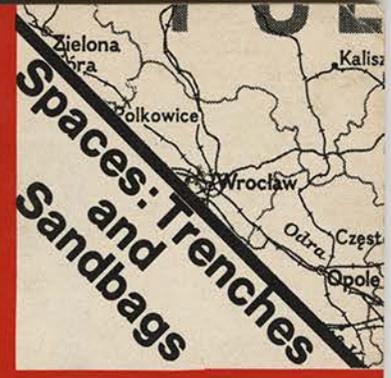


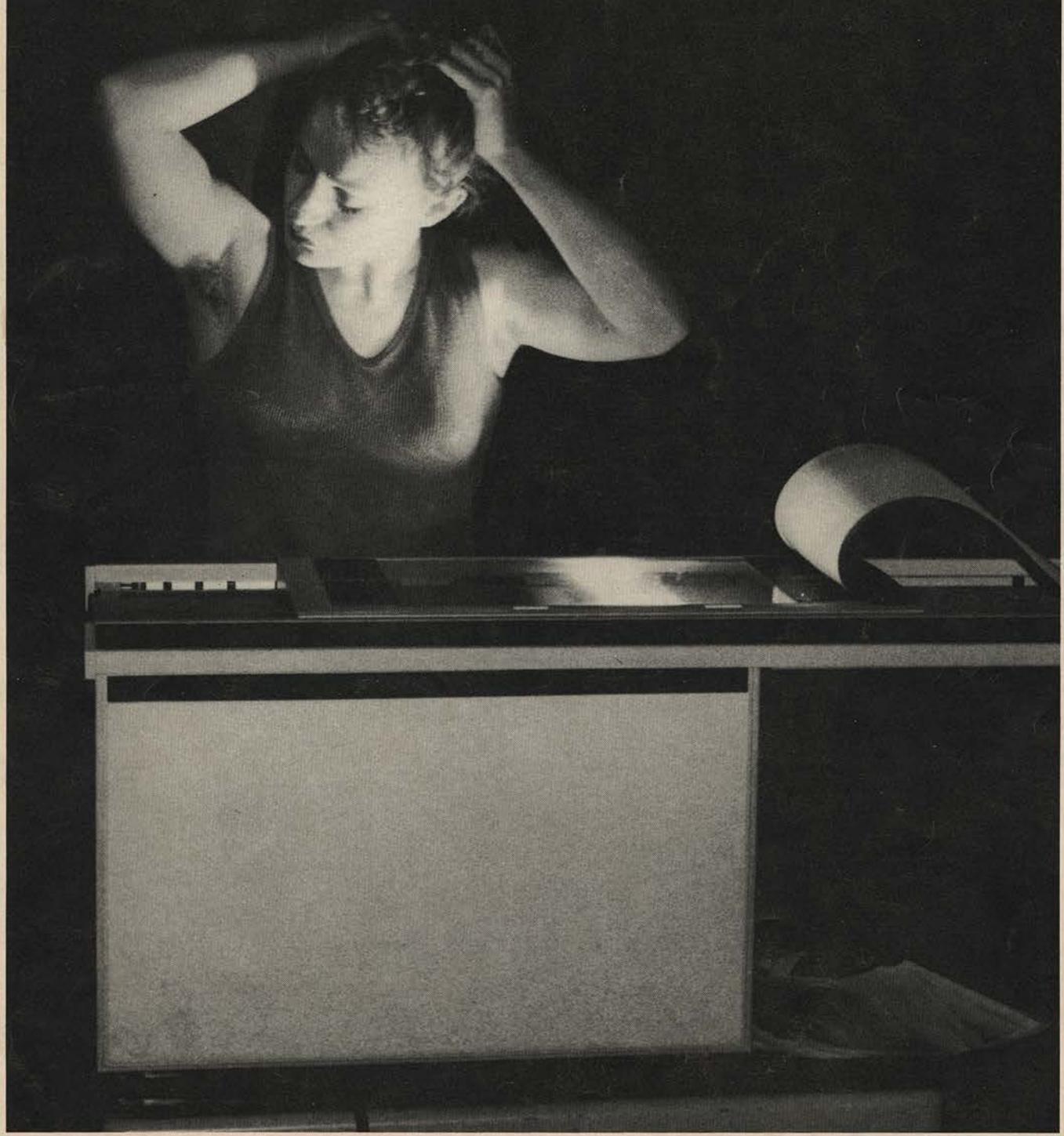
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# CENTERFOLD



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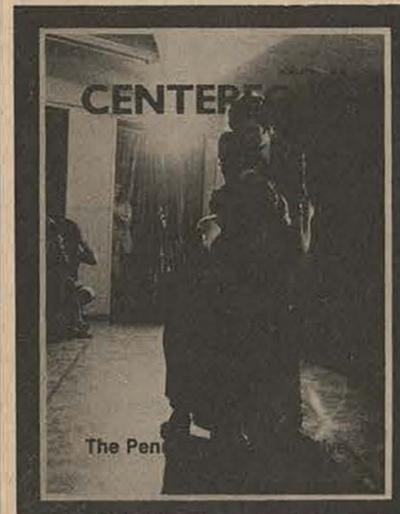
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### Letters

Mail correspondence to be published to: **LETTERS**, Centerfold, 2nd Floor 217 Richmond St. W., Toronto, Canada M5V 1W2.

Please be both brief and concise to prevent the need for future editing. Feedback and comments of a longer length should be submitted as possible texts.



#### "Grossly unfair to CAR"

In the June '78 issue of CENTERFOLD there is a letter from the editor that is grossly unfair to CAR entitled "Would You Drink Censorship on the Rocks?". The editor is responding to an open letter written by seven artists who work at York University protesting "the political gesturing of STRIKE journal which advocates knee-capping and other barbaric acts in the name of political ideology".

First of all, the seven artists were writing for themselves, not for CAR. They may be CAR members; they are not on any executive; they weren't speaking for CAR. CAR has not made any statement of position on the STRIKE issue. It's quite possible that the sentiments expressed in that open letter would be echoed by a majority of CAR members, since CAR is basically interested in survival, not self-destruction, however CAR bears no responsibility for CEAC's recent loss of public funding. CAR is opposed to censorship, but this isn't a case of outright censorship... STRIKE is still free to publish. Rather it is the usual bureaucratic financial string-pulling that hamstring many artists and groups. CEAC cut off their funding themselves in a highly visible, dramatic fashion (at the height of the Moro drama) that is either a demon-

stration of bravado or stupidity, and surely they can't be surprised at the outcome. The same issue of STRIKE that contained the famous "we support knee-capping" statement also contained a full page insert denouncing the selection of Ron Martin and Henry Saxe to represent Canada in the Venice Biennale. Whatever your aesthetic preferences it can't be denied that Martin and Saxe are serious, committed Canadian artists, and to dismiss their work as a rehashed U.S. product is just playing the tired old game of putting down Canadians with the easy U.S. comparison... So who should represent Canada? The CEAC? Of course self interest has no part in their pure revolutionary motives.

Artists and art papers are great at attacking other artists while the bureaucrats rub their hands together. To CENTERFOLD's call for CAR to come out of its unionized shell and support all censorship cases I would suggest that CENTERFOLD support CAR and its editor join up. It's too easy to criticize from the outside on spurious assumptions.

Dave Gordon, editor, *CAROT*, Kingston. (The Editors have been and are CAR members.) Ed.

#### "And the message got through"

Your confused and confusing editorial in the June issue demands a response; if not to completely answer the many questions raised, at least to reaffirm CARFAC's position with respect to some of the main topics.

At the 10th National Conference which took place in Winnipeg in May of this year the National Council of CARFAC made the following simple (but pregnant) resolution:

"THAT CARFAC SUPPORT THE AUTONOMY OF THE CANADA COUNCIL."

At the same conference we did express this support in the strongest terms to the Secretary of State's current Task Force — and the message got through. This course of action, supporting the Council's autonomy, is in fact saying that there must be no political interference into the Council's awards policies. This is purposeful political action directed towards those interests who, for one reason or another, would like to see a weakening of the Council and/or its takeover by some government department (presumably to make it more "efficient" or "responsible"). CARFAC as an organization does not

adhere to any political party or belief, other than the political belief that an organized group of artists can speak with a stronger voice than an individual when there are common concerns. We will not, as you suggest we should, "blacklist" any artist because of his/her expressed political beliefs.

The main thread which runs through your editorial is "censorship" — expressed as "it could hurt possible public monies going to essential contributions made by... 'obscene' 'extremist' artists."

It would appear to us to be a fact of life that when an artist requests public money and his proposal is presented to jurors, it is they who will decide (again for one reason or another) whether or not they consider the contribution to be "essential". For this reason CARFAC expends energies to make sure that jurying systems are as fair and representative as possible, and that individual appointees to The Canada Council are of the calibre which will produce the best results for the artists of this country.

Your final recommendation to CARFAC — that we should strengthen our "available lobbying power" leads us naturally to respond by asking all visual artists to join with the only national organization which has the strength to effect positive changes for each of us. That strength will be increased with your participation.

Jim Lindsay  
CARFAC 2nd National Vice-Representative

#### "Authorized" and "Unauthorized" Art

In your June editorial letter (Censorship on the Rocks) you call the public-funding "scandals" of last spring, centering on CEAC, blowoutment, Talonbooks and ourselves (Pulp Press), a "primary stage of outlawing." By adding *The Body Politic* to your list of publishers under attack, one might go on to describe the secondary and even the tertiary stages of a process which, like syphilis, seems, in this country at least, to be displaying an identifiable pathology of its own. It is the editors of *The Body Politic* who immediately face the prospect of being *in fact* outlawed under the terms of the Criminal Code. Their case is of particular importance to us all: in it we can see the transmogrification of pseudo-issues like "misuse of public funds," "accountability," etc., into the essential political issue of cen-

sorship and the suppression of distinct minority groups.

The media attack on *The Body Politic* began in the pages of the *Toronto Sun*, whose editors first "exposed" the fact that the magazine had received a grant from the Ontario Arts Council. That certain politicians smelled an issue in the pre-election wind we can presume from the ensuing police raid on *Body Politic* offices and the subsequent laying of charges against its editors. Their case is now pending; its outcome in the next month or so will determine whether or not in this country censorship has moved into its final, tertiary phase, or is to remain dormant a while longer, a contagious rash spread by contact with media hacks and politicians.

On 11 May 78, the *Globe and Mail* ran an article headlined: "Public Funds Aid Publisher Selling Guerrilla Manual." The publisher in question turned out to be Pulp Press, but the guilty party, it was implied, was the Canada Council. On 12 May, when the *Globe* item hit the wire service, the local media hit Pulp Press offices; front page headlines in the local paper announced: "Guerrilla Manual Publisher Got Grants," and "Canada Council Financing Publisher of Guerrilla Book." The evening TV news featured the Pulp Press item under the banner "Terrorism," sandwiched between the latest kneecapping news and Aldo Moro's funeral. The telephone rang continuously for two days as we in the office gradually realized that something was going on that was no longer the joke we had first considered it to be. The friendliness of the reporters (who almost without exception confessed, off the record, to thinking the whole thing a joke) and their personal views of the "affair" seemed to have nothing to do with the news that was literally being created by the media itself. The "Canada Council Connection" which in our case proved to be fairly tenuous, was overshadowed in the opinion of some reporters by the news that the Quebec government archive had purchased a copy of *The Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* and that the Vancouver Public Library had one in the stacks. (An embarrassed librarian was asked to justify the library's acquisition of the book.) The news mongering extended even into the Federal Development Bank, officers of which were asked whether they were aware of "the types of manuscripts" being published by us using machinery mortgaged by them.

At the same time an editorial writer in the *Windsor Star* concluded that, based on sales figures for the *Minimanual*, "there are in Canada at this moment perhaps one or two thousand persons (sic) with the potential to train and wage guerrilla warfare." The same writer stated that it is "inexcusable that such an organization as ours "be permitted to flourish in Canada." His essay was impacted with the current phraseologies (ie: "freedoms imply a sense of responsibility and civic duty," "traditional freedoms," "contributing public funds to such a menace," etc.) and at one point he implied that because *How It All Began* was banned in Germany, it is somehow illegitimate to publish it here. (Two large Canadian printers were subsequently to refuse to print the second edition of the book, for understandable reasons: they were afraid of being caught in the middle.) Editorials in small regional papers represent, to politicians at least, that democratic entity, "public opinion"; no doubt Tom Cossit (MP, Leeds) waited twelve days for that opinion to form itself before he introduced a motion in Parliament "concerning the continued giving of Canada Council grants to assist terrorist purposes, and refer specifically to a grant to Pulp Press of Vancouver." After a muddled summary of the contents of two books published by us, he moved that:

...all grants to organizations, groups or individuals under investigation by Canadian security forces be immediately suspended, and that the Prime Minister... call a judicial inquiry into the shocking aims, decisions, and actions of the Canada Council. (Hansard, p. 5624, item 1412)

The motion did not pass. For the time being, anyway.

The Pulp Press "scandal," on its own, is essentially trivial; the process of which it is an element, however, is not so trivial. *The Body Politic* editors face the courts; CEAC has lost its funding base; even the Western Front has come under scrutiny for its apparent "misuse" of public money — in this case a videotape which, in the opinion of MP Ed Wenman, constituted further evidence of the Canada Council's corrupt granting procedures. (Wenman, by the way, visited the Front personally in an attempt to get a copy of the tape to take back to Ottawa. He told members of the Front that there would

be good publicity in it for them if they would just let him have the tape; he even offered them a free flight to Ottawa and plenty of media coverage!) That the spate of planted media "exposes" and political haymaking has abated temporarily we owe as much to Talonbooks — who in June launched a now-pending law suit against seven MPs, seven newspapers and thirteen others charging them with libel and copyright infringement — as to Trudeau who didn't call an election. Attacks on individual groups have been suspended, although the Canada Council remains under fire, and will for some time.

I am giving you this account, which in itself is trifling, because the details may prove instructive to others, as they eventually did to us. So long had we presumed (not incorrectly) that we were invisible in the fabric of any official "Canadian Culture" that to discover ourselves now suddenly visible for reasons of caprice, for reasons of airtime, column inches — in short, news unrelated to the content of our work — seemed to us an immense and empty irony, bewildering at first because it seemed to come from nowhere and to be going nowhere.

In the week following the *Globe* item, the media seemed to lose interest in the "story," save for a few calls from free-lancers looking for personal profiles of members of our editorial board, but at least twice a day for some days we received visits from sportscoated gents — the most spectacular of them wearing sunglasses and white shoes — asking to purchase copies of the books mentioned in the news media. We referred these gents to the bookstore down the street; needless to say, none of them went there to get the books. (If we had complied with their requests, we would have been open to charges of retail selling without a license.)

In your June letter, Clive, (getting back on the track) you suggest that the Canada Council, as an independent funding agency, "has reason to protect its existence by ensuring that there is no government infringement of its mandate." I fail to see how the Council can ensure any such thing, considering that 85% (correct me here if I'm wrong) of its budget comes from the government. Bureaucracies, once set up, work to perpetuate themselves; mandates can be manipulated, rewritten, or simply overlooked. The political climate of the last ten years has been favorable to

small-l liberalism in socio-cultural areas, but we'd all be fooling ourselves to think those days can be brought back now. Across the country welfare money is being cut, unemployment insurance is being cut, cultural funding is being cut — as millions of dollars are pouring into the construction of at least twelve new penitentiaries. (Someone up there seems to think there aren't enough people in jail as it is; one wonders where the new jail population will come from.)

Government money has helped spawn an "art" that till now has been deemed suitable decoration, as John Mays puts it, for the halls of power. But the time has now come for that art to be divided officially into "authorized" and "unauthorized" art — a process that is well under way, following the lines of political expediency. It is taking place in the name of "public accountability," "responsibility," etc., and rarely, in official jargon, as censorship. As the politicians struggle for power, all of us — writers, artists, publishers, as well as cultural minority groups — become pawns in the game of democratic politics. The group of artists who publicly protested Canada Council support of CEAC have driven in the wedge: with artists themselves squabbling about who is to be authorized and who isn't, the politician's work is half done.

Who are we presuming to make this art for after all? This is an embarrassing question and it's not artists and writers who are asking it; it's the politicians who claim to want to know, and they're prepared to answer it for us too. They're pointing the finger and saying, "You're in," and "You — you're out." (And it is an embarrassing question: many of us find it somehow too literal-minded and vaguely unfair. When I think about it, I have to admit that I've never been too sure that there was anyone to make an art for.)

Writers and artists can be said to have benefited from the liberalism of the state for the last ten years or so (insofar as we have been permitted and, to some extent, encouraged to exist). And, ironically, as a community of artists, we are now in fact in a position of strength compared to a decade ago. We have, after all, obtained some control over the "means of production," we have artistic and production skills, even rudimentary management skills, and we own equipment; some of us have become acquainted with small business operation — we have the

means, or the beginning of the means, for articulating an unauthorized art. The evidence is before us: there is, whether we think so or not, a very real political dimension to our work, to the art we produce. We can take this evidence and incorporate it into our work, altering our tactics to correspond with the situation at hand, and developing new forms to embody it, or we can toe the line of authority. We can step in behind Messrs. Cossit, Wenman, et al, and consciously, not any longer "in spite of our personal intentions," proceed to create an art worthy of display in the halls of power.

It is in the interest of the politicians who manipulate and create "public opinion" that divisions exist between groups of artists and writers, and between cultural minorities of all kinds: gays, feminists, natives, prisoners, children, immigrants, the poor. It's a game they're playing and they're playing it with us. While we continue, as a short term holding action, to support the Canada Council in defense of its mandate, I suggest that we look to other minorities in need of support, that we consider our work and our strategy in the context of a struggle that includes us as artists but extends beyond the immediate tactical problems of our individual survival. It may be that we can discover the means of our survival as artists as well as re-discovering the content of our work by looking sideways, not up or down, for support and mutual aid. There are plenty of people in trouble and for essentially the same reasons that the artistic community is in trouble.

All that I'm saying here may of course amount to idle ramblings: your suggestion that CAR be marshalled on the issue of censorship, while reasonable almost to the point of being innocuous, is likely to get no further than the pages of your magazine. That we are all of us in the cultural community complacent, smug and paranoid is difficult to deny. At this moment, in Vancouver, workers from the Muckamuck restaurant are on strike for a contract and job security. Their employer is Douglas Christmas, whose Douglas Gallery introduced the high-powered New York pop- and op- artists to Vancouver in the late 'sixties, captivating much of the art-buying community with Bigtown pizzazz and high prices, and eventually alienating many local artists who found themselves working in the shadow of the glossy, imported prod-

uct, picking up a few crumbs here and there. The Muckamuck Restaurant is in the basement of the Douglas Gallery. It is the first restaurant in Vancouver to serve native Indian food (most of its employees are Indian). With the strike now in its fourth month, picketing workers have yet to hear any word of support from any group of Vancouver artists....

Yours truly,

Stephen Osborne  
Pulp Press, Vancouver  
(1st Sept 78)

#### A New Realist?

Please remove my name from your mailing lists.

Thank you,

John Hall, Calgary.



#### "A Curious Choice ..."

I especially liked the article "Art and Social Transformation" in the April 78 issue so more similar material is going to please at least me.

Also the video articles were O.K. too and I liked the fact that you devoted a lot of effort to the subject that most interests me. One thing I must say is peculiar to me: the trophy from the Video Open which is on the cover. It is amazing; it is right in the broadcast/Hollywood (American) media model design. (Once I had the opportunity to hold for a moment Budge Crawly's Oscar which he got for THE MAN WHO SKIED DOWN EVEREST ((which his wife edited)) and it was very BIG and so HEAVY that it seemed to be made from SOLID GOLD though it wasn't). Now if we are trying to foster the development of uservideo and broadcasting in opposition, that object becomes a curious choice to be associated with such a strategy. Maybe the trophy's appropriation from broadcast's cultural strategy is meant to sound more like a capture than a capitulation? I found I

ended up more speculating about the implications of that trophy than about anything that was said about video in the magazine and as far as I could tell nothing was said about the trophy in the magazine. In a way it dovetails with the star personality type interviews of the winners (which I am not criticizing; which I liked very much — especially Susan Britton). Having come into contact with artists through video from the "field" of social transformation (that preoccupied me) I am not yet extremely knowledgeable of the art economy and do not know if artists often receive such objects as awards. Once though I won a similar trophy (except that it had a banjoist on top instead of a video camera) in the world five string banjo championship and I treasure the thing highly. And my mother used to win blue ribbons for her mashed potatoes at the county fair. I suppose since video (i.e. miniature format video) makers have not one spit the money, technology, cultural power of even the most humble broadcast station, they might as well have some sort of compensation in the chance of winning something that at least LOOKS like it came out of money, technology, cultural power. At the moment I held that Oscar in my hands I decided that whenever I could afford it I was going to get my own, that I was going to have an exact facsimile custom made for myself — as I would surely rather have one than not have one and that was the only way I was ever going to get one.

Best wishes  
Scott Didlake  
Toronto

#### Powerhouse ...

To comment on the 'Powerhouse' article in the June issue of *Centerfold*. Being a member of Powerhouse, I fully agree with the statements made by our co-ordinator, Linda Covit — there definitely still is a need for a women's gallery and it's a pity that there is only one such gallery in Canada. It's even more a shame that there should be an art labelled 'women's art', but as with most everything else in society, it just seems to be another sort of segregation. On page 2 of the article (interview) was mention of a lesbian artist showing at the gallery whose exhibition was labelled as 'Gay Art' by a local critic. Actually the review called it 'Lesbian Art'. I am the artist in question and was even more shocked than Linda to read the word in the review. Obviously, there was something in the

exhibition to convey the fact that a lesbian had produced it, or else the reviewer would not have used the word in the first place. I am sure that she is not the type who would wish to be sued by a heterosexual artist that she labelled 'lesbian'. Whilst doing the works I had no conscious 'motives' of producing gay art. I am an artist who happens to be gay and who also happens to be a woman. It was a successful show, far above any of my expectations, but only because it was seen as being 'human'.

Let's face it — art is art, as love is love. Because I only have extreme emotions for my own sex does not make me any less or any more of an artist but obviously my sexuality is going to show through in my work. But, as with my life-style, my sexuality is not the predominant factor in my work.

Admittedly, many 'Gay Artists' are in more than one way exhibitionists. That is because their sexuality, for some reason, rules their lives. Their sexuality is uppermost in their minds. I consider myself an artist first, woman second and a lesbian thirdly and, until other gay artists put their art first and uppermost, I fear that they will not produce human art or, even for that matter, good art.

Thank you

Alexandra (Sandy) Hewton, Montreal.

#### Open Letter to Amerigo Marras

Dear Amerigo,

I am writing to you, care of *Only Paper Today*,\* as a result of both the second issue of *Strike* and the "Letter Re:Strike" in the June issue. I wish to state that I do not approve of "leg shooting/knee capping" or other forms of murder or torture. Further, I feel that *Strike* generally reveals both a lack of sympathy for any sort of community (proletariat or otherwise), and a stance of radicality for its own sake.

One of the major results of late capitalist society is the division of radical activity into either a non-programmatic world of play (Hoffman and Rubin) or an extreme self-referential position of terrorism or terrorist support. Both are found on the left and right; both are dysfunctional; both obscure our relations to the life-world; both are capable of blinding and paralyzing us. (For example my article "Transcription & Annotations" — an attempt to deconstruct the regulatory tendencies of Marxism which result in concentration of populace, labor, death, etc. — of-

fered no reconstruction. The article is not play, but it offered no solutions. This, coupled with the negative contexting of *Strike*, creates an ambience of hopelessness, which I do not endorse. Hopelessness functions too often as an excuse for a lack of engagement.)

In *Strike* you have chosen symbols — the Red Brigades emblem, the machine-gun in an attempt, I believe, to emphasize a radicality based on a closed system bearing little relation to *Canada*, to the *Canadian people* — except that of external authority. Your term "behaviorist art" relates closely to behaviorist attitudes in psychology, attitudes which define the self in terms of controlled experimentation and manipulation.

It would seem therefore that you wish the establishment of authority, an autonomous group disconnected from desires except for the machinery of the language you employ.

This is to be regretted; you are politically astute and could *serve*. (I mean this in the sense of an inversion.) But such a service must be on the basis of recognition of the autonomy of the Other, a dialog. Paulo Freire states (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*): "But while to say the true word — which is work, which is praxis — is to transform the world, saying that word is not the privilege of some few men, but the right of every man. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone — nor can he say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words." And again: "Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for men... dialogue cannot exist without humility."

Writing occurs; it is disseminated in the world; it exhausts itself against exactitude. I do not write, naturally enough, "in the service of." I understand your stance elsewhere, as an explosive negativity at the periphery of culture. I would hope that positivity could also be found there, a reconstitution.

