionalized creative challenge... at public expense." Was there — is there — such a "risk". Of course not. Once artists' organizations switch to government funding and are allowed and encouraged to grow and *depend upon such an economy*, pulling the plug, or even cutting back can and usually will eliminate all such risk.⁸ The control mechanism used is the maintenance of marginal status.

▶ TO REPLACE OR RUN PARALLEL?

Of less importance, but still significant was the transformation of some artists' organisations to a status of being 'parallel galleries' when The Canada Council, also in 1973, picked up some of the artists' project threads from both OFY and LIP. The term 'parallel galleries' originated from the Canada Council.⁹ The programme for these galleries was initiated by then-Arts Officer Philip Fry who "foresaw a national network developing."¹⁰ While there were at that time three or four artists' spaces requesting funding, by 1976 this "national network" membership had been created by The Canada Council. This 'creative' tendency further manifested itself in 1976 when The Canada Council summoned the then 22 artists' organisations that were funded under the programme to Ottawa to form an Association of Parallel Galleries. (Such artists' organisations have many self-terms: artists' space, artist-run centre; alternate space, multi-disciplinary centre.) The drawbacks of accepting the definition of parallel galleries become clearly apparent: it immediately defused the notion of



Directory from Video Inn, Vancouver, replacement. Chantal Pontbriand, editor of *Parachute* (a bi-lingual contemporary art magazine) and a former member of Véhicule, Montreal says: "Parallel galleries exposed the importance of ephemeral art but because of their marginal status they haven't been able to validate such work to the level that more durable institutions can...all we seem to be able to do now is keep the traditional large institutions going and they can hardly be said to be even absorbing new roles."¹¹

The artist-run galleries since 1973 have, as one part of their function, curated and displayed or presented over a thousand exhibits and an equal number of combined music, dance and literary performances. In 1977 alone 17 centres held 222 exhibitions/installations, 280 music concerts/events, 115 art performances/actions, 101 dance performances, 150 video workshop productions, 82 original video productions, 19 artists-in-residence, plus 7 regular publications and 64 lectures.¹² In that year 18 artist-run centers (parallel galleries) received a total of \$412,100 an average of \$22,894.00 per space. This money included salaries, fees to artists, exhibit costs, rent and other overheads. This money came from the Canada Council's Programme of Assistance to Art Galleries & Artist-Run Spaces. In the same year, 18 public galleries received \$1,069,800, an average of \$72,316 per gallery. Unlike the artist-run spaces these funds were only for programming, that is exhibit costs. And it is probably no exaggeration to suggest that all 18 of those public galleries combined did not provide the same amount of *original* programming as the most productive of the artist-run cen-

tres. The artists know this and so do the funding agencies and yet the disparity has remained the same over the last five years. The artist-space funding from The Canada Council has increased 53 percent from \$330,400 in 1975 to \$506,000 in 1980, whereas the public galleries funding has increased 37.5 percent from \$1,126,400 in 1975 to \$1,637,600 in 1980.¹³ They are indeed running parallel with a three-to-one ratio in favour of the unproductive public galleries. As we will see later this abundance of programming and underfunding places the artists who work with and in these organisations in a continual position of labour exploitation, and potential collapse.

▶ ANNPAC: FALLING AT THE STARTING GATE

In 1976 (at the Ottawa meeting convened by The Canada Council) when ANNPAC (Association of National Non-Profit Artist Centres) was formed, most of the formative aesthetic directions had gelled. Video, performance, experimental music, alternate publishing were the still-developing but well established focii. What was left to do in 1976 was to develop the social structure, the independent production capability, the educational programmes, and most important — the development of a common strategy that would necessitate the political restructuring of funding policies and programmes. The accomplishment of replacing traditional structures and functions has not been sufficiently used by ANNPAC as an argument for ongoing funding. Instead weaker and more spurious arguments have evolved such as: ANNPAC's "Living Museums" Proposal¹⁴; the potential exportability of new Canadian art; and government use of artists' technological works as an illustrative tool to demystify new technologies to the public! In other words instead of sticking to basic economic issues which were virtually uncontested, ANNPAC, with encouragement, began to drift.

