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The Cultural Media & News Magazine

July/August 1980

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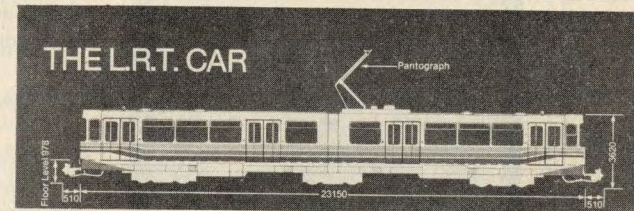
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the continuation of Centerfold Magazine

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## LETTERS



### Late For Class

I've just finished re-reading your critique of Dan Graham's book *Video-Architecture-Television* (FUSE, May 1980) which I found particularly incisive. I've had a great deal of trouble dealing with Dan's work, especially his "architecture" which he claims derives from Venturi's work (which it doesn't) and which also is intended to have socio-political meaning, for example, his *Suburban House Alteration*, 1978. One student in my Modern Architecture class, an admirer of Dan's, tried to come to terms with Dan's work and essentially ended up dealing with it on formal terms, connecting it with LeWitt's work, for instance. It's a pity your review hadn't come out by the time she wrote the paper because she would have been forced to examine Graham's projects and installations from an entirely different perspective.

I was certainly happy to read it.

Vivien Cameron, Halifax

### "You are obviously badly misinformed"

I was surprised and annoyed to see that you had used a quote from me, apparently to discredit Greg Curnoe's letter published in your May issue. Exactly what your use of this quote was intended to express is obscure, but it has about it the hysterical quality of all your comment on C.A.R. and its policies. Your readers should understand that the statement attributed to me has been taken out of context, and that I had nothing to do with its being used by you in apparent opposition to Greg Curnoe. On the contrary, I support his statements absolutely. I regret, though, that he took the time to respond to your article - it

didn't deserve it. In addition to your complete irrationality, you are obviously badly misinformed. As Karl Beveridge is a member of the editorial board and a C.A.R. representative. I suggest you talk with him about C.A.R. to straighten out your misconceptions.

Judy Gouin  
Spokesperson, C.A.R.O., Toronto

Karl Beveridge replies:

First, let me state that as a C.A.R. Representative, I do not, absolutely or otherwise, support the views of either Greg Curnoe or Judy Gouin.

To straighten out misconceptions, there is now a resolution before C.A.R.O., that was passed in the Toronto local of C.A.R., to eliminate the citizenship requirements for membership in C.A.R.O. The main point, to my understanding, in Clive Robertson's article was a criticism of these requirements.

### Shaping Convictions

George Brecht sent me a copy of your review of my book (*CENTERFOLD/FUSE* Nov. 1979) on his work a few months ago. I'm very glad that you appreciate the book, and I want to thank you for saying so in public. It's very surprising to find that you feel that the book "reads not unlike the Schwartz book on Duchamp." I'm not at all into alchemy or comparative anthropology and Freud seems ever less pertinent to my thinking, but perhaps that's not what you refer to, and then again I have to admit to having worked for all of several years with Arturo Schwartz on the revision of the manuscripts and proofs for the Duchamp book and perhaps I left more of a mark on it or it on me than I heretofore imagined. In any case you are attentive and perspicacious. There's still another curious coincidence in your phrase, "It is difficult to see how much Martin, once involved in this project, has suffered from attempting to 'sell' Brecht." A reviewer once made a very similar comment about my first book, the monograph on Arman that was published by Harry Abrams. Perhaps you spot a quality in my prose that I myself am incapable of seeing. I'm not at all involved or concerned with "selling" anything. But perhaps there's some sort of ambiguity in the way I use my writing for shaping, defining, and intensifying my own convictions. That is in fact what I use it for, and I wonder if that is what you react to.

Henry Martin, Bolzano, Italy

### Favours of the Public Purse

For a news magazine to headline a story "Ask Me No Questions" is a nice touch of irony. For it to compound that by not asking questions at the source, to check its hypotheses, is a double irony. We welcome, nevertheless, Tom Sherman's second-hand interest (FUSE, March 1980) in Statistics Canada's survey of writers.

His main beef (I gather) is that the StatsCan questionnaire constitutes an invasion of privacy. Writers, who are different from non-writers principally because of their insatiable curiosity about life and those who live it, must not themselves be subjected to scrutiny. If Sherman and his anonymous ("for reasons too obvious to mention") friend are to be believed, writers should be protected ... or at least warned.

Fortunately, the majority of writers were interested enough to respond to that "nosey" questionnaire. Some of them, apart from a wish to know themselves, might have reasoned that the public has a right (a duty?) to take an interest in Canadian writers — particularly those who, like Sherman's friend, are not above accepting Canada Council grants and other favours of the public purse.

Sherman does us a favour himself by answering some of his friend's questions, about what StatsCan is and does. But he worries that all respondents will have to fill in all the bits of data requested. We suspect (the survey will help answer the question) that most Canadian writers ... even the *live* ones ... don't write in every genre and for every medium. If we sent questionnaires to any dead writers, we would appreciate his giving us their names, unless he prefers that they remain anonymous.

We didn't tell Sherman's friend just what use would be made of the data because that's not our business. We might have pointed to the numbers of groups and agencies which do make frequent use of our cultural data, such as the Secretary of State and the Committee of 1812, but we think that the use of the data is best left to the users. Nor do we explain in the covering letter the technical details of sampling (we do publish it with the results for those interested). In fact, if we had answered all the questions in the "Ask Me No Questions" article, the covering letter might have been longer than the questionnaire.

For the same reason, we didn't go into detail about the "mysterious" second questionnaire. In fact, it was sent out by Canada Council to a much larger group of writers — all those whose works might be in libraries. This is part of the Council's work on public lending right. Sherman's friend should have got a copy and I'm sure that the Council will send

him one if he will disclose his name and address.

Sherman correctly assumes that other creative Canadians have received similar questionnaires. We have sent him a bulletin describing the scope and the nature of the Statistics Canada cultural programme, in the hope that he might write a more informed piece for *Focus* (sic) readers.

It should be pointed out that Sherman is incorrect when he says that no artist is legally bound to give this kind of information to StatsCanada. Under the Statistics Act, which he quotes, any survey by the agency has the force of law behind it. StatsCanada itself has been taking initiatives to try to get the Act changed to allow for voluntary surveys. And the agency has a record of very rarely resorting to the courts to support its penchant for asking questions.

The hand-lettered four-digit identification number is designed for two purposes: it allows us to cross off the mailing list the names of those who have replied and avoids the sending of a follow-up request. It also allows us to weight the reply in proportion to the subsample. The person who hand-assigned this number is not the same person who feeds the machines the data. The first person (who, for reasons too obvious to mention, has asked me to keep her name out of this story) locks the book in a safe and will destroy it once the survey is completed. The computer will never know.

Mr. Sherman's report, which by now you must realize reads like good and bad science fiction, goes on to point out the names of the groups who have helped us, both by supplying address lists and by suggesting questions which they feel their members would want asked. Some have told us that a strong response will help them speak on matters which their members deem important.

This letter to FUSE is signed by Jeffrey Holmes, Director, Education, Science and Culture Division of Statistics Canada — the same "nosey" division which brought you the foreign students statistics you quote in the same issue, just a few pages later.

Jeffrey Holmes, Ottawa

Sherman replies:

Only in Canada would one find such a secure, creative public servant. Jeffrey Holmes is a bureaucrat who can write, and all writers love to be published. We are fortunate to live in a nation where we occasionally find a true individual like Mr. Holmes working for us in the federal government. I must admit I'm less than amazed by his parrot-like treatment of my original article. But then when I think about it, good criticism is hard to come by. I was very impressed with the level of

callous wit Mr. Holmes maintained while dropping his little tidbits of official information. I was especially taken with the paragraph on his responsibility towards developing 'pure' information. It's not his business to say who uses the information. Apparently such diverse groups and agencies as the Committee of 1812 and the Secretary of State make use of the 'objective' information in Statistics Canada files. What arm of the Secretary of State? Mr. Holmes suggests we refrain from any such paranoia.

After all, statistics is a harmless 'soft' science. Unlike pure research conducted in the physical sciences, where the discovery of nuclear fission found such brilliant display in Hiroshima and Nagasaki — we are expected to trust that officially sanctioned social facts will never statistically pile up against a populace in the next holocaust. It is as if we are never subjected to the poetic orgies of behaviour modifying advertising injected into the public media by the federal government of Canada. Sure, the best propaganda, domestic and external, is always based on 'good solid information'. Jeffrey Holmes, your rather ignorant expression of departmentalized pseudo-scientific idealism leaves me to ponder what you will eventually do with all the information you can bilk from your 'fingered' public. Perhaps for your next occupational challenge, you will choose to pen clever jingles for the Liberals to air on the CBC offering the immigrants instructions on how to painlessly assimilate. As for Holmes' assurances on confidentiality for those directly interrogated by Statistics Canada; I figure if they've got a guy like Jeffrey Holmes answering their mail, just think how creative their computer programmers must be! As Erich Von Daniken stated in his book *Chariots of the Gods*, "the forest of questionmarks continues to grow."

### "Smearing With A Democratic Trowel"

Alan Harris' discussion of curatorial policy at the National Film Board concludes broadly from minute, misinterpreted specifics.

The article professes to discuss the recent debate surrounding the proposed exhibition of photographers from the Atlantic region. Harris' vehicle for his malaise quickly becomes an interim exhibition, *Cibachrome*, whose promotional material arrived in the midst of the furor. From this one document and from a chance remark heard from a N.S.C.A.D. affiliated photographer, does Harris construct his thesis. It is interesting to note that the document prepared by the N.S.C.A.D. students, listing

(continued on page 308)



## Distribution: A Solution For All Of Us

There is probably no one word that animates the tongues of those involved in independent publishing as much as 'Distribution'. When indeed such publishers eventually stop discussing the subject it's a good sign that stagnation has set in, or rigor mortis.

In the field of magazine publishing, 'distribution' as such becomes identified as a problem which varies somewhat with the circulation of the publication. For example: a magazine that has a circulation 1,500-2,000 would attempt to be supported by its readers through subscriptions. The same magazine would also try to get some bookstore display and sales. At the other end of the scale of independent magazine publishing, a publication with a circulation of 100,000+ would exist through subscriptions and display advertising as a result of national distribution or in some cases saturated regional distribution. The term 'saturated' is probably an ideal. In Canada perhaps only *TV Guide* and *Reader's Digest* have such distribution and both are hardly what may be termed 'independent' publications.

Where the distribution struggles really take place is for publications with circulations between 3,000-30,000. The procedures are at best chaotic. At the lower end of this scale a publication can begin controlled distribution directly to outlets or through regional or national distributors. Apart from friendly newsstands or stores within your own city plus a few good contacts in other cities the service is most often a losing proposition. And yet publications often distribute nationally and sometimes internationally without any promise of payment. In this mid-size area magazines can increase their circulation to attract more advertising — which is difficult to maintain beyond initial corporate flirtation. If indeed the advertising holds, you can, as one new Edmonton publication recently did, literally throw 20,000 copies of a magazine onto the doorsteps of your unsolicited readership.

By now you are probably getting the picture where being in the middle is much like sitting on the fence: it is very dangerous to your health. It's not like opening a donut shop where all you need is a good location. In Canada 13 percent of all titles distributed account for 87 percent of all sales. In Toronto the largest wholesaler of magazines distributes 1,800 titles across 4,400 retailers. This means



that roughly 22 magazines account for 87 percent of the sales, leaving 1,778 titles to share 13 percent. While these figures may beg the question of how many of the 22 titles are Canadian, equally important is the knowledge that newsstand sales are viewed as subsidised advertising, because they increase circulation on which advertising rates are based, and because tear cards lead to additional subscriptions.

There are other factors: each year entrepreneurs who wish to invest some of their gains become involved in the launching of one or another of the consumer magazines which flood the market. Substantial investments are made initially to buy a place in the distribution/advertising system.

So where does *FUSE* figure in this paper jungle? Well let's get the ad message over quickly. Every reader that has any warmth towards any small magazine should take out a subscription. There are many reasons why this is a must. And I mean essential. Firstly, every small magazine would then become self-sufficient. For *FUSE* with a circulation of 10,000 we would operate on a budget of \$90,000. This would mean that the production and writing labour of the magazine could be paid for. There would be no profit. I repeat — no profit. Secondly because not enough readers of such magazines take out subscriptions it means the following: a) twice as much time and energy is spent on raising money through hare-brained inefficient schemes — like Advertising & Distribution. b) that same scramble diverts the focus away from the function of a small magazine which in part is to develop alternate editorial content.

So by not subscribing to such magazines the reader is unintentionally dealing the magazine a death blow and simultaneously helps to editorially weaken his/her welcomed reading material. I'm afraid it's that simple.

But back in the real world *FUSE* fights for advertising and a place on the newsstands, the latter with the fervour of a national right. And because of this publication's mixed economy (the need for both paid newsstand sales and advertising) we end up with (as we have said before) a quirky hybrid. And it does annoy some people.

*FUSE* acquired a list of alternate British newsstands and bookstores from an independent distributor that services the same stores in England. We sent copies of the magazine on consignment, with no obligation. We have received some thirty letters from the outlet owners following the mailing of invoices. For example:

"Having sent us an unsolicited consignment of your magazine a month or so back we returned it saying we didn't want to stock it. Surprise, Surprise we got sent more. Listen if you pretend to produce a quasi-radical magazine why do you use such crass high pressure techniques. The five copies of the second issue are still here - I suggest you come pick them up if you want them if not we'll burn them. Hoping your magazine rapidly fades into the oblivion it deserves."

*Grapevine Bookshop, Cambridge*

Now just forget for a moment that we have been publishing reviews and reports of British artists, publications etc. All of the magazines that we send to Europe cost us valuable postage that we would never reclaim. We send magazines out of Canada because we assume (quite rightly) that the world has outgrown its regional isolationism. We also assume that the idea of solidarity is not some hollow joke.

The English example is not an isolated case. *FUSE* has also been refused by the majority of University bookstores across Canada, which is more of a reflection on those bookstores than on the magazine. We work hard on distribution to enable others to have access to the magazine.

We don't need the above abuse especially from 'alternate' or academic outlets. Which brings us back to our ad. We are willing to continue this pot-pourri for some time if you for your part will help us off this merry-go-round called 'Distribution'. You can by subscribing. Not tomorrow but today. And if you're still not convinced just remember that magazine subscriptions are currently deductible from your income tax.

*Clive Robertson  
for the editorial board*

"... a book everyone should read."

*Toronto Life*

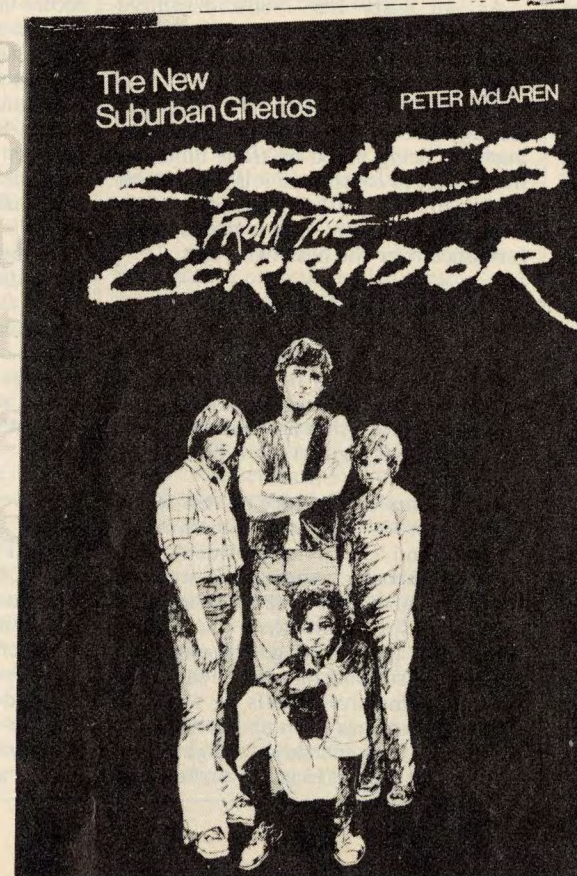
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"There has been a state-ment on o... will help as much t... uation, document... elicit a... en's... response a... touching"



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## Labour

### The CLC Convention in Winnipeg

*Some agreements were reached but the leadership and McDermott were repeatedly challenged from the floor.*

As 2700 trade unionists assembled in Winnipeg last month for the biennial convention of the Canadian Labour Congress, there were rumblings of an impending "bloodbath." But as newspaper and television reports on the convention appeared, we were led to believe that in fact things proceeded without a ripple: "CLC President McDermott Defuses Opposition," "...Soothes Postal Workers," "A New McDermott in Charge of CLC," "Scarcely a Murmur of Dissent at Labour Convention."

While it is true that the anticipated "bloodbath" did not materialize, the convention was a far cry from the "love-in" version so widely reported.

In fact, the militant opposition within the CLC was considerably stronger than in past conventions and won some important victories. There was direct and strong criticism of the leadership's policies on many issues. And there was sharp debate on the overall direction of the labour movement from Day One right through to the end of the convention.

#### THE PAST TWO YEARS

In the two years since the 1978 CLC convention the economic and political powers in this country have stepped up attacks on workers' standard of living and on basic democratic rights like the right to strike and to organize. Wage increases have been held down below the inflation rate and union busting is on the rise. Last winter in Ontario, 19 of 30

strikes were tough battles for first agreements. In Nova Scotia, the infamous "Michelin Bill" was passed to break the unionization drive at a Michelin plant. Eleven thousand provincial government employees in Saskatchewan had their strike broken by legislation.

As we enter the 1980's organized labour finds itself at a crossroads. Will it allow the corporations and governments to have things their way, or will it take the offensive, developing its strength through militancy and unity? This is the question being posed by trade unionists from coast to coast. And it is against this backdrop that CLC delegates were evaluating their leadership's performance over the past two years.

#### A SORRY RECORD

A brief look at the balance sheet showed that in every important struggle waged by Canadian workers during this period, the leadership had not only come up short, but in fact had thrown up obstacles.

One example is the Inco miners' seven-month strike. Ontario Steelworkers director and CLC vice-president Stew Cooke publicly opposed the strike at the outset, and it took the CLC executive many months before they were finally forced to (at least) go through the motions of support in order to save face.

Despite massive layoffs in the auto industry there has been no mobilization by the CLC leadership to fight these layoffs and their effects; no protests, no

action whatsoever, except of course International Autoworkers president Doug Fraser getting himself promoted to the Chrysler Board of Directors!

When CUPW president Jean Claude Parrot was thrown in prison earlier this year, the CLC leadership did not utter a word of protest. On the contrary, while Parrot was still locked up in an Ottawa jail, McDermott told a convention of the National Union of Provincial Government Employees in Vancouver that strikes were "old fashioned" and that there were "more forceful and intelligent" ways for workers to fight. Never one to mince words when it comes to attacking "fellow trade-unionists", McDermott charged CUPW with "creating nationwide havoc and anarchy," following "suicidal directions," and "leading charges of the Light Brigade" that would "leave the labour movement in total disrepute."

It is this last phrase that is particularly telling about McDermott's underlying strategy for labour. The fact is that the postal workers' strike did not leave CUPW in "disrepute" with Canadian trade unionists. On the contrary, it won that union and its leaders considerable respect and admiration. The "disrepute" that McDermott is so worried about is that which would come from big business and government circles.

McDermott and the CLC executive have been bending over backwards in recent months to prove how "responsible and respectable" they are, to show that they seek "co-operation, not confrontation." Why? So that they can continue to expand their participation in tripartite bodies involving collaboration between labour, business and government leaders. Strikes like those at the post office and Inco could only have the effect of destroying McDermott's cherished "credibility"...and so they had to be disavowed.

In these important labour battles preceding the CLC convention, the stakes were high, for rank-and-file workers and McDermott alike. And the stakes remained high on the eve of the 1980 Winnipeg convention.

#### FIRST CLASHES

The spirit of the convention was evident from the opening moments when the CUPW delegates followed the ceremonial singing of "O Canada" with a militant rendition of "Solidarity Forever".

Jean-Claude Parrot was received with a thunderous ovation when he stepped up to the mike to support a resolution demanding that the executive account for their actions (or lack thereof) on

decisions taken at previous conventions. He pointed out, and many delegates concurred, that at least twenty resolutions voted at the 1978 convention to take militant action to fight such issues as unemployment had been ignored by the executive.

Dave Patterson, President of Steelworkers Local 6500 at Inco, in Sudbury, blasted McDermott for betraying the postal workers.

"You sound like you should be sitting with the Liberals, not the working people," Patterson challenged McDermott. Up on the podium, McDermott kept silent.

It was obvious McDermott had decided to avoid an open fight. He was in a delicate position and had to play it cool. This tactic paid off to some



CUPW President, Jean Claude Parrot

extent and the CLC executive was able to eventually push through some of the basic elements of their program, such as tripartism and renewed support for the NDP. This move runs counter to the importance of independent political action on the part of the labour movement which advocates defending labour's interests no matter which party is in power, NDP included. The executive was also able to prevent any debate on resolutions upholding Quebec's right to self-determination. But at the same time, their opposition scored some important victories. One resolution which won approval condemned all strikebreaking, whether or not a strike is "legal." The CLC was called upon to launch a country-wide campaign in defence of the right to organize, to negotiate and to strike.

Another resolution that was won handily condemned all redbaiting - an art McDermott himself has become adept at over the past year. During the debate on this question, many delegates took the mikes to declare that they were sick and tired of labour leaders resorting to redbaiting instead of debating the issues.

One important outcome of the convention and a clear victory for the opposition was the unanimous support given CUPW in its current battle against the federal government. McDermott was

forced to swallow hard and promise unconditional support to the postal workers in front of all the delegates.

In the words of one postal worker: "We pushed these guys to say things they never, ever would have said before."

#### BLOCK VOTING

Just as significant was the major victory won over the executive's third attempt in as many conventions to concentrate more power in their hands.

The executive proposed a new system called "voting the membership," which would eliminate the principle of one delegate, one vote, by allotting weighted votes according to the number of members in a union. The scheme would represent a step towards reducing the role of rank-and-file delegates at conventions.

Even though the executive had watered down their original "block voting" proposal to try to ensure a win this time, the convention saw through it and rejected it by an even larger margin than the 1978 proposal.

#### McDERMOTT SALVAGES BASICS

One key element in the CLC executive's "collaborate-don't fight" line is tripartism, whereby organized labour agrees to sit down with the bosses and government to plan out solutions to economic and social problems.

This whole concept denies the basic truth of our economic system: labour and capital have opposing interests and governments are not neutral.

That is why tripartism has been rejected by provincial labour federations and other large sectors of the labour movement. But this has not prevented the CLC executive from participating in tripartite bodies on the sly. For these labour bureaucrats, tripartism is a way of carving out careers for themselves. It is a path to personal power and gain.

At the convention McDermott managed to push through adoption of a new structure called the Labour Market Board which is in fact a tripartite body.

Over two dozen of the CLC's top officers already sit on the Major Project Task Force with some of the biggest names in Canadian business, including men like Rowland Frazee of the Royal Bank.

The CLC has also been meeting with the Business Council on National Issues (BCNI). These meetings have been going on quietly since 1977 to "exchange views on the economy and possible courses of action."

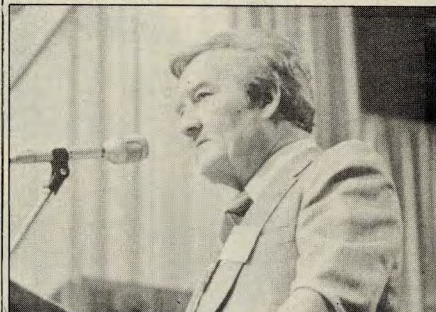
BCNI membership is limited to top business executives. It is the single most powerful grouping of businessmen in the

country.

Alfred Powis, head of Noranda and former co-chairman of the BCNI, described industry's new relationship with the CLC in a report from the Conference Board of Canada: "In March 1977, a number of BCNI members had a two-day meeting with senior officials of the CLC...We agreed that Canada was facing a serious economic crisis (and that) we would establish a meaningful ongoing bipartite and tripartite relationship to study the issue..."

Powis goes on to say that they agreed on making "personal commitments to a voluntary effort to make decontrols work and seek to persuade others to do the same." (emphasis added).

McDermott's "personal commitment" that Powis speaks of can only mean that the CLC top leadership agreed with these representatives of business to keep wages and strikes down so as to "make



CLC President, Dennis McDermott

decontrols (removal of wage controls) work."

#### BEHIND THE SCENES

At the convention, McDermott dropped the open confrontation and redbaiting which had characterized his dealing with opposition in the past. Instead, he used a lot of slick manoeuvring to try to undercut the opposition, such as substituting indepth policy papers for resolutions sent in by local unions. The tripartism issue never got to the floor in an open debate.

There was also a lot of behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing. For example Louis Laberge of the Quebec Federation of Labour supported McDermott's block voting proposal, silencing the positions that the Quebec delegates had adopted at their own convention. In exchange, McDermott conceded to the QFL on its jurisdictional dispute with the Washington-based Building Trades Unions Council.

#### OPPOSITION CAUCUS

Despite McDermott's gains on some key issues, the development of a militant opposition currently dedicated to turning the CLC into a real fighting machine for labour should not be underestimated.



# REPORTS

At the 1978 CLC convention, an opposition had already started to manifest itself. But it was not as strong, nor as well organized as in 1980. This time the opposition forces built unity in a common fight on a number of issues. An opposition caucus of rank-and-file delegates was formed uniting over 60 militants from the Canadian Union of Public Employees, CUPW, the United Steelworkers, the International Woodworkers of America, the Saskatchewan Government Employees Association and many others. They met throughout the

convention to discuss and debate the issues and plan their strategy and speeches from the floor.

The caucus also looked at the perspectives for the labour movement over the next few years. Starting right now, by organizing strong support for upcoming labour battles and by co-ordinating activities around provincial labour federation conventions coming up this year, the caucus will continue to build the rank-and-file opposition trend within the CLC. ■

Judy Darcy



Benjamin Buchloch, Linda Morris (top) and Lucy Lippard presented papers.

## Art Critics Play Solos

*It was more than a language problem at CRITICA 1, where international theoreticians raced to be original.*

CRITICA 1 was an international conference on problems of art criticism held in Montecatini Terme, Italy, at the end of March, 1980. Over sixty critical and curatorial representatives of the avant-garde arrived from around the world to compare notes and check out the current scene. Unfortunately, translations were almost nonexistent given the recurring technical problems which left the english version sounding like a live broadcast from the third world war. And consequently, a detailed analysis of the conference remains impossible until the discussion papers have been published. However, it is possible to speak of a few general impressions.

The topic of the conference was "Art from who to whom...". One usually associates these themes as the common factor which draws the participants

together, and certainly this topic was appropriately vague enough to include everyone. The main problem in the discussion was the absence of a common framework. One panelist spoke in intense, semiotic terms while another claimed there had been no art since pop art in the 1960's. It was not a question of clarifying differences in a debate. The critical frameworks of the participants were often so far apart they were actually working at cross-purposes.

One reason for this muddle was the super-abundance of academics present. These individuals, whose object is the 'accumulation of knowledge' in the abstract, tend to project a rather 'paper' vision of the world. They also have a pretty thin connection to the production of art. Not being too involved in art practice allows them the distance supposedly necessary to develop a

'theory'. This alienation from the artist turns into a dubious advantage as (in the worst cases) they can get away with saying anything, providing their argument is complex and they can drop the correct references. In discussion, these doctrinaire inventions become theoretical differences and the stakes in the debate have more to do with a career at the University than critical enlightenment.

Another reason for the confusion was a tendency on the part of even the most interesting and involved critics to be 'provocative'. This means making an extreme statement in the midst of a solid and agreeable argument which shocks the audience into responding to a new and radical position. This technique draws attention to the individual critic as they stir things up. It also makes their viewpoint seem unique. But this method of polemicizing sacrifices clarity for sensation and so is finally counter-productive.

But perhaps the greatest stumbling block was the rigid categories of what defined a critic, curator, artist, or administrator. It was generally assumed that an artist couldn't write criticism or curate an exhibition, and this tends to reduce the role of artists to being simply dumb (but gifted) romantics. There are, after all, artists whose intelligence exceeds beyond being "theoreticians of their own work". But any suggestion of this was considered either naively heretical or simply amusing.

In fact, any combination of writer/critic/artist/curator is possible; curators and critics usually claim at least an artists' sensibility. And the innocent refusal of this is significant. As artists begin to desire a wider audience, especially through an involvement in political activities, a sort of fragmentation of the avant-garde appears. As artists become less interested in directing their work towards the supportive audience of the avant-garde, then the avant-garde for whom these critics have become professional theorists, enters into a crisis.

This crisis was not on the agenda at Critica 1. A few interesting things were Benjamin Buchloch's presentation on the ideology of the museum, and Lucy Lippard's on the "Alienation of the Avant-Garde from the Audience". There were also useful critiques by Thierry LeDuve on the Beaubourg and Linda Morris on state patronage. As for the worst — including Thomas Messer from the Guggenheim Museum and one Parisian critic who had never heard of Daniel Buren — one can always learn from negative example. ■

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| PIRANHIA FARMS<br>Bruce McCrimmon   | CORRESPONDENCE<br>FROM THE<br>WESTERN FRONT<br>The Western Front    | BLACK UNITED<br>FRONT<br>Group publication   |
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photos courtesy of CRITICA



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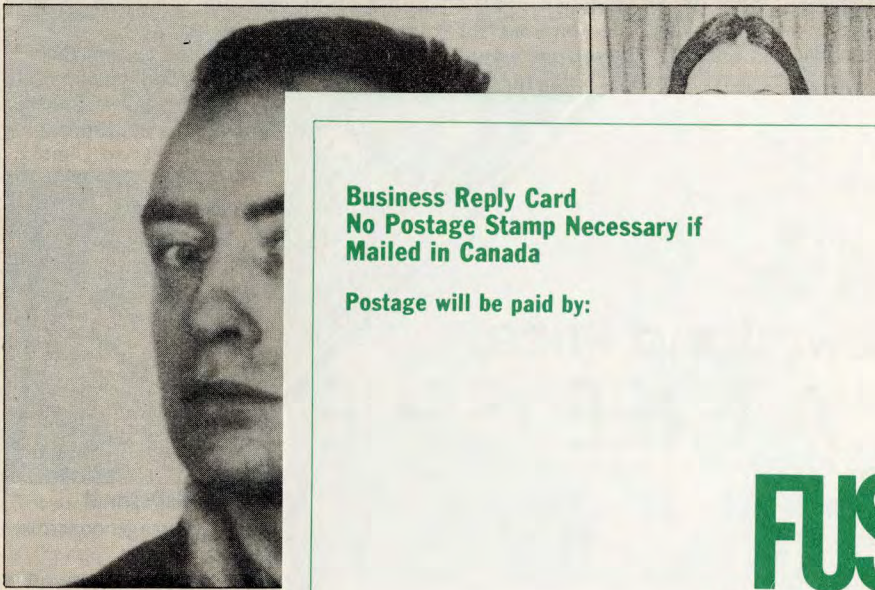
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photos courtesy of CRITICA



Benjamin Buchloch, Linda

## Art C

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Still from John Porter's *Down On Me* - hoisting the camera gives a new view.

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"The festival is primarily interested in the human activities and expression which Super 8 makes possible, irrespective of the physical limits of its hardware. It will continue to explore the potential of related media and to move with the technological developments in opening future responsibilities for the personal creativity and fulfillment of the Super 8 filmmaker."

*Festival Organizers, 1980*

This benevolent interest in the personal development of the filmmaker ran in tandem with the economic interest that the hardware and distribution industries hold in the future of Super 8 at the 5th Annual Super 8 Film Festival, which was held in Toronto in May, 1980. The festival originally began as a student project at the Ontario College of Art in 1976 and has grown to a size and range/scope that is somewhat disproportionate with its actual product. While Super 8 has a potential that is being realized as an art form, it also has a potential for larger equipment sales to hobbyists and young filmmakers, and a possibility for production and distribution in the mainstream film and TV network. With no apparent contradiction, all of these interests were served at the festival.

This year's attendance was approximately 1000 people. The workshop programme, that ran parallel to the screenings, trade show, demonstrations and tapings by Rogers Cable TV, had an unexpectedly high attendance rate. The workshops, which were lead by guest speakers and conducted in lecture and

demonstration formats, dealt with different areas of Super 8 production, and future possibilities for distribution. Their success varied widely and the general criticism of them is typical of festival criticism — that they did not (and could not) assign themselves to the audience's level of comprehension and development.

