

March 1980

FUSE

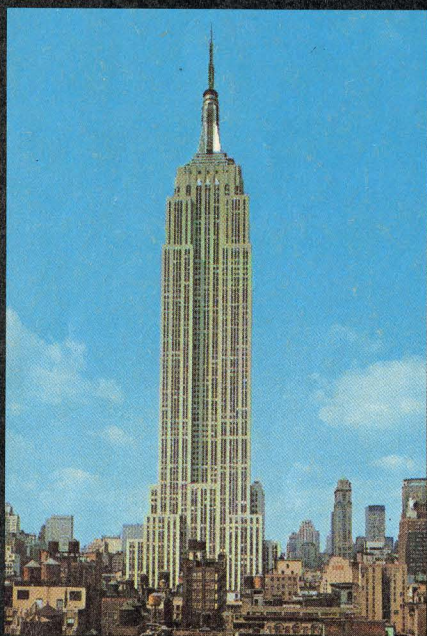
The Cultural News Magazine

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ECONOMICS
THE CRASH
OF
CREDIBILITY

VIDEO
PRODUCTION
IN A
TEST TUBE

In Poland, artists are well treated by the State but



Empire State Building

New York City

they obtain
this special
status at a
price. What
underlies the
common
lack of
social
effectiveness
in the art
of both



Palac Kultury i Nauki

Warszawa

WEST AND EAST?

RAISE HELL WITH MOTHER JONES!

Mother Jones is a magazine for the rest of us. For people who are barely surviving the age, who want—and expect—more. For people who are getting ready for the eighties. It's a kind of road map, compendium, home companion and provocation to thought—a catalogue of possibilities for yourself and the society that you won't find anywhere else.

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FUSE

MARCH 1980 VOLUME 4 NUMBER 3

THE CULTURAL NEWS MAGAZINE

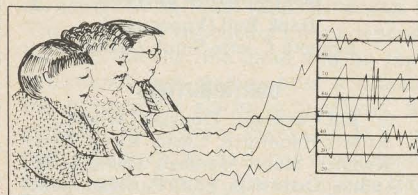
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How do immigrant workers learn English and still earn a living? This program has a practical solution.

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After three years, Franco-Ontarians got tired of waiting for the government. The result - an illegal high school.

Page 140

by Andrzej Ostrowski and Karl Beveridge

"Most of our understanding about art in 'eastern' countries is prone to misconceptions about the nature of those societies. This reveals that we view such art comparatively, either coloured by a conception of our own relative freedom, or from the vantage point of a developed industrial state. In other words, it is viewed from a position of 'advantage' and/or 'sophistication'." Breaking down the myth of the cultural superiority of the west allows a look at art production in Poland today - the similarities to and the differences from the west.

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Are there too many "foreign" students in Canadian schools? CTV network says yes - but the figures don't agree.

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When 'new age' predictions see only bigger and better hardware, one asks: Is this the future we want?

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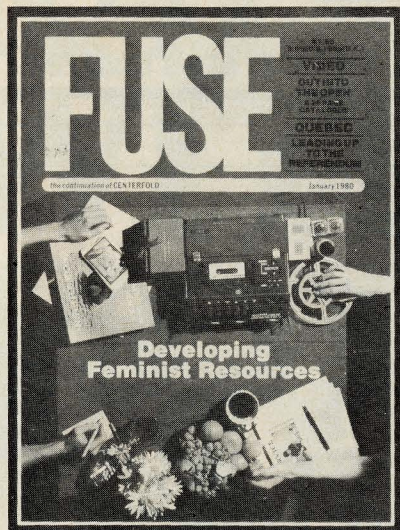
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LETTERS



Feminist Resources

Thank you for "Developing Feminist Resources", *FUSE* January 1980, in particular Elizabeth Chitty's article. What shaped up for me was a clearer picture of the conflict between trying to validate feminism by convincing greater numbers of people of its worth - felt as a pressure by many committed women - and trying to create a feminism that's alive on the leading edge of human activity. Running the risk of misinterpretation is a real danger in the sense of personal strength and persistence. Running the risk of banality is a bigger danger - the threat of absorption into the mainstream lurks everywhere, constantly.

We (women, artists,...) are playing with loaded issues, where part of the gamble, the choice of activity, is anticipating interpretation and reaction: acceptance/alienation, immorality/censorship, seriousness/satire. But who's ever been able to predict or control responses?

We can't play responses for a shift in values unless there's something tangible to respond to. Thank you for your enlightening discussion of some notable provocatrices.

Nell Tenhaaf, Montreal

A Request

I am doing research for a video tape on the subject of the social/political implications of institutionalized learning (schooling). In particular I am interested in hearing from women who have children who have been classified as 'exceptional children' - e.g. hyperactive, hypokinetic syndrome, maturation lag - etc. and most particularly anyone who has experience with drug therapy in the schools. All contact and discussion will be kept strictly confidential.

I am also looking for candidates for case histories of children to be utilised as documentary material in the production.

Any information, or experiences which you feel might contribute to this production would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Nancy Nicol, 620 Richmond St. 506, Toronto, Ont., or call 366-4029. Answers appreciated before March 30, 1980.

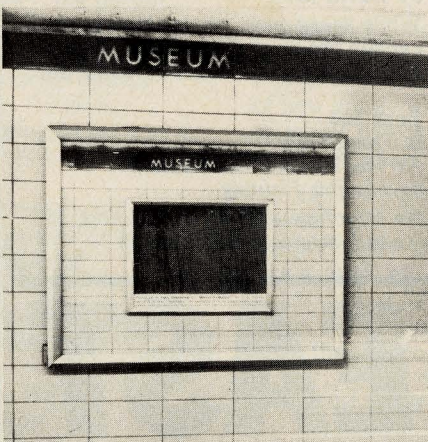
Re: Coppola Review

I found the review of *Apocalypse Now* the best review I have read to date on the film. I was also impressed by your coverage of immigration policy and practice. Keep up the good work.

*Marvka Omatsu, Toronto
Canadian Human Rights
Commission*

Rather Narrow

I read with great interest your review of A Space's "Art in the Subway" programme. *Station to Station*. George Legrady clearly has strong opinions about what is important in photography and seems to have given his response considerable thought. But by drawing conclusions from admittedly poor reproduction he is doing himself, your readers, and the potential audience for the exhibition a grave disservice. Mr. Legrady is of course entitled to his views, but to suggest that an exhibition lacks curatorial direction



because all the work does not fit his criteria, seems rather narrow. Had he taken the time to view the actual installations he might have noticed some environmental juxtapositions completely unplanned, but nevertheless functioning as a whole, outside the "language of publicity" within which he imagines everything must work. Editorial decisions were made with the knowledge that the imagery was to be dispersed (and also placed beside unknown quantities), so that there was a possibility for variety in both scope and approach. I believe that it was part of our mandate as well to provide some measure of relief from the onslaught of publicity images. While some installations may work more

FUSE

the continuation of Centerfold Magazine

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DESIGN

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PRODUCTION

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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Brad Harley

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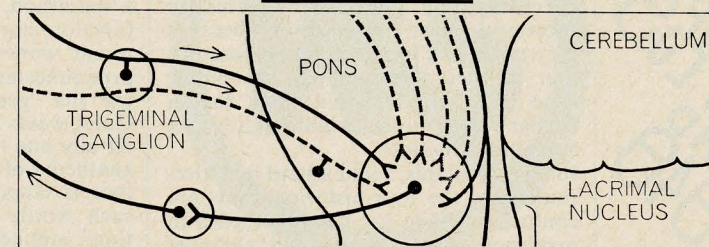
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SOURCES



It is very difficult to adequately criticize the mainstream media whether it's television, large circulation news magazines or national radio networks, without being specific. The nature of the media's dual dependency - on 'events' and 'sources' on the one hand and on the public on the other - determines that media abuse will take place with inevitable but nonetheless alarming regularity. So when the Canadian embassy in Tehran 'saves' six U.S. embassy staff, the TV networks and the national newspapers both cluck how Joe Clark and Jimmy Carter misuse the event as a "photo opportunity" and then inevitably proceed to validate and reinforce the same jingoistic space and time-filling gestures. Thus the media presents "both sides" at once - or if not at once, at least on consecutive nights. This ploy should never be mistaken for genuine self-criticism on the part of the media because it is not. The problem with criticizing these 'abuses' is that they are so structurally obvious, or at least they appear to be.

It is not so difficult to focus criticism on the media when one arm of the industry personally attacks you or your community. In this issue, Cheuk Kwan, a member of the editorial collective of *Asianadian*, refutes the *W-5* (CTV's Canadian version of *60 Minutes*) report entitled "Campus Giveaway". The report in essence stated that there were too many foreign students in Canadian universities, specifically too many Asian students. The implication was made that these "foreign" students were taking places away from Canadian students in Canadian schools and that something had better be done about this 'problem'. CTV's report was based on inaccurate statistics but more to the point - their position was clearly racist. A well-organised protest rally recently took place in Toronto and three thousand 'viewers' demonstrated their distaste for CTV's particular brand of "investigative journalism".

Ideological propaganda is more visible a result of mass media in other areas. So, for example, as David Mole illustrates in his essay "The Invisible Economy", where there's a 'mixed' economy, can a 'mixed' ideology be far behind? We are aware that *FUSE* should be dealing with specific subjects such as updates on taxation as it relates to cultural production but first we need to lift the veil off the economic face.

The print media bathes in the historical milk of its own importance. The New York Times uses the slogan "All The News That's Fit To Print", Rolling Stone cries "All The News That Fits" and The Globe and Mail (Toronto) shouts "You've got the vote, we've got the Information". In our feature, "Making The News Fit", Tim Guest and Martha Fleming look at *Life* magazine and *Newsweek's* version of The Seventies and find the usual distortions. In discussing this story editorially we ask, "What can be changed by such an

analysis?" The answer of course, is not much. One can be hysterical about the products of the mass media - but there could be little gained by suggesting for example, protective legislation. The culture as a whole has little protection from such propaganda. For you, the reader, we assume such media abuse is visible with or without our illustration. But wherever possible, we must begin to suggest definitive structural changes.

So where does this place our own prescriptive criticism? We do make choices. There is within the art community much work that doesn't warrant critical attention: its deficiencies are immediately obvious. We also do not criticize cultural works that either have no effect or no inherent 'power' structure to re-inforce its effect. Our cover story digs a little deeper. Why have foreign artists had reasonable access to Poland? Why do the Polish state authorities turn a blind eye to the Western avant-garde stylisms within their own borders? If such 'political' art as Contextualism is not of any political significance in Poland, how can it be considered radical in a much 'freer' West? "The Depoliticization of Art" corrects some mythological diversions without pretending that as societies Poland is "the same" as North America.

The production line of the mass media and mass culture are often synonymous. Most often there is a shared corporate ownership: record companies, television stations, magazines, newspapers can all appear under the same corporate genealogical tree. Some proof of this corporate 'oneness' is contained in the current issue of *The Canadian Journal of Communications* in a paper titled "The Treatment of State-Owned vs. Private Corporations in English Canadian Dailies." The article details a survey of nine daily papers (44 per cent of total English Canadian circulation). A random sampling of these papers showed that 72 per cent of all corporation-linked news items were neutral in treatment, which as the authors state, debunks "the conventional view of the mass communications media (as being)...unaligned protectors of the public interest: anti-establishment muckrakers who help to maintain an open society."

In this issue of *FUSE*, we look at mass culture in fashion advertising through the work of artist, David Buchan and in make-up through the experience of model, Kerri Kwinter. General Idea's new tape, *Test Tube*, alludes to the television medium without being television itself. Robert Handforth files a report from Amsterdam on this videotape in production.

We thank all those who wrote or worked on production for the first time with this issue.

Clive Robertson
Lisa Steele
For the editorial board

FUSE March 1980

ARTSOMETHING
HERENGRAHT 259
AMADAMHOLLAND 26348

RED
ORANGE
YELLOW
GREEN
BLUE
PURPLE

ARTIST'S BOOKS AND INFORMATION GALLERY

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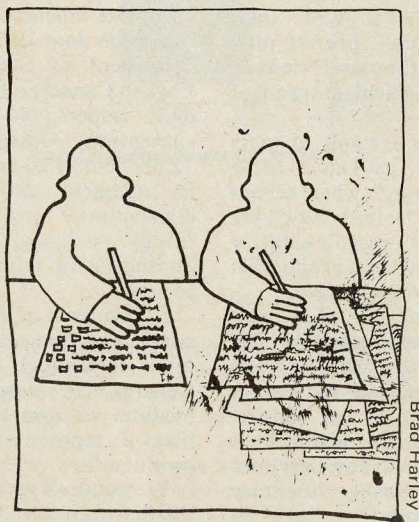
LETTERS

effectively than others, many pieces are successful - even conspicuous - because they work in a format quite opposed to that of their surroundings. As public taste is varied, I should think that a similar variety in the exhibition is in fact a healthy situation.

In light of all this, I find it hard to understand how the four historical shots are confusing. While Vic d'Or succeeded in making art out of the provided "alphabet soup", allow me to reiterate that the photographs in *Station to Station* were never meant to be taken specifically as linear dialogue. The newsprint reproductions of ONLY PAPER TODAY were intended as a guide for the intrepid art sleuth, and for the less ambitious, an indication of what was taking place. The published juxtaposition is an adaptation to what was necessarily secondary media. (As an aside, had the respondent read the catalogue more closely, he would have noticed that the historical Tata piece dates all the way back to 1973! And had he done his homework, he would have found that 31 photographs is hardly enough to fill "one billboard in each station").

There seem to be some hard feelings about an allegedly incestuous Toronto "scene". It is inevitable that an event of local interest be subscribed to most heavily by local people, and often the work offered is familiar. We do regret not having received more submissions from outside a ten-mile radius of A Space, and perhaps in the future we can afford to employ more extensive, even more personal, acquisition techniques.

Ben Mark Holzberg, Toronto



Brad Harley

More Barthes-odoxy?

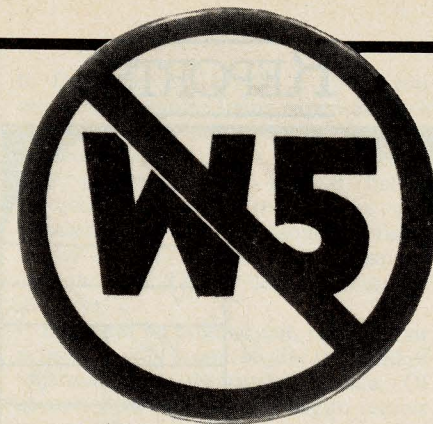
"Illness as Metaphor" *Centerfold* (Nov. 1979) announces, or rather pronounces, as prelude to two denunciatory and misrepresentative reviews. In an article on metaphor, nowhere does Tim Guest give

a definition, an analysis of its critical function, nor any indication of the many recent works on the subject, before a pronouncement is made of its permitted use (its "genuine, workable" use that Guest wants to "prescribe").

At any one time, certain terms bear the anathema of the distance from "reality" that is language's necessary condition: such words as "symbol", "representation", and here "metaphor." I am unsure of Guest's understanding of the word "metaphor" and, therefore, its function since some of the language conditions discussed there are more properly analogy, allegory, mythology or ideology. Most of these are used interchangeably in the article. I also find his intentions vague and his terms suspect when he accuses the media of consciously terrorizing the public through metaphor, metaphor which is not operative in public media. One can talk of representation, ideology, or even myth as a second order signifying system in Barthes' terms - but this demands a wholly different structural and careful ideological analysis that is not indicated in the confusion of Guest's approach.

With the careful attention that Guest wishes to give to metaphor in his distinction between social reality and its representation (this endeavor shows a simple metaphysical assumption of a clear distinction between the two in language), one would think he would not fall victim to the traditional leftist fault of equating a text with its "subject matter," as Martha Fleming's misdirected "analysis" of Judith Doyle's *Anorexia*, following Guest's statement on metaphor and the same book, regrettably exemplifies. We have learned elsewhere that the text is not a representation but a production, and our reading a reproduction. An analysis of metaphor in a text must carefully observe its function within the whole before discussing a work through a presumed representation of its "nature" (a condition which also should be observed for the work itself). Where is the responsibility of editorializing without sufficient grounding in critical tools, which Guest's ambiguous and invested terms suggest? Surely we must examine the parameters of the problem before making a pronouncement, especially since it perhaps is now possible and necessary to use representation critically in art. What moral trends diffuse this analysis? "Illness as Metaphor" - the expression itself functions as a ready-made approach (a metaphor?) with dismissal in mind. At least we know that *Centerfold* does not hide behind (as if there was ever the question of a "behind" in a text) the metaphor of illness or literature, but behind the representation of the responsibility of their politics.

Philip Monk, Toronto



Media Scare Tactics



*W-5 says too many "foreign" students
- but they counted wrong.*

By Cheuk Kwan

On September 30, 1979, one section of CTV network's weekly newsmagazine, *W-5*, began with this statement by host Helen Hutchinson:

"Here is a scenario that would make a great many people in this country angry and resentful. Suppose your son or daughter wanted to be an engineer, or a doctor, or a pharmacist. Suppose he had high marks in high school, and that you could pay the tuition . . . but he still couldn't get into university in his chosen courses because a foreign student was taking his place. Well, that is exactly what is happening in this country . . ."

Briefly, the 12-minute report, entitled "Campus Giveaway", depicted 'foreign' students taking away the 'rightful' places of Canadians in our universities - especially in such employment-oriented courses as pharmacy, engineering, computer science, and medicine. The contention of *W-5* in this report can be summarized as follows: There are too many foreign students in our universities; the foreign students are a burden to Canadian taxpayers; a majority of these foreign students are Chinese (read Asians, read visible minorities); and Something must be done about this situation.

Right from the start, *W-5*'s definition and statistics on foreign students were debatable. Commentator Hutchinson, claimed that there are at least 100,000 foreign students in our schools (presumably including elementary schools, secondary schools and colleges), and later on, she said that there are more than 100,000 foreign students on our campuses. However, 1978 university statistics revealed a total of 23,489 full-time foreign university students in Canada. A more complete 1979 analysis

gives the number of visa students as 18,304.

As an illustration, *W-5* chose the case of Barbara Allan. Ms. Allan, the report claimed, was unable to get into the University of Toronto's first year pharmacy class despite her 79.5% average in high school. A further claim was made that "although only 165 of a thousand applicants qualify, students from overseas make up 10 to 30 percent of the class." University sources have subsequently revealed that the University of Toronto admits no foreign students into its first year pharmacy programme and Ms. Allan did not obtain 79.5% in the subjects required for admission to pharmacy at the University.

So whom is *W-5* calling a "foreign student?" CTV officials later admitted that landed immigrants have been included in the count. This inclusion was based, no doubt, on the allegation made in the televised report that "the students enter on special visas, but easily become landed immigrants, if they need to, in order to get into courses which restrict enrollment." Critics have been quick to point out that students with landed immigrant status are, for the most part, members of families resident in Canada. As such, they enjoy both the right to work and, if qualified, the right to enter university.

So why such deliberate distortion of facts? Was *W-5* counting all non-white students in Canadian universities as "foreign", and then manipulating material by using standard

'news packaging' techniques to reinforce the claim? An example: Film clips of an orientation meeting of the Chinese Students Association held at the International Student Centre, U of T, September 1979 were used as 'visuals' for the racist commentary, "but there are so many Oriental foreign students and they rarely mix with their Canadian classmates..." The Association has subsequently identified most of the "yellow" faces that appeared on the programme: The majority of these faces belong either to Canadian citizens or permanent residents.