▶ ANNPAC: THE COMMON LINKS

The formation of ANNPAC initially was of equal convenience for

both artist-run spaces and The Canada Council. For the Council it streamlined administrative tasks, and established a certain amount of funding competition where before, little (if any) had existed, by introducing smaller regional spaces to their larger urban counterparts. For ANNPAC, programme exchange became more feasible encouraged by the introduction of *Parallelogramme*, a monthly programme news publication. The publication is the only common link that ties all of ANNPAC's 34 member organisations together. ANNPAC has one annual general meeting a year and a number of regional meetings and yet regions do not define substantial similarities between these various artists' organisations. ANNPAC's members could be divided into four groupings. The first would include organisations like Niagara Artists Association, St. Catherine's; Photographer's Gallery, Saskatoon; and Latitude 53, Edmonton who each maintain strong regional support for their artists. A second grouping would include Ed Video, Guelph; Women in Focus, Vancouver; Powerhouse, Montreal; and Direct Media Association, Port Washington who share specialised functional strengths. A third group might include Artspace, Peterborough; S.A.W. Gallery, Ottawa; Eye Level Gallery, Halifax; and Off-Centre Centre, Calgary, who with a regional base have altered their programming as input from ANNPAC and elsewhere has become available. The fourth group is more definite, and is the power base within ANNPAC. This core group was self-established on a mandate of both size and seniority.

▶ ANNPAC: THE CORE

A Space, Toronto; The Western Front, Vancouver; Video Inn, Vancouver; The Music Gallery, Toronto, and Art Metropole, Toronto maintain perhaps the closest relationships with The Canada Council. A Space, The Western Front, The Video Inn and Art Metropole command this position within ANNPAC (although Art Metropole has only had peripheral involvement) because of the size of their 'constituencies,' their age, but also as a result of their past or present productivity. A Space began in



Al Mattes, ANNPAC spokesperson.

1970, The Western Front in 1973 (many of its artist-directors have been active in earlier artist groups since the late Sixties), The Video Inn in 1972, and Art Metropole, 1974 (again its artist-directors have a longer group history). Though the Music Gallery only opened in 1976 it has been a productive and loud voice for experimental music. The Music Gallery's Allan Mattes is the current ANNPAC spokesperson. Apart from Mattes the other two most consistent representatives for ANNPAC have been Glenn Lewis, The Western Front and Victor Coleman, formerly of A Space. Lewis has written "The Value of Parallel Galleries."¹⁵ Coleman has prepared two reports: "A Brief Concerning The Status of Parallel Galleries, Interdisciplinary Artist Centres and the Role of Individual Artists in the Management of their Art" (1977) and "The Living Museums Report" (1979).

▶ OTTAWA: NO ROOM FOR REFORM

ANNPAC has used three major strategies in dealing with The Canada Council and other funding agencies which in turn the artist-centres themselves also employ. The first is co-habitation, a tactic based on the premise that friends don't hurt each other. The second method is confrontation — in this case largely based upon personal aggression rather than political strategy. The third is based upon statistical lobbying. Lewis tends to choose the first, Coleman the second and Mattes the third. Which is not to say that each separately or that a combination of any have not produced results in the past. But now the federal government is not giving increased funding to

The Canada Council which means that the Council is working with frozen budgets. Since The Canada Council itself has proved that it cannot reform its existing programmes — it can only create new programmes (as it has done in the past) — presently it has no room to proceed. Rather than reform its Assistance to Galleries and Museums Programme the Council introduced an additional section for Parallel Galleries. Rather than overhaul its Music, Theatre, Publishing, Film and Dance Sections it first introduced an Explorations Programme (which included Heritage projects) and then an Interdisciplinary Section. Most of The Canada Council's amended programmes which were made to accommodate both cultural growth and change are mere stop-gap measures. To suggest that further support must come from the private sector (which in effect means more donated artist labour) or from the corporate sector (which refuses to risk its public reputation) is highly impractical. And though there have been a few exception, the provinces act as if a national culture (that is beyond regional) is in the federal jurisdiction.