For many, the festival was a volunteer project. As Sheila Hill, the festival director, said, "If everyone got paid there wouldn't be a festival". This year's operating budget is just under \$30,000. Two people are employed full time from October to May. Of the total cost, roughly one-third is recouped at the door through registration fees. Several businesses and institutions provided services, supplies and facilities without charge. The guest speakers were given travel expenses, but no fee or honorarium. The jury members were volunteers. Their job was to select from the 340 submissions, 133 films for viewing and four prize winners. Each winner was awarded a \$500 prize.

Super 8 filmmaking often operates economically in the same way that the festival did. Although it is a relatively inexpensive medium it depends largely on labourers of love. Filmmakers generally only pay for equipment and processing. If any of their time is paid for it is probably through the government grant they have received, or in some cases, by the company whose product is the subject of their film.

The only people whose time is paid for

at the festival other than the two organizers, are the projectionists and the salespeople at the trade show. This points to an unfortunate truth — in order to serve the interest of the filmmaker, which is the mandate of the festival, the industries involved must necessarily have their interests served first. Their involvement, which is initially charitable, in the form of donations and support, is projected toward future sales and distribution profits. This is neither new nor reprehensible, it is simply the case.

The films chosen for screening were divided into three categories: Fact/Documentary, Fiction/Narrative, and Art/Experimental. The majority of the films in the first two categories must be judged as their precedents in 16mm and 35mm would be judged, because of their strong and obvious aspiration to emulate or 'be one of them'. After viewing many of the films in these two categories it appeared that many of the filmmakers were using Super 8 as a handicapped practice medium. Because the styles and subjects were so strongly reminiscent of commercial models, the following critical question became dominant — to what extent does this film overcome the problems and limitations of Super 8 and not look like a Super 8 film? In addition to trying to attain 35mm status visually, many of these films, including most of the award winners, borrowed content blatantly from well known films. The narrative winner *Junk Food Junkie*, used the control-room metaphor for the brain that Woody Allen used in *Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Sex. Distractions*, the animation winner, was impressive but essentially the same as an NFB transforming image piece.

Many of the narrative pieces were short personal films or film diaries. The fact that some of them were good was due to their being a clever idea, simply executed, not to their technical or visual accomplishment. Animation films using drawings or pixilation were included in this category if they had a narrative line. The longer films that copied or parodied popular TV and film formats were the most conspicuously out of place as Super 8 films. They were attempts to create good entertainment. Besides their obvious 'ducking around' Super 8 shortcomings or inadequacies they were bad films — especially the \$500 winner *Junk Food Junkie* and the lengthy James Bond parody *The Spy Who Did It Better*. Essentially these films were serious recreations of Hollywood icons. They only lapsed into real parody when they approached a Super 8 hurdle, such as a fixed tripod, that they could not master. This wavering only added to the confusion that was embedded in their bad scripts.

The high quality and success of the film *North Shore Adventure* by Walter Strickland, offered possibilities to the Fact/Documentary genre. Although it was probably financed by the company whose cargo vessel was featured in the film, it incorporated the communities and geography of the North Shore location well. It demonstrated that Ethnographic, Geographic or Anthropological films which are usually difficult for their producers to finance, can be efficiently made in Super 8. Super 8's portability, size, easy operation and economy suit this genre and can encourage its production.

The films that really distinguished themselves at the festival were the Art/Experimental films. Being experiments there was no recipe to follow. Thus they were not handicapped either technologically or experientially by Super 8 qualities or cliches. Some were successful attempts to find new or develop old vocations for the Super 8 Camera and film stock. Only these films utilized, to their advantage Super 8's superior ability for movement, temperamental behavior in artificial light (very 1959 birthday party) and its characteristic colour and textural traits.

John Porter's *Down On Me* was exceptionally good. It probably isn't possible to do what Porter did with either a 16 or 35mm camera, without a very good insurance policy. His camera was "hoisted" (sic) up and down the side of buildings and from the tops of bridges or ledges. The centre and primary object of the image was "Me" (John Porter) throughout the film. Although this is a small technical innovation, its effect is on the edge of revolutionary. Different than a camera swinging 360° on a string, whose effect is vertigo, "hoisting" creates a strong but nimble image. This shot is an addition to the vocabulary of camera-movement that is as or more important than the crane shot.

A larger proportion of the films in this category were appreciated, and generated more audience discussion than the films in the other categories. Also, far fewer had direct and obvious allusions to techniques and tricks that famous filmmakers are known for.

Helmuth Costard's eighty minute film *Der Kleine Goddard* (a little Goddard), originally shot in Super 8 and blown up to 16mm, was featured at the festival. It was shown on the third day, just in time to help articulate all of the problems — technical, financial and philosophical — that were imposing themselves in the constant screenings. Suitably, it is a film about making a Super 8 film. The narrative surrounds a letter he is writing

## REPORTS

to his producers that chronicles all of the progress he has made, and the setbacks he has suffered during the production of his film. He outlines as well as offers solutions to the inherent deficiencies of Super 8 filmmaking, which are first technical and second economic. He shows us how he fitted his cameras with more precise and expensive lenses, and built 'blimps' to encase the cameras in. These 'blimps' reduced mechanical noise during synchronized sound recording (as well as chewed up more film than they exposed in the cameras). Costard also designed a system that would synchronize all of his cameras and sound recorders, which he demonstrates and explains in the film. Unfortunately these two innovations didn't work as well as they might have, but the film obviously benefited from them. Acknowledging the massive influence that commercial filmmakers have on Super 8 makers, Costard furnished his own choice influence. Jean Luc Goddard played the

role of a guest filmmaker/director who was to work on the film within the actual film. Costard also 'cameoed' Fassbinder as 'the other kind of filmmaker'.

The film that Costard had invited Goddard to work on, and which was to be funded by German Television and the city of Hamburg was to be called approximately "Is It Possible To Make A Film In Germany Today?" Costard's film continues the dialogue on the economics and politics of future filmmaking. The discussion is one that was pioneered and lead by Goddard in Europe for the last 10 or 15 years.

Costard eclipsed the other filmmakers, who resorted to imitation or parody, by making deliberate admissions of Super 8's link to 16 and 35mm. His film was original in its particular treatment of a non-Art/Experimental text within the Super 8 medium and successful for pointing out and adhering to the often forgotten point, "a text still rules a film". This point actually sums up the problems that the other filmmakers neglected in their work.

Kerri Kwinter



There were constitutional discussions on censorship - total or qualified opposition?

### Art

## The Cultural Workers Alliance

*The discussion in Peterborough: Is the artist a moral conscience or a socialized producer?*

The consensus among those attending the recent three day founding convention of the Cultural Workers Alliance in Peterborough (see *Fuse* May, 1980, Vol. 4 No. 4) was the real need to provide a continuing forum for the common concerns of socially conscious artists.

The conference, attended by over 100 people representing various cultural disciplines, was divided between workshops, the presentation of various participants' work, and general meetings

which drafted and finalized a constitution and organizational structure. Due to the diverse political makeup of those attending, two constitutional discussions provided the highlights in an often heated and unavoidably extended debate: discussions on censorship — should the organization oppose all forms of state censorship, or should it qualify its opposition, taking into account forms of racist, sexist, Fascist, etc. propaganda, — and a discussion on how to lend support to progressive movements outside of



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Canada — how can the organization support in principle such movements without falling into the hotbed of sectarianism. The first set of workshops focused on particular disciplines: theatre, the visual arts, film, journalism. Here, participants discussed their own work, and issues related to its production. The second set of workshops dealt with censorship and art, and the labour movement, particularly the need to unionize cultural workers themselves.

Unfortunately little time was spent on general theoretical discussion. An open meeting in which three papers were read, covering art criticism, working in the mass media, and notes towards an androgenous theatre failed to get off the ground. It was also unfortunate that no discussions were held on possible concrete actions the organization might take up, such as positions on actual cases of censorship, government cutbacks in the arts, or support for existing labour struggles. The one move in this direction was the formation of a womens' caucus.

Although many participants, divided on professional or ideological grounds, made a concerted effort to transcend such differences, a more fundamental and underlying difference became apparent. It is a distinction that cuts across both specific political ideologies and the particular concerns of varied professions, although it, of course, affects all of them.

This basic difference is in the perception of the actual conditions of the artist's social practice and the forms of cultural production under advanced capitalism. It separates those who maintain a romantic view of the artist as a moral conscience and individualized innovator, and those who see the production of culture as historically conditioned and the artist as a socialized producer. Both attitudes can subscribe to the same general political principles, but whereas one sees these principles culturally in moral terms, the other sees them in historical terms.

The moralist is not necessarily a 'bleeding-heart', but can be an artist who sees the emotional content of art transcending particular social conditions. This includes, for example, the 'proletarian idealism' of those die-hards who wish to immerse themselves totally in the working class, or the pious who see their work as an escape from the decadence of a brutal bourgeois culture, even though they may appropriate the forms of that culture. Interestingly, it is a similar moralism that informed and still informs the practice of socialist realism, a point that many such artists would vehemently deny.

As suggested, the problem is more than one of sentimentality. Unless the mod-

ifications of cultural production are accounted for, the artist has little chance of collective survival, let alone being able to debate the place of emotion in a politicized culture. These modifications include the increased socialization of production under a centralized management (funding agencies, state institutions, media monopolies), the gradual elimination of the distinctions between the mass and fine arts, and the technological developments of media and communications. Central to this understanding, as well as the ability to develop a counter social-cultural practice, is the formation of a common basis between artists and media and communications workers. It is a stated aim of the C.W.A. to include both artists and communications workers, but, unfortunately, there was a noticeable absence of the latter at the conference.

A broadly defined realism, if that is what we are working towards, must not only account for political ideology and social conditions, but for the organ-

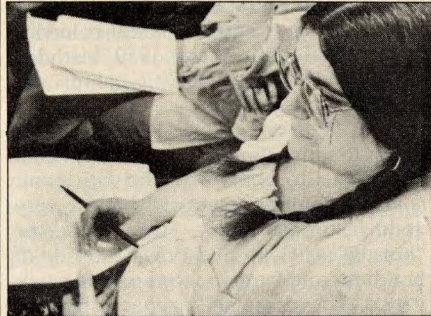


photo: Frank Rooney

ization and forms of production of all aspects of culture as well. It cannot substitute political romanticism for historical understanding, nor can it separate the production of a progressive culture from the production of mainstream or mass culture or vice versa.

This is not to say that these problems are peculiarly inherent in the C.W.A. Quite the contrary, it is a credit as well as a challenge to the C.W.A. that it was able to avoid political sectarianism at the convention, and allow more basic issues to come forward.

Now that the C.W.A. has been founded nationally, it needs to organize locally and develop programs of action on that level. But even more, it needs to make a concerted effort to include media and communications workers, and to organize in regions outside of Toronto and Montreal.

**Karl Beveridge**

*Judy Darcy is a free-lance writer who is also a member of CUPE. Tim Guest is an archivist and an associate editor of FUSE. Kerri Kwinter lives in Toronto and is an associate editor of FUSE. Karl Beveridge, artist and critic, lives in Toronto and is an associate editor of FUSE.*

For the first time since 1972 the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) and the Post Office have signed a contract without a national postal strike. Before the news fades from our minds and from the daily papers, it would be wise to look at the settlement and its importance.

Public opinion and media pressure have, in the past, influenced the outcome of CUPW/Post Office negotiations. One of CUPW's long standing claims is that the government refuses to negotiate until a strike vote has been taken and then 'negotiates' through publicity campaigns. Back in the Sixties the press reacted to the illegal strike that won CUPW and the rest of the Public Service the right to a contract by creating an image of postal workers as "lazy sons of bitches", as the then-Postmaster General MacKasey called his own employees.

The media has not handled these negotiations as it has previous ones. Since the handing down of the Conciliation Board Report of Germain Jutras of Drummondville, Quebec in May, the press has been hard pressed to criticize CUPW.

But why was the media so willing to put CUPW on the grill before? Are CUPW's claims of mismanagement, poor health and safety conditions, and the suppression of the union's rights true?

#### PROBLEMS IN THE POST OFFICE

A lot of complaints about the Post Office point to faults that are in the nature of any large corporation. The Post Office is a complex business that handles an enormous volume of mail. The government is under pressure to keep costs down and the public cannot expect to have excellent service and a profitable operation at the same time. Cost considerations are presently encouraging postal authorities to consider restricting delivery to every second day. No post office in the world operates at a profit. The Australian and French systems come closest to breaking even but they charge 35¢ for a first class letter.

The Canadian Post Office does have special problems, most of which can be traced to poor management. In 1969, Kates, Peat, Marwick & Co., a private consulting firm, published a report called *A Blueprint for a Change* which was very

critical of postal management. It said in part: "The quality of the managerial resource overall is inadequate". The report emphasized poor employer performance in the area of staff relations, arguing that "unless effective action is taken to upgrade the quality of

# POSTAL STRIKE TRUCE PEACE?

BY MICHAEL DUQUETTE

manpower management in the corporation, it is questionable whether a Crown Corporation should be established at all."

Some of these problems emerged after the second world war, when a large influx of unemployed, under-educated young men were absorbed into the civil service, including the Post Office. This caused overstaffing. There was little hiring until the late Sixties and early Seventies when mail volume increased dramatically as a result of the baby boom.

This left the Post Office with two distinct age groups, young workers and older army supervisors. 70 percent of these supervisors have high school or less, 55 percent are over the age of 55 and another 32 percent over 40. The work force, which includes both young educated activists and older, more experienced workers, became the basis of a militant and disciplined union. Later to receive certification as CUPW in 1975, they faced and still face a stubborn administration not open to new ideas.

In the last ten years, the numbers of postal workers and letter carriers has increased by 50 percent while the administrators have grown by 500 percent. 80 percent of total costs within the Post Office are salaries, but of this, 60

*Michael Duquette, Toronto, is a photographer and a postal employee.*

percent go to supervisors, and clerical workers. This large amount reflects a general policy towards decentralizing operations in large urban areas: three stations with identical administration in each instead of a more centralized system. Though dissatisfactory for all

concerned, the trend remains. Meanwhile, only 40 percent of the total salary expenses goes to the postal workers (CUPW, the letter carriers, and truck drivers).

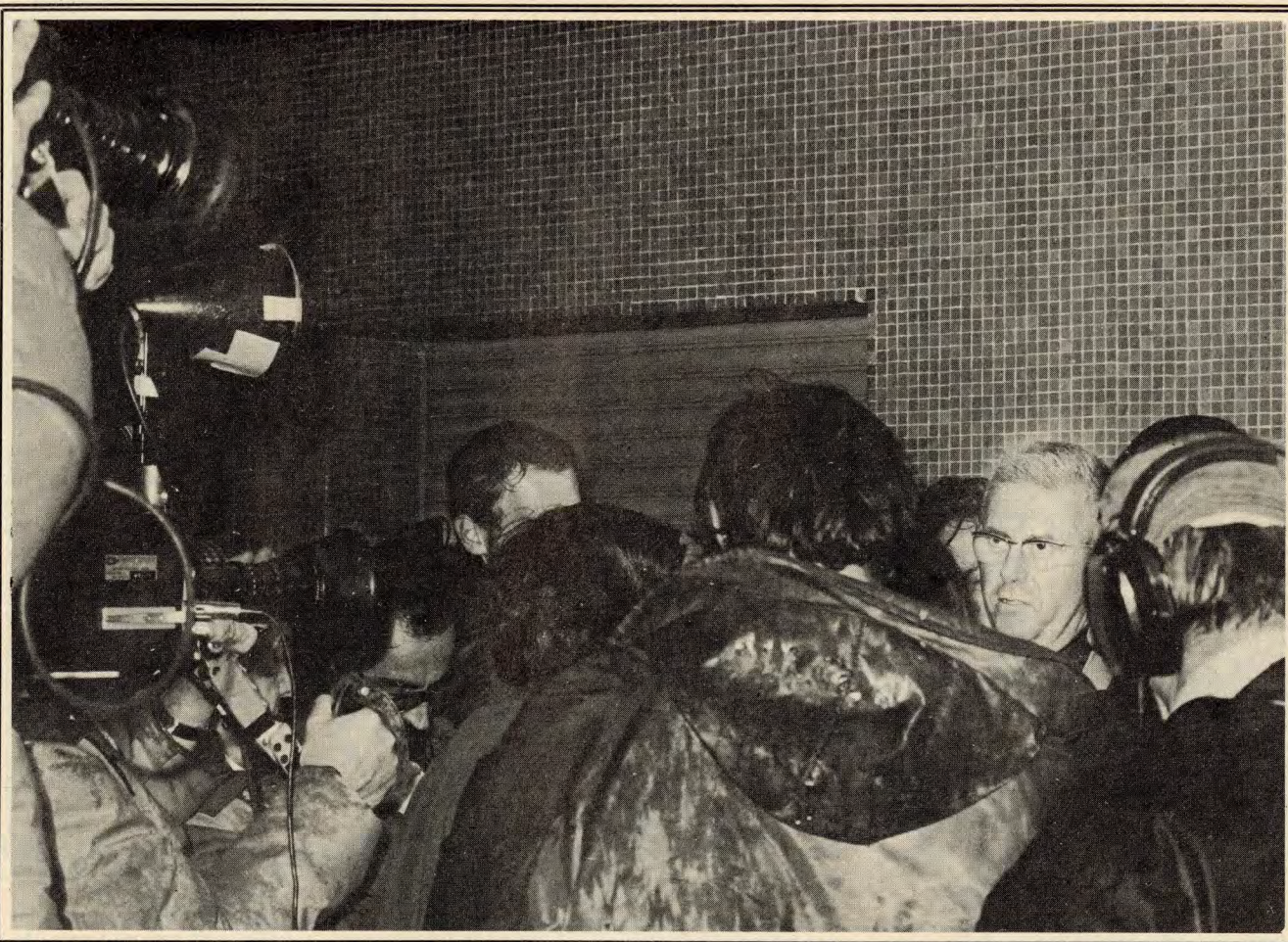
Automation began in the post office in the Fifties. By 1969 there was already a question about how effective this move would be. The Kates, Peat & Marwick report that year claimed that the existing postal management structure would not be able to successfully carry through the automation plan that was projected at that time. But the decision was made to proceed with the automation while at the same time ignoring the changes that

were recommended to accompany it. As a result automation wasn't the bargain management had expected.

The cost of mailing letters has gone up significantly, faster even than the Kates report predicted a decade ago. Inflation has of course been partly to blame (fuel prices, for example), but with all the new technology it still costs as much in real terms to send a letter today as it did in 1930. To the government, automation was seen as a necessary move. It took three months to train a manual sorter, yet the job was so boring and underpaid that there was a 30 percent turnover in staff every year. Automation was supposed to reduce both training time and job skills, and cut manpower requirements. But in reality there is less production per capita now than before. In real terms, automation means lower wages and the creation of flexible "worker units" who can be placed in whatever job is needed at the direction of the central computer. This is more to the specifications of the employer than for the benefit of either the workers or the public.

Automation takes away a worker's pride in the job and creates even more boredom, as speed becomes top priority in the internal flow of mail through the Post Office. Service is affected when the flexible "work units" are pushed to work quickly but lack proper training, in many





instances, to perform their duties accurately — in sorting for example. Some of the experts who took part in the planning of the system say that they never really considered what effects it would have on the workers, or on worker/management relations, as alienation from the job led to discontent and militancy among the workers.

In looking back, Arthur Porter, a University of Toronto engineering professor who helped to develop the system, sees a major problem in the automation plan. He says that the machines were designed to solve a short-term problem — the rapid turnover of underpaid postal workers. But the plan hasn't worked. He goes on to say that the emphasis on machines inside the post office has destroyed morale, created new labour problems and slowed down the mail at a very high cost, in excess of a billion dollars already.

The move to automation was part of the Post Office's concern to serve the needs of business. The machines are designed to handle business mail, which is 80 percent of the volume. Consultants from the Post Office work directly with businesses to improve their service by advising them on such matters as envelope size, proper placement of postal

**A**fter Jean Claude Parrot was arrested in 1978 for defying the government's back-to-work order, locals across the country reacted bitterly. Outside a turbulent meeting of postal workers, Toronto local CUPW president Arnold Gould tells the press that he was threatened and insulted when he reluctantly had to order his membership to go back to work.

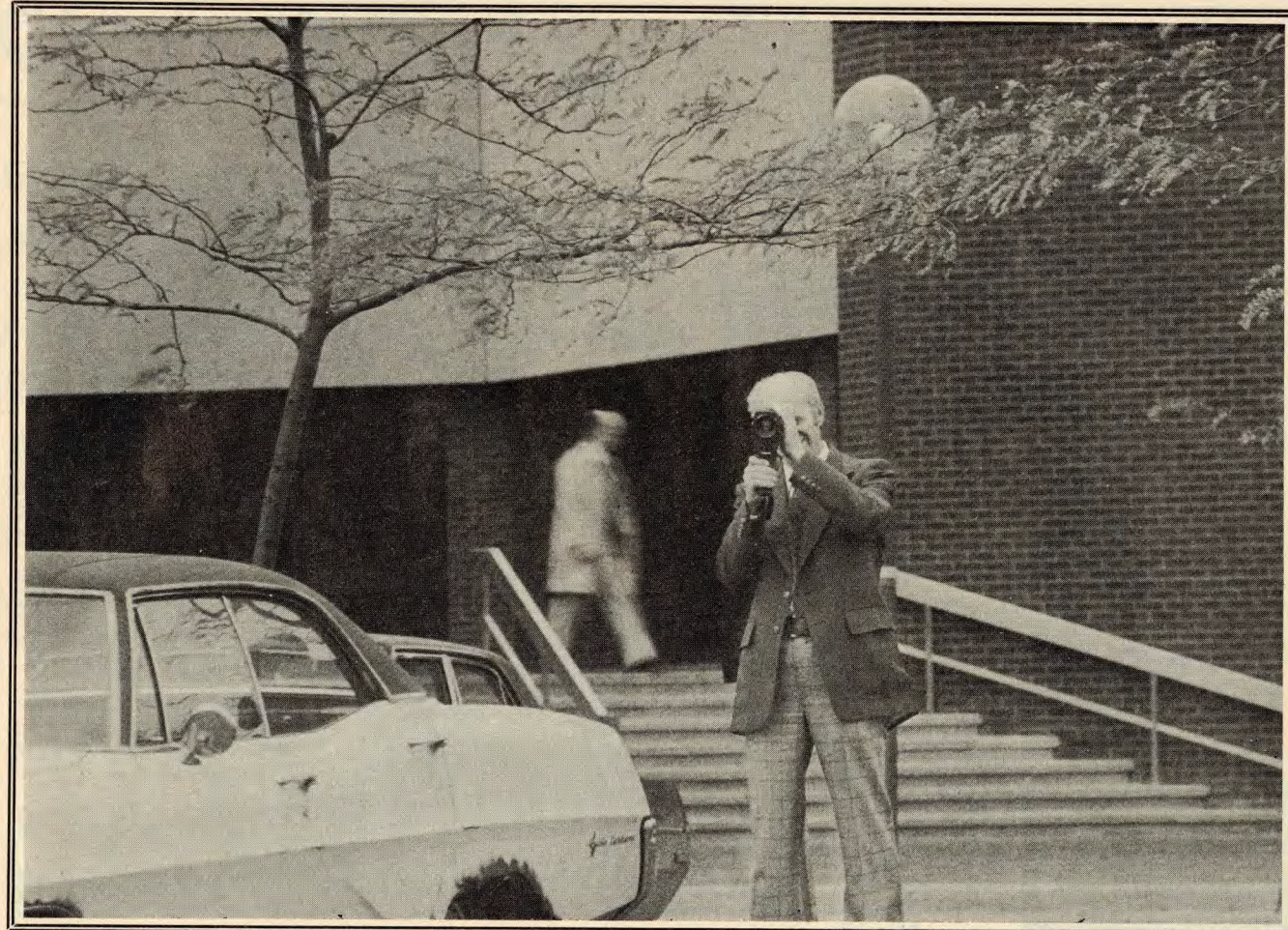
codes and even coding the mailing lists of large companies. Thus Bell Canada gets its bill to you on time, but your birthday card to your aunt is slowed down.

The main reason for today's deficit is the failure of the Canadian government and the Post Office administration to keep abreast of the communications revolution in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The British Post

Office controls all facets of communication: electronic, physical (mail), television, telephone and so on. The integration of these areas eliminated duplication and makes for a better, cheaper system. In Britain the profits of the telephone branch offset the deficit on the mails. The deficit of the Canadian Post Office would be similarly offset by Bell's telephone profits.

Post Office management has also let the most profitable section of the physical delivery system fall into private hands. Private couriers can charge high rates for delivery between Toronto and Montreal and make a good profit. Private couriers will not deliver to towns off the beaten track. This is the business that the Post Office gets and why it loses money. The government has a legal monopoly but it does not enforce it. It is the government's own inaction that puts it in the predicament if finds itself in today.

There has been a constant demand from the public that the Post Office be made a Crown Corporation. The government seems ready to go along with this, but supervisory staff within the Post Office up to the highest levels are opposed, as they could lose their jobs if the system were improved or streamlined.



Postal workers have no fear of this because the volume of mail should stay the same or, with better service, increase.

**MEDIA AS INFORMER** Newspapers and magazines are very dependent on the postal system and have a direct monetary interest in keeping any postal disruption short and in preventing any change in the status quo of the rate structure. Disruptions cause dollar losses and missed deadlines, decreases in circulation and an inability to meet cash flow projections, holding up money and material in the postal system.

The press pays a much lower rate of postage than you or I for the bulk shipment of papers and this class of mail increases the postal deficit. One of the local national papers gives out bundles of free papers to post office administrators to ensure better service. One of the wire services that shipped photographs through the mail gave out cases of liquor to the higher ups. After this, verbal directions were issued to take wire service mail out of the regular mail stream and to treat it like special delivery while only the basic rate was paid. This directive was never on paper of course.

All the media center their coverage of postal disputes on salaries and the mone-

**D**uring the 1978 illegal/legal strike, the author, Michael Duquette, was suspended from his job in the Post Office for taking these photographs. Here, we see the Post Office superintendent photographing the photographer, announcing, "I'm taking your picture as evidence that you are intimidating and harrasing my employees by taking their pictures."

tary value of fringe benefits, while reinforcing the public call for "better service" — all without clarifying any of the issues inherent to the mismanagement of the Post Office that make this "better service" impossible to achieve presently. In the media there is little effort to explain that the majority of worker demands are non-monetary issues like health and safety, slow and cumbersome

grievance procedures and the like.

The media have frequently misrepresented the union and its leaders. A typical example were the reports of a speech J.C. Parrot gave in the fall of 1979. He was speaking to a labour rally in western Canada; the press quoted him as saying that there was going to be a strike that November if the government did not give in and negotiate a contract. The radio reported the same story, saying that a strike date had been set and that CUPW members in western Canada were going to strike the next day.

What Parrot really said was that if the government did not change its attitude to the upcoming negotiations in November there was the possibility of a strike further down the road. Concurrently, the Western Regional Director of CUPW called for an "information picket" the next day where off-duty workers would hand out leaflets about their struggle. The media and hence the public incorrectly labelled this action as a strike. In none of the broadcasts or reports was the error admitted nor was there any reference made to previous stories so the confusion was perpetuated.

Any gains made by a union such as CUPW in its contracts eventually affect other contracts both within the Post





Office and also within other industries. It shouldn't be forgotten that the owners of the large newspapers and other media are themselves employers. Any improvement in the conditions of one group of workers could mean extra dollars and cents to them in running their own printing plants or associated industries from lumber to machinery. Their attitude toward improved conditions of work has not changed since the industrial revolution. This could account for the banner headline in *The Globe and Mail* during the most recent negotiations which shouted "Postal Union To Get \$22 Million Lunch Break". Here, what was basically a reasonable demand, for a half-hour paid lunch break, was 'reported' in the most sensational way to discredit the workers, making them seem greedy.

**THE ISSUES IN DISPUTE** Although wages are bound to be an issue, postal workers are also trying to improve basic working conditions. The strike in 1965 resulted in the appointment of Judge Monpetit to look at working conditions in the Post Office. When he toured the Terminal A Complex in Toronto he said that he thought criminals in jail were better treated. Workers were given half an hour for lunch but it took twelve

**M**any unions have a policy of non-cooperation with the Toronto SUN because of the paper's strong anti-union editorial position. SUN reporters often won't identify themselves, hoping to get interviews with union members. In the 1978 strike, CUPW members refused to talk to SUN reporters, turning their backs on SUN photographers.

minutes to walk each way to the cafeteria. The dust was over an inch thick in some parts of the building. "When I see things like this it makes me ashamed that we treat our civil servants this way", he said. Conditions for postal workers are covered by the restrictive Public Service Staff Relations Act. Under this legislation there is much less protection than under the general provisions of the Canada Labour Code.

In the new automated plants, sound levels are very high. The government claims that these levels do not exceed 85 decibels of continuous sound, but this has never been checked by an independent study. The U.S. Department of the Environmental Protection says that 75 decibels should be an upper limit. 90 decibels produces deafness after several years' exposure. Even at 75 decibels, 10 percent of the population will suffer some degree of deafness according to the World Health Organization. Noise has been proven to cause physical and emotional stress. Noise increases the flow of adrenalin in the body, causing a rise in blood pressure, pulse rate, and rate of breathing. The clotting ability of blood and the amount of fat released into the blood stream are both increased. Vision and balance are also adversely affected, the clarity of vision and the accuracy of colour perception are decreased. Because of these effects, heart attacks, circulatory and digestive problems, and ulcers have been linked to high noise levels. Production also drops with high noise levels.