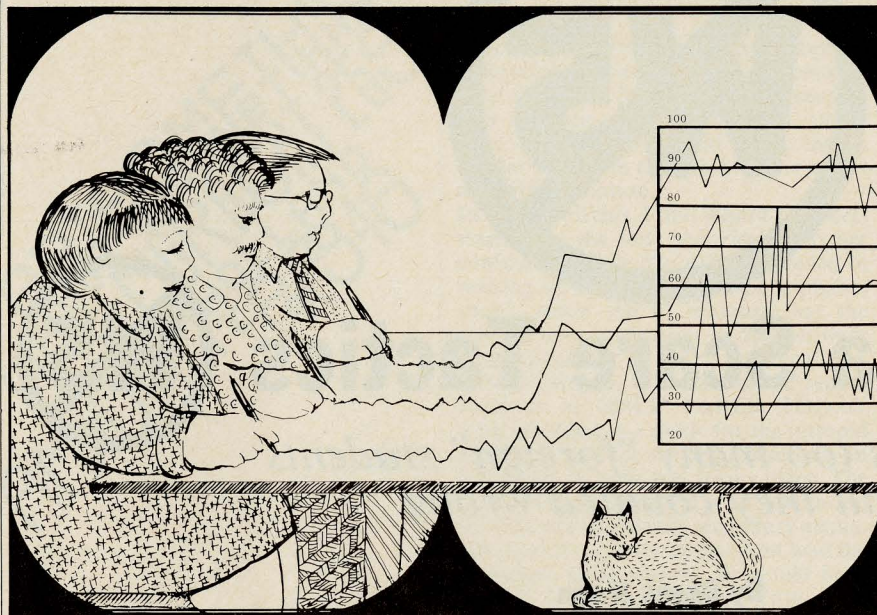
In a letter to CTV, Donald Savage, executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, pointed to the not-so-subtle message of the *W-5* report: "Screening film footage of Chinese-looking students with the explicit assumption that such people could not be Canadians while reciting incorrect statistics and information about the rampant takeover of our Canadian universities clearly smacks of warnings about the 'yellow peril'." The assumption is that all Asians are "foreign" and all whites are "Canadians". The report did not once mention the fact that 32% of the foreign students in this country are from Europe and the U.S.S.R., and that 18.2% are from the United States.

Reaction from ethnic communities was equally vocal. Protest letters from community organizations have been sent to CTV, the CRTC, and

(continued on page 144)

Cheuk Kwan is the editor of *Asianadian* magazine, published in Toronto.

REPORTS



Government

John Greyson

Ask Me No Questions

Statistics Canada gets personal with its Survey of Writers.

One rainy evening in Halifax, I was having tea with a writer-acquaintance of mine, when he showed me a thick official-looking form he was having a bit of trouble with. No, it wasn't just another grant form. It was instead a federal questionnaire of considerable length and detail. His problem wasn't that he didn't know the answers to all of the difficult questions inside, but he wasn't at all sure he wanted to participate in this particular government survey. After all, there was no clear indication of what was to be done with the results of the survey.

This questionnaire was part of a poll of writers by Statistics Canada. Accompanying this rather nose-y document was a form letter explaining that the purpose of the survey was to provide up-to-date information on the situation of self-employed writers living in Canada. The letter said that the information provided would be useful to funding-bodies, policy-makers and various writers' associations and organizations. My acquaintance, the author of several books of poetry and short-fiction, decided he would not fill out the form until he had a better understanding of what the survey hoped to accomplish, beyond its obvious invasion of his privacy. For reasons too obvious to mention, he asked me to keep his name

out of this story.

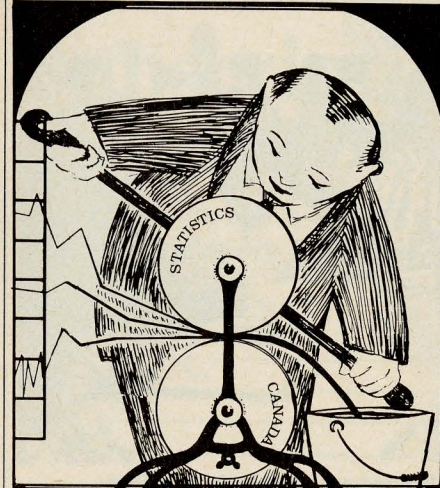
Before I go any further, let me outline briefly what Statistics Canada provides as information about itself. Statistics Canada is a major publication agency of the federal government. As published in their *Canada Yearbook* (1978), the functions of Statistics Canada are to compile, analyze, and publish statistical information relative to the commercial, industrial, financial, social and general condition of the people of Canada. Its reports cover all aspects of the national economy and social conditions of the country. The administrative head of the bureau is the Chief Statistician of Canada. Presently, Dr. Peter Kirkham holds this position. He reports to Parliament through the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Statistics Canada is a major performer of activities in the human sciences, spending millions of dollars annually on the collection of data. This statistical collection covers every area of Canada. Most Statistics Canada information is available to the public through publications, but for users requiring information in a more sophisticated form, there is an increasing output on microfilm, computer tapes and special tabulations. In short, Statistics Canada provides the statistical information required for understanding the Canadian economy and society.

The specific form this Maritime writer received without warning in the mail was form 7501A, *Survey of Writers*. It is eleven pages long, divided into eight sections, and contains 50 multi-leveled questions (actually there are approximately 300 bits of data requested). While it is probable that many questions will not apply to each individual surveyed -- the eight sections include Writing Activities, Books, Newspapers and Magazines, Stage, Film, Radio, and Television, Writing Background, Other Activities, Background, and Finances -- it is obvious that if the writer is *alive*, most of the questions are applicable. That is, if the writer being surveyed fits Statistics Canada's definition of a Writer.

As these forms must start out broadly aimed, the first question is often most difficult to answer with a simple yes or no. The first question in this case is, "Have you been active as a writer at any time since January, 1974?" Statistics Canada's criteria for being defined as an active writer are set out on the first page: the individual must have published at least one book of fiction, non-fiction or poetry in the general retail market (textbooks excluded); or written one script for stage, cinema, radio or television produced or broadcast (excluding work done as paid employee of a producing agency); written at least three published short stories or poems; written ten or more articles, columns or reviews published in newspaper or magazine (again excluding employees of newspaper or magazine). If none of the above bear reference to the surveyed, the writer should simply confess that he or she is not 'active enough' (or successful enough) to be defined (for the purposes of the survey) as a writer and is directed to send the questionnaire back in the stamped self-addressed envelope provided. If the surveyed can 'pass' as a writer, then the worst of the ordeal lies ahead. From the complexity of the form, I would assume they did not use a phone-book to target this *Survey of Writers*. The writer who showed me this form was 'an active writer', according to the criteria of the form, having received Canada Council grants and less direct government support through the Canadian Broadcasting Commission. His first question, in terms of his responsibility to this survey, was "why me?"

No information is offered with the questionnaire as to how those chosen to be surveyed were selected. The form letter does state that this is a sample survey, "not every writer in Canada will be receiving a questionnaire". There is also a mysterious sentence referring to this document as the

second questionnaire the writer has received in the last few weeks. In this



specific case, the writer being surveyed did not receive a preliminary questionnaire. I must add, to my knowledge, last year (1978) two artists in different cities (Vancouver and Victoria) received a similar questionnaire labeled *Survey of Artists*. Oddly enough, perhaps by coincidence, both artists were sent a *second* questionnaire without having received the first. I must assume musicians are also being surveyed at this time in Canada.

To get back to the form in hand, here are selected questions which will give some idea of what Statistics Canada wants to know about writers (multiple answer questions are abbreviated): "How would you describe the time you spent in calendar 1978 as a writer? Full-time occupation (More than 80 hours per week)" . . . "In what year did you first begin to earn money from your work as a writer?" . . . "Who looks after your subsidiary rights? (Such as translations, paperback, foreign sales)" . . . "Have you written a book?" . . . "Which type of book generated the highest amount of revenue for you during the last five years?" . . . "Have you ever written material for newspapers or magazines?" . . . "In your opinion, how important is each of the following factors in limiting your success as a newspaper or periodical freelance writer? (a) Not paid enough considering amount of time involved (b) Insufficient use of written contracts (c) Censorship . . . "In which medium was your first script produced or broadcast?" . . . "What is the highest level of training as a writer you have completed?" . . . "Were either of your parents actively involved in the production or the promotion of the arts?" . . . "Have you moved in the past 12 months?" . . . "What is the highest level of formal education completed by your parents?" . . . "What was your gross income before deductions (e.g. income tax, research expenses, etc.) from all sources for the period of January 1, 1978

to December 31, 1978?" . . . "Do you share your regular living expenses, such as food and accommodation with someone else?" . . . "For the same period you reported gross income before deductions, indicate the income and expenditures for the sources listed below" . . . (27 sources listed, questions 252 through 279, a detailed financial inquiry).

It should be pointed out, no writer or artist is legally bound to give this kind of information to Statistics Canada. Of course, it can be intimidating to receive one of these impressive questionnaires. Every one of these forms comes with its own hand-lettered four digit identification number. The form letter assures the writer of the agency's awareness that confidentiality is important and thereby promises, in accordance with the Statistics Act, that no individual information will be published or provided to the various users. It is explained that the questionnaires have only numeric identifiers and "no linking of an individual to his or her questionnaire will be possible through the computer". However, someone hand-assigned this numeric identifier and someone must feed the machines the data.

Labour

Teaching English at Work

Immigrant workers learn their second language on the assembly line and on the picket line.

I think that this our first strike, what we be, move us forward in the unity of all us workers. It is to let them understand even to the industrial groups that the workmen want to live and the time of the owners and the slaves it is finished. We want to give example to all workers who suffer to say 'Stop bow down!'

The fifteen workers attending English classes that were held right on the picket line had much to say, but few language skills with which to express their thoughts. Their union had sponsored a course in English as a Second Language in order to improve understanding and communication between the workers and their union.

The hour-long classes were held four times a week. The workers sat on discarded planks, blocks of concrete and patches of grass. Others stood. The teacher did not assume the traditional lecture stance, and was only discernible through his capacity to speak fluent English.

The teacher's objective was to facilitate language learning, oral and written. The workers wanted most to communicate

This form letter, which by now you must realize, reads like good and bad science fiction, goes on to point out that groups such as the Writers' Union, the Periodical Writers' Association, the League of Canadian Poets, the Playwright's Co-op, the Guild of Canadian Playwrights, the Canadian Authors Association, the Writers' branch of ACTRA, the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia, la Société des auteurs et compositeurs, l'Union des écrivains québécois and la Société des écrivains canadiens, "have all expressed interest in obtaining survey results." And to conclude with the line I find most interesting, "We are confident that a strong response to this survey will help complete the picture of the Canadian writer. This picture, in turn, should help your association (which is cooperating in the survey) describe the real situation of Canadian writers to governments and the public." The letter is signed by Jeffrey Holmes, Director, Education, Science and Culture Division of Statistics Canada. Results are promised by the summer of 1980.

Tom Sherman

about the strike itself: its effect on their families and what might happen if the strike continued for some time. The teacher's role was to encourage open dialogue and to assist by providing vocabulary and language structures which would arise during the course of conversation.

Who attends the English as a Second Language classes: chiefly, those working in hotels and restaurants or in the production area in small, labour-intensive companies. Many of their places of work are unorganized, paying low wages and offering less than hospitable working conditions. They are people who have come to Canada because they believe the educational system here will prevent their children from following the same kind of work. Often they have little formal education. They face problems of language and culture. They are in a powerless position dependent on services of social agencies, relatives and friends. They are unable to speak or understand the language used around them. The everyday facts that influence their lives

are unknown. They are not aware of their rights.

The teaching of English as a Second Language is one step towards providing immigrants with the tools necessary for them to actively participate in a society which not only demands an ability to handle printed matter, but which also "invites" input and direction. (i.e. the school system). It becomes clear that what is required is not only the ability to speak the English language, but also the acquisition of facts, legal rights, available resources and some comprehension of the systems in Canada.

Paulo Freire, author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, came to realize "the culture of silence of the dispossessed", while working among peasants in Brazil. He identified the whole system of education as one of the major instruments of silencing those living in poverty and began developing a method for teaching adult literacy. Freire wrote:

"Education has become an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive and memorize and repeat. In the banking concept of education, knowledge



The educational system could produce equality and not perpetuate inequality.

is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing. Projecting absolute ignorance onto others is a characteristic of the ideology of oppression. The banking concept of education negates education as a process of inquiry. Yet we all know that from the time a human being is two years old the most frequently asked question is "Why?" The teacher presents himself to his

students as their necessary opposite and by considering their ignorance absolute, justifies his own existence. This method of teaching only allows for learners to receive, file and store deposits of knowledge. But in the end it is the learner who is filed away through lack of creativity, transformation and knowledge. This is extremely unfortunate, for apart from inquiry and praxis man cannot learn and live."

In *Vertical Mosaic*, John Porter demonstrates the myth of a classless society in Canada. In identifying the educational system as a mechanism that perpetuates inequality, he also points to the possibility of reversing the mechanism. Thus the educational system could be used to *produce equality*.

As adults, we attend educational programs if they provide skills enabling us to do something for ourselves; skills to engage in physical, intellectual or social activity. "Look Dick, see Jane run" is no motivation for learning the English language. The English at the Workplace program recognizes this.

In one of the workplace classes, the teacher worked with the students to produce a photo novel depicting the operations that each student performed during the construction of a pair of jeans at the factory. Captioning photographs developed language that directly related to the experiences of the group. The exercise eased the feelings of alienation the individual workers experienced about their own part in creating the final product.

The English at the Workplace program has been in operation for two years in Toronto teaching English as a second language. There are two hundred workers involved in the classes and the demand is increasing.

Nancy Serro



Workers processing rags: adult literacy is a political right.

photos Nancy Serro

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photos Nancy Serro

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REPORTS

Education

L'école de la Résistance

The government said no, but there's a French school in Penetanguishene, Ontario anyway.

A lot has happened to the town of Penetanguishene, Ontario, and its 5,000 residents in the past year. The French community is demanding a French high school for the younger generation of Franco-Ontarians in LaFontaine, Perkinfield and Penetang. Three years of studies, briefs and governmental recommendations from such departments as the Ontario Language Commission have called for a French high school at Penetang. But so far the provincial government isn't cooperating.

In May of last year, Franco-Ontarians came from all parts of the province to march on Queen's Park. They demonstrated outside the provincial education ministers' meeting in Winnipeg and launched a campaign in the media. But no action was forthcoming from Ontario Education Minister, Mrs. Bette Stephenson.

So, in Penetang, they set up their own school. September 3, 1979, the Franco-Ontarian flag was raised at the old post office in the town centre. "L'école de la Huronie" or as it has come to be known

"l'école de la résistance" (the resistance school) was founded. Fifty-seven students are enrolled and teachers volunteer their time. Parents staff the cafeteria and transport students.

The long flight for survival for Franco-Ontarians is a continuing story. Many of the older generation remember fighting Regulation 17 passed in 1913 by the Whitney government. The regulation limited the teaching of French in schools in Ontario to one hour daily. It also meant dodging the police, going to classes in the homes of francophones for \$0.25 a lesson, widespread layoffs of French teachers and Franco-Ontarian students boycotting classes for months. In 1980, the struggle continues.

The Ontario government and the Simcoe County school board have tried to justify their policies. They claim there aren't enough students to necessitate a French school there, but studies show that over the next five years 350 students would fill the classrooms.

A Letter

On November 16, Edith Pariseau, a journalist for Radio-Canada's CBLFT-CJBC French language Toronto television and radio station was unjustly dismissed from her job. This was a clear case of discrimination based on Mrs. Pariseau's views on the future of Canada.

At no time was Edith Pariseau's competence called into question. She had satisfactorily fulfilled her duties as a reporter and a news writer for nearly a year before being informed on the morning of November 16 that she had until 2:00 pm that day to clear out her desk and leave the premises.

What had she done to merit this kind of treatment? According to the news director, the network management was not pleased with Mrs. Pariseau's involvement with the Committee to Defend Québec's Right to Self-Determination. Moreover, they objected to her having read out a message by the Francophones of Penetanguishene at a forum organized by the Committee on November 7, at the St. Lawrence Centre in Toronto.

The Committee was created last spring. Its purpose is not to support one option over another for Québec, but rather to defend the right of the Québécois people to make their own decision, free of interference or threats.

It would seem that such a stand is not acceptable to the CBC network, since Mrs. Pariseau's affiliation was used as grounds for her dismissal. Behind the supposed "neutrality" and "objectivity" of the publicly-owned broadcasting system, lies a very well-defined position in favour of federalism.

Our Committee condemns the unjust firing of Mrs. Pariseau and expresses its concern over the kind of "objective reporting" we can expect from the CBC, especially with the approach of the Québec referendum.

Graham Nicholson
for the Committee for Quebec's
Right to Self-Determination
P.O. Box 317, Station R. Toronto.

Enrollment in French elementary schools is increasing. Fearing an English backlash, government officials claim their hands are tied. But last October 23, the thousands demonstrating in the CHOC (Cutbacks Hurt Ontario Children) coalition listened and cheered as spokespersons from Penetang denounced the cutbacks hitting childcare and education. The Ontario government can't hide its blatant chauvinist policies that make the Franco-Ontarian minority second class citizens and a pool of cheap labour.

October 5, 1979, Bette Stephenson announced her solution to the problem of the Franco-Ontarians in Penetang and elsewhere: She will set up "distinct entities" in the bilingual schools. Students and parents have rejected this offer. After all, the bilingual school, Penetang Secondary School, is nicknamed "the assimilation machine" by the Franco-Ontarians.

The Franco-Ontarians are not asking for privileges but for their rights. All they want is a French school where their children can learn the language, history, culture and rich traditions of this minority that helped build Ontario. They are tired of fighting assimilation, a fate that awaits all after the eighth grade. Parents in Penetang, who long ago lost their ability to speak French, are now sending their children to an illegal school.



John Greyson

The actions in Penetang have raised the hopes of the nearly 50,000 Franco-Ontarians. Bette Stephenson's plan for "distinct entities" wasn't carried out in January, 1980, as proposed because it was so unpopular. She has yet to reply to the Franco-Ontarians in Penetanguishene. Meanwhile, in Kirkland Lake and Pembroke, similar confrontations seem likely.

Edith Pariseau

Nancy Serro is the co-ordinator of English at the Workplace, Toronto.

Edith Pariseau is a journalist, active in the Committee to Defend Quebec's Right to Self-Determination.

If this isn't your idea of a part-time job, how about one at a pool?



She's licking envelopes.

She could be typing long, involved and boring documents.

Or she could be standing behind some store counter watching time go by very slowly.

There are part-time jobs and there are part-time jobs.

Maybe you're looking for a part-time job that not only pays you money, but also pays you with a sense of satisfaction that you're accomplishing something.

Consider becoming a Water Safety and Life Saving Instructor.

You'll be among all kinds of people who are all as different as snowflakes. And just as interesting.

And you won't feel a greater sense of satisfaction than when you see some kid who was afraid to stick his head in the water a couple of weeks ago, actually swimming now. And knowing you had something to do with it.

Of course, you're going to have to be a pretty good swimmer yourself. We're looking for people who have a current life saving award. Or people who would be willing to get such an award (it wouldn't take you very long to get it, if

you already know how to swim) so they can take the Water Safety and Life Saving Instructor Course. If you fall into this category, or if you even come close, call your local Red Cross branch.



WEST ★ EAST

THE DEPOLITICIZATION OF ART

By Andrzej Ostrowski and Karl Beveridge

Political art in its various forms is a topical issue in the 'western' world. The issue of politics in art has run a different course in the 'eastern', 'communist' and/or third world, though not necessarily a clearer one. Most of our understanding about art in 'eastern' countries is prone to misconceptions about the nature of those societies. Common to these interpretations is the view that most non-western art has some form of relation to an authoritarian state. This reveals that we view such art comparatively, either coloured by a conception of our own relative freedom, or from the vantage point of a developed industrial state as opposed to an underdeveloped one, or both. In other words, it is viewed from a position of 'advantage' and/or 'sophistication'.