▶ ANNPAC'S PAPER PARADE

Since 1976 all of the funding agencies that have dealt with ANNPAC have profited more from the Association than the individual artist-spaces have gained in service from the funding agencies. And the more research studies that ANNPAC provides the more that imbalance will grow. Such studies serve to extend the 'make-work' ethic with short-term advantages of providing several salaries. Surely ANNPAC can look around at other similar Canadian associations and see that few major issues have been won to support indigenous culture and so much federal lobby money (provided by the government for the purposes of lobbying the government) has been squandered that is badly needed for simple day-to-day production operations?

Al Mattes believes that some of these problems could be solved if and when the federal government formulates a cultural policy. He admits that "ANNPAC's victories

have been small, but they are nonetheless victories." Currently ANNPAC is conducting what Mattes terms "a data base for long term use; if you are going to deal with the government you need to define ground zero."¹⁶ ANNPAC is working on five research projects. The first was a Toronto study to research the economic effects of the artist organisations on Queen St.W. "We don't just take money, we generate a lot of money," Mattes says quoting StatsCan who has documented that every dollar that is given for cultural funding is re-used ten times. Historical models such as Greenwich Village; Gastown, Vancouver; Old Montreal were looked at. Of course such redevelopment doesn't assist the artist community (except for artists who become landlords) as the real estate prices soar and the artists are then forced to re-locate. Another study sponsored by the Ontario Arts Council, who is apparently looking towards setting up a Parallel Gallery Programme of its own, researches the "ideal" artist-run centre. What does an artist-run center cost for staff, fees, programming? how much programming? what audience statistics could be expected? are some of the questions. Mattes says there are sixteen artist-run centres in Ontario. The Ontario Arts Council is using ANNPAC to document a demand that they know already exists. Again the transfer of a bureaucracy from, in this case a large administrative complex (The Ontario Arts Council) to a small association is in itself an arrogant move. It points clearly to the fact that artist-run organisations (whether in publishing, video, or project programming) service The Ontario Arts Council, which is a dexterous piece of role switching. ANNPAC's other projects include a Standard Video Fee Contract and a Performance catalogue that is being prepared as a tool for both artists and programmers. Perhaps the only study which is of direct use for ANNPAC is a research project on provincial funding policies. The thirty-five page bi-lingual questionnaire will provide comparative statistics and could provide a better base for artists' organisations who are currently being visibly ignored by their provincial funding agencies.

AA Bronson, Manager of Art



AA Bronson, Art Metropole/A Space.

Metropole (and Chairman of the Board of Directors of A Space) finds ANNPAC "a bit of a mystery." He concedes that "for the less sophisticated spaces it gives them a chance to mingle at the meetings and find out what everyone's doing, find out how people do things and learn from other people's experience."¹⁷ Many of the spaces who perform that 'mingling' role have been annoyed with ANNPAC's avoidance of ideological debates, and, as importantly the lack of defence that the Association provides for its members. The organisations that are not in large urban centres have less power and are accordingly mistreated by The Canada Council. There are numerous instances of this continuing practice and one illustration should suffice. Brian McNevin recently left the Centre for Art Tapes in Halifax. McNevin suggests that what ANNPAC currently defines as a 'network' is no more than a promotional device, and that the Association is a tentative formation where the rule still is 'survival of the fittest.'¹⁸ McNevin has spent two years running Art Tapes on a budget of \$14,000 a year. His administrative salary of \$7,000 (curator, bookkeeper, maintenance man) will now be split among three persons (the requested budget for Art Tapes was \$31,000). It was a video centre that operated without any equipment. The equipment it needed was loaned for two years by Video Theatre, Halifax. Both organisations had different mandates but maintained a good working relationship. Recently Video Theatre experienced an internal crisis — a condition common in artists' organisations where labour demands are high, and wages (where they exist) are low. The