The structure of automation as implemented within the Post Office presents another concern to the workers — that of an increase in night and

# Sixty Vintage Years

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Lismer, J. E. H. Macdonald, E. J.  
Pratt, F. H. Varley, J. S. Woodsworth  
1936 Eugene Forsey, Northrop Frye,  
Hugh Garner, A. M. Klein, David  
Lewis, Dorothy Livesay, F. R. Scott,  
Frank Underhill 1951  
Margaret Avison, Louis  
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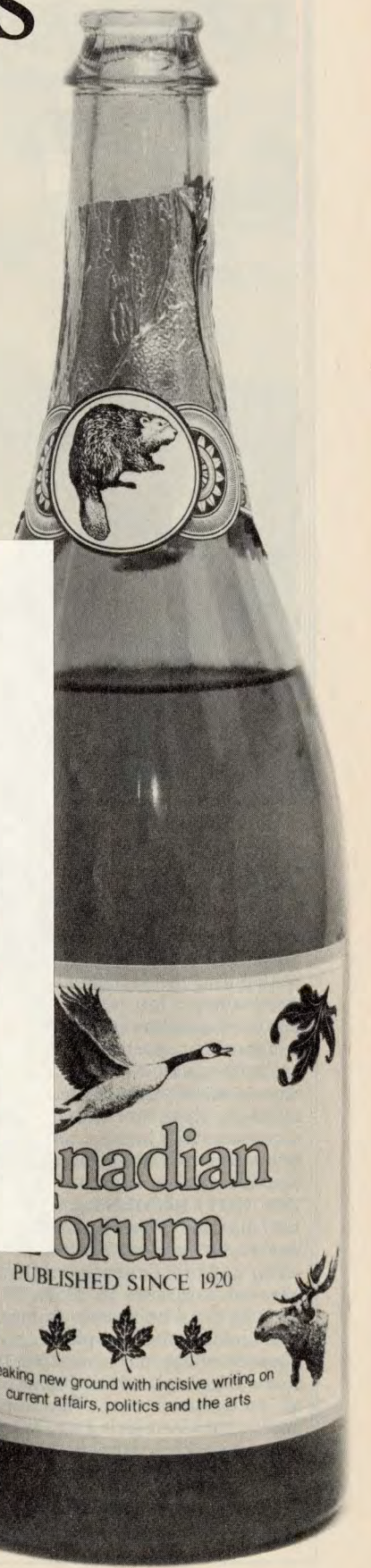
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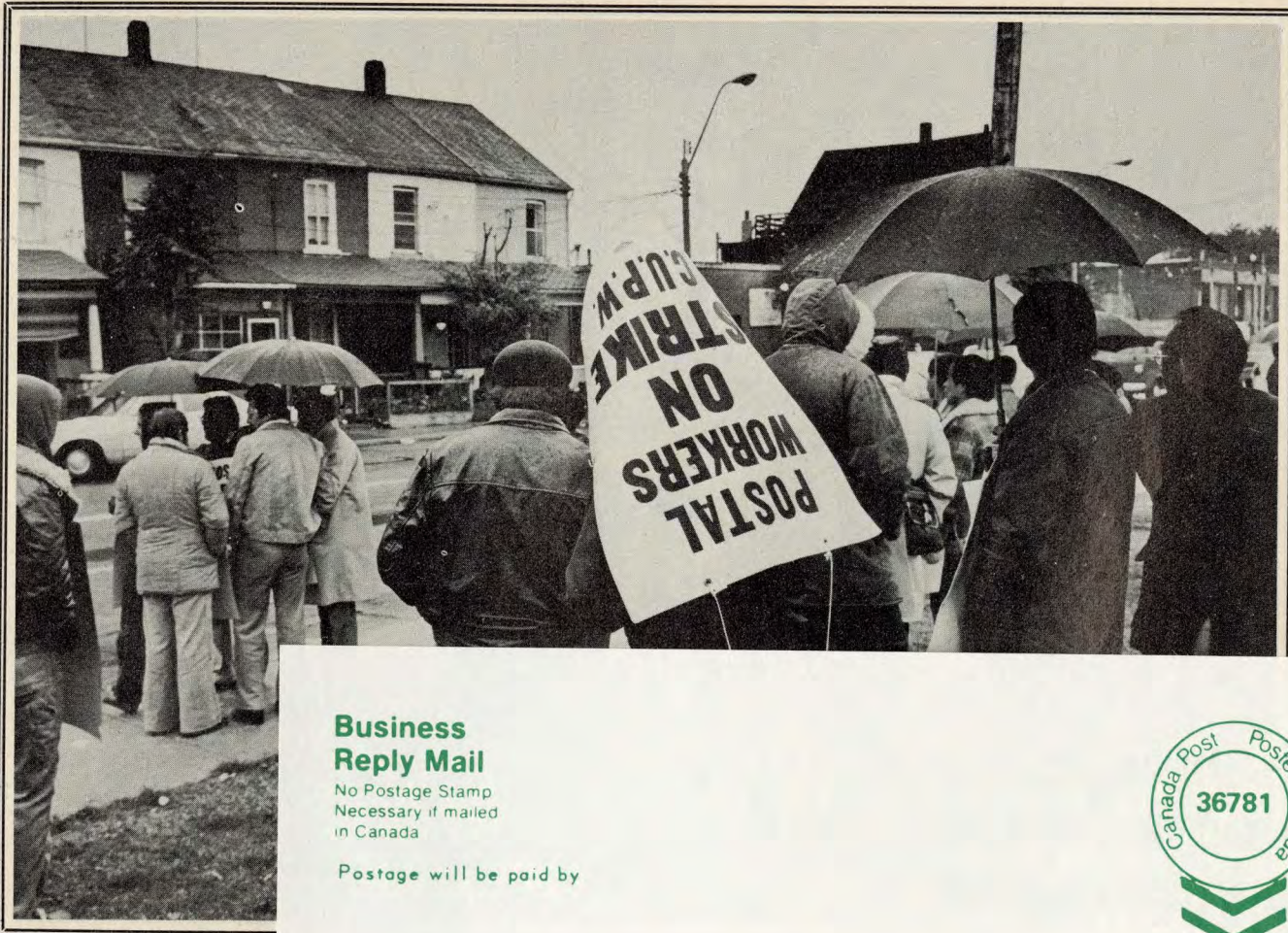
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**photographers.**

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# Sixty Vintage Years

1920 Bliss Carman, Barker Fairley, Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, Arthur Lismer, J. E. H. Macdonald, E. J. Pratt, F. H. Varley, J. S. Woodsworth  
1936 Eugene Forsey, Northrop Frye, Hugh Garner, A. M. Klein, David Lewis, Dorothy Livesay, F. R. Scott, Frank Underhill  
1951 Margaret Avison, Louis Dudek, Norman McLaren, Ken McNaught, Mavor Moore, James Reaney, Lister Sinclair, Robert Weaver  
1972 Ed Broadbent, D. G. Jones, Irving Layton, John Newlove, Walter Pitman, Abe Rotstein, George Woodcock  
1980 Margaret Atwood, Paul Chamberland, Walter Gordon, Jane Jacobs, Victor Lévy-Beaulieu, Michael Ondaatje, Josef Skvorecky.



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evening shifts. This affects most inside workers in Toronto. According to many studies, night workers have higher death rates on the job and there is an increase in the cancer rate. Body temperature, stress hormones, blood pressure, all reach their peak during the daylight hours which is a disadvantage for night workers, who become tired more easily, don't sleep well and lose their appetite frequently. Family life suffers, and divorce rates are higher among night workers. Because of their schedule, these workers are cut out of social activities and are not able to join organizations. Both the physical and emotional toll is high.

**THE GOVERNMENT AND CUPW** In 1957 the rate of pay for a postal worker was \$1.39/hour, well below the private sector and other essential services. There were no pay raises in 1957, '58, or '59 because the government claimed that it was looking into complaints about the injustice of the pay scales. In 1960 the civil service began to talk for the first time of going on strike. This shook the government into giving a raise of 20¢ to the whole civil service, but this was followed by another three year freeze. In 1965, with still no sign of a raise, the civil service unions asked for the right to bargain for a contract; this was refused.

**T**hese automatic sortation machines were designed and marketed by ITT in the late Fifties. By the time they went into operation in the Seventies, they were already out-dated. After having signed contracts to buy these machines, Deputy Postmaster General McKay left the Post Office and took a job with ITT as Head of Postal Mechanization.

So the Montreal local of the Canadian Postal Employees Association went to Ottawa and asked the national office to call a strike vote but they were turned down because they didn't have the right to strike.

Montreal held its own strike vote and when the proposed raise of 12¢ was made public they went out on an illegal strike. They were followed by locals in

Vancouver and Hamilton. In Toronto, when the local executive told their members to stay on the job they had to escape out the back door as the letter carriers started throwing chairs at them. The letter carriers marched en masse to the main post office and set up picket lines. The picket was respected by inside workers who joined the strike.

The members returned to work in two weeks after receiving a raise of \$2.50 an hour. Almost all the union leadership was voted out of office, and were replaced by the strike leaders.

When the other public sector employees saw what was gained as a result of the strike they demanded the right to collective bargaining. The government was forced to pass the Public Service Staff Relations Act giving all Federal civil servants the right to bargain collectively and to strike. This action put the union, which later became known as CUPW, in the forefront of civil service unions. This was not the intention of the union executive. It was the product of general support and action on the part of the workers.

The government hasn't liked CUPW since. In 1978 postal workers were legislated back to work after only two days. The CUPW strike was closely fol-



lowed by a strike of the postal workers organized by the General Labour and Trades which is part of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. They struck for the same length of time without provoking any legal action.

CUPW was the first union in Canada to be charged under the Criminal Code. Union leader J.C. Parrot was arrested and jailed. He believed that his members had the right to strike and that the law sending them back to work violated their rights under already existing law, the Public Service Staff Relations Act and the Bill of Rights.

As a result of the government's action Marcel Pepin, President of the World Federation of Labour, filed grievances with the International Labour Office for violations of the United Nations International Labour Convention that Canada had signed. The arrest of Parrot and the actions against the Union have become a major issue for the whole Canadian Labour movement.

**WHERE NOW?** As this goes to press, it seems likely that a new agreement will be signed that meets some of the postal workers' demands. But the implementation of the agreement will be crucial. Does this new contract mean peace in the

**D**espite spending \$1 billion to automate, the production level of these postal workers was higher in the old manual sortation system. Automation was supposed to increase production and reduce the numbers of workers needed. Instead, as productivity drops, more have to be hired. The only catch - they are hired as part-time postal employees.

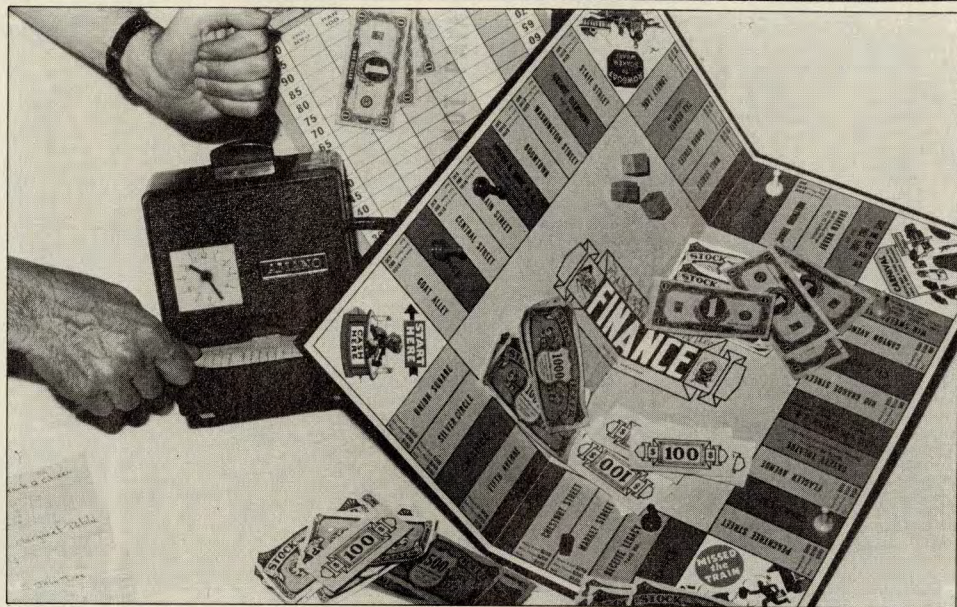
Post Office and a return to good postal service? In all likelihood, it does not. It is seen by many in the union as a stop gap measure until the next crucial negotiations that will begin in November as the Post Office is converted to a Crown Corporation. The gains achieved in this contract will satisfy the minimum demands of CUPW for now and allow the

Post Office administrators and the government to get on with the preparation for a Crown Corporation.

The logistical problems in implementing the contract are enormous and there is the possibility that the present contract will expire before these are all put into effect. And even with a signed contract, there is still no guarantee. The postal workers have only to recall the 1975 contract, in which the government signed a clause granting the elimination of adverse effects of technological change and then totally reneged. The arbitrator in the contract, E.B. Joliffe, who ruled that the absence of penalty clauses allowed management to flout the contract's intent, said: "There is no evidence of any effort (by the Post Office) to comply, even in part." With this track record, it would be very premature to assume that postal strikes are a thing of the past in Canada, unless there is a massive change in the government's attitude toward collective agreement. There are large concerns over staffing and hours of work which are not covered in this most recent contract. Postal peace — let's just say a truce — has been called until the next round. The next year is the most critical in the history of CUPW and the Post Office. ■



# THE INVISIBLE ECONOMY



## 3. Balancing the Budget

By David Mole

It is easy to suppose that the economy is divided into two parts — the “private sector” that makes profit by buying wage labour and selling what its workers produce, and the “public sector” producing and supplying goods and services in a way that is outside the orbit and discipline of the market and the business of accumulating wealth. The work of researchers in universities (or artists making videotapes) and the making of auto parts seem to be organized in very different ways. Those of us whose work seems to escape from the corporate grip take some comfort from this.

But this perception that we live in a “mixed economy” with two sectors marching to the beat of different drummers, if not quite an illusion, draws a distinction that is not fundamental.

The problem for the corporation is to turn its input into outputs in a way that is not immediately determined by market exchanges but is at the same time consistent with making a profit. This is exactly the same problem as that faced by a “mixed” capitalist economy: How are the non-market, non-profit making areas

of the economy to be articulated to the profit-making sector so that they ultimately promote the accumulation of private wealth?

So we should be able to get some insight into the organization of the “public” sector and to get a grip on how things will go in the future by looking at how private firms have dealt with this problem in microcosm.

The difference between life at the edge of the firm and life inside it is reflected in the existence of two sets of accounts. The organization has financial accounts that keep track of its overall income and the value of what it owns (its assets) and who owns the assets (its liabilities). The financial accounts give a portrait of its relation with the outside world. The operations in the interior of the firm are governed by management accounting that controls expenditure and revenue in each phase of the operation and in the various product lines.

The problem is to keep these accounting systems in line so that the use of funds in the interior of the firm is

consistent with the financial goals established in the financial accounting.

The articulation of “management” and “financial” accounts is not simply a technical problem for accountants and statisticians within the firm; it requires a hierarchy of divisions within corporate management. The “financial division” has become the head office of these organizations and it is the work of assembling finance and distributing it down the line accomplished by the financial division that finally governs the operation.

The establishment of financial divisions to control the operations of the once autonomous branch plants was the classic innovation that brought the modern corporation into existence. The organization of Dupont, General Motors, and the U.S. Steel Corporation in the 1920's provided early experiments in this new form of control.

The funding mechanism used to finance scientific research and cultural production is formally very like the process that has evolved in the modern business. The capacity of this process to bring outlying areas under stricter

photo: Paul Collins

control is presently being discovered first hand by university based social scientists.

Until 1978 social science research was substantially funded by the Canada Council. In that year the Government Organization (Scientific Activities) Act was passed transferring such research out of the Canada Council and into the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), a body that, like the other scientific research councils, is funded directly by the Federal Government. Between the research councils and the Federal Government stands the Inter-Council Coordinating Committee providing the government “with an overview of the Council’s activities ... It is also to harmonise the granting practices of the Councils”. In the same year that this new hierarchy of agencies was put in place, the first Federal-Provincial conference on Research and Development was held in the hope that university research could be better directed to issues of “national concern”.

A significant distinction has appeared in the funding categories of the SSHRC. “Independent” research and “strategic” research are now to be differentiated. Independent research is the grab bag of projects that individual social scientists think worth pursuing while strategic research areas are established by the funding hierarchy. (Not unpredictably, given the changing curve of average age in this country one of the first strategic areas funded was research on aging.) The largest and most stable segment of the SSHRC budget will go to strategic areas. The establishment of strategic research areas gives the state the opportunity to make sure that funds are directed to the study of problems that appear pressing from its own point of view. Thus ‘aging’ is important because innumerable social agencies, pension plans and so on find that the age structure of the population is an issue. The social sciences have always been an essential instrument in the management of society; now it seems that they will be harnessed more directly and more effectively to the business of social control. After ‘aging’ comes what? Regional ‘imbalance’? the ‘urban poor’? the ‘collapse of the family’?

With the 1978 legislation and the new hierarchy of budgeting that was established, a system of control has emerged that bears a real resemblance to that employed in private industry. The central financing agency is beginning to create a network of accounts that it can use to govern the activity of those who depend on the agency for money.

The funding mechanism that now manages university research is primitive as such systems go. But it is worth remembering that managerial accounting is itself a fairly new

phenomena. It is a product of the twentieth century, especially of the last twenty years. Financial accounting has also been transformed in recent decades. Sophisticated methods for evaluating the return on potential investments of money (capital budgeting) and for allocating funds (portfolio management) are being developed and introduced by ‘progressive’ managements. Even today the perfection of systems of accounting and management that are able to govern operations the function of which is to spend and make money has some distance to go.

The use of advanced accounting and managerial technique is hampered in some areas by the difficulty of making an assessment of the monetary value of the “output” they supply. This is a chronic difficulty in areas like scientific research and cultural production but it is not a problem unique to such areas. The attempt to quantify the unquantifiable is the general business of accountants and statisticians and the solutions to the problem being worked out in private business can with more or less difficulty be applied to other sectors.

The recognition that funding agencies necessarily acquire power over the work that they fund is no new observation. What should be given attention is the form that such control takes. It is the accountability of the subordinate funded area that is the central issue for a management structure that works through a hierarchy of budgets. This points us to a fundamental question.

Because an accounting system is also a managerial system it has the capacity to form and deform the life that goes forward within its orbit. It must efface qualitative differences to maintain the hegemony of quantitative categories. A profit-making business is, in the nice phrase of a B.C. forest industry baron, a money machine. It is a process that is organized as a flow of quantities through time. It must be regular, standardized, exact; a well-run business is like a well-made clock. Labour in such a business is labour per hour; profits are assessed per year, per quarter, per minute. The standards of production and consumption that are established are quantitative standards.

The abstraction of the accounting framework that reflects the desire to abstract money from the operation must be sustained by the abstract organization of the physical and social process that is required to produce not useful things but money. It is the effacement of the peculiarities and concrete qualities of labour that is fundamental here, and the subordination of the qualities of the worker to the qualities of the “money machine” to which they are attached.

Their work is defined by the process that they are fitted into, not by their own skillfulness.

There is no reason to suppose that the peculiarities and eccentricity of social research and the work of artists cannot be effaced as the work of shoe makers and iron founders was long ago. A big research project already has a corporate feel with its attention to proper management, cost control, the use of sophisticated technologies, the army of underpaid support workers and the thick printed report to be delivered to the customer, usually the state agency or a corporation. On the whole, the management teams that ply the research trade talk the same language as the managers that fund them and want their product.

It is true that nothing gets done without finance. This dependence on finance brings all productive activity under the control of a distinctive form of management. To the extent that the physical and social world that finance animates is malleable and plastic, that world will be transformed into an increasingly appropriate vehicle for the reproduction and accumulation of financial wealth. A system of ruling that directs the collective power of society to so coherent an end is bound to be unnervingly effective.

To the extent that we depend on finance to get things done we discover that finance has become independent of us. Because the availability of funds determines the level of activity in all sectors, gross movements in the size of the aggregate of available funds determines the level of production in every corner of the economy however remote.

In the last ten years of economic decline cutbacks have occurred in every funded area. The output of dance theatre and house building, scientific research and gentlemen’s shoes has moved up and down with an absurd sympathy. There is room of course for variation, some enterprises do better than others, the balance between state and private revenues adjusts somewhat. But there is no radical autonomy from these movements in the “fund of finance”; where ‘the fund’ goes, sooner or later everything goes.

Because the requirement that human activities be accountable comes to dominate the form of these activities, we lose control not only over the economy as a whole but also over our life within it. Managers whose instrument of control is the budget establish the power of money not their own power. We come to live in a society that hasn’t moved beyond the abstraction of arithmetic.

Where money rules, says Glaucon, a blind god heads the chorus. Well put, says Socrates. ■

David Mole is an associate editor of FUSE.



# URBAN TRANSIT SOLUTION?

## Calgary Destroys Its Neighbourhoods

By Brian Cross

The West is rapidly gaining political and economic power in Canada. Calgary, home of Peter Lougheed and a thousand oil companies, is an active city. More construction took place here than in any other city in North America last year and building permits are up 50 percent in 1980. The process of change relentlessly forces itself onto the senses and into the minds and hearts of Calgarians on a daily basis.

However, the din is not loud enough to drown out the discontent of the residents. City Hall, in a frantic rush to keep pace with this phenomenal growth, has often failed to consider other needs of its citizens. Several older communities have been decimated for what is generally referred to as 'redevelopment' but what is also called thoughtless urban insanity. Developers move into town, force up land prices with high bids, then redevelop. Housing prices are the highest in Canada, forcing land ownership out of the price range of the average buyer and leading to ridiculous rental rates. In the battle to provide office space, the developers are making fortunes and the social values of the residents are often violated. The residents of the inner-city have learned to live with fear and insecurity.

There is a long history of alienation and social protest in the West. Calgary was a major centre of the labour movement in the early part of this century and the spirit of agrarian protest that is common across the prairies still surfaces among the long-term residents. Calgarians also have a habit of saying NO to City Hall when consulted directly by plebiscite. The latest one was forced by a petition in the fall of 1979. City Hall had decided to go ahead with the redevelopment of three square blocks downtown

for a Civic Centre project. The question that was forced by the voters was whether or not they would approve the borrowing of \$234 million to finance the scheme. They answered no. Since then, however, City Hall has continued its land acquisition in the area and the wish of the voter has apparently only delayed the plan. Such action by Council only increases the frustration of Calgarians and this Civic Centre has already become an issue in the election to be held in October of this year. The sense of alienation has its positive side as well. The people are starting to band together in community associations and other civic-minded groups. Their protests, formerly carried out strictly within guidelines set by City Hall, are now being brought to the media and, even in conservative Calgary, into the streets.

Despite the lessons that could have been taken from urban centres across North America and Europe, the victims of the rapid changes in Calgary have been the inner-city residents. As the national Commission on Neighborhoods reported to the President and the Congress of the United States in 1979, "(T)hose who measure cities by their downtown skylines, city halls or cultural attractions miss the persistent, uneven pulsing of life in those communities-within-communities which are home for the men, women and children who spend twenty-four hours of every day in the cities ... (I)n real terms, the people live in neighbourhoods, not cities. In real terms, their investments, emotional as well as economic, are in neighbourhoods, not cities. And the city cannot survive if its neighbourhoods continue to decline ... (T)he American people must understand that the

deterioration of our cities did not just happen...big business, big government, and big financial institutions made decisions that had a devastating effect on cities and urban neighborhoods."<sup>1</sup>

The inner-city neighbourhoods of Calgary have had their share of such decisions. Much of Victoria Park fell to the expansion of the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, a dubious monument to irrelevance in a troubled world. Inglewood has been split by major roads although citizen action forced City Hall to abandon their more reckless freeway proposal. Connaught has been bought up by developers to become an apartment community with little or no room for families. As a result, it has a high crime rate. Eau Claire was levelled in one stroke last year and presently sits vacant, but not empty — it is used as a parking lot handily located between the river and the main business core. Redevelopment of that area begins this year — more and more offices along with a token housing project. Where do the former inner-city residents go? Where is housing found for all the newcomers?

City planners have pursued a policy of ever-increasing annexation on the outskirts of town to meet the needs of the city's expanding population. This has resulted in the dependence on the private automobile to provide transportation for the residents, much like the situation in California. Indeed, Calgary is the only city in the world to register more cars per capita than Los Angeles.

Calgary seems to sit out on the prairie but it actually has a mountain climate with an average elevation of some 3500 feet above sea level. The air is correspondingly thinner and the exhaust fumes are thicker than in a sea level environment. Coupled with this is the

photographs by Brian Dyson

weather phenomenon of temperature inversion, in which a bank of cold air sits only a few hundred feet over the city, holding a mass of warmer exhaust-thick air stagnant at ground level. The Light Rail Transit (LRT) option is one of the more daring planning solutions to this situation.

The problems of traffic, pollution and housing are hardly unique to Calgary.

Solutions are available and Alberta has the resources to experiment but, sadly, it also has one of the most unimaginative governments in the Western world. Hope for the future rests in the smaller communities and is not yet reflected in the provincial or local governments.

As Calgarians become more organized in their neighborhood associations, there is evidence to show that their input can help channel the effects of rampant growth for the benefit of the residents. However, residents are being told, implicitly if not explicitly, that they should not have a say in the future of their communities but must rely on the advice of professional planners. The developers, of course, have consultants whose use of professional jargon soothes and placates the planners. Since planners *must* plan in order to justify their profession, their interests will necessarily come before the needs of the communities.

Again, the situation is hardly unique to Calgary but plagues the industrialized world of the West and the communist East as well. Ivan Illich has put this problem into an intellectual framework: "By designating the last twenty-five years as the Age of Dominant Professions, one also proposes a strategy ... The strategy demands nothing less than the unmasking of the professional ethos. The credibility of the professional expert, be he scientist, therapist, or executive, is the Achilles heel of the industrial system ... Only those citizen initiatives and radical technologies that directly challenge the insinuating dominance of disabling professions open the way to freedom for nonhierarchical, community-based competence. The waning of the current professional ethos is a necessary condition for the emergence of a new relationship between needs, contemporary tools, and personal satisfaction. The first step toward this emergence is a skeptical and nondeferential posture of the citizen toward the professional expert. Social reconstruction begins with a doubt raised among citizens."<sup>2</sup>

It is the classic political problem of centralized efficiency versus decentralized participation and it is a critical question throughout the contemporary world. Professionals — doctors, lawyers, engineers — naturally prefer centralized efficiency because it maintains their positions of power and allows them to provide prescriptive solutions which perpetuate the need for their professional



Hazel and Martin Holm are residents of 9A Street. They will lose their home if the city's current plans for LRT are carried out. Understandably, they are upset. "I don't see how they can justify destroying all these homes when there are other alternatives. They always said that money wasn't a consideration."



Bill Kuyt, director of Transportation for the city. He and his boss, George Cornish, seem to be at odds as to what LRT actually is.

Doris and Don Bateson, 9A St. residents. "A lot of old people live on this street. Having this thing hanging over our heads has been a big strain this past year."



advice in an hierarchical society.

What follows is the story of one community in Calgary with the desire to address these modern challenges in their own way, the necessary competence and irreverence that its members have shown, and the inevitable backlash that they have suffered from planning authorities.

### LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT

The LRT being built in Calgary operates

from a single overhead wire. The cars are larger than buses and as many as five cars can run together in the same train. It runs on ordinary railroad tracks but does not necessarily require its own right-of-way: in many places in Europe light rail trains, automobiles and pedestrians share the same streets. The trains will run on rubber-insulated steel wheels to reduce the noise level and planners promise that a three-car train will be quieter than three diesel buses going by at the same time.

A heavy-rail system, such as the Toronto and Montreal subways, was eliminated as a solution for Calgary because of the expense and because its capacity, 40,000 people per direction per hour, is nearly four times the planners' projection for the busiest route. Potential use is affected by a number of factors. A gradual reduction in downtown parking, for example, would lead to increased use of the transit system. City Hall, however, insists on having parking structures included in each new development.

The original decision to go ahead with LRT was made in 1976 when the planners estimated that the 1986 population would be 636,000. However, it now appears that the city will pass this figure by 1984. In other words, they were wrong by as much as three years in a ten-year projection. With such fantastic rates of growth, the city could be over the 2,000,000 mark in the first decades of the 21st century. If so, transit ridership would be great enough to support a heavy-rail system. And unlike the light rail system, a separate right-of-way is definitely needed for a heavy-rail line.

A variety of groups have expressed opposition to the way in which the project has been planned. Although one

of the reasons planners have for originally selecting the LRT was that it "will improve the mobility of the aged and the handicapped", City Hall has now reversed this position and partially barred these groups from its use. There will be no elevator or ramps to the platforms at the stations, so those who cannot nego-

tiate will be unable to get to the trains. Both the Alberta Human Rights Commission and Gordon Fairweather, the Canadian Commissioner for Human Rights, have protested this decision but to no avail. (The similar LRT system in Edmonton includes elevators, ramps, and even has straps in the cars so that wheelchairs may be held in place.)

The 13.5 kilometer section of LRT on the



# Time Frame: What Happened When

**Nov. 21, 1978** Feasibility studies (CALTS 56 and 57) are presented to Calgary city council for the selection of an LRT corridor through the north-west of the city. Two alignments are compared — the east side of 14th St. and the east side of 10th St. The studies indicate that a ramp will be required to climb a hill at the north end of 14th St., but no ramp is needed on 10th St. *It is assumed that LRT will pass under 10th St. and stay underground through the campus of SAIT* (Southern Alberta Institute of Technology). The city claims that 16 houses and one fourplex will be demolished on 14th St. but only 8 homes will be taken on 10th St. In fact the 10th St. route will require taking out 78 dwelling units and 111 residents. *14th St. has one large apartment building which can be by-passed and one or two houses. More than a block of this street is already vacant.*

**May 15, 1979** The first "public participation meeting" is held by the city. The community presents a petition showing that 90 percent of those polled favour an underground route.

**Aug. 11, 1979** When John Hubbell, transportation official, admitted to the press that LRT will go through 9A St., demolishing 43 properties and displacing 280 people, Hillhurst-Sunnyside reacts so strongly that Hubbell has to retract the statement.

**Sept. 6, 1979** The community elects a four person committee to meet with city officials.

**Nov. 1, 1979** At a community meeting attended by the city a resolution is passed that the 9A St. in-block route be scrapped and that full studies be made of all alternatives including 14th St.

**Nov. 4, 1979** Mayor Ross Alger says that studies called for by the community should be made. A motion presented by Alderman Greg Husband calling for full sociological impact studies is rejected by council.

**Nov. 9, 1979** Husband withdraws support for the proposed \$234 million Civic Center, Alger's pet project. Alger calls the move "blackmail."

**Nov. 14, 1979** Alger again promises full and exhaustive studies. These studies are never made.

**Nov. 28, 1979** The Civic Center project is rejected by voters, but the city continues to expropriate land.

**Dec. 3, 1979** The community succeeds in winning a special hearing before Operations & Development (O&D).

**Dec. 10, 1979** O&D, made up of council members, requests another look at 14th St. Alderman Nomi Whalen expresses "grave concern" regarding the

information contained in CALTS 56/57

**Dec. 17, 1979** O&D's request for another look at 14th St. is rejected by council.

**Jan. 19, 1979** James Harris, independent Toronto consultant commissioned by the city Planning Department, comes out in favour of a tunnel. Transportation Commissioner, Cornish is not pleased; a stop-payment is put on Harris' cheque.

**Jan. 31, 1980** Council is asked to rezone 400 acres of land around LRT stations in the south. This will provide 38 million square feet of commercial development. High density development is encouraged because it provides ridership for the LRT system.

**Feb. 20, 1979** Cornish says he will recommend the destruction of 9A St. to council and indicates that social-impact studies will not be made because LRT "will not have any sociological impact." He agrees to meet with the community providing that 14th St. is not discussed.

**Mar. 12, 1980** Cornish sends a letter to

Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community Association stalling the meeting. HSCA decides to evaluate 14th St.

**Mar. 19, 1980** It becomes known officially that SAIT administration would prefer an underground LRT on campus "for safety reasons".

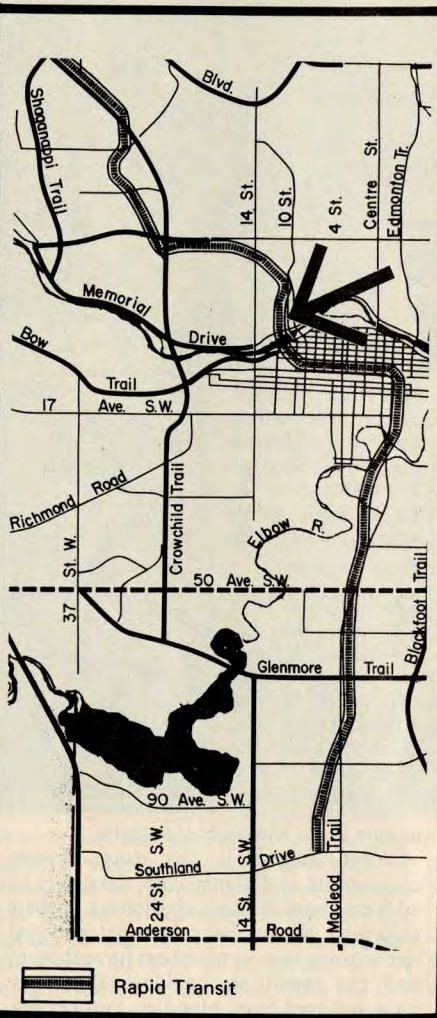
**Mar. 20, 1980** A major development more than a full block long and exceeding building height guide lines by more than 300% is proposed for east 14th St. It also exceeds density by-laws, but ex-mayor Rod Sykes, on behalf of Niagara Holdings Ltd., a major Calgary developer, defends the project on the grounds of its proximity to the proposed LRT station on 9A St. The Development Appeal Board (DAB) defers a decision until June 12th.

**Apr. 21, 1980** HSCA proposes building LRT on 14th St. if the city refuses to find the extra money to put it underground. 14th St. businessmen are prepared to accept a 14th St. alignment if it is proved to be the best route. They are opposed to LRT going through houses on 9A St.

**Apr. 28, 1980** Calgary Transportation Department releases study on the 10th St. corridor and recommends the destruction of 9A St. The city also recommends an alignment at grade through SAIT. This makes an underground alignment through Hillhurst-Sunnyside technically impossible because of LRT's 6% maximum incline capability. The alignment will cross 10th St. rather than go under it and therefore will require a large ramp at the north end of the route.

Meanwhile, the proposed meeting with Cornish was abandoned. Any discussion that did not include HSCA's evaluation of 14th St. would have been fruitless. Cornish refused to discuss 14 St. so HSCA withdrew its sponsorship of the meeting. The transportation Department has also re-evaluated 14th St. Their revised figures for the 14th St. alignment show the costs to be within 10% of the underground proposal, implying that, if council should reject the 9A St. in-block, 14th St. would also be too expensive.