It is seldom considered that such art is produced under particular conditions which are the historical variations of a common world economic situation. This is not to deny the cultural particularity of a given nation, but it could form the basis of a common frame of reference. More importantly, in the immediate sense, it might dump the myth of our own cultural superiority. We may sneer at the rigidity of Soviet cultural production, be amused by the moral naïveté of Chinese art, or give a nudge of support to the art of Chilean resistance, failing to note the actual ideological underdevelopment of our own art production, and the problematic contradictions within which it is produced.

The cultural policies of the 'East Block' (Warsaw Treaty) countries are often dismissed as being purely authoritarian under varying degrees of Soviet control. Cultural resistance in these countries is greeted uncritically by westerners (from ethical and sentimental, but never political, standpoints) as a positive step towards liberation. This is, of course, a simplistic reading and mystification which creates an apparent schism between the realities of east and west. All of this exists as an exotic nightmare punctuated by cold war reality.

Poland maintains a somewhat special relation to the Soviet Union, but this only increases the mystery. Holding the same basic 'principal' position with the rest of the East Block, the Polish state maintains a much more elastic strategy against opposition and a relatively independent cultural policy. This policy, initiated in response to the famous workers' struggles in Poznan in 1956, could be called the most 'liberal' within the East Block.

Part of the mystery about Poland is based on a certain astonishment that 'quality' art could be produced under 'authoritarian' rule, a 'quality' that the west considers to be the cultural legitimization of its own 'free' development. This initial astonishment is quickly overcome, however, by the explanation that western ideas have slipped through into Polish life to be heroically taken up by some Polish artists, and have gradually provoked the 'liberalization' of Polish cultural policy.

In reality, there is no heroism in the 'westernization' of Polish culture, and there is no liberalization as such in official policy which has supported this kind of activity for a long period of time.

Looking closer at the character of both western art and Polish cultural policy, it comes as no surprise that modernism, minimalism or conceptualism easily pass state censorship, and are supported by the Ministry of Culture with the approval of the Cultural Department of the Central Committee.

The de-politicization of art in Poland began in the 1950's with the institution of 'official' socialist realism. The shift from the art of *politics as dogma* (Stalinism) to the art of *politics as taboo* (as it is today) was a characteristic element of the 'revolutionary' change after the Stalinist period in the late '50's. As one Polish critic pointed out privately; whatever Censorship in Poland does *not* understand in art is immediately rubber-stamped for public consumption.

When the state bureaucracy turned from the Marxian theory of class struggle to an ideology that legitimates its 'steering' role, real political opposition, including its cultural expression, was (and continues to be) isolated and suppressed. This kind of state rule, disregarding its more or less 'elastic' methods, must continually strengthen itself while its policy of censorship must grow increasingly more intelligent and sophisticated, so as to 'creatively' deal with both liberal (cultural) and authoritarian (political) dictates.

Most artists in Poland lead a double life: a 'free' life relieved from politics, and a 'political' life. The necessity of disengaging art from politics is juxtaposed in the day-to-day life of the artist with the necessity to be engaged in official politics through the production of art and design for the state's propaganda system. The industry of state propaganda — from monuments to displays and graphic design — is a major source of income for the entire art community. On one hand, the state needs to develop effective propaganda to consolidate its power, but it also needs to develop the illusion of cultural freedom as a part of the same political propaganda. Consequently both 'lives' of the artist — the 'free' and the 'political' — serve the same end. By dividing art practice into artistic and political spheres, the state controls both a de-politicized art and an aestheticized politics. (In the west, the industries of art, the media, and consumer propaganda provide a similar 'dialectical' life for the artist. The predominance of Canada Council and N.E.A. funding may also be contributing to the unconscious 'double life' of Canadian and American artists.)

Successful artists in Poland, organized into a strong union, win permission to earn more money¹, are allowed complete tax exemption, extra studio space, and free-lance work², and can more easily travel abroad. But they obtain this special status at a price. In the midst of economic crisis, witnessing the

growing political opposition of workers and the development of underground political activity, they are unable to participate both as citizens and as artists. Thus many transform themselves into 'philosophers', and their work on aesthetic theories, structures and concepts makes them interesting to those in the west.

Jan Swidzinski, artist-theorist, is credited with having initiated 'contextual' concerns in Poland, and has been given moderate support in the west, particularly, it seems, in Canada. This interest is based on Swidzinski's concern with art, ideology and politics, and with his call for a concrete social practice which solves "real problems", as opposed to the "passive assimilation of culture".

Swidzinski has published two books in English. In the first, whose title imitates the American conceptualist Joseph Kosuth's *Art as Idea*, Swidzinski outlines his proposal for *Art as Contextual Art* (1976). He describes it as an art which confronts "the rapid changes of modern civilization" by acting "as a pure sign filled by present reality". Starting with a critique of Kosuth's *Art after Philosophy*, Swidzinski presents a theoretical basis for "interjecting art into reality". However, this abstraction is not a device for the introduction of radical critical concepts. Like the political jargon of the authoritarian state, Swidzinski's "radical" politics remain on the surface. What lies beneath the rhetoric of critical philosophy is an avoidance of considering the *political* "context" of the problems of "civilization" that he has described.

Art, Society and Self-consciousness is a recent book by Swidzinski published by the Alberta College of Art (1979). Here Swidzinski presents an historical validation of his activity, from the meagre beginnings of capitalism to recent conferences on Contextual Art he organized.

The book is divided into three sections: theory, history and practice. This separation is in itself problematic, for

"The book is divided into three sections: theory, history and practice. This separation in itself is problematic, for Swidzinski discusses each area exclusive of the others."

ANTYMANIFESTACJA

Swidzinski discusses each area exclusive of the others. The section on theory begins with an existential lament on his (in)ability to comprehend the world around him.

"Under conditions of uncertainty the results I achieve and the aims I pursue, ascribing to them particular values, depend on me as an individual to a lesser and lesser degree. I become indifferent to what I have to do. To do it with the greatest perfection becomes my number one aim. I am only informed, but not convinced, about the fact that something represents a value."

He continues by describing various formalized logical systems of ordering experience using "models". He admits they are "not of human origin: people are only subject to (them)", yet he maintains that they determine human activity. In other words these models of logic are seen outside of history, but are given historical power; they are a cause of social history separate from people as a political subject.

The section on history does little to clear up this confusion. Starting with the early stages of capitalism, he traces the gradual monopolization of world industry which has resulted in a world dominated by "some total power which we cannot identify" in which,

"Our action, however, takes place inside a more and more total structure and can never change it. Like in a game, the amount of possessed 'trumps' decides. An individual or a small group stands always in opposition to the whole, the power of which is superior and thus forces the individuals to ultimate subordination."

Swidzinski then traces the history of art in relation to this process of maniacal organization, as the "decomposition of man's actions" and the development of games-oriented epistemology (and art-for-art's-sake). This leads to the

ANTYMANIFESTACJA — jako przemieszczanie się w czasie i przestrzeni pewnej grupy osób. Spontanicznie i bezinteresownie zdeklarowanych
nie demonstrować
nie manifestować
nie gloryfikować
nie upamiętniać
nie uwielbiać
nie protestować

1. Pochód ma tworzyć obwód zamknięty, tak aby nie wyróżniało się ani czoło ani tył pochodu. Pozorowanie jakiegokolwiek hierarchii uczestników, byłoby sprzeczne z ideą pochodu. Pochód powinien powstawać spontanicznie i trwać tak długo zanim samoczynnie nie zaniknie. Za moment końcowy uważana będzie chwila opuszczenia pochodu przez ostatniego z uczestników. Wskazane jest, aby pochód odbył się w dniu nieupamiętnionym żadnym wydarzeniem historycznym ani w żadnym innym dniu, skazonym przeszłością. Pretekstem dla pochodu nie powinna być żadna okazja. Zalecenie to dotyczy także miejsca, w jakim pochód miałby się odbyć. Pożądanym jest udział możliwie największej grupy osób.

2. W pochodzie może brać udział każdy, kto zdeklaruje się i zastosuje do warunków uczestnictwa.

Warunki uczestnictwa:
1. Niezależność swego stanowiska w stosunku do kogokolwiek i czegokolwiek
2. Nieokazywanie sympatii ani solidarności
3. Nieprotestowanie
4. Indyferencja emocjonalna
5. Brak zaangażowania (nawet w ideę antymanifestacji)
6. Zdolność fizyczna do pokonania pewnej drogi (przynajmniej jedno okrążenie)
Poza tym partycypować można z prostej ciekawości nie podjętej określonym celem; można przyłączyć się do pochodu, jeśli jest go drodziej, jeżeli w kimś dostrzeże wewnętrzna potrzeba nie spowodowana namiętnością innych osób.

Uwaga!
Niestosowanie się do warunków uczestnictwa wyklucza właściwą partycypację w ANTYMANIFESTACJI!

ANTIMANIFESTATION as a translocation in time and space of a group of people. They are spontaneously and disinterestedly avowed not to:
manifest,
glorify
commemorate
worship
protest

1. The march should be "constructed" as a close circuit so that neither the head nor the tail of the march is distinguished. Simulating any hierarchy of its participants would be contrary to the march's idea. The march should be made up spontaneously and last until it vanishes by itself. When the last participant leaves the march it will be finished. It is advised that the march takes place in a spot not commemorated by any historical event and on a day not "contaminated" with the past. No occasion should give a pretext to the march. It concerns also the spot in which the march is to take place. Participation of possibly the most numerous group of people in the march is desired.

2. Anyone who declares participation and will observe the march regulations may take part in it.

Conditions of participation:
1. Not to state your standpoint towards anyone or anything
2. Not to show any sympathy or solidarity
3. Not to protest
4. Emotional indifference
5. Lack of engagement (even in the idea of antimanifestation)
6. Physical ability to pass some way (at least one round)

Besides, one may participate of simple curiosity not fanned with any definite aim; one may join the march on its way and if the inside need arises in him, not caused by incitement by other persons.

Attention!
If you don't oblige to regulations you are excluded from the proper participation in the ANTIMANIFESTATION!

decomposition of the art object which ends, in his opinion, with its demise in Art and Language.

The section on practice is Swidzinski's answer to this monolith. It outlines a history of *Art Sociologique*, Jorge Glusberg of C.A.Y.C. (in Buenos Aires), *Art and Language*, *The Fox*, and *Red-Herring*, briefly discussing their work on language, ideology and social institutions. This history concludes with a description of a series of conferences Swidzinski organized and which involved representatives from some of the above groups. The point of this history, however, seems to be nothing less than persuading us that these conferences were the ultimate response to those problems developing in the art world that the above groups had described but failed to transform. The selectivity of Swidzinski's history not only distorts the work of those he describes but is also notable for the absence of many other artists' work, especially of those working in Poland.

The book concludes with a discussion of strategy which amounts to a defensive adjustment (or reconciliation) to the instability of the environment. He proposes that we get rid of the "ideologies" that people have developed as a defense against this instability. ("Epistemology" has become

psychological). His solution: local activity as a means of encouraging self-consciousness, a "direct contact with reality" which is local spontaneous, and "human". Thus the muddy existential beginnings of the book end in the swamp of anarchist sentimentality. When confronted with the question of a "concrete social practice" Swidzinski offers this:

"Although it might be argued that individual political opposition has a more expressive latitude in the west, this doesn't mean that the artists' work has a corresponding social effectiveness."

"We propose substituting the institutional network of art with non-formal spontaneous social groups formulating themselves in order to solve real problems; true people who cannot be substituted by notional idealizations and stereotyped images of man."

In an earlier passage Swidzinski was quick to observe that capitalism was able to appropriate the forms of 60's counter-culture, yet his proposal sounds much the same, ignoring, once again, the question of political action.

Swidzinski is not representative of all artists in Poland. There are forms of underground cultural activities that deal explicitly with political reality, as well as forms that introduce the issue of art and politics into the practice of art history and cultural criticism. The latter forms have a long tradition in Polish history i.e. the culture of conspiracy. The best example of a successful application of such a "non-explicit method" is a book (recently published in Poland) by Andrzej Turowski, entitled *In the Constructivist Circle (W Kregu Konstrukttywizmu)*.

Working in the field of art history, Turowski is discussing the major questions of contemporary art. His book makes it very clear that the process of de-politicization of art takes place not only in the present but also in the past, since history is always "being made" by the present.

His work on the de-politicization of art history shows how to connect contemporary art issues with contemporary political reality.

Constructivist tradition is commonly misunderstood in Poland as being ahistorical (It is identified as a movement continuously alive.) and apolitical (It is seen to be part of modernist pre-minimalism.). Turowski has brought Constructivism back into history and to its revolutionary political context, analyzing the artistic movement within its aesthetical contradictions and ideological weaknesses, discussing its efforts and difficulties in understanding the dialectics of the development of the October Revolution. Not

pretending to develop any form of general theory of the "art in context", Turowski's book works as a perfect popular introduction to the historical, critical analysis of both the Constructivist movement and current relations between art and politics.

Particularly interesting in the work of Swidzinski is the appropriation of a more radical political content in the rhetoric of social relevance, and further, how such methods of appropriation are not exclusive to either the western art world, or to that of an East Block country. It is in this regard that the similarity between a Swidzinski and a Joseph Kosuth goes beyond that of form or proclaimed interest. Both Swidzinski and Kosuth³ point out that a social context determines the meaning of an artwork, but neither makes reference to the specific social, let alone political, conditions within which they are working. Social context, rather than constituting a radical break, is simply another topic, another area of artistic investigation that temporarily obscures some of the contradictions evident in the more narrow concerns of prior formalist art. Social context as a theoretical concern, rather than a political activity, follows the logic of much of the pseudo-scientific justification of avant-garde activity — from psychology to formal logic — that has served to 'humanize' and thus mystify the blatant instrumentality of real scientific development. It matters little whether the rhetoric of scientific progress is that of private enterprise or of a Marxian scientific determinism, when neither are concerned with the actual social relations of production, the lived experience of everyday life.

Although it might be argued that individual political opposition has a more expressive latitude in the west, this doesn't mean that artists' work has a corresponding social effectiveness. In both the west and Poland, once opposition finds a collective voice, and becomes a practical force of opposition, it is suppressed. Swidzinski's critique, like that of Kosuth remains within the bounds of *acceptable* opposition. Poland, like the U.S. or Canada, welcomes 'constructive' criticism. In the end their work serves to de-politicize social context by making concrete social conditions appear as natural (aesthetic) rather than political.

¹ Earnings in Poland are arranged into "allowable income" levels. Artists' allowable income level is among the highest in the country.

² Free-lance work is outlawed in Poland. Only a few professions, including artists, are allowed the privilege. Everyone else must be employed on a regular basis.

³ Kosuth is chosen here because of the direct relation of his work to that of Swidzinski. Other artists, e.g. Dan Graham, Hans Haake, could equally have been chosen.

(continued from page 133)

government representatives as well as the mass media. Representatives of the Chinese Students Association of the University of Toronto have filed an intention to sue CTV and its producers. Within the Toronto Chinese community, an "Ad Hoc Committee of the Council of Chinese Canadians in Ontario Against W-5" was formed by nine organizations to condemn this type of irresponsible journalism. In its recently released position paper, the Ad Hoc Committee stated the following objectives:

- to demand a public apology from CTV and equal time to present a fair and accurate report to repair the damages done by the W-5 programme;
- to take necessary steps to ensure that CTV does not air similar programmes misrepresenting and damaging the image of any ethno-cultural group; and
- to educate the public about the contributions of the Chinese Canadians to Canadian society.

On December 17, 1979, the Ad Hoc Committee voted to support the students in their legal action both financially and morally. Funds have already been raised from the Chinese community. Forums and rallies are planned to educate the community and to draw public attention to the issue.

But CTV shows little remorse. In a reply to the criticism, network repre-



sentatives concluded:

"... Far more disturbing than accusations of inaccuracies are attempts and threats to refer the program (W-5) to the CRTC and the Canadian Human Rights Commission to shut up once and for all. It seems that freedom of speech is pretty low on the list of priorities."

Judging from this reply, CTV sees itself as just another 'fella on the street'.

Clearly, the losers in this whole affair are not just Chinese Canadians and other visible minorities, but *all* Canadians. To the unsuspecting Canadians who rarely question the accuracy and credibility of CTV, watching W-5's "Campus Giveaway" segment is like being spoon-fed poison. The result is, of course, a brewing and growing hostility and enmity toward all visible minorities. This in turn creates suspicion and mistrust among visible minorities against the "mainstream" society. When different ethnic groups in this society are trying to live side-by-side and understand each other, who needs another racially provocative programme like W-5?

The recent W-5 airing, however, should come as no surprise to Chinese Canadians and other visible minorities.

For a long time, the backlash against visible minorities has been growing in Toronto and elsewhere in Canada. The police killing of Albert Johnson this past summer started a series of "cops are tops" campaigns in Toronto. The recent influx of mostly ethnic Chinese refugees prompted the National Citizens Coalition to take out full page advertisements in the *Globe and Mail* to advocate a white Canada. One wonders whether it is "purely coincidental" that CTV came out with a programme at a time like this? History tends to repeat itself. Can the race riots of 1907, the 1923 Exclusion Act or the 1942 War Measures Act be too far behind?

Despite claims to the contrary, racism is still rampant in Canadian society. All visible minorities have encountered racism in one form or another, and most have their own tales to tell. While our attention is focused on such individual racism as name-calling and racial slurs, another less visible form of racism is further entrenched -- institutional racism. What better instrument to reinforce it is there than television. ■

(ed. note: Originally, CTV network had planned a sequel to "Campus Giveaway" to have been broadcast on Feb. 13, 1980. Network spokesmen said this follow-up would contain even more 'facts' to back the claims made in the Sept. 30th report. But the large-scale protest seems to have CTV reconsidering. Dr. C.Y. Yeung, President of the Federation of Chinese Canadian Professionals, says he has received a "verbal agreement" from the network not to broadcast the proposed sequel.

When FUSE asked CTV if this agreement would be honoured, W-5 associate producer Gary Ralph said, "No comment.")

W-5 CLAIMS:

"At least one out of ten (10 percent) students in B.C., Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia are foreign. And the ratio is much higher in Ontario and Quebec."

"At least 20 percent of the kids in the high technology courses, engineering, computer science, are foreign, while these courses are turning down thousands of Canadians."

"Although only a hundred and sixty-five of the thousand applicants qualified, students from overseas made up ten to thirty percent of the class (in Pharmacy)."

Statistics cited:

* Von Zur-Muehlen, Dr. M. *Foreign Students in Canada and Canadian Students Abroad*. **University of Toronto Statistics.