Canada Council, according to McNevin, took 25 percent of funds allocated for Video Theatre and transferred them to Art Tapes so increasing Art Tapes' grant to \$24,000. Though the gesture could have promoted competition and split the video community in Halifax, both Video Theatre and Art Tapes are determined to prevent such a move from creating its effect.¹⁹

AA Bronson from his vantage point at Art Metropole and A Space feels far more secure. He says: "The government's been really crucial in its support of the arts in the last ten years, but my feeling right now is that they are not crucial for the next ten years. They've laid a groundwork and hopefully they'll continue to provide the funding that keeps the groundwork solid, but the next transformation whatever it is has to be generated in some other way and at our initiative."²⁰ Art Metropole, a specialised artists space, is unique within ANNPAC in that it has its own tangible economic base with last year's sales of \$30,000 in books and \$30,000 in rentals and sales of videotapes.

SO WHO REALLY PAYS?

Up to this point I have ignored the inherent contradiction of state funding for the arts. The common impression would be that it is both naïve and foolish to complain about the inadequacies of such a situation which is after all under state control. This view of funding implies that the artists and their self-run organisations are passive charities. However the actual economic function of State funding (How does it economically benefit the state?) should be briefly looked at. So must the value of artist labour and the serious desire for self-government.

As Victor Coleman outlined in his report: "Artist Fees...Currently the artist absorbs all the production and exhibition expenses incurred in the mounting of a visual arts exhibition or in the production of performance pieces. The artist must pay out of pocket expenses: material costs, transportation and shipping costs, studio rental and in some cases even gallery rental. It seems unacceptable for the artist to live on an income far below the

poverty line, while the pressures from the arts agencies is for more professionalism, higher public acceptance, media recognition and the like. We live in a very expensive culture. Baseball and hockey are multi-billion dollar operations. The art bureaucracy on the other hand, is secure, even comfortable. No amount of academic training or experience will afford the artist his success — he must work consistently, unhindered, at his committed task; and he must produce works of art that will receive recognition from the purveyors of official culture — and he must consistently do it on a shoe-string."²¹ While I don't doubt Coleman's emotional argument he knows as well as I do that artists' organisations often stimulate massive programming by using unpaid artist labour. A Space, which Coleman directed, has been notorious for building its programmes and its somewhat overblown reputation on the same promises of validation common to larger public institutions. Though A Space dramatically changed hands (see *Centerfold/Fuse*, Fall, 1978) the current administration still has not prevented artist-labour abuse.

► AND WHO REALLY GAINS?

In a brilliant but numbing essay: "Art and accumulation: the Canadian state and the business of art"²² Robin Endres points out who benefits from state financing of the arts. Not only do we learn that the state benefits from direct and indirect taxation, direct and indirect accumulation, but also that board members of large performing arts organisations have access to economic advantages. "Members of boards of museums and galleries are able to profit even more directly...they can influence acquisitions in such a way as to increase the value of their own collections...they can purchase art works cheaply; and by making donations of their own collections they can pass the sometimes very high costs of insurance and upkeep on to the taxpayer." Endres reverses the economic weapon that is normally used to defame artists by stating: "the artists themselves are the real subsidizers of art in this country," followed by "the public as excluded audience is also the real subsidizer



Robin Collyer, artist and curator, of the arts." (emphasis in original).

In a commissioned independent study on A Space made by ten Toronto artists (published June 16, 1978) the following appears in their report to the Board of Directors. "Future Administration:...A common problem of grant-supported systems is a tendency towards programming overkill in an attempt to justify the spending of public money. The situation is intensified when the funding is for programming and more programming and not for programmers."