Further, I do not find the *subject*, in the sense of the Other in her/his interiority, at the center of *Strike's* concerns. Instead, we tend to gravitate towards the rhetorical. I hope — now — for a grounding of our analyses and prescriptions in the *everyday* activities of collectivities and individuals, a grounding that parallels the *releasing* of our own languages from authority.

I wish to continue writing for *Strike*; I would also support its continued fund-

ing. It seems to me now, however, that it is becoming increasingly necessary to deal with concepts of community, support, education, and so forth. Perhaps I am tired of so much language, a negative vocabulary which no longer carries clear and intended meaning. Perhaps there is a need for a return to *women* and *men*.

With this in mind, I am now working on an educational institution dealing with both global/system and cultural concerns. There must be ways of avoiding critical and political catatonia. And penetration in these matters (and others) is always difficult.

Yours,

Alan Sondheim  
Hartford, Connecticut

\*As Only Paper Today is temporarily absent during the summer, this letter was forwarded to *Centerfold* by OPT for publishing. (Ed.)

#### CEAC and non-associates ...

##### First Letter

I would like to request the hospitality of your correspondence columns to clarify an extremely serious misunderstanding that has arisen in respect of my *apparent* relationship with the Toronto-based cultural group *Center for Experimental Art and Education* (C.E.A.C.). This group, as I am sure your readership is aware, have recently gone on record as supporting, from a cultural perspective, the political aims and tactics of the Italian anarchist organisation The Red Brigades. They are also currently engaged in a somewhat childish manifestations and "actions" in regard to the Venice Biennale.

I was recently surprised and dismayed to discover that an article of mine was reprinted in the C.E.A.C. journal *Strike* in such a manner as to suggest that I might personally endorse or support the recent statements and cultural policies of C.E.A.C. I wish to state publicly, and in as unequivocally a manner as possible, that I *do not in any way support* the adolescent, idiotic and manipulative platform adopted by Mr. Amerigo Marras and his colleagues.

I have never, through more than twenty years activity as an artist, a writer and a lecturer, disguised my commitment to both the theoretical and the praxical struggle to realise a more just and a more humane society based on socialist principles, nor do I wish it here thought that I have in any way altered my position during the recent past. But, surely, no-one who either knows me

personally (or who has read any of my books and published articles) can be in any doubt as to my basic and vehement disapproval of the type of infantile ultra-leftism revealed by Mr. Amerigo Marras in the statements and activities of C.E.A.C.

Nevertheless, the appropriate tactics of C.E.A.C. oblige me to issue this present disclaimer, since the appearance of my article *The Myth of the Artist as Rebel and Hero* was entirely unauthorised. The manner of its printing, furthermore, give rise to certain ambiguities, and it is clear that this was carefully calculated by Mr. Marras to suggest the existence of an ideological affinity between myself and the stated editorial position of C.E.A.C.

Mr. Marras can in no way have remained in any doubt, as the result of a conversation held last March, as to my fundamental opposition of the anarchistic platform now adopted by his group. The unauthorised printing of my article (and the use of my name without permission on the masthead of his journal in a manner that implies I am a non-editorial associate of *Strike*) demonstrates not merely that Mr. Marras has acted in the grossest of bad faith, but also that he is, personally, a devious opportunist of the crudest type who has attempted (and to some degree, succeeded) in capitalising upon the talents and the reputations of others for his own private and obscure ends.

I wish, therefore, to state, formally and categorically, that *there is no relationship whatsoever between myself and Mr. Marras and the C.E.A.C. group*, nor do I wish to be understood as condoning or supporting the politically immature idiocies that they habitually demonstrate. I have, naturally, demanded a clarification of this matter from the editors of *Strike*, and it remains to be seen whether this will be forthcoming or adequate. In the meantime, I would be grateful if you would be considerate enough to extend me the courtesy of a few column-inches of your letter page in order to publish this present statement.

Yours etc.,

Kenneth Coutts-Smith.

##### Second Letter

Some time ago I mailed to you, at *Centerfold*, an open letter which has also been circulated to other press outlets regarding the attempt by Amerigo Marras to trade on whatever reputation

I might have as both a writer and a socialist, and to imply that I was a collaborator in the anarchistic political stance that has recently been adopted by C.E.A.C. My original letter still stands, but some more recent developments make it essential that my earlier statement be qualified somewhat.

There has been, during recent weeks, a wide response to C.E.A.C. both inside and outside of the art community. As you reported in the editorial of the last issue of *Centerfold*, several Canadian artists have circulated statements condemning the statements that were printed in *Strike* (volume 2, number 2, May 1978) and which I am sure are well known to your readership. The problem is that these artists have taken the position that C.E.A.C. has acted reprehensibly *in that it has acted politically*, and has done so, furthermore, with the aid of grant monies from both Canada Council and provincial funding agencies.

It should be made clear that my objection to C.E.A.C. and my wish to be dissociated from them does not lie in any such point of view. My objection is fundamentally to an infantile ultra-leftism, a totally uncritical and non-analytic anarchism masquerading as "socialism" which constitutes nothing other than egoistic and romantic posturing. My objections are also, to a lesser degree, directed towards the personally manipulative tactics of Amerigo Marras who, it seems, has a long history of attempting to build a reputation as an "activist" through extremely dubious manoeuvres.

It is necessary that I make it clear that my opposition to C.E.A.C. is not one that should be understood as being critical of art forms that take place as *political actions*. Quite the contrary: it is the quality, intent, and seriousness of the specific political actions that I am placing under question.

The response to the provocative statements in *Strike* that have appeared across the Canadian art-community have been largely based on the old liberal-humanist myth that art (and high culture generally) is a quasi-sacral activity which somehow takes place in a sort of extra-historical limbo, divorced from other manifestations of social and material culture, and that it embodies, in itself, certain absolute and timeless values independent of any social mutation or class struggle.

This notion of art, of course, represents one specific aspect that visual cul-

ture takes on in the continuum of the present stage of capitalism. It is an ideological assertion that the existing conditions of the present are the natural and fundamental ones basic to a postulated "human condition". It is not surprising, therefore, that spokesmen for the visual arts, especially ones making judgements from the perspectives of an increasing institutionalisation of culture, should be opposed to the notion that art might be a "political" activity. There is, of course, a certain logic in the proposition that public funds (that is to say, funds awarded by agents of the established political order) should not be used to contribute towards attempts to subvert that order. This thought reveals the fundamental contradictions that exist in the accepted and received notions about art in contemporary society, for the conventions of visual culture also maintain the primacy of the avant-garde tradition, a tradition dedicated in the past to the subversion of cultural order.

The present crisis in art is, to a large extent, the result of attempting to transcend this contradiction by maintaining the myth of the artist as rebel and hero while claiming at the same time that his activity is one that does not have any direct concern with such mundane things as social or "political" opinions, attitudes and assumptions.

It is quite evident that a continuing allegiance to an outmoded view of culture is a major factor contributing towards the erosion of significance, particularly in the field of the fine arts. It has centralised the notion that art is a purely formalistic activity akin to various fields of abstract academic inquiry, and has resulted, of course, in the rupture that presently exists between the world of the fine arts and that of the rest of the social community.

The breakdown of communication in art, the rarefication of its activity from the mass of people, would seem to be directly related to process of exclusion of social and political material from its concerns. Whether art in the past has celebrated princely power, religious concepts, or "liberal" values it has always enshrined a collective view of society. It has only been during this century that the arts have tended to embody a privatized and individualistic world view. And even that has, until very recently, maintained elements of collective assumptions: futurism, constructivism, surrealism, abstract expressionism, all saw themselves as em-

bodying a social, and thus — ultimately — a *political*, perspective on human experience. The notion of the total a-historicity of art is a creation of the last two decades, and it has now long since run its course with the erosion of Greenbergian formalism.

At first glance a continuing adherence to this viewpoint appears only to risk irrelevancy in art, the survival of commercial imperatives towards the manufacture of sellable art-objects for the consumer market. However any further analysis reveals an extremely dangerous situation wherein the fine arts may tend towards being "politicised" in an unexpected and reactionary manner. Your editorial points out the dangers of self-censorship demonstrated by some of the responses to C.E.A.C. The refusal to recognise that all artistic activity is political in its very nature plays right into the hands of those who would wish art to reflect and confirm the consensus view of present-day capitalism.

Trudeau is already well along the road of attempting to equate in the public mind the consciousness of the Canadian national identity with the interests of the Liberal Party. Condemnations of artistic activity on the basis of the fact that it is *political* can only strengthen the inroads and assaults already being made on the autonomy of agencies such as the Canada Council by those conservative elements who would wish to see artistic culture even more severely institutionalised than it already is.

I echo the sentiment of your editorial urging C.A.R. to speak out in unequivocal opposition to statements that hold that art is an activity in which "political" ideas have no place. It is impossible that art should not be political. *The very act of making art is itself a political act.* The only judgement that can possibly be passed on C.E.A.C. from the point of view of the artistic community is that the art they make is bad art and the politics they espouse are stupid and infantile politics.

Yours etc...

Kenneth Coutts-Smith.

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from **Elizabeth Chitty's** performance **'DEMO MODEL'** (to be documented in the November issue of CENTERFOLD)

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## CENTERFOLD

### An Artists' Magazine

### A letter from the editor

As we are very late in going to press, my own personal statement. "Know no galleries!" seems to fit this issue perhaps a little too conveniently. However the contents of this issue titled 'Spaces: Trenches and Sandbags' were mainly decided on two months ago or more and its 'theme' has come about quite organically.

I would like to thank those readers that wrote to tell us that they didn't receive the August issue, eight weeks later it has become the September issue, even though we are now in October. However the special November issue of CENTERFOLD on TELEPERFORMANCE is right on schedule and it will introduce many new writers — at least new to this magazine. Following the Tele-Performance Issue we hope that there will be no further publication delays.

I would also like to thank those who have sent letters to be published with the hope that many more will follow in order that we can develop an ongoing dialogue that consists of its readership as well as its writers. The editorial policy of this magazine is still based upon critical perspectives by artists which hopefully will increase in the variety of subjects covered as well as our intentions to broaden the editorial base of the magazine. Both Kenneth Coutts-Smith and Tom Sherman will assist this

and we hope to encourage and introduce as soon as possible some feminist perspectives. My own statement concerning galleries at least in the immediate future will not affect the policy of this magazine. CENTERFOLD has based its attention on the work of artists working in performance, new dance, video, new music, writing, and the political nature of interdisciplinary work. As with the review of Rodney Werden's tape by Lisa Steele, new work does not necessarily have to be 'exhibited' to be reviewed. In fact with video a not-yet-exhibited work review could be a refreshing departure.

Spaces: Trenches and Sandbags suggests or was meant to suggest that there is some connection between the A Space, post-L.A.I.C.A. conference and Poland pieces, in at least their analysis of artist space development or stasis. The subject is of ongoing concern and in total can be a very wordy and amorphous debate. We can however see, hopefully, a change from what has been a positive 'rhetoric' being replaced with a critical rhetoric where the word rhetoric denotes a style of approach, — the former being created out of a fresh enthusiasm coupled with a need to convince the fundability of that enthusiasm, the latter being divided into a progressive criticism and from outside — reactionary attacks.

The superstructure that has been built to deal with contemporary art in Canada is now of monolithic proportions — a 'Sistine Chapel' with artist

spaces functioning perhaps as the 'decorative' frescoes. There are very good reasons to look at and make critical evaluation of what actually assists the daily production of our activities as opposed to the validating 'nirvana' that awaits our mature offerings. All art institutions are expensive promises that we, as artists, must 'believe' in because for us there are no short-term benefits. They do not guarantee artists an income, they do not extend our means of communication, they do not respond to the basic changes within artists' work, and of late(?) they do give-in to political pressures when the commodity itself is brought into question:

Item 1: This summer I was surprised to discover that not so long ago a trustee of the AGO (Art Gallery of Ontario) contacted the morality squad for advice on the content of a videotape being exhibited. This request in turn was passed on to the Ontario Board of Film Censorship who of late have been surveying video tapes by artists as being part of their revised mandate and jurisdiction.

Item 2: The Vancouver Art Gallery has introduced notices for video showings which state: "Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult."

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By giving in or giving up their validation function the "house that cleanses art for society's consumption" (it was supposed to be a metaphoric cleansing not a literal one) gives up its last usable service that they can offer the contemporary artist (though I personally disagree with even this use). I have deliberately avoided mentioning their use in providing artists fees as the percentage is too low to be worth considering. This is not to say that a very small number of artists do not benefit from 'major' purchases, what it is saying is that the benefit to the artist milieu amounts financially and in many instances accessibly to zero. (In my original draft of this editorial I did make a lengthy suggestion for a possible solution to this state of affairs which due to lack of space is omitted and will appear in a pamphlet: "Know no galleries" to appear later this year.)

The outside reactionism that I referred to has always been with us but in times of economic 'slumps' it swells like an unbalanced dietary complaint on the back of our necks. I refer to the 'boil' of the popular press. Scared of its, in turn, scared readership who are never allowed to understand either unemployment or inflation at the same time, they are presently going to print with a vengeance. I say 'they' because the fine line between the writers and the readers is so fine that they could and probably do exchange 'jobs' frequently. Whilst I have always been told that old-style owner-publishers are in modern times removed from their hot lines so that present-day newspaper publishing can proceed as a profitable business there remains a stench of 'moralistic' law officers that work both up and down the ownership-hack-journalist ladder of daily newspapers. These cellulose sheriffs appear coincidentally in papers with names like 'The Toronto Star', 'The Windsor Star', 'The Calgary Herald' etc. continuing a long tradition of despising popular culture all the way through this century. Of course in this instance they are at odds with a portion of their readership. Their reaction is not because entertainment journalists have a high-art preference but I suggest more because of a cancerous jealousy that refuses to objectivise the exponents of popular culture, their wealth and their social license. However, because it is popular their hatred is disguised and wherever possible those same editors job out the reviews to bright young critics (who often do

have high-art preferences) who love to show off by writing bad reviews in essence always saying that when popular culture is packaged in a spray can the deodorant loses its pleasant smell. (as if we didn't know).

The objective of this trail however is to remind those of us that are in any doubt that those pent-up emotions, exasperations of dealing with a four-pound press kit on the 'Bee Gees' has to escape somewhere and contemporary art is just one of those state-funded<sup>1</sup> sitting ducks.

'Contemporary art' has for the past two decades been somewhat chic (it is never popular) and during such times newspaper fillers will, so to speak, swing either way. But lately whenever artists claim some social license those shorty raincoats magically transform themselves into vampirical capes.

It is too easy now for those word-mongers to say, "Ah yes, I was interested in video, new dance, performance, structural film, improvisational music, artist spaces WHEN THEY BEGAN, but now I feel let down by broken promises and so like my editors I must admit that it's a complete waste of taxpayers money."

Naturally they are stricken with a 'disappointment syndrome' — disappointment with their job status, disappointment with their shrunken dollar, with their changeover to computers, with the fifth changeover in format in as many years — but after all we don't need such a transference — life doesn't come that easel-y for us either.

The sober side to this is that all artists, and performance artists-with-stars-in-their-eyes in particular, should revise their notions that all press is good press. Now is not the time to talk to the daily press, to send them press releases, to give them photographs. It is not just a question of protecting personal embarrassment but more of a refusal to be used as a reactionary weapon, a journalist's condom. If you cannot get an audience without going through the publicity mechanisms of the popular press then consider yourself underground and act accordingly.

Clive Robertson

<sup>1</sup>In Canada the assumption is that the artist is always existing on grants, though of course the artists know otherwise. Whenever the daily press is told that in fact projects are often made possible with your own labour and own source of funding you are then viewed as naively heroic, or stupid.

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## The Poland Report Brian Dyson

Paul Woodrow and I were invited to Poland to attend an international conference at the Gallery of Recent Art in Wroclaw, to discuss problems relating to art and social practice. We stayed in Poland for three weeks, mainly in Warsaw, but we also visited galleries in Wroclaw, Lublin and Krakow.

We went with rather gray expectations, having been warned about bad food, bad plumbing and carrying in our minds a rather dismal impression of its urban landscape, the precise origins of which I could not pinpoint. Some of these impressions proved to be correct, but there was no general rule, and with the exception perhaps of the plumbing, we always seemed to experience the happier alternative.

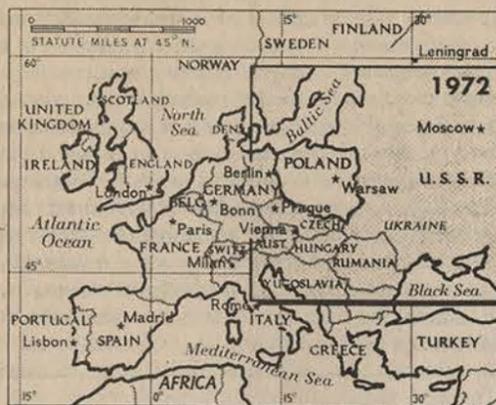
The urban landscape is rather gray and boring at first, although there are many trees and green areas in the cities; Wroclaw, a large industrial center in the south, being the one exception. The reason why everything looks so uniform and visually bland is the lack of commercial advertising which we are so familiar with in the west. The only commercial product we saw advertised during our stay there was Coca-Cola (what else?) — but not for long I suspect; Hungary is about to open a Levi Strauss factory in the near future. The only thing one sees advertised on the streets are state department stores. These 'commercials' are a source of income for some artists, who hand paint them on the sides of buildings. Another valued source of income for artists is the designing of western style discotechs. An artist can make enough money in a couple of months to meet most of his basic needs for about a year, and sometimes longer.

"The proposal of Contextual Art, depending on the possible ways of interpretation, may be treated as a theory imitating artistic practice. Here questions about this practice constitute the basic reproach. This proposal may also be treated as a recapitulation of contemporary art, a quintessence of its characteristics, a recapitulation which has no bearing on the future. It may also constitute a suggestion of a new human consciousness in culture (reality), which seems most significant to me. This kind of consciousness spreads outside of art and concerns not only the artist. Then it may be a method of perceiving the world, of actualization of our images about the world, a method in a sense adjusted to the changes of reality and ready for parallel transformations."

Zbigniew Korzeb, from the introduction to 'Contextual Art 4', published by Arcus Gallery, Lublin.

We arrived during the official May Day celebrations, complete with labour parades, military personnel in large numbers (both Polish and Russian) and the accompanying banners and slogans in the standard red and white colours. We were always aware of a great contradiction in Polish life: that is its Soviet controlled Communist ideology and its obviously western cultural aspirations. The Polish people are socialist by nature and not by political persuasion. When asked, many insisted that they were not communists (card carrying communists are obviously a favoured group) but Polish Nationals. They seem to accept their position philosophically, having been an occupied country, ruled mainly by the Germans, for centuries. Their alliance with Russia, also once a traditional enemy, during World War II was because such an alliance was the only way that they could stand up against the Germans. It is difficult to understand a country whose borders have expanded and contracted as much as Poland's have over the past centuries should have such a strong national identity. The position and power of the Church is critical in this situation. The Church is not only a focus for the country's religious expression, but also for the expression of its individuality as a nation. Perhaps the most moving experience of the trip for me was walking through the university district in Warsaw towards the old town (completely rebuilt to its original condition after the war, again out of this same sense of national pride and at great expense) and finding oneself walking against a wave of people perhaps a couple of miles long. This was a religious procession held a few days after the official May Day celebrations, the people walking silently and confidently, not just as an expression of faith but as an expression of solidarity and mute defiance against Soviet domination. This resentment of its Soviet directed leadership came to a head in 1970 when shipyard workers in Dgansk went on strike and marched on party headquarters, as a result of a fantastic rise in food prices. Many people were killed in the ensuing riots (the state admits to about 120, we were told at least 600) and Gomulka, the party leader was replaced by Gierek, who still holds power.

Poland is not a poor country (they talk about how wealthy they feel when they visit Russia) but compares to Great Britain in the late fifties in terms of availability of goods and standard of living. There is a new breed of Pole who has emerged in the last few years, the Polish capitalist; farm produce distributors, private shop and restaurant owners, black market currency dealers, who are making a great deal of money. They are buying large houses or building them to their own



specifications, and living in the most desirable areas of Warsaw, driving late-model Volvos and Mercedes Benzs. These people, we were told, have no social status whatsoever. We were told on several occasions that artists, though generally penniless, were very highly regarded in Polish society.

*"Contextual Art does not act in the field of formed logic with its criteria of truth and falseness.*

*Contextual Art acts in the field of epistemological logic. It is interested in such expressions as: I consider, know, believe, presume, discard, understand, forbid, allow. It is interested in the deep layer of civilization which creates its ideologies and myths which rule over its social practices, science, culture and art.*

*Contextual Art operates with assertions, statements expressed with conviction.*

*Contextual Art operates with occasional statements. Its expressions are not descriptions of traditional art and are not extentional statements of conceptualism either. They are intentional expressions. Their meaning does not depend on the meaning of the component expressions in which they appear."*

*Jan Swidzinski, from 'Art as Contextual Art', Remont Gallery, March 1977.*

The group of artists that we were involved with would correspond with Canada's artist-run alternative galleries. These galleries, approximately fifteen in number, are generally allied to student cultural centers which are financed by the Student Socialist Party of Poland. Whilst wages for gallery staff are minimal (less than \$40 per month), they do have quite substantial funds available for certain programmes. For example, it did not seem to be considered extravagant for a gallery to be allocated funds of up to \$10,000 to organize a large international conference on art. This is by no means the general rule however, the budget available for the particular conference that we attended being almost non-existent. The amount made available for such events seems to depend on the persuasive skills of the organizers in getting the money from the Student Socialist Party. These student cultural centers are situated in large town houses previously owned by the bourgeoisie or are located on university campuses and generally include a bar and restaurant, a discotheque, conference rooms, an art gallery and a jazz club.

*"I consider it necessary to discontinue inserting new forms of human activity/work into an artificially enlarged concept receptacle which demeans the word 'art'. I believe that the present situation may be defined as a process of transforming changes in quality which exist outside the boundaries of activity considered to be art."*

*Lech Mrozek, from 'Calendar 2', published by the Gallery of Recent Art, Wroclaw.*

The conference at the Gallery of Recent Art was held in an old building in Wroclaw which had not been very well maintained. Apart from historically significant sights, public buildings in Poland are generally in a very bad state of repair. The Polish semi-skilled worker seems incapable of doing anything with his hands with even basic degree of skill. The conference was originally to have been attended by Joseph Kosuth, Sarah Charlesworth, Hans Haake and Carol Conde among others, but an art historian from Amsterdam and ourselves were the only foreigners to attend. The conference itself was a rather formal affair, with the Polish artists making very precise statements regarding their own situation, and challenging statements made by other speakers in an equally formal and precise manner; a situation which contradicted their obviously anti-formal ideology. The need to have everything translated at least once did not help the situation. Discussion went on long into the early morning hours, tending to become less formal after dinner when brandy would be drunk in quantity. Another example of their liking of things western; they would much prefer to spend \$5 on a bottle of very bad brandy rather than drink one of the many excellent Polish vodkas at 75¢ a bottle.

*"... It seems to me that certain types of activity cannot be fulfilled through an image, even though we understand this conception in the broadest sense. Should not any system of symbolic mediation be given up in favour of direct contact of man with reality, of man with man?"*

*Not to depict, but simply to form a reality, without the intervention of images, symbols or forms of persuasion. This would be the transition from the illusion of art to the world of reality."*  
*Stanislav Urbanski, from an unpublished text.*

The artists that we met at the conference and at the other galleries in Warsaw, Lublin and Krakow, seem to have identified some significant problems relative to art as an elevator of experience, or as Swidzinski calls it, 'a plus factor' in our lives. As can be seen from the quotes inserted throughout this text, Polish artists who are aligned with or who are sympathetic to the Contextual Art propositions of Jan Swidzinski are very aware of the inadequacy of art to the present situation. They are eager for change, but for change of a permanent nature. They understand that no art ideology can provide this transformation, and yet are unable to break their attachments both to notions about art and about their roles as artists. Unless they can break this identification, resulting in this projection of themselves, this formalized posturing, rooted in historical models from the past, unless they can change *themselves* through their work, hopes of realizing changes on a larger social scale will be impossible. ■



photos: Taka Iimura from 'Observer/Observed/Observer' (1976)

#### Videoview 4 An interview with Taka Iimura

*This is an edited transcript from an interview with Taka Iimura following a screening of his tapes at Arton's, Calgary (16th April 1978).*

Centerfold:

What is the conceptual difference between your work for film and your work for video?