WHAT THE STATISTICS SHOW:

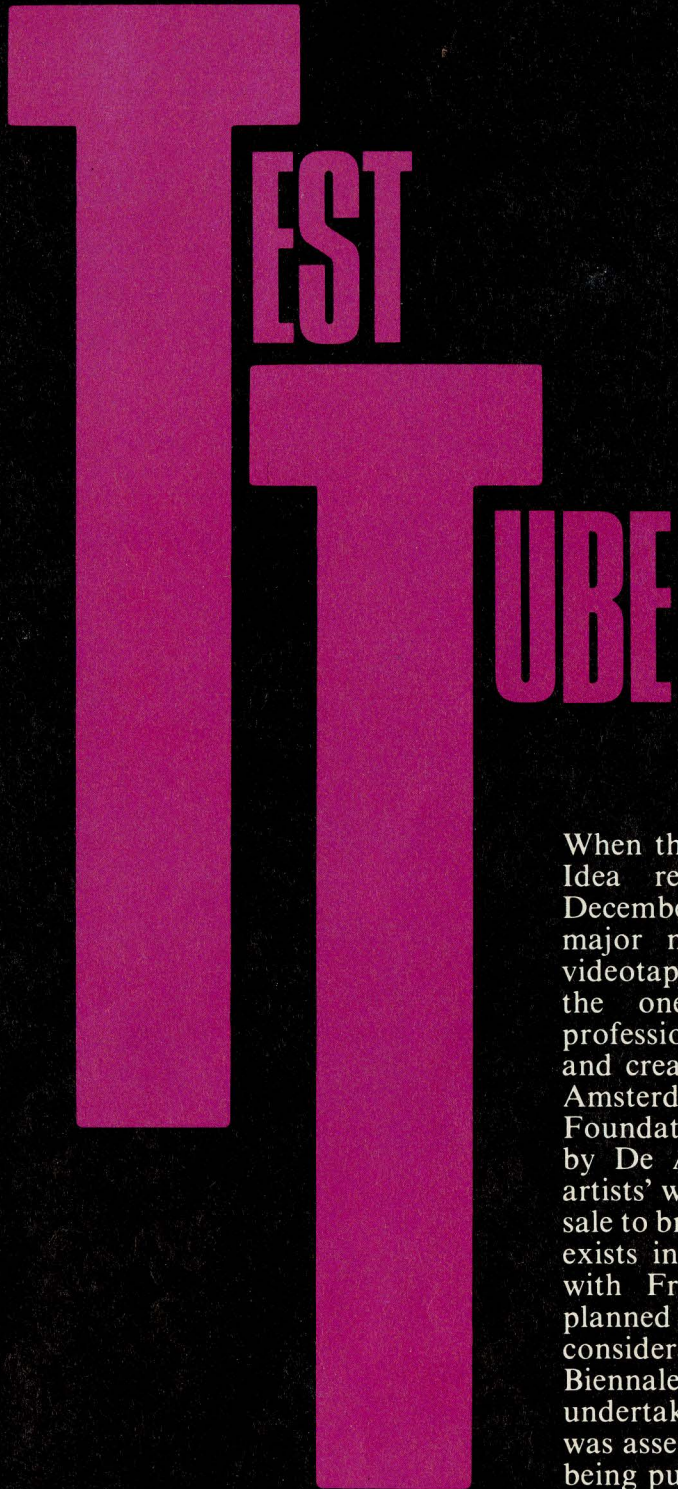
Percentage of foreign university students in relation to total full-part time enrolment*:

	1976-77	1977-78
Newfoundland.....	1.6%	2.6%
P.E.I.	2.5%	2.6%
Nova Scotia	6.0%	6.6%
New Brunswick.....	2.8%	3.2%
Quebec	5.7%	5.8%
Ontario	5.0%	5.1%
Manitoba	4.7%	5.5%
Saskatchewan	7.4%	6.7%
Alberta.....	5.7%	5.7%
British Columbia	4.0%	4.4%
Total.....	5.1%	5.3%

At the University of Toronto registration for 1979-80** showed:

	# of foreign students	Total # reported	%
Medicine	9	1,024	0.88
Engineering	152	2,598	5.9

Pharmacy in U of T 1979-80 has 690 students but only one student holding student visa who is in graduate school which count for 0.14% of the total student body, all others are immigrants and citizens.*



BY ROBERT HANDFORTH

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

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

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

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

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

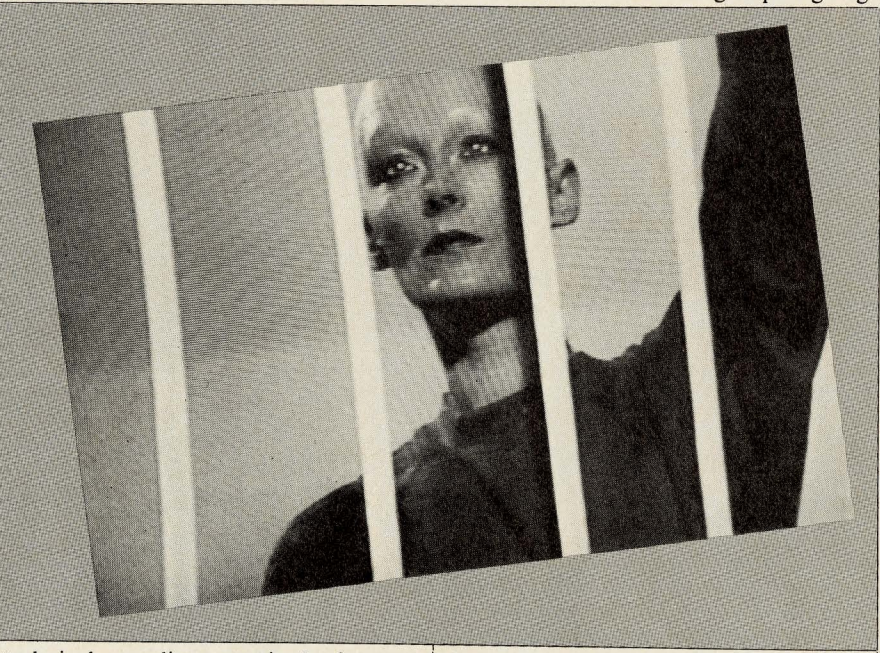
Simultaneously with the taping of *Test Tube* in September 1979, for example, De Appel was presenting *Words & Works*, a ten-day programme of lectures, discussions, performances, installations, films, video screenings, historical documentation and a photographic exhibition featuring several dozen artists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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

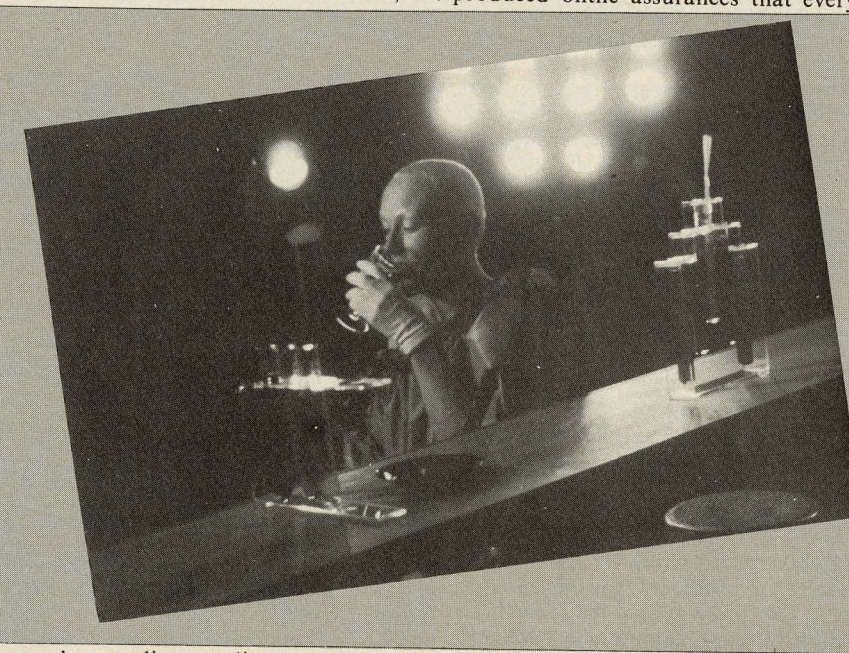
The importance of finding its resolution gave way to more mundane concerns upon their arrival. The subsistence allowances initially agreed upon were low. The group was housed in two locations kilometers apart, the better of them a spacious but otherwise minimal studio supplied by the Stedelijk Museum;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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

photos courtesy General Idea

but everyone had something to say.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



photo courtesy General Idea

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

January 8 - 19

January 22 - February 2

February 5 - 16

February 19 - March 1

March 4 - 22

March 25 - April 12

April 15 - May 3

Sorel Cohen
Theodore Wan

Stephen Horne
André Jodoin

Paul Hess
Douglas Kirton

Ian Murray
Tom Sherman

George Trakas

Peter Hill

David MacWilliam
Renée VanHalm

Mercer Union Front

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

Locations

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

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

THE INVISIBLE ECONOMY

The first in a series of articles
that will analyse specific economic events
as they happen

By David Mole

In a capitalist society the system of production — something out there called the economy, disappears in its products. When all goes smoothly "The Economy" is all but invisible. It appears only as a harmonious and providential mechanism that reproduces the technologies, and the social relations, necessary to deliver the goods continuously.

An economic crisis such as the one we have endured through the Seventies and will continue to endure indefinitely brings the economy into new focus. As it becomes clear to us that our spending power is melting away "because of inflation", that our ability to sell our labour is declining "because of unemployment", and more, that these phenomena are the effect of the collapse of the system of production on a global scale, we see the economy as a social mechanism that exists in history. This realization is the real crisis for a social system that depends on the widespread conviction that "The Economy" is some natural arrangement, interfering with which is futile and self-defeating.

The ideologues of capitalism have been obliged to work overtime in the Seventies to manufacture an account of the

economic crisis that blocks the information given us by our own experience, and to substitute some plausible story in its place. Bogus stories about "The Economy" are not a new but the current crisis has some special features that put extra pressure on the storytellers.

Any capitalist crisis is characterised by a sharpened struggle between workers and their employers. In an attempt to restore the profit levels eroded by the slump in demand, employers attack the living standards of their work force. Traditionally this attack on wages took the form of direct wage cuts. This deliberate cutting of wages puts particular groups of workers into direct confrontation with their employer. In the current crisis the fall in wages has been effected by an increase in the level of prices more rapid than the increase in wages. The fall in the share of output going to wage earners is in this way produced by a process that goes on behind everyone's back. The battle over wages that was once localised is now diffuse and general. This takes the pressure off individual employers but it turns the struggle over wages into a social and political question, setting at odds

workers as a class and their employers as a class.

This possibility of a class confrontation can only be headed off if "inflation" can be presented as a general affliction that unfortunately spontaneously appeared, something that we must "wrestle to the ground" as a nation. The fall in living standards is then seen merely as an effect of price increases and something altogether separate from the rise in profit rates that this fall in real income is designed to produce.

A certain plausibility is given to the "inflation as threat to the nation" story because the attempt to maintain profits by this device has got out of hand and produced an inflation that is virtually out of control. The required decline in real wages can now only be achieved at dangerously high rates of inflation.

Another aspect of the current crisis that poses special problems for those trying to keep the economy invisible is its global character. When a crisis is global the helplessness of those who claim to govern the system of production becomes embarrassingly obvious. It is apparent that no private action will have any effect on events; we know that no single sector of the economy can revive while the

**"Liberal economists
(and on the whole this is the dominant
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and the progressive section of the
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sectors that it deals with are in a slump; worse still, it is clear that weak national economies — Italy, Britain and the U.S. for example — cannot advance while world trade and finance is stagnant. Meanwhile the whole system cannot move forward until its elements revive. Finally policy makers and businessmen find themselves obliged to wait for "a turn around" in their affairs, and we are obliged to wait with them.

It is precisely this helplessness that is obscured by the view that the economy is not a human but a natural phenomenon, the vagueries of which are to be endured like the weather. Stories about "the economy" are mostly a gloss on this general theme, but it is dressed up in an interesting variety of ways.

Popular journalism adopts a moral perspective on events. Apparently we have been "living too high", in "a false paradise", on "borrowed time". The time has now come to "pay the price" and we are supposed to get some satisfaction from completing a cycle of sin and punishment. The tendency of capitalism to exhibit erratic cycles of boom and bust is then construed as the endless, and inevitable, replay of the fall and redemption of humanity.

Some extra force is given to this story because we are aware that current levels of consumption are using resources at a rate that cannot be sustained for long given existing technologies. If we can be persuaded that the problem is a consequence of private greed and self-indulgence, we may miss the fact that our social system is without any effective mechanism that would permit us to adapt consumption to our capacity to produce in a way that was fair and reasonable. The forced decline in real wages can then be palmed off as an inevitable consequence of the "shortage of resources".

A close relation of the moral view point is the medical paradigm. By this model we are asked to think of the economy as an organism much like our own body. Normally it is "healthy" but now it is "sickly". The doctors who are called in prescribe two types of cure. One group argues that the crisis is a symptom of the organism trying to cure itself. Periods of prosperity permit weaknesses

to develop: marginal small business, ineffective workers, parasitic social agencies and so on. Finally the organism must reject "the unwanted fat" and left to itself it will do so. No doubt the cure is painful for the weak elements "but the course of nature requires such things."

Another group of 'doctors' calls for more positive action, "unpleasant medicines" are to be swallowed and so on. The Canadian Tory Finance Minister, John Crosbie, is a lover of this rhetoric, moving freely from moral to medicinal modes as he tries to convince us of the need for "tough measures".

The organic metaphor is familiar and dangerous. Extended, it is the metaphor of fascism. The fascist takes society to be "unhealthy", "decadent", "impure" and uses this diagnosis to justify the surgical removal of the foreign bodies that infect it.

The right wing of the economics profession led by the "Chicago school" and especially by one member, Milton Friedman, a sort of right anarchist, do not permit themselves such transparently worthless analogies. They have been forced to adopt an economy story of their own. In this version the economy is not so much natural as providential, a harmonious mechanism that spontaneously appeared for the happiness of men. Left alone the mechanism produces if not "bliss", as the more old fashioned idealogues of this type had it, but, at any rate, "optimality", an arrangement that sounds uncomfortable but modern. The trouble arises, they assert, when "the state" interferes with this mechanism. That the modern state is the product of the efforts of the bourgeoisie to manage the chaos of the private property economy is forgotten, and, the helplessness of their class before this chaos, is not obscured but celebrated as the source of "freedom".

This view filters into journalism and current folk tales as the assertion that we "must stop expecting the government to do everything for us" and "must stand on our own two feet". This way of putting it makes for a nice circle with the cautionary tale about the consequences of self-indulgence.

Liberal economists, (and on the whole this is the dominant tendency in that profession) and the 'progressive' section

of the business community are generally horrified by the naivety of the right. They are not prepared to create the police state that would be required were a contemporary capitalist state to permit the "invisible hand" of the market to reduce its citizens to beggary.

For representatives of this group capitalism is not natural, providential, or even a very nice system. It is however a fact of life and something we are stuck with. They accept that the articulation of production by the exchange of private property and the purchase and use of wage labour is liable to produce periods of slump, the "unfair" treatment of the poor, cutbacks in essential social services, the exploitation of the Third World and so on. The challenge, they argue, is to moderate this inequality and irrationality as best we can under the circumstances.

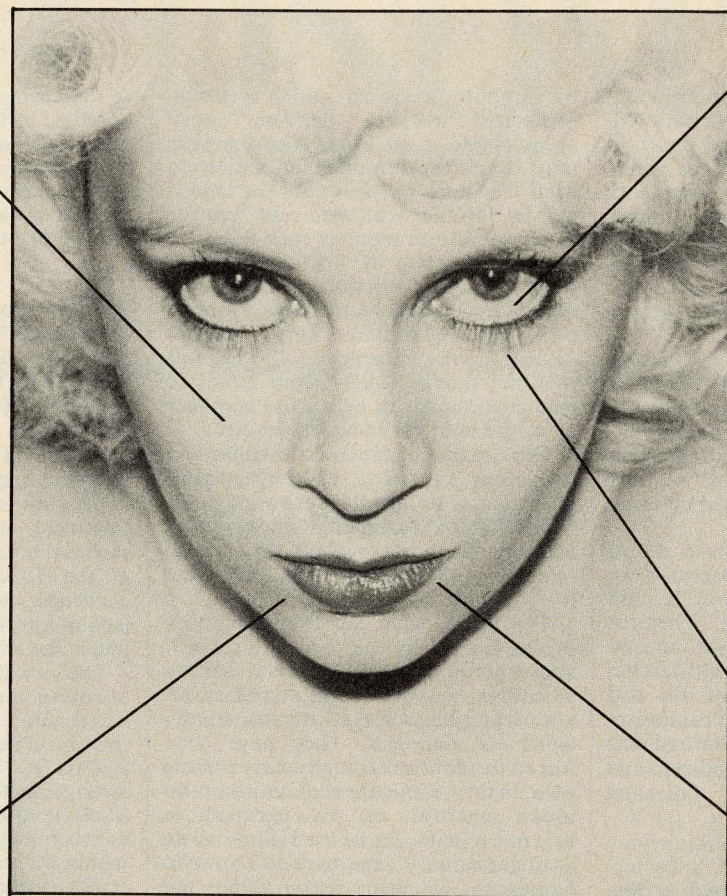
The view that capitalism is "a given" is, of course, a near relative of the view that it is natural, and, the attempt to set aside the fundamental irrationality and systematic inequality of the given arrangement, obscures any real understanding of the capitalist economy quite as much as the other stories it competes within the marketplace of ideas.

The disjunction between the various stories that are spun about the problems of capitalism in the Seventies and our own experience of it, produces a vacuum that is finally filled by an almost completely inarticulate journalism. Instead of any account of the economy at all, grounded in reality or in imagination, we are left with a bizarre series of apparently unconnected events to ponder: the sudden movement of currency prices as the Canadian dollar plunges, the rising price of fuel, the monthly appearance of statistics of the general price level and of unemployment, the sudden appearance and disappearance of jobs and grants. 'The Economy' which threatened to emerge from the fog, to show its form and where we fit in to its metabolism, emerges only in our private grievances and in line ups to buy silver.

The ideologists do their work well! ■
David Mole studies Economic History at the University of Toronto.

The face is kept dry.
Any allusion to
sweat or sex is
powdered away.

The eyes are outlined
to define the
parameters of their
wet contents.



The lips are outlined,
filled in with a
lighter shade and
finally the shiny
moist gloss applied.

By foregrounding
the eyes and mouth,
the alluring-yet-
frightful signal
is reinforced.

Make-up beautifies, but to do so it must also
efface. First the features are erased, and
then built again - as if from nothing.

THE FASHIONED FACE

Looking for signs of life

By Kerri Kwinter

photo Jorge Zontal

All fashion declares. The 'last word' as ideal of each style declares 'absolutely'. The styles that were saved and savoured for the most memorable of faces said clearly and distinctly "This is IT, absolutely."

Today, as in the past, the face acts as the ultimate 'signifier' of sex(uality) in the closely censored commercial world. Most magazines use faces on their covers. It's one of the few old and reliable advertising concepts. It's powerfully seductive and culturally acceptable. There are though, a few publications that will use anything *but* a pretty face on their covers. For them it's a perfidious, or at least irresponsible thing to do. Everybody is aware that 'a pretty face will sell anything'. It's *how* a face works on its owner and its audience that reveals just how capricious these images can be.

'Looks' are generated to correspond to the emotional ambivalence about women that manifests as the 'double standard'. It's the old contradiction of the beckoning-but-dangerous object of dubious pleasure. In Italy they call them *Motherwhores* (Madonna Putana). Everyone loves a mother and hates a whore, or is it the other way around?

Today we can loosely define these contradictory looks as 'vulnerable' and 'intimidating'. Both are called 'sexy' and require the same amounts and kind of work to achieve. But they are aimed at different markets. 'Vulnerable' sells toothpaste, running shoes, camping trips and other inexpensive 'popular' ideas. 'Intimidating' sells high fashions and designer perfumes to the rich or avant-garde, but not exclusively.

The image making process manifests this vulnerable/aggressive or passive/active tension itself. Many of the relationships incorporate it as a highly developed and defined aspect. There's one tension between the face in the mirror and the one on the shoulders. Another very touchy one between the make-up artist and the actress or model. There's an obvious tension between the photographer and the subject, and an inexplicable one between the make-up artist and the industry.

Models embody the image. They idealize or perfect its form. However, anyone who wears make-up or who has what are labelled 'beautiful' or 'attractive' features, is subject to the same scrutiny, or sexual size-up as the professional prototype. Even those who don't wear

make-up have been assigned a sexual definition that is also linked to the 'total' and plastic one that the commercial world creates.

The very function of make-up is twofold. Obviously, it beautifies, but to do so, it must also efface. The following is an outline of the conventional application process and the function of each step.

