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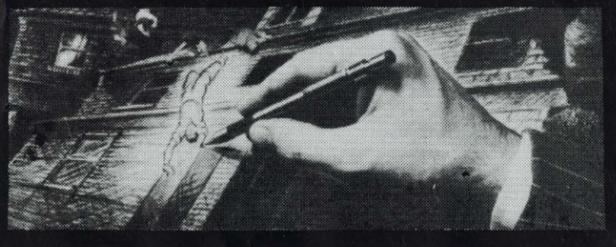


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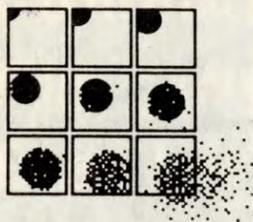
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Cover Design & Artwork: CLIVE ROBERTSON.

NEWS AND EVENTS

THE SCOTT MARSDEN CASE —

Scott Marsden, a Toronto peace activist, is seeking support for his battle against judicial censorship. Convicted last June of "criminal mischief" (as opposed to the usual charge of "trespass") for sitting down in front of Litton Systems, Marsden was sentenced to two weekends in jail, two years of probation, 200 hours of community service, and was enjoined not to go to a demonstration for one year, or to go within one kilometre of the Litton plant. Accused of trying to impose "his will upon other citizens," Marsden was told by Judge Robert Dneiper that the views of Canadian society are represented in the House of Commons and that he (Marsden) cannot "contravene the will of the people." Resisting this equation of an act of conscience with crime and coercion, Marsden has enlisted the help of Legal Aid in an appeal of his sentence. Marsden, an art student and member of the Independent Artists' Union (Toronto), is hard-pressed to raise his share of legal expenses and is asking for contributions to his case. Cheques can be made out to: Andy King (Scott Marsden in Trust) and mailed to the following address: Attention: Andy King, Karten, Barhydt & King, 149 Gerrard Street E., Toronto, Ontario M5A 2E4.

STILL SANE — The sculptural installation, *Still Sane*, created by Per-simmon Blackbridge and Sheila Gilhooly (see FUSE, Fall 1984) has now been reproduced in book form by Press Gang Publishers. Detailing Gilhooly's institutionalization and her subsequent druggings, shock treatments and isolation (all for being a lesbian), the work is a testament to Gilhooly's unbreakable will in the face of massive psychiatric abuse. The paperback book, \$12.95, is available from The Women's Press, who distributes through University of Toronto Press. To contact Press Gang directly, phone Barbara Kuhne at (604) 253-2537.

CULTURAL PRACTICES — This conference will be held in Toronto, June 20-24, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. The conference will address the issues of "politics, pleasures, pedagogies" within the genre of cultural practices. Himani Bannerji, John Greyson and Marianna Valverde will be among the featured presenters. The conference will be structured for informal gatherings and interaction. For more information contact: Cultural Practices Working Group, c/o 32 Mountview Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6P 2L3.

STRATEGIES FOR SURVIVAL — The Vancouver Artists League (VAL) is sponsoring *Strategies for Survival*, "an international conference to explore new models for artists' organizations" in Vancouver on June 9 - 11. The conference will propose realistic and positive alternatives to the current practices and procedures as a means of resolving the present crisis facing today's system of art in Canada. Artists from Western and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Pacific Rim are expected to attend. For more information contact: VAL, P.O. Box 3980, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3Z4 Telephone: (604) 684-1413.

SONGS FROM UNDERGROUND — Gerry Hannah, former member of Vancouver's original punk band the Subhumans and inmate at Matsqui Prison serving a ten year sentence in connection with the activities of a clandestine organization concerned with environmental issues and the nuclear arms race, has released a cassette. It's entitled *Songs from Underground* and contains twelve original compositions. The tape was recorded in the prison on a 4-track and was engineered, produced and mixed by Gerry Hannah. Copies of the tape can be obtained by sending a money order for \$3.50 per tape (plus postage) to: P.O. Box 34332, Station D, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 4P3.

ARTIFACT (ARTISTS FOR ACTION)

— A group of 11 young Canadian artists have returned from one month in Nicaragua, where they painted murals in three regions of the country. The people of each community helped them to design and paint the murals. They shot what will be a 30 minute film about their experiences. *Artifact* will be touring the film and a slide show across Canada, and asking the question: "Why are Canadian brigades working in Nicaragua? What can be accomplished by our going down there? What did we, as Canadian artists, accomplish and what did we learn?" For more information contact: *Artifact*, c/o Maria Gomez, 227 Villeneuve O., Montreal, Quebec H2T 2R8. (514) 272-8334.

ACT NEWS — On August 6, 1985 during a candlelight march to commemorate victims at Hiroshima, three ACT members serving as marshals were seized; two were later strip-searched. These three members of the Toronto peace group, ACT for Disarmament, were convicted of disturbing the peace by impeding traffic — which is a criminal offense. All three were given conditional discharges and placed on a year's probation. These are the first arrests sustained by ACT which have resulted in convictions. Over 50 other charges have been dropped. According to observers, the scenario described by police during the trial bore little resemblance to actual events. One of the arresting officers has a history of harassing street vendors and ACT members in particular, who sell buttons next to the Eaton's Centre. The group is initiating an appeal (to be handled, without fee, by Clayton Ruby). Funds are needed to pay for transcripts of the original trial. Send contributions to: ACT for Disarmament (re: Appeal Fund), 139 Robert Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2K6.

Fuse encourages submissions for the News and Events page, particularly regarding independent cultural production and regional events.

Not Thrilled

I AM ANGRY.

I live in Vancouver, home of this summer's "world exposition." Expo 86 has consumed this city. You can't move without running headlong into some form of exploitation as a result of the fair: the closing down of social services, cuts in educational spending, welfare rates of \$400/month, residents of the downtown eastside being evicted from their homes, increased police harassment, and so on.

What spurred this letter was the announcement this week of various entertainers and performers signed for expo, people to whom I have gone in the past for stimulation, entertainment and political refuge. Women like Heather Bishop, Lillian Allen, Maria Campbell, Four the Moment, K.D. Lang, and the Clichettes. Men like David Campbell, Bruce Cockburn, Pete Seeger and Arlo Guthrie. Groups like Stringband and the Parachute Club. Music that has spoken my anger, my energy and my joy. And now I find those names among the lists of performers that expo is flaunting as a major draw to the fair. Those names are listed alongside the likes of Julio Iglesias and other performers who regularly play Sun City in South Africa. One expo organizer has laughingly remarked that "he has been able to pull in every political performer in the country" to play at expo.

Expo is nothing less than large scale political and public masturbation by the Social Credit government. A government that has ruled by something called "the new reality," meaning cuts in social services, education funding and human rights. This morning the ILO declared this province to be on a par with third world countries in terms of labour legislation. Unemployment here stands at 14.8%. Youth unemployment stands at 21.9%. Slashes in social services and education spending have formed the funding base for mega projects like expo, rapid transit and the site C dam, which is being built solely so the government can sell hydro-electric power to California. The Socred government does not recognize the legitimacy of aboriginal land title or rights, encourages logging over preservation and conservation, and is determined to turn

B.C. into a province of tourist attractions, movie sets and free trade zones. Welfare gives those of us who are single and over 26, \$375 a month to live on. Some artists out here find that interesting enough to turn into art — poverty as performance.

As a poor woman in this province, I see expo as a manifestation of everything that keeps me down. It, like other world's fairs, is little more than a celebration of capital. It sickens me to see musicians and performers that I respect coming here to be part of a glorification of a system that sees people like me as the enemy, that values profit, that delights in exploitation. When you head home, having danced all night to the politics of the Parachute Club, we'll still be here, with a devastated downtown eastside and a huge bill to pay. As you thrill to the nightly fireworks and laser show, remember you're standing in a residential neighbourhood, and that people living there have to put up with the noise every night during the fair. When you go home, having sung your political songs or having had a great time, remember that we'll still be here, cleaning up after you. As will the government, which is using expo as a key component of its re-election campaign. If re-elected, we'll still be here, stuck with several more years of anti-people government, heavy taxing and profit gouging to help pay for the fair.

All of this pisses me off. I don't know what to say anymore when I hear another name, another person I respect, who has fallen into the expo cesspool. All I can ask is why? Do you know what expo is doing to us? Do you want to know? Does it matter? Last week a man, who was being evicted from his home in the downtown eastside, committed suicide. His room, like others, was being renovated for tourists. The owner says he is running a business, thank you, not a social service or charity. Another evictee was given the boot from his home in absentia: he was in the hospital undergoing surgery at the time. He's also out of a place to live. It makes me angry to see how expendable people are, moved about like bags of undesirable dirt. No one asked us if they would like five months of chaos rammed into their backyards. It just happened, *fait accompli*, no discussion, no debate.

So, I am asking performers who

have agreed to perform at expo: why? Why are you coming to legitimate this event and, in that respect, the policies of the Socred government and the system that expo "celebrates?" I also want you to know that if you come, you won't be greeted with open arms. Not everyone in this province supports expo. A lot of us are suffering and are angry, so don't expect us to be thrilled that you are performing inside the gates for people who can't afford either politically or financially to go. We don't care if you think you have a message for those people inside. If you really had a message that would shake people up, you wouldn't be in there in the first place, and you wouldn't have accepted the contract to play. You likely wouldn't have been asked to perform.

I suggest you find out what it is you have agreed to be part of. Call the people who booked you in and ask them what is happening, what the situation is here. Then call the people directly affected by the fair, like the Downtown Eastside Residents Association, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, or the Carnegie Centre, and ask them what expo is doing to them. Compare notes. And then consider your involvement in expo.

I also ask those of you who are planning to visit expo to reconsider. Come to B.C., enjoy the province, but reconsider giving those expo turnstiles a click, clicks that will allow the government to declare the fair a "success."

Premier Bennett describes expo as "...a turning point in B.C. fortunes..." That turning will inevitably happen on our backs, and increases the fortunes of those who, like scum on a pond, are always on top. expo is NOT a celebration: it is an exploitation.

Kandace Kerr

Following are phone numbers of the various downtown eastside groups working with residents to alleviate the impact of expo.
Downtown Eastside Residents Association (604) 682-0931.
Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (604) 681-8480.
Carnegie Centre (ask for the director) (604) 665-2220.
Vancouver Status of Women (604) 873-1427.

Cows Get More Upset

I AM WRITING REGARDING YOUR article on the killing of Boyarski. Why were these officers called to an inquest and not a murder trial? How can Attorney-General Ian Scott charge Harry Kopyto with contempt when the police walked into a guy's house and blew him away? Scott's whole office is contemptible. When Albert Johnson was shot, the Black community was enraged, but I've seen cows get more upset by a stranger in their field than Toronto's white, musical and artistic community. Except for country and western musicians, nobody is upset. I'm enraged. Hey, Queen Street! where's your plastic politics when your brothers are being shot in their houses?

Philip A. Giglio

Jacobs Replies

The interview between Fuse Editorial member Don Alexander and Akwesasne Notes editor Alex Jacobs (Fuse, Dec., 1985) was intended to disseminate information regarding a form of alternate cultural production with which FUSE readers may wish to be more aware. It should be noted that this project was not intended to simultaneously endorse the editorial views of Akwesasne Notes regarding the domestic policies of Nicaragua.

I WAS EXPOSED TO THE MISKITO issue by the previous editors of Akwesasne Notes and was taken by surprise that the Sandinista Revolution that I supported, as we all did, had its problems with Native people and there was NO MENTION of this in the mainstream or alternative press. We all know the U.S. uses this as a propaganda tool and anything they say on the subject is provocative and subversive, and I understand that while we "progressive" types know this, most of the citizenry does not and actually believes in their governments and media.

Notes and similar Native/alternative/advocacy press do not get the same attention as the mainstream media; we have learned to live with this. Still, the alternative press has finally started to cover the Miskito issue from the Native perspective, as we get loads of alterna-

tive press everyday. The Left is supposed to be self-critical, but it is only lip-service and when complex issues of Indigenous people, national questions, land and resources, culture and history and racism are combined, self-criticism goes out the window and the Left becomes defensive and closed-minded.

Notes and the native press have been covering the Guatemalan tragedy since a Notes crew went south after an earthquake in the mid-70s. We took the initiative on Guatemala and it has finally become a national and international issue. The same initiative goes for the Miskito issue, but for different reasons. We and many others have also covered the tribal problems in the Phillipines, South America and Indonesia, and so many other places in the world where mostly right-wing regimes are killing Natives, taking land and resources, relocating people, destroying cultures and depleting the earth's resources and fouling the planet. These people need a voice and we can be that voice, but we cannot make their programs or policies to our liking or anyone else's.

If the issue is fairness, then the Sandinistas should treat fairly and openly the Miskito and other Indigenous people of the Atlantic coastal region. Notes and the Iroquois support the Peace Negotiations with Brooklyn Rivera and MISURASATA and the Sandinistas for an end to the fighting and some form of autonomy for Miskito and Indigenous land-bases in association with the state of Nicaragua. Colonialism created the borders of these states, Natives cross these borders and continue their traditional economies and cultures and demonstrate that these borders are imaginary. Nicaragua has to settle the Native issue before it can successfully end the contra-attacks once and for all. The millions of Indigenous peoples in central and south and north America are looking to the Sandinistas to demonstrate good faith in their relations with them. A victory for both the Miskitos and Sandinistas will give support to other Indigenous people in struggle and it is logical that the various right-wing regimes should initiate much-needed reforms in their countries, especially where Indigenous people represent the majority of the population. If the Sandinistas crush the Indian resistance, they are playing into the hands of U.S. Corporate designs and will delay both peaceful reform and armed struggles of liberation.

FUSE

The safe answer is that Indians are not smart enough to resist U.S. designs and are willingly used by "outside" influences. We know this attitude; it says "we know what is good for our Indians." Racism abounds in the Americas, whether it is from the colonization by French, English or Spanish, it still exists and has never left.

While the Miskitos also have land in Honduras, the pressing problem remains in Nicaragua. We can not expect the military regime in U.S.-backed Honduras to do anything about their Indigenous problems; we should expect the progressive Sandinistas to do better and by action effect both left and right policy toward Indigenous people positively.

Genocide is still genocide whether hundreds are killed in Guatemala, East Timor/West Papua, or dozens killed in Nicaragua. Cultural diversity, and the diversity of food crops are important for the future of all mankind. The destruction of traditional cultures, the imposition of technological imperatives and cash-economies, and resource depletion are more immediate to Indigenous people than Superpower and Civilized concerns over nuclear warfare and East-West bashing in their spheres of influence. Land is what Indigenous people are all about, and their rights to that land is what the struggle is all about. Destroy the cultures and the land becomes a commodity for corporate or state exploitation. Indians without their culture enter the societies of right and left from the bottom with no place to go, unless they are totally acculturated. Even then, racism could keep them as second-class citizens unless they strive to become whiter than their economic masters.

The North-South struggle is where it's at, not the East-West propaganda. Overdeveloped Nations of the World are in trouble; Underdeveloped Nations of the World are in trouble because they seek to mimic the technologically superior Overdeveloped states but will never be allowed to become equal because technology will always be controlled and refined and made in the image of its makers, the exploiters and profiteers and power-brokers. Indigenous people, and people concerned with the survival of the planet and all species must find a path between the left and right.

Alex Jacobs

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Stopping Women's Art Gallery 940 Forced to Close

THIS MONTH, AFTER THREE YEARS of operation, Gallery 940 will be closing. As a result of continual financial pressure due to lack of recognition from the Canada Council and Ontario Arts Council, this gallery, dedicated to providing a forum for women's issues, will be eradicated. Although some other galleries maintain open policies, none can provide the range of service Gallery 940 has for the women's arts community.

Since its inception Gallery 940 has sponsored or supported various alternative projects such as *Fem Fest*, *Alter Eros*, *Black History Month*, *British/Canadian Video Exchange*, *Gay Gaze* and the *Older Women's Exhibition*. The Gallery has also promoted one group show every four months and one single or two-person show every month. For the *Older Women's Exhibition*, the Gallery received 20 proposals, 16 of which they were able to provide space for. They received some 120 proposals for *Fem Fest* from which 28 were chosen, plus bands, video and performance artists. Each month they receive approximately 20 proposals for single-person exhibitions. When Gallery 940 closes, these and other emerging artists will have no replacement space to show their work or put their ideas into practice.

Gallery 940's policy has been to familiarize the community in general with women's issues and their validity. Not only have they provided artists with gallery space but also with information and assistance in gallery procedure, grant writing and in generating dialogue between artists themselves and artists and the community. Gallery 940 has succeeded in this largely due to the efforts of full-time volunteer gallery coordinators, Phyllis Waugh, Michele Rosano and Sarah Denison, along with the contribution of time

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and finances by collective members and other interested parties.

As an art gallery engaged in showing women's, feminist and lesbian work, when applying for funding they were directed to Explorations. They did receive an Explorations grant that was sufficient to bring artists to Toronto for the *Older Women's Exhibition*, but it was not enough to improve their operations budget. Also, Explorations grants are only available to an organi-

which covered approximately one third of costs; the remainder was derived through benefits and donations.

Gallery 940 received a letter in regard to their grant application to the Canada Council from Edythe Goodridge which read, "While the assessors were sympathetic to the amount of energy and effort that Gallery 940 is putting into planning they felt the programming was not up to the standard of other submissions..." This excerpt betrays an inherent presumption of a worthlessness of women's efforts as well as a discriminatory practise of devising arbitrary standards as an excuse to avoid confronting the Gallery's policy. Gallery 940's intent in programming is not to show established women artists exclusively although they are included, but to give support to emerging women artists as well by giving them a space for their first shows or showing the work of persons who have not exhibited often.

Denying the gallery existence altogether by denying it even the minimum in operations grants is the ultimate act of censorship against a group that has been censored both overtly and insidiously throughout its existence.

Classifying the Gallery as only being eligible for project grants from limited sources such as Explorations effectively inhibits continuity. Then of course there are the more easily recognized incidents of censorship in which the Morality Squad seized the Woomers installation, *It's a Girl*, which was part of *Fem Fest* and also when members from the Theatres Branch of the Ministry of Community Relations seized video tapes and playback equipment from the *British/Canadian Video Exchange*. (Fuse, Summer 1985)

Insidious censorship is apparent in the lack of press or indifferent press Gallery 940 has received for the ma-



From L to R: Sarah Denison, Michele Rosano, Phyllis Waugh

zation once, thereby effectively discontinuing funds to organizations that have few mainstream funding alternatives. Gallery 940 also received a grant from O.A.C. toward *Fem Fest*

FUSE

majority of its projects. With only a few exceptions it seems the media would like to sweep women's issues under the carpet as if they were no longer valid, or worse, in poor taste. The media, through ignoring women's issues perpetuates the myth that the struggles have been won. It is obvious from the number of proposals submitted to *Gallery 940* that women are looking for a forum to express their views. Without the necessary funding to *Gallery 940* these women will be effectively silenced. "Gallery 940 can appreciate the Council's economic distress but feels they could rethink their priorities so that groups the Council seems to consider as marginal will not have to bear

the full weight of cutbacks," says Ms. Denison.

That *Gallery 940* has survived on volunteer labour, benefits and contributions is a tribute to the solidarity of the women involved. Another collective effort will be needed to secure a voice for women in the future. If you would like to say something about this situation write to Edythe Goodridge, Visual Arts, Canada Council, 99 Metcalfe St., P.O. Box 1047, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5V8.

Patti Seaman

Songs and Sanctions

TORONTO — *Songs and Sanctions Against Apartheid* was two panel discussions held at A Space on Sunday March 3, co-sponsored by the Black Music Association. This was as diverse a gathering as A Space had ever seen and it was making the place look good. A large segment of the music community was meeting to examine how contemporary music (itself now politicised by events) can affect politics, especially as applied against the apartheid regime of South Africa.

manding. Even the air felt crisp.

The immediate political context that day was the audience, which steered everything back towards local music politics. The underlying sentiment subtly manifested throughout seemed to be that the best place for Black and white musicians to start to work together, to fight apartheid, is at home.