Taka Iimura:

It might be better to talk firstly about how those works come out, perhaps we can mention what I have done in film too, in relation to the video. The pieces I showed yesterday was a series I have titled the OBSERVER/OBSERVED series which consisted of three titles: CAMERA, MONITOR, FRAME (1976); OBSERVER/OBSERVED (1975) and OBSERVER/OBSERVED/OBSERVER (1976). Each one of those titles is broken down further for example CAMERA, MONITOR, FRAME consists of five pieces, shot separately — each segment lasting from 2 minutes as the shortest, five as the longest. Some of these tapes are developments from earlier works, although not so expressly I have used before this programme or the theme of this relationship between language and image. This one is particularly concerned in video with language relating to the video system, trying to define each other using this video system. When I say system, I mean the whole system of video — not just what you see on the screen but including the camera, monitor, the whole system which you see in the tapes.

There was a text in advance of these tapes where I diagrammed the whole procedure, the operations as much as possible defined on paper.

C.:

Which is very much like a shooting script for film.

T.I.:

Right. But it's more precise. A shooting script in the general sense is mainly written text but in this case there is the picture and the description of the picture, voiceover, timing,

cable connections, floorplans and its operation.

C.:

What properties did film lack on a structural level that led you into video?

T.I.:

Mechanically, film has the camera and film — it's like videocamera and tape, it has been said that you have this monitor as well so that you can control the whole mechanism simultaneously whilst you're shooting — that is not the case in film, obviously. Also the feedback mechanism; film materially is different from videotape, film has frames which is not the case in videotape. Also the way film is exhibited is quite different. Film has this contained closed theatre space, mainly projected on a big screen, people seated in front and the picture itself is reflected from the screen. The whole exhibition system for film is also quite different from video. These are more the technical aspects between the two.

C.:

Wouldn't you say that film is a more common media for those whose work has been called 'structural'?

T.I.:

The type of structure is problematic, you can interpret it in different ways — everyone has their own interpretation, it doesn't cover everything. In case of film, when we say structural what the structure means is somehow different from the way you could describe structural video, which because of the time property is more of a system than a structure. In the case of film it's more on the level of what you see on the screen, as a result of what is within the projective surface. Video on the other hand, I suppose, includes not what you see on the screen but also, in this case, the whole closed-circuit system, which in this illustration (see opposite) you have the camera, monitor and taperecorder as the complete components of the system, so it somehow has a different implication. With video it is quite easy to record the sound, film records sound simultaneously too, but video uses a magnetic material which is common to both picture and sound synchronisation. So I found this ease of synchronicity to be one advantage.

C.:

Are there more structural paradoxes or contradictions in video than in film? As your work often consists of the system as content there seems in video to be an inherent quality of illusion because of the inclusion of the monitor.

T.I.:

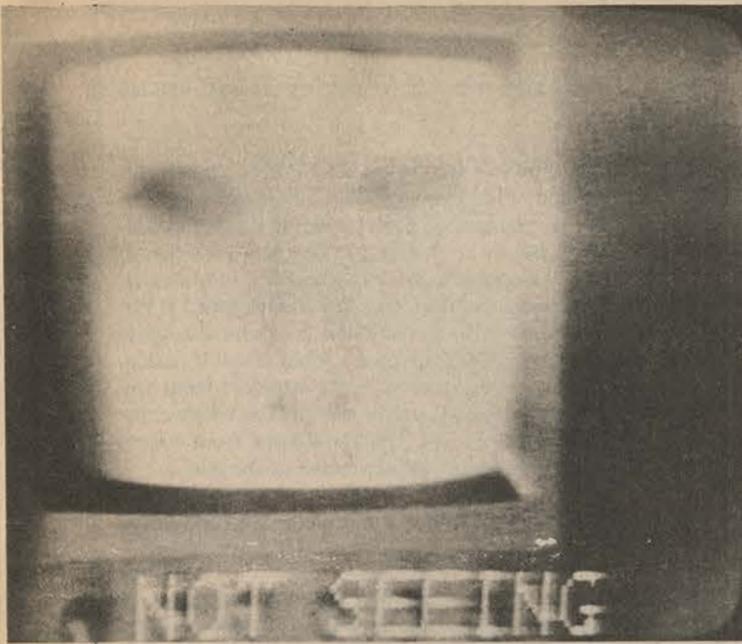
Yes. In 'This is a Monitor' piece (CAMERA, MONITOR, FRAME) you see the monitor as a real object, whereas if it were projected it would be an illusory surface, you see it both ways. A film screen somehow always remains as an illusion, video has more of a furniture aspect as an object. To me the film theatre space is quite ritualistic, watching a movie screen in a darkened room, video is watching a TV box in the living room in everyday life. In a film theatre you instantly get into the illusory box, you are conditioned that way.

C.:

Last night in the third version of OBSERVER/OBSERVED/OBSERVER where there are also graphics on the screen, symbols which as well as the voice identify the relationship between the camera and the monitor. The understanding of that becomes very abstract in some circumstances. Last night you made an analogy which seemed to make it clearer, the relationship of a TV interview, do you mind repeating that?

T.I.:

The Observer/Observed is similar to the Interviewer/Inter-



viewee (Interviewed) situation, in this case more abstractly in my tape, so in the case of interviewer/interviewed you have the distinct personality involved, in my tape there are no such personalities — however the role relationship is similar. The interviewer is always interviewing who is interviewed, like now I am supposed to say something to the interviewer at the same time you are addressing an audience who is not present, so in fact I have a dual role. In one sense I am talking to the interviewer as well as talking to the non-existent (in that space) audience.

C.: And television has to use its own cueing system as you show in your tapes, so that people can understand exactly what the relationships are as they change even though in television there is a more fixed relationship as you suggested.

T.I.: I was thinking about that too, perhaps I could do an Interviewer/Interviewed piece though I have dealt with it abstractly in the Observer/Observed piece where the 'interviewer' is not only asking but is also 'interviewed' too, observer and observed are switchable. An example is when I say, "I see you" — if the man in the monitor is saying that it means that he is addressing that to the audience, but if an off-screen voice says that he is addressing it to the man in the monitor. So this separation of the sound from the picture makes another role to be put in the tape, although he doesn't physically exist. One thing I am doing is that the voice or the sound is not necessarily identified or identifiable with the picture.

C.: Are you less interested in the clarification of identity and more interested in the paradoxical ways in which identity can be presented through the tape?

T.I.: No, I cannot distinguish those two. Somehow how you identify the picture is also somehow involved in how you separate, how you distinguish one from the other, we're just too conditioned through the medium. You're supposed to look at the picture to identify with the voice, but it can be quite manipulated. Identification is just not on one level.

C.: Have you ever been asked whether you are creating a basic language which at some further point could be used to re-create specific rather than abstract situations?

T.I.: It could be applied, those tapes are abstract but also very concrete, yes it could be applied into social situations like in the interview situation or news commentary — those programmes could be analysed through this structure.

C.: How about your procedure for this work, is it essential to work on it as a step-by-step procedure?

T.I.: Yes, to produce those tapes it is necessary to do a lot of pre-production work, diagrams etc., so then I got into a certain form which shows what I want as clearly as possible. Those tapes are made in series, each piece shows a different aspect. The OBSERVER/OBSERVED and OBSERVER/OBSERVED/OBSERVER pieces deal with similar situations, the latter being much more complicated, it could be further analysed though there is a certain limit to what can be comprehended by the viewer, people are not always following what I might expect them to follow — there is a limit to the audience following a visual logic.

C.: Is there a possibility that the time-perception pieces that you did on film could in any way be useful to deal with the identity definitions that you have used in video?

T.I.: Not necessarily, though I have done time pieces in video though in a quite different way, there was one called 'Time Trilogy' that I made in 71/72. But it didn't work well so I had to switch those matrix into film, which gave me more control. Film has the definition of the frame which you can count frame-by-frame, exactly; film has more of a material basis, video has more capability of defining the relationships, the structure of seeing. With tape I can deal with that problem more clearly.

C.: Do you ever think of your work in political terms?

T.I.: It is not directly political, though it can be applied to the political context. As I have said, in political documentaries or politically engaged films or tape there is always somehow narration involved, however they want to 'caption' the image, so the caption or narration dictates the pictures on a political level. This is controlled by the maker, I see it as somehow overpowering the narration into the picture, the stressed implications. Not so much recognising this dual play between the object and who is doing the shooting. So in a sense I think it shows in the way that political or non-political tapes or films are manipulated. It has I think political implications, it is not necessary to have narration act in such a dictatorial manner. For instance in Godard's film 'A Letter to Jane' it is the politicisation of a single photograph, it somehow is applying this coding system — how do you read a picture? Even in that case Godard dictated all his relations over the picture, that is a film in which he intended to show what he thinks about the picture. In a way it is well analysed but still I feel that film still allows the voice to dictate the picture. There is some kind of confusion too, when I say the roles played between Observer and Observed, in a sense in my tape also there is narration — somehow commenting on the picture; and yet the comments

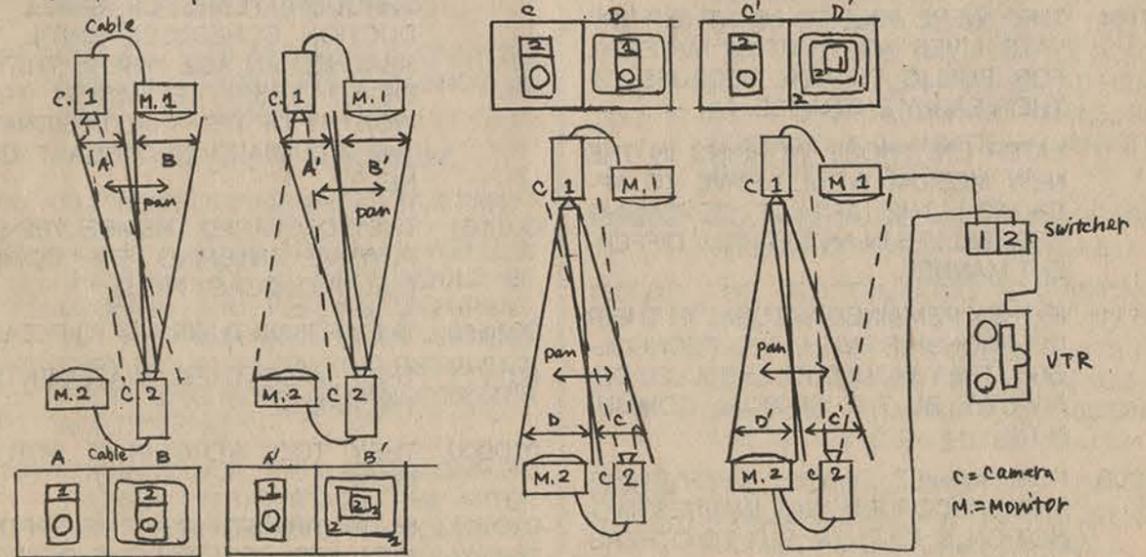
TAKA IIMURA  
OBSERVER/OBSERVED/OBSERVER (1976)  
#2 CAMERA 1/2 — MONITOR 1/2

videotape B/W  
7. min, picture plan

#	pic.w.super	voice over (dubbed)	#/sec	#	pic.w.super	voice over (dubbed)	m.sec
1	1	camera 2 shoots camera 1	0.15	3	1	camera 2 shoots camera 1	3.45
A	C.2-C.1			A	C2-C1		
2	2	camera 2 shoots monitor 1 which is shot by camera 1 which shoots camera 2	0.30	4	2	camera 2 shoots monitor 1 which is shot by camera 1 which shoots monitor 2	4.00
B	C.2-M1/C1-C2			B	C2-M1/C1-C2		
3	1	camera 2 shoots camera 1	1.00	5	1	camera 2 shoots camera 1	4.30
A'	C.2-C.1			A'	C2-C1		
4	2	camera 2 shoots monitor 1 which is shot by camera 1 which shoots monitor 2	1.30	6	2	camera 2 shoots monitor 1 which is shot by camera 1 which shoots camera 2	5.00
B'	C.2-M1/C1-C2			B'	C2-M1/C1-C2		
5	1	camera 1 shoots camera 2	2.00	7	1	camera 1 shoots camera 2	5.10
C	C1-C2			C	C1-C2		
6	2	camera 1 shoots monitor 2 which is shot by camera 2 which shoots camera 1	2.30	8	2	camera 1 shoots monitor 2 which is shot by camera 2 which shoots monitor 1	5.30
D	C1-M2/C2-C1			D	C1-M2/C2-M1		
7	2	camera 1 shoots camera 2	3.00	9	2	camera 1 shoots camera 2	6.00
C'	C1-C2			C'	C1-C2		
8	2	camera 1 shoots monitor 2 which is shot by camera 2 which shoots monitor 1	3.30	10	2	camera 1 shoots monitor 2 which is shot by camera 2 which shoots camera 1	6.30
D'	C1-M2/C2-M1			D'	C1-M2/C2-C1		
9	1	camera 2 shoots camera 1	7.00	11	1	camera 2 shoots camera 1	7.00
A''	C2-C1			A''	C2-C1		

↓ camera pan

floor plan w operation



**Videoview 4**

have a double role so that the choice of interpretation is open, which is not the case in so-called political tapes or film. The out of scene commentary in those films gives another dimension that means it has given up its straightforward documentary approach.

These pieces I have done are more concerned with the relationships between the sentence, the structure of the language and the image. All languages have their own logic, in this case I am using English. This English logic is quite different from say Japanese logic. In English you always have to stress in the first place who is the subject. In Japanese that is not the case, who is the subject is often omitted. Often in Japanese we just point out the object, what you see there or what you recognise. When I say in English, "I see you" in Japanese we would say "you see." So this logic is closer to

what you see through the camera, you thereby identify when you look through the camera what is the subject, unless you explicitly say ...

C.:

This is an important connection which I think you omitted last night, that actually explains why you use the language-image in that way. I don't think it's defined that well that the camera is not always given the role of the subject.

T.I.:

This logic, if I return to political issues, without saying who is the subject in film or tape, by generalising all the things that you see on the screen, without mentioning who is responsible for the commentary you can easily manipulate the image as propaganda, the narrator off-screen hides behind the film.

**000001 THE ARTIST ATTAINS HAM RADIO STATUS IN AN ERA OF TOTAL THOUGHT CONVEYANCE.**

**Tom Sherman**

- |        |   |        |   |
|--------|---|--------|---|
| 000001 | THE ARTIST ATTAINS HAM RADIO STATUS IN AN ERA OF TOTAL THOUGHT CONVEYANCE.  |        | SION THEY WERE ALREADY RECEIVING FROM THE STANDARD BROADCAST WORLD.   |
| 000010 | OR THE ARTIST BECOMES A RADIO FREQUENCY ENGINEER FULLY LICENSED TO BUILD THE BRIDGES FOR THEIR MINDS TO CROSS.                    | 001010 | AFTER A DECADE OF BEING OUTSIDE THE LOOK AND FEEL OF REGULAR BROADCAST TELEVISION, THEY WOULD MAKE THEIR MOVE OF CONTRADICTION.   |
| 000011 | WE NOW TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE PIONEERS OF THE PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS FIELD.   | 001011 | THEY WOULD MAKE THE NEW BROADCAST TELEVISION.   |
| 000100 | BY A TWIST OF FATE THEY WERE AMONG THE FIRST PEOPLE TO GET THEIR HANDS ON THE EQUIPMENT.  | 001100 | FOR THEY HAD LEARNED TELEVISION WORKING UNDER THEIR OWN SET OF RULES, BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH YEARS OF SMALL PRODUCTION SCHEDULES, UNTIL THEY REACHED AN AGE WHERE THEY BELIEVED THEIR TELEVISION TO BE WORTHY OF ITS FINAL DESTINATION, THE STANDARD BROADCAST CHANNELS. |
| 000101 | THEY WERE ABLE TO LOG THEIR PRIVATE LIVES AS WORTHY MATERIAL FOR PUBLIC DISPLAY BECAUSE OF THEIR EARLY ENTRANCE.                  | 001101 | THEY DECLARED THEMSELVES COMPETITIVE ENTERING THE COMMERCIAL BROADCAST FIELD.   |
| 000110 | LATER ON, THOSE WORKING IN THE NEW MEDIUM WOULD HAVE TO APPROACH THE ART OF REVEALING THEMSELVES IN AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MANNER. | 001110 | THEY FOUND THEIR AIM TO PLEASE.   |
| 000111 | IF THEY REMAINED NATURAL IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TECHNOLOGY, THEY WOULD BE LABELLED DERIVATIVE BY THE CRITICAL COMMUNITY.  | 001111 | THEY MADE THEIR STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS.  |
| 001000 | FOR AWHILE THERE, EVERYTHING THEY RECORDED WAS INTERESTING, NOT ONLY TO THEM, BUT TO OTHERS AS WELL.                              | 010000 | THEY TOO WERE IN IT FOR THE MONEY.  |
| 001001 | ALL THEY HAD TO DO WAS LOOK AND FEEL DIFFERENT THAN THE TELEVI-   | 010001 | IF THE ARTIST FINDS THE OPPORTUNITY AND ACCEPTS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PROGRAMMING BROADCAST TELEVISION, MUST THIS BE AN ENSLAVEMENT RENDERING THE ART-  |

IST POWERLESS, LOST IN TOTAL SERVITUDE TO THE GENERAL VIEWING PUBLIC?

- |        |  |        |  |
|--------|--|--------|--|
| 010010 | MUST THE OBVIOUS POTENTIAL FOR DIRECTING THE THOUGHT OF THE MASS AUDIENCE BE LOST IN THE SHUFFLE OF THIS MOST DIFFICULT TASK OF PRODUCING ART FOR MASS CONSUMPTION THROUGH TELEVISION?   | 011011 | WITHOUT EXCEPTION, THE DIE WAS CAST, TIME AFTER TIME, THE PRODUCERS WOULD NEVER QUESTION THEMSELVES AS ARTISTS. ALL THEY WOULD WANT WAS THE BEST POSSIBLE RESULTS FROM THE CREW, COMMUNICATING THROUGH THE DIRECTOR, MAKING THE DECISIONS THAT WOULD STRUCTURE THE WHOLE, OR MORE SIMPLY PUT, IT WAS THEIR JOB TO PUSH THE PROGRAMME THROUGH THE BUDGET. |
| 010011 | ARE WE MERELY PRESENTING THE ARTIST AS A CONTESTANT IN A POPULARITY CONTEST?   | 011100 | FREELANCING FOR THE INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE NOTHING TO SAY, WON'T YOU FIND IT RESTRICTING?, THEIR COLLECTIVE MENTAL STATE SHRINKING SKULL TIGHT AROUND YOUR FREE THOUGHT, THEREBY CANNING YOUR IMAGINATIVE NATURE.  |
| 010100 | YES, BY ALL MEANS, ARTISTIC CONTROL OF THE WORK WILL BE HARD TO MAINTAIN.  | 011101 | HOW GREAT IS THE NEED FOR PERSONAL MESSAGE ON THE MAJOR NETWORKS?  |
| 010101 | SO, AS THE NEW MATERIAL IS PRESENTED TO THE AUDIENCE, AS THIS THOUGHT IS EXTERNALIZED OVER AND OVER, UNDERGOING A CERTAIN NATURAL CLARIFICATION THROUGH UNAVOIDABLE REDUNDANCY, IT SHOULD BECOME VERY CLEAR IN TIME, THAT THE TELEVISION ARTIST HAS VERY DIFFERENT CONCERNS, HIGH PROFILE, ATTRACTIVE CONCERNS, WHETHER OR NOT THESE CONCERNS PRESENTLY APPEAR EXTRAVAGANT OR TOO VISIBLE TO BE TRUE, OR WHETHER IT SHALL TURN OUT THAT THESE ARE BUT A PROMPTER'S WORDS ENCOURAGING MUCH MORE FACTITIOUS ACTIONS THAN THIS OR THAT ONE. WRITING THIS - BROADCASTING THAT. | 011110 | IF COMMUNICATION IS CONTROL AND THE DEGREE OF CONVEYANCE PROVIDES THE BASIS FOR POWER, CHANCES ARE THEY'RE NOT GOING TO PUT THE INDIVIDUAL ON MASS TELEVISION SIMPLY BECAUSE HE OR SHE THINKS WELL.  |
| 010110 | BUT ALL THIS AND THAT IS ONLY SO FAR, AND THEREFORE IT CANNOT BE NEARLY ALL THAT IS TRUE.  | 011111 | THE CONTROLLING MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY HAVE GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THE ARTIST WILL USE THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO BE SEEN AS WELL AS HEARD BY A WIDE AUDIENCE WHILE PERFORMING A SENSATIONAL MASTURBATORY ACTIVITY.  |
| 010111 | IT IS UP TO YOU TO MAKE SURE.  | 100000 | COLOURFUL BEHAVIOUR INCREASING THE AMPLITUDE OF THE CLICHE.  |
| 011000 | AM I NOT JUMPING AHEAD TOO FAR?  | 100001 | THE ARTIST MAKING TELEVISION AS THE ARTIST IS EXPECTED TO ..... THRILLING SHOTS BLEED WHITE HOT BURNS ACROSS THE SURFACE OF THE TUBE ..... MAKING TELEVISION AS THE ARTIST IS EXPECTED TO.   |
| 011001 | FOR IF ARTISTS ACTUALLY WERE IN THE THICK OF IT, THEY WOULD BE LOOKING AND FEELING DIFFERENT, YET ANOTHER FULL TURN AROUND, THEY WOULD BE TALKING DIFFERENT, PRODUCING MORE, GETTING TIGHTER ALL THE TIME.   | 100010 | THE FORMAL GESTURE OF THE SINGLE INDIVIDUAL DIVIDED BY MILLIONS OF MONITORED SHARES.   |
| 011010 | FOR INSTANCE, THEIR BEHAVIOUR ON THE SET, ON THE STAGE, TIME AFTER TIME, THE DIRECTORS WOULD EMERGE FROM THEIR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE WORKING TECHNICIANS WHERE ONLY EQUIPMENT WAS DISCUSSED. THE DOWN TO EARTH LAN-   | 100011 | THE STAGGERING DIVISION OF A MAN OR A WOMAN CRYING ALOUD WITH THE PAIN OF MULTIPLICATION, THE  |

The Artist attains Ham Radio Status....