Washing and toning	To cleanse and tighten
Moisturizing	To smooth
Concealer and base applied	To flatten and homogenize or two-dimensionalize
Dark contours are applied	To reconstruct
Eyes are outlined, deepened and lifted	To foreground
Everything is blended to obscure lines and differences	To mask or mute
Lips are coloured and moistened	To foreground
Entire surface is powdered except the lips	To dry

This ceremony or ritualized process becomes important in style or fashion on its own. Each aspect has an effect on us. We are consciously erasing ourselves and refashioning our features. In a way we are humiliating ourselves. Also, while we watch ourselves in the mirror being transformed at our own hands, the application of our own make-up becomes an essential ingredient in our sense of our *image*. For many of us, it is one of the few times in a day that we are allowed to be alone, behind a locked door. It's a culturally justified moment of complete unabashed self-attention. The sensation of being able to manipulate, alter and control our hair, make-up and face is a constant reassertion of our power over ourselves and others. It's a power that we can bask in alone or carry out to our audience.

A finished face makes statements. It acts as the sexual message it is intended to be. It asserts the sense of control we personally have over ourselves, and perhaps the motivation behind the need to sexualize by obliterating the self. Finally it makes a social statement to observers: "I'm hip. I know how to look as well as how to achieve it. You don't." It's something that takes time, training and money.

Often an actress or model will have make-up applied by an artist. The relationship between the two is perhaps the most touchy one in the entire industry. In this case the make-up artist is the one with the knowledge, control and therefore, power. The model is the vulnerable one. Once it is taken out of her hands, she is prey to the questionable interests of the artist.

"I arrive at the studio and meet the artist. I sit down in front of the mirror. The make-up artist puts on a serious face and begins the process. If he defies the typical process (outlined above) I feel a moment of panic

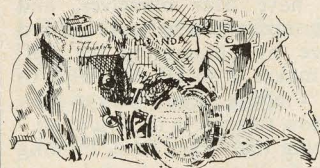
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Mandate Gives Cruising Green Like

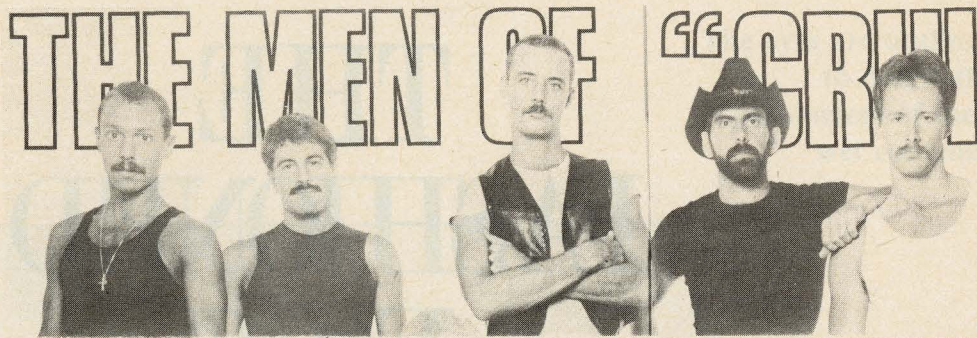
CRUISING, the gay-murder-horror movie is now scheduled for release February 15th. Demonstrators in New York last summer tried to stop production claiming the film was homophobic, and is not only misrepresentative but will generate violence against the gay community. However, at least one conservative gay magazine doesn't agree.

The Feb.1980 issue of **MANDATE** features six movie extras in the cover story, "the men of 'Cruising'". Inside are personal profiles on these heroic bit players who are only too proud to stand up to charges of collaboration. Although most of them don't deny the film is exploitative they're brimming over with rationales. As one man puts it, "Every movie can't show everything, you have to be selective." (Director) Friedkin is telling one particular story, that's all." Another calls for "strong family piety, restraint" (--this in a gay magazine!) In a further article editor John Devere states, "the enemy is not 'Cruising', it is not outside. The heart of darkness is within..." In other words, there are gay murderers and psychopaths just like normal people.

LIFE AFTER DEATH?

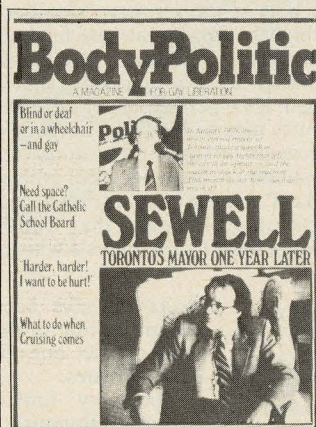


Not that we're worried - but strange things do happen to artists after they die; or more accurately, to their work and reputation. In the latest *This Magazine*, S.M. Crean looks at a photographer's 'life after death' in "The Revision of Michel Lambeth". Not only have Lambeth's prints quadrupled in value since his death, but both his reputation and the scope of his work have been re-written by curators and historians. Says Crean:



...William Friedkin says of his movie, *Cruising*, "I want this to be real." Implying commercial success? *Mandate* magazine wants some of the action...*The Body Politic* is back for more regal abuse: The Crown vs. Pink Triangle Press. Doesn't it sound appealing?...Wardair picks up mercy flight dollars and then looks for cheap labour...Video success is not always landing on your feet.

Mandate's appalling defense of this sinister film may represent a naïveté about the power of Hollywood in making public opinion. But it is also true that the publishers of *Mandate* have a logical fear that as businessmen, their position is threatened by mobilizations in the gay community which might question their conservatism, or the dubious motives that lie behind their self-claimed role as a "service" to the gay community. ■



Update: The Body Politic Trial

At the end of last year The Ontario Arts Council did not accept the recommendation of their independent periodical panel to award a grant of \$1000 to *The Body Politic*. Chairman, Frank F. McEachren wrote to *TBP* informing them that "a grant for *The Body Politic* would not be in the best interest of the arts in Ontario and that the (gay) Journal should be self-supporting." This is the second time in six months that the Ontario Arts Council has shown active prejudice, against *The Body Politic*. ■

In late December Ontario Provincial Court Judge Sydney Harris ordered the Crown to return the documents seized December 30th, 1977 and used in preparation for 'The Body Politic Trial' (see *Centerfold/Fuse* February-March 1979). Harris then ordered the Crown to reimburse *TBP* for all expenses incurred in seeking the court order for the return of the materials. The awarding of costs in a criminal case is highly unusual. Pink Triangle Press (publishers of *TBP*) were acquitted last February 14th of a charge of using the mail to transmit immoral, indecent or scurrilous material. That acquittal was appealed by the Crown. The appeal is to be heard February 7th and 8th. Judge Harris gave the Crown 30 days to appeal the return of materials and costs order. As expected, on January 21st the Crown announced that it will appeal the latest decision. To assist in this fight against intolerance and repression please send donations to The Body Politic Free The Press Fund, c/o Lynn King in Trust, Cornish, King and Sachs, Barristers and Solicitors, 111 Richmond St.W., Suite 320, Toronto, Ontario M5H 3N6. ■

Turbulent Skies

It looks like Wardair Canada Ltd. is in for some "turbulence". Wardair has been operating refugee charters from southeast Asia to points within Canada: Edmonton and Montreal. The airline is one of several Canadian airlines to be awarded federal government contracts through the Department of Manpower and Immigration to handle refugee charter flights. Recently, the union representing the flight attendants of Wardair have accused the company of laying off its members and hiring foreign nationals to staff these refugee charters in order to save costs and circumvent the Collective Agreement between the company and the union, The Canadian Airline Flight Attendant Association (CALFAA).

On January 23, Shirley Poole, president of the 5,500 member union sent a telegram to Transport Minister Walter Mazankowski and to Labour Minister Lincoln Alexander urging immediate action against the company's "despicable and scandalous" actions.

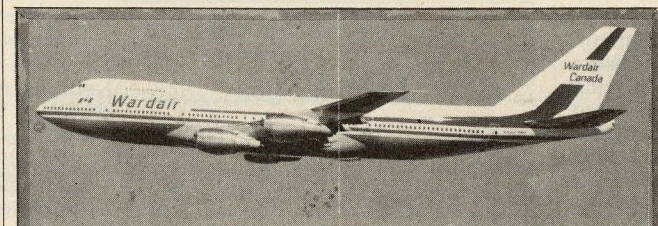
How did this come about? On January 7/8, Wardair's Director of Cabin Services, Art Jackman, issued a bulletin advising all flight attendants that the refugee charters were being cancelled for February. At that time, Wardair said these cancellations were due to the failure of the company and CALFAA to reach an agreement on these charters. The union and Wardair, which employs about 600 flight attendants in Canada, have been locked in grievance and arbitration disputes since September over their contract as it applied to these overseas charters operations involving refugees.

The union says that Wardair is not following the contract. Jo-Ann Scott, speaking for the flight attendants, said that the agreement provides for one hour's pay for every four

hours on the ground, "but the company says that doesn't apply outside Canada." Geographical boundaries aside, however, Wardair does provide this called-for one hour's pay for every four hours on the ground in Hawaii. The flight attendants want to know why this doesn't apply in Japan, where they are based while working the refugee charters. Nor are they provided the privilege of returning home every two weeks when working these refugee flights, as are the pilots of Wardair. This

provide data on crew cost estimates. But when union negotiations for CALFAA asked to inspect these figures, they were told they would have to accept Wardair's 'word' on faith — and no figures were forthcoming.

On January 22, Wardair starting issuing layoff notices to 20 flight attendants based in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. The union also learned that the company was attempting to recruit flight attendants in the United States to handle refugee charter operations in the



'Wardair Class'

When you fly Wardair you are treated to our special Wardair Class Service... at no additional cost. One of the treats in store for you is our steak dinner. This is served hot from the galley, cooked to your taste...rare, medium or well-done. Imported wines are offered with the main course. Also for your enjoyment the bar is open during most of the flight. We offer a choice of drinks, beer, pop, tea, coffee, juices and milk. And, if you want to relax, stereo headphones let you escape into the world of your favourite music. This is just a sample of Wardair Class and it is all...

Our treat.

'privilege' is provided for in the contract, between the airline and the flight attendants and is not being honoured. The flight attendants want to know why.

Wardair explains that the refugee program would be too "costly" if all the aspects of the collective agreement were adhered to. Both CP Air and Air Canada have agreed to run the program in accordance with their agreement with CALFAA.

However, what these "costs" are is unclear. Under the government contract, Wardair was required to

Orient. Since then some confusion has arisen over whether the recruited crews were from the U.S. or the Orient. In either case, a Wardair spokesperson admitted that foreign crews would likely be cheaper than using Canadians.

On January 28, almost 100 flight attendants picketed Wardair's offices in Mississauga to protest the company's actions. Then again on January 30, in front of the Wardair ticket office in the Eaton Centre in Toronto; more than 50 flight attendants demonstrated their anger at

Wardair's intention to pay non-union attendants less than it would pay its own employees under their collective agreement.

"We have here a case where a Canadian company which employs Canadian workers and has been granted a contract by the Canadian government, . . . turns around and lays off Canadian workers at a time of high unemployment and replaces them with foreign nationals," charged the president of the Canadian Airline Flight Attendant Association, Shirley Poole.

In the telegram sent to Transport and Labour Ministers, the (CALFAA) union says of Wardair's action: "If condoned, would have drastic repercussions for the workers of Canada." ■

Video Open: There's No Success Like Success?

Winners of the 1979 Independent Video Open do not always land on their feet. We hear that one of the five was in London (U.K.) showing tapes at Canada House. Canada House always "caters" its events from its hospitality budget. The artist, out of pocket, was told that there was no tape showing fee. So the artist instead bagged a few bottles of hospitality wine. The event curator, sympathetic, also informed the artist that "if money was the problem," some steno or cleaning work could be found at Canada House. "No thanks," replied the 'winner', "such fee practice might start a precedent."

Another winner, on receiving the \$700 prize, was immediately cut off unemployment benefits. The third example of not always landing on their feet is more literal: the 'lucky' recipient was enjoying some active relaxation at the roller rink when an out-of-control skater collided with the artist causing a fracture of the right arm. And the other two? No news is good news. ■

(continued from page 153)

and distrust. As he erases my features and reconstructs new ones I feel assaulted and relieved, veiled and improved.

The artist talks most often about his work and expertise. How he is ill-recognized for his input in an image. How he 'makes' a face regardless of what he has to work with. I agree with him despite the insult. After he has finished, the artist is recognized, but all is usually transferred to me. They say "You look great." not "Your make-up looks great."

- name and address withheld.

This insinuates that the make-up artist's role in glamour/fashion is publicly played down, that their work is treated as a personal, private ritual between themselves and their subjects. In the same way that make-up is blended and applied, to insinuate that it doesn't exist, the business insinuates that the artist doesn't exist.

Under the usual, lowest-common-denominator veneer of politesse, exists a tension between the model and artist that is never expressed. Many models dread them. Often experienced models hide behind racks of clothes, out of the artist's view, and rub out his work and do their own. Both know that the other knows, but pride prohibits a scene.

Make-up artists have to defend themselves against various attacks: "She doesn't know how to do my face." is a big one. On a subtler note is the vainglorious accusation by models that artists are living beauty vicariously — that they are fallen models. There is perhaps more truth in the accusation of subtle misogynist violence. Make-up is an aggressive sexualizer and eraser of personality. Applying it to someone else can suggest a kind of violent defacing or degrading of the model/subject. Rarely does a make-up artist have more than a dash or hint of make-up on her own face. In doing so they increase the tension and distance (subtly) between themselves and the models.

The final product speaks clearly, even before it is put under the lights and onto the film. Oddly enough, the face is always given its final analysis in its mirror reflection, even if someone else is judging it. Perhaps the mirror helps elevate the image to a spectacle, devoid of personality. The mirror image, like the celluloid one, has far more potential for myth or fantasy. It has power in two dimensions.

Most of the finished face is innocuous looking. Only irregularities or definite spots call our attention to it. It is typically kept very dry. ("Your nose is blinding me, dear.") Any allusion to sweat or sex is powdered away except on the eyes and mouth. They are the only wet areas on the face, but not without qualification. First there is a line traced around the lips. Then a slightly lighter shade is used to fill them in. Finally the shiny moist gloss is added. This gives them a deep rich fleshy appeal. The eyes get much the same treatment. They are either outlined or mascara is

"Women have to do more than just *not wear* make-up to change the connotation. The industry has already accommodated the 'natural look' and given it as significant and powerful a myth as any other contrived look."

applied to define the parameters of their sometimes fiery, sometimes empty, but always wet contents, — the "windows of the soul".

On an otherwise dry face, these emphasized boundaries around wet openings suggest an 'order' imposed on human sex. (Everything in its place.) Being the only unmudged or unblended lines on the face they suggest a control or oppression of their contents, while drawing our vision directly to them.

'Vulnerable' is popular. It is usually denoted by roundness and softness. 'Intimidating' is fashionable. It is usually defined by angularity and hardness. Film images try to be both. Vulnerability is incorporated in their aesthetics and their scale relative to the viewer is intimidating. The sexual treatment of a woman's face is epitomized in the '30's and '40's Hollywood classics. Almost always the starlet sat with the dominant lighting and camera just slightly above her eye level.

"As long as sex remains a commodity of obsession that lends itself easily to this primitive ritual of painting, the link between sex and manipulated form will keep reinforcing itself."

The most effective and frequent set-up was this: Woman's head slightly (ever so) tilted down and just out of the light. Slowly she turns toward the camera and light. Slower still she raises her eyelids and softly gazes into the lens. Hold. Cut. The formula doesn't leave much room for improvement. In fact it worked so well then, it is still in use now. The obvious correspondence of eye and mouth to the vagina or to the vague 'vesselness' of womanhood is never exhausted.

The specific treatment of the face by fashion is culturally encouraged. Make-up wearers 'foreground' the eyes and mouth to reinforce the alluring-yet-frightful signal, perhaps unknowingly, but willingly. As fashion dictates blackened eyes and mouths, everything hard and dry, a new emphasis is produced. Now brutal-and-confused sexuality is played with. By blackening these areas, historical signifiers of passive or unobtainable sex are converted into symbols of bruised, abused or neglected sex. In this case the old contradictions seem to be embraced, incorporated and combined instead of suppressed.

Finally there is the un-painted face. Although the refusal to wear make-up is to some extent a refusal to conform to the plastic sexual definition, it isn't sufficient. Women have to do more than just *not wear* make-up to change the connotation. The industry has already accommodated the 'natural look' and given it as significant and powerful a myth as any other contrived look. All the fashion magazines were coated with the 'natural look' for years. They have been invested with a 'free, self-confident, relaxed-attitude-to-sex' image. The second point has to do with perceptions. Just as we learn to read photographic imagery, we learn to read faces. The strength and repetition of film and photographic imagery has, perhaps, pre-conditioned our perception of the real-live thing. Although a face isn't painted, its soft hairless surface surrounded by feathery, longish (usually) hair, expresses the culturally dominant statement. The perception of this face is destined to alteration by memory and expectations prejudiced by commercial and classical imagery.

Make-up or no make-up, a face speaks sex and power by choice, or default. The historical significance of the face as depicted in art, described in literature and glorified everywhere, can't be obliterated by superficial manipulation. Every attempt will be co-opted by culture and be made to conform to the 'exciting' or 'castrating' molds. (As Olivia Newton John goes punk...)

As long as sex remains a commodity of obsession, that lends itself easily to this primitive ritual of painting, the link between sex and manipulated form will keep evolving, reinforcing itself and perfecting itself. This link may be one of the few but hardy superstructures that advances twice as quickly as its critics. ■

Kerri Kwinter lives in Toronto

MAKING THE NEWS FIT

How To Lose Ten Years Overnight

by Martha Fleming and Tim Guest

Once every ten years the publicity machine of the news media turns on itself and takes stock of what has happened, paraphrasing their own stories. As every new decade dawns, the ability of the newsmagazines to invent history increases in sophistication. Just as sure as Christmas is good for department stores, the end of the Seventies has been a boomtime for newsmagazines. And no matter how 'suspect' the analysis presented in these publications is to some, it still represents "The News" to many.

The intention of these decade wrap-ups is supposedly to give the public a view of their own history, fresh after it's been made - remember to look backwards and forwards before you cross ten years. It would seem that the public was having its 'temperature taken', and correspondents across the continent were assembling the results. But clearly this is not the case. Given that the media - specifically those involved in national and international coverage - will always be privy to information that the public is not privy to, the 'temperature' they are taking is of the control system itself. In their collection, analysis and presentation of this 'classified information', the media not only live up to their name as mediator, but also fulfill their role as state publicist.

Looking at a number of these Seventies' panoramas, collectively, they begin to read like an overture to the Eighties. They seem not so much to reflect the passing decade as to predict the next set of events (which of course will be reported and then filed as a future 'history'). Based on their analysis of the unfolding present, the media interpret the recent past - this 'interpretation' in turn being created from what has already been constructed in the daily news. A neat marketing device. No one questions the arbitrariness of even numbers in deciding when to call it history. But that is beside the point. This 'decadizing' has become, for the news media, a vehicle as important as an election.

"History doesn't really split into tidy ten year packages," says Larry Martz, Assistant Managing editor of *Newsweek*.

But he's managed to do just that in the November 19th issue of the magazine. Chock full of photographs and snappy text, it mirrors the recent issues of *Life*, *Time*, *Ms.*, *New York*, *Rolling Stone* and many others.