The first panel was entitled *South Africa*. The members of the panel were: Norman Otis Richmond, moderator, writer, broadcaster, president of

stead, she feels that the heroism of the people of South Africa inspires artists everywhere to begin changing things as the people of South Africa are: "My work and my politics are about my history, which is connected to the history of Africa, and about getting to the point of equality where there is neither superiority nor inferiority. That's where they're doing most of the work in South Africa. How can people say we're not connected to the struggle as we're too far away? True politics is making yourself whole. You can't do it alone. My work is part of a collective of social transformation. Collectively, we can transform things."

Greg Bobb, along with other members of the steel band *Afro Pan*, was banned from a CBC airing of the Caribana Parade last year for appearing in a mas (Trinidadian expression meaning Carnival-style group masquerade) depicting 'We Living in Jail,' "which was a tribute to the youths of South Africa." Bobb, and other members of the West Indian community feel that the omission of their band was deliberate, because of the political subject matter. He pointed out that racism exists in Toronto as well as South Africa, and spoke at length about the exploitation of black people by white religion.

Billy Bryans stated that culture is universal, and that people don't have to know each other's language in order to relate. In Toronto, musicians are isolated from each other in Black or white groups, and Bryans was most concerned about developing projects to break the colour barrier. For example, he has accepted Lillian Allen's invitation to produce her next album, following in the tradition of Clive Robertson and De Dub Poets, and a few hardy others.

Otis Richmond recited an over-long history of the BMA, then stated that the BMA calls for divestment in South Africa by the large corporations. He also emphasized that it was the duty of artists to force governments to impose sanctions. The BMA will be working towards staging an international radio and tele-thon against apartheid, and has started a petition campaign of 10,000 signatures that will be presented to the government on Canada Day that demands sanctions. Richmond noted that the Biko-Rodney-Malcolm Coalition in Toronto is also petitioning for a cultural boycott of South Africa. (I think in future, BMA information —

such as history, petitions, membership forms, etc. — should be handed out to the audience before an event in order to minimize the time taken by its dissemination during an important seminar where speakers' time is already limited.)

The video of *The Making of Sun City* (the hit song by a coalition of Black and white American musicians recorded to benefit South Africa) was shown after the panel.

At 7 pm, the second panel began, entitled *The Message*. Panelists were Afua Cooper, author of *Breakin' Chains*, poet; Lorraine Segato, singer, songwriter, *The Parachute Club*; Clive Robertson, critic, musician, performance artist, and independent producer; Kirk Lapointe, Canadian correspondent of *Billboard* (the American music trade paper); Norman Otis Richmond, moderator.

Afua Cooper began by stating that her poetry is a tool for liberation against oppression, and read three poems that she felt exemplified this. One of these, "Racism in the Media" by Devon Haughton, seemed to define perfectly the concerns of the panel; Afua's performance highlighted the power of poetry in delivering a political message in the language of the people.

Kirk Lapointe indicated that the music industry does not understand message music nor its fundamental issues. To the Canadian music industry, message music is equated with charity, and the industry feels definitely charity'd out for this year, and is less responsive to message music than ever before.

Clive Robertson said that the Black and white artist communities have taken a long time to come together in Toronto, and now they must tap the resources that are available to them in order to get their message across.

Lorraine Segato, as a member of a pop group that has won Canadian Black Music awards, said that her group is classified as a message band by the industry and has been informed more than once that it could really make money if it "dropped the political stance." *The Parachute Club* tries to be "responsible," singing "what we believe in, and our music reflects this. You live your life and it becomes expressed in your art." The band wants to continue to reflect the community from which it came, not become a pop fixture isolated

from its peer group and its raison d'être.

Otis Richmond ended the panel by stating that music is the Black national resource and that Black people should have a share and controlling interest in their own products. About music and politics, Otis quoted a founder of the BMA who said: "Understand why you dance." Above all, Blacks need to find out "how to get our fair share" of the music industry.

A woman got up to note that during the refreshments, Blacks and whites did not mix. "Blacks and whites should also socialize together," implying more chat and coziness. Someone said he would circulate BMA petitions at his shows. Some made direct references to the local music scene. "When you take from a community, you should put back into it," said Jerebu of *Gayap Rhythm Drummers*. "Share the wealth," said Lillian Allen. Qwammie, of *Truths and Rights*, said that his band had revolutionized the Toronto music scene, "but where is *Truths & Rights* now?" Lance Ingleton, reggae promoter, keenly felt that Blacks should stop complaining and do more. Ishaka, poet, asked Lorraine Segato why *The Parachute Club* takes from Black culture without acknowledging it. Segato replied that the

band has corrected that mistake. Ishaka questioned whether the band's dancing in the video was "spontaneous" or "derivative." Tempers were beginning to flare at the edges. Pent-up feelings were starting to be released. But, because of the restrictions on time, the full discussion has yet to take place.

The video *Black Wax* by American poet-musician Gil Scott-Heron was shown after the panel, and, because of its seriousness, naturalness, and reality, it is an elegant music documentary.

The panels were necessary and important. Cultural history is being changed. People are very polite; we are just scratching the surface. A lot remains to be said, explained, and built. The next panels should address the reality of the Toronto music scene; remedies should be sought actively. The airwaves should be cleared for new broadcasts where race, "style," and other classifications will be dropped from this art, and music allowed to thrive, free.

Songs and Sanctions Against Apartheid was co-sponsored by A Space, Trinity Square Video, FUSE, the Independent Artists' Union (Toronto), and CKLN.

Isobel Harry

Isobel Harry



From L to R: Clive Robertson, Afua Cooper, Norman Otis Richmond, Kirk Lapointe, Lorraine Segato

These were people you would normally see at a reggae show, or at the Blue Note (jazz club) — performers, promoters, music lovers (nobody from the media though), perhaps discovering their first downtown artist-run centre, everyone bristling with anticipation. Prevailing attitude: de-

the BMA (Toronto Chapter); Lillian Allen, dub poet, recording artist; Billy Bryans, drummer for *Parachute Club*, producer; Greg Bobb, steel pan player, *Afro Pan*.

Lillian Allen felt that she has no illusions about how much her work is helping the South African struggle. In-

FUSE

Saskatchewan Arts Funding

REGINA — Regina established a Regina Arts Commission in 1979. Before RAC, arts groups had to compete for city funds with social services and sports groups. In 1979, a well organized, politically persuasive delegation (was formed) to make an appeal to City Council, concerning the rejection of a funding request by the Rosemont Art Gallery. The Rosemont won their appeal in 1976 and City Council directed the head of Parks and Recreation to provide background information for purposes of formulating a municipal cultural policy.

The City of Regina Arts Commission formed out of that research. RAC makes recommendations re: grant amounts to Council under established guidelines. RAC, made up of voting members from the public who are chosen for their knowledge and commitment to the arts, gave \$258,000 last year (1985) which is \$1.50 per capita.

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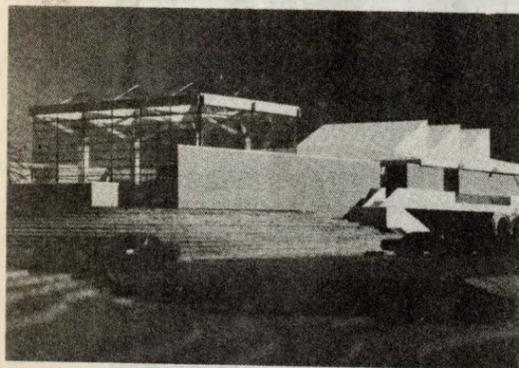
The Saskatchewan Centre for the Arts, Regina

Seventy percent of the RAC's allotment goes to professional, established arts groups such as the Rosemont and MacKenzie Art Galleries, the Regina Symphony, The Globe Theatre, Thunder Creek Publishing, and provincial based arts organizations such as Saskatchewan Theatre Ballet and the Saskatchewan Writers Guild. The re-

maining funds go to artist based organizations which produce, exhibit, perform or train other artists.

This year in February, RAC organized a forum with clients to discuss the role and function of the commission, to discuss funding needs and to meet each other. RAC ended the forum with roundtable discussions between members of the commission and members of the cultural groups. Questions asked: What problems are you facing today? What additional policies would you like to see the Arts Commission adopt? What sorts of professional development workshops would you like?

RAC is also willing to adopt the role of advocate for the arts community when it is necessary.



Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon

SASKATOON — Meanwhile in Saskatoon: Until 1985 arts groups were funded under "Financial Assistance to Community Groups." In 1985, the Legislation and Finance Committee at city hall introduced a "Community Initiatives Program" with a cultural component. Twenty-five percent of this

program's available money goes to cultural groups, seventy-five percent to Recreation and Social Services.

In July 1985, the president of the Saskatchewan Writers Guild, Regine Haensel appealed to City Council concerning a denied request for funding. The appeal was also denied. The matter was referred to the Legislation and Finance Committee. The City Council did not sanction research leading to development of a funding agency. The idea was cast into the labyrinth of civic bureaucracy. The result: an advisory committee of 5 members appointed by the Committee of Committees. This Advisory Committee is to devise a procedure by which arts groups are funded. This committee has a one year mandate.

Many important questions remain unanswered: What funding guidelines and procedures will the committee refer to? Will these guidelines be available to arts groups and cultural organizations? Why weren't positions on the committee advertised openly in the Saskatchewan cultural community?

Because the City of Saskatoon has no arts policy and no funding purposes, the funding procedure is open to ad hoc decisions based on economics and always without consultation with the art community.

An Arts Policy is vital to the fair and equitable disbursement of grants. It is time for the City of Saskatoon to adopt an Arts Policy, as has the City of Regina, and abandon their "shell game" approach to arts funding.

Paul Wilson (Regina);
Pat Wilson (Toronto)

MUP Report (Maritime Unemployment Politics)

MARITIMES — What do Litton Industries, Pratt and Whitney Inc., and Thyssen Rhein Stahl all have in common? Well, for starters: they are all multinational corporations or subsidiaries of same: Litton — Swiss based Oerlikon Industries; Pratt and Whitney — the U.S., Hartford, Connecticut based United Technologies Corporation; and Thyssen Rhein Stahl — subsidiary of the West German Indus-

trial giant Thyssen, the chief officers of which, in the company of Krupp executives financed the *National Socialist German Workers Party* to power in 1933. Each of these corporations are heavily involved in the research, development and manufacture of weapons systems, and each has been given a tacit welcome to set up shop in the Maritimes. In the case of Litton and Pratt and Whitney, it is already a fait

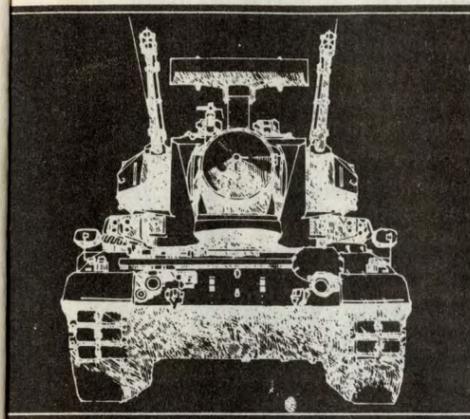
accompli; with Thyssen some kind of deal will probably be made before the summer is over.

Premier Lee of Prince Edward Island was delighted to have clinched the long term deal with Litton and reports suggest that other weapons manufacturers (euphemistically called Defense contractors) will soon be following Litton's example and setting up their operations in P.E.I. and elsewhere in the Maritimes. During the recent election rounds in P.E.I., the Litton plant has been the focus of considerable debate, but the odds are presently with Lee who is using the 'Litton Card' as a ploy to convince voters that he is concerned about the Island's 15% unemployment figures — among the highest in the Maritimes. A high profile lobby group calling itself *The Island Way* is attempting to counter the government and Litton's propaganda by suggesting that the development of high-tech radar surveillance equipment by Litton at their facility is part of the Canadian government's research and development contributions to Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (S.D.I.) better known as the president's "Star Wars Plan." *The Island Way* is expressing its concern over the "jobs at any price" attitude of the Lee government and suggests that other weapons manufacturers will also look favourably at P.E.I. as territory for industrial expansion unless there is strong opposition from the residents of P.E.I. during the forthcoming elections.

In an attempt to outdo Premier Lee, Nova Scotia's John Buchanan recently concluded a deal with United Technologies which will give its Canadian subsidiary Pratt and Whitney (Montreal) \$12 million in start up monies. The familiar United Technologies Corporation is up and they will soon be building their plant in the newly formed Aero Industrial Plant adjacent to the Halifax International Airport. The plant is to be the first of many projected for the industrial park and if the experience of other industrial parks in the US is anything to go by, United Technologies could establish any number of its other subsidiaries nearby, particularly if the operation of Pratt and Whitney in Nova Scotia is profitable. Over the past few years UTC has been one of the wonder companies of the New York Stock Exchange. In 1981 it was 21st on the *Fortune 500 List* of the 500 largest corporations in the US and, since the election of Reagan and Congressional

okays for a three trillion dollar military buildup over a six year period, UTC has moved to seventh on the *Fortune* list.

Pratt and Whitney is the world's leading producer of turbojet and turbofan engines for commercial and military transports. The company is also a ma-



jor producer of fuel cell power plants for use in space technology and industry: solid fuel rocket propellant for use in the Titan II launch vehicle; ramjet propulsion systems and liquid hydrogen fueled rocket engines used for the upper stage propulsion of NASA's Atlas Centaur and Titan Centaur launch vehicles. United Boosters, another UTC subsidiary is also involved in this.

It is clear from reports reaching the local media that Pratt and Whitney, which is almost totally owned by the US parent corporation (98.2% voting power), is not just in the business of producing domestic aircraft engines in Nova Scotia. They have also negotiated the establishment of research and development programs at Nova Scotia's Technical University and Dalhousie. While it is rumoured that these programs are merely to train Nova Scotians to work in the plant, this hardly reinforces the public pronouncements by the N.S. government and UTC that these developments will place Nova Scotia in "the forefront of today's new technological developments."

Does the Buchanan government know who it is dealing with when multinationals come-a-court'n? Obviously not. Perhaps they were just bedazzled by the UTC corporate image advertisements which were sent to government officials before the official deal was signed. Or worse, maybe some special arrangements were made to ensure that quick passage was made for the Corpo-

MAY/JUNE 1986

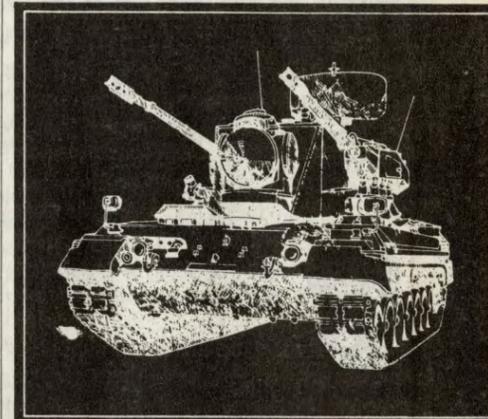
ration to settle into the happy unemployment grounds of the Maritimes.

Another spectre of the shortsighted welcoming of multinationals by the government of Nova Scotia (and the Feds' Sinclair Stevens) is being confirmed by the release of information suggesting that the West German corporation Thyssen (Rhein Stahl) is requesting permission from both the local and federal governments to establish a plant at Bear Head Point near Port Hawkesbury on Cape Breton Island. Since Thyssen already have subsidiaries in Ontario, the establishment of another facility in Nova Scotia should present few problems to a company that has maintained a firm foothold in the German economy since 1870. Thyssen wishes to manufacture and export tanks and armoured vehicles to the Middle East under the shelter of Canada's liberal export policies. West German government policy prohibits the export of weapons to areas of conflict or potential conflict such as the Middle East. The *Mail Star* newspaper report suggested that the decision to locate in Canada would be the federal government's but with Sinclair Stevens (regional Industrial Expansion minister) and Nova Scotia's own Stuart McInnis (Supply and Services) and Elmer McKay (Revenue), the passage of the company should not cause too many problems for the Feds even if, as reports have it, Joe Clark and the recalcitrant Mulroney are against it for reasons relating to the possible backlash from the Canadian Jewish communities. Nova Scotia's peace groups are rallying their efforts to combat the decision which is expected to be handed down from the Federal Cabinet sometime within the next few months.

It is somewhat ironic that the several dozen corporate researchers working on Thyssen can not find up-to-date company reports or information on the company from corporate stats newsletters at the local libraries because of Federal cutbacks to education. With the diminishing supply of funds to maintain up-to-date material, librarians have been forced into positions of reducing their periodical subscriptions. If the government is basing its decisions on material sent from the corporations themselves, and the only material available is to 1983, this leaves corporate and government critics in the unenviable position of having to import their information, which they are do-

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ing. Petitions criticising the Buchanan government's cavalier and ill-informed decision in welcoming the corporation are circulating. "Will we...take them? You're darn right we would. We want the jobs," Buchanan stated in answer to a question reported in the *Mail Star*



February 15th. Would it interest the Premier to know that Fritz Thyssen, the grandfather of the present executive 'family members,' wrote a book on financing the Third Reich under the title *I Paid Hitler*. Maybe unemployment is a bigger moral problem than the Premier of Nova Scotia thinks.

Royal Commission Report

NOVA SCOTIA — The recently tabled *Report of the Nova Scotia Royal Commission on Post-Secondary Education* has many of the province's education institutions worried. University presidents, faculty and students have all protested some aspect of the report. The students took their criticisms and fears to the streets in the largest single demonstration of student power in years. On black Thursday, February 13th, several thousand students marched from many of the provinces post-secondary institutions to deliver their message to Nova Scotia's Education Minister, Tom McInnis. Chanting slogans such as "Can the Commission" and "You're wrong Tom," the students reflected in their protest the concerns about the escalating costs of education, tuition increases and funding program cutbacks, quoting article 35 from the report which suggests the entrenchment of a user-pay system for financing the province's universities. Article 35 reads: "Tuition fees should increase so that

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students, as the primary beneficiaries of their university education, assume 50% of the costs of their instruction."

The SUNS (Students Union of Nova Scotia) *TIMES*, a newspaper not distinguished by its radicalism, suggested that this would made education "less accessible to the financially less fortunate." A stronger indictment of article 35 came from the NSCUFA (Nova Scotia Confederation of Faculty Associations) which suggested that students were already overburdened economically and the move to a user-pay system is in response to a historical "systematic

Commission — a government based advisory council which many in the university system thought was doing a good job. The Royal Commission has recommended the establishment of another more powerful body which would be, to quote from the report: "endowed with the executive authority and discretionary powers over funding in order to ensure that university planning programming and resource allocation are performed in the context of a provincial university system." The last line is a caveat, which in other sections of the report indicates the possible introduction of a master plan for the whole of the Nova Scotia universities, by making them all part of one system — The University of Nova Scotia.

Generally the responses to the Report have been exceedingly critical of all of its major recommendations. From the presidents, faculty and students there is almost unanimous support for greater public debate on the Commission's 115 recommendations before any are implemented. This has begun to occur but the government is hungry for results and unless further debate is initiated it will not be long before post-mortem activity is taking place in the streets and the media. Rumour has it that the government expects a major battle, one reason for the release of former Education



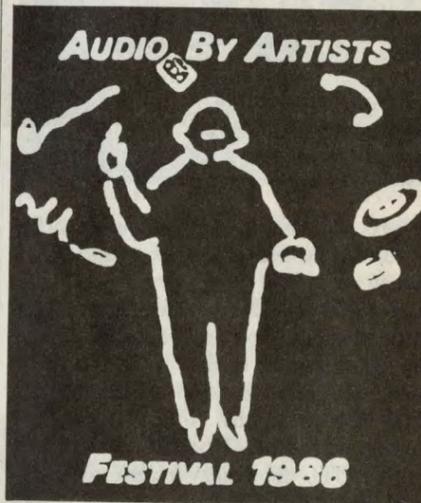
Black Thursday, Student power

Minister Terry Donahoe from the vulnerable portfolio to "higher and better things," and the setting up of a sacrificial lamb, Tom McInnis, to "take the heat when the going gets rough." And, as with B.C., things are going to get worse before they get better — that is, if they get better.

Audio by Artists /86

HALIFAX — This year's *Audio by Artists* festival was the seventh and by all accounts — not only from the organizers — "the biggest and best yet." The month-long festival was organized by an independent non-profit organization with links to Eye Level Gallery, The Centre for Art Tapes, The Nova Scotia College of Art & Design and Wormwood's *Dog and Monkey Cinema*.