	FACT OF THE MATTER OF BEING DUPLICATED MORE THAN A MILLION TIMES BY EVERY KIND OF RECEIVER AFTER HAVING SAID ONLY THEY THE PEOPLE WANT ME.		THOUGHT CONVEYANCE, FOR YOUR EMBARRASSINGLY LIGHT CONVERSATION UNDER THEIR STRICT CONTROL.
100100	THEY THE PEOPLE WANT ME TO CRY FOR AN HOUR.	000111	IF THEY REMAINED NATURAL IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TECHNOLOGY, THEY WOULD BE LABELLED DERIVATIVE BY THE CRITICAL COMMUNITY.
100101	SO QUICKLY BROADCAST TELEVISION TURNS INTO JUST ANOTHER PERFORMANCE SITUATION FOR THE ARTIST.	001000	FOR AWHILE THERE, EVERYTHING THEY RECORDED WAS INTERESTING, NOT ONLY TO THEM, BUT TO OTHERS AS WELL.
100110	THE PICTURE OF THE FAMILY HUDDLING DOWN LOW POSING IN FRONT OF THE TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT, THIS PICTURE WILL LAST BUT A SHORT TIME.	001001	ALL THEY HAD TO DO WAS LOOK AND FEEL DIFFERENT THAN THE TELEVISION THEY WERE ALREADY RECEIVING FROM THE STANDARD BROADCAST WORLD.
000001	THE ARTIST ATTAINS HAM RADIO STATUS IN AN ERA OF TOTAL THOUGHT CONVEYANCE.	001010	AFTER A DECADE OF BEING OUTSIDE THE LOOK AND FEEL OF REGULAR BROADCAST TELEVISION, THEY WOULD MAKE THEIR MOVE OF CONTRADICTION.
000010	OR THE ARTIST BECOMES A RADIO FREQUENCY ENGINEER FULLY LICENSED TO BUILD THE BRIDGES FOR THEIR MINDS TO CROSS.	001011	THEY WOULD MAKE THE NEW BROADCAST TELEVISION.
000011	WE NOW TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE PIONEERS OF THE PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS FIELD.	010001	IF THE ARTIST FINDS THE OPPORTUNITY AND ACCEPTS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PROGRAMMING BROADCAST TELEVISION, MUST THIS BE AN ENSLAVEMENT, RENDERING THE ARTIST POWERLESS, LOST IN TOTAL SERVITUDE TO THE GENERAL VIEWING PUBLIC?
000100	BY A TWIST OF FATE THEY WERE AMONG THE FIRST PEOPLE TO GET THEIR HANDS ON THE EQUIPMENT.	001110	THEY FOUND THEIR AIM TO PLEASE.
000101	THEY WERE ABLE TO LOG THEIR PRIVATE LIVES AS WORTHY MATERIAL FOR PUBLIC DISPLAY BECAUSE OF THEIR EARLY ENTRANCE.	001111	THEY MADE THEIR STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS.
000110	LATER ON, THOSE WORKING IN THE NEW MEDIUM WOULD HAVE TO APPROACH THE ART OF REVEALING THEMSELVES IN AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MANNER.	010000	THEY TOO WERE IN IT FOR THE MONEY.
101010	TELEVISION TIME, ALL AIR TIME, IT'S MEASURED BY THEIR ATTENTION SPAN, NOT BY THE HOUR OR HALF. ALL OF IT, THE AIR, IT'S MEASURED BY THEIR THOUGHTS. IT'S AN AIR LOADED WITH THEIR SYMPATHIES. OR IS IT LIMITED BY THEIR SYMPATHIES? YOU CONTROL THE AIR WHEN YOU'RE ON THE MICROPHONE OR THE CAMERA, LIMITED AS YOU ARE AS AN INDIVIDUAL AS AN INDIVIDUAL, YOU MUST BOX WITH THEIR STRICT CONTROL. YOU SHOULD CHARGE THEM FOR LACK OF INFORMATION, FOR PERSONAL LOSSES SUFFERED UNDER THE PRESENT LOW LEVEL OF	010010	MUST THE OBVIOUS POTENTIAL FOR DIRECTING THE THOUGHT OF THE MASS AUDIENCE BE LOST IN THE SHUFFLE OF THIS MOST DIFFICULT TASK OF PRODUCING ART FOR MASS CONSUMPTION THROUGH TELEVISION?
		011100	FREELANCING FOR THE INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE NOTHING TO SAY, WON'T YOU FIND IT RESTRICTING?, THEIR COLLECTIVE MENTAL STATE SHRINKING SKULL TIGHT AROUND YOUR FREE THOUGHT, THEREBY CANNING YOUR IMAGINATIVE NATURE.
		011101	HOW GREAT IS THE NEED FOR PER-

	SONAL MESSAGE ON THE MAJOR NETWORKS?		OF THE MATTER OF BEING DUPLICATED MORE THAN A MILLION TIMES BY EVERY KIND OF RECEIVER AFTER HAVING SAID ONLY THEY THE PEOPLE WANT ME.
011110	IF COMMUNICATION IS CONTROL AND THE DEGREE OF CONVEYANCE PROVIDES THE BASIS FOR POWER, CHANCES ARE THEY'RE NOT GOING TO PUT THE INDIVIDUAL ON MASS TELEVISION SIMPLY BECAUSE HE OR SHE THINKS WELL.	100100	THEY THE PEOPLE WANT ME TO CRY FOR AN HOUR.
011111	THE CONTROLLING MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY HAVE GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THE ARTIST WILL USE THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO BE SEEN AS WELL AS HEARD BY A WIDE AUDIENCE WHILE PERFORMING A SENSATIONAL MASTURBATORY ACTIVITY.	100101	SO QUICKLY BROADCAST TELEVISION TURNS INTO JUST ANOTHER PERFORMANCE SITUATION FOR THE ARTIST.
010100	YES, BY ALL MEANS, ARTISTIC CONTROL OF THE WORK WILL BE HARD TO MAINTAIN.	100110	THE PICTURE OF THE FAMILY HUDDLING DOWN LOW POSING IN FRONT OF THE TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT, THIS PICTURE WILL LAST BUT A SHORT TIME.
100111	HAVING SOMETHING TO TELL EVERYONE ON TELEVISION. TELL EVERYONE SOMETHING BY CALLING THEM IN ON THE OPEN CHANNEL. SHOWING THEM YOUR FACE. EXPOSING YOUR THOUGHTS. TALKING TO NO ONE IN PARTICULAR. HOLDING ON TO THE AIR. YOU CAN LISTEN IN. WATCH ME. I'VE GOT A MESSAGE FOR YOU.	101000	FOR A TELEVISION PLATFORM, WE'VE GOT IDEAS. A PLATFORM, A STRUCTURE, IF ONLY A COLLECTION OF THOUGHTS TO BE EXECUTED WITHIN SOLID VISUAL ORDER, HAVE WE GOT IDEAS? YOU CAN HAVE YOUR LITTLE SPIT-BUBBLE OF A WORLD. BUT I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU WHAT I SEE IN THE TEAR-DROP WINDOWS OF YOUR MOVING WALLS, YOUR SCREENS OPEN TO MY CAMERAS, YOUR LIPS, YOUR EYES TELL ME EVERYTHING.
100000	COLOURFUL BEHAVIOUR INCREASING THE AMPLITUDE OF THE CLICHE.	010101	SO, AS THE NEW MATERIAL IS PRESENTED TO THE AUDIENCE, AS THIS THOUGHT IS EXTERNALIZED OVER AND OVER, UNDERGOING A CERTAIN NATURAL CLARIFICATION THROUGH UNAVOIDABLE REDUNDANCY, IT SHOULD BECOME VERY CLEAR IN TIME, THAT THE TELEVISION ARTIST HAS VERY DIFFERENT CONCERNS, HIGH PROFILE, ATTRACTIVE CONCERNS, WHETHER OR NOT THESE CONCERNS PRESENTLY APPEAR EXTRAVAGANT OR TOO VISIBLE TO BE TRUE, OR WHETHER IT SHALL TURN OUT THAT THESE ARE BUT A PROMPTER'S WORDS ENCOURAGING MUCH MORE FACTITIOUS ACTIONS THAN THIS OR THAT ONE. WRITING THIS - BROADCASTING THAT.
100001	THE ARTIST MAKING TELEVISION AS THE ARTIST IS EXPECTED TO ..... THRILLING SHOTS BLEED WHITE HOT BURNS ACROSS THE SURFACE OF THE TUBE ..... MAKING TELEVISION AS THE ARTIST IS EXPECTED TO.	010110	BUT ALL THIS AND THAT IS ONLY SO FAR, AND THEREFORE IT CANNOT BE NEARLY ALL THAT IS TRUE.
101001	AM I WRONG TO THINK I CAN GET THE MESSAGE ACROSS WITH SEX? JUST A KISS, SHIT. FUCK THE SPONSOR, ROLL THEM BACK AND PUT THEM ON PAUSE, THEY'LL HAVE TO HOLD THEIR BREATH A MINUTE, I'VE SOMETHING TO SAY. THIS IS A HIGH PRIORITY PUBLIC MEDIA ADDRESS. A CRUCIAL VERY LOUD ANNOUNCEMENT. AN AV BLAST OF THE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TRUTH.	010111	IT IS UP TO YOU TO MAKE SURE.
100010	THE FORMAL GESTURE OF THE SINGLE INDIVIDUAL DIVIDED BY MILLIONS OF MONITORED SHARES.	011000	AM I NOT JUMPING AHEAD TOO FAR?
100011	THE STAGGERING DIVISION OF A MAN OR WOMAN CRYING ALOUD WITH THE PAIN OF MULTIPLICATION, THE FACT	011001	FOR IF ARTISTS ACTUALLY WERE IN THE THICK OF IT, THEY WOULD BE

	LOOKING AND FEELING DIFFERENT, YET ANOTHER FULL TURN AROUND, THEY WOULD BE TALKING DIFFERENT, PRODUCING MORE, GETTING TIGHTER ALL THE TIME.		IN ON THE OPEN CHANNEL. SHOWING THEM YOUR FACE. EXPOSING YOUR THOUGHTS. TALKING TO NO ONE IN PARTICULAR. HOLDING ON TO THE AIR. YOU CAN LISTEN IN. WATCH ME. I'VE GOT A MESSAGE FOR YOU.
011010	FOR INSTANCE, THEIR BEHAVIOUR ON THE SET, ON THE STAGE, TIME AFTER TIME, THE DIRECTORS WOULD EMERGE FROM THEIR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE WORKING TECHNICIANS WHERE ONLY EQUIPMENT WAS DISCUSSED. THE DOWN TO EARTH LANGUAGE OF THE TECHNICAL CLASS. THE JARGON IN THE LOUNGE, THE SILENCE IN THE CONTROL ROOM.	000010	OR THE ARTIST BECOMES A RADIO FREQUENCY ENGINEER FULLY LICENSED TO BUILD THE BRIDGES FOR THEIR MINDS TO CROSS.
		000100	BY A TWIST OF FATE THEY WERE AMONG THE FIRST PEOPLE TO GET THEIR HANDS ON THE EQUIPMENT.
		000101	THEY WERE ABLE TO LOG THEIR PRIVATE LIVES AS WORTHY MATERIAL FOR PUBLIC DISPLAY BECAUSE OF THEIR EARLY ENTRANCE.
011011	WITHOUT EXCEPTION, THE DIE WAS CAST, TIME AFTER TIME, THE PRODUCERS WOULD NEVER QUESTION THEMSELVES AS ARTISTS. ALL THEY WOULD WANT WAS THE BEST POSSIBLE RESULTS FROM THE CREW, COMMUNICATING THROUGH THE DIRECTOR, MAKING THE DECISIONS THAT WOULD STRUCTURE THE WHOLE, OR MORE SIMPLY PUT, IT WAS THEIR JOB TO PUSH THE PROGRAMME THROUGH THE BUDGET.	000110	LATER ON, THOSE WORKING IN THE NEW MEDIUM WOULD HAVE TO APPROACH THE ART OF REVEALING THEMSELVES IN AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MANNER.
		000111	IF THEY REMAINED NATURAL IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE TECHNOLOGY, THEY WOULD BE LABELLED DERIVATIVE BY THE CRITICAL COMMUNITY.
000001	THE ARTIST ATTAINS HAM RADIO STATUS IN AN ERA OF TOTAL THOUGHT CONVEYANCE.	001000	FOR AWHILE THERE, EVERYTHING THEY RECORDED WAS INTERESTING, NOT ONLY TO THEM, BUT TO OTHERS AS WELL.
000011	WE NOW TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE PIONEERS OF THE PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS FIELD.	001001	ALL THEY HAD TO DO WAS LOOK AND FEEL DIFFERENT THAN THE TELEVISION THEY WERE ALREADY RECEIVING FROM THE STANDARD BROADCAST WORLD.
101010	TELEVISION TIME, ALL AIR TIME, IT'S MEASURED BY THEIR ATTENTION SPAN, NOT BY THE HOUR OR HALF. ALL OF IT, THE AIR, IT'S MEASURED BY THEIR THOUGHTS. IT'S AN AIR LOADED WITH THEIR SYMPATHIES. OR IS IT LIMITED BY THEIR SYMPATHIES? YOU CONTROL THE AIR WHEN YOU'RE ON THE MICROPHONE OR THE CAMERA, LIMITED AS YOU ARE AS AN INDIVIDUAL. AS AN INDIVIDUAL, YOU MUST BOX WITH THEIR STRICT CONTROL. YOU SHOULD CHARGE THEM FOR LACK OF INFORMATION, FOR PERSONAL LOSSES SUFFERED UNDER THE PRESENT LOW LEVEL OF THOUGHT CONVEYANCE, FOR YOUR EMBARRASSINGLY LIGHT CONVERSATION UNDER THEIR STRICT CONTROL.	001010	AFTER A DECADE OF BEING OUTSIDE THE LOOK AND FEEL OF REGULAR BROADCAST TELEVISION, THEY WOULD MAKE THEIR MOVE OF CONTRADICTION.
		001011	THEY WOULD MAKE THE NEW BROADCAST TELEVISION.
		001100	FOR THEY HAD LEARNED TELEVISION WORKING UNDER THEIR OWN SET OF RULES, BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH YEARS OF SMALL PRODUCTION SCHEDULES, UNTIL THEY REACHED AN AGE WHERE THEY BELIEVED THEIR TELEVISION TO BE WORTHY OF ITS FINAL DESTINATION, THE STANDARD BROADCAST CHANNELS.
100111	HAVING SOMETHING TO TELL EVERYONE ON TELEVISION. TELL EVERYONE SOMETHING BY CALLING THEM		

001101	THEY DECLARED THEMSELVES COMPETITIVE ENTERING THE COMMERCIAL BROADCAST FIELD.	100100	THEY THE PEOPLE WANT ME TO CRY FOR AN HOUR.
001110	THEY FOUND THEIR AIM TO PLEASE.	100101	SO QUICKLY BROADCAST TELEVISION TURNS INTO JUST ANOTHER PERFORMANCE SITUATION FOR THE ARTIST.
001111	THEY MADE THEIR STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS.	100110	THE PICTURE OF THE FAMILY Huddled DOWN LOW POSING IN FRONT OF THE TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT, THIS PICTURE WILL LAST BUT A SHORT TIME.
010000	THEY TOO WERE IN IT FOR THE MONEY.	010001	IF THE ARTIST FINDS THE OPPORTUNITY AND ACCEPTS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PROGRAMMING BROADCAST TELEVISION, MUST THIS BE AN ENSLAVEMENT, RENDERING THE ARTIST POWERLESS, LOST IN TOTAL SERVITUDE TO THE GENERAL VIEWING PUBLIC?
011100	FREELANCING FOR THE INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE NOTHING TO SAY, WON'T YOU FIND IT RESTRICTING?, THEIR COLLECTIVE MENTAL STATE SHRINKING SKULL TIGHT AROUND YOUR FREE THOUGHT, THEREBY CANNING YOUR IMAGINATIVE NATURE.	010011	ARE WE MERELY PRESENTING THE ARTIST AS A CONTESTANT IN A POPULARITY CONTEST?
011101	HOW GREAT IS THE NEED FOR PERSONAL MESSAGE ON THE MAJOR NETWORKS?	010010	MUST THE OBVIOUS POTENTIAL FOR DIRECTING THE THOUGHT OF THE MASS AUDIENCE BE LOST IN THE SHUFFLE OF THIS MOST DIFFICULT TASK OF PRODUCING ART FOR MASS CONSUMPTION THROUGH TELEVISION?
011110	IF COMMUNICATION IS CONTROL AND THE DEGREE OF CONVEYANCE PROVIDES THE BASIS FOR POWER, CHANCES ARE THEY'RE NOT GOING TO PUT THE INDIVIDUAL ON MASS TELEVISION SIMPLY BECAUSE HE OR SHE THINKS WELL.	010100	YES, BY ALL MEANS, ARTISTIC CONTROL OF THE WORK WILL BE HARD TO MAINTAIN.
011111	THE CONTROLLING MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY HAVE GOOD REASON TO BELIEVE THE ARTIST WILL USE THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO BE SEEN AS WELL AS HEARD BY A WIDE AUDIENCE WHILE PERFORMING A SENSATIONAL MASTURBATORY ACTIVITY.	101001	AM I WRONG TO THINK I CAN GET THE MESSAGE ACROSS WITH SEX? JUST A KISS, SHIT. FUCK THE SPONSOR, ROLL THEM BACK AND PUT THEM ON PAUSE, THEY'LL HAVE TO HOLD THEIR BREATH A MINUTE, I'VE SOMETHING TO SAY. THIS IS A HIGH PRIORITY PUBLIC MEDIA ADDRESS. A CRUCIAL VERY LOUD ANNOUNCEMENT. AN AV BLAST OF THE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TRUTH.
100000	COLOURFUL BEHAVIOUR INCREASING THE AMPLITUDE OF THE CLICHE.	101000	FOR A TELEVISION PLATFORM, WE'VE GOT IDEAS. A PLATFORM, A STRUCTURE, IF ONLY A COLLECTION OF THOUGHTS TO BE EXECUTED WITHIN SOLID VISUAL ORDER, HAVE WE GOT IDEAS? YOU CAN HAVE YOUR LITTLE SPIT-BUBBLE OF A WORLD. BUT I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU WHAT I SEE IN THE TEAR-DROP WINDOWS OF YOUR MOVING WALLS, YOUR SCREENS OPEN TO MY CAMERAS, YOUR LIPS, YOUR EYES TELL ME EVERYTHING.
100001	THE ARTIST MAKING TELEVISION AS THE ARTIST IS EXPECTED TO ..... THRILLING SHOTS BLEED WHITE HOT BURNS ACROSS THE SURFACE OF THE TUBE ..... MAKING TELEVISION AS THE ARTIST IS EXPECTED TO.		
100010	THE FORMAL GESTURE OF THE SINGLE INDIVIDUAL DIVIDED BY MILLIONS OF MONITORED SHARES.		
100011	THE STAGGERING DIVISION OF A MAN OR A WOMAN CRYING ALOUD WITH THE PAIN OF MULTIPLICATION, THE FACT OF THE MATTER OF BEING DUPLICATED MORE THAN A MILLION TIMES BY EVERY KIND OF RECEIVER AFTER HAVING SAID ONLY THEY THE PEOPLE WANT ME.		

The Artist attains Ham Radio Status....

- 010101 SO, AS THE NEW MATERIAL IS PRESENTED TO THE AUDIENCE, AS THIS THOUGHT IS EXTERNALIZED OVER AND OVER, UNDERGOING A CERTAIN NATURAL CLARIFICATION THROUGH UNAVOIDABLE REDUNDANCY, IT SHOULD BECOME VERY CLEAR IN TIME, THAT THE TELEVISION ARTIST HAS VERY DIFFERENT CONCERNS, HIGH PROFILE, ATTRACTIVE CONCERNS, WHETHER OR NOT THESE CONCERNS PRESENTLY APPEAR EXTRAVAGANT OR TOO VISIBLE TO BE TRUE, OR WHETHER IT SHALL TURN OUT THAT THESE ARE BUT A PROMPTER'S WORDS ENCOURAGING MUCH MORE FACTITIOUS ACTIONS THAN THIS OR THAT ONE. WRITING THIS — BROADCASTING THAT.
- 010110 BUT ALL THIS AND THAT IS ONLY SO FAR, AND THEREFORE IT CANNOT BE NEARLY ALL THAT IS TRUE.
- 010111 IT IS UP TO YOU TO MAKE SURE.
- 011000 AM I NOT JUMPING AHEAD TOO FAR?
- 011001 FOR IF ARTISTS ACTUALLY WERE IN THE THICK OF IT, THEY WOULD BE LOOKING AND FEELING DIFFERENT, YET ANOTHER FULL TURN AROUND, THEY WOULD BE TALKING DIFFERENT, PRODUCING MORE, GETTING TIGHTER ALL THE TIME.
- 011010 FOR INSTANCE, THEIR BEHAVIOUR ON THE SET, ON THE STAGE, TIME AFTER TIME, THE DIRECTORS WOULD EMERGE FROM THEIR CONVERSATIONS WITH THE WORKING TECHNICIANS WHERE ONLY EQUIPMENT WAS DISCUSSED. THE DOWN TO EARTH LANGUAGE OF THE TECHNICAL CLASS. THE JARGON IN THE LOUNGE, THE SILENCE IN THE CONTROL ROOM.
- 011011 WITHOUT EXCEPTION, THE DIE WAS CAST, TIME AFTER TIME, THE PRODUCERS WOULD NEVER QUESTION THEMSELVES AS ARTISTS. ALL THEY WOULD WANT WAS THE BEST POSSIBLE RESULTS FROM THE CREW, COMMUNICATING THROUGH THE DIRECTOR, MAKING THE DECISIONS THAT WOULD STRUCTURE THE WHOLE, OR MORE SIMPLY PUT, IT WAS THEIR JOB TO PUSH THE PROGRAMME THROUGH THE BUDGET.

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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 viewed<sup>1</sup> 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 disastrously 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

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

<sup>2</sup>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':

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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  
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True/False, Love-Life)

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Cusco Two)  
JOAN JONAS (Good Night, Good  
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## Rodney Werden's, 'Baby Dolls'

Lisa Steele

It is not an elegant problem to transform man to woman, woman to man. It involves the cutting and clipping of human tissue, the boring of holes, the removal of flesh, prosthetic re-creations. It is years of elective surgery; that is, surgery by choice, over and over again. It is the pursuit of a physical self-ideal that most of us will never know. It is a new freedom, or seems to be.

Science and the mechanically cexterous micro-surgeons are producing the last sculpture — the human body. They are at work right now. As usual, they work where the poets have already camped. "Let me look into your heart . . .", a wonderful little Romantic whim, has become quite possible. Likewise, the Lover, the Romantic tradition says,

Take me.

Take me and make me more like myself than I am now.  
Change me.

And so the modern surgeon/lover cuts and trims, adding and subtracting, working from photographs and memory. Loving hands encased in a skin-thin latex substance; the hands of an artist. Lifting the new person out of the old; personal anatomical customizing. Price? \$4700.00.

What is the use of being a little boy if you're going to grow up to be a man what is the use, says G. Stein.

"well, I've got a picture in my mind of how I should look when I'm finished . . . no, I'd fight it because I feel I'm a woman trapped in a man's body and I've a female outlook on life. I've always had the desire to cross-dress; not get off on it sexually but psychologically like to be able to be, well starting out as a young girl then a teenage girl then a woman. It's a better feeling."

The speaker is a young man about to begin the surgery phase of a sex change in Rodney Werden's videotape *Baby Dolls*. Soon he will be a young woman. It is a tape similar in technique to Werden's earlier *Pauli Schell*; both are taped interviews with people who present uncommon autobiographical details. In *Pauli Schell*, a young woman discusses the specifics of sexual bondage; in *Baby Dolls*, the medical, legal and social events in the life of an about-to-be transsexual are presented. In both tapes the strength of this presentation is in Werden's choice of individual. He has chosen people who are able to present potentially sensational personal material in quite a commonplace, almost banal manner. They are able to drone on and on in excruciating detail the most personal of personal stories; and in doing so begin to cross the boundaries that separate us the viewer from them the wierdos. Viewing these tapes, we are involved with people who present the sexual/political questions of bondage and sex cross-over as events catalogued in a phenomenological manner, without deep interpretation. As people they are not emblems that "stand for" greater issues. As ideas, they do not beg to be understood. Instead they are individuals, leading detailed and ambiguous lives, just as screwy as our own, only different. Somewhere they have made a set of personal choices very different from those most of us make, and this is disturbing.

But there are important differences between the two tapes. *Baby Dolls* is a much more ironic view than *Pauli Schell*. The viewer is allowed to look at Pauli while she is talking and as a consequence, her deviation becomes more acceptable and di-

gestible. She looks ordinary really; a nice girl with a whip. She talks; we listen. Against nature she stands, but now without reason, or seemingly so; there is incest in her background. And this painful uncomfortable subject offers not so much a cause-and-effect answer as an environment for the unusual.

But in *Baby Dolls*, we never see a face on camera. The reassurance of the calm, orderly facial features (two eyes followed by nose ending with mouth, moving) is denied to us by Werden. Instead there is a foot being fiddled with; cuticles pushed back, nails filed, clip, clip and finally polish applied in awkward short strokes to the prepared nails. A visual intermission in the form of a piece of rainbow-striped candy sliding hesitantly down the instep of this ever-present foot. And then on to the last act: the installation of a rigidly soled, metallic lace-up, high heeled sandal on the waiting, well-prepared foot. The end.

While this is going on visually, the casual, conversational voice-over of the young man-becoming-woman is filling us in on the medical and legal details of *The Change*. He is well versed in the specifics of hormones, implants and adoption. But what are we to think as he chatters on about "service guarantees" on his work? " . . . and any extras that have to be added on like if something heals up and closes up they'll reopen it for nothing. Like it's more or less a service guarantee."

It seems that he has seen too many doctors. He has developed a romantic notion of a futuristic mechanical mutation process. And it is happening to him. Reborn under the knife. But what does he address in us that is so seductive? The belief in change and alteration? Freedom? Self-analysis on a strictly materialistic plane? He is the desiring-machine become the desire. The subject become the object of his own regard. And for a moment we want it for him. We want him to rise from the operating theatre, new and unbound — a production with no end. We want him (now her) to feel good. But then he says:

"I wanna wait like I'll probably wait five or six years after I'm finished my operation and experience like as a woman and then I will I guess eventually marry and settle down if the right person comes along."

And who will this right person be? Someone with some understanding, we hope; able to discern the divine in every hair-line suture. And what are we to think of this:

" . . . it's bookkeeping it's basically something to set me up in life where I can work as a woman in a woman's job. I dunno, office work has always interested me. I'm not into factory. Like, as far as I'm concerned no woman should have to work in a factory. (women's liberation?) I'm for it and then I'm not. Like, I like to be dominated. I don't like to be totally independent."

A man wanting to be the woman that so many biological women are fighting not to be. Perhaps it will be men who carry on the true and classical meaning of femininity in the 20th century.

What does he seem to be saying? In order to be a human being I want to be regarded as a woman, seen and perceived by others as a woman, desired as a woman.

What does he want? He wants to be a woman, do a woman's work, live a woman's life, raise a little girl to be the woman he has always wanted to be. He wants a trade in. Or does he? Who told him he can't be a man and love other men? Who has convinced him of this?