A footnote: Regarding the proposed development on east 14th St, alderman Husband, in a sworn affidavit, has informed city authorities that he overheard a conversation between ex-mayor Rod Sykes and alderman Bob Simpson about the relaxation of height guidelines along LRT corridors. Simpson is a member of DAB, a quasi-judicial body which will be reviewing Sykes' development presentation on June 12th, following the LRT decision in council. There is to be an official enquiry.



south side of Calgary is expected to be operational sometime in 1981. The suburban community of Southwood has expressed strong displeasure with the two stations which will be built there. The City recently approved a \$200 million project for one station, which will include two high-rise apartment buildings, a 300-room hotel and three large office towers with a potential height of 250 feet each. According to the

plans there will be only 400 parking stalls at each station and Southwood residents are concerned about the extra parking that their streets will have to absorb.) These high density developments are being encouraged to create riders for the LRT. Thus the present community is artificially enlarged, providing a justification for the implementation of the transit system.

Ideally, residents in other parts of the city would like to observe the ability of LRT to service the transportation corridor in the south before rigid decisions and commitments are made for the north-west line. At the west end of downtown Calgary the north-west leg of the LRT will begin. It must cross the river and enter the community of Hillhurst-Sunnyside. This community must pay an especially high price in this transit scheme and their refusal to play dead is detailed in the following account.

## HILLHURST-SUNNYSIDE

The community of Hillhurst-Sunnyside sits directly across the river from downtown Calgary, and contains about 10,000 people. It is one of Calgary's oldest established communities. Development here is a process of dialogue and reason between the community and the developers. A down-zoning in terms of density was recently achieved, restricting development to duplexes, condominiums and "in-fill" detached houses.

There are three major traffic arteries (see map p. 274). Memorial Drive runs east and west and separates the entire community from the riverbank at its southern boundary. 10th Street runs north and south between Hillhurst and Sunnyside and over the Louise Bridge into the city core. 14th Street splits Hillhurst and goes into downtown and continues to the south side of Calgary. 10th Street is the shopping area for the residents and forms the general centre of their activities. 14th Street, on the other hand, is a major four-lane road without parking that carries through-traffic in and out of downtown. It is a noisy street,

difficult to cross at peak traffic times and one that attracts businesses which are oriented toward the automobile rather than toward the residents.

If the city were in a stable condition problems such as major thoroughfares dissecting residential neighborhoods could more easily be dealt with inside the community. However, Calgary is anything but stable right now. New



**Glen Sherret, owner of Earth Harvest, a natural food and herb store on 10th St. Sherret is president of the 10th St. Businessmen's Assn. "They are going to take out 26 large trees. These trees circulate 1,600 gals. of water per month each. We need them to clean up the pollution caused by cars."**



**The east side of 10th St. is the shopping area for local residents.**

**Karen Dyson, owner of Children's Garden on 10th St. "The development pressures and high rents will force businesses to leave the area. Its unique character will be destroyed, and in time the residential area will be destroyed too."**



residents are moving into new suburbs on the north-west fringe of town as fast as the developers can build them. City Hall has immediate plans for another 50,000 residents in this area and they must use one of the five main arterial roads to reach the city centre — these include 10th Street and 14th Street. Both these roads are presently overcrowded at rush hours and city planners have developed

alternatives to expand their capacities: 14th Street could be expanded to six lanes; 10th Street could be 'twinning' with 9A Street to create yet another major artery 10th Street becoming one-way southbound, 9A one-way northbound; or the Light Rail Transit system that is being built in the south could be brought to the north-west. These were the options as seen by the planners in 1978.

The Hillhurst-Sunnyside Design Brief was drawn up by the community and the city planning department in May, 1977. It succinctly defines the area: "Hillhurst-Sunnyside contains a population with characteristics which are distinctly different than those exhibited by the typical suburban area or Calgary as a whole." There is a higher percentage of young adults and ten times as many elderly people as the average suburb. Nor is it an economically wealthy area when compared to the rest of Calgary. Land values, however have risen dramatically. A 25-foot lot can demand (and get) \$50,000 in the current market. The community has become a very desirable future location for young mid-career professionals and executives. Naturally, with this kind of capital available, there has been a boom in apartment construction. (Much of this activity was stemmed by the density down-zoning referred to earlier.) New homes are also starting to appear on 25-foot lots. And a housing cooperative, the Sunnyhill Co-Op, has produced one major development and would like to gain control of some of the city-owned property in the neighborhood. All of this illustrates that Hillhurst-Sunnyside is by no means a degenerating neighborhood. There is no reason why it must face the large-scale

destruction that has characterized 'redevelopment' in other inner-city areas of Calgary.

The community has long been vocal in its support of public transit options over the continued expansion of the vast network of roads. (Fully 35 percent of Hillhurst-Sunnyside is devoted to roads and parking areas.) As early as 1975, the community recommended that rail transit be brought to the north-west and that the tracks be laid on 10th Street. This recommendation was made in the citizens' section of the Design Brief (1977). It specified the 10th Street right-of-way, which means between the existing curbs on 10th Street.

On December 6, 1978, the transportation department informed the



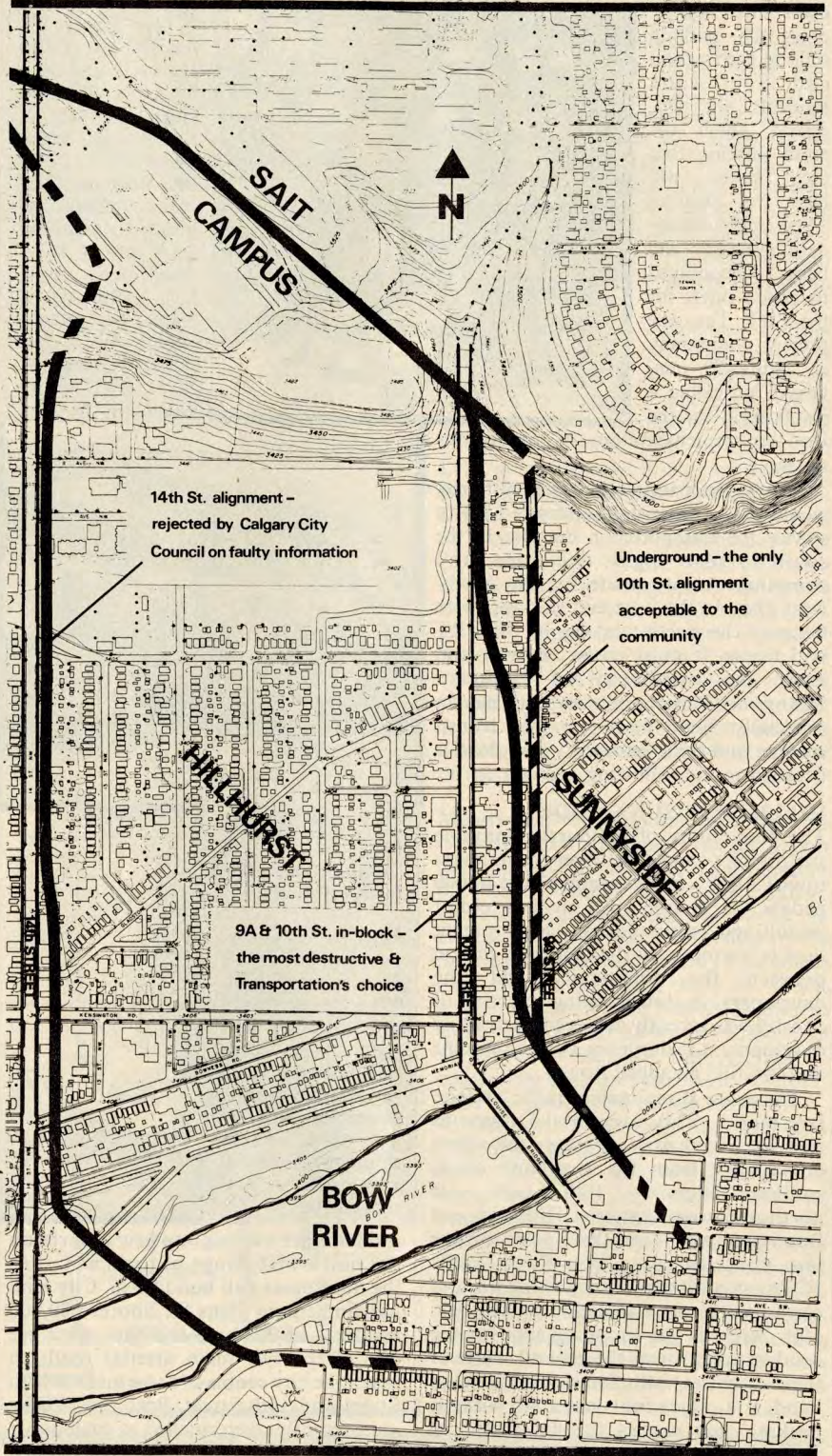
residents that they were going ahead with the selection of the LRT 'corridor'. It is important to note the difference between 'right-of-way' and 'corridor': within any corridor there are many potential right-of-ways, and in the 10th Street corridor the citizens had already indicated that their preference was the 10th Street right-of-way, meaning *on* the existing street. Suddenly, five days before the scheduled public hearing, the community had to prepare to evaluate the planning criteria for the selection of an LRT corridor. 10th Street and 14th Street were the two most logical corridors and the citizens' position was clear. Thus there was little comment when the 10th Street corridor was chosen, even though only eight members of a fifteen seat Council voted on the matter and only five of these were in favour.

Later examination of the criteria for the corridor selection made a mockery of the planning process. Only one specific right-of-way in each corridor was evaluated for comparison. For both 10th Street and 14th Street, the selected right-of-way went *through* the commercial properties on the east side of each street, requiring massive property acquisition and building destruction. The planners did not even assess the effect of putting the tracks *on* one of the existing streets. With these demented alternatives in mind, the planners decided that the capital costs of the two corridors were virtually the same. However, they argued (erroneously) that if they went up 10th Street they would be able to put a station 1,000 feet closer to the campus centre of the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) which sits above Hillhurst-Sunnyside. (The two potential station locations were, in fact, about 300 feet apart.) Because of a 3-minute walk, planners ascertained that 2,400 less students would use the system each day. This despite the fact that some of the present bus stops are further away than this and parking facilities even further yet! Based on the planners' misguided assumption, five members of Council approved the 10th Street corridor.

With the corridor decision passed by Council, planners concentrated on specific right-of-ways in the 10th Street area through the spring and summer of 1979. No provision was made for citizen participation at the working level, even though "extensive and full public participation" was promised at the time that 10th Street was chosen; and also irregardless of the fact that a petition favouring an underground routing (favoured by 90 percent of those responding) was presented to city planners at the first design meeting. The planners' idea of participation was to provide a barrage of graphs and details and glossy photographs rationalizing

their preferences and then taking these to poorly advertised public meetings. This likely would have worked and the citizens would have been kept in the dark until the recommendations were due in May of 1980, but the planners made a fatal mistake in August, 1979. In an interview with the *Calgary Herald*, reported on August 11, 1979, they confessed that the route they would support would go

through the houses and apartments on 9A and 10th Streets: 43 residential buildings accommodating 280 people would be destroyed. This was nine months before the study was supposed to be complete and it was apparent that their work was designed to justify their selection of this 9A Street "In-Block" alternative. At this point, cut off from the planning process and faced with a ready-



made decision that had enormous consequences for the community Hillhurst-Sunnyside began to organize to actively challenge the planning process as it had taken place.

The Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community Association (HSCA) provides a variety of services and is also the political focal point for the residents. This in itself is irritating to Council, which is one of the paternalistic opinion that one's concerns should be taken to the alderman and not to anyone else. However, the community has developed along the lines documented by Don Keating and the Riverdale Organization in Toronto.<sup>3</sup> The Association states as its objectives: "To have an effective communication system for the neighborhood (and) that the Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community Association become a powerful, democratic political organization.

In order to deal effectively with the real world of politics, the community must be organized.

The community must have more control over the decisions which directly affect the neighborhood.

The people should come to understand the political processes that affect their lives.

To actively support other community associations holding these goals and seek their active support."<sup>4</sup>

The association has lead other fights against City Hall. Its largest victory was a defeat of the 'couplet proposal' of 1973, which proposed twinning the Louise Bridge at 10th Street with one of 9A, thus, creating two one-way thoroughfares to carry traffic into and out of the downtown area. This would have effectively cut off Hillhurst from Sunnyside and led the way to the wholesale destruction of the neighborhood for another apartment community.

A meeting convened by the Association heard this and other fears about the LRT expressed on September 6th by the people of 9A and 10th Streets. The proposed destruction of the homes on 9A would remove much of the opposition to the twinning idea; even without it, the combined effect of an LRT right-of-way next to 10th Street would be divisive for the community. The meeting endorsed an LRT steering committee of four community people and recommended that they sit with planners in all matters

involving the final selection of the alignment. They decided that another transportation right-of-way would harm the neighborhood; the only alternative that they could support was an underground one. In addition, the meeting demanded that extensive land use studies be done *before* the final decision was made so that there could be some direction given to the changes that a



Shirley Flett, owns Pendulum, a clothing store on 10th St. "I'm sorry that the city couldn't listen to or take the example of other cities' experiences with inner city rail transit systems."

below left: Calgary Mayor, Ross Alger. right: Transportation Commissioner George Cornish.



Ralph Park, the owner/operator of the Natural Bread Store on 10th St. "James Harris' analysis of the negative impact of LRT bisecting the Safeway parking lot is very astute. If they don't care about the 280 people being displaced, they should at least consider the 10,000 people who shop at that Safeway store."



rapid transit system would obviously bring. It was also recommended that an independent consultant be hired to sit with the steering committee and the planners so that the residents would not be dependent solely upon the planners for their information.

Planners called a meeting to be held at the community hall on September 18. The Association went to work — flyers were

distributed and everyone was invited to attend a local meeting one hour before the scheduled planning meeting. 175 residents heard the decisions of September 6 and endorsed the steering committee to represent their concerns. Thus when the planners appeared, they met with a fairly informed audience. They denied that 9A Street was the preferred route and were told that an underground alignment was the only acceptable one to the community. Impasse.

**DISABLING THE PROFESSIONS**

Illich has proposed that the coming years be referred to as the "Age of Disabling Professions".<sup>2</sup> Part of the technique used by Hillhurst-Sunnyside is to confront the pros with people, real people, in an attempt to get the theoreticians out of their sterile offices into the actual life that exists on the streets and in the homes of their city. George Cornish is the Commissioner of Transportation for Calgary, a position of immense responsibility that often seems to hold even more power than the mayor's chair. Cornish's world is graphs, statistics, and professional presentations. He repeatedly refused to come to Hillhurst-Sunnyside to meet with the citizens. Residents have begun to refer to him as the 'Cornish Hen' which was more aptly amended to the 'Big Chicken'. On October 25, Mr. Cornish notified the Association that he would again be sending his 'aides' down to the community hall on November 1.

Despite the short notice, the Association was able to distribute flyers to most homes in the community. Again, they were invited to come one hour before the planners were due. First they were treated to a theatrical satire in which "Cornish The Magician" performed magic tricks, illustrating the Commissioner's duplicity. Then David Diver spoke to the residents. Diver is a former city planner himself. He lives in the community and is one of the members of the liaison steering committee. In

October, he had led a group of residents on a fact-finding trip to Edmonton to view the LRT there. This trip, he noted, was necessary because the community had been unable to get essential information from the Transportation Department to determine the best alignment. To listen to the planners, he continued, the LRT is like the trolley buses that Calgary used to run and which



**Cost Breakdown for LRT  
(in millions)**

Land	\$16.1
Vehicles	22.7
Engineering/ Design	10.5
Stations	13.7
Electrification	8.1
Track	5.7
Utilities	8.9
Shops/yards	8.0
Civil Works	10.6
Signals	2.6
Other	9.4

**Total Cost \$146,339,000**



many still do. If so, Diver argued, why is it necessary to tear down four blocks of homes so that it can have a separate right-of-way? He pointed out that the specifications for the LRT could handle a heavy-rail system at some point in the future, and that this was a critical point in the selection of the alignment.

After Diver spoke, the meeting with the city began. Greg Husband, the area alderman, was nominated chairman. The planners didn't like this. They were also uncomfortable with the number of people present, about 160. Again they produced a series of charts and graphs designed to convince a small group of people that 9A Street was the best alternative, although John Hubell, whose *faux pas* in August had led to the original *Herald* article, said that "at this time there is no preferred route." The planners were visibly sweating as they faced the large crowd. Despite their presentation, the meeting unanimously passed the following recommendations: that the 9A St. "In-Block" alternative be abandoned and that a thorough study be done of any other alternatives including 14th Street. Things looked good for the community.

Other evidence of success came in November as the City hired an independent consultant from Toronto, James Harris, to study the 10th Street corridor. His terms of reference did not allow him to study 14th Street and thus the citizens still did not gain any adequate information on this possibility but Harris supported the beliefs of the residents in deciding that the underground route was the most suitable for Hillhurst-Sunnyside. In his view the community is "an island of sanity" in a city unable to keep up with the rampant growth, and every effort should be made to preserve its character. The morning paper, *The Calgary Albertan*, had followed the whole saga of LRT and the HSCA closely and lent editorial support for the concerns of the citizens. A special meeting of the sub-committee of Council, the Committee on Operations and Development, was called for December

10 to hear the complaints of the residents.

The presentation that was prepared criticized the Transportation and Planning Departments in five areas: the lack of meaningful public participation; the structure of the study itself; the frivolous criteria used for the choice of 10th Street over 14th; inherently improper planning procedures; and the lack of time and money spent on what was such a major decision for the community. David Diver alleged that the Transportation Department had deliberately mislead Council with regard to three criteria in its choice of 10th Street over 14th. The committee was convinced. They recommended that the study be reopened. On December 17, this recommendation went before Council to be decided.

The public galleries were packed on the 17th by citizens who came to watch how Council would decide their fate. The meeting was a sham. Four of five aldermen who had witnessed the previous week's presentation voted to reopen the study but they were outpolled by aldermen who refused to believe that the Planning Department could have made a mistake. To the audience, it appeared that Council was exacting its revenge on the HSCA for speaking up too loudly in its criticism of the administration. Alderman Huish said that "we have already decided once that 10th Street was the best route. Must we go through the process again?" (Five of fifteen Councillors voted for 10th Street in that first decision and they were guided by misinformation provided by their departments. Mr. Huish was not in on that vote.) Council's vote this day was a triumph for everything that is wrong with our system — misinformed politicians relying on a self-interested bureaucratic elite that is fearful of losing a position of power if a community association is allowed to develop articulate leadership.

What is wrong with a city council that cannot hear the complaints of its own citizens, the recommendation of its own sub-committee, or the words of an

independent consultant that it hired to survey the situation? Thousands of hours of volunteer labour and discussion had been put in by hundreds of residents to convince the Operations and Development Committee of the incompetence of Commissioner Cornish and the study of the LRT alignment which was the responsibility of his department. Enough doubt was raised that the Committee recommended the study be reopened. A heavy-handed paternal Council overruled this recommendation. The residents left the meeting in despair and disgust.

1980 is election year in Calgary and Council's attitude has strengthened the resolve of the HSCA to take its message to the people of Calgary. The problem is how to approach a population that is generally wealthier and tends to leave all decision-making to planners. A 'Refugee House Parent' program has been started in which other Calgarians can adopt the homes of the people on 9A Street. But the community simply does not have the resources to reach out to the whole city. On November 27 of last year a bugler played the Last Post as residents of Hillhurst-Sunnyside offered the heart of their community to the administration on the steps of City Hall. Sadly, the administration not only accepted it but has also proceeded to devour it. On June 2, 1980, the planners will recommend to Council that 9A St. be torn down. It seems assured that Council will agree. ■

**Footnotes:**

<sup>1</sup> Joseph P. Timilty, Chairman, The National Commission on Neighborhoods, *People, Building Neighborhoods*, Final Report to the President and the Congress of the United States, March 19, 1979, pp. ix, 1, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Ivan Illich, *Toward a History of Needs*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), pg. 17.

<sup>3</sup> Don Keating, *The Power to Make it Happen*, (Toronto: Green Tree Publishing Co., Ltd., 1975).

<sup>4</sup> Approved by the Board of Directors of the Hillhurst-Sunnyside Community Association on April 21, 1977.

# A R T A G A I N S T INCEST

## Feminist Artists Challenge the Conspiracy of Silence

by Terry Wolverton

"It was three years of waiting and silence. Of not breathing. Of feeling guilty, ashamed, trapped in a situation I did not want, didn't understand; I hated him ... I cannot contradict him, I cannot escape him, I cannot tell the truth about him; he is my step-father, my mother's husband, the authority, the provider, he is bigger than me, everyone likes him - he is a 'good man'."

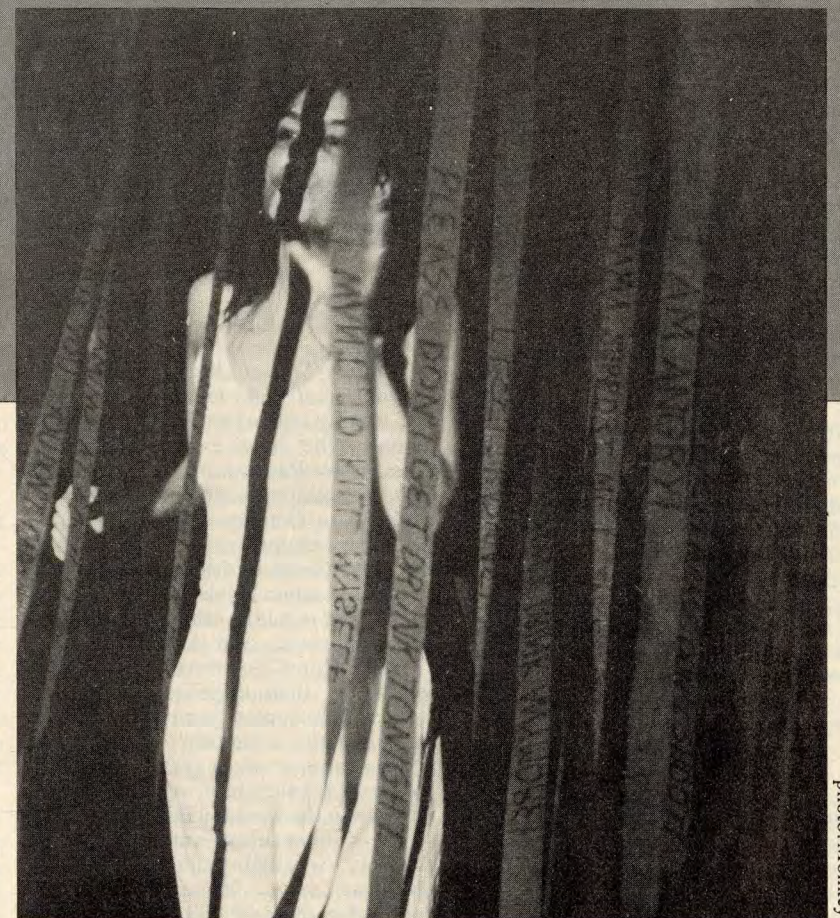


photo: Monkey

One out of every four girls in the United States is sexually abused before the age of eighteen. Different studies done throughout the country show an overwhelming majority — 97 percent — of the offenders in the sexual assault of children are heterosexual males. It is estimated that 25 million women in the United States have been sexually abused by men in their families. Incest is not an isolated incident that happens to "other people" — to poor people or in "pathological" families. Incest is widespread, transcending divisions of race, class, and religious

upbringing. Incest is sexual assault and it is supported by the silence that surrounds it. As Louise Armstrong writes in her book, *Kiss Daddy Goodnight*, "Sexual abuse can only happen in secrecy. It can only continue if it continues to be silent." Incest is sexual assault within the family, which can include non-blood relatives like step-fathers, mothers' lovers or anyone who fulfills a family role. (Additionally, brothers, male cousins, or uncles — non-adult males — are given authority over female children, and are often the perpetrators of incest. *T.W.*) In incest there is an imbalance of power and

knowledge between the aggressor and the victim. Incest is not love, or consensual sexual activity. Its motivations are power and domination, and it thrives in the privacy and dependency of the family situation. Historically, incest has not been defined as sexual assault. We have heard about young children who seduce their fathers, luring them into sexual activity. We have heard about wives and mothers who have failed to protect their children, who have not satisfied their husbands' sexual needs, who have "asked for it" by leaving the home to work. Or men who have been excused and given



**"Children remain silent in the face of authority ... not questioning the person they trust to know what is best, the person who provides for them."**

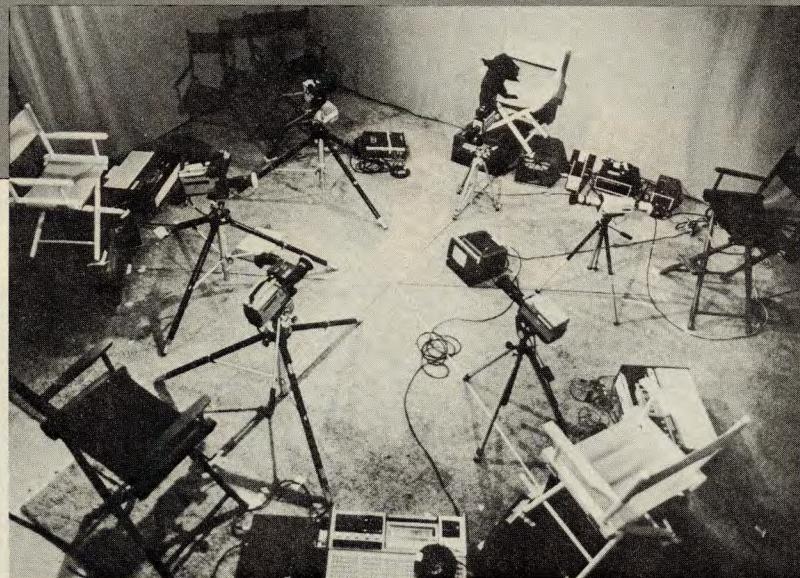
license to satisfy their "natural sex drive" and "seek comfort from loneliness" with what is theirs — their daughters. Most definitions, treatments and analyses of incest have one thing in common: they do not hold the aggressor responsible for his actions. Women and children are blamed and left to hold the burden of guilt. They harbor a secret that could destroy the only security they have: the family. Children remain silent in the face of authority; often told "not to tell" anyone; often not questioning the person they trust to know what is best, the person who provides for them. Incest is a big secret — not because victims are hiding pleasure. There is no pleasure. Incest is a secret because it's a power situation where victims are punished and silenced by fear.

As women speak out and tell the truth about incest, we will begin to chip away at the beliefs, the fear and the isolation that have saddled us with blame and guilt, served the aggressor and perpetuated our victimization. Our stories need to be heard and examined in a community where we have support and acknowledgement to value our own experiences and draw our own conclusions.

Excerpted from an article by Annette Hupt and Nancy Angelo which first appeared in *Spinning Off*. Copyright Annette Hunt 1979. Reprinted by permission.

The Los-Angeles based Incest Awareness Project is a nationally-focused cultural action project, started by a group of feminist artists and activists in the summer of 1979. The project is co-sponsored by Ariadne: a Social Art Network (an organization founded by Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz in 1977 to provide a network between women in the arts, media, local government, and the feminist movement) and the Women's Information and Skills Project of the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center. With the goal of raising community awareness about sexual abuse within the family, the project's strategies include:

- using the mass media to communicate facts about incest with a feminist perspective;
- creating artwork, writing, and alternative media pieces to express women's experience of incest;
- forming support groups for adult survivors of incest;



Six cameras, six chairs - on the set of *Equal Time in Equal Space*.

- involving a large and diverse group of women, including therapists, social workers, artists, mothers, and activists.

*Bedtime Stories: Women Speak Out About Incest* is an exhibition of visual art, writing, video, and performance by women who have experienced incest. Curated by Paula Lumbard and Leslie Belt, the exhibit opened at the Women's Building in October 1979. Designed to present the issue from the point of view of the child victim and the adult survivor, the show contained the work of eighteen artists, and included excerpts from childhood journals, and a section called "Letters Home" in which women wrote letters to their families about their experience of incest. Some of these letters were actually sent, others provided an opportunity to express long-held feelings. Another part of the show was devoted to the work produced by teenage and juvenile incest survivors in art therapy workshops conducted by therapist Evelyn Virshap as part of the Incest Awareness Project. Additionally, the show provided information about the social services available locally to victims of incest.

*Bedtime Stories* received extensive local newspaper and television coverage, and was the most widely-attended exhibition ever displayed at the Woman's Building. These facts demonstrate the need for information about the issue of incest, articulated from the point of view of those who have experienced it. By speaking out, the artists in *Bedtime Stories* made the transition from being "incest victims" to becoming "incest survivors". For these women, the act of artmaking is an assertion of creative control and personal power over a crime

against the self. In acting to inform others, these women claimed the right to heal themselves.

*Equal Time in Equal Space* is a community video project about women's experience of incest, as expressed in a consciousness-raising group. Conceived and directed by Nancy Angelo, a feminist video and performance artist and educator, the project involves a multiple-system video installation and audience interaction. Angelo describes the installation: "Six video monitors are set up in a large circle, with six audience members sitting between each one. Each monitor carries the image and voice of a different woman. Since there is no *one* experience of incest, the six women on the monitors are viewed by the audience in their own space and time.

"The rules of a consciousness raising session structure the presentation. CR is used as a model for communication and healing. Transmitted over video, in itself a communication tool, the audience is witness to women, who have long been silent, speaking out.

"Finally, through taking part in the piece and through discussion, the audience learns of resources within their own community for dealing with the problem of incest. These people have already moved out of isolation and silence in sharing interests and concerns with a small group from their community. The foundation for action is thus established."

Nancy Angelo continues, explaining her vision of creating feminist communication media: "Most television work involves the presentation of



Cast and crew preparing to begin production.

photos: Deborah Rountry

information by a non-involved party (either newscasters, actors, or documentary makers) to a passively receptive audience. As you watch in your living room you may be alone with your response. In thinking about feminist communications media there are several things that I would want to have at the base of such work.

"The first is images of women that are self-generated and multi-dimensional. No more definitions from the outside. The second is a system which brings the audience together, challenges them to look at themselves and think about their point of view, and finally, gives them a chance to talk it all over. I am also interested in a media form in which anything can be discussed, and through which people have a broadened sense of their own lives in relation to others.

"I am interested in exploring work structures and relationships in producing this work. I am also interested in creating a form which calls for us to explore and come to an understanding of our using the media — to be responsible for being so public."

*Equal Time in Equal Space* will open in southern California in the fall of 1980. Several showings are planning for a variety of specific audiences, including parent and teacher organizations, mental health workers, feminist groups, and the art-viewing public. Each screening will be held for an audience of 30-40 people, who will afterwards be asked to discuss what they have seen. Angelo plans to distribute the tapes to community groups across North America.

A media campaign was conceived by Leslie Labowitz of Ariadne, to introduce a feminist perspective on incest in the

public media, and to criticize the sensationalizing of incest by the television and film industries. In the past year, incest has become the latest "hot" topic in mass media, referred to as the "last frontier." A *Los Angeles Times* book reviewer has called incest "the flavor of the month." Films like Bertolucci's *La Luna* and the television movie of Pete Hamill's novel *Of Flesh and Blood* use the timeliness of the issue to popularize a male fantasy of sexuality between attractive mothers and adult sons. This is the information received by the general public about incest — that it is vaguely daring, naughty but titillating, and consensual, therefore harmless.

It is seen by feminists as no accident that the sudden popularity of incest in the mass culture coincides with the recent appearance of feminist writing about the issue. Three books, *Conspiracy of Silence: the Trauma of Incest* by Sandra Butler; *Kiss Daddy Goodnight* by Louise Armstrong; and *Father's Days* by Kathleen Brady, all published in the last three years, explore incest from the victim's perspective. Over and over again, as issues have been addressed and analyzed by feminists, these same issues have been exploited and trivialized in mass culture.

Labowitz sought coverage of the project in local newspapers, and on radio and television, by using the art exhibit to draw the public's attention and interest. She explains: "The working model of Ariadne, created by Suzanne Lacy and myself, is a public information campaign designed to expose the community to a feminist perspective through encountering art made from that perspective. By using the mass media, artists can bring their work into a public environment,

**"This is the information received about incest - that it is vaguely daring, naughty but titillating, and consensual, therefore harmless."**

which can stimulate dialogue and change public opinion."

Labowitz succeeded in drawing hundreds of people to the exhibit through articles in two major newspapers, and numerous radio and television appearances. Many of these people remained to participate in various aspects of the project.