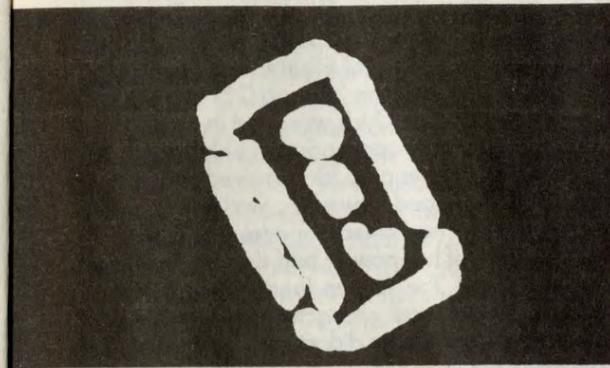
A high point of the festival was the opening night series of performances at the downtown Misty Moon Cabaret,



usually the venue for the nouveau, post-nouveau, disco and ragtime crowd. This evening the Moon played host to a thousand (big crowd for Halifax) members of the artist community, who loved every minute of the Toronto-style event. The show featured, yes, you got it, Toronto's own *Clichettes* and Tanya Mars, Nova Scotia export Dan Lander and the Maritime's own hostess, filmmaker and comedienne, Lulu Keating. The *Clichettes* were in form, upstaging most of the other performances and even the serious drinking taking place in some sectors of the former Zellers department store. Also played were the *Scratch* videotapes made under the auspices of the now defunct G.L.C. (Greater London Council) in England. It was a wonderful compilation, recoupage and post-Situationist punky detournment tapes with some awful rhythm box soundtracks. These tapes were better than most rock video, politically problematic for the most part, but invigorating and thought provoking — yes, thought provoking to watch, a

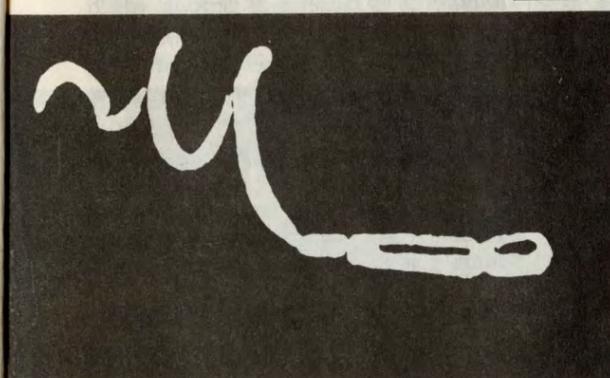
breath of fresh air for the Halifax scene, even if the projection equipment at the Moon was a bit on the blue.

Other highlights of the Festival: a series of Films and Tapes with strong audio components; an exhibition at the Eye Level Gallery of Audio installation and sculpture works; an airing of artists



tapes on a local radio station (CKDU); an exhibit of new Audio acquisitions at the Nova Scotia College of Art & Design's Anna Leonowens Gallery; a Scotia Square parking lot Audio exhibition using the internal P.A. system to play a number of commissioned works instead of the usual Muzak.

The organizers Alex Busby,



Melodie Calvert, David Craig, Andy Dowden, Gord Laurin and Micah Lexier have established the festival as worthy of national attention. *Audio by Artists* was a fitting dedication to the memory of the young audio artist Andy James, who died a short time before the opening of the festival. His work was played in one of the festival's audio programs on CKDU. This year's organizers are looking for a new committee to oversee next year's festival, which in the manner of festivals, promises to be bigger and better.

Bruce Barber

MAY/JUNE 1986

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reduction of the real resources available to the Universities, in the face of enormous increases in enrolments." This fact was underlined recently when Provincial Education Minister, Tom McInnis, announced a 3% increase for education after he had received word from the federal government that 5% would be sent to the province in the form of transfer payments to social services and education. The writing is on the wall some say, and the language spells, *Premier Bill Bennett and British Columbia*, which serve as the model for conservative ministers here and elsewhere who feel that a Royal Commission is an adequate survey of public opinion with which to establish and implement a political agenda.

Other Commission recommendations causing concern include the implementation of a "core curriculum" throughout Nova Scotia's university system; the elimination of program duplication; the emphasis on accountability on the basis of a corporate industrial model, as well as the dismantling of the Maritimes Higher Education

PURE VIRTUE, 1985

Running Time: 15:00

Director/Producer: Tanya Mars

Cast: Tanya Mars, Angelo Pedari, Odette Oliver,

Johanna Householder, Louise Garfield, Janice Hladki

Distributor: V/tape, Toronto

In Elizabethan times, Romantic Love was generally scorned. Arranged marriages were the order of the day, promising "firmer foundations" than those built on passion. When Romantic Love did figure into a relationship, it was submerged in guilt. Romantic Love was particularly unuseful to women, whose almost certain victimhood in relationships was only intensified by its presence.

Such was the lot of women that, according to Antonia Fraser, "A life of chosen virginity, led in a ordered, secure and educated society [that of the upper classes], was certainly not the worst fate which could overtake a young woman." Even so, virginity did not carry with it the concept of purity in which the Patriarchy had invested so much in earlier (as well as later) historical eras. It was infertility, much more than 'promiscuity' which was equated with sin. This was complicated further by the presence of a woman on the throne, Queen Elizabeth I, herself childless, which made those particular social mores much more difficult to uphold, until her death in 1603.

None of this has much of a parallel in contemporary society, of course. Today Romantic Love is rhapsodized in endless, painfully sophomoric movies and pop songs; it may be a particularly tormented fetish difficult to locate in reality, but it certainly isn't socially devalued. And the subjects of virginity and fertility, while being issues of concern to women in their own right, are not a focal point of

1. Is there no military policy how virgins might blow up men?

2. The plot thickens.

3. Man is enemy to virginity. And our virginity, though valiant in the defence, is weak. I would uphold to you some warlike resistance, but there is none.

Pure Virtue steered well clear of that mistake. There was no attempt to evoke 'historical accuracy' — less so, even, than the Hollywooded History of *Elizabeth and Essex* starring Bette Davis and Errol Flynn (playing QEI and the Earl of Essex), some footage of which was used in the tape.

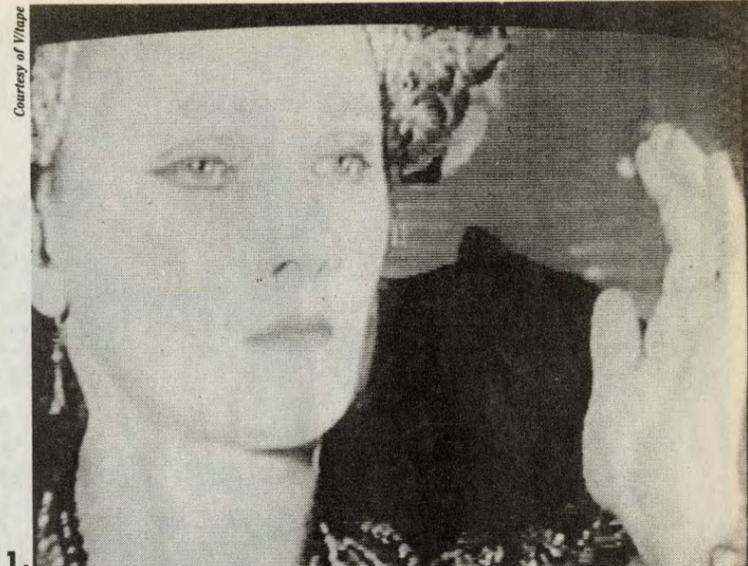
Why, then, the aesthetic appropriation of history at all, particularly historical material so far removed? According to the artist, QEI cut a good figure as a well-known politically powerful woman; had at least one relationship which was scuttled because of her power; and simply made for a good stage spectacle. The Queen functions as a sort of condensation of issues and characteristics which might otherwise have had to be more didactically presented. The historical material, while serving to make the general point that "women's relationship to power has not significantly changed since the 16th century," is used very obliquely and perhaps in places erroneously. At first, this flippancy about history might make one feel rather uncomfortable, considering a current wave of neo-conservative efforts to rewrite history in order to abet reactionary politics in the present. Yet *Pure Virtue* is clearly uninterested in entering any debate over the truth-content of history. There is no pretense of historiography, only an undisguised effort to reduce its historical material to a series of images, which serves to simply collapse or fold history into the present. The time dimension disappears and past and present con-

Pure Virtue, which instead represents the present as a logjam of unacceptable social contradictions and inequalities which have been building up over a very long time, changing their external form perhaps but not altering in substance.

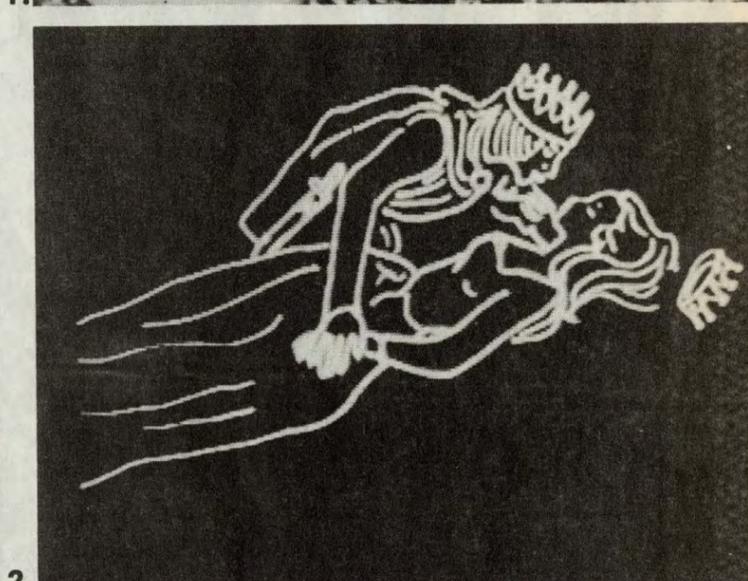
One realizes through *Pure Virtue* that once history has been conceptualized as a series of contiguous images rather than a continuous development of time, the aesthetic as well as political potential is broadened in many ways. QEI can then be understood as a metonym, where the part stands in for the whole, the whole being women in Western society, past and present. She becomes an easily recognizable association of power and desire, where the raw political power of sovereign royalty is displaced, or stands alongside of, a more personalized feminist politic in contemporary Canada. Thus the artist can have it both ways: it is but it isn't 'historical,' and when it is, there is no need to presume to tell it "the way things really happened." (It was curious to see that Mars did not check off "history" on the "Subject Categories" list that the videotape distributor has the artist fill out. Academic historiographers, it seems, cast a long, long shadow.) The present, as seen through the images of *Pure Virtue*, shows that the content of historical change does not trot dutifully alongside the forms of historical change; the same contradictions in the gender relations regarding power and desire could easily remain unchanged in substance even while we're zipping through the air in Ford's airborne cars (the underlying message of *Blade Runner*?). By defining a current problem as the signal of a past one, *Pure Virtue* dispenses with a cornerstone of neo-conservative thinking, the ideology of Progress.

The question that *Pure Virtue* asks, then, a question imbedded in the history of Western culture, is: how can women (particularly, here, heterosexual women) reconcile exercis-

Courtesy of Vitape



1.



2.



3.

ELIZABETHAN

by GARY KIBBINS

VIPEO

patriarchal anxiety in 1986.

Nonetheless, in a recent videotape *Pure Virtue*, adapted from her earlier performance of the same name, Tanya Mars, Toronto performance artist, has chosen to transpose some of this historical material as a way of addressing some issues in contemporary sexual politics. *Pure Virtue* is a time-based collage of fast-paced and humorous mini-skits, all of which involve Mars playing the part of QEI in full dress.

The Elizabethan era is now so far removed in time that the more or less routine observations of similarity and difference one usually pursues with historical representations threatens to become short-circuited. When social memory is increasingly tied to the duration standards of newsmagazines and new T.V. series, such historical images begin to appear little more than charmingly odd. The conventional method of overcoming this problem is to present history "the way it really was," a process which almost invariably reduces history to a meaningless exercise in information-gathering, undertaken for its own sake and, worse, without any self-understanding of its ideological framework.

verge, each becoming indistinguishable, or at least irrelevant, as content.

But to describe *Pure Virtue* this way is also troublesome. It is well known that postmodern culture has tended to reduce history to a repository of visual styles. As Guy Debord has said, "history has always existed, but not always in a historical form;" such is also very much the case today. What do Disneyland's historical displays accomplish but the spatialization of time into an arbitrary series of pictures? Such too is the depiction of QEI and her era in *Pure Virtue*; in neither case has there been any attempt to signify duration or development — often important elements in developing a consciousness for social change. What separates these two ways of showing the relationship of 'history' to the present, however, is not the attitude displayed toward history, but the attitude displayed toward the present. Disneyland lobbies hard for an eternal present: 'Nothing ever changes in substance,' it might say, 'so don't try. Any changes that occur are purely visual, technological, or stylistic in nature, not political.' A very different understanding of the present issues from

ing social power and control over their lives, with having relationships with men marinated in male privilege — men who persistently plot to expand their own domain of power?

In *Pure Virtue* this question is asked in a roundabout way, through the topic of virginity, a slightly anachronistic topic whose concern for the present is indicated by a line in the voice-over: "...how might one lose it to one's own liking?" That is, to retain the state of virginity is also to deny the woman her own desire, so the point is rather how to satisfy her desire without having to yield power to the man. The 'man' in *Pure Virtue* is cast in a rather grim light (there is not point dickering with that here). He wants to have sex in the same way that he wants to have, or acquire, or accumulate power. Both function as a means by which to acquire more of the other, and become recto/verso sides of the same one-dimensional lust. Because both the power and desire of women have been suppressed, they may be more apt to discriminate between the two. This is quite different than the male experience, which enjoys a relative freedom in both, and so loses sight of their distinctness in the patriarchal porridge. Also, women have not had the



4. Remedies For Damaged Maidenheads. These remedies will be needed by any girl who has been induced to open her legs and lose her virginity by the follies of passion, secret love, and promises. When it's time for her to marry, to keep the man from knowing, the false virgin might stop up the passage as follows: Let her mix rain water with fresh, well-ground oak bark, and make a suppository which she should insert into the vagina shortly before she expects to have intercourse. Best of all is this deception the day before her marriage. Let her place a leech very cautiously on the labia, taking care lest it slip in by mistake. Then she should allow the blood to trickle out and form a crust on the orifice. The flux of blood will tighten the passage. Thus may a false virgin deceive a man in intercourse.

luxury of advancing their power through the blunt fact of their gender as have men, but, when they have been able to advance their power at all, it has often been through their sexuality. This is represented in film noir scenarios, where the femme fatale is able to extract power through her sexuality, even though the power is temporary and narrow in scope, and even though she is usually punished for her impudence.

Pure Virtue shuffles this double theme around, assuming the power of the woman to be an established fact. The viewer has then to read through the semiotically and historically bizarre image of QE1 to contemporary circumstances where woman's power is not the isolated and contingent lack of a proper male heir, but the result of systematic political and cultural work undertaken by women in open conflict with patriarchal relations. Again the strategy of historically displacing the issues successfully articulates their complexity when it is understood that today a woman's desire is still placed at a disadvantage, although now of a different sort. Today, men may either be scared away by women who refuse to submit to subjugative relationships (thereby bringing about a kind of "virginity"); or men may now want to exercise control over not only the woman's desire, but they may also wish to absorb her developing power. When this occurs (as it did with Essex) it may be necessary to give him the axe. From the point of view of power, this last recourse makes perfect sense; from the point of view of desire, none at all.

Offering no resolution to this dilemma, the final sequence has QE1 wielding an axe over a chopping block. This called to mind the chicken used in the dissertation on "how the false virgin might deceive a man in intercourse," as well as the (un)timely death of Essex; but also the Queen herself, who offers her hand on the block, only removing it in the last instant.

There is another disjuncture of power and desire drawn out in *Pure Virtue*. To divest desire of an accompanying need to preserve or augment power is to introduce vulnerability into the equation — a characteristic traditionally associated with women's desire, but one resolutely refused by men who are unwilling to surrender power even when 'vulnerability' enables them to better explore the horizons of their own desire. In order to sustain the legitimacy of this rather sad self-repression, it has been necessary for men to perceive power as either preceding pleasure in importance, or becoming directly equated with it. Yet heterosexual contact demands at the very least a reconciliation process to be at work between power and desire if desire is not going to be axed at the edges. This marks the strange *pathos* lurking beneath the relentless burlesque and comicity of *Pure Virtue*: it only takes one to hold desire ransom to power, forcing their dialectic into a fixed hierarchy.

This *pathos*, a slippery and vague subtext throughout the tape, is finally concretized at the tape's conclusion cited above, wherein the Queen, the Virgin Queen, retained her power, but had to sacrifice her desire in order to do so. The *pathos* gave substance to the humour, which often enough was manifested in the form of a gag. Nonetheless, *Pure Virtue* is no 'comedy,' a form of which is supposed to embody evolution or revolution, or at least a kind of resolution. It is finally, I think, a work of irony, both in its depiction of a presumably eternal, and perhaps unresol-

able, conflict between power and desire; but also in the playing off of a humour privileged in terms of sheer presence (that is, formally), and its *pathos*, privileged in terms of its interpretive suggestions (its content).

We are asked to, and do, laugh at a social conflict which is not in itself 'funny.' This is usually the case with humorous material, but it is used very differently here. Because of the persistent humour, the viewer was set up for a resolution (woman [and man] reconcile both power and desire) or at least a show of certitude or strength (woman will have both...). The last scene, following the axe sequence, is QE1 facing the camera and saying in a bewildered way: "Mom." (Her own mother, it will be recalled, was herself beheaded by Henry VIII.) Rather than the pleasure that can be derived from an anticipated but postponed narrative closure, which is usually the case in comedy, the 'comedy' announced itself as irony. (Apart from the sketchy sequence involving the fate of Essex, there was no identifiable narrative, despite an ironic "the plot thickens" appearing on the screen mid-way. Nonetheless, a resolution might have been achieved in another sense by working through the conflicts set up throughout the series of skits.) This reversal was brought about, I think, due to the sheer visibility of the humour in relation to the conflict it was used to convey.

The decision to give to humour the primary role in an ironic mode might be expected to have one of two general results. All the complex and difficult realities of the conflict might not only be retained, but might also be made all the more accessible by virtue of the generous and extroverted character of humour. Or, the humour might mitigate the social reality of this rather ugly and debilitating struggle between power and desire, perhaps eliminating some psychological barriers, but necessarily 'distorting' the topic in order to do so.

Yet raising that (hypothetical) option makes more sense than risking an unnecessary reduction of the work by trying to support one over the other. It only frames a range of responses to a humourously delivered and historically displaced topic. When the voice-over asked: "Are you meditating on virginity?", doubtless the general response, between chuckles, was: "No, not particularly." Nor was it likely that anyone thought it practical to take notes during the "Remedies for damaged maidenheads" sequence. Was the richness of using historical material (looking backwards in order to look forwards) to treat contemporary issues heightened or hindered by the emphasis on wit and spectacle? Was the metaphorical richness of the anachronistic topics as available as the humour in which it was framed? These questions rely on the pragmatics of viewer response, and can't be answered by looking solely at the work itself. For what it's worth, my own (male) response was that, because the irony and the humour didn't simply coincide, the humorous form needed to be set aside at certain points in order to appreciate the complex of meanings intended by the artist. It was too extended and intricate to function like the joke, where a seemingly perfect economy of form and meaning are at work — until, that is, the receding horizon of humour and message was arrested by the strange helplessness of the final appeal: "Mom."