What's the use indeed of being a little boy if you're going

to grow up to be man or a woman. What connections aren't severed irremediably, sealed and burned. What part of the past isn't gone forever the moment it slips onto the other side of the present to be recalled only as dust. But this, this Change is a leave-taking of a kind unknown before. By presenting us with an individual who is not emblematic of the whole of transsexualism, Werden has succeeded in making a tape that is not a smooth and persuasive political endorsement. Nor is it a convincing argument against anything. Instead each statement that is heard becomes a new question for the viewer. We are made to examine all of our own partial prejudices and slippery "beliefs". And he has done this without making one statement of his own.

But perhaps the key to both of these tapes by Werden is the place of emotion in them. There is none. The emotions seem

to have been clipped like tendons, rendering them stiff and useless. What are usually considered to be volatile topics, sex and general topics so close to the individual's image of self, are transposed into lists of details, specifics added to specifics, recitation of processes, medical ("... they'll take what's left of the penis and use that to form the outer part ...") and legal ("... the only place that doesn't get an F is on the birth certificate in certain cases and well, adoption agencies, they keep a list of all transsexuals registered ... we can only have little girls."). This lack of emotion is the core of Werden's specific presentation of his subjects. It is a presentation of deviant behaviour. A non-liberal stance: not one of understanding the transsexual next door. But instead a note of despair and irony. The question: What does this person really want and if you can buy it is it really free?

## The Terms: Limits to Performance?

Bruce Barber

'The Terms: Limits to Performance' is an excerpt from Bruce Barber's, 'Problems in the Taxonomy of Performance and Body Art' (1977), and examination to appear in *Art Metropole's* forthcoming book: *PERFORMANCE BY ARTISTS*, planned for December 1978.

Barber's complete essay discusses the problems of artists' inventing or coining descriptive labels for their work which are often eclipsed by critics' pejorative term-ings. There then follows mixed usage of both sets of labels within vernacular. For the unsuspecting researcher who may have tried to approach *Art Index* (H.W. Wilson Co.) with the hope of finding directive information Barber warns of yet further hazards:

"The situation is compounded when one learns that nearly 50% of the magazines and journals that deal with the three label types ('Happening', 'Body Art', 'Performance Art') are not represented by the *Art Index*."

The book, *PERFORMANCE BY ARTISTS* will also contain important contributions by RoseLee Goldberg, Dick Higgins, Maria Gloria Bicochi, Ardele Lister, Vito Acconci, Germano Celant, General Idea, Laurie Anderson, Tom Sherman — in all thirty pieces. Estimated as a three hundred page publication it will contain a substantial Performance Art bibliography of more than five hundred entries. (ed.)

"What are the limits of performance? We do not know with certainty," said Michael Kirby in his introductory paragraph to a short evaluation of early (1971) art performance works.

"For several years," he continued, "we have been aware that performance did not necessarily need an audience. It could be done as an activity, in which the performer was his own audience so to speak." (Kirby 1971, p. 70)

To my mind "the limits", as Kirby prefers to call them, have still not been determined. This is what makes classification at the present time so difficult. The examples from the *Art Index* system previously given reveal how easily, on the official level at least, performance can bleed into other categories and vice versa. It is perhaps in the very nature of the word 'performance' that this be so, at least until the term becomes so convenient and 'catch-all,' like the word *Happening*, that it ceases to have any other than a specific historical relevance. *Viz* performance in New York meant such and such to this particular group of people within this limited period of time. In fact the word performance is not like the word *Happening*. It has been appropriated rather than coined and has therefore already been honed down by its users to accommodate what they wish it to mean. This might sound surprising, yet I would contend that it is (or was) less open to abuse from the very start of its existence as an art term than *Happening* ever was. As a word with already a great deal of currency in the vernacular it is less likely to be appropriated by

the world of advertising than say *Pop art* — *Body Art* or *Body Language*. But then it's more likely to be open to abuse in the art world — of the kind that the term alienation has had in the world of sociology and philosophy.

Kirby, to get back to the 'limits problem', touches on an important notion as far as actually setting the limits is concerned; that is, can we actually ascribe the word performance to a situation where there is a performance but no audience? Does, in other words, the use of the word performance imply that an audience was present and can we call some kind of activity a performance when either the performer himself is the audience or all of the audience members become participants, or do we have to give it another term? This is in fact what did happen with some 'post-minimalist' work of the mid to late sixties which used the body as its raw material. The other situation is answered in some ways by Kaprow's ideal for the *Happening* which 'breaks the wall between art and life'. We shall touch on this point again a little later when distinguishing between an 'authentic' body work and Kaprow's theories. The name accorded this kind of work became *Body Works*<sup>8</sup>, coined in 1970, probably by the editors of the then new art magazine *Avalanche* for the first major article to deal with the new form. Titled "Body Works: A Pre-critical, non-definitive survey of the very recent works using the human body or parts thereof," the contents are exactly as the

<sup>8</sup> Other items are *Body Art* (contemporaneous with *Body Works*), *Body-Language* (lea Vergine?), *Auto Art* (Peter Frank?).

title describes. However, for any critic approaching the subject now, the article incorporates nearly all the major problems that one is likely to find in any investigation into the limits of performance. In America at least, the term *Performance* gained preference over other terms fairly early on and even in the article named the term was offered along with others and was presumably received positively by the artists doing such work as one suitable alternative for their activities.

"Various called actions, events, performances, pieces, things, the works present physical activities, ordinary bodily functions and other usual and unusual manifestations of physicality." (Sharp 1970 p. 14)

Interestingly enough Allan Kaprow, with a slightly different emphasis from Sharp, italicizes the term *performance* in his book "Assemblage, Environments, and Happenings" (Abrams 1966) when he stated.

"Shifting things around can be an excellent mode of Performance as much as of composition. Just as environment or assemblage can be maintained in prolonged transformation by allowing its parts to be rearranged in numbers of ways, the same can apply to a *Happening*." (Kaprow, p. 204)

A more likely source for the appropriation of the word for recent art is Vito Acconci, and specifically, from the writings of sociologist Irving Goffman, whose 'dramaturgical metaphor' for day to day interaction between people was a major influence on Acconci's early work and writings.

Sharp in his article broaches what appears to be a crucial distinction between *Performance* and *Body Art*. Sharp describes an early work by Dennis Oppenheim (Backtrack 1969) in which the artist's body was dragged along a sandy beach to make marks while the whole process was filmed. He describes this (after Duchamp) as an 'assisted Body Work' because it demanded the assistance of others for its execution. And importantly, to distinguish this from an early Yves Klein work, he wrote,

"In some ways it is reminiscent of Yves Klein's *Imprints* (*Anthropometries* 1961) using the bodies of nude models to apply paint to canvas, but Klein was more interested in the theatrics of the works which were generally done as performances. (Sharp p. 15)

So here in the first major article on *Body Works* is a feature which seemingly singles out the bona fide *Performance* work from the *Action*, *Gesture*, or 'authentic' *Body Work* — theatre. Does it divide it from the *Happening* or *Event* as well? Yes, in terms of the prerequisites or principles Kaprow outlines it does. However, a few of the principles are the same. For instance Kaprow states in his list of general principles that:

(a) "The line between art and life should be kept as fluid and perhaps indistinct as possible." (p. 188) On one hand Oppenheim's work fits this description; after all, it's not an extraordinary gesture or activity to see taking place on a beach. But yes, it may be, if someone is carefully filming it with a 16 mm camera. The means of documentation provide an effective wall between art and life. We are not merely documenting life, but framing it, containing it. And the real crux of the matter is what happens to the document after the event.

Kaprow's (b) is "Therefore, the source of themes, material, actions, and the relationships between them are to be derived from any place or period except from the arts, their derivatives, and their milieu". (p. 189). Even Kaprow admitted in his explanation for this that it was an extremely diffi-

cult practice to adhere to, and in fact many of the *Happenings* make references to other forms of art — sculpture, painting, literature, film — as much as to popular culture — advertising, the automobile, etc. The credo 'nothing develops in isolation,' is certainly accepted here by Kaprow and probably in this instance by Oppenheim as well.

With (c) Kaprow states, "The performance of a happening should take place over several widely spaced, sometimes moving and changing locales." (p. 190) This certainly doesn't fit the Oppenheim piece but then neither does it fit many of the works generally regarded as being *Happenings* either. Only a few of Kaprow's *Happenings* would actually comply with this direction.

(d) "Time, which follows closely on space considerations should be variable and discontinuous." (p. 191) Here is a marked difference between Kaprow's ideals and Oppenheim's work. Discontinuity and variability is the mark of the collagist and ultimately the Surrealist. Oppenheim is more interested in continuous time, and he is certainly not interested in any more than the most rudimentary and 'real' forms of juxtaposition, i.e. body to sand to landscape. He is only working with what is given. For Kaprow discontinuity is an attempt to break the picture frame, reach out from the proscenium — to break away from any form of confinement because, as he says, these will "not allow for breaking the barrier between art and life." (p. 193) Oppenheim happily accepts this convention. His use of the camera, if we want to be purists, all but says as much. With (e) we read "Happenings should be performed once only." For Oppenheim, who is not particularly interested in the spontaneity or novelty of the event, performing his gesture once may be all that is required. After all there is no difficulty in reproducing the action if the film doesn't come out well. There is no live audience as such to worry about. For Kaprow, however, reproducibility is one of the most salient and objectionable features of the theatre tradition. To renounce reproducibility is to embrace life.

(f) "It follows that audiences should be eliminated entirely." (p. 195) Oppenheim is not interested in a live audience for his action, for there will be an audience for his work in the marketplace, the gallery or magazine. Kaprow would eschew this not only because it may be a crass form of consumerism, but also because it is another instance of framing, of the divisive function of art. Ideally for Kaprow, the audience for a *Happening* would become all participants or all 'watchers'. Another essential difference between the two artists is principle (g), "The composition of a *Happening* proceeds exactly as in *Assemblage* and *Environments*, that is, it is evolved as a collage of events in certain spans of time and in certain spaces." (p. 198) If anything, this is diametrically opposed to the way Oppenheim, at least in his early works, operates. Juxtaposition is minimised, spontaneity, the collagist's use of chance and the discontinuous meanderings of the subconscious mind are all but eliminated. Oppenheim's work is exclusive rather than inclusive; he focuses on the singularity of the event rather than the plurality. Absolutely nothing is extraneous to the original conception of the activity. Though Kaprow says that the *Happening* is 'anti-theatrical,' there is still a theatrical residuum which permeates the works.

Michael Kirby noted in the introduction for his "Happenings: An Illustrated Anthology" (1966) that,

"Not all of the fourteen presentations described in this book

were called *Happenings* by their creator. The poster for (Red Groom's) 'The Burning Building' called it a play," Whitman refers to his works as 'Theatre-pieces,' and Oldenburg uses 'Ray Gun Theatre.'" (Kirby p. 10).

As we have seen this theatre is not the only element that one can use to compare and contrast. This discussion has pointed out that other attributes, more easily isolated than theatre, can be used for this purpose. And as far as Body Art and Performance are concerned, there is nothing to indicate that any single attribute such as Theatre can be isolated to say that this work — exhibit A is an example of either 'genre'. An even more detailed morphological and ideological analysis than I attempted with the Oppenheim example and Kaprow's principles for *Happenings* should be done.

Some of this has been attempted (Lea Vergine, Max Kozloff, Lucy Lippard, RoseLee Goldberg), yet even relatively recently in a 'definitive' 'Project 74' essay for the "Kunst Bleibt Kunst" show in Cologne, the critic asks:

"Why the word 'performance' — and why this American technical term in association with a compact Beuysian principle?" (Gruterich, p. 55, 1974)

Why indeed? But the Germans have never been terribly happy with American coined terminology for their art. Klaus Rinke and German art critic George Jappe in a recently published interview (*Studio* July '76) were both adamant that there is no such thing as 'performance art' in Germany.<sup>9</sup> Their preference is for 'Aktion', 'Demonstration', or a more curious word offered by another German artist, Franz Walther — 'Handlung'. 'Aktion' as a synonym for 'Event' is also used in preference to Kaprow's term in German Fluxus artist Wolf Vostell's book "Aktionen: *Happenings*." (Hamburg, 1965).

The German words *Handlung* and *Aktion* however fairly closely approximate the English words *perform*, *performance*, here quoted from the Concise Oxford Dictionary:

*Perform*, vt. to do, to carry out duly; to act in fulfilment of; to carry into effect; to fulfill; to bring about; to render; to execute; to go through duly; to act; to play in due form.

and

*Performance*, n. act of performing; a carrying out of something; something done; a piece of work; a notable feat; manner of success in working; executing; especially an exhibition or entertainment; an act or action.

and then *Action*, this time from the Shorter Oxford:

*Action* n) Gen. 1.) the process or condition of acting or doing; the exertion of energy or influence; working; agency; operation. 2) A thing done; a deed; in Pl. conduct; viewed as occupying time in doing. 3) the thing represented as done in a drama, poem, etc. 4) pl. acts or records of a court. 5) Gesture, esp. oratory; feature and attitude in sculpture and painting; trained movement of the body, etc. 6) the way in which an instrument acts.

Other more specific meanings follow — as in law, a legal process or suit; the acting of plays; a devotional exercise, etc.

Now for comparison, *Handlung* and *Aktion* in German from Cassels German/English Dictionary:

*Handlung*, (en) f. action, deed, performance, act, transaction, business, trade, commerce, shop, firm.

*Dramatische Handlung* — plot of a play

*Handlungweise*, (f) mode of procedure, action or operation; way of acting, attitude, conduct, behaviour.

<sup>9</sup> Though the translation *Aufführungskunst* for *Performance Art* would seem to indicate otherwise.

and

*Aktion*, (f) en (pl) has the editors "this has recently become very common" and has the vaguest connotations: 1) Activity; Process, eg. *Schuttaktion* — clearing rubble. 2) undertaking, procedure.

It may be seen from this that *Handlung* very clearly approximates the meanings for the English verb to perform, with, if anything, a slightly greater emphasis toward the theatrical. *Aktion* is extremely close to the English *Action* which it should be, as a fairly recent adaption into the German Language. Yet to evaluate objectively, neither the English or the German words have an exceptionally strong component of theatre in their meanings, nor is there any sense in *Handlung*, *Action* etc. that these activities — doings, have to be done for another — an audience. The emphasis appears to be on the 'carrying out, acting through' or merely 'doing something.' They are fairly anonymous in this respect. Yet we find in two exchanges between Georg Jappe, Franz Walther and Klaus Rinke very fine distinctions being made.

G.J. "You are aware of the notion of 'performance.' Would you count yourself as one of its followers, or what description would you use for your work?"

K.R. "The concept of 'performance' comes from the New York scene. For us — for our generation — it took a long time after the *Happening* era to avoid walking in its footsteps. That is why we use the notion of *Aktion*<sup>10</sup> and *Demonstration*. *Aktion* was basically a quite short minimal gesture, in contrast to the theatrical, material organisation of *Happening*. Minimal art was fundamentally very important for us. In the first place, it was concerned with material, but then we got rid of material and I only want to do things with myself. Personally I would prefer to call it *Demonstration* or 'I Present' something, if there is an exact translation for that." (p. 63)

With Walther, Jappe opens again with the same leading question:

G.J. "You know the blanket term 'performance.' Would you accept it for yourself, or what description would you want to see applied to your own works?"

F.E.W. "Ever since the word 'performance' was first applied to my work I've had difficulties with it, because for me it has too many theatrical associations. All sorts of words have been used, but I haven't found one that's right. Certainly what goes on in my work has something to do with action — *Handlung* in German. It's thought processes developing. I've seen my work categorised sometimes as process art, sometimes as Behaviour Art, I should prefer to use the word *Handlung* if it can be turned into an art word: I like 'Aktion art' better than performance because its more neutral. And yet the English word 'action' I'm afraid it has something programatic about it: it almost amounts to a definition of content. I don't think I do 'Actions.' A better way to put it in English would be just 'doing' — it's simply an activity." (p. 66)

Obviously the meanings in these instances correspond to the use, and no matter how much we would like to bind these artists to the literal it would still not enable us to feel satisfied with our appellation, simply because it's not theirs and there may be no real point of conjunction between theirs and ours. And yet labels do matter to artists like Walther and Rinke because they are a useful way of signalling, usually in shorthand, the difference between their type of work and say that of Joseph Beuys who also uses the word *Aktion*, and those of

<sup>10</sup> This appears in the English translation as *Action*. Rinke is possibly using the German *K.* to distinguish it from the English version.

the 'true' Waltherian or Rinkeian performance artist, say Acconci, whose work to them would be unnecessarily theatrical. Thus, judging by some of the remarks made by participants in the debate, 'performance' can be distinguished from 'Aktion' or demonstration on the basis of theatre. However, many of Rinke's works, for example, look superficially like some of Acconci's early works. If we were to compare some of Rinke's early "Primary Demonstrations" (1970-71) where simple, unemotionally performed actions or tasks were performed (sometimes of long, sometimes short duration) such as moving one object from one side of a room to another, emptying one material from a container into another container or simply holding the body in certain positions for periods of time, with some of Acconci's early 'performances' or 'activities,' for instance his "Seconds" (1971) where he simply paced time in a circle around a naked hanging bulb, following with his eye the second hand going around a clock, we can identify certain common features. Both stem, according to the artists themselves, from minimalism; both are gestures that consume (for want of a better word) time; there is no acting or role playing in the accepted theatre sense; they are in some ways uninteresting to watch; there is little complexity or detail; there is no hierarchy in the structure of parts (instances in time) with the whole, (the duration of the performance). In fact they both fit neatly into many of the principles governing minimal dance as expressed by Yvonne Rainer.<sup>11</sup> And yet the distinguishing feature between the two for Rinke would be theatre.

Now theatre is a very difficult thing to isolate unless, that is, you are an Irving Goffman who would dichotomise into 'front stage' and 'backstage' a household situation in which — (hypothetically) you were in the bathroom, while your parents are in the kitchen talking to your neighbours while your brother is in the hallway talking to a policeman. It is almost as difficult to isolate as performance. Obviously, like performance, theatre is relative and context dependent and to compare individual instances may be misleading and unfair. However, some would say that Michael Fried did a pretty good job in his finely honed essay "Art and Objecthood," which appeared in *Artforum* June 1967. Fried's basic thesis, which was deftly used from the standpoint of modernist theory, to attack minimalism, is that there is, at the core of literalist (minimalist) theory, an inherent theatricality.

"What is it," he says, "about objecthood as projected and hypostatized by the literalists that makes it, if only from the perspective of recent modernist painting, antithetical to art?" (for art — read modernist painting) And "the answer," he proposes, is this: "The literalist espousal of objecthood amounts to nothing other than a pleas for a new genre of theatre; and theatre is now the negation of art." (p. 125)

In a new paragraph he continues:

"Literalist sensibility is theatrical because, to begin with, it is concerned with the actual circumstances in which the beholder encounters literalist work. Morris makes this explicit. Whereas in previous art, "What is to be had from the work is located strictly within (it)," the experience of literalist art is of an object in a situation — one that virtually by definition includes the beholder." (p. 125)

The question of whether or not theatre is the negation of art is not at issue here. It is, I think, true to say that this is the case as far as modernist theory is concerned. And when Fried

<sup>11</sup> See Yvonne Rainer's "A Quasi survey . . ." in Battcock, *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* (Dutton 1968) and Yvonne Rainer: *Work 1961-71* NSCAD eNYU Press 1974.

claims that minimal art is inherently theatrical and substantiates this view by enumerating cases of 'statements of intention or observation' from what the minimalists feel and experience when confronted by the 'minimalist presence' — he is right. This presence was a means whereby the object somehow gained control over the spectator, or Fried's term, the beholder. The beholder, asserts Fried, again interpreting sculptor Robert Morris, is distanced "not just physically but psychologically" (p. 126). And "it is," he continues, "precisely this distancing that makes the beholder a subject and the piece in question . . . an object." (p. 126) But what he subsequently goes on to reveal is that the beholder becomes *subjected* to the object's *power* or *presence*: The control that the object evinces over the viewer is like the instance he gives of sculptor Tony Smith dwarfed at the Nuremberg parade ground. This 'control' is further equated with theatre. It is simply power that the one (the object, situation or person) has over the other. This, to Fried, is an example of "Art degenerating as it approaches the condition of theatre." Theatre corrupts, perverts and as he says in his conclusion, "We are all literalists most or all of our lives. (But) presentness is grace." (p. 147) This 'presentness' exemplified in modernist art but not in minimalist is for Fried an affirmation of the continuous, (existential) and "permanent present" — a transcendent condition which art *should* have over the 'theatre of life.'

Paradoxically, it is almost as if Fried's essay were opening the door to the exploration of the self existing within this 'theatrical world.' It is an act of affirmation rather than of abrogation of the self in the here and now; in fact we use a surrogate object to 'get at it' — this transcendent condition?

Is this what Acconci means when he says that his early work was really "a last gasp of minimalism" (in conversation with me Jan '77) or what Rinke means when he talks of substituting "the material of minimalism with (the material) of self"? (p. 62). Probably not, in Rinke's case, for he would not worry too much about debating the notion of theatricality in those works associated with the term performance; for him it is in the word itself. But then minimalism? Perhaps Rinke is labouring under a misconception. If, as Fried says, minimalism is theatrical, surely Rinke should re-evaluate what he (Rinke) means by theatre, and alter the appellation for his own work accordingly.

Acconci possibly knew that it, theatre, was there in the situation of the object 'confronting' the viewer, and the lesson was readily assimilable and translated into the ultimate theatricality contained in the subordination of the audience (the object) to the performer (the subject). Or were Acconci, Nauman and others pointing out in the late 60's that Fried's position was anomalous; that theatricality was not necessarily there (in the object) — even when you had a person *literally* imitating the object? This is one way the argument could go if one was to adhere to a lineage concept of art history from the beginnings of 'Reductivism.' The intense examination of the 'self in the world' may be the ultimate gesture to make in relation to the reductive impulse that has been said to have operated in mainstream art over the past century. The body object 'in-the-world' is probably more open to a close scrutiny by the self and others than the object used as a theatrical substitute for the body. But then is this the kind of narcissism that Merleau-ponty talks about in his essay the "Eye and the Mind" quoted ad nauseam by the 'literalists' of the 60's — the ultimate tautology we involve ourselves in when confronting the problem of the self in the world? We, according

### "The Terms: Limits to Performance?"

to the philosopher, are confronting ourselves, confronting ourselves.

"The enigma is that my body simultaneously sees and is seen. That which looks at all things can also look at itself and recognise in what it sees the "other side" of its power of looking. It sees itself, it touches itself, touching; it is visible and sensitive to itself. It is not a self through transparency, like thought, which only thinks its object by assimilating it by transforming it into thought. It is a self through confusion, narcissism through inherence of the one who sees in that

which he sees and through inherence of the sensing in the sensed — a self therefore, that is caught up in things, that has a front, and a back, a past and a future. . . .

This initial paradox cannot but produce others. Visible and mobile, my body is a thing among things; it is caught in the fragment of the world, and its cohesion is that of a thing. But because it moves itself and sees, it holds things in a circle around itself." (Merleau-Ponty 1964), p. 162-3)

This is presentness; it may not be the presentness of the stage, but it is the presentness of the amphitheatre.

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Fall 1978

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- 24 Henry Kucharzyk. New compositions.
- 30 Michel Waisvisz. Electronic music from Amsterdam performed by the composer on a compact, touch-sensitive synthesizer of his own design.

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- 10 Evan Parker with the CCMC.
- 14 James Newton. One concert only by acclaimed American flutist.
- 21 & 22 Dance + 4. Dance, electronic music, percussion and light sculpture. Bentley Jarvis, Robin Aulis, Robert Mulder.
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### Ask Not What Our Country Can Do for Us, But When Will We Realise That We Are the Country — Or — What's on the Menu?

#### 9 individual artists' views after the "New Artsspace Conference."

*Whilst in agreement with the general substance and critical attitudes of this collection of nine individual artists' views there is, we believe, a double inconsistency as a number of the artists whose comments follow have been part of the traditional institution's star-making machinery. Baldessari, Askevold and Kaprow have existed well, outside of the artist-run organisations, placing instead their emphasis on employment within the educational art system. The growth of artists' spaces in the seventies has been a radical departure from merely securing an income in that it recovered the mechanisms of work and distribution and sometimes the means to exist. That this experiment has not been altogether successful has of late been a popular observation but, once admitted, it is necessary to fairly compare artists' spaces with the stagnant and inflexible state of affairs within the traditional art-training grounds of art colleges and university art departments. In the latter the changing role of the artist has been all but excluded, exceptions being institutional galleries and their sometime patronage of leasing that which moves. These aforementioned artists and other art satellites should remember that only when you have no job, no contract, no commercial outlet can the cry for destruction or dissolution of artists' organisations be seen as an act of concerned logic or bravery.*

*That art students should continually be wooed into thinking that there still exists any valuable apprenticeship through art educational 'heat-sinks' is the other inconsistency. No one who lives by teaching could suggest that perhaps those same student fees be used as a financial base for artist-run organisations in which the students could be allowed to change from their 'student skin' into full participation finally taking over with their own organisational requirements. As a continuous flow model this could have dealt with the gap that exists between the likes of Askevold, Baldessari, Kaprow and artist-space workers; it could have established a continuity between those same artist-run spaces and the next generation. The influence could have changed from "teach like me" to work, like me. These regrettably are the real flaws in artist-space growth.*

It is not an issue that these reactions come several months after the fact. Nor should the attitudes expressed here be seen in a limited context, rather, as exemplifying frustrations which permeate many levels of this culture.