The prevention and recovery program, initiated by the Women's Information and Skills Project at the Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center (GLSC) includes a 24-hour hotline, referrals to qualified and sensitive therapists, and support groups for adult women and teenagers of both sexes. The program also provides speakers to schools and community groups, on the topic of sexual child abuse.

Nancy Taylor, director of the Community Education office at GLSC, says of the program: "Our agency is heavily involved with the program of runaway youths in Hollywood. Seventy-five percent of these young men and women have experienced sexual abuse in their homes. That's what they are running away from. Many turn to drugs and/or prostitution to cope with living on the streets. GLSC sees our sponsorship of the Incest Awareness Project as a way of seeking solutions to the social and family problems that cause these young people to leave home.

"We are also committed to combatting the stereotype of gays and lesbians as child molesters. It is important that the public know that 97 percent of all sexual child abuse is perpetrated by adult heterosexual men."

Another project member, Merle Fishman, a writer and mother, is independently working to convince local school boards to provide information to children, parents, and teachers about incest. Her efforts so far have resulted in an educational film, *Who Do You Tell* being shown in ten public schools in southern California. She is also concerned with what happens after the child "tells" and is planning to set up a volunteer program for child advocates, who can serve as a resource for children trying to break out of an incest dynamic in their families.

In these ways, participants in the Incest Awareness Project are bringing incest to





Anita Green, performer, and Catherine Stifter, camerawoman.

the public's attention: analyzing the social causes of the problem; working to provide alternative education and treatment; and encouraging women everywhere to challenge and combat the "conspiracy of silence" which surrounds incest.

**O**ne Woman's Story: I offer my own experience of participating in the Incest Awareness Project to illustrate the relationship of personal process to public (political) expression. This relationship is crucial to feminist artmaking and is necessarily reciprocal.

I cannot separate this project from the community in which it began, the community of the Woman's Building, a public center for women's culture and feminist education founded in 1973 in Los Angeles. Without this supportive context, and the groundwork laid by groups like Ariadne, I would never have had the courage to explore my feelings about my incest experience.

In 1977, during a worksharing session of the Feminist Studio Workshop (a two-year educational program for women in the arts offered at the Woman's Building), I watched a videotape made by Nancy Angelo, in which a woman describes her experience of incest. Many of the women viewing the tape were embarrassed, disturbed, or critical of the subject matter. I raised my hand to say that I had had sexual encounters with my stepfather as a young child, and that I was grateful that the tape had been made. It was the first time I had ever spoken publicly about my experience.

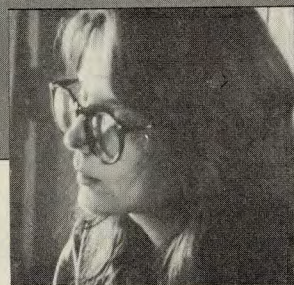
More than two years later, I attended the first meeting of the Incest Awareness Project. It was a large public gathering,

designed to generate interest and participants in the project. A panel consisting of a psychologist, a social worker, and a counselor discussed the issue from a clinical and objectified perspective, speaking of "patients" and "victims", referring to "them". This is my major criticism of non-feminist therapeutic treatment of incest, that it isolates and distances those who are seeking help. This dialogue continued, with the audience taking up the discussion from the same point of view. An unbearable tension began to fill the room, tension of many women's suppressed pain and rage, until Annette rose to say that she herself had experienced incest, and she needed to discuss it from her own perspective. Other women rose then, identifying themselves, claiming their experience, saying "I" and "we". We saw clearly that we, and not the professionals, are the experts on incest.

Soon after that, Paula Lombard and Leslie Belt approached me about submitting work for the exhibition they were planning, "*Bedtime Stories: Women Speak Out About Incest*." Leslie suggested I consider creating a performance for the opening. Paula offered to spend time helping me to develop my ideas and images.

In creating this performance I had to confront the taboo of speaking about incest, and my feelings of guilt, fears of not being believed, fear of punishment. I came to realize the effect my twenty years of silence had had on my life. How I came to silence other parts of myself, those parts which seemed too unacceptable or shameful. How these silences eroded my sense of self. How I had become a liar by omission, to and about myself.

"I came to realize the effect my twenty years of silence had had on my life. How I came to silence other parts of myself... how I became a liar by omission to and about myself."



Terry Wolverton (above)

**M**y performance was called *In Silence Secrets Turn to Lies/Secrets Shared Become Sacred Truth*. I constructed a physical environment in which I could move through layers of experience: revealing first those secrets I had thought were too terrible to share, exposing the lies I told about myself to seem more acceptable, and finally moving into honesty and self-awareness, affirming my commitment to honesty. Women responded to the performance by telling me their own incest stories, or other secrets they had long kept hidden, or by sharing their own struggles to break silence. In speaking out together, we were able to break through the shame and isolation we had carried since childhood.

After the closing of *Bedtime Stories* Nancy Angelo began to gather women to work on the video project *Equal Time in Equal Space*. She had planned originally to launch the project much earlier, but had been unsuccessful in securing the needed funding. In November 1979, she was determined to proceed without funding, deciding to seek private donations to raise the money to produce the tapes. She called a meeting, and explained her vision of the project: Six performers, seated together in a circle, speaking one at a time, the others listening without interrupting. Six cameras, each recording one woman as she speaks and listens. The audience viewing the tapes would also sit in a circle, amid six video monitors, seeing all six women as they share and respond.

Each participant signed a contract with Nancy, committing to carry out the agreed-upon tasks, to attend each session, and to participate fully. These contracts outlined the structure and expectations of the project, and provided a basis of mutual trust among us all.

The six performers were Anita Green, Bia Lowe, Paula Lombard, Lyric

"For many of us, it was the first time in our lives we had ever revealed the explicit or actual details of our abuse to anyone, including lovers, including therapists."



Nancy Angelo (above)

McCaleb, Christine Wong, and myself. Each performer was paired with another woman who would act as her "buddy", giving emotional support, as well as being her camera woman during the shoot. The camera women were Jerri Allyn, Cheri Gaulke, Chutney Gunderson, Geraldine Hanon, Jane Krauss, and Catherine Stifter. The purpose of pairing up was to develop a close and sympathetic bond between performers and the technical crew, so that the camera would not be seen as an alien tool, but an ally. In addition, Leslie Belt, Betsy Irons, Leslie Labowitz, and Sue Maberry helped to create the piece and worked on production, sound, fundraising, and promotion. Nancy was the facilitator and director. All the performers had experienced incest, as had some of the technical crew.

**I**n making *Equal Time in Equal Space* there were eleven consciousness raising sessions on topics related to incest. These included our mothers; sexuality; anger and authority; class, race, and religion; and our feelings about speaking out. Before each weekly session we were to think and write about the topic, and to meet with our buddies to share experiences.

At our first session, we each told our stories of our incest experiences, all seventeen of us, huddled together in a huge circle in Nancy's living room. For many of us, it was the first time in our lives we had ever revealed the explicit or actual details of our abuse to anyone, including lovers, including therapists. Everyone of us was embarrassed by the depth of her pain, feeling somehow wrong or queer to hurt so much. It was



Silent Screams, an installation by Lyric McCaleb Jazzwomin.

clear that these old experiences affect us still, in ways we are scarcely aware of.

I cannot say I enjoyed the process. Each session was depressing and emotionally draining. Sometimes I thought I couldn't bear to hear one more woman's story, or to reveal one more thing about myself. Often I was unable to make myself think about the topic during the week. Being so involved in the process, we sometimes lost sight of the overall project. At these times, it was Nancy who reminded us there was a goal at the end.

At some point, after the seventh week, we realized that this process would indeed have a product, and we turned our attention to planning the videotape, and the information we would present. We wanted the tape to be a collective statement, so input was shared between performers and tech women.

As performers, our first impulse was to convey our information conceptually, articulating our political analyses, and drawing our conclusions. This approach proved to be very dull and stilted on tape, and we realized that we needed to extend to our audience an experience of our actual CR sessions. This meant speaking personally, simply, emotionally, and with immediacy. We worked collaboratively to decide what would be presented, with everyone respecting the needs of individuals to share their important issues, while working as a group to figure out how best to express

them. I felt strongly that the issue of lesbianism should be addressed in the tape, since all of the participants except one were identified as lesbians. Although I had fears about reinforcing the false notion that incest "causes" lesbianism (an easy stereotype which is used to discredit both issues), I felt it was vital to acknowledge that this creation was made by lesbians. For me this means being free to analyze and criticize the family structure, because as lesbians we are outside of it. This is one of the issues I explore in the tape. Other topics discussed by performers include self-hatred, masculine roles, violence, alcoholism, religion, anger, therapy, and being public about incest.

The tape was shot in February of this year, but this is not the end. The process begun last November will not be complete until the tapes are shown in the fall. Then the chain of communication that began with our personal process will extend to include many more people, and we will see what changes result. It is my hope that people who view the tapes will be moved to respond, to identify, to involve themselves and join with us to break this conspiracy of silence. ■

Terry Wolverton is a writer and theater artist, whose work has appeared in *Heresies: a journal of feminist art and politics*, *Chrysalis*, a magazine of women's culture, and *Sinister Wisdom*.



Some eighteen years ago a close school friend of mine wrote to tell me of a band he was excited about in Newcastle. They hadn't yet produced a record but he knew they were good. He knew it was the sort of band "we" were looking for. The band was The Animals. Prior to his letter we had spent time together, bought our first solid body guitars and shared two channels in one 15 watt amp. In fact for six years we had listened to Duane Eddy, The Piltdown Men and The Fleawreckers, Sandy Nelson and The Ventures. At that time the "market" too was in its teens, and it was possible to buy one or two singles a week and still own a complete collection of all available instrumental records — where every band was trying to squeeze new sounds out of amplified guitars and their accompanying recording technology. Every ounce of vibrato, echo and reverberation was worth its wait in gold and in 1962 we were still two years away from the fuzz box and some four years away from the wah-wah.

Since that time we have musically been through the 'Sixties' and the 'Seventies'. And most of us have had enough cock-rock to last us a lifetime. Corporate rock (pop music) continued to flourish from places like Chicago, San Francisco and New York to flatten and fatten out the Seventies. But nonetheless in each urban center new bands periodically emerge and create temporary live excitement for their audiences.

Toronto in the last five years has been the home of at least four such bands: The Dishes, Martha and the Muffins, The Government and most recently a band called TBA. Like The Animals and others before them, all four were welcomingly fresh and urban (or suburban): The Dishes are no more; Martha and the Muffins are now with Virgin Records; The Government has successfully self-released their first album and TBA has yet to record.

TBA currently consists of Glenn Schellenberg (vocals, keyboards), Paul Hackney (vocals, keyboards), Andrew Zealley (vocals, synthesizer), Donald Mercer (drums), and Michael Brook (sound technician). In their second concert on January 4th at the Cabana Room, TBA brought with them old technology but a new live sound which perfectly fit the historical bill; namely — take a small room packed with people (for good baffling) and make the audience feel that acoustically you have "rearranged the furniture". TBA chooses its gigs sparingly. With the minimum of gimmicks, an inverted stage presence but armed with passion-filled lyrics, TBA is currently riding its own wave of serious optimism. Glenn Schellenberg with TBA's first drummer Steven Bock put the band together by co-writing many of their current slate of songs. They give the impression lyrically that they are on top

# HAVING BEEN ANNOUNCED

# THE PASSION OF TBA

By Clive Robertson

of their own self-analysis by using vulnerable statements. As well in certain songs there is a less appealing use of lay-psychology. TBA is not alone. Following the pop tradition which includes The Talking Heads the 'coding' in TBA's case is perhaps written for their own immediate audience. Namely, those currently in their early twenties, who may or may not identify themselves as being post-anarchist, post-punk, post-hippy and stylistically, at least, post-bohemian. Their self-termed "paranoid love songs" like "Steven" or "Most Nervous Person" are analytically clear. They also perform other songs like "I am the Artist" which is loaded with ideological fantasy direct from the artist community in whose

shadow TBA sometimes unwisely stands. Visual artists historically have all too easily attached their sticky fingers to pop music protégés. Warhol and The Velvet Underground being just one case in point. TBA, unlike The Dishes before them, seem intent on ducking that web. Though it could be premature to say — they do seem to understand that the drive of this format-music must come through their own practice and not from a theoretical committee of those who would like to but can't. I talked to Schellenberg, Paul Hackney and Michael Brook for their views on what TBA is both doing and planning.

**FUSE:** Why did you choose two, and now three, keyboard players and a drummer? Were you trying to get away or go towards some idea of a band?

**Glenn Schellenberg:** Both. I'd been in two bands previously. In The Dishes we had lots of different instruments and it was always a mess. In The Everglades the guitars were never in tune with one another and in most bands I hear, the guitars are normally out of tune. So that was something I wanted to avoid. Also I play keyboards and it's easier for me to write for keyboards.

**FUSE:** Has it got much to do with the fact that the music you wished to play is devoid of solos, that the four keyboards and the synthesizer create an undulating block?

**Schellenberg:** Yes. There's little improvisation. Rhythmically it changes in performance — but essentially they are pre-arranged pieces.

**FUSE:** The omission of a bass player is somehow more noticeable than the lack of a guitar.

**Schellenberg:** As soon as I found out I could play a bass on a different keyboard that's what I wanted. Again my own experience is that rhythm in bands is so sloppy, yet it's easy for a piano player to use his left hand. The difference being that you have to change your style.

**FUSE:** TBA seems to have some controlled deliberation?

**Schellenberg:** It has to be fun, but that for us is trying to be serious about it. We don't want to do gigs just to play — but it becomes expensive to maintain that desire.

**FUSE:** What sort of function do you see TBA having either live or on record, given the fact that there is so much music around? What do you see as being your input?

**Schellenberg:** I think what we are doing is new in some ways while at the same time incorporating a lot of things that are contemporary. The music's danceable; there's an apparent reggae influence; the keyboard focus is also happening in England and also in North America but not as much. Most of the bands I listen to are almost all keyboards. Those bands which are electronic however come across as being mechanical, sterile,



photo: George Whiteside



lacking passion.

**FUSE:** What audience are you aiming your songs at? Many of your lyrics seem personally loaded. Are the love songs addressing a gay audience or are love songs sexually interchangeable?

**Schellenberg:** The gay audience would immediately pick-up on some of the lyrics — "The Most Nervous Person In The World" is the only song that is a direct statement that "we are gay" — the rest of them could be read ambiguously.

*Michael Brook, video and audio technician is also a musician. He has been the guitarist for both Flivva and The Everglades.*

**FUSE:** Part of TBA's "difference" as a live band is your usage of studio techniques, that process the sound. How do you conceptualize the electronic effects?

**Michael Brook:** I like the sound of processed voices — what is referred to as being 'fatter'. I mean this in terms of the chorus effect. It adds a certain richness that is so prevalent on records. I think that difference that can be heard in live amplified voices because so many records use overtracking: the same voice is either repeated or its processed electronically. It's a personal preference of mine rather than a conceptualisation.

**FUSE:** But you do decide where and on what songs ...

**Brook:** We use the chorus effect on all songs. Sometimes it's more distinct for a larger voice, but it's the Harmonizer that comes in and out more often — so that's what you probably notice is missing. The Chorus is fairly fixed — sometimes I change it so that it's almost echo by lengthening the delay time.

**FUSE:** So technically how does the Chorus work? I've noticed that it's easier to sing lower registers?

**Brook:** What it does is allow you to have more apparent volume without actually increasing the microphone gain. In a live situation this means that the singer doesn't feel that they have to force their voice. The chorus effect we use is an Electro Harmonix Echo Flanger. It has a chorus setting on it — it's just a guitar effect. On the chorus position there's about a 30-100 millisecond delay that is swept: the length of delay is slowly changed at a variable rate. If you make the rate of change quick enough you get vibrato. When it slows it sounds like two people singing. The reason for this is that when two people do try and sing together there are microgaps — differences of attack in their voices as well as the pitches being slightly off. So the chorus effect simulates this 'microgapping' by means of a variable delay. But as I said, the box is an echo flanger and we use some flanging which is a shorter delay 3-10 milliseconds. The flange itself consists of a cone filter that as it's swept slowly removes and adds harmonics.

Most of the songs are asexual so that it's more universal. Obviously we don't normally expect to reach a gay audience. At The Cabana Room it's probably a high of 30 percent.

**Paul Hackney:** I don't think we intend to appeal just to gay audiences.

**Schellenberg:** It's somewhat of a dilemma. We do want to be a band that a gay audience can identify with. I've been involved with gay activists. They would be interested or more interested if, as a

## TECHNOLOGY

**FUSE:** So how does the harmonizer work?

**Brook:** Technically, in musical terms it gives you parallel intervals (harmonics) with the same timbre. So if you listen to the output you can still recognise the instrument or voice but the pitch has been changed. I use it mostly in a lower interval as a special effect — for instance in "I am the Artist" it creates a 'wailing' sound an octave down from the singers voice. When it's used at a higher interval it produces a simulation of a back-up singer, singing in a parallel interval.

**FUSE:** What other effect technologies might be possible?

**Brook:** Voice synthesis chips are becoming cheaper. Therefore similar to the currently available programmable rhythm box — you might also have a 'singer' box. Technically it is feasible; which of course is no guarantee that it would be aesthetically useful. TBA might be able to use a Vocoder: a device that takes the frequency spectrum of one sound and superimposes it on another. Such additional equipment is expensive and right now we are just adding one thing at a time. We have used digital delay with a storage mode so that we could effectively make live tape loops. It's useful because it 'traps' phrases without degenerating them. (Normal repeating through the effect of echo degenerates the signal). When TBA plays live I don't do much in terms of sound enhancement. The instruments are not fed through the P.A. so they are not therefore mixed through a board (mixer). I would like perhaps to get more involved in spatial separation but most rooms that bands play in are acoustically unpredictable. For us it's still quite primitive.

**FUSE:** Wouldn't it then be advantageous to have some constant space like The Music Gallery (mainly programming improvisational music) only open to the sort of music that you're personally interested in.

**Brook:** In a sense The Cabana Room is a small version of that. It seems to me that the essence of The Music Gallery is that its subsidized so that the quality and quantity of the equipment available isn't

band, we had a strong sense of gay politics. We don't have songs where we literally tell people that we (less Donald Mercer and Michael Brook) are gay. I can condone that approach but on the other hand we are making pop music. We don't deny that we are gay but our musical interests are foremost and our separate needs obviously come out in the songs that each one of us does or may write.

**FUSE:** How complete is the band at

related to the door receipts. That's the main difference — The Cabana Room is a commercial bar that artists programme. But it's true for instance when TBA played at The Legion Hall it was a completely exhausting marathon to set up what turned out to be inadequate — in terms of a useful acoustic space. So yes Toronto could use a space where certain equipment was 'built-in'. The Cabana Room comes closest but on Friday nights there are too many people trying to get into too small a space.

**FUSE:** If you produce a recorded type of sound for TBA live what would you do in a studio recording?

**Brook:** I think what would be interesting, given that TBA's live sound is already processed would be to further emphasize the essence of what is happening. This would mean trying to improve the focus of what seems to be the intent of the music. In the sense that the lyrics seem to be that focus — as the music is fairly derivative — I would like to try to translate onto a disc. I don't think doing what we do live would do that — after all it would then sound common, or indistinguishable. I think therefore that the effects would have to be more intense which would be possible in a studio, where the mix goes directly onto tape rather than having to combat the acoustics of a room. So the sound could be denser, maybe using two harmonizers to produce the effect of one voice singing chords. Also processing the instruments is possible which, as I said, we don't do. All of this though is completely standard stuff and the challenge remains that people do this on record anyway.

**FUSE:** You could use the properties of tape to expand the band in terms of editing-in 'unplayable' arrangements.

**Brook:** We would be limited in terms of how much time we could spend in a professional studio where experimenting means time and therefore increased studio costs. You can produce in a small studio but I guess my theme these days is that you cannot hide a small studio sound. The only way to produce what everyone else thinks recorded music is supposed to sound like is to get access to the sophisticated technologies that sometimes appear in a professional studio.

this point? You now have a third keyboard player.

**Schellenberg:** I think we have to know how to play synthesizers better, find out more about what they can do. It's really a studio tool. Live, it can be a problem because it has to be loud. Then you have to deal with the high frequencies and the positioning of the amplifiers in a small room which creates balance problems.

**Hackney:** It's a compromise between being overwhelming and not being heard. We'd like to make records and the synthesizer is part of that but it's not always useful live to have that or any instrument upfront.

**Schellenberg:** The bass and string synthesizers are accountable instruments. The current sound of the band is limited by money. I would rather not have the Farfisa (an electric organ) in the band for instance. I want an organ but not that cheap Sixties sound.

**Hackney:** But you were asking how complete is the band? It's hard to say. We are going to remain a keyboard and drum band. We might add some guitar. We've considered that with Andy if he's interested. I would like to see some different things being done with the lyrics, not just their arrangement. New songs will do that — and Andy will help. His song "You Kill Me" was quite different from the rest of our material and it was very noticeable. As one of the vocalists I need to do more and for me, that takes time ...

**FUSE:** One of your unrecorded hits is "I am the Artist", a song whose shallow irony becomes submerged in the music. Another of your songs "Most Nervous Person" also displays a clear romantic view of the artist with the line: "he's a painter so I know he's in pain." Isn't this sensitivity approaching naivete?

**Schellenberg:** Perhaps. The idea for "I am the Artist" came from the early days, last September, when there was Steven, Paul and two women, Kate and Pat plus myself in the band. We were sitting in a restaurant, someone came in and I introduced the others as my band. I was chastised for it by the band members. So the song was a response, because I had been writing all of the songs, doing all of the arrangements, telling everyone at rehearsal what to do. But it's also about 'art sets the pace', 'artists set the pace'. Art students seem to react negatively to that song but artists appear to like it.

**FUSE:** Yes it does flatter their own mythological role.

**Schellenberg:** I think when you write a song or make a work you take an attitude. I also think it's clear that we are not despots.

**FUSE:** What is your personal interest in terms of lyrical content?

**Schellenberg:** Well the lyrics are secondary to me, which is perhaps the way I listen to music. It's really important that they be good but the music comes

## MOST NERVOUS PERSON

I really like the most nervous person in the world

I really want the most nervous person in the world

Don't ask me why cause it's unhealthy I'll bet  
Don't ask me why I want as much as I can get  
I'm in love with the most nervous person in the world

And I really want the most nervous person in the world

### CHORUS

He's so nervous he's hard to ignore  
It's his neuroses I really adore  
I try to tell him it's all in his head  
He says that's what he really dreads  
Maybe starting to rub off on me  
He's cute but maybe he's contagious  
I'm involved obliviously  
And I think that it's very courageous

*Excerpt c. 1980 Glenn Schellenberg and Steven Bock*

first. We tend towards a style of what I would call paranoid love songs which is, I guess, bowing to pop tradition. There's usually a reference to another person or a general 'you'.

**FUSE:** However it's not chauvinist — which has been the gut of pop music.

**Schellenberg:** The songs generally are personal so they will turn out lyrically as I have said to reflect the way we are. And we are not like that. Thematically the band wants to be serious rather than gimmicky or bohemian or both.

**FUSE:** You also include a few cover songs: "Sweet Jane" (Lou Reed), "Monopolies" (The Dishes) and what sounds like something off "Fear of Music" (Talking Heads).

**Schellenberg:** Yes. There is a David Byrne influence. Steven and I decided we would do a song that was primitive. The Talking Heads album had African influences but the song you mention which we wrote called "O.K." sounds more like North American Indian.

**FUSE:** If you were being critical of the musical scene of which you are a part, what observations would you make as to what is not happening that might or could be happening?

**Schellenberg:** Well in New York the No-Wave scene has been happening — noisy jazz music. I don't personally find that interesting. What is also happening in England and New York that gets a lot of attention is Ska music. They both seem like regressive things to me. I did like The Specials until I realised it was a movement and that in total it was like this year's hula-hoop. They all wear black and white, they all have black and white people, white people playing black music. I hate The Madness record and I don't think it's progressive musically. I never liked jazz music and when I say that

maybe I don't understand it. But I don't like the sound of it. Therefore I don't like the Lounge Lizards or The Contortions. I think there are good records coming out too. And I think right now all of them are from England.

**FUSE:** Such as?

**Schellenberg:** Young Marble Giants, The Human League, Orchestral Manoeuvres, they all deal with what has happened electronically to music.

**FUSE:** Whatever happened to "suburban" music, Martha and the Muffins, The Biffs and your own past in The Dishes?

**Schellenberg:** I don't find suburban consciousness interesting. I think in 1975 when The Dishes first came out and did that Thornhill (suburb of Toronto) number it was interesting. When they played at OCA with ironing board sets — it had its place in a history but now to think it's cool to write about supermarkets .... You can write political songs about supermarkets but just to write songs about shopping I find offensive. It's basically poking fun though not exactly knowing what the object is. It's like the idea of suburbs being tacky and therefore being kitsch.

**FUSE:** In that light, what about your "Meltdown" song; isn't that somewhat of a leftover from suburban vagueness rather than a seriousness you seem to imply?

**Schellenberg:** I agree. It won't be there for ever. It was the first song I co-wrote for TBA. Lyrically it's of the B-52's — when Steven and I liked that band.

I think we should say something about pop music. We're very much a pop band. Our songs are usually three and a half minutes long with a traditional structure of verses and choruses and usually a middle eight or sixteen. The sort of mass pop format is important for what we are doing. That part of the band is ordinary.

**FUSE:** So what's descriptably different?

**Schellenberg:** The way we sound. The instrumentation, the lyrics, the vocals. It's also important for us to be danceable and if a piece is undanceable it must be strong rhythmically. Some of our music is written in 7/8 or 3/4 or 5/4 which is quite hard to dance to, even though people seem to do it when we play live. It amazes me. I would never try. We also use synthetic instruments. In a studio I would like to use a grand piano but processed piano.

**FUSE:** It's not 'pop' in the sense of corporate rock as in The Osmonds or disco?

**Schellenberg:** No. The music structure is pop. It's accessible so that we can have a following that will then allow us to continue doing musically what we want to do.

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## On the Screen of Influence

THE SIXTH ANNUAL VIDEO AND TELEVISION DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL  
Held at the Global Village, N.Y., Spring 1980.  
reviewed by Tony Whitfield

In Peter Davis and Steffan Lamm's 16mm film *Paperback Vigilante*, E. Howard Hunt, former CIA agent, and convicted Watergate Burglar, off-handedly defines the news media as the most powerful "agent of influence, molder of public opinion," in history. As such, the role of the documentary within the realm of the media carries with it an undeniably explosive potential to effect radical changes in the way we view the culture in which we live. The intensity of concentration on the particulars of the given subject in a successful documentary, while they were undoubtedly chosen to illustrate the documentary maker's point of view, reveal not only the facts but, more importantly, mirror the means and systems through which we process information, both as individuals and as a culture.

In New York, this spring, the Global Village presented its Sixth Annual Video and Television Documentary Festival. Twenty-four works were chosen from several hundred entries. When this festival was conceived in 1974 it was the only showcase for emerging video docu-

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At its best, *Death of A Princess* is an interesting television melodrama.

mentary makers in the U.S. (Remember that the first Sony Portapak became available in North America in 1968, and with it came a new set of technical and conceptual problems and advantages. The greatest problem being the complete absence of viewing facilities and a limited audience who understood and accepted the value of video relative to film.) In the past six years as video technology has rapidly advanced, the ranks of documentary makers has multiplied and the question of desired viewing forums has shifted from provisional situations to broad public access. In short the video documentary maker is now ready to take on the real world. But is the real world ready for the challenge offered by the contents of these works? Therein lies the significance of these documentaries. Recognizing this, the Global Village, over the past few years, has expanded its original concept of the festival to include film, and film and video documentaries which were made with television broadcast as their ultimate goal. Global Village Executive Director, John Reilly says, "As has been our practice..., we have not limited the choice to works that have been broadcast or are scheduled to be broadcast, but include documentaries that *should* be broadcast."

Of the twenty-four documentaries shown twelve were made solely by independent producers or independent production groups with no support from public television stations; ten were made

in association with a broadcast station or network; and two were commissioned by broadcast stations. It is important to note here that while the vast majority of these works received some funding from foundations or public agencies such as the National Endowment for the Arts or Humanities the largest portion of their funding came from the pockets of their makers themselves. In many cases, in view of its low cost relative to film, the presence of video as an alternative determined whether or not a work would be brought to fruition. As such, it has become an integral component of independent documentary production and a crucial element in the arduous process of vitalizing television programming.

For the first time prizes were awarded in various categories of the festival. John Reilly explains that these distinctions were instituted for two reasons: "first, because the video documentary has lacked a context for recognition in the already highly developed film world; and second, to provide a forum for works that exist outside the mainstream of broadcast documentaries and the industry-sponsored awards for television."

Among the most successful documentaries shown were three that dealt with the conditions of, and adaptations to, radical transformations in the characteristics of one's life resulting from physiological change and the institutions that accompany such change. In Teresa Mack's *What's Expected of Me?*, which was named Best Video Documentary, Renee, a Manhattan girl, is followed in her passage from childhood to adolescence, from elementary to junior high school, from the playground to the cosmetic counter. Mack achieves a very sensitive portrait of Renee, both as an individual and as a reflection of every child at this point of development, realising the range and limitations of one's power in the world beyond the family. Admirably, Mack allows a particular personality and state of consciousness to make itself apparent without evidencing the preconceptions of the videomaker. Renee, as a character, is a particularly accessible subject for such a portrait. Bright and extremely articulate, she moves in her discussions quickly from the specifics of the everyday, the bells that signal classes, to interpretations of those bells as symbols of a "job-oriented" society. Although, on the surface, this work is extremely gentle in its probing and goes out of its way not to pry for the sensational it manages to pinpoint crucial moments in the assimilation of traditional female role models that have been considered necessary steps toward adulthood. As this tape travels through a



*What's Expected of Me*, Teresa Mack's documentary of Renee, a 12-year-old girl.

year in Renee's life in the course of thirty minutes it becomes a striking condensation of real experience as well as real time. Produced by the TV Lab at WNET Thirteen this work was broadcast on WNET in November 1979.

*Choosing Suicide* by Richard Ellison, which won Special Jury Recognition, and *Joan Robinson: One Woman's Story* by Mary Feldhaus-Weber, Jon Child and Christine M. Herbes both focus on a woman's coming to terms with terminal cancer, the rapidly approaching end of her life and the world that shifts to become a constant acknowledgement of death's imminence. The approaches of these works are as different as the women on whom they focus. While both works were undertaken as responses to their subjects needs to come to terms with terminal illness, *Choosing Suicide* never loosens its grip on the value of the life that preceded the illness and *Joan Robinson...* is centered in the disease itself and the slow resultant process of deterioration that accompanies it. *Choosing Suicide* is a series of color videotaped conversations with Jo Roman, an artist and psychotherapist, alone, and with her family and friends in which she discusses her decision to commit suicide as an alternative to a long and painful illness and the unnecessary interruption of the lives of those she loves. When she discovered that she had cancer Jo Roman was in the process of writing a book advocating suicide as a basic human right. In essence this tape is the completion of that book. It deals with the distinction between suicide as a creative act of self-determination versus suicide as an act of murder, its ethical, moral and social implications and the


severe emotional and psychological upheaval the committer imposes on those who survive as something other than inevitability. One of the greatest strengths is its own acknowledgement of its intrusive nature into some of the most emotionally charged moments of this woman's life. The camerawork is quite simple and at no time are we allowed to believe that we are present at scenes at which our presence is not requested. Jo Roman's conversations with Ellison alone are so candid that we must trust that we know all we need to know. This is a video-essay with its own structure and a discreet point that it succeeds in making. Produced by LRE/Video Team, it will be broadcast by PBS in June and followed by a discussion of rational suicide.


*Joan Robinson...* was broadcast in January of this year and drew three to four times the normal audience for its time slot. This is a work of epic proportions (two hours and forty-four minutes, in 16mm color and black and white video) and is unrelenting in its determination to record one woman's experience of cancer. It follows her through the two years leading to her death, through periods of denial, bargaining for time, depression, anger, acknowledgement and a constant fight against isolation. While in no way can one minimize the importance of this documentary as a major record of the emotional as well as the physical pain the cancer victim suffers, the toll it takes on all who are involved with the stricken and the questions of medical culpability that arise during the treatment of the disease, one must also question the impetus



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behind such a work. When one becomes aware of the hundreds of hours of footage that were edited out (many of which, according to their producers plans, will be incorporated into medical and other cancer related documentaries) the seemingly ever-present, self-imposed burden of the camera crew and the unwaning preoccupation with death it must enforce one is struck by the symbolic role of the mass media as a presence with powers that reach beyond the mere conveyance of information. For the Joan Robinson who wanted to "leave something important behind" this documentary seems to have become a tool of the Puritan ethic, the important work of a life which for all intents and purpose seems to have begun with her own death notice. Therein lies a tacit acknowledgement of the extraordinary weight of broadcast material.