3 THE COLOR PURPLE + 886

PHILIP + MARIENE NOURBESSE

A SITE REPORT

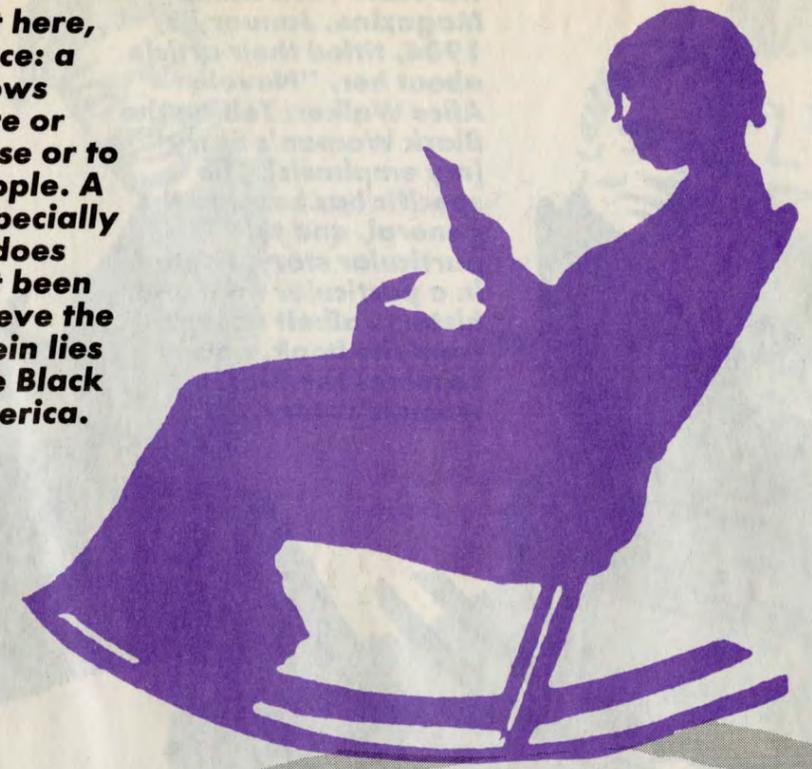
THE YEAR IS 3086 A.D. ARCHAEOLOGISTS SIFT THROUGH THE RUBBLE of a now defunct American 'civilization.' Among the detritus of an extinct people, they come upon a time capsule containing, among other things, books, films, newspapers, magazines and other cultural artifacts. Among the books is *The Color Purple*; among the films is *The Color Purple*; among the newspapers and magazines are several reviews and articles about *The Color Purple* and its author, Alice Walker, as well as Alice Walker post cards, posters and diaries.

The archaeologists face the fundamental and perennial problem — that of constructing the life of an extinct people from the material remains of their culture. They are fortunate in finding the time capsule — unlike most archaeological finds its contents have been preserved intact.

Based on their findings, what conclusions would they be encouraged to draw about *The Color Purple* — book and film; about Blacks and whites in North American society? What would they conclude about literature written by Blacks and its reception in North American society in the last quarter of the twentieth century?

Several qualities distinguish the archaeological find: separation in time from its

The critical element here, however, is audience: a Black audience knows that we are no more or less inclined to abuse or to love than other people. A white audience, especially in North America, does not, and has in fact been encouraged to believe the opposite, and therein lies the problem for the Black writer in North America.



Illustrations by Gail Oelner

original context; a monetary value inflated beyond its intrinsic worth, often due to it being the only one of, or one of a few of its kind, and a distorted aesthetic value, arbitrarily assigned by the society excavating and curating the artifact, but bearing little relation to the value initially assigned it — by the society which originally produced it.

From the publication of the book to the release of the film and its aftermath of praise and condemnation, what has happened to *The Color Purple* and its author has resulted in imbuing them both with the same qualities of the archaeological find — separation from context, an inflated monetary value, and an arbitrary assignment of aesthetic value; the archaeological find thus becomes a metaphor for the work and its author.

The archaeological approach is valid in yet another way. Seldom if ever is Black culture and society considered a part of mainstream American culture (this applies in Canada as well); it is seen rather as some sort of exotic appendage — never understood from the inside. To consider this book, therefore, from the distanced perspective of the archaeologist, is to capture and reflect how most white readers, knowing little of Black life or culture, will or

have considered it. Black readers might object to this approach, but the book has been marketed for a specific white North American market, and I am more interested in analysing how its contents enabled, if not colluded with this process, and how 'minority' literature can be manipulated to keep certain myths intact. What has happened to *The Color Purple* and the reasons for this are, in my opinion, far more noteworthy and significant than the book itself.

For those who have not yet either read the book, or seen the movie, *The Color Purple* is an epistolary novel: it opens with a letter to God describing the rape of a fourteen year old girl by her stepfather; it closes with one addressed to God, stars, trees, sky, peoples, Everything and God, which thanks God for bringing the writer's sister and children home. Between those two letters unfolds the life story of Celie, a young Southern Black girl, over a period of some thirty-five years. Both those letters are hers, and through many, many more she records the loss of her two children, removed at birth by her stepfather; and forced labour at the hands of her husband, Albert, who beats her, is insensitive to her sexual needs, and considers her one of the ugliest people he has ever seen. She

becomes involved with Albert's mistress, Shug, and through that relationship is able to make fundamental changes in her life.

Alice Walker and *The Color Purple* have been presented in the media so as to eclipse, if not obliterate, both the long and distinguished literary history of the Black peoples of America, as well as the present abundance of very good or excellent Black American writers, of which she is but one. Reading the reviews, observing the extent and nature of the media coverage which, very subtly, uses her race and its 'shock' value to market her, one could very easily forget that the tradition of Black writing in the United States goes way back to the young slave poet, Phillis Wheatley.

The American media is unable to deal with more than one Black superstar at any one point in time — consider for example the Michael Jackson phenomenon. Alice Walker's saleability is in part generated by her 'uniqueness'; to link her with or make her a part of the tradition that produced Toni Morrison, Jamaica Kincaid, Ntozake Shange, Gwendolyn Brooks (another Pulitzer Prize winner), June Jordan or Paule Marshall — to name a few sister writers, would be to reduce that 'uniqueness' and thereby lessen her sale-

The New York Times Magazine, January 8, 1984, titled their article about her, "Novelist Alice Walker: Telling the Black Woman's Story" [my emphasis]. The specific has become the general, and this particular story, rooted in a particular time and history, albeit absent from the book, now becomes the Black woman's story.



ability. The result is the marketing of a Black writer as a one-of-a-kind, first-of-a-kind freak. For the most part, no attempt is made to put her into a context or a tradition of either (a) American writing (and there is a noticeable American theme in the work); she's Black so that is denied her, or (b) Black literature. I say for the most part, for the *Nation* did say that "*The Color Purple* place(d) her in the company of Faulkner."

I would hazard, based on a most inaccurate survey of TTC readers observed reading *The Color Purple*, that most of them would not have heard of, let alone read, any of the writers mentioned above.

The overall result of this process, therefore, is a book and its author that, in the media at least, have become archaeological artifacts truly distanced in time, isolated from their source, lacking a nexus.

To the archeologist of 3086 a more immediate problem would have presented itself: identifying the audience — of both author and those marketing her. They are not necessarily the same.

She, the archaeologist, might conclude that the intended audience of the author was Black — she is Black and the characters are Black. Talking about the making of the film, Alice Walker says, "So much of my constituency just doesn't read, people in other countries, in Africa, who can't read English. I know that people in my hometown (Eaton, Georgia) might not read the book."¹ There is no doubt in my mind whom Alice Walker *hopes* will read her book or see her film, and nothing that I have read convinces me that Black folk, literate and illiterate were not her intended audience.

Reviews and coverage, however, have ranged from *Essence*, a magazine for and about Black women, to the *New York Times Book Review*, the bellwether of the hard-nosed competitive journalism industry; in between those, most of the reviews and articles have appeared in the white media. Unless the archaeologist has done some

¹Ms. Magazine, December 1985

very good historical detective work, she would have no way of even identifying the discrepancy — that although this book was, in all likelihood, written with a Black audience in mind, it and its author was aggressively marketed for the white feminist North American audience. This is also an audience which, over the last few years, has become aware of, and is guilty about the absence of Black women's voices and those of women of colour in the feminist movement; where there is guilt there will be found susceptibility to manipulation. The lesbian relationship between Shug and Celie would also play a part in attracting and solidifying a lesbian readership within that movement.

Even in 1986, the only clue for me as to the identity of the targetted audience is the personal observation that the book has always had more appeal for white women than Black women, especially those from countries other than the United States. The marketing industry, selling Alice Walker and *The Color Purple*, cannot however be solely faulted for this, for were the



book not amenable to this kind of marketing it would not have been possible.

Our archaeologist of 3086 might also be able to spot the role of timing and fashion in the success of the book: in 1976 a book about a poor Southern Black girl finding herself through a lesbian relationship would have fallen with a thump, and been remaindered before the printer's ink was dry. In 1996 the same story would probably lack shock value and be passé.

The award of the Pulitzer Prize to Alice Walker for *The Color Purple* has so elevated it and its author, that canonization of both was the inevitable result. Undoubtedly this has had a positive effect on her financial worth as an author, and parallels may be drawn between this process and what I have earlier described as the elevated monetary value of the true archaeological object.

The book is not without literary merit, let me hasten to say — quite the contrary. It is at times a beautifully written, deceptively simple work. Its African section is, however, particu-

larly weak, and reads at times like a travelogue — a bad one at that — of Africa, the language of these letters lacking the vitality of Celie's letters.

There are, however, reasons why the work was a 'suitable' choice for the Pulitzer Prize: none of the stereotypes assigned to American Blacks — male (loutish brutes with a predilection to rape) or female (passive and mule-like) were successfully challenged: the historical underpinnings of Celie's world were noticeably absent, resulting in an aura of historical amnesia surrounding the work, and finally, the work reinforced the classic American theme of individual struggle as the solution for systemic poverty, individual achievement and success, the reward.

It would be crass and inaccurate to suggest that *The Color Purple* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize because of these qualities. Where we have a book of some literary merit; an ideology that

needs to be seen as liberal and democratic (*any* writer can win the Pulitzer Prize) and a system that does not reward its critics, the interplay is subtle and modulated. *The Color Purple* won the Pulitzer Prize because it is a good book; it is, in part, a good book because of the conformist qualities mentioned above.

Dealing with the first of these conformist qualities: Alice Walker did not set out to malign or stereotype her people: I believe she was calling the shots as she saw them — men of all colours and stripes have been beating women and children and committing incest ever since they knew they could get away with it; that has been a very long time and race has had nothing to do with it. There have always been people — too often women — like Celie who have colluded in their own oppression — again the factor or race is irrelevant.

The critical element here, however, is audience: a Black audience knows

Who is the audience of this particular article — Blacks or whites and does that matter? Were such a piece to be found in the capsule, our archaeologist might well ask about the merits of a Black writer criticizing another Black writer in a forum that is predominantly white.



that we are no more or less inclined to abuse or to love than other people. A white audience, especially in North America, does not, and has in fact been taught, led and encouraged to believe the opposite, and therein lies the problem for the Black writer in North America. The relative paucity of our numbers means that although we may write for a Black audience, our readership will often be other than that. In that gap created by the cross-over potential, the possibility for misunderstanding and exploitation (as discussed earlier) is great.

The second of the conformist tendencies is present in the portrayal of Celie's world — an almost discrete enclave — completely unmediated by the actions of a larger white society. Those readers aware of the extent of white America's oppression of Black people at that time can, as active readers, hold that as a backdrop to the story. When the one incidence of contact between these two societies — Black and white — occurs, resulting in the incarceration of Sofia,

this incident can then be interpreted and understood within the context of the lynchings, burnings, and other activities of the Klu Klux Klan, integral to that time and place. Many whites, ignorant of this history — particularly those outside the United States — would be in no better position than our archaeologist of 3086 trying to locate the book in some sort of social and historical context.

The historical amnesia of *The Color Purple* places it squarely within the ahistorical traditions of America — a new world established in supposed opposition to the old, and free of all the historical baggage that continued to entrap the latter. We all know where that particular myth has taken us.

Is it fair to ask an author to write the book she didn't intend to? No, but I have as much difficulty with the absence of a wider social and historical context in the deep South of the 1940's as I would have with a book about Jews set in Germany of the 1940's that omitted reference to the German state.

The last of the conformist themes is visible in Celie's transformation to a

small business entrepreneur, having worked her way up and out from Southern poverty. The message — in black-face — is a variation on the theme of "anybody can be President of the United States — provided you work hard, are white and male." It is a profoundly American theme and fantasy, and one which most Blacks in Celie's world would not have been able to realize. Celie and Shug were atypical of their time, place and race.

The Color Purple is now being touted as *the* book about *the* Black experience; Alice Walker as *the* best Black writer: *The New York Times Magazine*, January 8, 1984, titled their article about her, "Novelist Alice Walker: Telling the Black Woman's Story" (my emphasis). The specific has become the general, and this particular story, rooted in a particular time and history, albeit absent from the book, now becomes *the* Black woman's story. The Black woman's story is many, and much more differentiated and nuanced than this.



In part, the absence of the historically specific spawns this sort of generalising, but as with the archaeological process, what we have is the arbitrary assignment of certain values to a work that has little to do with the variety of Black societies or cultures. These latter play no part in the assignment of an aesthetic value to Alice Walker or *The Color Purple*. Such decisions are made in New York or San Francisco — not Eaton, Georgia.

The plethora of objects associated with *The Color Purple* — post cards, posters, diaries, might encourage our archaeologist to assume the presence of a cult that generated extreme variation. If she truly understood the post-

nuclear, post-feminist, capitalism-in-crisis societies of the second half of the 1980's, she might understand that what was being worshipped was only an image and that true veneration was held for the American dollar.

A few comments about the film: it is the logical and expected development of the themes in the book, so those who criticize the treatment of Black males in the film have only to look to the book for the source.

In fairness to Alice Walker, the book traced the decline and moral redemption of the men much more clearly and definitively than does the film. The moral message is very clear in the book, and a balance, lacking in the film, is maintained. Unfortunately in this case, the power of the visual image

of film has been harnessed to capture, irrevocably, the brutality of the Black male.

Like the book, the African scenes are weak and exotic: an African scarification ceremony, for instance, is juxtaposed with a scene of Celie about to slit her husband's throat! I don't know what our archaeologist will make of that — that African scarification ceremonies are crimes?

Alice Walker is quoted as saying, "Well, if he (Steven Spielberg) can do Martians, maybe he can do us."² She was closer to the truth than she probably realized. This throwaway statement reinforces what I said earlier about Blacks being perceived as being distant and apart from American society — aliens always.

The film reinforces all the issues mentioned above: the one-of-a-kind syndrome; inflated monetary values and a distorted aesthetic value assigned, in this case, by Spielberg wanting to make a 'serious' film.

I doubt that this review will be among those found in the time capsule, but the very issue that will confront

our archaeologist of 3086 confronts me now: who is the audience of this particular article — Blacks or whites and does that matter? Were such a piece to be found in the capsule, our archaeologist

might well ask about the merits of a Black writer criticizing another Black writer in a forum that is predominantly white. I could cop out and reply that, given the arguments that the book's audience is a predominantly white one, there is no better forum, but it is a cop out, and one that does not address the hard questions: who is our audience; whom do we wish to hear us and respond; who markets us and why; how do we earn a living doing what we do best, when our intended audience is limited in numbers, buying power or literacy?

There are no easy solutions to these issues; by 3086 they might all have been solved — finally, but suffice it to say to all writers, Black and white, writing athwart the mainstream, the marketing of *The Color Purple* is instructive to all of us — co-optation is an extremely attractive and risky business.

Marlene Nourbese Philip

²Ms. Magazine, December 1985

PERFORMANCE ART RE-VISITED

by Clive Robertson

PERFORMANCE ART EMERGED IN CANADA AS A DISTINCT FORM around 1971. As elsewhere it was a second generation practice that responded to conceptual art, Fluxus, happenings, Events and oppositional politics. Clive Robertson takes a critical but supportive look at thirteen recent Toronto performances and their sponsoring institutions. Events surveyed include the Performance week of the *Rhubarb Festival* (organized by Buddies In Bad Times); *Six of 1001 Nights* (organized by A Space's Performance Committee); and *Voyeurs 3* (organized by the artists for The Rivoli).

PERFORMANCE: FROM MYTH TO FETISH TO THE PRESENT

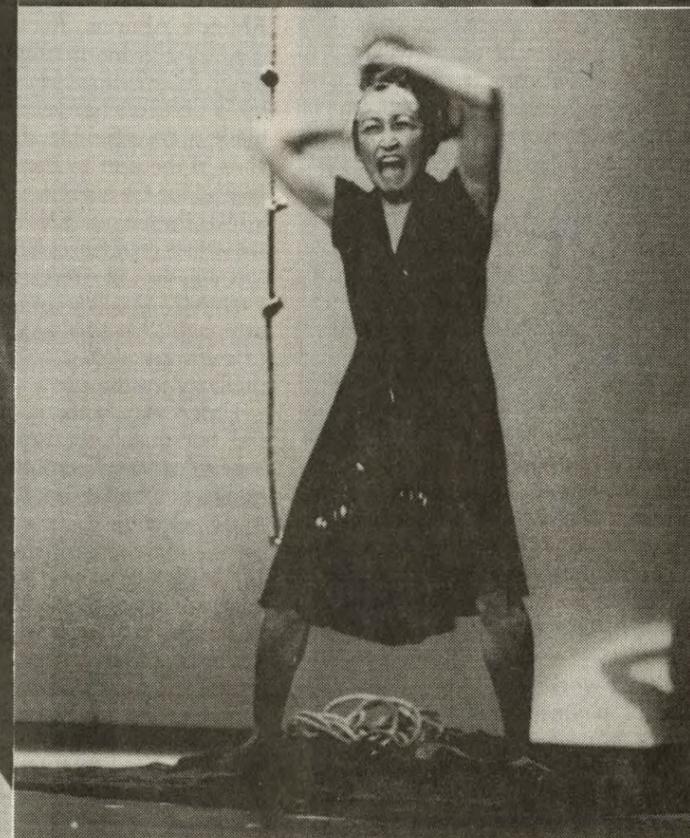
Vancouver Performance artist, Eric Metcalfe (aka Dr. Brute) has said: "There is an edge to Performance art where you are not sure whether it's real behaviour or not...in theatre you always know they are acting." Lucy Lippard has described the Performance process by saying that it "quite literally provides the way of acting out one's fears of awareness and reaching towards a supporting unity with one's audience."

As the story goes, back in the 50's when mothers were still doing the dirty work of supporting patriarchal values, a mother took her young son

to an art gallery to show him the finer, more aspiring things in life. She entered a room full of abstract canvases daubed with thick dark paint. Angered by such visual 'insult' and 'obscenity' she promptly put her hands over her son's eyes and quickly wheeled him out. That is the myth. The fetish came from historical performance work selecting other modernist desires to temporarily shock and confront the bourgeoisie. We have Chris Burden who had a friend shoot him in the arm, Yoko Ono having the audience cut away her clothing with scissors, and the late Joseph Beuys cleansing himself of

Clive Robertson has produced Performance artworks since 1970 and has organized generative Performance festivals both in Britain and Canada. *Fuse* began as a tabloid that reviewed and featured Performance work.

Donna Marchand



Left: Luther Hansraj, Ed Lam
Top: Lillian Allen Middle: Makka Kleist

Cheryl O'Brien

Cheryl O'Brien

his former Nazi war service through shamanism, student democracy and the co-founding of the ecological Green Party. In Britain, Performance has maintained its eccentric functional standing by often, literally, throwing-

up the country's nostalgic desire for a lost Empire. In California, feminist Performance has produced a litany of both serious and satirical attacks on the patriarchal world of entertainment and consumer service.

RECENT PERFORMANCE AND ITS SPONSORS

The best way to see Performance is at some collaborative event. It's rare that there isn't at least one piece presented that makes the attendance worthwhile. The first of such recent events took place as part of *Rhubarb*, an annual theatre festival organized by Buddies In Bad Times under the leadership of Sky Gilbert. Gilbert is an energetic gay theatre activist whose *Rhubarb* festivals began in 1979. This year, three weeks of programming took place at the Tarragon theatre. The first week contained performances by Frances Leeming, Ed Lam, Christian Morrison and Shaun Lynch. The second week was a mixture of Performance and theatre culminating in a third week of theatre. The Performance week was guest curated by Tim Guest who unfortunately was out of the country during the actual event. In Guest's absence, the artists were left to fight it out with the traditionally tight confines of the theatre — this time at its technocratic worst. The technical assistants were competent, overworked and inflexible.