The following account should again, by illustration, emphasise one specific aspect of the labour problem as it exists within artist-run centres. A Space is run by a board of directors, all but one of whom are artists. It has two full-time paid staff both of whom are not artists, both were hired as professional administrators. The senior staff member is Peggy Gale, who in the past has worked for the Art Gallery of Ontario; the nascent Video Section of The Canada Council and was the Video Director of Art Metropole before moving to become the Administrative Director of A Space. This year there have been three major production projects guest-curated by artists. *Television by Artists*, curated and produced by John Watt. *Radio By Artists*, curated and produced by Ian Murray, and 222 an installation, performance and video festival curated and produced by Robin Collyer. The first two projects have an extended function; their producers not only worked on the series but also have to establish distribution by getting each series on the air — a feat that is difficult in itself for independent programming. Murray's fee from A Space was \$1,000 for eighteen months work. Watt's fee was also \$1,000 for an unfinished twelve months work. Robin Collyer work-

ed daily on his project for six months and was paid \$2,000. All three have voiced dissatisfaction with A Space's current staff, Peggy Gale and Jane Purdue. Gale is a frequent traveller on the international art circuit and while A Space's domestic programming remained understaffed, Gale has occupied her time largely organising two prestigious projects. The first is a north American visit by five German performance artists who will be working at A Space as well as visiting nine other institutions. (Apparently Ms. Gale is the overall co-ordinator.) The other programme is an exhibition of Gerry Schum tapes.

John Watt submitted his objections to A Space in writing, many of which have yet to be resolved. Robin Collyer is equally vocal: "They have stamped these (artist-curated) programmes without any clear idea of what it means in terms of a further commitment on their part. If you're going to do a Radio Show or a TV Show whatever, there are more administrative complexities than just hanging an exhibition...it's really a learning process in this case for A Space's employees because they don't seem to know what it entails. If they're not willing to do the amount of work that's needed maybe they shouldn't do them — they just can't expect artists to keep putting out so much. The 222 Warehouse show probably cost me \$2-3,000, stuff that comes out of your pocket: meals on the job, gas, transportation, maintenance, etc...Between Ian Murray, John Watt and myself there was probably \$10,000 that came directly out of our pockets. The irony is that A Space originally didn't have to give a cent to the project (it was sponsored by Harbourfront and Art Toronto '80) — it does now because it went over budget. The show in aftermath reads 'A Space' rather than Harbourfront/Art Toronto and I did the majority of the work."²³ Collyer's problems existed beyond A Space. He created a successful event despite being undermined both by Harbourfront and Art Toronto '80, a situation that should have been dealt with by the A Space administrative staff and not by the guest artist-curator.

AA Bronson defends A Space's staff claiming that "all three of

them (the artist curators) were pretty hazy as to what was really going to happen — how many hours, what were the possible problems. What was originally foreseen as the administrative part was also much smaller because it was not understood by either the administration or the curators that the projects were going to be as big as they ended up being.²⁴ The reasons that Bronson gives as to why the professional staff could not cope with these three programmes is very reminiscent of the arguments used to defend large institutional galleries which the artist-run spaces were supposed to replace! John Watt had said earlier: "They knew that they were doing this programme (Television by Artists) eighteen months ago. Right in my original proposal it states that on completion of the tapes they were to be distributed as TV broadcasts. It stated the percentages for the artist (65 Percent), the distributor (20 percent), the producer (10 percent) and A Space (5 percent)."²⁵ Watt's budget was \$4800 to commission six artist-video programmes to be made for television. The artists received \$225 for the production cost and a \$250 fee. The artists had complete copyright on the work for closed-



John Watt produced TV By Artists.

circuit use. Watt's estimate of the actual cost (labour, production, etc.) is \$30,000 which amounts to a \$25,000 donation to A Space.