*The Year Zero: The Silent Death of Cambodia*, won the award for Best Documentary for Television. Made in Cambodia in September and October of 1979, by British journalist John Pilger and David Munro, this 16mm, hour long, color documentary's impact was so devastating when it was aired in Great Britain that it forced the severance of that country's diplomatic relations with Cambodia's barbarous Pol Pot regime. The film depicts the scene of one of the most successful exterminations of a culture in world history. It names Nixon and Kissinger as the groundbreakers in this endeavor in the early Seventies, and identifies western governments as war criminals in the complicity of their support of the now all-but-defunct Pol Pot regime. The footage is shattering: walls lined with post-execution photographs, piles of bones and broken skulls, hair and blood caked on cots, children dying of starvation, too weak to move or cry, insects crawling across their open mouths, the once bustling districts of Phnom Penh, deserted or razed. In response to this film's airings in Great



Britain, Israel, Ireland and Australia millions of dollars of food, medicine and transport were raised in those countries at a point when the need for those supplies was most crucial. To date no American network will touch this work and as the urgency of John Pilgers plea for aid subsides and the Heng Samrin regime struggles to piece together the remains of an ancient culture in the aftermath of a genocidal rampage the likelihood of a change of heart on the part of those networks dwindles to nothing. Meanwhile, *The Year Zero...* produced by ATV, London, is distributed by ITC Entertainment in New York City and is available for screenings by all interested groups.

Also included in this festival was the first American film about post-war Viet Nam. *Viet Nam: An American Journey*, by Robert Richter in 16mm color is an account of the filmmakers travels along Highway One, from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City beautifully photographing the current state of affairs in Viet Nam and documenting the progress of a war-ravaged country toward economic and cultural rehabilitation. One of the highlights of this film is a poignant interview with a woman, the only survivor of the My Lai massacre. It is a work full of sad remembrances and disturbing echoes. Although Richter is a veteran filmmaker whose other works have been broadcast on both public and commercial networks, this film, his first effort as an independent producer has not been scheduled for airing. Undoubtedly, the political climate in the U.S. during this election year is such that any further reminder of the impact of American failure will be impeded at all costs.

The most highly publicized and controversial of this year's works by independents is Antony Thomas and David Fanning's 16mm film, *World*

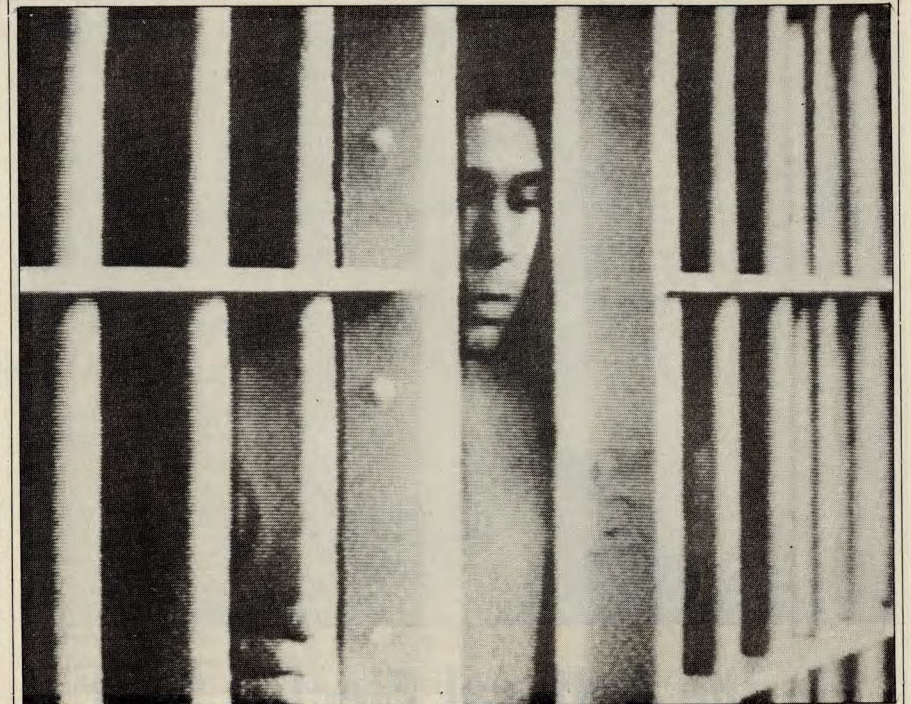


Joan Robinson: *One Woman Story* follows Robinson (left) through the two years leading to her death. photo: Centerscope (above) *America Lost and Found* by Tom Johnson and Lance Bird pieces together the Great Depression.

*Special: Death of a Princess* which is, in Thomas' description, a "non-fiction movie" because it combines a rigorous concern for facts that characterizes the best of journalism with the narrative strengths and dramatic thrust of a screenplay." As such, the issues raised by this film and the debate that has ensued have become extremely complicated. At its best it is interesting television melodrama; at its worst it throws up another smoke screen in the already limited path toward western understanding of Arab culture and its struggle to meet the demands that staggering oil wealth have imposed on a heretofore isolated, poorly educated, economically underdeveloped country. As a piece of journalism, *Death of a Princess* is, by its own admission, an inconclusive account of the 1977 execution of a Saudi Arabian princess and her commoner lover for the crime of adultery. It does, however, provide disturbing insights into western journalistic technique and its inherent transposition of cultural values.

From an historical viewpoint, Tom Johnson and Lance Bird's *America Lost and Found* pieces together a picture of the Great Depression from newsreels, feature film, documentaries and home movies made in the 1930's. In this fast moving work we look at a world of individuals betrayed by a national dream. The images used in this work were instrumental in creating an illusion of unity and national spirit at that time, instilling a belief that economic crises were in fact little more than a failure of the will. To date no television broadcast has been scheduled.

Two documentaries in this year's festival bring the issue of the failure of American ideology into the present. *Plea Bargaining: An American Way of Justice* by Robert Thurber and *Presumed Innocent* by Stefan Moore and Claude Beller both examine the judicial systems which have replaced as common practice those which are outlined in the Constitution. While the right to trial by jury and the abstention from testifying against oneself are basic constitutional rights an estimated 85 percent to 95 percent of all felony cases are "disposed of" through plea bargaining which requires that an alleged felon plead guilty in exchange for a guarantee of a light sentence and the removal of the need for a court trial. In Thurber's 16mm film the old Lenny Bruce aphorism is played out. "In the halls of justice, justice is in the halls." Using "direct cinema" the daily activities of a number of judges, prosecutors and defense lawyers are recorded. Justice and fair sentencing, it seems, are merely matters of expedient solutions arrived at in backrooms, judge's chambers and crowded corridors where the defendant is not present. In *Presumed Innocent* we



*Presumed Innocent*, by Stefan Moore and Claude Beller filmed at Riker's Island jail.

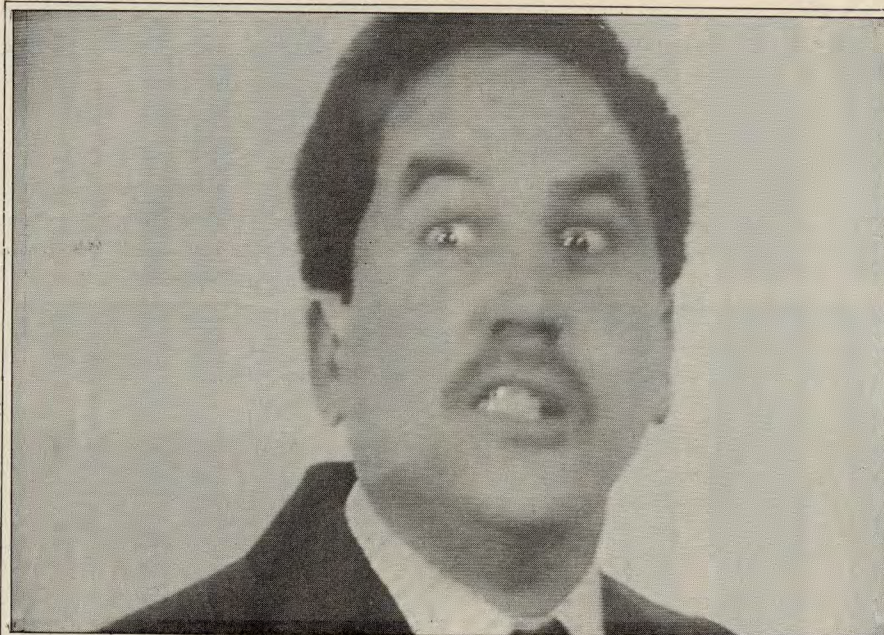
are shown the conditions of pre-trial detainment which reduce the issue of constitutional rights to irrelevance if not absurdity for the detainee who wants nothing more than release from the hell-holes of the American criminal facility. In Moore and Beller's videotapes we are taken inside the House of Detention for Men on Riker's Island where those who are unable to raise bail, most of whom are poor, black or Hispanic, are held for indefinite periods of time. (Again, although the constitution guarantees that "unreasonable bail shall not be set," the inequities practiced have grown to such proportions that what is reasonable clearly defines itself as a matter of race and social class.) Despite the insights posited by inmates, lawyers, guards and officials, into the reasons for the default of the criminal justice system, the overwhelming feeling of both *Plea Bargaining* and *Presumed Innocent* is one of institutional paralysis and individual frustration. Both of these works have been broadcast by PBS.

While all of the works discussed to this point have been extremely serious in their outlook many of the documentaries in this year's festival possessed an ingenuous sense of humor. Most notable was the winner of the Special Jury Recognition Award, a color videotape by Sol Korine and Blaine Dunlop, called *The Uncle Dave Macon Show*. Uncle Dave and his son, Dorris were among the first voices to be heard on the Grand Old Opry in the 20's and hold a revered position in the Country Music Hall of Fame. The tape is a compilation of bits of stock footage of Uncle

Dave, interviews with not only those who remembered him then and who had heard stories, but also with his family, who knew the truth. It is punctuated with renditions by Uncle Dave himself and others (including Pete Seeger) of the songs that made him famous. Characteristic of this tape is a sequence in which six people, in a series of edited, quick cuts, piece together a story about Uncle Dave and the smoked Virginia ham that seemed to be his steady date. Although the story never makes logical sense its humor is conveyed and an interesting point is made about the way a society's recollection of its cultural heroes disintegrates. Beneath the surface of this endearing, yet posthumous portrait is a deeper examination, however, of the Old South and its transition into the twentieth century. *The Uncle Dave Macon Show* will be shown this summer on PBS.

The works that have been written about in this article distinguish themselves as significant among those chosen for the Global Village's festival primarily in their degree of realisation of the potential in the documentary to expand the parameters that define our reality. Whether or not we agree with their point of view is not really of initial importance. Whether that point of view is accessible, however, is as important as the accuracy of the works' content if the work is to be located in reality. As witnessed by this festival, the determination to establish that grounding is often one of the most striking aspects of the work of independent documentary producers and the major advantage of their independent stance. ■





## In the Cultural Ejector Seat

**STEEL AND FLESH**  
Videotape by Eric Metcalfe. Produced at the Western Front, Vancouver, 1980.  
reviewed by John Greyson

Eric Metcalfe's new and very fast videotape *Flesh and Steel* opens with the preamble: "The dream fantasy you are about to see is based on images and characters remembered from comic strips I drew as a teenager in the mid-fifties." The tape is quite skillful — it places your anticipation in the comicstrip package, and keeps you there, keeps you relating this tape rightly or wrongly to the frame progressions of a comic book through to the end — which is accurate in the loose sense that comic books and B-movies have always had an intimate relationship, and this tape is certainly a B-movie. Structurally, it's more like a coming attraction trailer, the headlong sort that leaves you breathless between the popcorn and the Seven-up.

Let's be difficult and turn the preamble into a disclaimer. Disclaimers are always loopholes, suggesting absolution of sins the artist has yet to commit. Seen in this way, Metcalfe subtly absolves himself from any responsibility for content. Instead the scribbles of the twelve-year-old he once was are to blame. This makes sense, when you consider that an adolescent's first attempts at drawing are often copies of cartoons, and the characters copied are static renderings of the cult clichés of the silver screen — the gangsters, the vamps, the superheroes, etc. Metcalfe, in recreating his mid-fifties

John Greyson is an associate editor of *Fuse*.

strips on tape, gives us the genre he originally mimicked — the murder mystery. *Steel and Flesh* is a funny filmic cross between the elegant drawing room violence of Agatha Christie and the sleazy ambiguity of Raymond Chandler. 200 pages reduced to 12 minutes.

Given the title of the tape, you are led to expect some sort of analysis of the sex and violence that typifies the murder mystery formula. Instead, Metcalfe and his long list of collaborators have stuck carefully to the veiled suggestiveness characteristic of the genre. The bra is more enticing than the breast, the clenching of the knife is more exciting than the thrust, and so on.

The opening scene, a car pulling up in front of an imposing mansion, establishes the locale. From then on, the characters within this environment act out the predictable farce. They include a nightclub singer, a jester, two worldly ladies of dubious glamour and intrigue, a passel of underworld figures playing cards, drinking at the bar, or engaged in revealing conversations, a harlequin and a knifer. Metcalfe himself plays several roles that he has created before in other productions: a dragqueen in a bathtub, Ruby the Fop, and Dr. Brute (tooting the infamous leopardskin sax that became his trademark). However, his major role is as the host of this shady establishment, a dressed-to-kill, smooth-moving con who pursues the knifer until the final shot. The various murders are elaborately staged: a card game is concluded when the winner claims his

cocaine only to die from the substituted battery acid oxide; the knifer laughs maniacally, flushes a toilet, and a stabbed body is found floating in the swimming pool. The genre has always lent itself to elaborating the connections between sex and violence, and it's here that the producers throw innuendo out the window, as revolvers are thrust into garterbelts and revolvers are fondled with breathy abandon. In the final scene, the knifer grabs one of the girls, scratches her breast with his knife, and is about to go further when the host, unable to control his own fixation with guns ("is this my nemesis?") murders the murderer.

But the action is banged together so tightly that the narrative gets clipped — there is the basic plot, but we only get the general connections, not the specifics. Metcalfe's contribution to the murder mystery genre is one of eliminating the story. The short terse scenes are ones we have seen many times. Is this tape revealing something that the Hollywood B-movies never have? That the established formulas need not go through the narrative motions any more? Since everyone knows the story, all that is necessary are the thrills — the sex and the violence. Yet the tape still packages these very marketable items in all the predictable details of a narrative, proving that schlock culture's flesh and steel still need to be explained logically; a man needs to hit a man for a reason, even though all that counts is the blood. The tape is a fantasy, both for the producers and the audience — what it really proves is that old truth that fantasies are by definition stories we already know.

This knowledge is the key to schlock culture and the stumbling block. To know it is to be safe with it, over and over again; there is nothing more unthreatening. We like our fake sex and violence in familiar frameworks, where these two very real and threatening components can become artificial, manageable, and hence, the analogy goes, quite entertaining. The various genres (those of war, horror, spy, sci-fi, superhero beachparty, nurse and so on) each have rules about how much and what sort they will provide. As formulas, their coded predictability allows us to learn the rules quickly. Like beer, all we have to do is choose and continue to buy our brand of flesh and steel nothingness. Yet it's impossible to reject any part of it, because as much as it creates our taste, it also serves it. This tape is a good example of that old fascination of low art sliding into the high art party, like a Roadrunner cartoon at a Bergman festival.

This tape weighed in at four and a half hours, was cut to twenty-two minutes, and then edited down again to



Two of Metcalfe's many collaborators: (left) Margaret Dragu with Ruby the Fop (Metcalfe) and (right) Andy Paterson

photos: Paul Collins

twelve minutes. No continuity girl is listed in the credits (which are currently being reshot) but every other aspect of pro production is acknowledged. The large group of people involved, most of them artists, could probably not have rallied around any other kind of project except this sort of sophisticated camp. The sound track is particularly complex; many of the scenes are cleverly staged and shot. The hand mirror on which the cocaine sits reappears throughout and always manages to reflect a mouth saying something of import. Performances include that of Andy Patterson (a performance artist and member of the band The Government) as the knifer, whose frantic twitchings and mutterings suggest some breed of seedy convict, and Byron Black (interdisciplinary artist,

Vancouver) as a German gangster with a fallen monocle. It is the edits, however, that ultimately make the tape. While most attempts at reproducing mainstream culture by artists fail on the technical level, this one succeeds primarily because of speed.

It will be interesting to see whether Eric Metcalfe and his cohorts pursue this very professional manufacturing of specific cultural ejector seats, mimicking the very popular anaesthetics of our culture. Will the next one be a nurse movie or a war epic? To be true to that B-movie tactic of endlessly repeating a good thing, he could take every genre and reduce it to a string of stock scenes, testing how well we know the story. If he does, the potential is endless, and he has his work cut out for him. In another way, he doesn't. ■

## PUBLICATIONS

### New From Audio Arts

#### IMPROVISED MUSIC AND SOUND WORKS

Audio Arts Vol. 4 No. 2  
DAN GRAHAM. THE STATIC  
Audio Arts Supplement  
"THE MASTERWORK" AWARD WINNING  
FISH-KNIFE  
Audio Arts Editions  
Published by Audio Arts, 6 Briarwood Road,  
London SW4 9PX, England. Catalogue,  
subscription prices, etc., are available on  
request.

reviewed by Clive Robertson

*Audio Arts* is a British magazine published in audio cassette format begun in 1973 and edited by William Furlong. The magazine issues appear quarterly and are available on subscription or as "back issues". Furlong's interests in audio as indicated by what he publishes are varied — from symposia, to interviews with artists, to historical audio documents, to performance material editions. The publications are well produced and clearly designed as educational materials. (See *Centerfold* April 1978 interview with Bill Furlong.)

"Improvised Music & Sound Works" on Side A consists of three sections. The first is the cassette's cover piece: two disc-to-tape transfers of Antonio Russolo's "Corale and Sernata" (1921). Antonio was Luigi Russolo's lesser known brother. Luigi wrote the influential futurist manifesto "The Art of Noises," (1913). Both brothers invented large rectangular boxes with protruding horns which they called *intonarumori* (new noise instruments). The recordings are as clear as can be expected and it is possible to hear the origination of orchestral noise in film soundtrack development as well as *musique concrete* in early electronic music. What do the horns sound like? Almost like the roar of the old MGM lion. To modern ears in fact the orchestral music of Russolo sounds drawing-room sweet with its mid-eastern oboe tones. Drama or not, there is no question that both of these early pieces deserve their welcome distribution.

The second cut on Side A is "Breakwell's Circus" by Ian Breakwell and Ian McQueen. Breakwell created an

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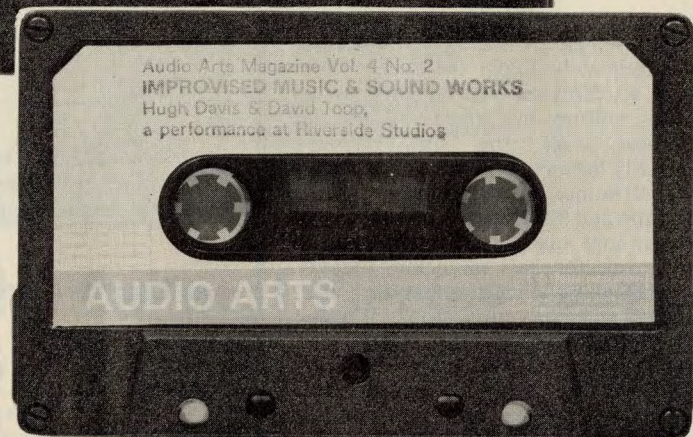
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exhibition called "Circus" for The Third Eye Centre, Glasgow in 1978. McQueen is the composer. Musically the work is described as "taking the form of sixteen variations on a theme of Franz Listz." The recorded tape "uses the voice of Breakwell reading his series of sixteen Circus texts, recordings made at a live circus performance, the voices of old Glaswegians reminiscing about Hengler's circus, and electronic music." And that is pretty much what you get collaged together. Breakwell is aptly reminiscent and poetic. His voice is slowed down by tape, reversed by tape. One could say it is a narrative work but it does not really tell us more about a circus though it does suggest a conceptualisation of a circus that is private to and for Breakwell. Yes in all its acts it is essentially another unremarkable perversity of creative structure that by itself is assumed to be interesting. One might simplistically make the remark that it offers all that Sgt. Peppers Band omitted, and wisely omitted. The original circus music itself and the Glaswegians' reports are definitely the trapeze act of this piece.

The final piece on Side A is Ian McQueen's "Insight into the Night" (an extract from the work). It features the improvised singing of Norma Winstone, the soprano voice of Deborah Goody, the oboe of Andrew Westrop and harp of Helen Tunstall. The liner notes talk of a reconciling with the two voices — one

structured, one improvised. As they both sound as if they come from the same tradition — the improvised voice in fact imitates the structured voice — there is not such a leap to be made. Everything is kept under control in this composition and you could indeed swirl your brandy while listening to this cut in front of an open hearth fire.

The second side of this issue of *Audio Arts* is titled "Improvised Music" by Hugh Davies & David Toop (recorded 1978). This 35 minute piece is highly recommended even for those who don't warm easily to what is often available closer to home as 'improvised music'. I won't guess to describe how the sounds are manufactured but I can re-assure you that these two musicians mean business and in terms of 'industrial' electronics they do produce the goods. The sounds are given their own space and both Toop and Davies respond quickly as listeners rather than giving the audience too much blank space to prove that improvisational musicians think as they play. The cover notes talk down somewhat to the listener as if improvisational music was some risk and I suppose here the educational priorities of *Audio Arts* shows through as having a conservative effect on the publication. Nonetheless in this case it's the music that counts and thankfully it more than adequately succeeds.

The *Audio Arts Supplement* featuring on one side Dan Graham and on the other The Static needs little comment.

Dan Graham's piece titled "Performer/Audience/Mirror" is an audio document of an earlier performance where Graham describes his own actions on stage and the reactions of the audience. This new version performed at Riverside Studios, London (February 1979) adds a mirror for Graham to view the audience. As in previous versions, his execution of this piece is thorough and articulate. The major problem with the work is that Graham duplicates the traditional stage-audience pattern by getting the audience to react to his structure. Should the audience make objection to the piece it would succeed past its very limited boundaries. Number 1 irony? The British do socially like to be told what to do and Graham plays the unwitting role of reinforcer.

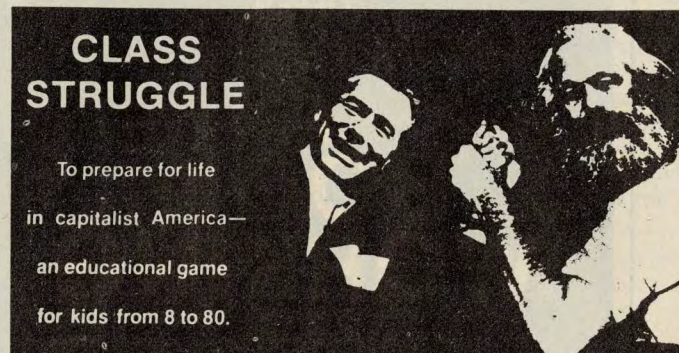
The Static was a N.Y. band that at least in the current musical context do not come across as being very interesting. The pace is quick and frantic, the music is 'noisy' and the songs' arrangement/breaks are all too obvious. There must have been many experimental English bands that were far more deserving to put onto a cassette?

The last cassette in this review is "The Masterwork" Award Winning Fish-Knife, a performance sculpture by Paul Richards and Bruce Maclean, with a soundscore composed by Michael Nyman, performed by the Michael Nyman Band. "The work deals with the consequences after the unveiling of the ultimate architectural masterwork, a 'model' for society." We are told that this is a complex work involving four disciplines: dance, dramatics, gymnastics and contemporary sound (music/dialogue/noises). What this cassette edition presents on one side is a truncated version of the music, and on the other the "contemporary sound" which consists largely of four voices speaking texts — often at once. There are lines which come through the net: "I wasn't bloody well consulted", "I buy my clothes at Tesco's". The cassette however does not 'capture' even the aural essence of the piece. Where are the sounds of gymnasts' feet? Accepting the production limitations this text is not that extraordinary, nor clear, nor wonderful. In fact its bureaucratic single voice is not, save perhaps for zealots of simultaneity, of much use.

Michael Nyman's music is more successfully reproduced in the cassette idiom. The score is derived from an eight-chord model, with permutations and interpolations. Those familiar with Nyman (*Audio Arts* previously released his "The Otherwise Very Beautiful Blue Danube Waltz") may know of his lyrical preferences. Nyman's orchestral works are somewhat like what Terry Riley might score for travelogue films with

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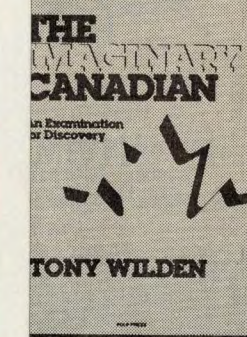
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The final piece on Side A is Ian McQueen's "Insight into the Night" (an extract from the work). It features the improvised singing of Norma Winstone, the soprano voice of Deborah Goody, the oboe of Andrew Westrop and harp of Helen Tunstall. The liner notes talk of a reconciling with the two voices — one

blank space to prove that improvisational musicians think as they play. The cover notes talk down somewhat to the listener as if improvisational music was some risk and I suppose here the educational priorities of *Audio Arts* shows through as having a conservative effect on the publication. Nonetheless in this case it's the music that counts and thankfully it more than adequately succeeds.

The *Audio Arts Supplement* featuring on one side Dan Graham and on the other The Static needs little comment.

nor wonderful. In fact its bureaucratic single voice is not, save perhaps for zealots of simultaneity, of much use.

Michael Nyman's music is more successfully reproduced in the cassette idiom. The score is derived from an eight-chord model, with permutations and interpolations. Those familiar with Nyman (*Audio Arts* previously released his "The Otherwise Very Beautiful Blue Danube Waltz") may know of his lyrical preferences. Nyman's orchestral works are somewhat like what Terry Riley might score for travelogue films with

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# Books in the Mail

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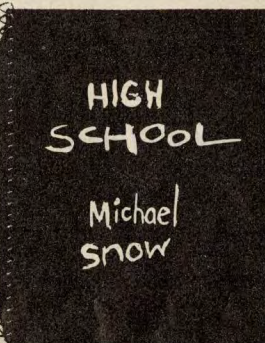
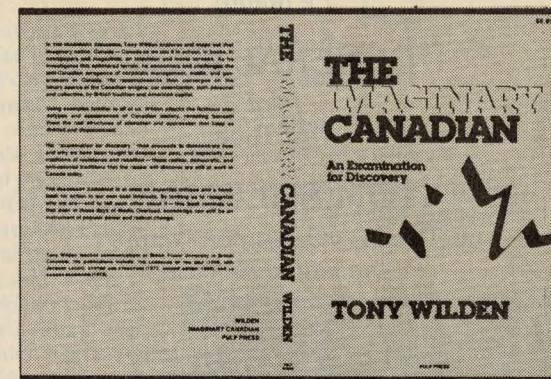


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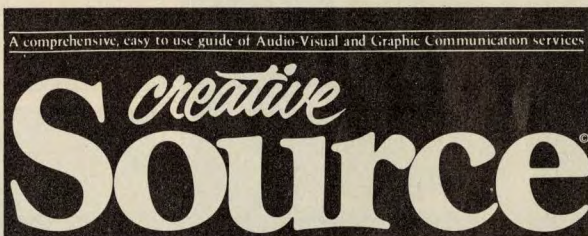
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swans drifting down the river...of course Riley wouldn't but Nyman does and by adding modality to hotel orchestra music of yesteryear he does make you feel like a senior citizen. Of course it would be possible to experiment by mixing these two sides together to see if the texts were lifted out of their morosity. Nyman does have humour. This aside, I can only say that "Masterwork" is not assisted by this publication.

In short these three new publications display both the advantages and disadvantages of publishing performance

works. The side effects of not being able to de-scramble some works from a cassette and a few sparse cover notes can be felt. While it would in some senses 'destroy' the audio publication by having extensive printed material accompanying the tapes in some cases I can see no other constructive or instructive alternative. *Audio Arts* should be supported in its commitment to Audio Publishing but also there could be benefits arising from less editorial conservatism. For myself, though interested in performance, I would probably only play the Nyman Band and Hugh Davies-David Toop sides and leave the rest at peace. ■

## FILM

### Being Where?

#### BEING THERE

Directed by Hal Ashby, story and script by Jerzy Kosinski, starring Peter Sellers, Shirley MacLaine, Melvyn Douglas.

reviewed by Jody Berland

This movie is a good example of what happens when Hollywood employs the talent of a disillusioned East European anarcho-romantic to provide a satirical rendition of American media politics. And why? Its romanticism is combined with fierce anti-authoritarian sentiment whose most flourishing narrative gestures demonstrate a deep attachment to protecting the individual as an endangered species. This is also the basis for most liberal and popular antipathy to the mass media. It's not very political. Also, the script has a propensity for grotesque characterization and a kind of super-real but unclear zeal for turning everything into allegory, which as "style" proclaims the work as "art" — that is, *not* mass media. As Hollywood celebrates its own intelligence, so may its audience.

My interest in *Being There* began with a report whose enthusiastic synopsis of the movie was typical of the current popular response to the film. The story, I was told, involves the adventures of a man whose only contact with society in his first fifty years is through TV and gardening. Through some accident, this human specimen is thrown into the world of American politics and high society: his phony utterances of profound wisdom win, among other things, the deep confidence of the U.S. president. As a sort of cultural fable this outline titillates interest because it promises, at the very least, a farcical attack on American

Jody Berland, Toronto, is currently writing about popular culture, art criticism and music. She is a former editor of *Mayday*.

culture and its mass submission to TV mentality (but what is that?). And who better than Peter Sellers to carry the anti-hero foibles of Hollywood's beloved "little man", lost in dreams and confusion, to new heights of cultural satire? The fact that the story is written by Jerzy Kosinski, a Polish-American writer, promises added sophistication: these European intellectual types, as we all know, don't fool around when it comes to debunking American culture.

Susceptible viewers will find their disdain for TV delightfully confirmed with a brilliant video/film technique whereby colour TV acquires grandiloquently appalling cinematic qualities, without too much analysis of what appears; and will discover that the reality of American government politics is even



Peter Sellers as Chance the gardener-turned-Presidential-advisor. Playing Hollywood's beloved "little man".

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more ludicrous than public rhetoric suggests; if everyone is stupid, including our (their) leaders, why bother with politics. The overexposure of metaphor also encourages a more philosophical response for people looking for morals. These viewers can conclude, with the movie, that the ultimate failure of American culture is to be found in the atrophy of individual development in such a civilization. In some vague way the mass media is held responsible.

This philosophical conclusion, to be sure, is embedded in the more 'metaphorical' aspects of the movie, and assures those who want to interpret their meaning that its more bizarre moments indeed have a deeper meaning, mainly psychological, but definitely socially significant. This can be used to explain the total self-humiliation of the millionaire's wife, as she attempts to win the hero's affections, for instance. TV is stronger than sex in this story. The 'failure of culture' motif, with its defence against the stunting of the individual, reminds me of a recent conference in New York of liberal academics and writers who gathered to discuss the "failure of American civilization" along similar lines. Hollywood is always in touch with waves of attitudes, as this and other current movies demonstrate. For this reason it's worth taking a closer look.

The basic conception of *Being There* is ingenuous. A man grows to a mature age, if not to maturity - the metaphor is at work already - confined to a house with two other inhabitants, an old man and a black maid, a yard, two pastimes, tending the garden and watching TV. As Chance's day begins, so does the movie: with dawn breaking, the TV in his bedroom (there's one in every room of the house) pierces the idyllic atmosphere with its aggressive emission of movement, colours and sound. We soon discover that Chance never watches the same program for more than, say, 20 seconds. We begin to wonder about arrested development. He has a remote control gadget so that he can press a button, thrusting his weapon towards the screen, and instantly change the action. He does this incessantly, arbitrarily, hypnotically. The only features on the screen which visibly attract his attention involve imitable gestures: yoga lessons and politicians shaking hands are his favorites. He likes to imitate them, briefly. He prefers this to any social interaction. When the black maid comes to inform him that the old man who has supported him from childhood has just died, he has trouble averting his eyes from the screen.