Performance Art is many things, but it is not theatre, nor is it dance — a fact that both Buddies and Danceworks chose at best to overlook or at worst to ignore. For both *Rhubarb* and *Danceworks*, Performance is used as the 'experimental' come on — and a needed source of extra funding. Time and again the theatre/dance audience admires the "experimentations" and gall of the performance but essentially faults it for its poverty. In plain words they don't accept it, nor is it presented for what it is.

Performance artists participate in these types of venues for two clear reasons. The first is the infrequent opportunity, any opportunity, to present their work. The second is the promise of payment which theoretically covers the cost of the work. The artists at the *Rhubarb* event received \$350 for four performances of the same work. With few exceptions the press received from such mixed venues is bad. (Dance and theatre critics are usually bad news.) Who in 1986 needs some asshole

from the *Globe & Mail* exercising his postmeridian gas by summing up the programme as follows: "the stance of the art-form itself, which its artists seem to bend to, is the worthlessness and absurdity of human effort"? Gilbert's *Rhubarb* should borrow some other art-form to open for his worthwhile theatre festival — reproductions of Bruegel's paintings would do fine.

The second event was A Space's performance series, *Six of 1001 Nights*. Five nights in a theatre at 1001 Queen Street West (a psychiatric hospital). The Performance Committee of Heather Allin, Johanna Householder, Chris Martin and Honey Novick commissioned works from John Greyson, Marcia Cannon, Makka Kleist, Lillian Allen, Krisantha Sri Bhaggiyadatta and Rhonda Abrams. Rectifying the embarrassingly low publicity afforded to the British performance artists, Matchbox Purveyors last year, the committee made a considerable effort to "give a shot in the arm to Performance." The budget for the event was \$13,000 (from which they made \$2000) with each of the artists receiving a \$1000 fee for performing the same piece on two separate evenings. The committee hired Cliche/publicist Louise Garfield whose talents garnered maximum pre-publicity for the event.

Unfortunately the audience turn-out did not match the achievement. The series was stretched out over too many nights, combinations of different artists made selection for the audience awkward, and the excitement and energy that such events need to be socially regenerative was regrettably dissipated. Following the week, a reception and keynote address (Performance) was made by Tanya Mars satirising the performance artist as endangered species.

Performance as well as video suffer by having to be periodically introduced to a changing public, something that is hard at this time for A Space to overcome. What might help is the re-introduction of a regular in-house tabloid in which artists could provide ongoing in-

SIX OF 1001 NIGHTS OF PERFORMANCE

FEB 18 KRISANTHA SRI BHAGGIYADATTA MAKKA KLEIST	FEB 19 MARCIA CANNON RHONDA ABRAMS KRISANTHA SRI BHAGGIYADATTA	FEB 20 JOHN GREYSON LILLIAN ALLEN
FEB 21 LILLIAN ALLEN MAKKA KLEIST RHONDA ABRAMS	FEB 22 MARCIA CANNON JOHN GREYSON	FEB 23 HONEY NOVICK CHRIS MARTIN TANYA MARS

depth background to their work. A tabloid produced ahead of time would have given the journalists (and a potential audience) a little more to go on than the instant off-the-cuff remarks which appeared in *NOW* and the *Globe & Mail*. Not wishing to overstate the point, but the trend of quickie P.R. onslaughts has few proven cumulative or long-term advantages.

The final event, *Voyageurs 3*, was a one-evening show co-ordinated by the participating artists, John Porter, Annette Mangaard and Edie Steiner. Held at the Rivoli, it was, in a sense, the most public of the three events. The evening's pacing was definitely dictated by the artists' relaxed (even slow) requirements. The artists almost certainly shared the gate as a fee and the place was full. The Rivoli is one of a number of places that artists use to organize their own events. It's not much, in terms of size, but for most of the year when special Performance series are not happening, it is a reasonable and reliable venue. If I were to critique The Rivoli (the performance space is adjacent to a restaurant and bar), I would say that they are on to a good thing and should at least subsidize the street publicity for their artist-organized events and give the artists a full complimentary meal.



RHUBARB, Tarragon Theatre

This small space is stageless but has audience risers. The audience is very close to the action thus preventing most normal theatrical illusions apart from

lighting and its subtraction. The settings for each of the pieces were struck quickly and effectively. Reviews are in order of appearance.

FRANCES LEEMING: FINDING FAULTS WITH THE FIRMAMENT

Leeming's use of props and product demonstration techniques results in a honed use of theatrical manipulation. The piece opens with a depiction of the male creation of the universe, and quickly shifts gears introducing a miniature white cardboard house and the dislocated film voices of Marilyn Monroe and Clark Gable (*The Misfits*). The house then becomes a screen for a *Pathe News* excerpt on natural disasters, with Leeming animating the house. The film journalist narrator tells of the brave pursuits of men rushing around the world acquiring this footage — emphasizing the news-gathering competitiveness while down playing the actual human disasters we are shown.

The lights go out, a red curtain drops from the ceiling, Leeming becomes a puppeteer acting out the women's dialogue from *The Misfits* while manipulating the cowboy puppet to act out Clark Gable's fears concerning "independent women." (*The Misfits* is one of many male-written 'proto-feminist' films, where a woman is depicted as being scared and confused but nonetheless able to make more sense of the world

than her over-confident (and confused) male detractor(s).)

The hanging curtain is removed, the house pushed back into a symmetrical position between two miniature clumps of trees. The soundtrack has Monroe screaming at the horse-killing cowboys, Leeming coolly lights two fires, the stage lights go red, and an animated film fills the screen. (The fires are extinguished while smoke rises from the smouldering newsprint.)

The animated film re-tells the described story, albeit from a different (*Life* magazine) perspective. The soundtrack contains many different versions of the song, "He's Got The Whole Wide World In His Hands" and more sound-clips from *The Misfits*. The film's appropriated material juxtaposes the original meaning with Leeming's changed meaning. The film also functions to tie together some of the seemingly random references which appeared earlier in the performance. Leeming's style of Performance is to carefully rehearse and memorize the smallest of details, allowing for a controlled and even presentation.



Top: Paulette Phillips Christian Morrison

Bottom: Frances Leeming

ED LAM: SOUL-BLIND

Ed Lam's work is a segmented and often satiric dissertation on the effects of self-knowledge. Though 'race' does not surface within the *dialogue* of the work, Lam is an Asian-Canadian who chose as his co-performer a Black male actor, Luther Hansraj. At the beginning of each half of the piece they each claim to be "Ed Lam" and suggest that the body "tells no lies" even if the person (body and soul) is capable of contradictory and schizophrenic behaviour (love, oppression, humour, enlightenment). Both wear formal clothing; Lam has a padded stomach. Both smoke cigars. Situated in the middle of the floor is a sculptural monument equipped with miniature speakers which provides voices and mood music. Lam walks up and down telling anecdotes about two sisters and friends that become "assholes." Nasty people in a nice world?

In part two, Hansraj lip-syncs to (blackface Al) Jolson songs. Hansraj then switches from colonial speech actor to soul-singer to street philosopher. He finally moves into two sets of actions which pull the Performance out of its large and unweildy subject matter. First, in describing access to "knowledge, truth and for that matter the soul," he proceeds to drill holes into a square of Tentest which Lam holds above his head. As the dust and material settles on Lam's suit, Hansraj describes the various ways that knowledge can be obtained. Shouting above the noise of the drill he offers, "knowledge can best be obtained by osmosis, bits and pieces of information coming to you one at a time."

Hansraj continues into the final action — throwing five iron letters of the alphabet (spelling the word 'blind') at Lam's feet: "Bathing in the light rays of self-knowledge is similar to the lizard that's baking there in the warm desert sun soaking up all that heat. And not realizing that his skinny body is being overheated and consumed by the very sun that gives him heat and so much pleasure. You may call this a cruel twist of fate, though the little lizard may know very well what it is doing. And really, is it any crueller than a blind man (picks up metal letters) being taunted (throws letter) by a bunch of cowboys, because his hearing, is so impeccable?"

Lam's choice of illustrative actions and his props (including large illuminated dot portraits of both actors) gave Soul-Blind an effective presence.



Donna Marchand



Edie Steiner

Top: Shaun Lynch: Keep It Clean

Bottom: Edie Steiner, John Porter, Annette Mangaard

CHRISTIAN MORRISON: SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Performed by Morrison with live dialogue read by Paulette Philips, this piece was difficult to focus on, due to its long pauses of contemplation. *Schools* finale contained a sequence whereby Morrison directed a spot-light through a large free-standing megaphone — pumping incense into the beam of light. *Schools* also contained two films, one being a high contrast print of a man floating in a bathtub, the other a moving upper male torso (a la Kenneth Anger).

School had some serious conceptual and structural problems — a common symptom for a new work that is being

presented for the first time. The solution is either to alter the piece or dump it. (Morrison understands these problems all too well.)

The content of the Performance was about entrapment, paralysis, and apocalyptic fear — serious concerns that are not clarified through further mystification. Even if this work were transformed into an installation — where its use of time and contemplation would be more acceptable — I would still have problems with its avoidances. The work in its current form is devoid of resistance and self-criticism.

SHAUN LYNCH: KEEP IT CLEAN

The last work in the program employed David Blank, a self-professed street 'bag lady' to take a bath on stage while watching pre-recorded excerpts from the soap opera, *All My Children*. Hidden from view were soap products that Blank would use whenever they were mentioned in the program breaks. Blank ate Kentucky Fried Chicken in between washing his clothes, his hair and his body.

The confrontational aspects of the piece did not work because the type of institution in which the act took place does not really guarantee a class of people who would most benefit by being offended. The nudity, the eventually embarrassing ad-libbing, and the exploitation were all contextually misplaced. As it was, Blank made the best of a bad job: cold room, unpredictable water temperature, sub-zero outdoor temperatures. It might have been better if the artist Lynch had got himself into the act, possibly by sucking the cold soapy water into his mouth with a straw. As it was, he hid in the shadows where he did not even exercise his directorial option to shorten the piece. So — Blank quickly ran out of repartee, and Lynch mimicked exploitative conditions for a few short laughs, with little responsibility and even less critique.

VOYEURGEUR 3, The Rivoli

The Rivoli holds about 100 people, has a small stage, film screen and average sound system. This program was presented by three filmmakers: John Porter, whose other recent Performance was on censorship and film screening; Edie Steiner, a musician familiar to Toronto's art-music underground; and Annette Mangaard, a Performance artist. The evening was a drawn-out mixture of Performance aesthetics, saved by John Porter's warm, generous and open Performance style. Having said this, the evening achieved the social feel of a Performance event to a greater degree than either *Rhubarb* or *1001 Nights*.

MAY/JUNE 1986

PERFORMANCE

JOHN PORTER, ANNETTE MANGAARD, EDIE STEINER

John Porter opened with the first part of *How To Make A Movie*. Passing a loaded Super 8 camera into the audience, the audience filmed themselves and their surroundings while keeping the camera on the move. Porter then took off his black T-shirt, tied his sleeves, placed the exposed film cassette inside the shirt, hit the cassette with a hammer to remove the film and started processing the film. All the time he gently encouraged and educated the audience, making them feel at ease with their participatory involvement.

Mangaard followed with four films/Performances. Her chosen monologues rarely rose above the trite. "Evil, guilt—I find paranoia a much more interesting subject." In *What Guilt?* we discover that Mangaard in fact longs for the collective assistance of earlier social cultures that provided relief for "individual stress."

Performance history is littered with examples of work that are no more than personal angst. What in past histories might comparatively have been courageous is now not much more than a repetitive lifestyle. In her exotic film of Egypt (*Her Soil is Gold*) we are given Arabian music, aural snatches of "the name is the word and the word is the

name" and empty phrases-repetitions like "cause and effect."

Steiner showed two films: *Episodes* with live 'industrial' music accompaniment, and the best film of the evening, *Possibilities of Love*, a film-poem read by a succession of friends. *Episodes* is a Warholian film shot in NYC. We see people acting out the same underground that they have seen portrayed twenty years ago: people hiding from the camera while treating it like a mirror. The film was an accurate piece of nostalgia, no different than antique objects collected by those with money.

Steiner is a working part of a reasonably large community of artists and musicians alienated from modern Toronto who graduated from punk to the passive *mores* of counter-cultural styles of the past

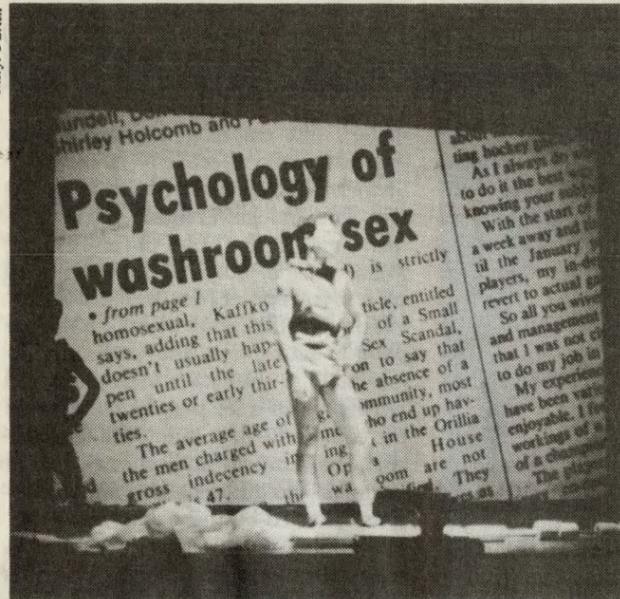
Following Steiner, Porter ended his piece by passing the processed wet film through the audience who eagerly blew on the film to dry it and some who marked the exposed sections of the film. The film was then fed into a projector upside-down, whereupon Porter turned the projector upside-down as the audience enjoyed their collective play (and patience).



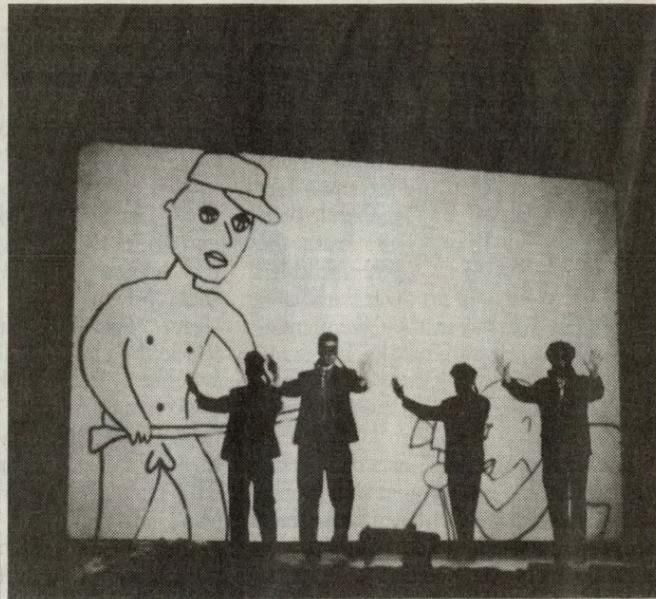
Cheryl O'Brien

Rhonda Abrams: The Sugar Bushman

Cheryl O'Brien



John Greyson
You Taste American



Cheryl O'Brien

RHONDA ABRAMS: THE SUGAR BUSHMAN

The *Sugar Bushman* was undoubtedly the prettiest and best staged Performance in the *1001 Nights* series. Abrams is a video artist who reproduces what she sets out to create with care and accuracy.

The content expressed concern for the effects of Acid Rain and Sulphur Dioxide on the maple sugar industry and avoided all political references as to why such a state of affairs exists.

The performance was staged like a 40's/50's musical, the floor littered with tree-trunks and two performers: a fiddler and a male tenor. The singer, John McKeown co-wrote the song, "The Lament of The Sugar Bush Man" with Abrams and sang in a form of operatic country — a trained country voice.

The enormous backdrop was filled with a perfect blue sky interrupted by a couple of small puffy clouds. The man could sing, the fiddler could play and the aesthetics were alluring: not unlike aspects of Laurie Anderson's work where the formal presentation overrides the content or becomes the message. It was also somewhat like early Spielberg films where the continuous dissolving between ideal social and material constructs somehow tastes like the fountain Coke you happen to be slurping.

It is a question of aesthetic bias. The lyrics to the song were like Coke. So successful was the musical form or the style and content of the musical that its irony polluted its politics with much the same effect as acid rain.

KRISANTHA SRI BHAGGIYADATTA: THE ONLY MINORITY IS THE BOURGEOISIE

Krisantha is a well-known poet and political activist and co-author (with Dionne Brand) of *Rivers Have Sources, Trees Have Roots*, a book on racism. This was his first 'art-Performance' and as he half-jokingly said, who could turn down \$1000? He walked on stage chased by a follow spot and not unlike Richard Pryor, ribbed the event and his inclusion. He then proceeded to give a slide lecture with soundtrack on the "glories of modern business advertising." It was a history lesson alter-

natively making people laugh, and stopping the same laughter with, "Do You Think That's Funny?"

Bhaggiyadatta saves his real attacks for modern 'democratic' fascism, but can't resist easy jabs at white people, the middle class and artists. "The middle class always think they create art. In fact they create nothing but trouble. Because basically they're the buffer between us and the bourgeoisie."

The piece started with the National Anthem, a slide of CBC's National and

Below:
Krisantha Sri Bhaggiyadatta

Bottom:
Makka Kleist

Cheryl O'Brien



Cheryl O'Brien



a news intro on "freedom." Bhaggiyadatta defined the origins to the word 'ethnic' — the hordes outside the gate, and named the various policing agencies in Toronto, estimating their combined size as being 1/4 million people, and the largest 'ethnic group' in the city.

Like other Black writers, Bhaggiyadatta is a detailed political and media historian, history being the sane anchor point in the white-dominated media world. "People refer to it as the 'Third World' when we actually occupy four-fifths." Apart from de-constructing business section advertising ("where the real news is"), military products, investment opportunities and the unrequested exportation of white know-how — it was his ad libbing that prevented his "proposition" from becoming another stand-up academic exercise.

(Erasing the Black Panthers)
"You remember Edgar Hoover? Mr. Hoover was the founder of that big vacuum cleaning company, sucking out all the dirt in America."

(The Pope and Mother Teresa)
"If you could get them married on TV you could call it Jive Aid. What are these two East Europeans doing in Calcutta? She helped approximately 18 people in Calcutta and there's 5 million more on the sidewalks."

(Colonizing space. Mankind's dream)
"That's what I always dream about. Taking Mars. Don't You?"

(We make the landing gear for most of the free world's aircraft)
"Do you know the difference between a 'free-world's' aircraft and a non-free-world's aircraft? It's very important if you are Black, because a free-world's aircraft is coming to drop its bombs on you."

"The World Bank and the IMF are known as international financial policemen. They can arrange a coup d'etat or famine from Beirut to Pretoria."

"Foster Parents Planning of Canada. That's a multinational kidnapping organization that takes care of the 'insufficiencies' of Black motherhood."

Bhaggiyadatta uses political content in his art because he is in politics to win. It provides a useful contrast for those of us who get embedded in the 'reality' of Canadian politics where face-to-face confrontation is considered the quickest way of losing support. Bhaggiyadatta doesn't get side-tracked, and has no interest in trying to reform the liberal unreformable.

MAKKA KLEIST: THERE WAS AN OLD WOMAN

Makka Kleist's Performance is based upon a central figure in Inuit mythology — Mother of the Ocean. Kleist, an Inuit actress from Greenland, co-wrote the script with Larry Lewis who also directed the piece.

It starts with the legend in which Sassumap Arna surfaces in Lake Ontario. The stage is occupied by a hanging rope on one side and a pile of office furniture on the other. "When people on land are doing something wrong to each other, or to nature it goes down to the Mother of the Ocean as dirt/shit in her hair."

Dramatized by live digitized key-

boards and tape, Kleist moves her story into multiple character roles: a bag lady, a cleaning woman, a clerical worker, a beauty products manager and an aggressive corporate president. Kleist includes the process of integration into the workplace and dominant culture, providing odd moments of humour deflected off racial stereotypes.

Kleist's energetic work is assisted by a wide range of far-reaching emotional deliveries. The piece is part ritual, part traditional theatre, with Kleist breaking both sets of predictable traditions at will.