The statement "DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU ARE A PART OF IT?", drew over 60 people, (April 20). Not bad considering the mailing was to 100 artists, and the city was Los Angeles. The occasion was to discuss implications of the First National Alternative Artsspace Conference, sponsored by the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, to be held April 26-29, 1978. That statement obviously pinched a lot of nerves. The feeling, exemplified by that statement, was my reaction after having read the conference brochure. It seemed to me another blatant example of an administrator assuming the organizational responsibility for many, and passing it off as open, innovative, alternative, "what's good for you." Patronism is subtle castration. This time, I noticed my own complicity. Rather than take my ques-

tions, as an individual artist, to the institution, I chose to take them to artists in the community. This resulting meeting the first of several, at which artists' grievances were aired, argued, clarified, honed, with the objective of presentation to the paid participants of the conference. Our efforts culminated in a demonstration of protest, after the inaugural dinner. Let it not be forgotten that well over 100 artists appeared in support of the protest. What actually did happen is hard to say — it probably warrants an in-depth sociological/psychological study. Suffice it to say here, that beyond causing disorientation and confusion, we actually were, faced with the reality, numb. We are over socialized, and that is an important message! It's scary to speak out, to rock that boat which we trusted would be steered for us. It's not enough to realise that we don't like the course it is taking us on. It's not enough to realise that without us there would be no need for a boat. We are here. We must learn how to steer. We cannot wait to be taught. We must teach ourselves. We must accept the actuality of our own power and take

every opportunity to use it. We can order our own meal. That is innovation.

The following views are offered by some of the artists still concerned with making their views public. As editor, I decided that the main issue was to support and nurture that concern. Everyone who chose to participate was included, unedited. If you are sensitive to redundancy, keep in mind the importance of speaking out.

Dorit Cypis

That the New Artsspace Conference, a nationwide alternative space conference, funded by the N.E.A. and planned by the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, excluded artists, (via allocation of N.E.A. funds; from the planning of the conference; by requiring registration fees), indicates that the government and local alternative space organizations are coopting public arts monies for institutional ends. It appears that one of the dangers which can occur when alternative spaces become institutions is that they become economic bureaucracies capable of functioning entirely independent of artists. From the nature of much of the discussion at the conference, it became evident that there is great concern about how to become bigger and more powerful institutions, how to get more funding.

Never was the question of the artists' participation or economic relationship to these institutions brought up or examined. Alternative space administrators, not by design but by function, neglected one of the fundamental issues inherent in the notion of radical alternative space — that of new economic relationship of artists to exhibiting institutions. This omission exemplifies the danger of alternative spaces functioning independent of artists and underscores the fallacious idea that these spaces offer a new economic alternative or alternative of any kind.

And it punctuates the necessity for artists themselves to become a functioning part of arts exhibition systems, responsible for decisions which determine economic policy and exhibition philosophy. Artists must begin to function on their own behalf within these institutions if their needs are truly to be met.

Sheila Pinkel

**Being and Usefulness.**

I've been on many panels. It appears to be that no matter what the name of the panel I am on (or other panels during the conference) the panel will drift to a topic that is *really* on the minds of the panelists. This observation may or may not be generally true, but a recurring concern of the panels I attended at the Alternative Space Conference was this: what do we do when the money runs out? Not once did anyone conclude (other than myself) that perhaps an alternative space should stop functioning — that perhaps it had outlived its useful life, and that a new space might arise that would address than-current urgent issues. The best way to test if a committee is still useful is to disband it. If a reason to be is still there for that committee, it will certainly arise again. I suppose it is much like a vote of confidence for government. It makes one wonder how many spaces really need to exist (that is, are they still serving the needs of artists?) or are they still going mindlessly on, simple because they are there. Mere existence doesn't mean usefulness, nor does a smoothly running ship.

John Baldessari

It seems fitting that an art conference should manifest as many layers of meaning and be as subject to multiple interpretations as a work of art itself; yet on the other hand a few common threads seem to emerge from and even dominate the content of this conference and its ensuing debate, just as we are beginning to observe similarly pervasive ideological strands converging in the structure of art per se.

After all is said and done the thing which grates on one's critical pretentiousness the most is the billing of the show as an "alternative." The artist's protest points, specifically, to a deep and underlying meaning constant through virtually every form of "artist's support" thus far: the subsumption of art under — or at least its placement in an inferior position with respect to — the logic of rationality, embodied in our day in the familiar bureaucratic apparatus. From Melinda Wertz and his xenophobic attitude to poetry, to Kant with his great divide of Sensibility and Understanding (the latter clearly on top), to the mindless and naive cliché of art as "apolitical," and the attitude of L.A.I.C.A. to art and artists, we can see the continual maintenance

of art as, to use Levi-Strauss's metaphor, a "public park." Non-rationality is tolerated so long as it remains within bounds and is ultimately malleable, fungible — administrable, if L.A.I.C.A. et al are alternatives they are so only in relation to the now defunct (— did we really need anyone to tell us) commercial gallery network — but certainly not, to pick one example, to the telephone company or more insidiously, to the culture industry.

Of course, it's clear that things can't go on like this for much longer — or is it? One's sense of despair is heightened by the fact that alternatives to the alternative seem few and far between, offered perhaps least of all by the artist's protest group. The dialectic of bureaucracy may be moving onto its next phase as it completely expunges, through subsumption (the latter merely a product of its inherent logic), the very subjectivity it had pretended simply to "support" — eventually emerging as a stale and lifeless redundancy.

This ultimate consequence is belied, thankfully, by the fact that artists did get up and say something. Whether or not the presently emerging generation of artists will have any significance in terms of the history and development of art (remember that?), as distinct from entertainment — let alone significance with respect to society as a whole — depends upon how well we can nurture and how far we can extend that cry of protest.

Fredrick Dolan

No matter how hard I try, I find it hard to think of the New ArtSpace Conference without lapsing into notions of food and feeding. I refer not to a metaphor of personal survival, rather, the thoughts are like the instinctive, uninflected musings of a beast. It is the inordinate concern with whether one will find a place to park. I am tired of decorous, collective stagefright. I involuntarily cease to care.

Sheena Snake,  
as told to

Harris Boldt Edleman

**The Form of a Breakdown:**

The Alternative Space Conference brought to light some disturbing relationships in the Los Angeles art community. Two circumstances fomented a breakdown in communication between artists and other artists. There

was a breach of (verbal) contract between the conference head and the artists: artists were promised, and not given, a fully accredited conference panel format for their presentation. The artists were relegated to a much less effective position as one in a series of speakers (creating justified confusion and resentment by the artists which became apparent, without the reasons being known) to the conferees.

Artists of "high professional stature" in the Los Angeles art community were involved, from the inception, in the planning of the artists' presentation. None of them, however, chose to speak during the "artists' time" at the conference.

The above factors contributed to a devastating discrediting of the artists' points of view. They effectively undermined significant discussion of the issues at hand (which were clearly stated in hand-out sheets which had been passed around beforehand). This was no one party's fault, but unfortunately, it was everyone's loss; for the issues at stake in the role of the artists within the alternative space context still need to be honestly and thoroughly addressed. It is crucial that artists feed their opinions into the existing art structures, alternative and otherwise. It is deeply discouraging that a schism between the more successful artists and the "unaffiliated" artists became apparent when it came to a point of making a public statement.

One hopes that the conference sparked off discussion between artists and institutions at the local level around the country. And one hopes that the attitudes represented by the circumstances I've outlined here will not be duplicated in each local situation; for such debate is fundamental and important enough to deserve a national forum and national publicity. It deserves a conference of its own.

Kathy Kauffman

**Artist's Run Spaces for Artists Run Spaces**

I learned a lot, or rather confirmed a lot by attending the New ArtSpace Conference, — or since than have you read Melinda Wertz's article in Art Week 5/27/78? "Love it or Leave it" — Merle Haggard —

Within my rejection notice for an individual artist's fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, is the following statement:

"Our Panels looked at 3,683 applicants and recommended 127 for fellowship." I wonder what ratio exists between applications and acceptances for the arts institutions (alternative spaces)?

I realize that often a space may not be funded for the maximum grant application, and in that case, because operational costs usually take precedence in the functioning of an institution, the artist fee becomes bottom priority.

Has money ever been cut back from an institution to fund the individual artist?

David Askevold

**From a talk presented at the L.A.I.C.A. conference on the New ArtSpace, April 26-29**

... An art space is:

- 1) a box (i.e., the typical studio or gallery).
- 2) a physical exterior space, such as a street, desert, forest, parking lot (or a group of these).
- 3) a human body and its immediate space of movement.
- 4) a contextual environment or situation, in which (like a city's center or bedroom) meanings of things and spaces commingle. (Hence, the space of a gallery box that resembles a factory conveys overtones of industry and art history).
- 5) the physical interior space of the human body, the vital organs, the sensorium, nervous system, circulation, etc.
- 6) communicational spaces such as telephones, roadways, postal ways, radio, T.V., telegraph, as well as transpersonal activities.
- 7) the spaces of the mind; conceptual and metaphoric behavior, private and social senses of the self and group, education, religion, political consciousness, etc.

When viewed against this range of alternatives, the current new art spaces mainly reflect definition number one. They are boxes, or containers modelled on a sentimental image of an earlier day. Peripherally, they do support art activities (such as performance) not bound up with the box and its meanings; but their major commitment goes into fostering of exhibitional art. Their message to the world is: *art is what you put into a gallery*, and a gallery carries more meaning than any art work put into it. Put another way (Yves Klien did it once by "exhibiting" opening-

night guests in an empty gallery), *the gallery is the art.*

No one would quarrel with this message as a conservative belief, but it is misleading when it is represented in brochures and articles as innovation, and is offered as the typical example of fresh change. It would be helpful to ask if indeed the new art spaces adequately reflect the range of legitimate experimentation in the arts today. While they may be defended as sympathetic to and supportive of experimentation, in the end they confuse the issue (however sincerely) because everything novel is referenced to the notion of a "house of art." Human energies and use of monies set aside for the arts could be far more diversified. For example, all that might be needed to manage a "new art space" would be a typewriter, a public relations budget, and some air plane tickets. Compared to the cash required to support a "house" for several years, the outlay would be minimal. Marinetti, Zara, the post-revolution Russians, Seth Siegel, Lynn Hershman, are good models for the

next agents of "New Art Spaces" to follow.

Allan Kaprow

Alternative spaces have done some good for the art communities across the U.S. and Canada. Regrettably, they have not left many of the problems manifested through the museums and galleries. The New ArtSpace Conference was organized in a way that could only pass on the ills inherent in past and present systems. No effort was made to enlist new ideas from artists outside their own ranks. The conference was far too self-serving and lacked any creative or progressive conditions to benefit a wide range of artists \*(one was hard pressed to find Third-World artists). It is a pity that all this money and energy spent in the name of artists, was wasted on the perpetuation of a system that refuses to critically look inward.

Paul Tzanetopoulos

\* Editor's note © Dorit Cypis, 1978.



cartoon by Pieter Sepp

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## Imagine A Space as Karen Ann Quinlan....

### A A Bronson

#### CLARIFICATION:

'Centerfold' did not commission this piece on A Space. We originally requested A A Bronson to write on his recent European experiences. The proposal that follows is not unrelated to those observations but is perhaps more grounded to the fact that whilst listed as an A Space Consultative Committee advisor, Bronson's advice was neither sought after nor received.

#### Corrections:

1. Al Mattes was not, as suggested, a peripheral member of The Consultative Committee. He attended many more meetings than this text suggests and in

addition worked hard on recommendations and future music programming.

2. The innuendo concerning Victor Coleman "enjoying the benefits of an exchange programme with La Mabelle in sunny California" is also unsubstantiated. A Space in San Francisco included performance, exhibits and new projects (Radio Room, guest issue of La Mabelle). Such a programme beset with technical access problems could hardly be termed, "Holidaying in San Francisco."  
(ed.)

## powerhouse

PRESENTS: SOME WOMEN FILMMAKERS  
PRESENTE: QUELQUES FEMMES CINEASTES

Oct. 10 - 14 - CINEMA PARALLEL - 3682 Blvd. St. Laurent - 20h30 - \$2

### 10

SUN, WIND & WOOD

Qué. 1977. Dorothy Todd Hénaud. 25 min. Documentary.

PATRICIA'S MOVING PICTURE

Qué. 1978. Bonnie Klein. 28 min. Documentary.

AN UNREMARKABLE BIRTH

Qué. 1978. Diane Beaudry. 58 min. Documentary.

### 11

JUST-A-MINUTE

Qué. 1976. 10 min. Animation.

LA GRANDE REMUE-MENAGE

Qué. 1978. Sylvie Groulx & Françoise Goulet. Documentaire.

FILM WITHDRAWN  
new schedule available end of Sept

### 12

A VOL D'OISEAU

Qué. 1976. Marie Chamberlain. 1 min. Animation.

TRAVELLER'S PALM

Qué. 1976. Joyce Borenstein. 2 min.40sec. Animation.

HOW THE HELL ARE YOU?

Qué. 1972. Veronika Soul. 11 min.30 sec. Animation.

TALES FROM THE VIENNA WOODS

Qué. 1974. Veronika Soul. 11min.35 sec. Animation.

A SAID POEM

Qué. 1977. Veronika Soul. 2 min. Animation.

RECIPE TO COOK A CLOWN

Qué. 1978. Lois Siegel. 24 min.3 sec. Scenario.

PASSAGES

Qué. 1978. Nesya Shapiro. 30 min.

### 13

D'ABORD MENAGERE

Qué. 1978. Luce Guilbeault. 120 min. Long-métrage.

### 14

WOMEN ON THE MARCH PART I

Can. 1958. 29 min.18 sec. Documentary.

LADY FROM GREY COUNTY

Qué. 1977. Janice H. Brown, Margaret Wescott. 26 min.13 sec.

SOME AMERICAN FEMINISTS

Qué. 1977. Nicole Brossard, Luce Guilbeault, Margaret Wescott.

56 min. Documentary.

Oct. 13 - POWERHOUSE - 3738 St. Dominique - 15h - libre/free

### 13

JILL JOHNSTON OCTOBER 1975

Ontario. 1977. Lydia Wazana & Kay Armatage. 30 min. Documentary.

THIN LINE

Ontario. 1977. Holly Dale & Janis Cole. 32 min. Documentary.

On September 15th at 8:00 p.m. the membership of A Space will meet to decide the future of this battle-worn artist-run gallery, Canada's oldest, largest and most influential.

The Board of Directors is proposing a new budget which will more than double the current operation to a cool quarter-million dollars a year, and will involve hiring a new staff of four administrators and five curators, in addition to some other part-time staff.

The controversial super-budget is the result of a \$10,000 advisory report made by a panel of artists. The report advises the continuation of A Space's current form of organization, slightly modified and vastly expanded, despite the recent noises of non-confidence from both the artistic community and the Canada Council. More about that later.

At a recent 'information meeting' A Space members, including myself, peppered president John Bentley Mays with questions for which there were insufficient answers. John Mays is an efficient, correct and charming chairman. He fields questions with an aplomb gathered on the verandas of southern plantations. This child of southern politics was born with a silver spoon in his mouth and he's loath to swallow it now. He has thrown himself into A Space with an enthusiasm which is admirable, if perhaps misdirected. Certainly A Space's battered books and mangled legal status have improved with his attention. But plastic surgery is not enough. Beneath the thin skin of forward-looking optimism lurks a murky tangle of vested interests and bested egos that not even he can smooth over.

This information meeting was a chance to iron out the dirty wash, if you'll excuse my mixed metaphors, before the annual members meeting. Curiously, only two of the five directors and three of the five curators were present to present their budgets and programmes. The climax of the evening was another informal show of no-confidence, this time for the expanded budget. Of twenty-five present, only two approved.

The budget earmarks \$35,000 for dance and music, both of which are being adequately handled elsewhere. Another \$80,000 is budgeted for visual arts, writing and video. Please note that there is no budget for artists' performance, despite A Space's traditional strong role in this medium. There is no

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF A SPACE: A PROPOSAL

It is clear from both the report of the A Space Consultative Committee and from the many discussions in the community itself, that the community wants A Space to function as a museum without a collection, as a working service organization within the new art community.

As preliminary work in that direction it is crucial that A Space and its parent organization, the Nightingale Arts Council, be separated and clarified, thus:

1. What organizations are members of the Nightingale Arts Council? As I understand it they are A Space, the A Space Video Co-op and Only Paper Today.

2. How does an organization become a member? What criteria must they meet?

3. Who are the voting members of the Nightingale Arts Council? Are all members of each participating organization voting members of the Council?

4. What can the Nightingale Arts Council offer its members? What are its responsibilities? Obviously, it offers a charter, charitable status, and an advisory board. What would financial responsibility of the Board be?

It is my belief that in order to set up a carefully structured functioning museum without a collection, A Space must be temporarily suspended, and the new organization built from scratch.

As the new budget has already been sent to the Canada Council, I suggest the membership take the following action:

1. Discontinue A Space as a building and as a name. All equipment should be temporarily loaned to other artist-run organizations, except where it is needed for specific programming.

2. Decentralize A Space programming for six months as follows:

a. Establish the School of Letters as a separate writers' organization under the Nightingale Arts Council. The programme can continue under the curatorship of Susan Harrison, administered by the organization itself, and held in outside locations.

b. The dance, music, video and visual arts programmes can each be held by the curators in outside locations, either other institutions or

rented spaces. The budget, in each case, should be temporarily administrated by an appropriate institution, for example the Music Gallery for Al Mattes music programme.

3. The administrative budget should be co-opted by the Nightingale Arts Council for the following purposes:

a. to rent an administrative office. A Space's records can also be kept here, and the office can be used for A Space programming mailings.

b. to cover costs of discontinuing A Space and storing equipment, where necessary.

c. to hire one full-time administrator and a full-time secretary/assistant. Their responsibilities are outlined below.

d. to cover costs of assembling a detailed working proposal for a new museum without a collection. These costs will include fees for consultants, and travel expenses for examining other working institutions of a similar nature (see Addenda A)

4. The full-time administrator and secretary mentioned above would be hired for the following purposes:

a. to handle the legalities and practicalities of disassembling A Space.

b. to research and develop the concept of a museum without walls, in all its details, with the purpose of presenting a detailed proposal to the membership and to the Canada Council by next spring at the earliest or next fall at the latest. It is essential that the administrator use the advice of managerial, legal and financial experts; that he meet regularly with the new board, who should be a majority of artists; and that he visit similar existing institutions to examine their workings. The Arnolfini in Bristol and the Kunsthallen in Munchengladbach, Lucerne and Basel are of particular interest.

Implicit in all my suggestions is the recommendation that artists run their institutions by hiring outside personnel for purely administrative positions. Curatorial and Board of Director positions should be primarily artists, except where specific outside help is needed or of interest. The Board of Directors, however, should include at least one and preferably two professional people with legal, financial and/or managerial expertise.

AA Bronson  
September 6, 1978

other continuing forum for artists' performance in the city.

Another \$100,000 is budgeted for administration costs. This is more than twice that of any other similar institution in Canada. When asked to defend this rapid growth, John Mays suggested that in these times of economic cut-backs, only a bold move would keep A Space ahead. Although his reasoning may be politically sound, it is culture we want to support and nurture in Toronto, and not just A Space.

My misgivings about the budget, by the way, are not a reflection on the programming itself. The programming, with the one exception of visual arts, is excellent, and in the case of writing and video, important. But Flavio Belli's proposal for 60 exhibitions per year (count 'em — sixty!) in theatre lobbies strikes me as council-pleasing pseudo-educationalism rather than serious investigation and support of the visual arts.

has always been A Space's strong point. One of the first artist-run organizations in Canada, it has pioneered alternatives to the Art Gallery of Ontario and other white elephants.

Over the past two years, however, warring personalities have driven that programme into a hiccuping accolade of the banal, the bad and the brilliant. In addition, book-keeping mysteries, legal inconsistencies, and in-house hiring have decorated A Space's destruction derby styling. It is frankly difficult to rationalize the continued growth of an organization that is run on the principles of thinking big but acting small.

This spring the Canada Council stopped A Space funding. To help A Space look at itself and reorganize its operations they provided \$10,000 to use as A Space saw fit.

Directors John Mays, Marien Lewis and Victor Coleman appointed a board, the Consultative Committee, to make a study of A Space's present and past, with recommendations for the future. The Committee, all artists with previous relationships to A Space, demonstrated the democratic idea that the community could dictate its own future. Unfortunately, conflict of interests is the other side of that rather thin coin. More about that later.

#### THE NIGHTINGALE ARTS COUNCIL: A Brief History

The Nightingale Arts Council was the legal name under which half a dozen

artists chartered their A Space concept. The charter is an innovative open-ended support of culture, encompassing cinemas, galleries, education, whatever. A Space, then, was seen as simply that: a space, in which anything could happen.

Since then the Nightingale Arts Council has acted as an effective legal umbrella for numbers of fringe organizations—currently the A Space Video Co-op and *Only Paper Today*, to name two. It provides a Board of Directors, a charter, and charitable status.

Now nobody has noticed that the Nightingale Arts Council actually exists or the important role it's playing. As the original charter was begun by a small group of individuals, who put in an extraordinary amount of personal thought, energy, and faith, there were no other members. Since then, A Space has established a paying membership, and it is that membership who elects the directors of A Space and thus the Council, which they mistakenly assume to be the same thing.

But in fact A Space is only one, albeit the largest and original, member of several organizations comprising the Nightingale Arts Council.

The writing of the Nightingale Arts Council charter—inventive, innovative, absolutely crucial to the development of artist-run institutions in Canada—has been eclipsed by the more dramatic full-moon scenarios of A Space. As you read the rest of this article, please keep in mind with absolute clarity the importance of this charter, not only in the past, but in the future of artist-run organizations.

#### THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE or: Too Many Cooks Spoil the Broth

Who chose the Consultative Committee? Who did they choose? Even people on the committee disagree on this one.

The Board's initial appointed choices do not constitute the final group. John Mays reported that Victor Coleman added members behind his back. Susan Harrison reports that she was asked to present herself before the committee by John Mays, but that the Committee itself had to OK her. Michael Snow and Al Mattes, both on the committee, spent all but two meetings out of the country. Other members included Judith Doyle, Flavio Belli, Elizabeth Chitty, Robert Bowers, Paula Ravitz,

John Scott and perhaps Miriam Adams.

A Space's lawyer and accountant were not on the committee, nor were any other people with financial or legal expertise.

No management or fund-raising consultants were talked to, and the committee objected to using the services of such people.

Susan Harrison, a member of the committee told me, "I felt we were fumbling around a lot. I definitely feel we could have used someone a bit more experienced or older."

The Committee, although they did not attach their own names to the report, did attach a list of people they 'consulted'. I put 'consulted' in quotation marks, because that consultation was often extremely narrow, and in some cases imaginery. Elke Hayden, for example, previous A Space administrator now working at the Art Gallery of Ontario, was questioned only about literary programme possibilities. Rodney Werden, A Space Video Co-op administrator, was questioned only about the relationship of A Space to the Co-op. And myself and Peggy Gale, both listed, were not consulted at all. How many other names on the list were only included for political purposes?

#### THE COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The 'Historical Perspective' with which the report opens provides perspective but no history. The report does not say who started A Space or when. The original Nightingale Arts Council charter is not described. The relationship of A Space to the Council is never stated.

Previous forms of organization used by A Space are not described or criticized. No investigation is made of similar decision-points in A Space's past or of previous directions indicated by the membership.

In fact, the 'Historical Perspective' is a simple statement of A Space's early evolution and relative importance. There is nothing here of use in studying A Space's internal structure — although it does act as a fair defense of A Space's past existence.

The report continues in the same vein. 'Administrative Problems' are described only by symptom. The existing administrative organization is neither described or criticized, except for the overlap between directors and staff.

Hiring and firing, traditional A Space trouble areas, are not mentioned.

'Fiscal Problems' are described in the most superficial way:

"Rarely has the NAC staff been temperamentally suited for or interested in the kind of balance sheet management necessary in government and private industry."

The actual mechanics of A Space's day to day finances are neither described or criticized. Nor are recommendations in this area made later in the report.