The device of filming televised incidents has some uncanny effects in



Is Chance stupid because he watches tv, or does he watch tv because he's stupid?

these early scenes. The figures, larger than life, coloured and patterned, moving ghost-like in nervous patterns across the unreal screen, exaggerate what for Chance is simply reality: the spectacle of performance which no longer even pretends to imitate anything other than its own conventions. It isn't up to TV to imitate life, apparently, but the reverse. When Chance gets tired of watching, he goes into his garden. The music here is exactly appropriate: stiff, popular, predictable, it's conspicuously expressionless. Moving from one tranquillizing activity to another, in his slow and deliberate gait, Chance brings (almost) alive the obvious metaphor: from one cultivation of vegetables to another. With TV he is completely passive, and his favorite sentence is the *leitmotif* of the movie: "I like to watch."

In the garden, however, observation combines with activity to produce



flowers and trees. The cultivation of vegetables also produces his famous oracular wisdom. Chased out by vulturous young lawyers, Chance leaves the house of the dead man and stumbles his way through a series of First Encounters: with a young black gang, a black woman who won't make his lunch for him, a video monitor whose image of him doesn't change when he presses his button, a car which backs into him and then whisks him off into the shelter of a millionaire's mansion. The disillusioned and dying millionaire makes speeches over dinner about the oppression and misunderstanding suffered by American businessmen (this is a brilliant scene) and Chance talks about what he knows from the garden: seasons, cycles of birth, growth and death. This is received as a wonderfully natural expression of natural philosophy which can help save these mistreated businessmen from their sufferings. God has come from the garden, apparently, to reassure the world that its progress is not a problem because cycles are the basis for movement and universal truth. Kosinski has a chance to make a good Eastern European joke here - against the theology of naturalists and mystics, and against the materialist myopia of "progressive" America. They both look ridiculous. Chance's achievement, of course, is that he brings them together - he brings the garden to TV, and everyone applauds. Since he sounds profound and says nothing while promising everything he is rapturously received by the millionaire - and the millionaire's younger wife (Shirley MacLaine), who melodramatically attempts to engage his affections - and subsequently by politicians, media gurus and even, with trepidation, by the president. This proves that he, Chance, is an idiot and that they are all fools, every one, except Kosinski, that is, and perhaps us if we are suitably perceptive.

Chance becomes a household mascot in the millionaire's house, a dignified noble savage in a costume of faded elegance with impeccably correct behaviour. No one suspects that he doesn't know anything more than what he says. Washington finds him fascinating, elusive, refreshing. He looks like a blessed messenger bringing some "new" wisdom to the Gordian knot of political crisis. He's a sensational hit on TV, talking about cycles and seasons and spring growth. Finally the millionaire is dead, the wife completely in love with this wooden model of manliness, and indeed the whole nation (that is, TV audience) is in love with this meditative Gardener.

But unlike those other characters, whose personalities have the same flat, super-real quality rendered by the filmed close-up of TV images, and unlike real

people, Chance has had neither the need nor the opportunity to bring to TV (either as spectator or as star) any social experience. It doesn't matter *what* he is watching, or, in reference to any of those other people, *why* - only that he is, and that it's a spectacle, and that it's technology. For Chance TV is a drug making an empty head busy. But while we may feel we are more intelligent viewers than he is, we don't really know what this "mass media" is actually doing.

Such a sensitively "artistic" approach to TV doesn't have to consider what needs from work or life bring "normal" people to their vicarious involvement with TV or other popular media. Also it doesn't expose any motives or interests in the production of mass media, such as the reproduction of the audience as consumers, both psychologically and economically, or the perpetuation of certain images of political and social reality. Chance's absorption is due simply to mental deformity, which existed before TV; he doesn't learn anything from any of his experiences, and from TV has only acquired gestures - not a way of thinking. For this reason the movie's attack is very spiritual. Everyone in it suffers from psychological damage, and what is left of human 'spirit' is easily duped.

Of course this is a comedy and I would hate to be charged with having no sense of humour for asking for something else. Movies like this create such problems. When I laughed in describing several scenes, someone wondered how I could then be writing such a critical review. No doubt they felt I had revealed some sort of ethical inconsistency. Comedies aren't supposed to be intellectually serious, at least in the American tradition, to which one ought to be loyal when sitting in pubs. Also, the vulnerability of the anti-hero, whose Christ-like simplicity suggests unconscious wisdom and deep perceptiveness to his gullible friends, might be enough for some to explain the movie's hovering between romantic ideas about Culture and ironic deflations of such sentiments. That's the symbiosis of Hollywood and European estrangement. Satiric attacks on TV and American Civilization are rather captivating if you are in a more relaxed mood. The only critical comment I've heard of the movie is that it's too long. But this is because the sharp taste of satire is tiresomely diffused into an overdose of exposed illusions.

Since the writer's intelligence offers only the most general and euphemistic approach to TV as a psychological evil and to its viewers as psychological deformities, even the most poignant scenes are weakened. The black maid shows up again in the lobby of a run-down hotel with a group of run-down blacks watching the evening TV. Who



The only 'critical' comment - "You see what it means to be white in this country."

should appear on the screen but her former unresponsive ward, Chance, that clear case of arrested mental and emotional development, now presented as the newest economic pundit and presidential adviser. "You see what it means", she says, her face larger than life and her expression slightly terrible, "to be white in this country". It's the only 'critical' comment in the film, and is clearly intended to throw the whole charade into perspective. But the scene which immediately follows reiterates the weight of TV and the gullibility of anyone who takes it seriously. So it's not clear whether we can take her seriously or whether she's just another neurotic. Cut to the president, looking nervously melancholic, watching the same program with his wife in the White House. Later he can't sleep with her, worrying about this Gardener and his sudden power. You see? They are all at the mercy of the mysterious machinations of TV mentality and its products. They are defeated because they believe.

But are they like that because they watch too much TV? Or because the American personality is hopelessly unsophisticated? Is Chance stupid because he watches TV, or does he watch TV because he's stupid? And what are all these viewers learning from TV? Is it more accurate than we think? Is all the world a technological stage, and Kosinski the only enlightened eye? We are invited to accept this view, and to share in his sardonic expose of unmitigated stupidity.

Chance may be stupid, but it isn't chance, so to speak, that leads to his inability to distinguish between the technological spectacle and what he encounters when he steps into the streets of the city. It all looks unreal. Except that now when he presses his remote control button, nothing changes. Kosinski's

America is full of idiots: the press, the ruling class, the president, his advisors, their women; in the spirit of comedy we can just laugh knowingly at all their pretensions. They all fall for it, but as more intelligent individuals we can know better. But what do we know better, exactly? Apparently it doesn't really matter.

The story ends with a plan brewing at the millionaire's funeral to nominate Chance for president. He's too busy looking at trees to know about it. He leaves the president's boring eulogy and, his happy unconsciousness undisturbed, begins to walk across the lake. His noble disinterest brings tears to the eyes of the mourners. So much for trying to understand American politics. But wait - this is a comedy. During the credits we return to an earlier scene, omitted from the movie, in which Sellers, lying on the millionaire's private hospital bed, is heroically trying to repeat a line which quotes from the black youth in the street. He can't do it, but dissolves in laughs between his deadpan intonations. We, too, are only watching a scene represented by actors, a spectacle, in case we forgot. But as intelligent artists they, Ashby and Kosinski, are pointing it out. The humour, the individuality of Sellers, erupts out of the blank prose of the automaton. If TV is a drag, there is an antidote. You too, can be more enlightened by watching serious and artistically ambitious Hollywood movies, like *Apocalypse Now* or like *Being There*. Hollywood's new strategies for social commentary serve the emotional tenor of 1980 cynicism very well. A TV producer informs Chance before his talk show interview that he is about to be watched by some astronomical number of viewers, hundreds of thousands, more than he can imagine. "Why?" Chance asks. The producer laughs sardonically and doesn't answer. Neither does the movie. ■



## Charge It On the Eaton's Account

**UP FROM THE BARGAIN BASEMENT**  
Production: Indignant Eye Productions, 1979.  
Glen Richards, Leuten Rojas. Direction: Glen Richards, Jacqueline Levitin. Editing: Jacqueline Levitin, Claude Lacombe, Glen Richards. Cinematography: Peggy Nash. 30 minutes, colour, 16mm. Distributed by DEC Films.

reviewed by Ardis Harriman

*Up From the Bargain Basement* is a film about the multi-million dollar Eaton's empire and how its paternalistic

approach to its employees has kept it union free for its entire existence.

The film begins with a brief and humorous history of the Canadian economy and Eaton's role in it and then focuses on Eaton's specifically to show how service industry workers (such as in food chains, restaurant chains, etc.) are exploited to the fullest; these workers, it states, form the largest group of unorganized workers today. It then goes on to give a brief history of the Company

beginning with the day when Father Timothy Eaton opened his first store on Queen Street and showed how his management and marketing methods were so successful in building the company: saturation advertising, and the hiring of low paid workers, the introduction of the catalogue designed to reach farms and remote communities to create a desire for necessary and unnecessary items. The Eaton family then began to assume the role of Canada's first family: they hobnobbed with royalty and even outfitted a division in the First World War and yes, the generous Lady Eaton (they just couldn't

### Up From The Bargain Basement A statement from the Film League

What began for Film League, a collective production group in Toronto, as a "modest proposal" grew into a two year production.

All seven of us had worked on each others films, but we had never produced collectively. The "modest proposal" was to make a five minute short on the then new Eaton's consumer palace in downtown Toronto, emphasising its surreal character derived from its central inspiration - profit. We were to teach each other as well in a series of workshops, camera, sound etc. and find out how we would work together as a group. The five minute film would then become our model with which we could approach potential co-producers who needed films. It was also hoped we could use it to raise money.

The modest proposal nurtured on gallons of coffee, dialectical thinking and a large dose of optimism, became more and more an immodest proposal. It was generally felt that no film should be shot without some conscious effort to make it as useful as possible. That got us from Eaton's into a discussion about so called "white collar workers" and the campaign to organize the bank workers. We were well on our way to making *Up From The Bargain Basement*.

We each agreed to put \$200 in the pot to kick off with. With some free footage and a member's Ariflex BL we were off. We paid a friend to do some research at the business library. As we all worked full time we needed the boost to get us off the ground. The research was very hard for us to apply to a film, 200 file cards with snippets of this and that. Although we understood it — we couldn't give it any life.

We divided up research we could do ourselves. Historical, current, Canadian political economy, unions, etc. and started our own elaborate card file system, with colour codes and numbers. We rediscovered an article by Mark Starowitz from *Last Post* which seemed to contain most of the 'known' information on Eatons in an easily digestible format. Another gem which somebody picked up at a second hand bookstore was Lady Eaton's *Memory's Wall*.

At that point there was fierce discussion about what kind of film we should make. One position was that we should make a traditional talking heads, narrator as voice of god, documentary. Others were for more of an experimental approach. In line with our ideas to demystify filmmaking and to touch base with the ideas of Brecht, Zigi Vertov and some original cultural dialecticians - we opted for narration. These ideas were not only in line with the use of film as an active intervention in a process (unlike the passive consumption of TV images), but also with our low budget that demanded very tight script control.

Finally we had two basic outlines, with a couple of spare ideas floating freely around them. We wrote these outlines on long sheets of paper, lay them on the floor side by side, and discussed how Bert Brecht would have done it. We lay out the appropriate cards next to the appropriate sections, added a cup of maple syrup and amalgamated the ideas. This particular session was one of the more gratifying — lots of yelling and jumping up and down, the very essence of collective consensus. Two of us then went off to tackle the writing. Concurrent to that we also started to interview on tape the people we wanted to use in the film as the "documentary" side. From transcripts of these interviews we picked various stories and ideas which we wanted to use and that would substantiate our thesis and minimize the shooting ratio. We then worked these texts into the script, along with text from *Memory's Wall* and from the 1930's "Stephens' Royal Commission on Price Spreads". At that time the ending was still hazy and only had a broad outline. Our narration was also in the form of a broad analysis.

At each stage the script was brought before the group, analysed, questioned and suggestions for improvements made. The script was also passed around amongst a variety of contacts and their suggestions taken into consideration.

We began filming. We took the text of the first interviewee, gave it to him to re-write and memorize. We were looking to him for the same qualities of presentation that we required of the actors. Not reality as in the 'normal' interview, but as Brecht would say "the essence of reality" thus everyone became an actor.

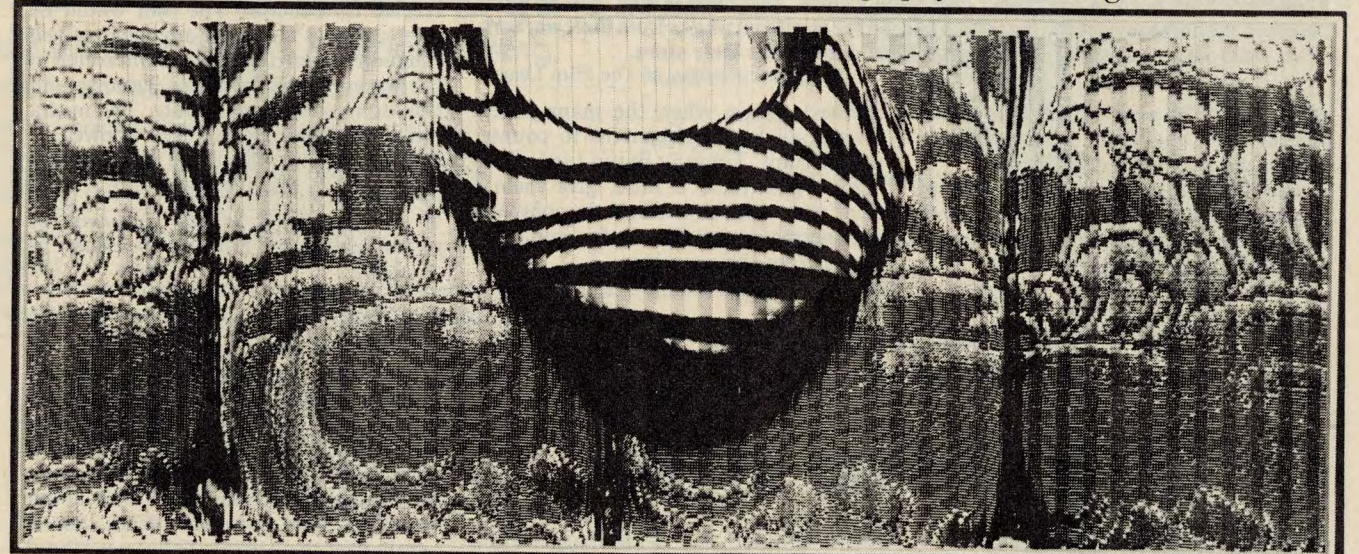
Our holidays that summer were spent filming and within two weeks the bulk of the live material was shot. On the set we established a clear definition of function — Peggy was the cinematographer, Claude did sound etc. and although there were some minor and major altercations, we succeeded in carrying it through.

The next stages were begun simultaneously. Archival footage was researched at the NFB in Montreal, two of us took an animation course at Ryerson, discussion with the last interviewee took place. Although the text of the last interview is some of the shakiest, our final analysis was developed through discussion with Linda, a bank worker, about the nature of unions, especially in relation to women and what kind of unions would be best, i.e. politically and socially engaged, and democratically controlled.

Film League

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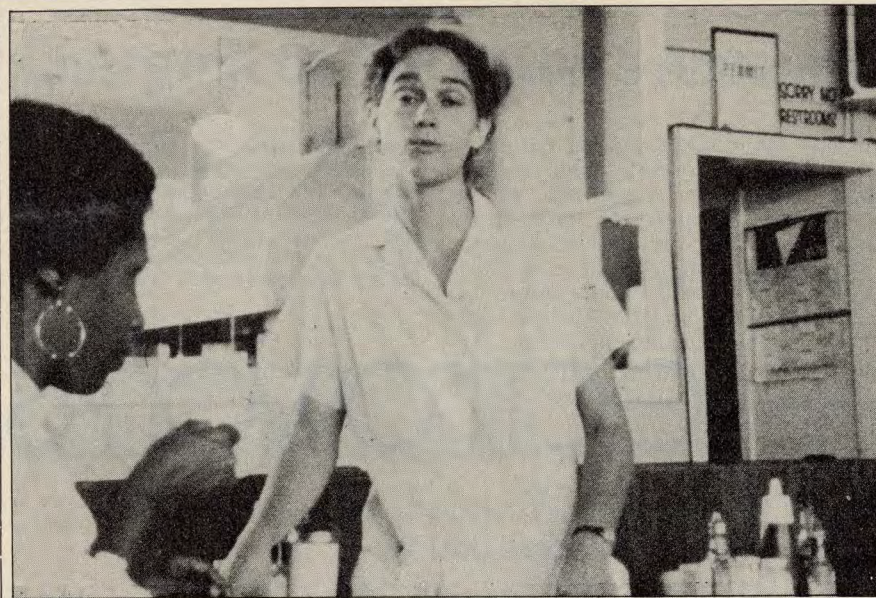
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Timothy Eaton used to say "Don't give them a raise, give them a title" and with this method the company got the maximum benefit for minimum wages from their workers. The film looks at Canada's aristocratic 'first' family and their store.

photo: courtesy of The Film League

refuse the title) even opened her home (Eaton Hall) to refugee British children during the Second World War.

The first union organizing attempt began in the summer of 1947 and by 1949 about 4,000 members were signed up but certification was ultimately lost by a

narrow margin when the management offered all kinds of benefits to counter this attempt. Timothy Eaton used to say "Don't give them a raise, give them a title" and with this method the company got the maximum benefit for minimum wages from their workers.

The film is refreshing, witty and engrossing because of the variety of techniques it uses to get its point across; rather than a dry lecture, declamatory slogans or long, boring interviews, it uses animation, drama, and on-camera interviews: the history sections are shot in sepia and include documentary (archival) footage as well as dramatized episodes to give us a picture of how the company grew and began to dominate with a marvellous actress (Gloria Sheard) playing the part of Lady Eaton. It uses animation for the modern history of the company and to explain how the empire works and what its role is in the economy as a whole and then on-camera interviews and comments with people who have worked at Eaton's as well as other service industries.

Eaton's remains unorganized today; the catalogue has been discontinued and up to 9,000 workers were laid off and then some replaced by part-timers who receive no benefits. The film would be very useful as a tool for anyone involved in union organizing, anyone interested in the history of the Canadian economy and this domineering monopoly. The media has traditionally never been allowed to criticize Eaton's; this is the first film that finally does - and it's about time.

Ardis Harriman is the Information Officer at the AV Library, University of Toronto.

## PERFORMANCE

# The Archeology of Now

**MUSIC FROM THE NEW WILDERNESS**  
A Festival held in Vancouver, March 14-22, 1980, the Western Front.  
reviewed by Hank Bull

Festivals, festivals, festivals. And not just festivals but trade fairs, political summits, scientific synods and international sports meets. Never in world history have there been so many festivals as there are right now. Just imagine all the actors, tourists, curators and tuba players milling about in airports, all off to festivals, good ones hopefully. At best, festivals are conspiracies, filling the whole town with fresh revelations and then dispersing participants back into the world, revolutionized by the experience, address books doubled in size.

If they really were all they're made out to be, festivals might be seen as the emerging form of a new world govern-

ment. Granted this is an exaggeration, but the festival, *Music from the New Wilderness*, did have its moments.

To begin with, what place could be more "new wilderness" than Vancouver, a city where, on a Sunday drive, you may come quite literally to the end of the road. The steep forest takes over where the city abruptly stops. There you may sit, fifteen minutes from downtown, and watch the seemingly endless supply of cars turning around at the end of civilization.

The term, New Wilderness, was introduced by Jerome Rothenburg, the poet and translator whose groundbreaking anthologies, *Technicians of the Sacred: A Range of Poetries from Africa, America, Asia & Oceania* and *Shaking the Pumpkin: Traditional Poetry from Indian North America*, have done much to define the many similarities between contemporary intermedia and that of tribal peoples. "Forms are often open.

Causality is often set aside. The poet (who may also be dancer, singer, magician, whatever the event demands of him) masters a series of techniques that can fuse the most seemingly contradictory propositions." (Rothenburg, 1968.) Contradictory propositions: how about primitive and civilized? What has a synthesizer to do with a Toltec nose flute? Is the New Wilderness some mythic locus where the post-apocalyptic meets the prehistoric, or where western aesthetics meet those of the Third World? If so, on whose



photo: Mary Ready

David Mahler's twists between language and music worked like spells.

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**Timothy Eaton used to see method the company got t The film looks at Canada**

refuse the title) even ope (Eaton Hall) to refugee E during the Second World The first union orgar began in the summer of 19 about 4,000 members wer certification was ultimat

**The A**  
**MUSIC FROM THE NEW WILD A Festival held in Vancouver 1980, the Western Front. reviewed by Hank Bull**

**F**estivals, festivals, fest just festivals but trade summits, scientific sympos and international sports meets. Never in world history have there been so many festivals as there are right now. Just imagine all the actors, tourists, curators and tuba players milling about in airports, all off to festivals, good ones hopefully. At best, festivals are conspiracies, filling the whole town with fresh revelations and then dispersing participants back into the world, revolutionized by the experience, address books doubled in size. If they really were all they're made out to be, festivals might be seen as the emerging form of a new world govern- *Hank Bull is a contributing editor of FUSE. He is a musician and performance artist living in Vancouver.*

road. The steep forest takes over where the city abruptly stops. There you may sit, fifteen minutes from downtown, and watch the seemingly endless supply of cars turning around at the end of civilization. **T**he term, New Wilderness, was introduced by Jerome Rothenburg, the poet and translator whose groundbreaking anthologies, *Technicians of the Sacred: A Range of Poetries from Africa, America, Asia & Oceania* and *Shaking the Pumpkin: Traditional Poetry from Indian North America*, have done much to define the many similarities between contemporary intermedia and that of tribal peoples. "Forms are often open.

The film is refreshing, witty and engrossing because of the variety of techniques it uses to get its point across; rather than a dry lecture, declamatory slogans or long, boring interviews, it uses animation, drama, and on-camera interviews: the history sections are shot in sepia and include documentary (archival) footage as well as dramatized episodes to give us a picture of how the company grew and began to dominate with a marvellous actress (Gloria Sheard) playing the part of Lady Eaton. It uses animation for the modern history of the company and to explain how the empire works and what its role is in the economy as a whole and then on-camera interviews and comments with people who have worked at Eaton's as well as other service industries. Eaton's remains unrecognized today

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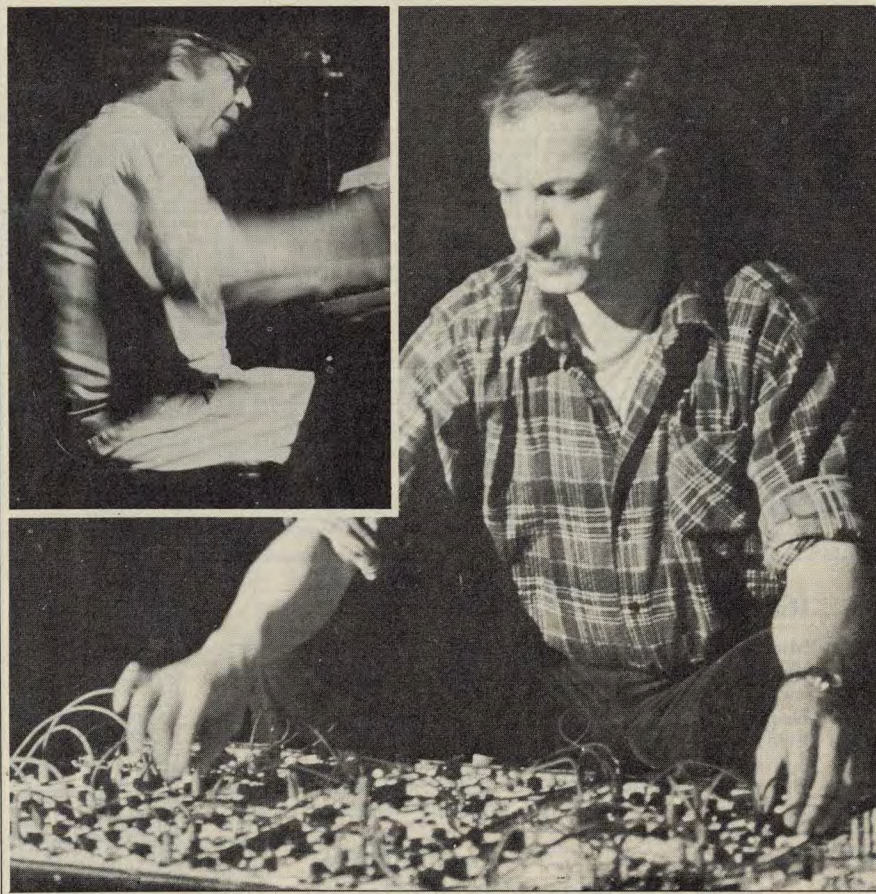
**David Mahler's twists between language and music worked like spells.**

*Photo: Mary Ready*

*Photo: Mary Ready*

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Al Neil (above left) improvising with Martin Bartlett who played on "the Black Box", his hand-built synthesizer. (below) Antonio Zepeda with his Mexican instruments.

terms do they meet? Is this New Wilderness perhaps just a slogan leftover from the sixties like "global village," a concept that advertises world communication while in actual fact reinforcing the international distribution of American lp's, tv's and oppression? Or can one dig deeper beneath the term to a level of understanding that predates western ideologies altogether?

Rothenburg performed to a full house - mostly poetry fans who were not seen again during the week. He looks like a beaver. The Seneca Indians with whom he has lived call him Beaver and he celebrates this and his New York Polish Jewishness with good humoured chanting and shaking the rattle. He read. He sang along with a four-track tape of his voice - five Jerome Rothenburgs at once. He talked of how the Navajo storyteller includes certain carefully controlled but abstract vocal sounds in his repetitive tale, and towards the end the audience spontaneously joined him on the refrain: *All I wantsssss A good five cent seeeeeeegar.*

Downstairs, in the gallery, there was throughout the week a comfortable acoustic environment designed by Hildegard Westerkamp. Her impeccably recorded sounds of the woods and waters around Vancouver were illustrated with



poems by Norbert Ruebsaat, which were reproduced both on tape and on the wall. The combination was a multi-layered series of images about life in these mountains - "Cordillera." The sounds were quite complete but the visuals were undeveloped and seemed to be an afterthought. The piece as a whole was caught between exhibition and performance.

Confronted by tape played back in a gallery, I always wonder, unless it's a loop, who's going to rewind it, where is it,

how long will it last? (One artist, who will go unnamed, refused the invitation to play on a double bill during the festival because he would have been worried about how long to play and when to stop. He felt that in the New Wilderness there could be no such framing of time). Much has been made of tape, however, as a time machine, and with good reason. It helps us to realize such concepts as déjà vu and the disembodied voice. It's also a musical instrument. You can play it just like a trumpet or a talking drum - they may all be used to charm, alarm and even knock down walls. These notions lost the support of the scientific community some centuries ago but continue to function in tribal cultures. Tape can help us to recover some of this "lost" knowledge.

One such explorer is Don Buchla, called the inventor of the synthesizer. On the left of the stage hangs a large banner announcing works by John Cage, Pierre Boulez, David Rosenboom and Buchla - an actual programme! Will this be a genuine concert in the grand tradition? Centre stage we see a couple of synthesizers bursting out of their metal suitcases and stage right a table, covered in smouldering test-tubes. Buchla presents himself, dressed in a lab coat, and begins to concoct in the manner of the new alchemist. Suddenly a bang, a flash of flame jets across the room and the banner falls, revealing none other than Amy Radunskaya and a bodyless electric cello. The music begins, a series of trios, duets and solos for cello, synthesizers and tape. There are some strong moments but also a couple of bloopers. Chance enters. The Balinese say, "the music enters," but only after you have been playing for a while. At that point it gels, there is communication, meaning and intensity. Don and Amy reached that point but too soon after they came to the end of their programme and the music was over. I wanted more. The programme had been as much of a distraction as the mistakes within it. Doubtless there was food for thought in the comparison between Boulez and Cage but what I wanted, I confess, was some improvisation. Improvise is Latin for unforeseen. Improvisation gives chance a bigger part to play, like Thelonius Monk said, "the wrong notes for the right reasons." Strange that both Monk and Cage were interested in chance but not in each other. Chance is close to coincidence is close to magic. Don Buchla's impersonation of the musician as mad scientist was a portentous image. He and Amy Radunskaya certainly know how to play.

For the next two days the performance salon was lit by candle light as Antonio Zepeda laid out and played his collection of Mexican musical instruments. Some were hundreds of

years old and some are still being made and used today. Zepeda is a very graceful man with a large colourful wardrobe. His was a delightful presence throughout the week of the festival. The workshop in which he demonstrated the instruments, impressed me more than the concert, mostly because he described how each instrument is used in its original culture ... This one is for communicating with the land of the dead. This one is to be played for the birth of a child. This one cures a headache: on a small clay flute the shape of a stone he blows two simultaneous piercing notes that make everyone's ears twitch and hair stand on end ... Several times during the evening sighs of amazement rippled through the people as they felt physical effects. These were no musical instruments. These were machines, designed to achieve specific ends. Nothing to do with music for pleasure, in a sense not music at all but more like a Muezzin ("that's not music," says Khomeini) or sonar, or Nikola Tesla's little audio vibrator which is capable of knocking down brick buildings. This, surely, is what is meant by "technology of the sacred." This is what a synthesizer has to do with a Toltec nose flute.

So there we were, halfway through the festival and smack dab in the middle of the New Wilderness. It is said that there are certain musicians who can cause fire and rain, and others who know the language of the birds. When he left Vancouver, Antonio Zepeda was on his way to Yucatan to visit a man who can look at the sea and read the waves.

These festival events that emanated from tribal, historical, nostalgia sources drew larger crowds than those perceived as avant garde. One detractor was heard to declare that certain areas of the New Wilderness appeared to be desert, where the ideas were so good that the actual sounds of the music didn't matter. And out of this desert rides the midnight cowboy of minimalism, Ned Sublette, one whose search for means and methods makes no obvious reference to any deep past at all. No double talk, no mumbo jumbo, just real American expression, raised in New Mexico and razed in New York. In a clear nasal voice he wailed chorus after verse of "The Days of '49" while a super 8 movie taken from the front window of a hurtling subway crawled by frame by frame. New wilderness? More like new wasteland, the asphalt jungle as they say.

Sublette and David Mahler sang alternating sets on that night and between them they really got it going. Definitely "the music entered." Mahler gave us some beguiling word pieces,

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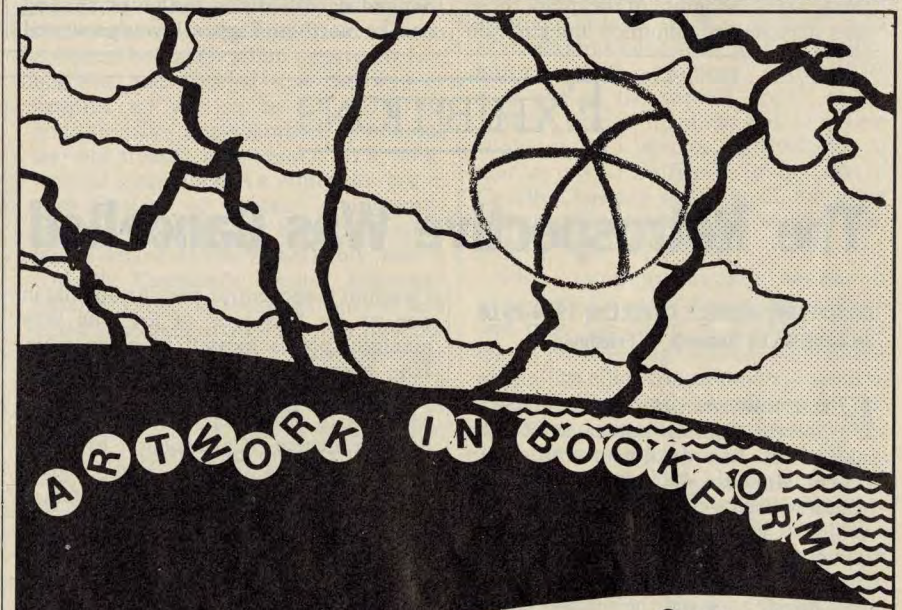
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twists between language and music that worked like spells. He finished the evening with a simple and masterful piano solo called, "Only Music Can Save Me Now."