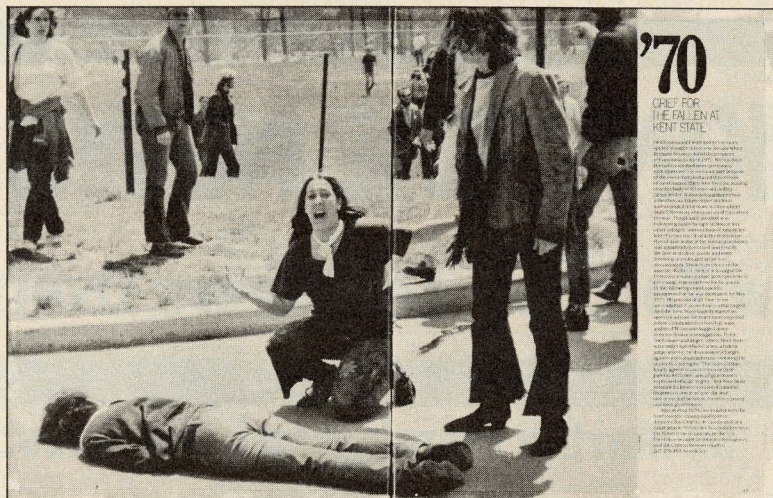
The obituaries of the 'great who have fallen' within the last ten years is a favorite space-filler in these wrap-ups. *Newsweek* has devoted five full pages of its Seventies' issue to those who have gone. These 'tombstones' are convenient ways to smooth over 'problematic' careers and also to call into question the 'contribution' of those who may not be fitting into the current form of 'greatness'.

Lyndon Baines Johnson, 64, politician and paradox. A puller of beagles' ears and a displayer of his appendectomy scar, he wielded a soft voice and a rough edge; he blustered in public and cajoled eloquently behind closed doors. Puppet master of the Senate in his Congressional days, he started his term as the 36th President with a burst of liberal legislation in civil rights, housing, education and medical care. Then his war on poverty — and his hold on the White House — foundered on the disaster of Vietnam. *Newsweek*

As the Seventies fade, we see Lyndon Johnson transformed into a merry prankster whose inconsistency in office elevated him to "politician and paradox". Billy Sol Estes aside, *Newsweek* says LBJ "left office ... still somehow larger than life". Mao Tse-Dung, however, is cut down to a more appropriate size (in *Newsweek's* view). His obituary ends with his reply to Nixon's statement that his (Mao's) "writings ... changed the world." He is quoted: "I have not been able to change it, I have only been able to change a few places in the vicinity of Peking."

The not-so-subtle qualifications of greatness continue. *Newsweek* seems to begrudge Golda Meir her Prime Ministerial status. Not only was she a woman, but she was a Jew: "With her dowdy dress and peasant shrewdness, she could have been just another grandmother." Of course, women newsmakers who grow old are not all that popular with the photographers and caption writers. The late Margaret Mead is described as a "frumpish dynamo". And civil rights leader, Adam Clayton Powell seems to have had no other difficulties in life except those of his own making. He was a "shameless playboy" whose "cause had passed him by".

But it isn't just the dead whose images are processed to fit the present. All of the articles in these magazines assemble facts which have been carefully chosen to direct and manipulate memory. Major events of the past are selected and regurgitated in collage format, a method which disguises their projected ideology.



Life

As well, collage is a mechanism that works, structurally, very much like memory. So it is an effective tool in evoking the past. But what is evocative does not *indicate* reality, nor is it representative. And even the least qualified journalists in any one of these magazines mentioned will claim that in the instance of these articles, (s)he is attempting not just to be 'objective', but to be purely 'informational'. It is not a paranoid's dream to consider that the mainstream media only tells part of the story, that it colours information and promotes ideology. Moreover, media events happen by inflating incidents, if not by fabrication. But the over-riding technique of collage - with 'words and pictures' - does not leave us with facts. It leaves us with a tone, a sense of the time, and a confusion over the relationship of one 'fact' to the other in this veritable attack of familiar information. But whatever has a 'tone' also carries a message.

This double-packaged news-item is

then dumped into a container of intermingling bits of history. Real events are collaged with 'media events', reducing everything to a confusing mass of ephemera. Muhammad Ali's TKO over Jerry Quarry in 1970 is given equal space in the same paragraph with the election of Allende in Chile.

Anything 'deserves mention' and so everything becomes senseless, indecipherable. Or so it seems. The senselessness is used to evoke a certain moral crisis, and to read between the lines is to realize the conscious portrayal of this crisis. Articles in *Newsweek* are called "The Limits of Power" and "The Age of Uncertainty". *Life's* page-long introduction is not just subliminal seduction, because what *Life* is selling here is not a product, it's an attitude. And *Life* doesn't simply colour facts through description, it methodically plays on fear. It is this fear, this uneasiness which unites all the disparate bits of information into one package.

Life's advantage over the less pictorial

newsmagazines is that photographs are more immediate and evocative than text. *Life* always chooses the 'perfect' photo, poised rather than posed: the instant of the event of Jimmy Carter's inauguration and the split-second death of a Vietnamese. In these shots, we are being directed towards an 'understanding' rather than being given an ideology to accept or reject.

In *Life's* section "Body and Soul", the extremism of cults, disco and the New York City Marathon convey a picture of frantic upper-middle-class obsession as a 'norm' throughout the country. In "Oil Made the Bedouin King", the ally we love to hate is presented as a distant exotic who buys Kentucky Fried Chicken in funny clothes in downtown Riyadh and eats cakes decorated with the MOBIL symbol. They are accessible but removed, a perfect way to present a force one has to deal with though one might not want to.

Life continues with the decade in pictures, first divided into years, then into quasi-categories: i.e. "Good Moments", "Bad Moments", "I Am Woman". Despite the happy images of America in PTL style, the overall tone is guilt. Significantly, there is hardly a single mention of natural disasters throughout this profusely illustrated package. The problems of the past decade seem to have been caused by fanatics. Lurid photographs of Jim Jones' Peoples' Temple, Tenerife Airport and the hostage-taking incident at Munich are all depicting 'man's inhumanity to man'. All the calamities are human mistakes, which animate the 'moral crisis'. And where there's 'moral crisis', can the 'neo-conservatives' be far behind? Unlike *Life*, the final *Newsweek* editorial is quite literal in its prescription for curing this ambiguous 'crisis'. George Will writes about the Seventies as "The Illusion of Progress". First he handles the domestic scene. In a section titled "Doubts" he raps the knuckles of women and gays, saying:

Doubts: In 1973, the Supreme Court, citing the "privacy right" of women, swung a scythe through abortion laws. By 1979, pornography had done what a million abortions a year had not done: it has given the "women's movement" doubts about the dogma that sexual mores are none of the law's business. Homosexuals demanded laws making their affliction a civil right.

Newsweek

Moving on to the 'climate of the nation', he claims that "individual fears

... have been supplanted by social fears."

What might those social fears be? The dubious equivalents "nuclear war and a 15 per cent prime interest rate." But it is in his international 'analysis' that Will shows his brittle cold-war attitude. "Consider the calamities that did not happen. Chile and Portugal did not get communist governments ...". On first reading this statement in November it seemed incredible that *Newsweek* could be so heavy-handed, but months later in the fresh ice of the new cold war, such statements are not surprising. It is not just dissociated world events which have prompted this 'turn to the right'. The newsmagazine, in reporting on the Seventies have created a social climate and a prepared audience for this sinister message.

All of which is testimony to the effectiveness of this type of publicity. Its influence in interpreting the world to an atomized and already confused audience is immeasurable. Basking in the artificial light of *Newsweek's* 'history', columnist Cynthia Wilson writes: "Looking back on a turbulent decade, events tend to blur in time: while wars fade from memory - and was it in '73 or '75 that America had its epidemic of streaking".

Finally, the importance of analysing these 'histories' is not only to flush out the prejudices and falsehoods. The critical point is the way in which this tool is used. With an apparent lightweight pop appeal "The News" intends to shape public opinion for an audience who, mystified, sees the media as their own reflection. ■

A Chip Off The Old Block?

One article in *The New York Times* Wrap-Up-Of-The-Seventies, published December 24, 1979, suggested the following decade-signatures: 1950's - the age of the atom; 1960's - the dawn of manned space flight; and the 1970's - the coming of the age of electronics. Elsewhere in the section, the silicone chip is presented as the key to the "new industrial revolution" of tele-communications. Succinctly and gratuitously the 'new age' of our "electronic lifestyle" is predicted; a lifestyle where "the home computer will provide easy and economical control of kitchen appliances and household finances, reservations for hotels and airlines, and education and entertainment for the kids."

This article is typical of the 'new age' journalism that has become prevalent in the last three years, where unquestioning endorsements of technology present a rosy future while ignoring (as did similar articles in *Popular Mechanics* in the Fifties) the very real economic, social and political implications of this ever-advancing revolution in tele-communications. Predictably, no mention is made of the governmental and corporate power struggles involved, nor the inherent issue of how independent usage of these new 'toys' will be determined and/or discouraged.

In the January 1980, issue of *Videography*, a trade magazine whose own brand of 'new age' endorsements discusses video in a similar manner, Victor Ancona, resident Video Art columnist, goes on a rampage of general observations and predictions for the Eighties.

He begins with "Video tapes will be made in the millions..." and concludes, "video is the land of future promise". Between these inflated predictions, he shows a patronizing contempt for both the artists using the medium and the tapes they

produce, with one-liners like: "Why do performance artists think that a tape of their performance is art?", "Documentaries can be works of art." and "Video curators ought to be called monitors". He is at his most venomous in a section called "How to Alienate Audiences and Keep Your Art."

There appears to be no point to Ancona's hundred-odd acerbic observations. What he really does, between the lines, is make a series of suppositions: that artists are economically stable; that they control both the means of production and their distribution systems, and that both are adequate; that video art is an 'established' cultural commodity, both understood and embraced by the public.

While being unspecific, it becomes clear that what he wants is a safe art, one of 'emotional power' but one that ultimately preserves (his own) conservative outlooks and aesthetics. He is suggesting an art of social unconsciousness.

His understanding of the medium parallels most 'new age' journalists: he sees the revolution in terms of the hardware, not in the use of the hardware and what it can produce - the content. In Ancona's case, he wants the video of the Eighties to remain in an ineffectual cultural hinterland, both empty enough and pretty enough to travel publicly in government and/or corporate controlled channels. He doesn't understand that much of the art he hates is the same art that those controlling telecommunications would also frown on - and that such independent production will be 'safe' from being seen, and eventually even being made, because the official channels will have no place for it in their 'new age'. ■

John Greyson

TEN YEARS

In which Americans suffered growing disillusionment about their leaders, their institutions, even the value of their currency — and came to the stark realization that there were hard limits to the riches of the planet; in which they were torn against themselves over an undeclared war on the far side of the world; a President was brought down after he used the power of his office to cover up his own illegal acts and those of his lieutenants; oil-rich Arab nations transformed the power balance of the world; chiefs of state who were sworn enemies shook hands in a bold try for peace in the Mideast; a mad preacher called his flock to death — and an abundance of other shocking, horrifying, edifying and tenderly moving events. A calendar in pictures presenting the climactic event of each of the years, 1970 to 1979.

Life

IS THERE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE FUNNEL?

The Funnel

is an Experimental

Film Theatre that offers

screenings and member access to

editing facilities. Future plans

include distribution and more equipment access.

by Martha Fleming

The work of filmmakers such as Stan Brakhage, whose use of rapid camera movement and violation of the film surface itself with paint and scratching, perhaps best exemplifies the break with convention which experimental film makes. His involvement with the physical qualities of the medium led the way for more structural and formal filmmakers. Michael Snow's *Standard Time*, in which a camera makes precise horizontal pans in direct conflict with the movement of the film through the camera entertains structural examinations of the nature of film and vision.

But the over-riding concerns of the artist/filmmaker are in the depiction and bending of spatial/temporal precepts. As Anna Gronau, co-director of the Funnel, states:

"In the last decade, experimental filmmakers have been looking at the nature of perception and psychological response in film as a renewed humanism appears. There is new interest in the effect of sound and language in film - areas neglected in the long fight for the autonomy of the visual image. 'Personal' cinema has re-emerged in the form of autobiography, either directly or as a thematic framework. And a cautious examination of narrative forms and their ramifications is beginning."

The following is an interview conducted by FUSE with Ross McLaren and Anna Gronau of the Funnel on January 13th, 1980.

FUSE: There's been a lot of activity in experimental film since the mid-Fifties, but the Funnel didn't begin till the late Seventies. What changes in the needs of the community gave rise to the Funnel? What was the catalyst?

Ross McLaren: A number of experimental filmmakers were showing their work in studios and basements. We felt a need to organize some sort of forum where work could be shown publicly. Initially I started the Super 8 Film Festival. Shortly after the Festival was taken over by a number of school media studies administrators, I managed to get a local arts organization, Centre for Experimental Art and Communication (CEAC), to let us use their basement to set up a screening facility. The fall of 1977 saw our first formal screenings. I wanted to establish an autonomy from CEAC from the start, because the filmmakers were a different group of people. It wasn't completely autonomous from CEAC because we were getting some programming money through them, but I was doing all the programming. We had

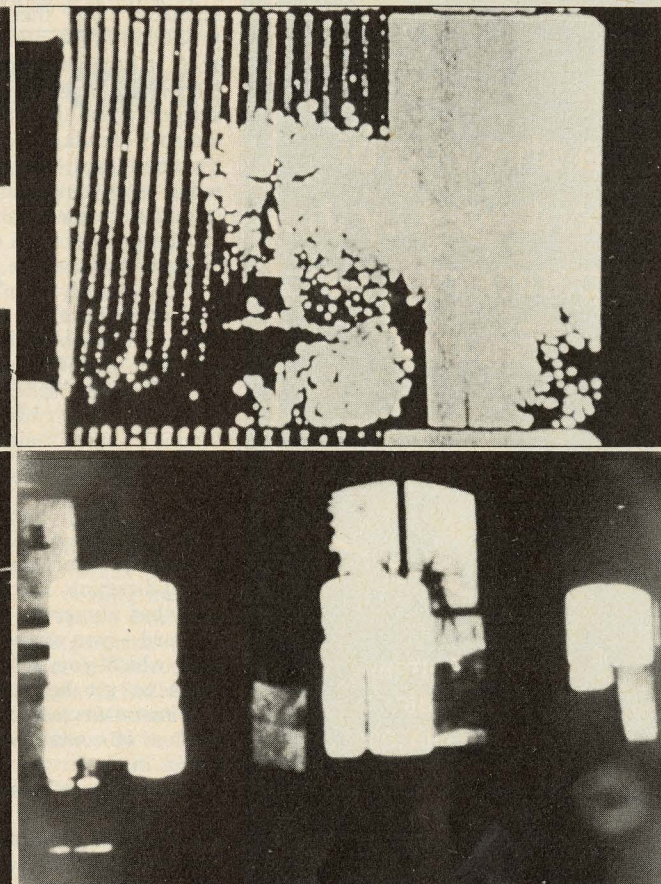
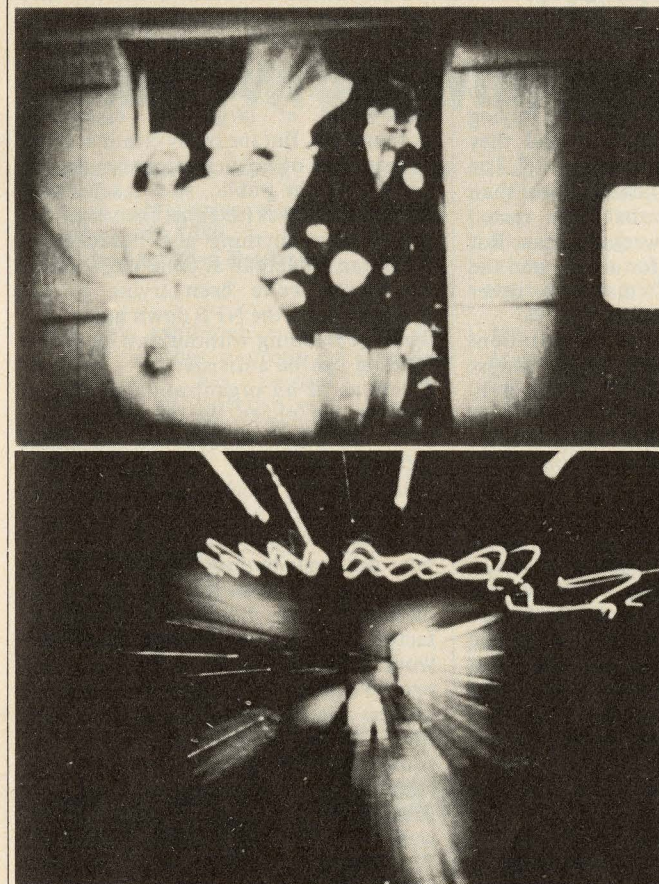
our first year of screenings, getting good response and turnouts, CEAC lost their funding and their building so we found ourselves without a location. We were incorporated around the same time as we had to leave the CEAC building. But when we wrote our by-laws, we made it a membership organization and it has functioned very well on volunteer help and government arts funding. It was an experience to set up the Funnel to try to be self-sufficient. We saw what had happened to CEAC and, having been involved in the Toronto Film-Maker's Co-op, we saw the financial problems that an arts organization can get into sometimes as a result of over-capitalization. That made us plan for a bottom-line self-sufficiency.

Anna Gronau: It wasn't just that we felt politically that we shouldn't accept funding. We felt our reason for existence was our commitment to experimental film - regardless of whether or not we were to receive funding.

FUSE: Do you feel that you still represent the community that was the original impetus to start up the Funnel? Do you feel that you are approaching that 'five-year-crisis-point' that all artist-run organizations seem to reach where a certain level of disenchantment with the organization on the part of the community creeps in?

RM: I'm always anticipating that; analysing the relationship and so on. But I can't really see it happening yet. We do have a great amount of volunteer support here from the community we represent. I don't think there was much happening in this field really until the Toronto Film-Maker's Co-op started in Rochdale in the early Seventies. But then, that was an all inclusive situation where all types of film were being made, unlike the Funnel. The Funnel made a definite statement that artists were working in film and that it is a different thing from industry or independent film.

AG: In the late Sixties some of the energy



Stills from experimental films of the Funnel members. (above left) *Wedding Before Me* by Patrick Jenkins, (above right) *1-51* by Peter Chapman, (below left) *I.E.* by Ross McLaren and (below right) *Maple Leaf Understory* by Anna Gronau.

"Filmmaking is usually treated like some kind of occult knowledge when in fact it's a simple mechanical and chemical process."

in experimental films in the States began to filter up. Dave Rimmer, Michael Snow and Joyce Weiland all came home from New York. Films like *WAVELENGTH* affected a number of film students at the time, people who

were also members of the Film-Maker's Co-op. But unfortunately the problem was that the film industry was not able to support its own people, so potential industry filmmakers would use the Co-op till they got on their feet. If, when they did

get on their feet, they continued an affiliation at all, it was just for the use of facilities. It lost its co-operative aspect and became a service organization. Any workshops or seminars were technically out of league with the kind of things

Marketing For The Makers

Why doesn't the Funnel Experimental Film Theatre have the funds or the opportunity to begin distributing experimental films to the audience it has helped educate? Because The Canadian Film-Makers Distribution Centre (CFMDC) is 'handling' them already.

The CFMDC is the major distribution outlet for all independent - and some commercial - films in Canada. From their offices on Front Street West in Toronto, they send out films to public libraries, school boards and other such institutions. But surely that's not the place for experimental films? Though the CFMDC has a full-time well-salaried arts administrator to justify its arts funding, experimental films are not getting the kind of attention that is required. The kind of attention that an exclusively experimental distribution centre could give it.

The CFMDC distributes documentaries, dramas, travelogs of Canada and other such productions with their arts funding, and then further co-opts the possibilities for the Funnel with regards to distribution by benignly channelling an amount of

their arts funding to the Funnel for programming - something the Funnel already does - on the understanding that a younger organization doesn't 'bite the hand'. But this was only after a recent knuckle-rapping administered by the Ontario Arts Council, who sense some rift in the community.

A further initiative depletion occurs through grant subsidies in the arts sector by which the CFMDC is able to offer film-makers a higher percentage of sales and rentals than commercial houses are able to offer. This attracts films and producers who should never be distributed through a subsidized organization, spreading the funding even more thinly over the existing structure.