The report ignores A Space's historic inability to formulate or follow realistic budgets, an inability which is due, not so much to the cliché of artistic temperament as it is to itchy fingers. Minor graft is a fine art at A Space. As one former employee told me, "That's what that system (A Space) was — a way to funnel money into people's pockets. We all took money that wasn't ours." The lack of internal checks within daily operations made 'borrowing' easy, and paying back easy to forget. Long hours and poor wages often provided the moral rationale for bad business practice.

'Cultural Problems' are reported as public hostility to the closed-door aspect of recent A Space programming. Although some small attempt is made to deal with this, the Committee ignores A Space's methods of choosing curators and artists, and of programming events and exhibitions.

Nor are A Space's communication lines with the community described. In fact the community itself is neither described or defined, although it is often mentioned. The Committee tries to give answers without knowing what the questions are or who is asking them.

As Committee member Susan Harrison reported: "It was almost arbitrary, a lot of it ... if you got the same people on a different day, it would have been different. ... I don't think the content is important. Doing the report was more important than the report itself."

The Committee also states: "We have questioned a large number of people ... Not surprisingly, much of what we have heard about A Space has been remarkably positive. Despite its many shortcomings, the place is still surrounded by goodwill and enthusiastic support."

and again:

"...none of its critics seem to feel

that it's a waste of time, an expendable project."

As the Committee (and most often their consultants) are almost entirely individuals with a vested interest in A Space's past, continuation and/or expansion, this statement reads simply as paranoid defense.

In fact, many would like to see A Space discontinued and its substantial funds made available to smaller or new organizations. Video Artists Colin Campbell and Lisa Steele, for example, both consulted for the report, made this recommendation. The report ignores that suggestion.

I am not saying that A Space should be discontinued but rather that the Committee, finally, made its recommendations less believable by not having adequately explored this avenue before discarding it.

The rest of the report is devoted to recommendations. Note that no study is presented of other organizational models outside of A Space. In addenda A, below, I describe briefly the Arnolfini in Bristol, England, and the Kunsthalle in Basel and Lucerne, Switzerland, both of which provide alternate and working models for spaces and activities comparable to A Space.

#### THE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Here comes the meat of the matter: 28 pages of recommendations on 'The Future Administration' and 'The Future Programming'.

Both sections suggest (or assume) the continuation of A Space's existing organization on a slightly modified level. Directors are not to be staff, curators are to be hired for a six month period, and so on. This is in effect a sort of paint-by-numbers attitude to the last administration ... unfortunately the picture which emerges is even more clearly open to the same gross mismanagement as before.

No defense of the Committee's chosen structure is made. Frankly, I'm surprised, considering the failure of the same structure in the past. Is a slight clarification of responsibilities and an increase in salaries enough to transform A Space into the active, effective leader in contemporary culture that the Committee obviously wants?

Although the Committee suggests numbers of directors, curators, administrators and their duties, no overall view of working relationships is

described. No system of financial or decision-making checks and balances is devised. No guidelines are established for hiring and firing.

The recommendations are expansionist — in fact within Toronto, imperialist — and do little to increase the effective support of culture in Toronto or to reorganize A Space.

Programming recommendations are ambitious, and idealistic but impractical and unfocused. This is one big stew of everything everybody would like to see done in Toronto. No priorities are stated. The overall relationship of the artist to society, the marketplace, funding bodies and the media has not been sufficiently considered to give the programming suggestions consistency, direction or weight.

The recommendations create a flurry of rag-a-tag responsibilities, none of which are covered by previous descriptions of staff jobs. Who will sell artists' work paying 'particular attention ... to sales to other public galleries with permanent collections'? Who will act as the editor for artists' publications?

Many projects seem a result of wouldn't-it-be-nice-if thinking. The video playback set-up has proved a failure in the past. The programme of 'offset art' is badly thought out. And for the salary alone of the printing operation, A Space could finance all its printing costs.

So the programming too, is expansionist and helter-skelter. Surely it is time that A Space worked to consolidate and improve its existing strengths, and to clarify its position in the community, rather than setting up a hundred new programmes.

#### AFTER THE FLOOD

Perhaps the Committee's recommendations were the turning point in this lengthy drama. John Mays, Victor Coleman, and Marien Lewis, directorial triumvirate, now set into motion a series of actions, based on the report, which all too clearly demonstrate the ineffectiveness of the report in changing anything at all.

Victor Coleman, also executive director, quit the board in order to prevent 'conflict of interests'. The board appointed three new members: Michael Brook, Miriam, and Matt Harley. Miriam was on the Consultative and Michael Brook is currently an employee of the Nightingale Arts Council, not under A Space, but under the A

Imagine A SPACE as Karen Ann Quinlan ...

Space Video Co-op. This is what I call out of the frying pan and into the fire!

As if this were not adequate demonstration of conflict of interest, the new board then appointed four new curators, without advertising the positions or accepting applications. Not surprisingly, all four were members of the Consultative Committee who had created the positions in the first place.

A Space has always hired friends, for power, personal promotion, goodwill or just because someone needed the money. Often firing took the form of personal vendettas, in which relationships eroded until someone was forced to quit. The complex web of politics and favours that resulted has been a prime factor in A Space's murder mystery staffing. The Board of Directors clearly demonstrated their support of that system.

Thanks to the intervention of Tom Sherman, the position of video curator was briefly advertised and filled from several applicants. This refreshing piece of hiring technique set a new precedent in A Space history.

Flavio Belli, visual arts curator, entered the programming arena with a flourish by pulling down all the walls. This unauthorized renovation went beyond the normal responsibilities of a temporary visual arts curator. So did the fee he demanded, which had not been budgeted. Meanwhile, executive director Victor Coleman, holidaying in San Francisco, announced that when he returned he was going to build those walls again.

Meanwhile, Victor himself was enjoying the benefits of an exchange programme with La Mammelle in sunny California. Please note: A Space paid for all or most of this one-sided affair, including travel expenses for both sets of travellers. It is exactly this sort of financing that makes Canada a laughing stock and 'easy mark' on the international art scene. And of course it is because of the threat of broken friendships and tortured working relationships that this sort of out-front maneuvering by the staff of A Space can continue.

...LITTLE IDEAS GANG UP ON ONE BIG IDEA

And so we return to our informational meeting. Bloated with rhetoric, the inflated concept lumbers between rows of A Space members, who hit it with big sticks while catching the dollar bills

that tumble from its back pockets. Our twenty-five extras play the part of the test audience, the sampler predicting the course of affairs at the upcoming annual meeting. They gather about the corpse of A Space, attempting the transfiguration of the moldering carcass into smoldering stardom. And success will be well paid: double your budget, double your fun.

Surprisingly, everyone means well. The Consultative Committee means well. John Mays means well. Marien Lewis means well. Victor Coleman means well. Our new curators all mean well. And all of them want a new museum without a collection. Out of all this mish-mash, this hogwash, this dishwater rhetoric of mangled sentiments and sentimental subordinate clauses, one thing becomes overwhelming clear: the little ideas have all ganged up on one big idea and that big idea is this: a museum without a collection.

Despite the current Canadian climate of cultural repression, economic cutbacks and escalating censorship, our situation in Toronto is strong. To a certain extent, national problems are driving artists and their organizations into Toronto. The recent arrival of Arton's from Calgary, for example, adds a valuable facility for audio and video publishing to Toronto's range of artist-run spaces.

I won't list the many facilities we have for dance, theatre, video, film and music, but they include such unlikely commercial endeavors as the Beverley Tavern and Cafe Soho in addition to such specialized artists' endeavors as the Music Gallery.

But for artists' performance and the visual arts, and to a lesser extent for writers, facilities are the least developed. With the demise of CEAC and the threatened demise of A Space (which at any rate hasn't programmed any performance for the coming year anyway) the visual arts are bound to suffer. Gallery 76 and ACT cannot carry the load, and the Art Gallery of Ontario is clearly not going to invest time or money in activity that tourists will not appreciate.

It is time in Toronto's active history for a substantial, well-planned museum without a collection, similar to Europe's Kunsthallen, similar to the Arnolfini in Bristol, indeed similar to A Space itself. It is my proposal that A Space could become this museum, wants to become this museum, and

that membership of the Nightingale Arts Council actively take upon itself the creation of this museum at its annual meeting next week. My specific proposals concerning this project are presented in the form of an open letter elsewhere in this issue.

AA Bronson  
September 6, 1978  
Toronto, Canada.

ADDENDA A.  
EXISTING MODELS.

Kunsthallen abound in Germany and Switzerland. A form of museum without a collection, they exert a great influence, assemble major exhibitions and catalogues, and are an integrated part of the museum circuit.

Despite their often large exhibition spaces, Kunsthallen are usually run on small staffs and small budgets. Nevertheless the quality of curating and the depth and thoroughness of their catalogues is legendary.

For these reasons, Kunsthallen offer an important model to the artist-run institutions of Canada. It is my recommendation that a selection of personnel from artist-run galleries across Canada should visit a selection major Kunsthallen and discuss mutual interests with their staff.

The Lucerne Kunsthalle, for example, is run on a budget of less than \$100,000 a year. Nevertheless, it turns out some of the thickest, most comprehensive, and most sought-after catalogues in the world. Although cheaply produced, and in small editions, these catalogues usually pay for themselves.

Jean Christophe-Ammann, an important European curator, recently left the Lucerne Kunsthalle to run the Basel Kunsthalle. As he mounted a large exhibition of new Canadian art this June, it was possible for me to examine the running of the Kunsthalle closely.

The Kunsthalle itself is composed of nine medium to large exhibition spaces, plus a small bookstore, offices and workspaces, and an excellent restaurant. It is a bit larger than the Vancouver Art Gallery, but not as well kept as it could be, because of the low budget available. Nevertheless, it offers considerably better exhibition possibilities than most parallel galleries.

The curator also acts as the managing director of the gallery. Assisting him is one full-time secretary, two part-

time secretaries, and two part-time men who look after installations, maintenance, and just about anything else that comes up. The bookstore is run by Stampa, a local gallery and bookstore. The restaurant staff is of course in addition to this, but covers its own costs with sufficient left over to help support the Kunsthalle. Catalogue layout and poster design are subcontracted, often to Jean Christophe's wife.

The Kunsthalle exhibits one major exhibition a month and produces a major catalogue each month.

In addition one or two major events are held each week, including lectures, concerts, performances, etc. This sort of dedication and careful programming is the secret to the low budget, limited staff and absolutely maximum effect which these institutions have.

At the other end of the spectrum is the Arnolfini in Bristol, England. Initially very similar to A Space in conception and variety of activities, it has since gone through an extreme restructuring to maximize the flexibility of its many-sided programming.

The Arnolfini is housed in a converted warehouse of excellent design. The central lobby acts as a large information centre from which audiences are funneled into a variety of spaces: two exhibition areas, a simple but versatile performance space, cinema, offices, a bar/restaurant, and a bookstore. The bookstore also includes a small exhibition area for experimental jewellery. The Arnolfini also publishes a monthly tabloid as house organ to give background information on its very heavy programme of special events. The bookstore, cinema, and bar/restaurant all help subsidize the expenses of the gallery as a whole.

Although the staff at the Arnolfini is relatively large, it is all quite specific: three people in the bookstore, the restaurant staff, a film/video co-ordinator, two curators, and so on. The administrative staff, in contrast, is kept to an absolute minimum.

Again, I would recommend that parallel gallery staff visit this institution, as it provides another excellent working model of another possibility in direction.

There are other potential models too: the Kitchen in New York, for example, although the focus there is entirely video and performance.

# VIRUS INTERNATIONAL

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**"And in the blue corner from Toronto, Canada  
Clive Robertson**

Yes it was the night of the big fight, September 15th, 8.00 pm. — 1.00 am. There was a colour TV at the back of the room where the audience could make instant comparison (I didn't even look) between the jabbing gloves or back into the room to go a few rounds sparring with the bruised hulk of meat that has become *A Space*.

This evening, the evening of *A Space's* Annual General Meeting was no sporting occasion. It followed the *Fifth Network Video Conference* in Toronto, which in turn was followed by the Annual General Meeting of *ANN-PAC* (Association of National Non-Profit Artist Centres). It reminded me more of the ongoing World Chess Championships where the contestants and the audience expected but could not possibly face another draw. In eight days 'artist responsibility' (if you went through all three occasions) came in and out of every human orifice like a tapeworm with a purpose.

The crowd was large, between fifty and sixty with representation from Toronto, Vancouver, New York, elsewhere in Ontario and apart from the chairperson of the meeting, *Dennis Tourbin*, *A Space's* legal counsel also was calling the plays, though often the knowledgeable crowd openly disagreed with, if not jeered, his interpretations.

Being an honorary member, as I climbed the stairs 15 minutes early, I decided to buy a membership for \$12.50, so I could at least vote — all the time knowing that the meeting could make a mockery out of inflation and that I could be left holding a piece of card worth nothing. It is still too early to decide whether or not that is in fact the case. Membership and voting rights became the first issue and it turned out that everyone who said that they were a member or who had paid or promised to pay \$12.50 could vote, as if this were the time to begin checking!

We all perhaps know by now what an agenda for the annual general meeting should be. As the motions for acceptance or rejection came up there followed interpretations of the motions on the floor that eventually became the uppers and downers of the race, to slow or speed up the purpose. It has been said often recently that, strategically, consensus in these meetings can be gained through the process of attrition. In that sense it is a race and at least on three occasions during the evening there were motions to adjourn.

The previous meeting's minutes were accepted. The Chairman's Report (*John Bentley Mays*) was accepted; The Acting Executive Director's Report (*Victor Coleman*) was accepted. The

Consultative Committee's report was accepted. *Robert Bowers*: "view this report in the time in which it arose and realise this is a different time." These timely words by Robert Bowers can be amplified:

The Consultative Committee Report (appears in *Parallelogramme 2*, 1978 pub. ANNPAC) was perhaps the best document that could emerge from within the Toronto community for the continued development of *A SPACE*. The 'One Year' proposal that followed that report in most ways faithfully adhered to such an 'internal' concept. However because it was internal it did exclude other existing deficiencies that were observable from an open perspective. If for instance you do accept that there is an increasing fossilisation of artists organisations — it also becomes both obvious and essential that if the *A Space* organism was about to turn from flesh to stone that it would have to be constructed in such a way that it could withstand 1) further public, private and artist scrutiny, 2) the energy lapses and exhaustion that from time-to-time affect us and 3) the political insecurity and social suicide of buying off support in return for its actions. Furthermore the new construct would have to recognise that in place of an annual joust that there should become recognition of critical debate as a mainline artistic focus.

*A A Bronson's* proposal at this point only mentions 'articulation' and 'clarification'. The initial problem it was addressing was that it was time to dispense with administrative rhetoric and at least to establish an executive structure that could agree on exactly where it stood in matters of economics and role-sharing. Before we return to the ringside I should make perfectly clear that only because of its size was this drastic re-organisation necessary, only because of its age could *A SPACE* no longer romantically view itself as an ageing juvenile delinquent.

The sixth round or item on the AGM agenda was the year-end and interim budget reports. The reports were unaudited and at this point the membership showed signs of teething and at what better point to make use of your new teeth than to bite on your organisation's accountability. Not only was the *A SPACE-LA MAMELLE EXCHANGE* under attack but the sensitive innuendoes multiplied until *D. Anne Taylor* protested the discussion of accountability, informing the member-

ship that funding relationships as they exist were basically accepted by the applicants as a form of nepotism. Her sardonic comments were caught by *Victor Coleman* who could have accepted such a hook with ease but chose instead to resign immediately, and more regrettably, walk out of the forum. If, as in the recent chess tournaments, there were suspicions of one side using telepathic interference, it ultimately did seem to be in use.

The interim Board of Directors' 'One Year Proposal' which at the earlier information meeting looked unhealthy in terms of membership acceptance now looked positively weak. But still no-one was aware of any other counter-proposals other than the one *A A Bronson* had passed around. At this point *Elizabeth Chitty*, member of the Consultative Committee, suggested that all alternate proposals be raised for discussion so removing the need to deal immediately with the remaining agenda which had 40% of its items left to be covered.

Enter *John Bentley Mays*. *John Mays* is not the hero of this report — if indeed there is one at all — but by his efforts alone *A SPACE* was very much alive at this meeting when in fact it could have very well been buried alive. The issue still to be faced was the acceptance or rejection by the membership of the 'One Year' proposal's \$220,000.00 budget which had already been applied for, which faced a mid-September deadline that would need to be dealt with if the proposed budget was rejected. A new board would have to start the fresh computing process, if any immediate programming was to be saved, if not from scratch, at least from necessity. The proposed budget — and with it the confidence in the interim board — was defeated throwing the room into a series of "A SPACE?"

Having proved that it could say no, the pivotal question was becoming, "but could it say yes?" In a flash I saw those milk teeth becoming fangs beckoning any new proposal with uncertainty; would indeed the membership vote in any of themselves WITHOUT a proposal to send the *A SPACE* lemming right over the edge? A motion was put forward to adjourn and reassemble within days to listen to proposals and vote in a new directorate. This motion was defeated.

In this No! You! climate *Bronson's* proposal was presented, answering what questions could be asked, reveal-

ing a possible slate of directors that if elected would support and carry out his proposal. 'With membership alteration and amendments?' the teeth inquired, whilst at the same time whispering through their pearlys, 'A set-up?', 'A counter-conspiracy?', 'An ad-campaign without spending a penny?' But I am jumping ahead.

Before this presentation the relationships of the parent organisation, The *Nightingale Arts Council* and one of its offspring, *A SPACE* was brought into question. *Bronson's* proposal (WITH SLIGHT ALTERATIONS) suggested now to keep the parent and its unusual but advantageous charter and to keep the name *A SPACE*. *Marien Lewis* who had inconspicuously been bouncing around all evening seemed to exhale a sigh of relief: her 'namesake', her 'grandchild' was not going to be the baby that was thrown out with the bathwater. The name *A SPACE* was about to begin its ninth life.

But back to the rubber ring. After much consultation and counter-consultation with the *A Space/I Ching*, bye-bye for now by-laws it was decided to elect five new directors with the suggestion that two further be added once the new board could ratify and legalise itself, the last board, the membership, etc., etc.. In the meantime *A A Bronson's* proposal was accepted by the membership, 'in principle'. Five additional names were entered for nomination, mostly younger artists, with the exception of *David Young* who was proposed from the floor and not from the old board's slate or *Bronson's* slate.

The new board was elected consisting of *René Blouin*, *Tess Taconis*, *David Young*, *Rodney Werden*, and *A.A. Bronson*.

Yes! indeed a change had taken place. But — minutes after it was all over the new board was receiving unsolicited suggestions for a new executive director as well as suggestions as to how to compensate Peter by robbing Paul. Was this going to mean a rematch? Had not the boxing 'fans' agreed with the boxers that they also should retire as umpires?

Perhaps I can now emerge from my dressing room which somehow I needed to re-live that third in a series of recent exhausting Toronto events. The current board is now faced with the sober autopsy of finding out what there was and where it is or was, of carrying out an inventory, an audit — not to investigate wrongdoing but merely

to give themselves substance where previously there had only existed an ether. The *A SPACE STORY* as it evolved this summer is not usable as a moralistic tale to be read by a smug audience, and as I write this I include myself. It is not an *Agatha-Christie* look-alike: it is not a story of conspiracy and intervention. It is the story of a community which did in fact care what was possible, it is the consequence of having to open and answer the mail — even when the mail turns out to be an unwanted, if not unsolicited, letter-bomb. The heroes/heroines are those that participated. A second *CEAC* was avoided. The political bureaucracies were again matched and defeated. There was a struggle without an ideology, and artists 'fighting amongst themselves' proved itself to be more beneficial than, as mythically supposed, counter-productive.

As observers, we can only wish them well. *A SPACE* is certainly not the first artist-organisation to commit itself to radical change, but it may be the biggest to try.

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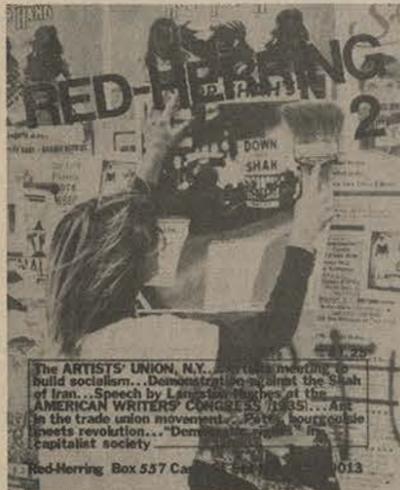


lar identity gratification. The MAIN TREND reviewer of the film is left to complain: "but let's not be fooled that everyone can make it". The question is, Who is fooled? Street experience at whatever class-level does not in fact give credibility to that promise. The 'everyone can make it' cry continually remains a capitalist, spiritualist and 'socialist' slogan, you can make it 1.) by work 2.) by submission or 3.) by right. Each promise as conducted by any 'socialist,' church or capitalist society has had comparatively short bursts of actuality, remembering that the banality, "making it" is not limited to property ownership.

The working-class, the mass or as artists euphemistically term it, "the audience" has long been a prop to many different people's dreams and MAIN TREND should remain aware that the 'working-class' as behavioural guinea-pigs is exactly 'cheap labour' for the building of theoretical structures.

Given these reservations, MAIN TREND is a potentially important cultural paper that deserves both serious attention and contributions.

C.R.



**RED HERRING • 2**  
Box 557 Canal St Station N.Y.,  
N.Y. 10013 or,  
131 Bathurst Street, Toronto,  
Ont., M5V 2R2  
\$2.50 68pp.

*Red Herring 2* follows some eighteen months after the first issue. For the most part it is a dense but very readable issue and at face value its contents consist of five pieces of allegorical fiction, three reports plus a self-analytical editorial.

*Red Herring*, I've just noticed, states more clearly a position on 'theoretical

structures'.

"To adventuristically proclaim that we were "openly working for socialism", while remaining a small, isolated petty bourgeois group of artists, was to relegate class struggle to the realm of ideas." (emphasis mine)

It would be possible to review *Red Herring* just by using the editorial because the editorial is used to report on the stage of *Red Herring's* struggle. The struggle or if you like the evolutionary analysis of the group by the group is of real use to the magazine's readers as a continuing illustration of formative ideologies, even though it places the reader, at times, in the position of a 'soap-opera' voyeur.

Of the many components of that struggle, there is one continued focus which increasingly seems to me to be illogical:

"The problem was that our practice was still organized by the New York art world — and however much our changing world view demanded that we separate ourselves from it, we ended up talking almost exclusively to the audience of the New York art world."

My objection lies in the known fact of the non-N.Y. developments that have taken place within the last five years by artists, howbeit state-aided, to reduce the reliability and personally increase their autonomy from that particular traditional market structure. In Canada as elsewhere some form of cultural-historical ringroad has been constructed by artists which denies New York its imperial relevance. Which is to say that for most artists living outside of New York, New York\* is no longer a necessary phobia. Whilst a small point, it does suggest that those of *Red Herring* who are artists have to some extent lost touch with the grass-roots development of their own working peer group.

Historical essays are an important part of any group's organ especially in times of common but unfamiliar confrontation. Both state and legal institutions recognise the importance of history as an ideological tool/weapon usable upon those who neglect to research or remember what happened as late ago as yesterday. *Red Herring* offers in this issue an encapsulation of the *Artists' Union, N.Y.* (1934-38) which outlines the development of *The John Reed Club* through *The Emergency Work Bureau* (also known as Unemployed Artist Group) and the *Artist Union* with its paper, *Art Front*. The

Artists' Union at one point joined *The United Office and Professional Workers of America* (as Local 60 of The United American Artists) which eventually merged into the *American Artists' Congress*, the socialists remnants of which were increasingly ousted by acts like the issued instructions from the WPA (1940?): (instructions) "against the production of any art work in which the main idea was social content rather than artistic value."

Also in this issue is a report by *Fred Lonidier* titled: "*Art and Unions in the U.S.*". (Some of Lonidier's work has been seen at galleries and museums, notably The Whitney with documentation works of industrial health hazards.) Lonidier begins with his analysis of the cultural left and continues with his own history of unionism in the U.S. and the means of finding opportunities for doing revolutionary cultural work. His personal union entry is in a small AFT local as an art teacher, a union member whose work consists of media and graphics. Lonidier makes this report very open ended suggesting that the possibilities are real and the forms usable are not limited. Whilst this report is both sincere and genuinely helpful, his own experience is somehow like a privileged example. What about the artist who is employed as a *production worker* on a production line wishing to utilise performance capabilities? The "class" structure within the union and the class structure within management would not treat such an individual with as much respect, as the 'art-teacher'. This and other facts are more questions to, rather than refutation of, his argument. Also within the union context Lonidier's rejection of academic theory and spontaneous practice seem logical until you note that 'discipline' is one of the main control mechanisms of manual workers from within management and the union. Spontaneity as practice is one tactic, revolutionary or otherwise, which is not appreciated within a production-efficiency rationale.