Martin Bartlett, who, with Donna Zapf, skipped the festival, appeared the following night in two contexts: first with the Canadian Shadow Players (a group which includes this writer) and then with the legendary Al Neil.

If anyone personifies the New Wilderness it is Al Neil, the crazy/wise ex-bopper whose unpredictable emanations from his beach shack, perched on the edge of city and forest, have established him for years as the Milarepa of Vancouver music. Once was a time when no presentation of poetry or new music would be quite complete without the figure of Al Neil stomping and crooning a running commentary to the performance. And if there was a piano handy he'd sit in 'til carried out. Such is the sheer unbridled energy of this beat dude as he plays, laughs, sings, mutters and interrupts himself to remind us of the Hopi planting their corn in the desert or Olson gone fishing for Kukulkan that if, as he talks, he should stumble over a syllable, his voice trips off sometimes for minutes into the outer space of vocal sound, re-entering often far away in the narrative landscape. In him the New Wilderness is certainly that savage terra incognita of the mind, those vast stretches of untamed imagination



Kwakiutl group of Indian songmakers.

beyond ideology that few have the courage to enter, for fear of being lost in space forever. Over slides by Carole Itter of the Phoenix rising from flaming pages of text, Al freely improvised with Al Mattes playing electric bass and Martin Bartlett on his hand built synthesizer, "the Black Box." It was one of those nights when the audience doesn't leave at the end but stays to talk.

By now those who have been around all week are growing ears for ESP and don't need much sleep. The largest crowd yet is bursting the room in anticipation of the West Coast Indian Songmakers. After a week of electronics and antique drums, this Kwakiutl group stretched a board between two chairs and banged it with sticks, the music shining on like Northern Lights. It was presented

amid great respect and solemnity, but also with mirth, and introduced by Chief Jimmy Sewid, who stressed that for his people the music is not an entertainment but a sacred power. These singers and dancers proved that their art is still very much alive. While we wonder what this new wilderness is all about, the old wilderness is still there, as powerful as ever. Amazing. They came together from Alert Bay, Kingcome Village and Mamalilaculla, all ages up to ninety-six. There was an incredible bird whose long beak opened sideways like two doors, framing another mask hidden within.

What one discovers in the new wilderness is simply that there are many other approaches to making music than those we have inherited from Europe, those traditions we think we must preserve by forcing children to learn them by rote, to the point that they are terrified to play without sheet music between them and their instrument.

The consuming patrons of the west have apprehended music as an object created for their pleasure. The real musicians knew differently. Before them were the guilds, the griots and the magicians. After them, the bands, collectives and improvisers are rediscovering that ancient POWER music. Not the power politic, but charismatic personal healing power. Utopias (and often festivals) are based on the hope that this sacred power and the political one might come together. It rarely happens.

look forward to his next venture. At that critical moment when the original impact had vanished — but disgust had not yet emerged — one could imagine that the evanescent boredom was a trough between two peaks. The one peak, Cavellini's past; the other, a new and fresh suite of ideas yet to emerge. But no new ideas were about to emerge.

For a brief moment, it seemed possible that Cavellini had a reasonable future, if not quite the **Before Cavellini artists made postage stamps. "Fluxstamps" by Bob Watts (1965).**



## EXHIBITIONS

### The Retrospective Was Cancelled

GUGLIELMO ACHILLE CAVELLINI 1914-2014  
an analysis by Kenneth S. Friedman

From Italy comes an urgent appeal to prevent nuclear holocaust for the sake of art. In a document entitled *An Urgent Appeal of Utmost Importance* Italian collector-turned-artist Guglielmo Achille Cavellini writes, "I urgently appeal to all the peoples of the Earth and implore them to do everything within their power to avoid the outbreak of an absurd and catastrophic nuclear war and thus to foster the preservation of the works of art that I have created: these works constitute a heritage to be passed on to posterity for the benefit of all mankind and of universal history."

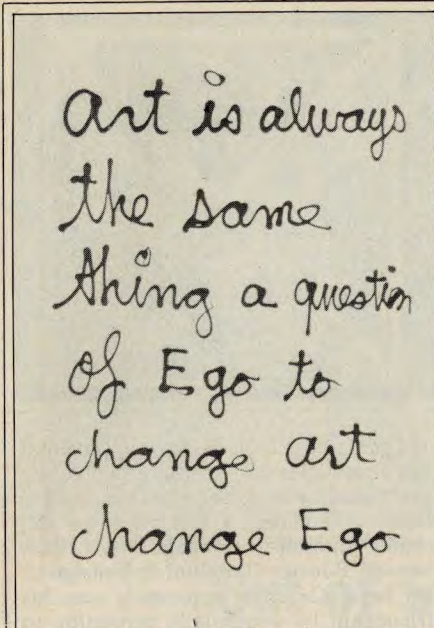
We have long known that there was some reason that we were opposed to a nuclear war, we just couldn't quite put our fingers on it until now.

Let one imagine, however, that G.A.

Cavellini is egocentric, please note that in one of his "histories of art", he very carefully places himself in perspective. His chronology reads, "Grafitti of Altamira / Egypt / Greece / Rome / Mosaics of Ravenna / Giotto / Piero della Francesca / Caravaggio / El Greco / Rembrandt / Goya / Van Gogh / Cezanne / Mondrian / Duchamp / Picasso / Pollock / Cavellini."

The works and catalogs of this artist are available to his admirers free of charge. (Simply write to G.A. Cavellini, 16 Via Bonomelli, 25100 Brescia, Italy.) In fact, he's happy to send them. He counts every delivery of one of his many books as a one-man show. And makes it all a part of his history of himself.

Cavellini's Self-Historicization-as-art is cute — to a degree. It was funny when he first did it. Very funny. It became a dim reminder of itself when he carried it forward, yet there remained a glimmer of its original impact. People could still



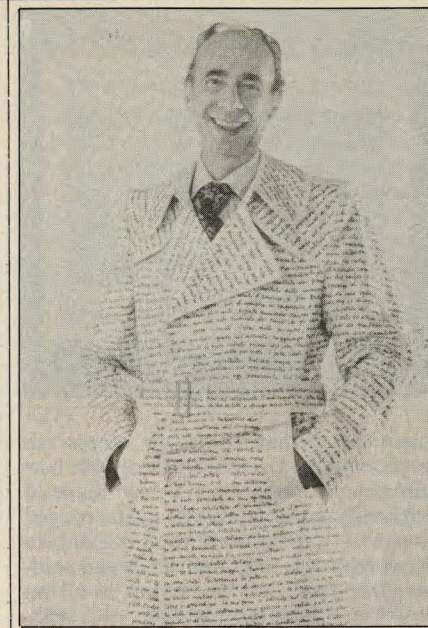
Ben Vautier's handwritten ego (left (1973) is often personally witty. Cavellini's autobiography-on-a-raincoat (right).

arrogance. No one can possibly mistake his artless egotism, so skilled in its apparent naivete, for the egotistical failed art which Cavellini pumps out. To be sure, Ben has produced self-promotional fliers and bulletins for years. But they've been friendly, low-keyed, witty and have dealt with issues and ideas about art. Cavellini's endless glossy productions deal with nothing but Cavellini.

Many artists today make much of their sense of self or their personalized history: Chris Burden, Mary Beth Edelson, Eleanor Antin, Jon Borofsky, Geoffrey Hendricks, Tommy Mew, Don Boyd, and dozens more in ways both interesting and provocative insert themselves into their own art. The difference is that they and their art point beyond themselves to issues of greater concern than their own desires or personalities. Cavellini is nothing more than his personality. He verges on an art world equivalence of a television talk show guest who is a celebrity known for nothing more than being known. The only difference between Cavellini and those guests is that no one really has the least curiosity about him. In Cavellini's case, we'd rather know less about him than we do.

Is Cavellini an educated insider? If we look beyond his own apparent self-definition, we find that it isn't so. His legendary collection does indeed contain the work of many important artists, collected before Cavellini apparently lost his wits and decided that the way to support art was to be art. Now, his collection lies in a shambles, ill-housed, terribly treated and abused to a point beyond imagining. An American critic, who prefers to remain anonymous, recounts the story of a visit to Cavellini which ended rather remarkably with a trip to Cavellini's musty, mildewed basement. On the journey from one end of the basement to the other, our traveller bumped into objects which he later discovered were works of art. When a dim light bulb was turned on, he discovered that the objects were not just works of art, but major works from De Chirico to De Kooning, stacked and strewn around the basement without thought. The critic looked in amazement at these treasures. As Cavellini flung canvases aside in his search for something "very important," the critic asked, "Are these real?" At that moment, Cavellini found what he was looking for, and stated abruptly, "Yes, of course, but they're inconsequential. Here's what I want to show you. This is important." And so saying, held out an object. This object was so remarkable that it honestly requires a paragraph of its own to describe it.

Those readers who attended Summer



Camp or who did time in Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts will remember the craft of burnt wood wherein one burns an image with a hot-tipped instrument into wood. How many "Last Suppers," "Mona Lisas," and Canadian or American flags have been proudly brought home as the result of that noble science?

The object Cavellini had been seeking (and in favor of which he tossed aside the likes of Warhol, Fontana, and Mathieu) was none other than a Cavellini burnt wood "Last Supper," Dated 1956, it is one of the earliest proofs of his artistry. Only if I had the skill of a Tom Wolfe could I portray the brilliance of that moment. Suffice it to say that if Cavellini has any genius at all, it is more as a stand-in for the Three Stooges than as an heir to Leonardo.

This incident hardly marks a connoisseur, an educated insider. And lest one raise the claim of Rauschenberg's erased De Kooning to justify the trashing of the Cavellini collection by Cavellini, recall De Kooning's permission for the act. Most artists have depredated either their own work, or as a mark of particular symbolism, a singular work as in the defacement of Guernica some years back. Few have exhibited the monstrous bad taste of Cavellini. Few can afford to do so. His great wealth gives him opportunity to become an aesthetic ortho-fascist. Only a small-town school board member banning books, a Stalin with his purges and revisions of the past, or a Cavellini could preside with equanimity over such abandonment and destruction of works.

Now let us observe Cavellini as an outsider. Is this man of wealth, the possessor of the fabled Cavellini collection, owner of several palaces and a





**Cavellini borrowed the idea of self-homage stamps (left) from expressionist stamp artist Ed Higgins, whose hand-painted reproductions (see right) are much more interesting visually.**



chain of Italian Safeway stores an outsider to the art world? Hardly. He is as sophisticated as a TV ad. Any image of outsiderly grace is as false as the rugged charm of the Marlboro Man. It is only in the corrupt vision of his friends and paid-for defenders that he seems at all an outsider. His past, his wealth — his sense of self-in-history belie any such possibility.

Let's look at Cavellini's final claim to fame, the quality of his productions. It's clear they cost a great deal. Fortunes are spent on the typesetting, printing and mailing of the endless volumes of a series which might well be entitled *Cavellini Salutes Cavellini*. Look closely at his books. The content is vapid. The design is as often bad as it is good. Only an occasional effort by a reasonable designer gives the work fine quality; more and more the recent books degenerate into repetitive, pretentious self-adulation. How tacky can one be? Evidently as tacky as the purse will permit.

Cavellini's books used to be interesting. His letters to the famous (an idea stolen, by the way, from the late Pope Paul I in his earlier days as the charming Albino Cardinal Luciani) were pleasant. His family album was charming as all family albums are charming — filled with mysterious, slightly archaic photographs. His little list of ten commandments was even charming, as jokes which contend against organized religion and codified truth are charming. But small charms borrowed on themes purchased elsewhere are apparently the limit of Cavellini's talents.

His swift descent into the purgatory of self-adultery, art which lies on a hard border between Onanism and Necrophilia, came soon thereafter. The book of Cavellini's friends saluting him was the first sign. Anyone who ever said anything good about Cavellini or nice to Cavellini was quoted — whether what they said made sense or not. A few reasonably alert people were thrown in with a world-wide network of schlock artists who do for correspondence art

what LeRoy Neiman does for Sports art and what Salvador Dali now does for anything whatsoever. These are Cavellini's legions. The book was trashy because of its uneven contents. The book, well-handled, could have been lovely.

Recall, for example, Robin Crozier's wonderful books, *Portraits* and *Self-Portraits*. They were autobiographical, they presented the artist in homage to himself and his friends, they presented the homage of the artists' friends in return, and they were a delight. Crozier edited and drew together a hundred strands of idea and information, giving them unified theme and visual emphasis. The format eclipsed Cavellini for beauty and interest while achieving print at a cost so far beneath Cavellini's investment in the "Everybody Salutes Cavellini" project that the imagination would be staggered by straightforward figures.

If Cavellini intends to pursue this course, he ought to do it well. The fact that he fails to do so hardly speaks well for the intelligence of his supporters, let alone the hard-core Cavellini faithful. To put it gently, by the time his last book was out, everyone in the art world had been on Cavellini's list ten times over. It's even become the subject of jokes. A standing skit now takes place between two friends of mine. One will visit the other, and in broad vaudevillian gesture, exclaim, "Guess what I got in the mail today?" The other will reply, "Six Cavellini books?" The answer will be, "No. Seven."

Alas, poor Cavellini. His faithful admire him, the stupid proclaim his participation in Inter Dada '80 as the proof of its excellence, the misguided plaster his damned *Cavellini 1914-2014* sticker all over the world, giving him claim to the title of the most polluting artist as well as the most widely seen. There is something dangerous here, dangerous beyond the aesthetic issues and dangerous beyond the actual misguided admiration of those few who still find Cavellini intriguing.

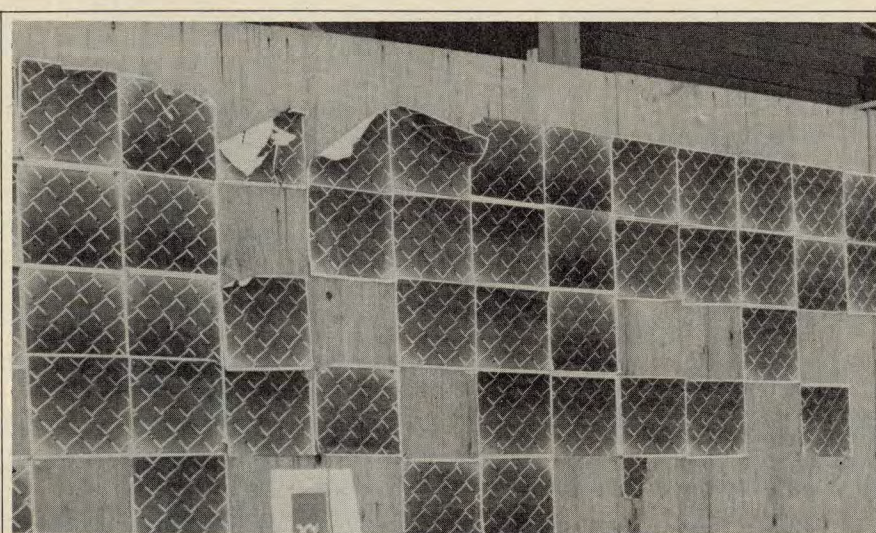
That is the fact that Cavellini's great wealth gives him the opportunity to become a one-man fascist state. The avalanche of material with which he can pollute the world may look for a brief moment as though it has substance. It has fooled even such respected publishers as *FlashArt's* Giancarlo Politi, persuading him to waste space on Cavellini. I'll admit that I was briefly fooled. The fact that he can buy what he wants permits him to continue to elicit the admiration of those who wish that they, too, could pollute the art world with as much trash as Cavellini

can generate. For some reason, Cavellini still commands the loyalty of two young gentlemen whose ideas he has stolen. Buster Cleveland, a nice guy who still thinks himself a Dadaist, now calls himself Booster Clevellini in homage to his hero. Cavellini apparently won his friendship by continually promising to do something for him. What Cleveland/Clevellini doesn't understand is that what Cavellini will do for him is to let him continue to make Cavellini "famous." Ed Higgins, a stamp artist whose idea Cavellini borrowed in order to make self-homage stamps much less interesting visually than Higgins' expressionist, hand-painted reproductions is similarly convinced that Cavellini is respected simply because he is well-known. I suspect it is because perhaps the art world could support Higgins better than it does. He sees in Cavellini the fulfillment of a longing for wealth and for the power to change the world which wealth can sometimes bring with it. Cavellini is a crude representative of the most basic psychic forces. Like the Nuremberg rallies, he appeals to those individuals who can be swayed not by art, nor the lack of it, but by the Fire-and-Ice aroma of spectacles which pluck the infantile heart-strings. Cavellini is perhaps as near as the art world can come to a 'prophet'. For those who dream of creating history, not through the force of their genius and their ability to sway the minds and hearts of other human beings, but for those who believe that money and crude force can sway all. Almost everyone else cherishes at least the illusion of taste.

Cavellini represents a danger, more by virtue of the power of the infantile myth than through any overt act of fascism. The roots are remarkably similar. If he has his way, Cavellini may succeed where Mussolini failed, not at making the trains run on time, but at obliterating those of us, who - like artistic Ethiopians - stand in the way of his dreams of conquest. ■

*Kenneth S. Friedman, critic and sociologist, is Executive Editor of National Arts Guide. He is also Editor of the new magazine, Art Express, in New York.*

photo: Paul Collins



Brian Groombridge's colour xeroxes of a Frost fence covered a temporary hoarding.

## Out of Site Works

### LOCATIONS

A show sponsored by the Mercer Union, Toronto  
May 15th to June 30th, 1980.

reviewed by Martha Fleming

"(Sculpture) sits in a particular place and speaks in a symbolical tongue about the meaning or use of that place."  
Rosalind Krauss *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*

We are drawn by osmosis to that which we don't understand, being motivated primarily by sensory information and the desire to synthesize and comprehend it. The opaque therefore has a vogue, and since location and site work in 'modern art' remains to some extent in the realm of the opaque, it is sometimes ill-applied because of this very attraction.

The *Locations* show, curated and executed by the Mercer Union (an artists organization) in downtown Toronto, indicates just how much site work is still teetering on the attraction/comprehension seesaw which equals vogue in the minds of many Toronto artists. Many of the artists whose work I saw in the *Locations* show seemed to be caught in the classic conceptualist dilemma of being more interested in the 'idea' than in its effectuation. Coupled with the temptation to lean on something not quite understood, *Locations* as a 'show' doesn't work.

The vitality of site work and its importance lies in all the necessary balances between place and intervention in place, between idea and evidence, between art and non-art. In *Locations*, these facts seem to be lost in the attractiveness of the concept of site work and the presumption of an inherent strength in the weight of a 'place'. The non-art audience, to whom the work should be a surprise that speaks

Martha Fleming is an associate editor of FUSE

about the meaning of that place, should not instantly recognize it as 'art'. It should be integral enough with its location that its only context is that location. If a piece sticks out, it is, colloquially, out-of-place. It will move from its location context to an art context. And location work should inform its random audience about the location, not about the art or the artist.

There are seventeen pieces altogether in the show, and I went looking for fourteen of them on opening day. Surprisingly, some had been destroyed or stolen; some were not yet up. I don't mean to say that permanence is a requirement of site work - in fact, one of the best pieces (Brian Groombridge) was effective in its evident transience.

Groombridge photographed a Frost fence with a sky blue background and ran off a large number of colour xeroxes of the photographs. He then papered a temporary hoarding with his temporary posters. He attended to the notion of the dispensability of both the posters and the hoarding, and to the fact that a hoarding hides something and a poster covers a hoarding. The posters attempted to mutate the function of the hoarding by postulating a non-existent visibility that a Frost fence would afford. It was witty in its brevity and its manageable scope.

Robin Peck's small piece was lifted from its sidewalk position at the busy intersection of York and Front Streets. Groombridge's piece works with impermanence, but is it responsible for Peck who is working in a specific context to allow that context to co-opt both himself and his audience by building and 'depositing' a piece so little associated with its context that it is stealable? Location work is by definition an inter-

vention, but when the location itself is intervened it ceases to function. Nowhere was I led to believe that Peck's piece was stolen 'on purpose'.

But to have to rely on secondary information such as a map or catalogue to find out what Peck's intentions were in this regard is slightly suspect. This brings up the contradiction in information about the *Locations* project; a problem central to comprehending the project's ultimate failure, regardless of the few good works which come under its umbrella.

On opening day a catalogue was a week off, but the map was available. The decision to print a map and a catalogue and the implicit intersection of the two kinds of information defeats the purpose of site work. A map with artists' names and dots on it turns an art audience's search into a treasure hunt — they know where to go but they don't know what to look for. To some extent, the catalogue renders the visits to the locations redundant, and the documentation and objectification of work whose sole purpose is to instill a physical sense of place seems defeatist to me, and co-opts the idea of place. Where the catalogue and the map come together to inform a specified audience is the point where the work itself is eliminated.

Lee Pacquette cut off any 'uninformed' audience and co-opted the possibilities of the *Locations* project by placing his piece in the backyard of the gallery, cloistered behind a number of fences. His piece has in common with many others in this show the fact that they can only be found if you are looking for them. If you are looking for them, then you must have a map or a catalogue, and that makes you the art audience. If nobody but gallery goers are going to see the work, why put the piece anywhere but in a gallery? But the treasure hunt cliché is not just the result of a lack of ideas on the part of the individual artists, but indicates a grave misunderstanding of the nature of location work on the part of the curators as evidenced by their decisions to print maps and catalogues.

Close to Pacquette in linear interpretation of site was Hans-Peter Marti's project. It was the most anti-locational of all, entitled "Duplication and Distribution of a Location". For the same reason that the catalogue is anti-locational in its attendance to the piece and not the context or the association between piece and context, Marti's photographic duplication is self-defeating. He photographed a view from a park bench which was later removed, and mailed the prints to a pre-determined group of people — again an art audience. Marti has decided already who the audience of his disappearing act will be. The location itself is in no way



addressed or challenged. Its objectification through its duplication is not enough to stretch the location-and-piece context even geographically.

Within the project there were a few good pieces, which are not enough to change my feeling about the project as a whole. Groombridge's is one of them; Peter Blendell's is another. I hope that their effect is not eliminated by the map and catalogue.

Located at the foot of Bathurst Street, one of the city's transportation intersections, Blendell has drawn a simple 'compass' reminiscent of a primitive navigational tool. From the bridge which overlooks his location the observer can see the railway tracks and switching yard, the Island Airport, The Gardiner Expressway, the Western Channel to the Harbour full of ships and the Bathurst Street viaduct. A square of sod the size of a paving stone was cut out on a slight embankment in clear sight of all these converging directionals. In the middle of the square was chalked an angled cross.

At the hub of all these modes of transportation which refer implicitly to other 'spots' and the inextricability of all 'spots' is Blendell's four spokes which also direct us to other 'spots'. Blendell's piece addressed the problem of location as it must be — a point in relation to, or in reference to, other locations. He says there are no centres, but only discourse around them.

On the whole, I was surprised not to see anything in *Locations* (with the exception of Blendell) which referred directly to the architecture of the city, or to the many points in the city which its grid pattern affords. Why did nobody take advantage of this, or the passage that streets like University Avenue have inherently, or the ribbon of pavement and ravine that stretches along the Don Valley Parkway? The pieces also ignored the blatant tensions which social boundaries in a city create.

In a city full of grids, cars, parks, harbours, an island and distinct neighbourhoods, why would any artist want to do location work in alleyways within walking distance of their homes, or worse — lay an Ariadne thread from the inside of the gallery to its own backyard? The elitism of addressing an art-only audience through hiding your work or sending it to specified people through the mail automatically precludes the effective social possibilities of location work. It points up a lack of thought about an extremely complex project.

My vote for location work of the future goes to Blendell and Groombridge, who don't feel they have to have an art audience to have an audience. I hope that in future they stay away from Mercer Union's enthusiastic obsession with catalogues and art trends. ■

## LETTERS

(continued from page 251)

their objections and suggestions, is nowhere mentioned by their champion. Harris must have been eager to get to press.

*Cibachrome* was announced by a two-sided poster, one surface a listing of works and artists, along with my own short statement, the other side, a description of the process, prepared by Ilford, a listing of travelling exhibitions, a listing of available publications, an announcement of the opening and room for address and postage. I describe it at length because I want the reader to be as advantaged as Harris: this is clearly all he saw of the show.

He therefore disbursts his bullets with care. First, he quotes: "Look, a show about a Process!" (I assume the capital P belongs to Harris unless the words appeared as a balloon above the photographer's head). Emotion must have been running high at the College else why such ironic alarm? What is photography if not a process or method of expression? Are all exhibitions using light-sensitive materials below curatorial par? Should film festivals be boycotted for procedural obsession?

Harris next takes aim on what he suspects to be a cosying-up to the Ilford Company: the CREDITED (my caps for EMPHASIS) use of their information on the hand-out. Harris returns to this again and again. "The NFB must be as happy as Ilford is for the advertising." This sentence in particular mystifies me. (We'll come to Harris' mystification later.) I guess we're happy. Is Ilford happy? How happy? If we are equally happy, is that wrong? I searched and searched for some unethical side to this factual report by Ilford. I had mentioned in the listings other experimentation and modification of Ilford's process: work by Richard Holden, Michael Schreier. I couldn't feel implicated in a multinational conspiracy.

Harris says: "What is interesting is that the artists do not transcend the commercial technology. As the poster clearly indicates, they are secondary to commercial interests." Harris' perspective places the exhibition, the actual assemblage of photographs, not only in a secondary position but far down a queue of politics, intrigue, unfounded assumption and sensationalism. Why doesn't he come right out and say it: There was no exhibition, only government propaganda to placate forty photographers and a powerful multinational concern. Such accusation is as plausible as this one of his: that photographers contributed to the *Cibachrome* show only for "money ... the possibility of having work seen in Ottawa (and hopefully further) and a prestigious addition

to their resume." Incidentally, there's a contradiction here. Harris has earlier stated that these works, "in sumptuous color", will later be used to brighten up "the drab offices of the civil service". Effective but untrue. His is the kind of narrow-minded commentary that I was referring to in my introduction, those "eight mystifying sentences". Harris takes sophomoric pleasure in trying, with the cunning employment of brackets, to interpret my words to his readers. Unfortunately, I meant what I said: the word "check" means to slow or stop, implying a stultifying effect (much like that of his prose style). (Anyone can use brackets). "Scrutiny" is — scrutiny — close watch or surveillance, oh paranoid one. If I'd wanted to say "criticism" I would have but I do not class Harris' efforts in that sphere. He is a scrutineer, a self-appointed watchdog; he is writing a "report".

No one could accuse him of a "laissez-faire" job. He's read the whole poster. He has then proceeded with great diligence, building one bracketed conclusion on another. Having led his reader to the unmistakable evidence that I mean an end to criticism, he challenges me to offer an alternative.

He mentions my guilt — such insight! Actually, I have one small insight of my own. Dichotomies really bother Mr. Harris. He worries over them in photographic history; he finds another in the concept of "whimsy" transposed to "permanence". Alan Harris must like things neat and tidy — what can that mean? My last paragraph for instance; I cite three separate notions, "study ... celebration ... pleasure". He virtually ignores "study", seems a bit upset by "pleasure" and leans heavily on "celebrate", tying it up with another chorus of multinational payola.

Finally he chides the photographic community for "apathy" (now there's a word we haven't heard in a while) and labels an exhibition ("show like *Cibachrome*"), that he's given no evidence of having seen (I am not fooled by his digression into one participant's work) a "facetious, insidious (harmful but enticing), bureaucratic contextualization".

Alan Harris' facetious, insidious (harmful but enticing) anti-bureaucratic contextualization smells like art/political terrorism, the latest parlor-game for the glib and frustrated. He has smeared with a democratic trowel: me, the "apathetic" community, Ilford and all the status-conscious, greedy participants in our shows.

One can only be grateful that he's obviously shot his bolt. That his "brief spontaneous fascination" with this particular political scene is over. To write anymore, he might have to do a little research.

Martha Langford

Tom Sherman

TVIDEO

May 28 & 30

Dara Birnbaum & Dan Graham

LOCAL TELEVISION NEWS  
Program Analysis for Public Access Cable Television

June 11 & 13

ROGERS CABLE TV, a subsidiary of Canadian Cablecasting Limited, has holdings in:

Canadian Cablesystems Limited: (Famous Players Limited, 49%; TWC Television, 100%; Cablesshare Limited, 50%; Alberni Cable Television Limited, 20%.)

Canadian Cablesystems (Metro) Limited: (Rogers Cable TV Division, 100%; Community Antenna Television Limited, 100%; Hamilton Co-Axial Division, 100%.)

Canadian Cablesystems (Ontario) Limited: (Cablesystems Engineering Division, 100%; Grand River Cable TV Division, 100%; London Cable TV Division, 100%; Rogers Cable TV, Brampton, 100%; Pine Ridge Cable TV Division, 100%; Jarmain Cable TV - Brantford Division, 100%; Cornwall Cablevision Division, 100%; Chatham Cable TV Limited, 100%; Jarmain Cable TV-Newmarket Division, 100%; Kingston Cable TV Limited, 50%; Essex Cable TV, 100%.)

U.S. Cable Systems Inc. (Syracuse Cablesystems, 67%; Dickinson Pacific Cablesystems, California, 50%)

A SPACE is the art presentation division of the Nightingale Arts Council, and is a non-profit, artist-run organization funded by the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council. This series is syndicated for broadcast by A Space. Address all correspondence to: A Space, 299 Queen St. West, Suite 507, Toronto Ontario M5V 1Z9.

A SPACE

in cooperation with  
THE FINE ART BROADCAST SERVICE  
PRESENTS

TELEVISION BY ARTISTS

Premieres on  
ROGERS CABLE 10

at 8:30 pm

Robin Collyer & Shirley Witasalo

DARN THESE HANDS

June 18 & 20

John Watt

TWO-WAY MIRROR

June 25 & 27

Randy & Berenicci

LOST CITY FOUND

June 4 & 6

Ian Murray

TBA

July 2 & 4

TELEVISION BY ARTISTS: Toronto has been a hot bed of video activity with artists producing tapes since 1971. Most of these video works were produced for closed circuit viewing.

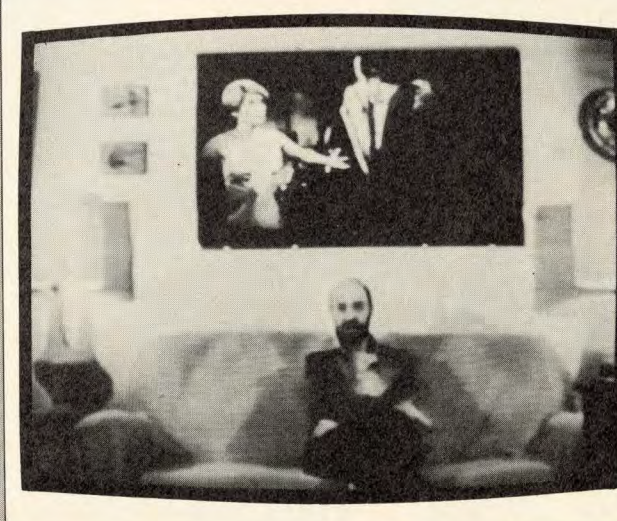
Television By Artists began production in the fall of 1979 on this series of six commissioned television works by artists. These programs were designed and framed for broadcast television, rather than art to be exhibited in a gallery.

The six artists selected for this series are all concerned with television broadcast as an object/event. As these artists work within the limitations and potentials of television broadcast they present their forms and concerns for you the television audience. The programs in the series are extremely diverse in nature as are works by these artists in other media.

This series is the presentation of art through the corporate broadcast media (Rogers Cable TV) into the personal reception space of Metro Toronto Homes.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE

Production assistance was received from the following people: Ric Amis, Clinton Ashton, Cathleen Ashton, David Bolduc, Candace Bolduc, Wendy Banks, Chris Clifford, Cyne Cobb, Robin Collyer, Jerry Farguharson, Alan Fox, Peter McLaren, Jennie McLaren, Laura McLaren, Ian Murray, John Orentlicher, Fred Piller, Jack Place, Charlene Reader, Bob Reid, Tanya Rosenberg, Shirley Witasalo, Bruce Wilson, City T.V., Ivan Fecan, and Scenic Production Services.



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PRODUCTION FACILITIES were made available through Trinity Square Video, an open access production centre for non-profit use; A Space Video, an artist post-production facility for non-profit use; and Rogers Cable TV, a community access channel.

FOR ROGERS, production and programming was organized by Richard Fung and Lawson Hunter.

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