JOHN GREYSON: YOU TASTE AMERICAN

This piece defies condensed description because Greyson typically bombards you with both documentary and docudrama fiction. On stage, Greyson was accompanied by Colin Campbell, David

Roche and Michael Balsar in a series of scenes that included necking, weeping, stripping as well as (film) auditions for portrayals of Tennessee Williams and Michael Foucault.

**1001 NIGHTS:
Joseph Workman Theatre**

This theatre was large with a well equipped stage, catwalk, sound and lighting system, with formal seating to accommodate maybe 250 people. The first night had performances by Rhonda Abrams, Krisantha Sri Bhaggiyadatta and Makka Kleist.



Marcia Cannon

You Taste American was written around the washroom sex arrests in six Southern Ontario towns and cities. The projection screen at various times contained male anatomical drawings, newspaper clippings and Greyson's cartoon drawings of the economics of the fruit growing industry. (Some of the arrested were seasonal workers.)

Written into the performance were videotaped fictional portrayals of Foucault and Williams describing their experiences in the washroom raids where (in a clashing of ideologies) they get to meet each other. There are also intermittent clips of Williams' film *Suddenly Last Summer*. Greyson's focus on male gay politics and gay iconography has resulted in many excellent Performances and videotapes including the *Kipling Trilogy* and *Perils of Pedagogy*.

Greyson has also produced videotapes on agricultural reform in Nicaragua and farmworker unionization in Ontario. It's therefore in keeping when under a section titled: "Culture and Agriculture" he has Foucault saying, "Think of the CBC as a Heinz factory struggling to meet its quota; think of Gord Lightfoot as a field tomato who gets pulped by the paste processor."

Interpreting exactly what Greyson means by his dexterous cross-fertilizations is often difficult in one viewing. Instead you remember camped-up songs like "Snowbird" (the weeping scene) with kleenex tissues being dropped on the audience from the catwalk. Greyson's art: political education and entertainment is effective due to his considerable skills as a graphic artist, writer and cinematic director. A lot of *You Taste American* is time spent entertaining the audience which, depending on the way you look at it, either gets in the way of the central story or helps its digestion.

LILLIAN ALLEN: LET THE HEART SEE

Allen's performance was essentially a reading of a long narrative poem through two microphones, one to amplify her voice, the other for vocal processing (dub effects, chorus and flanged voice). I have mixed feelings about this particular piece. It works better listening to a recording of it, where it becomes a functioning intimate experience. Live, the processing transformed the narrative into an improvisational soundwork — from which more is to be gained doing it, than listening to it being done.

I have had the pleasure of seeing Lillian doing a variety of performed work including live funk versions of older poems from her new album. I have also heard tapes of her jamming with younger West Coast musicians sounding not unlike Patti Smith, as well as the work for which she is popularly known. Lillian's performing skills, her extensive range of voices — from yardstyle to Anglo-Parisian — match her exceptional writing abilities. Even Lillian

Allen as Jane Cortez (which is what *Let the Heart See* invoked) is welcome, but this Performance venue, at least on the night I was there, did not work to her advantage.

Let the Heart See could've been helped by letting the eyes work. A series of slides paralleling the literary imagery would have been a welcome accompaniment. Normally, Allen's presence is reciprocated by the audience's immediate response. Here the huge stage and the event — Performance Art — created an unnecessary and untypical barrier. Being disappointed is not so bad, as Allen's successes create substantial expectations. This event did allow her an opportunity to experiment outside of her own familiar territory of concerts, readings and benefits. That in itself is justification.

"Sometimes we fight like hell to survive. Most times we dream that the fighting is through."

MARCIA CANNON: JANE OF THE GRAPES

Unfortunately, the one performance I didn't see was Marcia Cannon's *Jane of the Grapes*, a story of a white woman in South Africa that closes with the song "Born Free." The video documentation I watched of the work also suggested that Cannon was somewhat swallowed by

the large stage and formal setting. Cannon, a tough performer whose work is seen at speaks and benefits, is an invaluable asset to the Performance community.

Clive Robertson

TORONTO, WE HAVE EIGHT DAYS TO SHOW WE CARE.

The Toronto Arts Against Apartheid Festival is a celebration of freedom. You'll experience eight days of theatre, music, dance, art, poetry and discussion, designed to offer insights into the issues surrounding apartheid and celebrate international equality and social justice. Join us — and be a part of an extraordinary event that is helping to shape a better future. Speak out. South Africa will hear us.

DAY ONE: SUNDAY, MAY 25.

"IDILI" — Celebrity Brunch with Hon. Alvin Curling, Ona Fletcher, Mike Williams and Noelle Richardson. Jamaican Canadian Association Bldg. 11 AM, 1621 Dupont St., 535-4476. Tickets: \$10; \$5 for Youth & Seniors.
ARTS AGAINST APARTHEID GALA with Margaret Atwood, Timothy Findlay, R.H. Thomson, John Neville, Rudy Webb and Salome Bey. Royal Alexandra Theatre 8 PM, 593-4211. Tickets: \$25, \$18, \$12 at BASS.
FILMS OUT OF AFRICA including "Graves at Dimbaza", "Woza Albert", "We Have Struck a Rock", "Crossroads/South Africa", "Boesman & Lena". Art Gallery of Ontario, Jackman Hall. For show times call 977-0414. May 25 through June 1. Free admission. Donations accepted.

DAY TWO: MONDAY, MAY 26.

ALWAYS AND FOREVER with The Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Desrosiers Dance Theatre, Dance Theatre of Harlem, National Tap Dance Co., The National Ballet of Canada and The Studio Dance Theatre. O'Keefe Centre, 8 PM, 365-9744. Tickets: \$75 \$50 \$35.50, \$25.50, \$20.50 at BASS.
POETS AGAINST APARTHEID with Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones), Jane Cortez, Pedro Pietri and The Dub Poets. The Bamboo Club, 9 PM, 312 Queen St. W., 593-5771. Tickets: \$14 at BASS.

DAY THREE: TUESDAY, MAY 27.

"ASINAMALP" — a play by the Market Theatre of Johannesburg. Toronto Workshop Production Theatre, 8 PM, 12 Alexander St., 925-8640. May 27 through June 1. Tickets: \$14 at Box Office or BASS.
HARBOURFRONT READING SERIES with Mazizi Kunene, Ian Adams, Dionne Brand and Beth Jankola. Harbourfront, The Brigantine Room, 8:30 PM, 364-7127. May 27 through June 1. Free admission. Donations accepted.

DAY FOUR: WEDNESDAY, MAY 28.

CLUB NIGHT — various well known blues, rock, jazz and calypso clubs throughout the city, including Bamboo, Cameron, Rivoli, Horseshoe, Bluenote, The Diamond, Copa, El Mocambo and Mardi Gras. 9 PM. Produced by Jonwrite Productions. Tickets: \$10 at BASS.

DAY FIVE: THURSDAY, MAY 29.

"THE BLOOD KNOT" — a play by Athol Fugard, presented by Theatre Fountainhead. Alumni Theatre, 8 PM, 70 Berkely St. W., 363-7273. Tickets: \$12; \$8 for Youth & Seniors.

DAY SIX: FRIDAY, MAY 30.

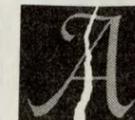
BISHOP DESMOND TUTU DINNER with Bishop Desmond Tutu, Premier David Peterson, Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, Harry Belafonte and U.N. Ambassador Stephen Lewis. Metro Convention Centre, 7 PM, 597-8222. \$100 per plate. \$1000 per table.

DAY SEVEN: SATURDAY, MAY 31.

FREEDOM CONCERT hosted by Harry Belafonte joined by internationally known Candian and American performers and a special appearance by Bishop Desmond Tutu. Presented by Concert Productions International. Tickets: T.B.A.
RALLY AGAINST APARTHEID with speakers Bishop Desmond Tutu and Robert White, President of U.A.W.—Canada. Simcoe Street and University Avenue 10 AM, to Queen's Park for rally at noon.
EDUCATION & THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID with Dame Nita Barrow, Yusef Saloojee and Enid Lee. Trinity St. Paul Church, 3 PM, 427 Bloor St. W., 924-6607. Free admission.
TWO DANCERS, AN EVENING OF INDIAN CLASSICAL DANCE with Rina Singha and Janak Khenry. Hart House Theatre, 8 PM, 978-8668. Tickets: \$9; \$7 for Youth & Seniors.
"BORDERING ON MADNESS OR WHO'S TORY NOW" by Second City. The Old Firehall, 8 PM, & 11 PM, 863-1111. Tickets: 10.50.
YOUTH FORUM ON RACISM Convocation Hall, 1 PM. For further information call 591-1179. Free admission.

DAY EIGHT: SUNDAY, JUNE 1.

THE BISHOP TUTU INTER-CHURCH SERVICE led by Bishop Tutu. St. Paul's Anglican Church, 4 PM, 227 Bloor St. E., 961-8116.
WOMEN AND POVERTY IN THE 80's — with Leah Tutu, Dr. Kapu Desai and Marilyn Kane. City Hall Chambers, Toronto City Hall, 1 PM, 920-5338. Daycare is provided.
TCHO CHO LOSA — FREEDOM TRAIN with Kim & Jerry Brodey, Quammie, Adhri Zhina, Alec Gelcer and Patricia Wynter. The Children's Book Store, 1 PM, 690-8470.
AFRO-HEAT — SOUNDS OF THE PEOPLE with Letta M'bula, Caiphus Semanya, Leroy Sibbles, Sonny Okosuns and Amandala. Produced by The Garys. Massey Hall, 7 PM, 598-4828. Tickets: \$25.50, \$18.50 at BASS. Massey Hall Box Office, Roy Thomson Hall Box Office, 593-4828.

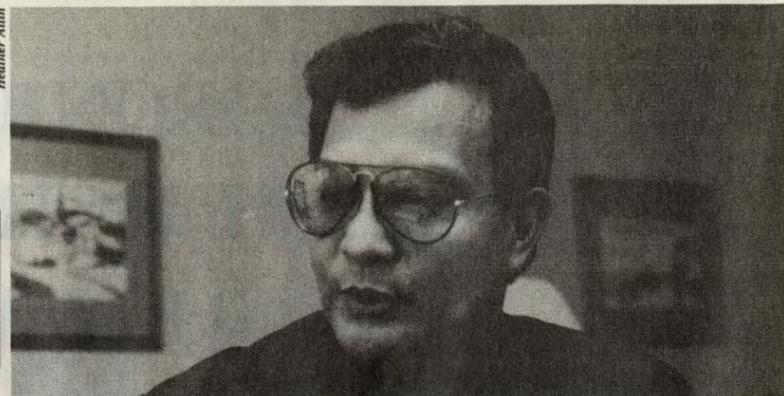


The Toronto Arts Against Apartheid Festival Foundation.
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(416) 591-1179
BASS: (416) 597-2300

SPEAK OUT. SOUTH AFRICA WILL HEAR US.

ON

FILM AND THE PHILIPPINES



Lino Brocka

This interview was done in September, 1985, five months prior to the ousting of Ferdinand Marcos from the presidency of the Philippines. Despite the political changes which have taken place in the Philippines, this interview provides a useful look at the Marcos regime and the historical forces — still in ferment — which brought about its overthrow.

Seeing the films of Lino Brocka in Toronto's Festival of Festivals last September and listening to this foremost Filipino director attack the Marcos dictatorship, it was not surprising that there were to be two cases, "leading an illegal assembly" and "inciting to sedition" pending against him when he returned to the Philippines.

Like his other films, *Maynila* and *Jaguar*, *Bayan Ko's* (*My Country*, 1985) political manifestoes are hidden in allegorical images. This film prescribes no solution and does not sermonize. Rather, it tells a story of Turing, a printer, whose only goal in life is to make a decent wage and live with his wife in dignity. However, forces around him he cannot as yet define, do not allow realization of these goals. Indebtedness forces the hero to scab at his strike-bound press, violence at the picket line costs him his job; his wife and their new-born child are held hostage for ransom by the hospital until Turing pays his bills. He is drawn irrevocably to alternatives offered by his slum environment — 'lumpen' violence. The law, which in the end kills Turing, is unjust. Brocka's allegorical treatment of the law is deftly disguised in a polite Police Colonel keeping order on the picket line, in nurses and doctors simply following directives while keeping his family detained and in a SWAT team brought in to protect the boss' property. Turing's form of struggle against this law ends in death, which changes nothing, but through it all Brocka hints at other forms of struggle — strikes, demos and marches — giving the sensation of a groundswell, something happening, suggesting that

the struggle of Turing need not end so badly.

In the past decade, Brocka has made more than 50 films; most of them are commercial so that he can support his more serious projects. In between filmings, he has been actively participating in the parliament of the streets. He is spokesman for the Concerned Artists of the Philippines (CAP), an organization of artists of varied disciplines which do not see artists as separate from the conditions surrounding them. CAP joined street protests against the bogus May 14 Elections. In his support for a transit worker's strike early this year, he was arrested on charges of subversion. His use of the Tondo slums as his film's center of gravity has earned the ire of Imelda Marcos who once lectured, "American films make everyone want to be American. Filipino films should make us all pleased to be Filipinos and should only reflect the good, the true and the beautiful." No one has been allowed to film Tondo since.

In 1982, the dictator Ferdinand Marcos issued Executive Order 868 empowering the Censors with jurisdiction over live art performances. Film producers were to relinquish the master negatives of finished films to the Board. The militant, US based *Ang Katipunan* (progressive Filipino newspaper) reported that Brocka turned up at the Philippine Academy Awards ceremony, not long after the decree, wearing a shirt emblazoned with the words "Ban the Censors." It is with the same anti-Marcos stance that he broke the law by spiriting the master negative of *Bayan Ko* to the Cannes

Film Festival in May, 1984. I spoke with Lino Brocka in September, 1985 about many of these subjects.

Voltaire DeLeon: Is it true that *Bayan Ko* has been totally banned in the Philippines?

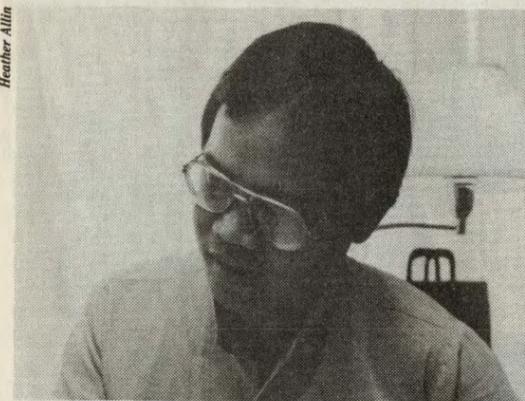
Lino Brocka: In the beginning, yes. The Censors did not want it shown at all, mainly because they were saying that first it was shown in Cannes without passing through the Board of Censors. We put up a fight. Our argument was that the film is a co-production, that it was not an entirely Filipino film. It was co-produced by a French company. There are a lot of films being co-produced in the Philippines by foreign companies. Even Interfil, a government agency — though they deny it — goes into a lot of co-productions and these films never pass through the Censors. Besides no foreign producer will agree to being subjected to censorship just because he makes use of the Philippines as a location for shooting. And, of course, the Philippine government encourages filming there because it would mean revenue and employment for a lot of people. So they have been very lenient towards foreign co-productions in the Philippines.

VD: Has *Bayan Ko* been shown locally in the Philippines?

LB: No, it has not. It has been premiered by some cause-oriented groups after given the permit to "exhibit," but it has not had any commercial exhibition. There were two decisions made by the Board of Censors. Let me clarify that. They wanted the song, "Bayan Ko" [the protest anthem of the anti-

An interview with

by
Voltaire
de
Leon



Voltaire DeLeon

LINO BROCKA

Marcos dissenters] cut out, the title changed and many things cut, otherwise they would not allow it to be shown. It was tantamount to banning the film. If we agreed to that then what would have been left of the film? Nothing. They would have mutilated it completely. So we filed a suit at the Supreme Court. This was the first time that a movie company filed a suit at the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court did not want a precedent on this, so they released the film.

VD: Does this mean now that you can commercially release *Bayan Ko*?

LB: Well, in spite of the approval, the permit given by the Censors to exhibit came with a classification of 'Adults Only.' This time their reason was 'sex and violence.' Whereas before it was 'subversion.' That is precisely what we protest against...the fact that the Board of Censors decision is so arbitrary. It is so capricious and it is so whimsical. First it was subversion, inciting people to sedition, etc., etc. The second time, it became lasciviousness and so it's neither here nor there. This time the Supreme Court upheld their decision.

VD: What is it about *Bayan Ko* that provoked such interest from the Board of Censors?

LB: I think that it was sent to Cannes and that it was done by me.

VD: What about its content?

LB: As far as the content is concerned, they are making such a big thing out of it. A movie by Mike DeLeon (another Filipino director), *Stella L.*, had more political slogans in it. *Bayan Ko* is a melodrama, you know. I'm a little bit worried because people are expecting a political statement in the film. *Stella L.* got General Patronage classification from the Censors. With *Bayan Ko*, I think it's a case of harassment, pure harassment.

VD: Western critics have said that



From *Jaguar*, 1979

Courtesy of Ontario Film Institute



Courtesy of Ontario Film Institute

From *Kapit sa Patalim — Bayan ko (My Country)*, 1984

your film is a bit too extreme to represent reality and that the character is a bit of a caricature.

LB: I don't know about that. If this kind of criticism comes from the Western sector, then it only reflects the ignorance on the part of these critics in so far as the conditions back home are concerned. I mean, they should not be talking about things they don't know about. They have not been there, so they have not seen the conditions of these people. They have not been terrorized. They have not met the marines, the P.C. [Philippine Constabulary] and the military trying to demolish shanties and killing people. They have not gone through this, so they don't know what they are talking about. As a matter of fact, what I show in the film is very mild, because I have not shown a revolution.

VD: Will there be a day when Lino Brocka will make a film on revolution?

LB: I don't know, but what I'm saying is that the films I'm doing are very personalized. They focus on the life of a labourer, a peasant or a young man looking for his sweetheart in the city. In other words, this is the medium of cinema and I'm not talking about the whole country in that sense. I am high-

lighting the problems of a bigger level, on a bigger scope, by zeroing in on the problems of a particular couple. For instance, in *Bayan Ko*, when the leading character, trapped by the police in the hostage drama, asks for and is given time by the authorities to make an appeal through television, he starts talking for the first time about the plight of his fellow labourers. This person, who was not involved, not even part of the strike, not a member of the union, now suddenly starts talking about the problems of the unemployed. So people are wondering why? Probably because in his own simple way, he realized that the solution to his own particular problem depends on the solution to the bigger problems; that the reason why he has his problems is because there is a problem in the system that dominates him and this realization comes to him at the last minute.

Now, when critics say caricature, I can only... that makes me mad. Because if they talk about caricature, then they should see some of the Hollywood films. They should see *Rambo* before they start talking about my caricatures. The criticism I usually hear is that they (the films) are a bit too depressing. My only answer is that I

guess it is meant to be. The intent of the film is not to offer solutions, but to present the problem of injustice and oppression. And the next question is up to the people to answer when they say, "Oh, I can't take it." Why? I say, "Because it is so unjust, so unfair." Then I suppose the next question to ask them is, "What is fair, what is just?" And it is up to them to find out.

VD: You play the role of a catalyst for awareness by critiquing the kind of society responsible for oppression. At the same time, because of limitations, such as the Censors, you have to express your truth in metaphor. Do you think you have succeeded in making people understand your messages?

LB: I think so. People are sensitive. Back home, they know what you are trying to say. It can be done through a song, through a streamer. Filipinos are very sensitive to images and in this country you are not allowed to speak much, or to make very overt forms of expression. When martial law was declared in 1972, PETA [Philippine Educational Theatre Association], the theatre group which I belong to, had to resort to doing period plays. We had to make materials from the Spanish times, even pre-Hispanic, and, of

course, the people understood that the change was only in the form and the costumes. Performing artists are going back into traditional art forms to contemporize and reflect present conditions.

In the movies, of course, it's a bit limited because of the commercial pressure, but somehow you get by, you are able to sneak in one or two images and the people understand. That's the nice thing about the power of suggestion. On television, which is owned by the cronies of Marcos, one can show the colours of protest — red and yellow. A lot of production designers who are CAP [Concerned Artists of the Philippines] members do the set designs. You will see against a black background a profusion of yellow flowers, or on the performer's costume, yellow ribbons. People have become very innovative. In a situation where writers face libel suits, among other things, it's just amazing. It is limitless what people have been doing to show their protest.