There are two pieces of fiction, which I introduced as being allegorical, there is a third which I will return to shortly. One is *The Meeting* by *Ron Stevens*, the second *Two Roads* by *C.K. Conridge*. The first is a story, the second a sophisticated cartoon strip (by *Carole Conde* and *Karl Beveridge*). Admittedly the term allegorical in this sense is critical. The first, *The Meeting*, has an oppressive feel to it because it

basically is an annexation of 'Love Story' with a spiritualist derivation that unfortunately aligns itself by implication to Fundamentalist America. It is not an oriental illustration but an occidental 'soap'. The same could be said for *Two Roads*, the 'comics section' of *Red Herring*. But perhaps it's the identifying context of the Conridge piece which appears to openly rely on a diary experience that separates the two. In both the technique seems more to complement the struggles of the committed rather than to encourage (by ethical guilt?) the interested. One wonders on whom would revolutionary fiction of this genre be successful? *Two Roads* seems less bankrupt a parody than *The Meeting*. (a parody of fictional style). Having said that, a third piece titled: "*The Free World Thesis*" is more of a theoretical enactment launched from a fictional scenario. 'The Free World Thesis' consists of the bringing together of a cabdriver and a woman in a diner where the woman plays the Aristotelian explaining the limits of 'freedom' within bourgeois society. Written by *L. Lucha*, perhaps it is

## Catalogues

### JAPANESE VIDEO ART FESTIVAL

**Jorge Glusberg**  
Center of Art and Communication (CAYC)  
**Elpidio Gonzalez 4070**  
**1407 Buenos Aires**  
**Argentina**  
\$? Catalog 24pp

A catalog for a video show held in Argentina in April of 1978. 33 Japanese artists (not all currently living in Japan) participated: Besson, Hans Fleishchner, Hiroshi Fujii, Mako Idemitsu, Taka Iimura, Norio Imai, Shoji Kaneko, Etsuo Kawamura, Hakudo Kobayashi, Hori Kousai, Shigeo Kubota, Duck Jun Kwak, Masafumi Maita, Shoji Matsumoto, Toshio Matsumoto, Yutaka Matsuzawa, Kyoko Michishita, Setsu Miura, Toshi Morinoh, Hidetoshi Nagasawa, Tsuneo Nakai, Kou Nakajima, Yoshio Nakajima, Hitoshi Nomura, Kishio Suga, Noboru Takayama, Yoshio Uemura, Morihiro Wada, Aki Yada, Katsuhiko Yamaguchi, Keigo Yamamoto.

Besides photographic portraits of some of the artists and single-photographic-image-representation of most of the tapes, this publication's

because the characters seem more 'grounded' and that the content is not impeded by the conveyance which gives this piece of writing its definite effectiveness.

Apart from *Listen Close*, a poem by *Helen R.*, the hitherto unmentioned contents of this issue are, *To Negro Writers*, an address given to the American Writer's Congress by *Langston Hughes* (1935), a statement on white writer's piffrey — yet another valuable inclusion, and finally a piece by *J. Byron* titled, "*Down with Shah*", a report on Iranian students leading a protest against the Shah of Iran's U.S. visit (report covers July 1977 — January 1978). The Shah protest stands out from the remainder of *Red Herring* as a competent piece of political reportage involving the U.S. arms/Iranian oil exchange, CIA-Israeli intervention and the brutal suppression of Iranian fascist-resistance. It is difficult to suggest at this point which of the contents are out of place, if any; the concerns and reports covered in this issue all need a place to be and future *Red Herring's* could serve some if not all of them.

C.R.

main ingredient is a two part essay by *Jorge Glusberg* entitled "An Open Spirit" and "Imagination and reality of Japanese video". The whole text is translated less than perfectly into English from Glusberg's native tongue, but his train of thought is for the most part comprehensible throughout the 12 noise ridden pages of his muse. At the very beginning, in "An Open Spirit", and at the conclusion of "Imagination and reality . . .", we are given quotes

japan  
video art  
festival

cayc  
buenos aires

by *Katsuhiko Yamaguchi*, referring to "poetry encounters" of 200 years past, where the poets of Japan would gather to write in real time in a common physical space and where they would share their poems and therefore develop the next popular tradition or legend. It is said by *Yamaguchi* in a couple of different ways, that the contemporary artist must allow his or herself to substitute modern technology for the paper and brushes of yesteryear, as only this technology can allow us to project outside our minds the inner process of the imagination. The next point is video is easy, writing is, at least, more difficult. Now that we have video, everyone has an equal opportunity to articulately exhibit their imagination in real time. Is this true? This leaves us witness to the poetry encounter of today, the video encounter,

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and the CAYC's 10 International Open Encounters on Video in the last 5 years are now illuminated conveniently by poetic activity in Japan 200 years ago.

At this point the main essay opens and we find Glusberg displaying himself as the definitive Western philosopher. The persistent problematic dualities of the real and the imaginary world. Thought from Descartes to Spinoza, from B. F. Skinner to Gregory Bateson. Or even more recently, and certainly more mathematically, through linguistic and semiotic analysis we find the distance between the abstract and the iconic is not as great as we had once thought. Through this, his most philosophical writing, we are informed, not as simplistically as John Brockman or Jerry Mander would explain it, that it should not be necessary to separate the imaginary from the real because by the time the information reaches us via the video monitor, it is all television. These ideas are thrown around as a curator rationalizes video documentary and video art into video *period*. If I understand his paradox, there exists a technological structuralism that makes the real imaginary and the imaginary real. Even when we view a video document of genuine streetlife in real Japan, we actually see a Japanese mind in the television format. Or then we could ask what makes these tapes Japanese? They did, in fact, come in a box from Japan. Not the brand. The mailing address. But these tapes are truly Japanese because the minds producing these realities through television are Japanese in this case, by example, not cassette. But seriously, although confusing, Glusberg plots his course for thinking with some very interesting writing. I am certain there will be many who will find his philosophy more realistic than I do.

The balance of his article concerns itself with the history of video art in Japan. Glusberg credits Expo 70, held in Osaka, as the single consumer event that made the Japanese people aware of their incredible television industry (to be television is to Japanese?) and he then isolates the arrival of Canadian Michael Goldberg in Tokyo in November of 71 as the most important factor leading to Japan's first video art festival, held in February of 1972 at the Sony building in the Ginza neighborhood. I have to believe him, because it was this same Michael Goldberg that I met while constructing a video studio at A Space in Toronto in the Spring of

72. I remember Goldberg dressed casually enough to help us unload a truckload of 3/4 inch plywood before he introduced himself. He then convinced two or three of us to take the afternoon off to watch 2 1/2 hours of Japanese video on OECA's (TV Ontario) equipment, then the only color equipment we had access to. A Space had only CV at this date, very black and white and incompatible with everything else in the world.

Back to Glusberg's writing... he completes the brief history and proceeds to describe in very general terms what each artist is liable to do in their work in his exhibition. The last page of the catalog features a photograph of Shigeko Kubota and her well known poem "Behind the Video Door". In this poem Kubota feels like a woman in Vietnamese and Russian as she travels with her porta-pack through Europe, Navajo Land (U.S.A.), and Japan. In this poem, she is without male companionship. Her porta-pack is her baby. Later she would introduce the late Marcel Duchamp to her Navajo friends at the Anthology Film Archives in New York City. As for a check on Glusberg's theoretical history of Japanese video art, may I suggest you contact Michael Goldberg, the Canadian in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Tom Sherman

**VIDEO KOANS (Scripts) 1977)**  
Taka Iimura  
P.O. Box 431  
Cooper Station  
New York, N.Y. 10003  
\$? 16pp Instaprint

For those familiar with Iimura's videotapes, this collection of scripts include Identity Pieces 1,2,3,4,5; Location Pieces 1,2,3; Formula Pieces 1,2,3,4; and Picture Pieces 1,2,3. 15 pieces, all done before 1978, according to the 1977 copyright. There are no dates on the individual pieces. Each piece gets one page. Heading each page is the artist's name, the title of the piece, that it is a videotape, that it is black and white with sound (all pieces are b/w with sound), and the length of the tape in minutes and seconds. In this selection of Iimura's work, the longest tape is Location Piece 3 at 1 min. 25 sec., the shortest is Formula Piece 3 at 35 sec. Most of the pieces have a total duration of close to 1 minute. Below this basic page by page heading index appears Iimura's graphic system for detailing each piece. These details are

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Tape includes performance, film and proposals by the co-founder of The Eternal Network. A verbal and visual synopsis by one of the most important and inspiring French artists whose work during the last twenty years has given fresh direction to the collaborative phenomenon.

**AVP 002 Steve MacCaffery 'PERMANENT PERFORMANCE' B & W 1978.** 25 min. \$55.00

An anthology by Canadian sound and action poet including Language Events, Performance Scenarios and Sound and Action Poems. Poses the relationships between Futility and Utility and their transformations.

**CENTERFOLD** magazine. Subscriptions: \$9 Individual. \$18 Institutional (Airmail)

**CENTERFOLD Vol. 1 1976-7**

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**CENTERFOLD Vol. 2 No.'s 1-3. 1977-8**

Tabloid newspaper. \$1 each.

**VOICESPONDENCE audio cassette magazine**

**VSP 1. 1975 90 min.** Envelope edition with postcards. \$7.50. Contents: Fluxshoe, Albert Mayr, Suzy Lake, Davi Det Hompson, Graham Challifour, Paul Woodrow, Dick Higgins, David Zack, Clive Robertson.

**VSP 2. 1976 90 min.** \$6.50

**The Telephone Issue:** Robert Filliou, Image Bank, Ray Johnson, COUM, Vic d'Or, A.A. Bronson.

**VSP 3. 1977 60 min.** \$6.50

**PLUG - An Acid Novel [1963].** Dick Higgins and Emmet Williams.

**VSP 4. 1978 90 min. Stereo. Dolbied.** \$6.50

Robert Filliou's 'GONG SHOW'. John Oswald's 'MRS SCHULTZ OVERDUBBING'.



**The 1978 Canadian Video Open** 44 pp. catalog. 22 color plates. May 1978. \$5.00

Catalog of Canadian Video Artists including, BARLING, BERTEIG, BLACK, BRITTON, DISHES, DRUICK, FOX, FREEMAN, G.I., GENTLEMAN, GOLDMAN, HARDING, HP, HUGGLER, HUTCHINSON, IMAGE BANK, JEFFRIES, KURAMOTO, LEWIS, MacHATTIE, MARSHALORE, McGLADE & DUNDAS, MORRIS, ROBERTSON, SHERMAN, SIMPSON, STEINMAN, TRANTER, STERLOFF, VANDERZAAG, WARD, WERDEN, WIMCHARUK & ZABLOCKIS and YOUNG. Includes videographies and two videoviews by Peggy Gale with Rodney Werden and Susan Britton.

The following publications were produced by W.O.R.K.S. (We. Ourselves. Roughly. Know. Something.), a Canadian artist-group whose publications continue through Arton's Publishing.

**A Conceptographic Reading of Our World Thermometer** 72 pp. 1973 \$10.00

This little-known document was the result of a cable broadcast project, an International Video Open containing the works of fifty-six artists from a six-hour video exhibition of the same name. Scores, proposals, diagrams, illustrations.

**Clues. David Mayor** 20 pp. 1973 \$2.00

A room-diary play script by the editor of SCHMUCH magazine, co-author of BEAU GESTE PRESS.

**W.O.R.K.S.C.O.R.E.P.O.R.T. 1971-3** 140 pp 1975 \$7.00

An historical document of W.O.R.K.S. Includes essays, installations, video, concerts, scores, manifestoes, collaborative projects, etc.

**In the Singular - Clive Robertson** 15 pp 1975 \$2.50

Essays, photodocuments, catalog of performance and music works.

**W.O.R.K.S. Plays Cricket** 11 postcards, texts, envelope 1975. \$4.50

Document of performance, photo-exhibit. 'Cookery-card Criticism'. (published jointly with Egg Press, Calgary)

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retrievable from a kind of video truth table, a video script or concept diagram resembling the truth or operation tables used to diagram functions in Boolean or logical algebra. Information included on each piece: number of shots, each picture (visually what is shot), a description of each picture, voice over lines (what is said), the duration of each shot in seconds (hundredths of seconds, in one case) and arrows and lines indicating right or left pan as well as cut in (out). In other words, these tables show what the camera sees (a symbol, the letter A), how the camera sees what it sees (whether it is panning right or left or cutting straight in or out), describe what the camera sees (for instance, the letter A or the color white), tell us what the voice over says (This is picture A, This is not picture A), and tell us how long the camera sees (A for 5 sec.). The Identity Pieces focus our attention on what is on camera (picture A, letter A, This is picture A, 5 sec. camera pans right). The Location Pieces examine where the camera is going, or where the camera is coming from (A, letter A, Camera pans from A to B, 10 sec-

onds, camera pans right). The Formula Pieces are best imagined by the flow of the voice over from shot to shot (A is equal to A is not equal to A is equal to A). The Picture Pieces are best imagined by the flow of the voice over as well (This is a picture, this is not a picture, etc. or It is a picture, It is a picture, It is a picture, They are pictures).

For those of you who have not seen Iimura's tapes (I have never seen Iimura's tapes myself), it should be apparent from this review that he is interested in formal logic where he can invest the camera with an identity and likewise where he can supply the object of the camera's attention with a location based on the camera's observational behavior. Where most video artists deliver what is on camera as content (Picture Pieces)? and ask further, what are the relationships between what is on camera as content from time to time (Formula Pieces)?, Taka Iimura divides these questions in half. What is the camera doing or who is the camera (Location Pieces)? What is the camera seeing or where is the camera (Identity Pieces)?

Tom Sherman



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**FIFTH NETWORK CINQUIEME RESEAU**

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Conference for Independent Video (Eng. & Fr.)  
available from  
ART METROPOLE 217 Richmond St. W., Toronto, Ont.

As this will be one of the documents that last after The Fifth Network Cin-

quième Réseau Conference (September, 1978) fades away it is of interest to trace its contents.

The whole tone of this conference as projected by its organisers was a mastermind of self-congratulations. Granted, when the monster finally rolled into action there were outside achievements (including the Video Inn's screening room) that often overrode the inarticulate analysis of its initial feeders.

The opening piece, following the conference schedules and event listings, is written by Marshalore, 'Ballroom Dancing in Ottawa'. It never really focuses on its subject: funding policies/politics but instead functions as a trite and self-indulgent veneer as if the real purpose of the project was to shake the money tree instead of being a means to harvest ripe fruit. (An instant comparison can soon be made between The Fifth Network Cinquième Réseau Conference/Festival and the soon to take place 11th International Festival of Sound Poetry. Already one can safely assume that the latter will do more for its 'cause' than the former.)

To continue — in complete contrast with Marshalore, René Blouin's contribution to the document is a very carefully constructed and fresh evaluation of the different contexts of video in Canada:

*"The medium, the style, the format etc., are the components of the 'coding' operation — symptoms allowing the communication of the 'actuality' to which the creator wishes to refer. Far too often, we confuse these with the creative process itself. The two categories to which we generally refer in the context of creative video are in fact only lame descriptions of a context of production, of a field of exploration. They express a kind of commitment, an ideology, a reference to a specific aesthetic, but they do not offer a description of the process. The expression 'the art of video' touches the heart of the action and best summarizes the stages of conception and production."*

'Access — A Canadian Approach' by Michael Goldberg is not quite as complete, though it is a reasonable evaluation. Most of the remaining texts are specific evaluations written by people who author or co-ordinate specific projects: 'Against Colonel Sanders' by Pierre Falardeau and Julien Poulin; 'Fighting on Equal Ground', Terry McGlade; 'Challenge for Change', Peter Katadotis etc. Some of the writing is just far too brief, consist-

ing of two or three paragraphs as in David Rahn's, 'The Lay of the Land' and John Richards, 'Alternative Technology'.

All of the information that appears in this 'cahier' would have been better served if Video Guide, Vancouver had been given the budget and been allowed to produce one or two special issues of their newspaper. However, for all its defects and rushed production (Randy Gledhill performed an overnight miracle) it still can be of general interest to video users.

Too early the rationale for this extraordinary meeting of the Canadian video society was, "it will change our lives", to which in retrospect we can fairly ask: "for how long? Five minutes?"

C.R.



**EDITION #1**

40pp. 8 x 10 3/4"

\$2.00

Edition. P.O. Box 403, Station A, Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6C 2N2

New collective-collaborative magazine from Vancouver co-ordinated by Rick Hambleton. Contains work of 29 artists with an elaborate centrefold of Investigation Department of Eternal Art. Mucho-macho enthusiasm with another generation heading into image bondage, most of them thankfully with the minimum of props. As a magazine it speaks to nothing, but does a good job of keeping 29 people feeling warm inside. What more can you ask for?

Rick Hambleton, Bill Cupit, Cathy Charlton, Julie Abbott, Monica Holden-Lawrence, Roy Arden and John Anderson, Jon Baturin, John Jordan, Joan Scarabelli, Mike O'Connell, Liz Vanderzaag, Michael Markham, Ed Varney, Maria Insell, Alex Kowaski, Oraf and C.C., Olga Froealich, Dave Ostrem, Tom Robertson, Siz Morozoff, Danice Macleod, Keith Donovan, Dave F. Larson.

E.B.

**"Some artists, for example Joseph Beuys"**

Catalog n/print 44pp.  
(May 15 — June 15 1975)

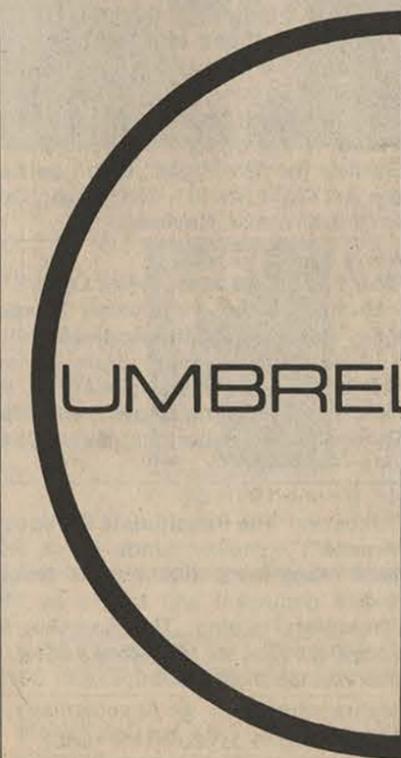
Gallery, Univ. of California, Riverside

This catalogue came about through the efforts of Kirk de Gooyer and was the first if not one of the first collection of essays about Beuys in English. It surfaced during a book exhibit (La Mabelle) this summer, and as very little (in English) has followed it, and as it is still available...

Pieces include 'By way of introduction', Irene Von Zahn; 'Some words with Beuys', Edit de Ak and Alan Moore; 'Beuys: Drawings and Ideology', Lizzie Borden; 'Thinking about Joseph Beuys', Saul Ostrow; 'A Brief look at Beuys' early development', Matthew Lee Rohn; 'A talk with Rene Block', Lona Foote; and a cataloging of multiples, drawings and videotapes — presumably the ones that formed the exhibit. The cataloging is of interest because it not only describes the physi-

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calities but makes relations between elements of different works.

The Matthew Lee Rohn article is based if not limited on the art magazines' articles printed up to 1974 which as source material on Beuys is hardly consistent. Both Lizzie Borden's and Saul Ostrow's pieces hold up well the latter being a classical love-hate relationship that Beuys' work holds as a clichéd attraction.

A well-illustrated and modest publication that I highly recommend. For those who want a copy in a hurry write: Kirk A deGooyer, P.O. Box 5014, Riverside, Calif. 92517, U.S., Art Metropole should also be getting some in stock soon.

C.R.

A SPACE in cooperation with the 11th International Festival of Sound Poetry presents



Friday, October 6 at 9pm

Rebis Partners James Pettilio & Betsy Davids from California. Storytelling, visual imagery and sounds. (Rebis will also present a slide lecture on bookmaking at A Space on Tuesday, Oct. 10 at 7:30pm.)

Saturday, October 7 at 9pm

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The Horsemen Canada's exciting sound poetry ensemble presents their work with audience participation (voluntary, of course).

Friday, October 13 at 9pm

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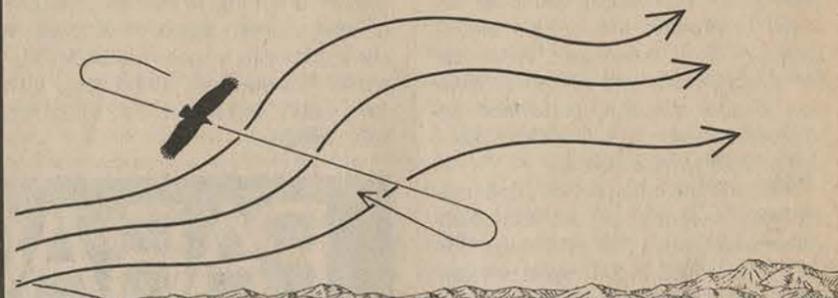
Henri Chopin The inventor of 'poésie sonore'. A native of France. Presenting an artform based on the electro-acoustic treatment of the human voice. It is man's body that is poetry and the throat.

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Back Issues, Volume 2.:

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'Robert Cumming' by Brian Dyson; 'Margaret Dragu' Interview; 'A Space - Vic d'Or' Interview; 'Things You Should Know No. 10' by Opal L. Nations; 'Getting the Art Right No. 1' - ART-RITE; Reviews.

No's 2 & 3 January 1978 \$1

'The Propositions and Principles of Robert Filliou - Part One'; 'General Idea and the Metaphive (one beyond the metaphor)', Clive Robertson; 'Le-La', Brian Dyson; 'Brian Dyson - Looking Both Ways at Once', Paul Woodrow; 'Medical Opinion Once Held', Steve MacCaffery; 'Western Front Video - Kate Craig' Interview; 'Dennis Tourbin' Interview; 'HP/RELICAN - Getting the Rite Right'; Carl Loeffler - La Mamelie Inc. Interview; 'Getting the Art Right No. 2' - CRITERIA; 'Our condition is post-preemption', Marcella Bienvenue; Reviews.

No. 4 April 1978 \$2

'The 1978 Canadian Video Open'; 'Catching a Hearing-Aid to the Airport - Michael Snow' - Interview; 'Towards an Allusive Referential', Dick Higgins; 'Retention of the Audial Form - AUDIO ARTS' - Interview; 'Videoview 1: Susan Britton', Peggy Gale; 'Videoview 2: Rodney Werden', Peggy Gale; 'Art and Social Transformation', Kenneth Coutts-Smith; 'Robert Filliou, Part Two: The Gong Show Transcript'; 'Cloning Closes The Gap Between Clones', Clive Robertson; 'John Oswald: In Between the Stations' - Interview; Reviews.

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Discussion: 'The Penultimate Perspective'; Review: 'The New Arts Speak Conference'; Interview: Linda Covit, POWERHOUSE, Montreal; Videoview 3: Paul Wong talks with Michael Goldberg; The Photographer's Ball performance document and scripts by Margaret Dragu; Reviews: Performance: Chevrolet Training: The Remake; As the World Burns; Film: Theatre for Strangers; Books: Wie Alles Anfang, Re-Visons, The Ballad of Dan Peoples, The Woman from Malibu; Discs: 33/3, Hot Property and more.....

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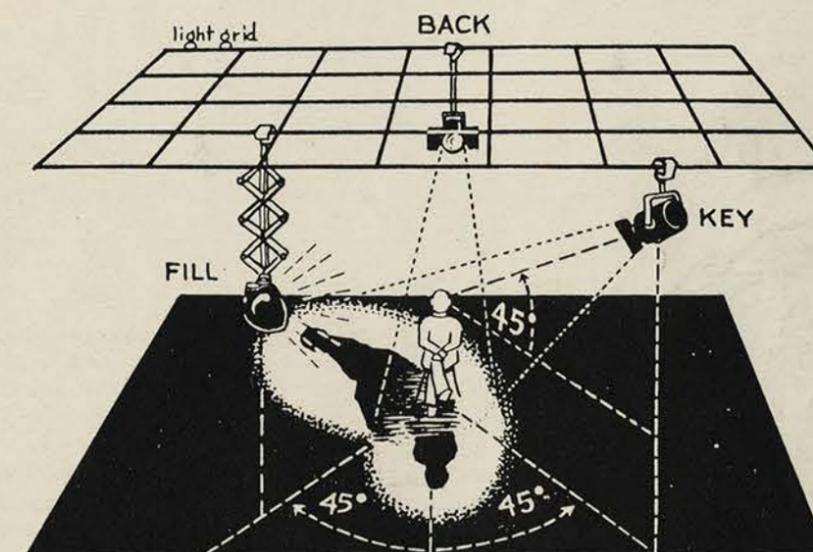
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guest-edited by Kenneth Coutts-Smith with exclusive photo coverage by Rodney Werden.

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