Collyer says after the experience: "As artists we know that this programming should happen, the majority of larger public galleries won't rise to the occasion and sponsor programmes of this type." The illustration of how a large artist-run space like A Space works, suggests that professional administrators may be suitable for the funding image (A Space has a budget of \$120,000) but less adaptable when challenged by the actual work to be done.

While it is true that through the process of institutionalization artists' organisations can and have

exploited artists' labour, we cannot afford to accept such a defeated and reversible position. Equally it must be said that those organisations involved in collective production are the only models that effectively meet the needs of artists. Galleries, as a structure for distribution and public engagement, are not only anachronistic social models; they are unnecessary superstructures. This applies as much to galleries run by artists as it does to those that exist as public institutions.

To fully answer the question who really gains, one could say that the state accrues validation through the mechanism provided by the finding agencies and so the artist-run spaces involuntarily have joined the long chain of cultural organisations that form the 'ornamentation of power.' ANNPAC must understand that there are inherent class and capital barriers between themselves and their public funding, and insist on better service, from their government, for their legitimate economic demands.

Lastly, I must admit that it is easier for me to construct this analysis in retrospect than it was five years ago when such an overview would have been of substantial use. ●

Footnotes

1. There are perennial examples of artist-organisations being underfunded. More importantly there are no *workable* mechanisms for appeals.
2. While not drawing attention away from individual artists, the activities of video and performance have taken place within *communities* often centering around artists organisations for the technical (or polemical) services that have been available.
3. This anonymous comment was specifically directed at the arts administration at the Ontario Arts Council.
4. From Martin Loney's "A Political Economy of Citizen Participation" an essay published in *The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power*, edited by Leo Panitch, University of Toronto Press, 1977. This book is invaluable for a more thorough political analysis of the Canadian state, its economic, employment and cultural strategies.
5. *ibid* p. 460.
6. "Brenda Wallace on Parallel Galleries" interview by France Morin, *Parachute*, Montreal, No. 13, Winter 1978, p. 51.
7. "The Canadian Presence in Paris," Joan Lownes, *art-scand*, October 1973, p. 78.
8. Cut-backs here mean 'underfunding' as well as eliminating grants. Underfunding creates a continual focus, leaving little time for 'subversities.'
9. "The Value of Parallel Galleries," Glenn Lewis, *Parallelogramme* Vol. 3 No. 2, February 1978.
10. see footnote 6.
11. Interview with Chantal Pontbriand, August 5th 1980.
12. see footnote 9.
13. I have not included \$56,000 here from The Video Sec-

tion for artist-run centres (1980) as there already is such a disparity between the public galleries funding only being for programming while the artist-run centres funding also has to cover operations.

14. The Living Museums project includes a network of computer terminals to connect each space to assist administration and programming. This development is premature considering that funds have yet to be found to actually pay for the programming. "The Living Museums" proposal is probably the best example of how off-track ANNPAC is in terms of basic economic demands.
15. see footnote 9.
16. Interview with Allan Mattes, August 7th 1980.
17. Interview with AA Bronson, August 13th 1980.
18. I do here mean ANNPAC. Within cities where there is more than one member gallery there are many attempts to co-operate and avoid the implicit competitive survival instinct.
19. Conversation with Brian McNevin, August 10th, 1980.
20. see footnote 17.
21. "A Brief Concerning The Status of Parallel Galleries, Interdisciplinary Artist Centres and The Role of Individual Artists in the Management of their Art," Victor Coleman (1977).
22. "Art and accumulation: the Canadian state and the business of art," Robin Endres. Essay appears in *The Canadian State: Political Economy and Political Power*, ed. Leo Panitch. University of Toronto Press, 1977.
23. Interview with Robin Collyer, August 11 1980.
24. see footnote 17.
25. Interview with John Watt, August 13 1980.