How long this tension continues will depend, to a certain extent, on how well the CFMDC handles itself with regard to this aspect of the medium in the future, and how long the Funnel is prepared to put off a confrontation with the CFMDC over the issue of experimental film distributors.

M.F.

a showing of
recent work by the
Experimental Arts
Faculty

Ontario College of Art

Barbara Astman
Brian Blair
Zbigniew Blazeje
Susanne Britton
Ian Carr-Harris
Tom Dean
Eldon Garnet
Saul Goldman
Udo Kasemets
Nobuo Kubota
Wendy Knox-Leet
Peter Mah
Ross McLaren
Ross Mendes
Gray Mills
Dan Solomon
Paul Sloggett
Jim Tinkl
Gus Weisman
Colette Whiten

Feb 28-March 13
Gallery 76,
76 McCaul Street, Toronto
362-5311

people like us were doing. We were alienated by their involvement in production-type films.

RM: It became an organization run by ten small businesses. They tried to accommodate industry types by buying industry-standard equipment and they went bankrupt. "Hollywood North". The rental rates were significantly lower than standard commercial that IBM rented the equipment for six weeks in a row. But it wasn't low enough for artists, and the Co-op certainly didn't make any other accommodation for artists.

AG: The problem is that organizations that are profit oriented must choose profit making schemes over the well-being of the membership. The double bind is trying to maintain self-sufficiency on some level while keeping out of this trap.

RM: At the Funnel, we try to make money any way we can, but not at the expense of the programming, or access or initial direction. But then, someone once said that non-profit organizations were doomed - you start out with a specific goal which you achieve and then you begin to get back to your work and administrators take over the wheel. Then the loss of contact with the community comes in.

FUSE: But in many ways you are becoming a lobbying front for experimental filmmakers.

RM: I think that the involvement of filmmakers in the beginning of the Funnel and in its continuation is a statement to government organizations that experimental films exist. Now that we're a visible organization promoting this kind of activity, there is a recognition on the part of governmental agencies. It's not intentional, but I suppose lobbying is a natural progression. It's a role we'll have to consider in the next three years or so.

FUSE: Yet you don't seem to do any distribution.

RM: There's an exchange circuit of course, and we send out packages of films by our members. This year we showed in Detroit, Ann Arbor, Houston and we're setting up something in Chicago and Buffalo. We have prints of films by all our members. The Canadian Film-maker's Distribution Centre does the majority of the distribution of experimental films in Canada.

AG: Distribution is a problem area, but there are a lot of problems in the curatorial and critical aspects of the arts in Canada. The larger institutions seem to be only interested in new mediums insofar as they are being used by artists who have proven themselves in more acceptable media. What we do is not 'films by artists' - we are filmmakers.

RM: The problem with larger institutions doesn't end there. We always run up against people who want to

compare experimental filmmakers with the work of the National Film Board. The NFB is a 40 million dollar a year organization that's running on a deficit, and it shows "Canada" to Canadians and the world at large. It's essentially propaganda. But the really criminal thing is that they offer their films for almost nothing to the public, so a teacher will always rent 20 NFB films for very little rather than anything else because the NFB can undercut anyone else's rates. For years we've been trying to get someone from the NFB down here to see what we're doing without any luck. But funding can be a divisive force between functions of an organization as well as between disciplines. We try to define our needs and goals without worrying about slotting into the existing funding structures. We make experimental films, show them and have editing equipment and other access for making films - why not do distribution as well? We're educating an audience we should be distributing to. Education is the key factor in getting people interested in the work. I just started teaching about a year ago. In classes I try to de-mythologize the process and the ideas that go along with film. Filmmaking is usually treated like some kind of occult knowledge when in fact it's a simple mechanical and chemical process. I try to show something every week and the students bring in their films. We discuss ethics and aesthetics and problems that come up in working. We talk about what art-making means, or how it fits into society or why we're doing it. The big problem is that there's nowhere in Toronto really that has equipment access of the kind needed. I try to tell the students that it is within financial range to own your own Super 8 or 16mm equipment. Owning it implies a different mode of filmmaking. You can work all the time, it becomes an integral part of your life. When you make a feature you have production schedules and dates and so on and you can rent equipment specifically, whereas when you own your own equipment you're shooting all the time. We're trying to get some equipment here that is member-only access. We're not a community service organization or a co-op. Most of our Wintario funding went into projection equipment, but we will eventually have basic editing equipment.

FUSE: How do the screenings and programming fit into the rest of the operation?

RM: We've begun a document library of post-screening discussions with the artists. We're archiving members' material, written and otherwise. The last Wednesday of every month we have open screenings and amazingly enough we've never had a dry night. There's always enough work to show, and we show it till we drop.

EXHIBITIONS

What's Wrong With This Picture?

CORRESPONDENTS FROM THE WESTERN FRONT

A Space and Thirty-One, Toronto. January 17th - February 11th 1980.

reviewed by Clive Robertson

This exhibition could be the first time that a group of Canadian artists has curated its own travelling retrospective with assistance from The National Museums. As an example of do-it-yourself validation we would hope that these five artists from The Western Front would take advantage of such an opportunity to

shape their own immediate history.

Unfortunately, on seeing the show's stop in Toronto, the results are disappointing - for some, more than others, have not, in art-parlance, "done their homework".

The five artists showing work "1969-79" (in fact it's more like 1969-75) are Michael Morris, Glenn Lewis, Kate Craig, Eric Metcalfe and Vincent Trasov. Metcalfe and Craig (Dr. Brute and Lady Brute) represent their early work adequately concentrating on Leopard Realty. Glen Lewis also shows representative work from several projects such as the aqua-events of the Sponge Dancers, and the Paris Trajectories correspondence event. Many of Lewis' important works are missing including "The Great Wall of 1984", work done with Intermedia, among others.

Image Bank's own self-selection is perhaps the most awkward. Rather than showing possible (?) collaborative art works done with other artists, Image Bank (Michael Morris and Vincent Trasov) have chosen to exhibit original works by Spoerri, Robert Cumming, Ant Farm, Allen Jones, and others. To the viewer that cannot recognise these artists, authorship is conveniently blurred. What is shown is certainly not "art from The Western Front". Would a retrospective of Ant Farm or Spoerri contain actual works from Morris or Trasov? It's highly unlikely. So in what other ways could you show the nature and acts of correspondence exchange? Glenn Lewis does so successfully in the "French Letters" documents. It's not highly finished "art" but it is a more accurate illustration of the practical process.

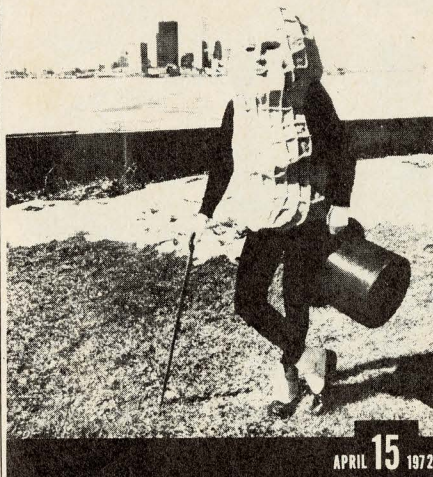
The role played by Correspondence Art in the early Seventies was important for many isolated Canadian artists. In the catalog of this show The Western Front rightly cites Robert Filliou and George Brecht's model of a Network that connects artists and others. This Network decentralised the focus away from the art market and returned the social connection. Unfortunately, in explaining their work - after some ten years of working on an explicit model - Image Bank cannot offer any textual addition that explains their

(above left) Mr. Peanut leans on his schtick. (below left) Dr. Brute with the Brute Sax. (below right) Lady Brute alights from the Brutemobile. (above right) Sponge Dancers at Decca Dance, 1974.

(left) photos courtesy of FILE Magazine.

(top right) courtesy of IS Magazine (bottom right) courtesy of FILE.

FILE



specific role in the Network. All they can say is: "the works presented here are a reflection of responses, attitudes and positions that have been part of the constant redefining of the creative processes of our time."

Unfortunately the words sound more like the utterances of some cultural attaché or novice museum curator. Where is the re-definition? or did it stop in 1969? This avoidance is regrettable and the blurring prevents the educative function of an otherwise important show from taking place.

All five of the artists developed their work to be infused into the popular media environment of the early Seventies. Again, that environment has changed. The Western Front,



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VIDEO

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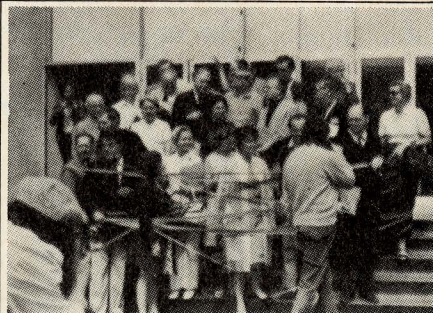
March 15
June 15
September 15
December 15

For information and application forms, write to the:

Video Office
The Canada Council
P.O. Box 1047
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5V8
Telephone: (613) 237-3400

which formed as an artists space/workshop in 1973, was perhaps the most important production space in North America. All of these artists contributed to the many collaborative works done there. This work required perhaps 85% of their energy and time between 1973-9, and yet little evidence is shown in the retrospective, apart from Image Bank's oblique references.

Perhaps the artists felt the pressure to exhibit themselves as 'The Western Front' but still the focus of the exhibit is confusing. Kate Craig and Eric Metcalfe's work has changed substantially since the Brute days. Glenn Lewis' projects have also developed in many different directions. Image Bank, though working under the guise of "exchange" has long been working on ways of marketing their earlier work, of which this exhibit seems a flawed extension.



Michael Morris/Glenn Lewis - taping the critics.

It's too easy to say that what this show needed was an outside curator for, unfortunately, there are few around that would be sufficiently qualified. While the individual works themselves are undermined by the packaging, it is more the opportunity of assembling a useful history which has, for the time being, been thrown away.

Image Bank Post Card Show

VIDEO

The Use of the Static

TAMARA KRIKORIAN

Two Installations at The Fruit Market Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland, November 1979.
reviewed by Stuart Marshall

The exhibition comprised a corridor and foyer of documentation of both previous and current work and a darkened room containing two video installations. The installation *Vanitas* consisted of two colour monitors placed back to back on pedestals at shoulder height. The first monitor, which faced towards the centre of the viewing space, showed a carefully composed still-life of a vase of flowers, a bowl of fruit, a lighted candle in a glass candlestick, a glass of clear liquid and some items of jewelry. Very occasionally a bubble or a butterfly would drift through the image field. The tape was monochrome but the monitor colour balance had been set to a greyish brown. The second monitor faced into a corner and displayed a colour head-and-shoulders shot of the artist looking screen left holding a small round hand mirror in which rapidly edited monochrome images of British newscasters were reflected. The figure was placed against a black background and the complete image was only viewable in a screen-sized mirror attached to the wall. There was no sound-track.

The installation *Tableau* consisted of a 12 foot by 6 foot mirror attached to the wall above a 12 foot trestle table on which were placed two video monitors and

some of the contents of the artist's studio. The first monitor, which was turned towards the viewer, was tuned to broadcast and showed a grainy, partially disintegrated colour image. The second smaller monitor, which was turned towards the mirror, showed a grey grainy image surface in which an almost static self-portrait of the artist was just discernible.

The contents of the table included photographs, contact sheets, film catalogues, private view invitations, a toy television, a videotape, a record, copies of television guides, art magazines, shells, a glass and decanter, fruit, a vase of dying flowers, an unlit candle, bubble liquid, a cup and saucer, stamps, photocopies of magazine articles, correspondence, news-cuttings, a cassette tape, saucers of sequins brooches and buttons, photographic negatives, a journal of contemporary film theory and a smaller mirror.

In Europe, as in the U.S.A. and Canada, there is a history of narcissistic video works. Many installations have employed live spectator image feedback using tape-delay and spatial manipulation and many tapes involve layered interacting images of the artist. Countless works incorporate images of the artist as performer, protagonist or self-contemplating subject. Krikorian's installations have a relationship to this

Stuart Marshall, video artist, is a curatorial member of London Video Arts (U.K.)

photo courtesy Tamara Krikorian



Still-life from the installation "Tableau" is displayed so as to involve the viewer.

genre through their use of mirrors and self-portraits but the relationship is a critical one which cannot be subsumed as 'a development'. What stops these works 'fitting' into the narcissistic video genre is their use of didactic reference and excessive content. All Krikorian's work is characterised by an unashamed use of didactic reference which opens the work up to readings of the cultural and historical context into which it is inserted. In the case of *Vanitas* and *Tableau* two of the major references, at first sight, are to the unrelated themes of broadcast television news and seventeenth century Dutch painting. The theoretical ground upon which these themes and a particular history of video are articulated is a critique of dominant forms of representation. The connections are tenuous and all the more valuable for their seemingly anecdotal nature. The spectator must work hard to construct this 'bricolage'.

In the documentation section, Krikorian refers to a painting by

Tournier titled "Allegory of Justice and Vanity", a painting of a young woman holding a delicate pair of scales in her left hand and propping up a small mirror behind a skull and a book with her right hand. The mirror stands parallel to the picture plane yet shows only the back of the skull. It returns no image to the world to which it points. The host of symbolic readings of this non-reflecting mirror are unimportant here. What is of prime importance is that the representation refuses to recognise the existence of the viewing subject. The painting directly addresses the viewer — the direction of the woman's look, the display of the objects — yet simultaneously effaces his/her presence. The spectator can only recognise him/herself in his/her absence from the representation. The painting offers itself as a critique of the entire system and ideology of Western perspective projection which constitutes the viewing subject as the point of its intelligibility yet in so doing suggests that the subject is the originating presence of

MARGARET
ATWOOD
&
MARGE
PIERCY

writers
in dialogue



\$5.00

SATURDAY, MARCH 1st, 1980
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252 BLOOR STREET, WEST
(St. George Subway Stop)

7:30 P.M.

Reception to follow

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PERFORMANCE AND VIDEO

A T T H E G A L L E R Y

• Perfect Lives (Private Parts)

An opera in progress by
Robert Ashley
March 8 9:00 p.m. Tickets \$3.50 members; \$4.50 non-members

• Dance into Performance

by independent choreographers
Elizabeth Chitty and Marie Chouinard
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• Projected Parts Seven Weeks

Video in Continuous Exhibition
Seven one-hour programs of new works by Lisa Steele, Tomiyo Sasaki, Jorge Lozano, Ernest Gusella, General Idea, Antonio Muntadas, William Wegman, Richard Wardell, Robert Williams, Fitzgerald/Sandborn, Eric Cameron, Susan Britton, Kathryn Kanehiro, Vera Frenkel and Richard Foreman.

Selected by Noel Harding
March 18 to May 4 Free with admission to the Gallery

• William Wegman in Performance

"I am very pleased to be here"
April 10 8:00 p.m. Free with admission to the Gallery

ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

Dundas Street, three blocks west of University
Information: 361-0414

VIDEO

the world of the representation which is laid out for his/her eye.

Self-portraiture always carries, albeit in a less problematic manner, this fundamental ambivalence. The painting of a self-portrait must make use of a reflecting surface in which the artist contemplates his/her image. The finished work, in its function as a reproduction of this reflecting surface, reflects the image of the maker whose position is now occupied by the viewer. This structure of looking serves as an exact model of the ideology of 'complete self-expression' and 'perfect communication' which denies that any representation is a production of meaning — precisely a 'work' — and suggests that artist and viewer, writer and reader, speaker and listener occupy precisely the same position (achieve identity) when language reaches total transparency, when 'true communication' takes place.

The artist is represented as 'the one who holds a mirror to the world.' According to this conception of realist practice, the success of the work is judged in terms of a match between the representation and the world it represents. Such a practice falls prey to dominant ideology in its aspiration to transparency. The work of the representation, that is to say the conventions it uses to produce 'the real', are glossed over, subdued.

For Krikorian, self-portraiture/portraiture is a device used to question notions of authorship and origin. In *Vanitas* the self-portrait with a mirror quotes the Tournier painting but also functions as a literalisation of dominant conceptions of realism. The artist is represented as 'the one who holds a mirror to the world'. According to this conception of realist practice the success of the work is judged in terms of a match between the representation and the world it represents. Such a practice falls prey to dominant ideology in its aspiration to transparency. The work of the representation, that is to say the conventions it uses to produce 'the real', are glossed over, subdued, repressed. In *Vanitas* this work process is again literalised as strain and tension. The expression on the artist's face is one of grim concentration and as the tape progresses the act of focussing the images in the mirror becomes more and more difficult — the

mirror trembles and the reflected images flicker through the mirror frame. The reflected images provide a second layer of representation and portraiture — the world of television newscasting and its 'authors'. The faces reflected in the mirror are all too familiar to viewers of British television. Their carefully produced and controlled character of reassurance and authority takes on an irony within this context of presentation. Layered and framed within the representation a tension is produced between their stability and the fragility of the means of their quotation. All the news visuals have been edited out — newscasting is presented as a chain of speaking heads, of readers, of authors.

The still-life in *Vanitas* is carefully composed — it follows a conventional aesthetic. At first glance it appears to be a videotape of a painting. It is only when a butterfly or bubble floats through the objects that the image is recognisable as a three-dimensional composition. The humorous anachronistic coupling of a twentieth century means of image production and a seventeenth century art historical subject matter provides a focussing upon the usually transparent conventions of representation. Movement in the image reveals the composition to be a 'fake', a 'set-up' and most importantly a 'display'. This quality of display appears regularly in Krikorian's work as a subtly controlled alienation effect. The world of the representation is slightly over-composed, self-consciously laid out for the eye of the viewer. Display is frequently achieved through framing — over-framing, re-framing. Framing is used here not only in its literal sense as the bounding of the representation but also as the marking off of a system of coherent conventions, as the limits of a category. Display is also achieved through over-composition; the distribution of elements is over-considered. Composition here must also relate to the use of over-framing. In the self-portrait the layers of framing — mirror frame, monitor frame, mirror frame — produce a tunnelling back into the blackness of the video image and the wall supporting the mirror.

The second major characteristic of Krikorian's installation work is the use of near static images of immense duration. Unlike most video works using extremes of duration the problem here is not one of mode of attention but is rather a play with perception. Krikorian's installation tapes never give any suggestion of narrative or resolution which would demand a prolonged viewing. The period of viewing need only be as long as is necessary for the perceptual play 'still/moving' to have full effect. In some sense then the images function as video

Exhibition and distribution of
video and audio tapes by artists

Open to the public for
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Tuesday-Saturday: noon to 5:00pm
Presentations: Wednesdays 8:00pm

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January 23, 24 & 25
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Edward Slopek

February 20 to March 1
Garry Conway

March 5 to March 15
Ian Murray

March 19 to March 29
Douglas Waterman



Centre for Art tapes

1671 Argyle Street
Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada B3J 2B5
902 429-7299

WE URGE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF ONTARIO TO DROP THE APPEAL AGAINST THE BODY POLITIC.

In January 1979, *The Body Politic*, Canada's national gay liberation journal was tried on a charge of using the mails to distribute "immoral, indecent or scurrilous" material. The paper was found *not guilty*.

Although the court battle was both lengthy and costly for the non-profit community newspaper, supporters of freedom of the press and of minority rights were justifiably pleased by the verdict. In his judgement, Judge Sidney Harris remarked on the basis of the issue before him, that *The Body Politic* is a "serious journal of news and opinion".

Some weeks later however the Attorney General of Ontario, Roy McMurtry, decided to appeal the verdict and force the defendants in this case to face still further legal proceedings.

This decision to appeal is an attack on the freedom of a minority to express its views. It will drain the energy and financial resources of the gay community's principal newspaper and will further weaken that community's capacity to make its views known. Moreover the effect of this appeal, whatever the intention, will be to punish people who have been found *not guilty* in the courts.

We urge the Attorney General to drop the appeal and to restore the reputation of his department for the fair and equal treatment of minorities.

The Editors of FUSE Magazine

NOT GUILTY MEANS NOT GUILTY.