VD: Students of art in the Philippines have for decades, under American and colonial tutelage, been told that art and politics don't mix, and that, if they do, we are treated with propaganda. Yet you and other artists have shown that art and politics can gel without resorting to poster-and-slogan. In fact, what you brought up about putting the question, confronting people with realities...

LB: Which you have to do because, in the first place, the source of my material is the people. Where else will I get my material? From America? I mean... it's got to be from my own surroundings. These are the people that I put on screen. It's the reality of their existence, their oppression that should be written about, talked about, sung about. When we organized CAP, the first declaration of principle states that we hold that artists are citizens of this country and as such must confront the issues facing society today. We hold that artists cannot distance themselves from the national and public mainstream. You have to be with the people. Otherwise, amidst all the 'salvagings' [military assassinations] and kidnappings, you will be painting the skies... [he laughs.] I have nothing against that, but what is your art serving? It should serve the people. It should communicate a people's anguish, their protest, without necessar-

ily going into propaganda. This is why in *Bayan Ko*, I refuse to have many slogans. It is not a political movie in that sense. What you will see is a couple trying to make a go at life, trying to fight, trying to survive with dignity against a system that exploits them, degrades them and humiliates them. How they fight back is my topic.

[The slogan] "Ibagsak" [Bring Down] or dismantle the US-Marcos Dictatorship, that's for the streets. I can say it in some other way. I think this is where artists are more effective. A singer and composer like Freddie Aguilar, one of the most popular folk singers back home, to dramatize, for example, the starving children of Blacks, writes a song about Blacks. He does not have to raise his fist. All he has to do is get his guitar and strum it and people understand the message. Right now, I think that's all we're trying to do — to sharpen the awareness of people, to make them see what their rights are. They are entitled to certain rights which have to be preserved at all costs. One man has taken these away with the help of the US government by force, by intimidation, by harassment and, by all means we must fight back. We have to get these rights back because these are the basis of the democracy. So there are many ways of doing it. Politicians are doing it by running for office [he laughs]. Others do it by carrying arms, going into the mountains, burning and fighting back. Still others do it by going into the streets and joining the parliament of the people.

VD: Two years ago, you were interviewed by Richard Fung for *Asiatic* magazine. You said you did not espouse violence because it gives the government the right to impose sanctions such as martial law. Have your feelings changed?

LB: What the government is waiting for is for you to espouse violence because the moment you do, they say, "Ah-hah! There, you see, it's coming from his own mouth. He is advocating revolution." So let's not fall into that trap. In some areas of the Philippines where people have no other choice because of heavy militarization and the atrocities committed by the military, what do you expect? You expect them to be like Gandhi? Definitely not.

VD: You were arrested recently. Can you tell us about that?

LB: I have two cases because of the

arrest: 'leading an illegal assembly' and 'inciting to sedition.' What could be worse than that? I think that is the height of subversion charges. The two cases are still pending. I was arrested together with about 40 jeepney transport strikers and sympathizers, but I was not the leader of the assembly. I was there with a support group — CAP — and members of PETA. We didn't initiate the strike. We didn't sponsor it. I was there as a member of the negotiating panel and our group were to put on some musical numbers while the picket was going on. I was arrested and detained after a violent explosion of a pillbox which I suspect was thrown in by them [the police], because they said it was one of the students who threw it. Why would the student throw it in our midst? It doesn't hold water. If a student threw it, it would be at the police. So we were arrested and imprisoned for about three weeks. Every week, we have a hearing on Wednesday from 2:00 to 5:00. To be able to go out, I need a court permit because I'm out on bail. The other case is 'inciting to sedition' which is a farce because as the lawyers would say, it's double jeopardy. Leading an assembly and inciting to sedition are the same thing. This is actually harassment.

VD: CAP — who comprises it and what are its goals?

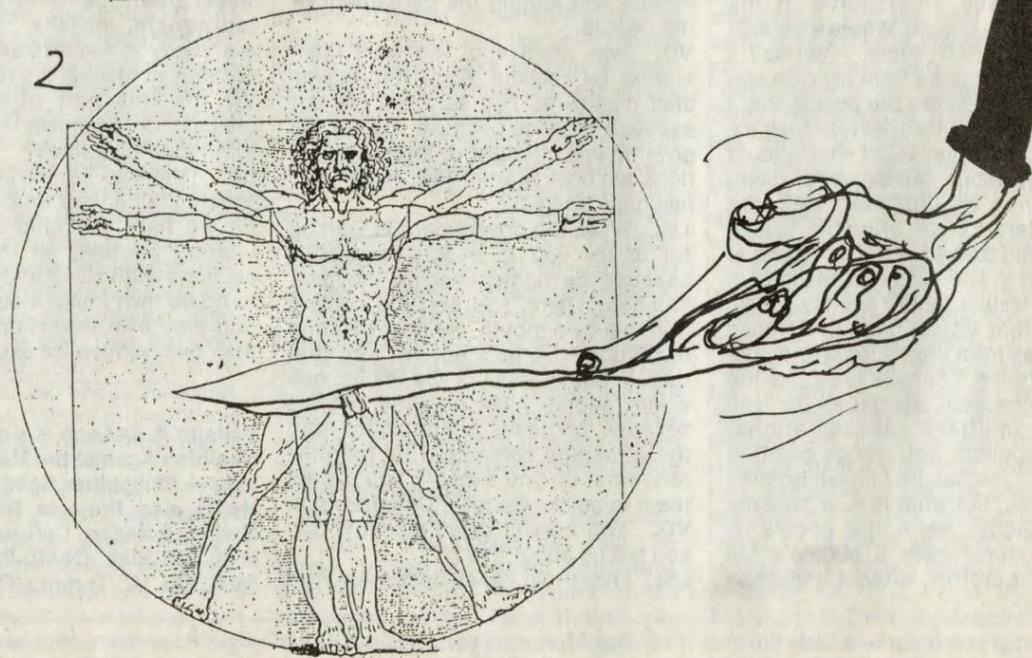
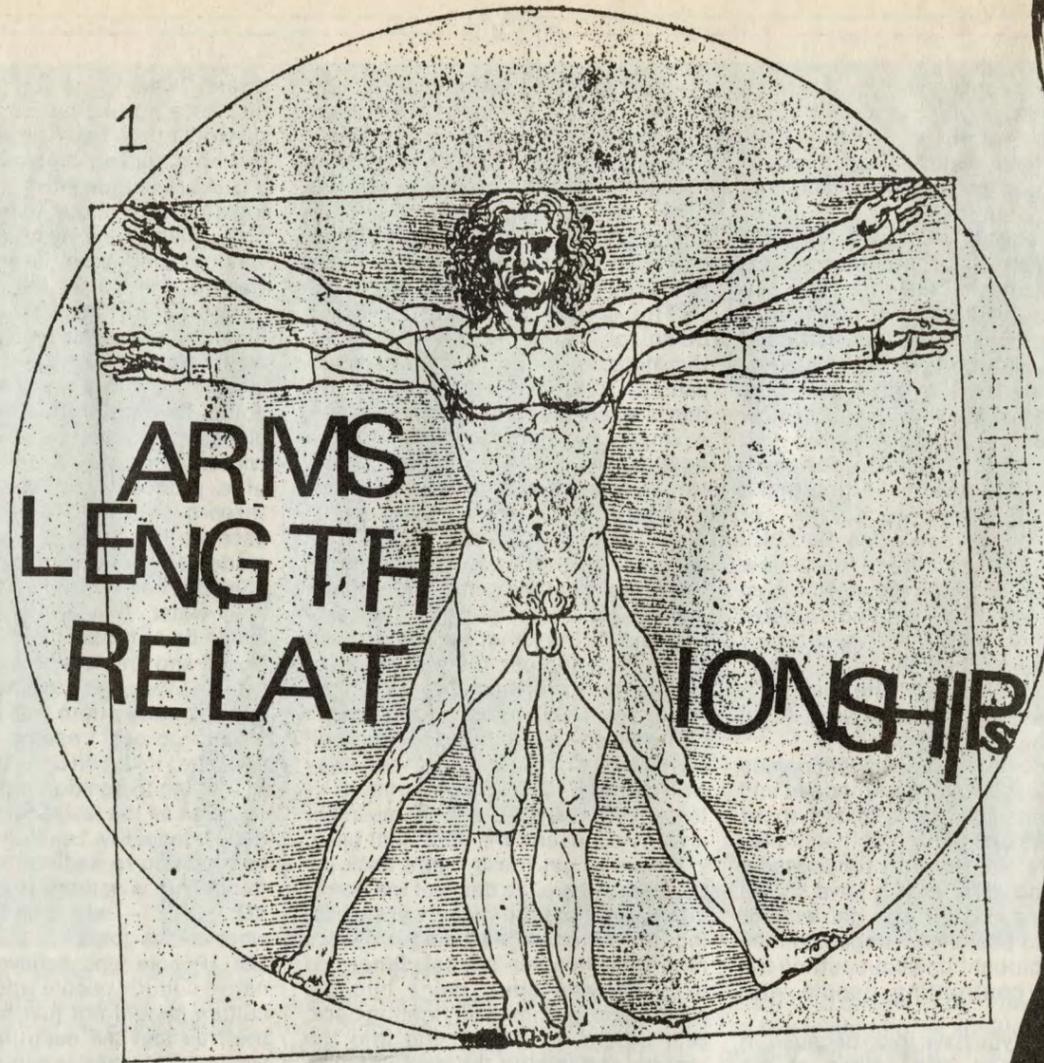
LB: People who believe in an alternative culture, people who believe that culture should not just be "the good, the true and the beautiful." We have visual artists, performers, people from journalism, writers... it's open to everybody in the arts and culture. It's not only in Manila. It's nationwide.

VD: Is this part of the new progressive development of the arts sector in the Philippines?

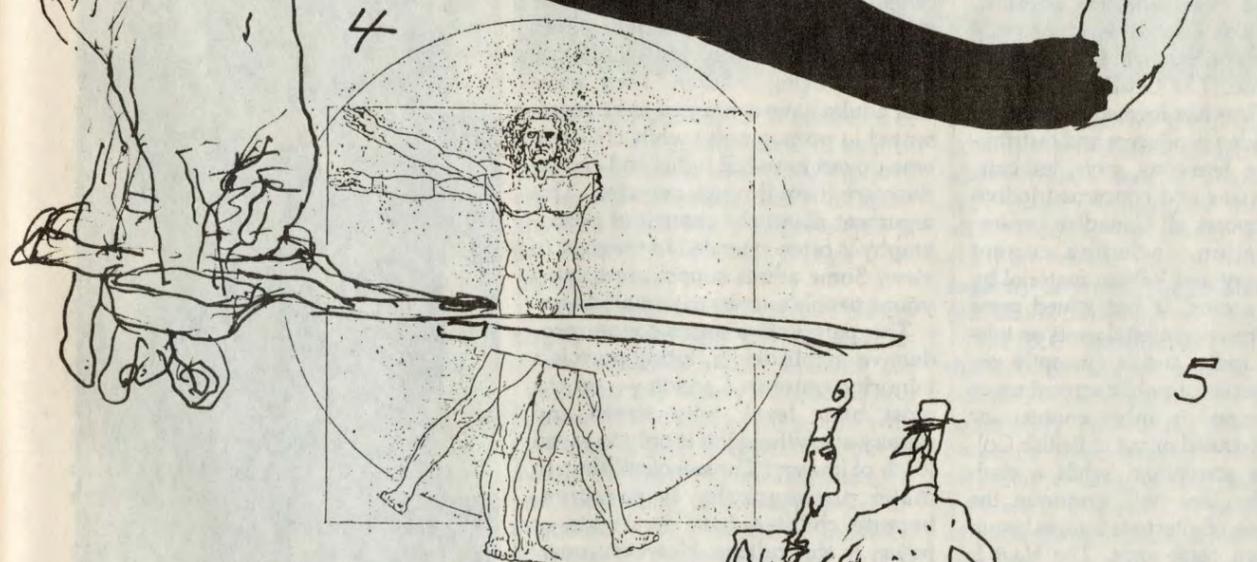
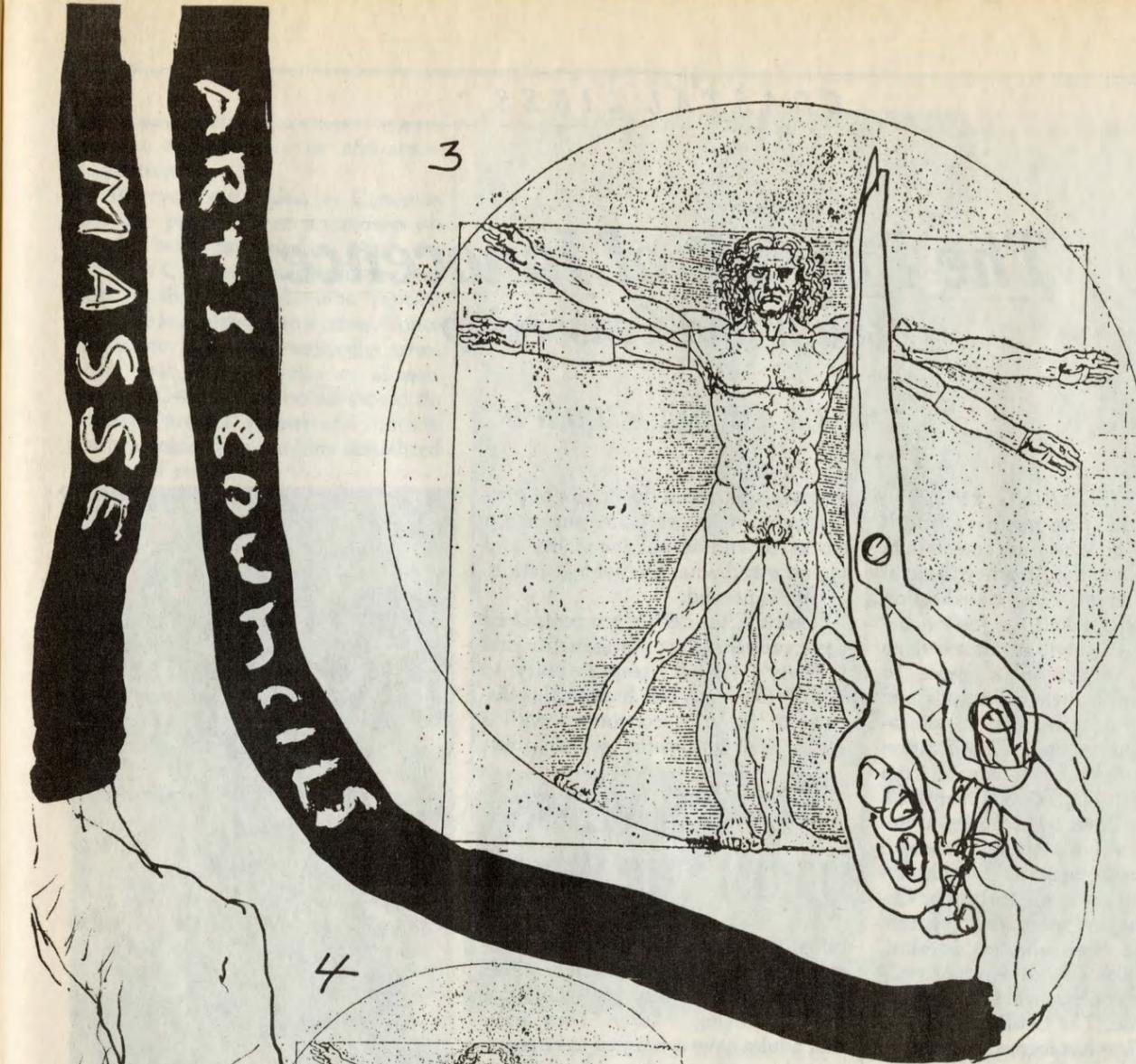
LB: I think so. For the first time we are forming alliances among ourselves. So we have the Music Section, the Literary Section, all these different sections within CAP and each one tries to do its own thing. Many are conducting their own workshops and finding their own venues for expression.

Voltaire R. DeLeon is a member of the Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship — Philippines Solidarity Network. He is also Projects Director of the Carlos Bulosan Cultural Workshop: (416) 923-3349, CAMD-PSN, P.O. Box 5505, Stn. 'A', Toronto, Ont. M5W 1N7.

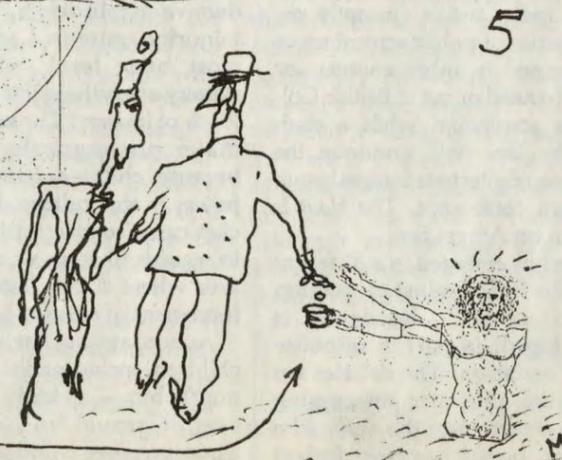
Lino Brocka can breathe a little bit freer now that Marcos is gone and sedition charges have been dropped. He can use his new-found freedom to help lead the Arts sector in the Philippines in protecting the gains of the new government and giving support to the drive to remove the last vestiges of fascism from Philippine society. He can continue to raise the people's consciousness through his films.



CENSORS



ARMS LENGTH ...
RELATIONSHIP



The Pursuit of Innocence

Youth and Censorship

SARA DIAMOND

WE ARE TEETERING ON THE brink of video censorship in British Columbia. The legislature convenes in mid-March, and the Attorney-General promises to enact video classification and censorship when the session begins. The new law will require all video distributors to take out a license, to submit tapes in their collections and those newly acquired for "classification and censorship." Classification will divide the "adult" material from video "appropriate" for youth or children to view. Several categories of images will be unilaterally censored: material that shows sexuality and coercion, "unnatural acts," torture or dismemberment, and sex involving youth. It is not yet clear whether historical, documentary or video art work or specific screening contexts will be exempted.

In response, *The Coalition For The Right To View* has formed, comprised of artists, video producers and distributors, writers, feminists, gays, lesbians, civil libertarians and concerned individuals. It opposes all Canadian censorship legislation, including current seizures of gay and lesbian material by Canada Customs. It has issued press releases, done educational spots on television and radio and is currently organizing a series of public screenings of material banned in other contexts or potentially banned or cut in British Columbia. The screenings, while a challenge to the law, will continue the dissemination of alternate images begun by the recent conference, *The Heat Is On, Women on Art on Sex*.

The issue has emerged in a different light than the fight against censorship in Ontario. In B.C., legislation is being developed, in part in response to feminist agitation. The debates are less about the abuses of an existing censorship board, for the B.C. film classification board has been lenient

to date, than about the nature of pornography, whether state censorship works to end sexual inequality and violence and what kind of legislation, if any, is needed.

Recently, the debate has centred on the treatment of youth sexuality and "society's" (adult) responsibility to youth. Emotions run high in this discussion, for it is concurrent with a series of high profile sexual abuse

NEWS & VIEWS FROM THE WEST

cases. Some people in the anti-censorship movement are now drawing lines between images involving adults and those involving children. They argue that adults have consented to be represented in pornography while children, who do not have full rights and obligations are there through coercion. This argument about the content of pornography is often extended to the right to view. Some adults support restricting young people's access to sexual images.

This perspective seems counterproductive. Realistically, kiddy porn is a minority genre in Canada — on the most basic level, why screen and classify everything if it is only to arrest .05% of images? The use of children to make pornography is coercive, because children have no rights or power in this culture. However, coercion can also exist within the industry in regards to adult women. This is the area where strong legislation and enforcement of existing laws are needed.

Action against the sexual abuse of children, including the making of pornography — already illegal — and against sexual and other violence against women is critical. No one in the

Courtesy of *Homemaker's* magazine, June 1984

anti-censorship movement argues against anti-violence or anti-abuse legislation.

However, embedded in Canadian law are punitive and misogynist attitudes towards sexuality. With the new law C-49, a woman or young person in the sex trade who reports violence is confessing to a crime. Police are more likely to eventually arrest them than their violator or abuser. Wiping C-49 off the books would do more to "protect" women and youth in the sex trade than banning sexualized images of youth.

The problem goes far beyond the issue of coercion. When the state talks about sexual images of young people it collapses images of sexuality between consenting youth and adults. It fails to differentiate in any way between commercial porn, imagery produced by young people — how unthinkable that they might fantasize about sex on their own — sex education resources, commercial and non-commercial writing, video and film that includes youth sexuality as a component. If the Fraser Commission report is implemented, young people (18 and under) in Canada will be banned from access to materials that reflects what they are for the most part already doing. Age of consent laws should be lowered so that they are realistic and cannot be used to harass sexually active young people.

In a recent report, James Check found that youth between the ages of 12 and 17 are the "primary consumers of pornography in Canada" and 37% of them watch sexually explicit videos at least once a month." Check warns in his study that youth are learning to rape and be violent by watching pornography. — Is he assuming the viewer to be male, despite recent American research indicating that women are the primary consumers of video porn? — He states that "students learn about the social and behavioural aspects of human sexuality from pornography."

This final statement reiterates what anti-censorship forces have long argued: **In the absence of sex education and a variety of erotica oriented to the youth market, young people will turn to pornography for information.** And if porn is their only source of information about sex, then it will have an important place in forming attitudes, especially when it corresponds with attitudes and behaviours learned at

Courtesy of *Photography Annual*, 1985 Edition

home and from adults in positions of authority. Accepting violence against women or rape as a fact of life is not a big surprise given the norms of family life/family violence/sexual violence in the society. It's no real change from my generation.

The solution is not to censor pornography but to make accessible alternative materials about sexuality for youth that are widely distributed and popular. It is to arm young people with the capacity to think critically about all media. We need to provide education and counselling in schools and communities. I have a nightmare in which educational resources about sexual abuse in B.C. are seized in the same way that *Not A Love Story* was banned in Ontario.

Nor is the solution the classification of video. Young people will continue to see video porn at home. Of course the state could consider arresting their parents for letting them view porn, but what about the sanctity of the family,

so often touted by the Social Credit government?! Restricted access, in the already taboo area of sexuality, will only make pornography more desirable. Banning all sexual images of children would further restrict the capacity of young people and supportive adults to discuss sexuality.

The B.C. government reminds us that 51% of the adult population is opposed to sex education in the school or community. No wonder young people consume pornography! Maybe it's time that we asked young people what they want and need in terms of sex education, entertainment and information and give them the resources to develop it. In the meantime, we need to resist all forms of state censorship, including classification.

Sara Diamond

To contact C.R.T.V., write to: P.O. Box 69376, Station K, Vancouver, B.C. V5K 4W6.

Cultures in Contention

Left Off The Map Again

DON ALEXANDER

CULTURES IN CONTENTION

edited by Douglas Kahn and Diane Neumaier
The Real Comet Press, Seattle, 1985.

CULTURES IN CONTENTION GIVES an overview of recent left cultural work in the U.S., England, West Germany, Australia, Kenya, Nicaragua and Jamaica. It is typical and unfortunate that the book makes no mention of Canadian work.

As the editors note at the outset, 'culture' as it is used here, "is situated between, or rather, amid the anthropological and artistic senses. It is more specific than the anthropological because it deals with products and performances usually associated with the arts; at the same time...it is conceived from the very beginning in social and political frameworks."

The Changing Picture of Docklands, from a series sited on billboards in London's Docklands



Peter Dunn & Loraine Leeson

The book is useful because it tells us what 'cultural workers' are currently thinking and doing. Despite the variety of approaches, certain common themes emerge, perhaps the most important being the relationship between "oppositional culture" and affirmative culture, between a naming of self (identity-building) and a naming of the enemy (art as pedagogy).

Peter Dunn and Loraine Leeson, two artists associated with the *Docklands Project* in London, England, are definitely in the pedagogical camp. They have attempted to take a capitalist 'institution' — the billboard — and change its function from manipulatory to educational. Rather than aspiring to be an "ad agency for the left," Dunn and Leeson have worked hard to involve the com-

munity in determining the billboards' content and placement.

Begun as a "photomural" project in a section of London slated for redevelopment, Dunn and Leeson involved working class and community groups in the issues to be profiled and in siting the final product. Though dedicated to exposing the social forces behind the destruction of this working class neighborhood, the billboards became a focus for community solidarity. An interesting anomaly which helped make the project possible was the significant autonomy of the Greater London Council (GLC) — the official governing body of the city — which permitted Dunn and Leeson to get sympathetic funding. The local councils are an invaluable counterweight to the central government, and are now being dis-

mantled by the Thatcher government.

In "Paper Tiger Television," Dee Dee Hallack profiles efforts to subvert another dominant medium — television. Taking advantage of local cable access, a loose-knit group of left-wing media workers in Manhattan have come together to produce "Paper Tiger," a weekly show dedicated to critiquing the media. Rather than attempting to compete with the slicked-up production values of this most manipulatory medium, the Paper Tiger crew have opted for turning a limitation into an advantage. Their shows are patently low-budget, and make the viewer feel like ordinary folks were involved in its production. By making the production process transparent, the producers seek to overcome technical mystification, and a distancing of producer from consumer. Local access cable is a mainstream medium with a marginalized audience. Nonetheless, if a lesson can be taken from Tetsuo Kogawa's "Free Radio in Japan," it would seem that structuring community participation into cable usage itself would insure a greater audience. Community self-representation would replace "fake TV," providing a greater drawing card.

This theme of people as producers is taken up by Ernesto Cardenal in his speech, "The Democratization of Culture in Nicaragua." Cardenal describes how manifestations of popular cultural self-activity were dealt with harshly under Somoza. Rather than impose a new culture on people, the Sandinistas have stressed the rebuilding of people's own culture. In these works, the emphasis is on self-naming. Developing participatory folk forms is given as much emphasis as ensuring 'radical' content. The methodology suggested by this is one of 'releasing' pent-up cultural ambitions and helping people to actualize their own culture, rather than imposing cultural correctness. This suggests that people's own cultural forms are the foundation and potential source of a culture of emancipation.

This same faith in people's own capacity for self-organization is reflected in Ross Kidd's "Popular Theatre in Kenya" (published in *FUSE* in two parts, Spring 1984 and Summer 1984). Kidd describes how villagers in the community of Kamiriithu, with the assistance of a playwright and an adult

educator, built up their own theatre company and involved community residents in scripting and production. The final product functionally obliterated the distinction between people as producers and consumers of culture. People were able to draw on their own traditions (such as *Harambee* — mutual aid or cooperation), which had been perverted by the rich, and revitalize them to meet their current needs.

Judy Baca, well-known Chicana muralist, is less sanguine about the possibilities for 'leaderless' decision-making. That notwithstanding, her work in the barrios and neighborhoods of L.A. is a testament to the impor-



Ernesto Cardenal, Nicaragua's Minister of Culture

tance of self-production in the formation of popular culture. People have an intrinsic need to see themselves reflected in their environment, yet currently cities are structured to preclude community self-expression. "The group of people I was working with was very connected to and influenced by visual symbols — in tattoos, in the kind of writing that went on in the street. Nothing of the architecture or visual symbols reflected the presence of the people — other than the graffiti." For Baca, art is not merely a matter of 'class consciousness' or 'ethnic identity' — it is central to the process of humanization itself.

"I always had the feeling that art was a celebration of the senses, that it was a place we kept asking people to make a leap, keep it all together, and just let something happen to themselves in a real sensual way."

SPARC (Social and Public Art Resource Centre)



The Great Wall of Los Angeles, detail 1981 section

Honor Ford-Smith, director of *Sistren*, describes (in an article reprinted from *FUSE*, Nov./Dec. 1981), the importance of using theatre to foster identity and individual/collective empowerment. While Ford-Smith underlines the role of "dialogue" and "reflection" in their work, *Sistren* has also made use of African ritual, recognizing that symbols and movements can be a reservoir of knowledge and strength.

Bernice Johnson Reagon of *Sweet Honey in the Rock* cites congregational singing as the inspiration for her work. Although traditional spirituals carry a reactionary message, the music itself is often a vehicle for the affirmation of "creation, celebration, and unleashing of communal power." This in contrast with the almost obsessive focus on reaching the intellect which characterizes many white producers. By contrast, Reagon seems to have grasped the "layering effect" of capitalist conditioning whereby ideology, values,

Isabel Harry



Sistren Theatre Collective, from L to R: Beverly Elliot, Rebecca Knowles, Vivette Lewis



Our BUGA UP Is Here. The beer can was readily changed into a spray can.

symbols, feelings and needs are colonized by a culture which penetrates into its subjects very souls.

But what becomes of the spirit of resistance when the traditional cultural forms become 'obsolete'? In an epoch where television has replaced the jazz club or the church, where tradition is no longer transmitted by oral means or, at most, by a popular literature, where is the cultural seeding device which can maintain the continuity of lived experience? In his interview with Kofi Natambu of the journal *Solid Ground*, well-known jazz artist Archie Shepp laments the lack of attention to

what he calls "cultural nationalization." According to Shepp, Blacks have never secured control over the means of cultural production, and therefore their ability to control the use of their cultural product and to maintain a sense of cultural continuity has been lost.

Thus, a split emerges between those who would use the existing cultural institutions and those who would create their own. The strategy outlined by Lacy and Leibowitz in "Feminist Media Strategies..." is dependent entirely on enticing mass media to play a complicit part in broadcasting the feminist cul-

tural message. Klaus Staeck, a West German artist, has adopted mass techniques like posters and post cards but controls the production process himself. Hans Haacke aspires to reach a mass audience, but contents himself with the knowledge that the boundary between the art world and the public is a permeable one, and that "seepage" from one to the other is bound to occur. For Peter King of the Australian graffiti group, *BUGA UP*, the resources of the consciousness industry can be put out of commission by turning them against their original purpose.

In sum, "there is no single route" to cultural democracy. As Lucy Lippard notes, our notion of 'political art' has to expand to avoid "promoting any single style" and has to include work which opposes the status quo through a variety of possible methods: "experimental form, visual analysis, community outreach, or directly agitational imagery." In criticizing "apoliticism," we should be careful in demanding a purely educational role for art. Political analysis and the unconscious expression described by Reagon and Baca are inter-related, but separate realms. Each gives support to the other without merging their respective identities. To quote the Situationists, should the slogan be "Poetry in the service of the revolution" or "revolution in the service of poetry," "every artist a cultural worker," or "restore to work its artistic function."

The crucial issue is the interdependence of means and ends. The "cultural democracy" we desire can either be achieved through top-down coalition-building where the 'leaders' of various communities form a united front to legitimize themselves to their own constituencies, or it can occur through the bottom-up promotion of popular cultural expression. In contrast with Fred Lonidier's assertion that "Radical art is a small-shop home industry taking on the multinational conglomerates for the allegiance of the masses," I would argue that radical art is a process of self-naming. To quote Kahn and Neumaier, "...to be truly affirmative, there must be a continual recognition of the source of subjugation and identification of that source as part of a system which subjugates others," but this is largely the task of the political discourse which accompanies art, rather than of art itself.

Don Alexander

MAY/JUNE 1986

NEW PRODUCTIONS

NO SMALL CHANGE: THE STORY OF THE EATONS STRIKE — Produced by EMMA productions; *No Small Change* gives a first time look at the experience of women retailer workers during the historic Eaton's strike of 1985. The video producers spent a year shooting this tape on the picket lines, at strike support meetings, rallies and at strikers' homes. A warm rapport is established with the women, and the producers allow them to speak for themselves. The Eaton's strikers describe what it was like for them to be on the picket line for the first time, the difficulties in dealing with a male dominated labour hierarchy, as well as the frustrations they felt as negotiations started and the "Boycott Eatons" campaign failed to take effect. Though the union ends up with an inadequate contract, the Eaton's women see themselves as part of the women's movement.

CHINESE CAFES IN RURAL SASKATCHEWAN — Produced by Anthony B. Chan; *Chinese Cafes* is a 26 minute documentary which unlocks the doors of Chinese cafes in small town and country Saskatchewan. It looks at the people behind their businesses and the cafes in their communities. *Chinese Cafes* was produced to widen our understanding of race relations in North America, foster our knowledge of rural people and to bring out the multifaceted dimension of Chinese people in North America.

CHINESE CHARACTERS — Produced by Richard Fung, 21 minutes; An ancient explorer goes into the heart of China in search of the Yellow River. A young gay man heads off to the park for the ultimate sexual experience. *Chinese Characters* is a critical look at gay male pornography and popular notions of Chinese Culture. It is also about the power of their images to project themselves onto our ordinary experience. *Chinese Characters* attempts to break out of the tyranny of the general audience produced by broadcasting. It is not conceived as outreach on racism or homophobia. It doesn't assume the viewer is white or heterosexual. The tape is a personal communication to other gay men.

MOSCOW DOES NOT BELIEVE IN QUEERS — Produced by John Greyson, 27 minutes; The author went to

VIDEO NEWS

Moscow last summer as a gay delegate attending the 12th World Festival of Youth and Students. *Moscow Does Not...* "is a fake documentary, an eccentric diary, a calculated re-construction of those ten days in that overdetermined city." In this tape, one man tells a casual lover his festival stories while such disparate figures as Rock Hudson and Alexandra Kollantai are drawn into the discussion. The tape addresses the problems of linking sexual politics to a critique of soviet socialism. Yet ultimately, this tape is about Toronto, not Moscow: how we travel, how we perceive the world, how we shape a gay identity and politics from the contradictory fragment of a homophobic culture.

QU'EST CE QU'UN HOMME PEUT FAIRE — Produced by Clive Robertson; *Qu'est...* is a 25 minute videotape based on the performance, *In a Drunken Stupor* written and recorded in 1983, the same year that private/domestic violence became a widely-aired public issue. The tape incorporates found-texts in the soundtrack as a fictional device. Much of the performance dimension is not acting, but a re-enactment of the author's own violent history, including military training. This videotape functions as a male reminder of the need to fight institutional and state patriarchies and refutes any argument that supports the illusion of post-feminism.

HENRY KISSINGER WON THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE — Produced by Gary Kibbins; This 12 minute video tape is designed to address the complex and symbolic dimension of human shit. Yet rather than try to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, the tape represents the symbolic relationships people have toward their bodies without making any effort to resolve them. The ambiguous and contradictory attitude toward shit is openly portrayed as exoticness and banality, moroseness and humour, loathing and fascination, aggressiveness and acceptance and so on. Yet there are some, the Henry Kissingers and that ilk, who seek revenge on

nature for its tasteless joke of foisting shit on the purity of the mind, and whose deepest eliminative instincts are reinterpreted for that end.

NO VOICE OVER — Produced by Colin Campbell, 27 minutes; *No Voice Over* is a narrative which unfolds through the correspondence between the five characters. The three women are working on three different continents. Through audio and video tapes they keep in touch. Time, distance and tapes eventually prove to be barriers to communication. Messages arrive out of sequence and read in unfamiliar contexts. Instinct gives way to second guessing; intuition to logic. The tape details a series of visions or second-sight experiences that one woman has about the other. These events are disturbing and seem to contain some ominous portent, which remains unclear until the end of the tape, when it is revealed that the visions are in fact premonitions of Miranda's death.

FESTIVALS

THE 10TH SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN AND GAY FILM FESTIVAL — VHS and 3/4" videotapes may be entered to this festival. Contact FRAMELINE, P.O. Box 14792, San Francisco, Calif. for more information.

NYC EXPERIMENTAL VIDEO & FILM FESTIVAL — VHS or BETA entries only. Selected finalists will be included in a nationally distributed catalogue. For more info contact Hunter Yoder, Festival Director, 331 Smith St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11231.

THE FIFTH KIJKHUIS — WORLD WIDE VIDEO FESTIVAL — Enter 3/4" tapes to this large and well run video festival. Deadline for entries is July 1, 1986. For info and entry forms, contact W.W.V.F., Noordeinde 140, 2514 GP den Haag, Nederland.

NEWS

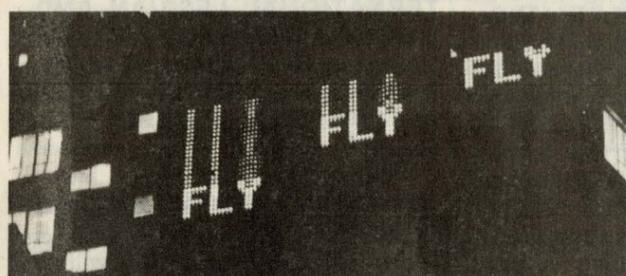
ART METROPOLE VIDEO — recently decided to cancel its contracts with its video artists in favour of a book store approach to video distribution. Art Met's plans include featuring a selection of artists' tapes intended for the home market at reasonable prices.

COMPILED BY KIM TOMCZAK, THROUGH THE SERVICES OF V/TAPE

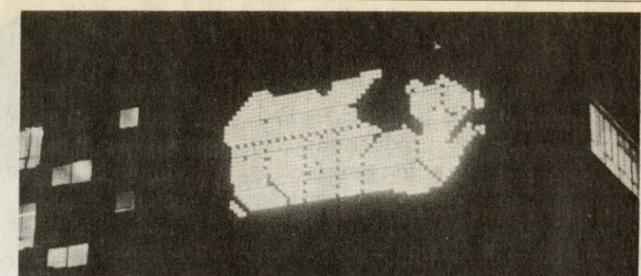
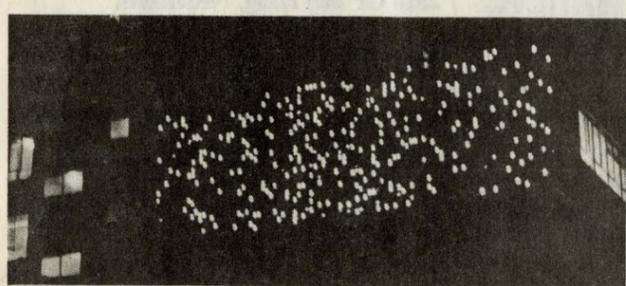




LESBIANS ON
YONGE
STREET



A Work by
Lynne
Fernie



There are currently at least three movies showing in mainstream theatres which treat gay and lesbian relations, and in some instances go so far as to depict them as if they were downright normal. That may be breathtaking in itself, in the context of a homophobic society, yet one still has to choose to see it consciously, and to lay down a fiver before gaining entry.

On the other hand, the unsuspecting civilian trudging north on Yonge Street might glance up to see the word 'Lesbians' spelled out in lights 20 feet high and 40 feet long — for free. There being nothing else in the immediate area quite so deserving of their attention, they doubtless would watch on to see the message in its entirety: Lesbians Fly Canada. Provocative and coy, the message vanishes like a dream, replaced by comforting information about cheap flights to Bermuda. The unsuspecting viewer stands transfixed, doubting their senses, though 7 minutes of extraordinarily banal advertising messages. Then, preceded by a disclaimer of sorts ('An Artist's Project for Public Access'), the message returns... "Private Desires, Public Sins," it says, "Lesbians Fly Canada."

Yet the civilian still did not see the message as it was originally intended to read: Lesbians Fly Air Canada. The sponsoring company, Electromedia, fearing reprisals from Air Canada, which it considers a potential client, refused to run it; and the three meetings with the organizing arts group Public Access were not enough to change the necessary minds. What the civilian saw was the compromise the artist made under protest, one which served to rescue a crown corporation from any association with *that word*, and which prohibited the project from challenging advertising texts. Nevertheless, *that word*, intervening into public space, was seen in 20 foot letters on Yonge Street, in lights, every 7 minutes for a week (April 21 to April 27).

Gary Kibbins



All photographs this page by Tom Taylor.

Cover photograph by Cheryl O'Brien

I JUST RECEIVED MY FIRST G.A.I.* CHEQUE OF \$24,000



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Jean Ius
24 Parliament Blvd.
Streetsville, Ont.
AOK

It's a good job I joined the Artists Union.

*For details consult "The Economic Status of the Artist: A Working Paper" prepared by the Independent Artists Union, in the next issue of Fuse.

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