If you wish to help you can send donations to *The Body Politic* Free The Press Fund c/o Lynn King in Trust, Cornish, King and Sachs, Barristers and Solicitors, 111 Richmond Street West, Suite 320, Toronto, Ontario, M5H 3N6.

VIDEO

paintings with an important difference which can best be described phenomenologically as a hovering or oscillation between image surface and image object. These tapes draw out a quality specific to video which is its ability to sustain a flickering delicate image for immense durations — a fragility coupled with a monumentality.

In *Tableau* the same themes are re-worked with an increased emphasis upon display. Here the mirror behind the table draws not only the spectator into the work but also sucks in the whole gallery space. The tunnelling device of embedded framings in *Vanitas* is used again in the mirror reflection of the brightly lit entrance to the gallery space, the reflection of the smaller monitor and the angled reflection of the smaller mirror. In *Tableau* the display of objects points to production and in particular to the production of the exhibition itself. The 'hailing' of the display is so effective that it involves viewers to the extent that they rummage through the contents of the table handling, selecting, reading and comparing. Again elements are simply juxtaposed — the connections between them have to be sought out in the mass of notes, letters and objects. In both video images there is an emphasis upon grain, upon the image in-formation, upon the production of the image. Glancing into the mirror the viewer finds him/herself in the act of reading, or working, or producing knowledge.

Because Krikorian's work promotes the problems of its own reading it also poses problems for the making of a re-writing. A work of criticism all too frequently acts as a process of recuperation in its desire to make the definitive reading. The definitive reading seeks to repress all the wayward elements of the work which challenge its authority and homogeneity. The documentation sections of the show tends to run this risk even though its process of contextualisation is anecdotal and asymptomatic. It should therefore be stressed (it is politically necessary to stress) that the exhibition is not about anything in the sense of its self-promotion of a definitive reading. Themes and perceptions are brought into differing and complex relations to each other like a constantly shuffled deck of cards. The work attempts to resist its recuperation by dominant ideology by pointing to the conventions which dominant ideology seeks to repress in order to represent the world as one of coherent unchanging values.

PUBLICATIONS

Casual But Continuous

DAVID BUCHAN
Modern Fashions, exhibition at Glenbow Museum, Calgary. Dec. 15, 1979 - Feb. 10, 1980. Catalogue, 20pp. 1979. \$4.00 reviewed by Clive Robertson

This catalogue prepared and designed by David Buchan has a sub-title "Modern Fashions or An Introduction to the Language of Partial Seduction". Buchan is a self-described "wardrobe artist" which implies clothing but not advertising. The work that Buchan presented at the Glenbow consisted largely of photo-murals based on men's fashion advertisements, most from *Esquire* 1959-63. As such "Modern Advertising" though less 'catchy' could have been a more appropriate title. Buchan's fashion is high street-fashion that follows a twenty-year tradition of the artist having the ideas but not the money. The result produces schizophrenic alliances between the empty but clever patron — the boutique

owner — and the artist. Of course not all street fashion comes from 'creative' minds which adds to the cultural wealth to be plundered.

Buchan is underestimated as either a wardrobe artist or a performance artist. He is a determined archivist of popular culture, perhaps a "modern anthropologist". The advertising panels are the more effective aspects of Buchan's work — his objectivity here is clear whereas in some of his performances (see "Fruit Cocktails" *Centerfold* Vol.3 No.1), wish fulfillment often overcomes his capabilities.

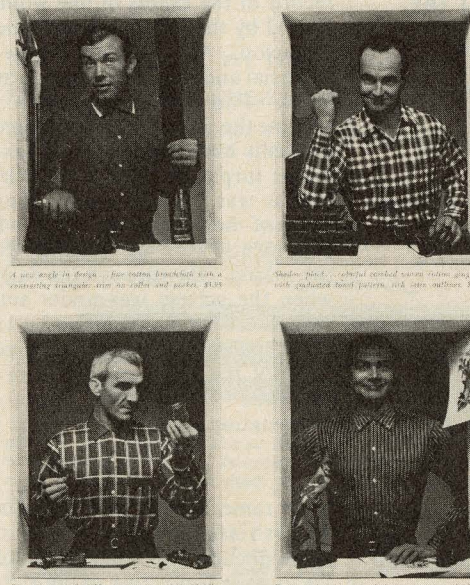
The catalogue opens with an unfortunate but perhaps obligatory preface by Jeff Spalding, Curator of Art, Glenbow Museum who in an irritating manner, receives credit for saying nothing. The catalogue has an introduction by the actual curator of the show, Peter White, who writes a re-assuring (for the patrons) if not quite adequate history of Buchan and his work.

The most glaring omission is a

discussion of gay content within the work. All of the ad's are loaded with gay humour, the exception being "Take Her Breath Away" which White hints at as being misogynous. On top of the humour there are further incitements, e.g. at the bottom of the "Men Like You Like Semantic T-Shirts" ad the copy reads: "Tell them who you are. When you've got something to say, don't just say it — wear it! No one likes to go unnoticed, and what better way of saying look at me than a sign. Logo Boys dancing to today's beat."

White's diversion seems more related to proving that Buchan's work is art which somehow must be taken for granted if it appears at the Museum. Buchan like other gay artists in Canada appears hesitant to be identified with any gay liberation movement as if it would somehow simplify or too easily categorise his work. On the other hand as current examples of gay culture (a gay critique of such artists is long overdue) such focus need not be downplayed. Needless to say the gay struggle continues even if the artists can survive and succeed in a straight society. As Peter White writes: "What emerges is a comprehensive picture of Buchan's concerns both as an artist and person."

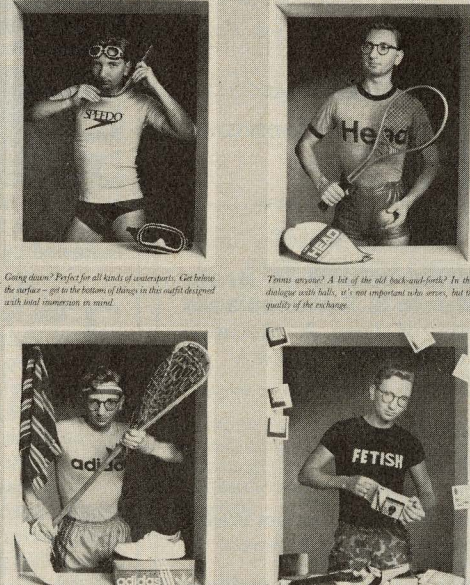
Men like you like Truval shirts!



wash and wear sportshirts

(left) A full-page advertisement from an early *Esquire* magazine. (right) In *Modern Fashions*, Buchan's up-dated view is full of gay humour. (top left) "Going down? Perfect for all kinds of watersports. Get below the surface - get to the bottom of things in this outfit designed with total immersion in mind."

Men like you like Semantic T-shirts!



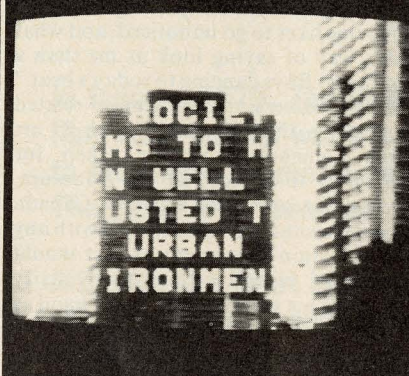
Tell them who you are. When you've got something to say, don't just say it — wear it! No one likes to go unnoticed, and what better way of saying look at me than a sign. Logo Boys dancing to today's beat.

SAFETY FILM 6017 KODAK SAFETY

FEBRUARY/MARCH/APRIL

A SPACE

SAFETY FILM 6017 KODAK SAFETY



• **Hallwalls at A Space**
February 16 - March 8
Opening Feb. 16, noon - 5 pm
A Space 299 Queen Street West

• **Murder Research**
An Exhibition of photo-works by Paul Wong
February 18 - 24
Opening Feb. 18, 5 - 8 pm
Music Gallery, 30 St. Patrick Street

• **Anne Turyn**
February 25
Performance : 8 pm
A Space, 299 Queen West

• **Second Annual Electronic Music Festival**
February 28 - March 2
series of concerts 8:30 pm
\$4 each, \$12 series
Music Gallery, 30 St. Patrick Street

• **Demonstrations of Brain Wave Music & Synthesizers**
Courtesy of Long & McQuade Musical Instruments
March 1, 1 - 4 pm
A Space, 299 Queen Street West

• **Sandra Meigs**
Film Installation
April 1 - 19
Opening April 1, 8 pm
A Space, 299 Queen Street West

• **A Space Television**
A series of six commissioned works by artists: available for broadcast
Opening April, 1980

A Space, 299 Queen Street West, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 1Z9. (416) 595-0790

Some of these are familiar." And what is not is to be left unsaid?

Peter White makes much of the influence of General Idea on David Buchan. Too much. While Buchan works with and around General Idea, White over-implies a patriarchy. White further trivializes General Idea's own statements on glamour by suggesting: "General Idea's use of the structures (glamour from mass media and public spectacles) ultimately amounts to the only practical way to deal with such a world (emptiness inflicted upon contemporary life), for to ignore it would be to be destroyed by it." How can you be destroyed by an oppressive aspect of culture once you recognise and so decode its mode of operation?

White mentions that David Buchan understands that advertising is a language of partial seduction. Buchan says: "They have to convince you to fall for the product but also to part with it at a later date. So, in a way there's a certain casualness that's incorporated into the selling process." Casual perhaps but

continuous. Kraft food products hoped that after decades of advertising the products would sell themselves and they could ease up on the massive advertising budget. Not so, unfortunately for them (and us) — as they cut back the advertising the sales dropped considerably.

What is noticeable looking back to '58 - '59 issues of *Esquire* (in the early *Playboy* era) is the quantity — often 320 pages a month. Full of the "best" writers. The design is nostalgically ornate — scratch and sniff ads, fabric samples for shirt and trouser ads — all of which make today's glossy magazines look decidedly protestant. In current terms the advertising is both sexist and chauvinist which in itself adds a further twist to Buchan's appropriations. Though a lot of work in itself, the catalogue is thin. It would be interesting to see Buchan produce a complete magazine. Buchan does produce successful antonyms. Rather than suggesting a critical illustration of black and white, he could place such advertising where it belongs — out of the art closet. ■

BOOKS

Three Books - Three Lives

ESSENTIAL DOCUMENTS: THE F.B.I. FILE ON JEAN SEBERG (PART 1)
by Margia Kramer. 36pp. New York: RANSACKED
by Nancy Holt. 38pp. New York: Printed Matter, Inc. in association with Lapp Princess Press, 1980.
AUTOBIOGRAPHY
by Martha Wilson. 16pp. Chicago: A Chicago Book, 1979. \$4.00
reviewed by Tony Whitfield

The book, open or unfolding, is a metaphor for life. The artist's book often recognizes this analogy. The associative and cumulative powers of adjacent pages, the sequential experience of the book, and the structural organization of the narrative, if not language itself, parallel the modes in which we recall or recount our experiences. Sets of facts, series of events seem to define our lives; what they are, what they have been, become our biographies.

Three new artists' books approach forms of biography from different territories, with different intentions. In Margia Kramer's *Essential Documents: The F.B.I. File on Jean Seberg Part I*, one is confronted immediately with the

Tony Whitfield, artist and writer, is currently a curator at Artists Space in New York.

record of the events of one woman's life as told by the F.B.I., a biographer under suspicion. As a public figure and a financial and intellectual supporter of the Black Panther Party, Jean Seberg became the target of a government plot to discredit her on grounds of sexual and moral turpitude. The F.B.I. file on the actress was over 300 pages long at the time of her death in 1979 when the documents were declassified. It covers the period 1969 through the early 1970's when the actress was under active surveillance by the Bureau and a victim of their counterintelligence activities. Late in 1979 these documents were sent to Kramer from the Freedom of Information Act's Office of the F.B.I.

Kramer's book is a compilation of thirty pages of unaltered documents, selected because they are most self-indicting of the F.B.I. They have been reduced to a 5 1/2 x 8" format. The story tells of the F.B.I.'s plans to neutralize the "promiscuous and sex perverted white actress" through the publication of her alleged pregnancy by a member of the Black Panther Party, "a Black Nationalist Hate Group." Doing so would "cause her embarrassment and serve to cheapen her image with the general public."

During the period of Bureau harassment, a baby was born prematurely to the actress and soon thereafter died. Seberg and her husband attributed the child's death to the trauma which resulted after an article appeared in *Newsweek* questioning the child's parentage. It is now speculated that the F.B.I.'s activities were ultimately contributing factors in the emotional disintegration and subsequent suicide of Jean Seberg. In a *New York Times* interview in 1974 Seberg, still unaware of the role the F.B.I. had played in her life, said, "I began cracking up . . . without knowing it. I decided to bury my baby in my home town. We opened the coffin and took 180 photographs and everybody in Marshalltown who was curious what color the baby was, got a chance to check it out. A lot of them came to look . . ." This quote was written in red and yellow gravel in a field of black gravel which covered the floor of a small gallery at New York's Artists' Space. This and a raised viewing platform comprised Kramer's installation which ran concurrent with the publication of her book.

From Margia Kramer's *Essential Documents* - reproductions from F.B.I. files.

FBI

CONFIDENTIAL Date: 4/8/70

Transmit the following in _____
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Via AIRTEL AIR MAIL - REGISTERED
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APPROPRIATE AGENCIES AND FIELD OFFICES ADVISED BY ROUTING SLIP(S) BY DATE 4-22-70

CLASS. & EXT. BY 6076-1144/225
REASON-FCIM II, 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW 4/8/90 (67c)

TO: DIRECTOR, FBI (105-165706 Sub 26)

FROM: SAC, LOS ANGELES (157-3579)

RE: BLACK PANTHER PARTY - FUNDS
LOS ANGELES DIVISION
RM

Enclosed for the Bureau are 11 copies of a letterhead memorandum (LHM) captioned as above suitable for dissemination. Two copies enclosed for San Francisco. No local dissemination being made.

(b) [REDACTED]

Los Angeles is continuing to follow the activities of the Los Angeles Black Panther Party (BPP) and particularly the source of funds furnished to it. Information of this nature will be furnished to the Bureau and San Francisco as it is ascertained.

REC-1 105-165706-36-1139

The attached LHM is being classified **CONFIDENTIAL** inasmuch as data set forth from sources utilized could result in identification of sources of continuing value and this identification could adversely affect the internal security of the United States.

AGENCY: ACST, REC. SEC. SERV.
DEPT: ISO, SEC. SER. IDIU, CO (5124) 6/4/70

HOW FORM: 4/8/70 APR 11 1970

DATE FORM: 4/8/70

1 - SEBERG, J. [REDACTED]

RHR/bab
(9)

Approved: [Signature] Special Agent in Charge

66 MAY 20 1970

CONFIDENTIAL

It was the first of a series of installations planned by the artist in conjunction with the publication of the F.B.I. documents. While the book stands as a public record of the Jean Seberg case, the installations will deal with the personal record, the actress's own words recounting the emotional effects she suffered. In combination they detail an incomplete biography of neither the real Jean Seberg nor the public figure created by the F.B.I. but that of a victim created on paper for political reasons and destroyed in the flesh for the same end.

The documents themselves are surprising. One is inclined to believe that the type of victimization suffered by Seberg is so far removed from the realm of respectable human interaction that it occurs in some uncommon space or time. This is not the case. Each page shows the evidence of human decision - many different hand-writings, typing errors, rubber stamps, marking pens obscuring sections of text. Visually these pages are very alluring.

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March 28 to April 27, 1980

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A BOOK, WORKING

Eight - twelve, original, unpublished artists books will be chosen for inclusion in A BOOK, WORKING, an artists book anthology. Those chosen will determine the specifications of the final volume. The artists represented, whenever possible, will be encouraged to design & layout their bookwork, to maintain as much control over the final product as possible. The artists will receive \$150, plus 25 copies of the final volume.

SUBMISSIONS

Deadline: May 15, 1980

Open to all, artists and non, regardless of age, experience or aesthetic. We especially encourage individuals who have never worked in the bookform before. We have intentionally left all specifications open, except length (approx. 15-50 pages) to promote new and original responses to the book form.

All submissions should be in dummy form, and should include an estimated budget for production costs.

A BOOK, WORKING is conceived as an opportunity for artists to produce and publish a bookwork, that will be effectively distributed and internationally seen. It is also a chance to explore the anthology format; ten books in one that will challenge, subvert, and reinvest that venerable institution. A chance to test the theory that individual works need their own covers.

Send submissions and inquiries to:

A BOOK, WORKING

A Space, 299 Queen St. W. Ste. 507
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 1Z9
Call: (416) 595-0790

THE CABANA ROOM



THE WEEKEND EXPERIENCE

KING & SPADINA

Books

Morally they are horrifying.

If one were to register the content of Kramer's book on purely aesthetic terms, it would amount to little more than an inexpensively produced handbook of mean images, interesting visually but ultimately questionable as a work of art in the idiom of the artist's book. The shattering significance of the text threatens to remove it from the realm of art into an area lying somewhere between reportage and voyeurism when the book is considered independent of the accompanying installation. Perhaps it should not be assessed as a complete work at this stage; it is important to note that this publication is *Part I* of a projected series of three. In essence Kramer does not consider this book an independent work. After the installation is dismantled, the book will become a component of a larger book-work which will include other documents, transcripts from telephone conversations, and instructions on how to decode the F.B.I.'s notations which appear throughout the file. Therein lies the potential to transform merely edited information into an artist's book which seizes the subject on its own terms.

Assuming another dimension of biographical inquiry, Nancy Holt's new book *Ransacked*, presents the events that overtook the artist's aunt during the last year of her life and the house in which these events occur. The book is divided into two parts. The first, "In Aunt Ethel's Words," is comprised of excerpts from an audiotape of Ethel describing what it had been like to live as a virtual prisoner of her housekeeper, Pat, in the house where Ethel had grown up, the house she had come to consider her alter-ego. In this section, bits of text are placed as captions under photographs of the house after it had been ransacked by Pat and her friends, the act which ended their reign of destruction. In effect the opening section is a layer by layer examination of the remains. Each image and its caption require the reader's complete focus before moving on; a theme and all its variations are quietly posited. The tone set in the text is calm and

somewhat distanced, the photographs are straight-forward journalistic records. Their content however betrays a state of absolute confusion and the aftermath of violation.

The second half, "Record of Events," gives a chronological recounting of the occurrences that led to the abandonment of the house and Ethel's death. (At that time Ethel was terminally ill with cancer.) This section rapidly builds in pitch as its bizarre story unfolds. Unlike the first section, the effect of this record is cumulative. Its short character sketches, letters, documents, and photographs of Ethel with friends and family at different stages of her life contribute to the ultimately disturbing nature of the tale that develops without logical explanation. For Nancy Holt the physical and emotional ravages suffered by her aunt and the destruction of the house are inter-related. Ethel was Holt's last living relative. The simultaneous deteriorations of the woman and the house that represented her family history are metaphorically linked with blood, genes, fate, and finally one's sense of place in the world.

Ransacked is the second instance in which this house, this place has been the subject of Holt's work. Her videotape, *Underscan* (which has a soundtrack composed of excerpts from letters by her aunt) used photographs of its interiors. With the death of Ethel so ends the role of the house as a monitor of the Holt family history. In the artist's words, "All of the memories of the Holt family reside now only in the house which has passed into other hands, and in myself, the last member of my family."

In *Ransacked* Holt has used the medium of the artist's book to convey the facts and emotional results of situations that remain incomprehensible while growing in dimension from disquiet to emergency. Choices she has made in layout and design, language and photo-documentation impose an order that allows us entry into the situation. These decisions do not dilute its impact nor do they leave us feeling as though our



Fixed with makeup this is me as a male impersonator I thought I was

A double-page from Martha Wilson's *Autobiography*.

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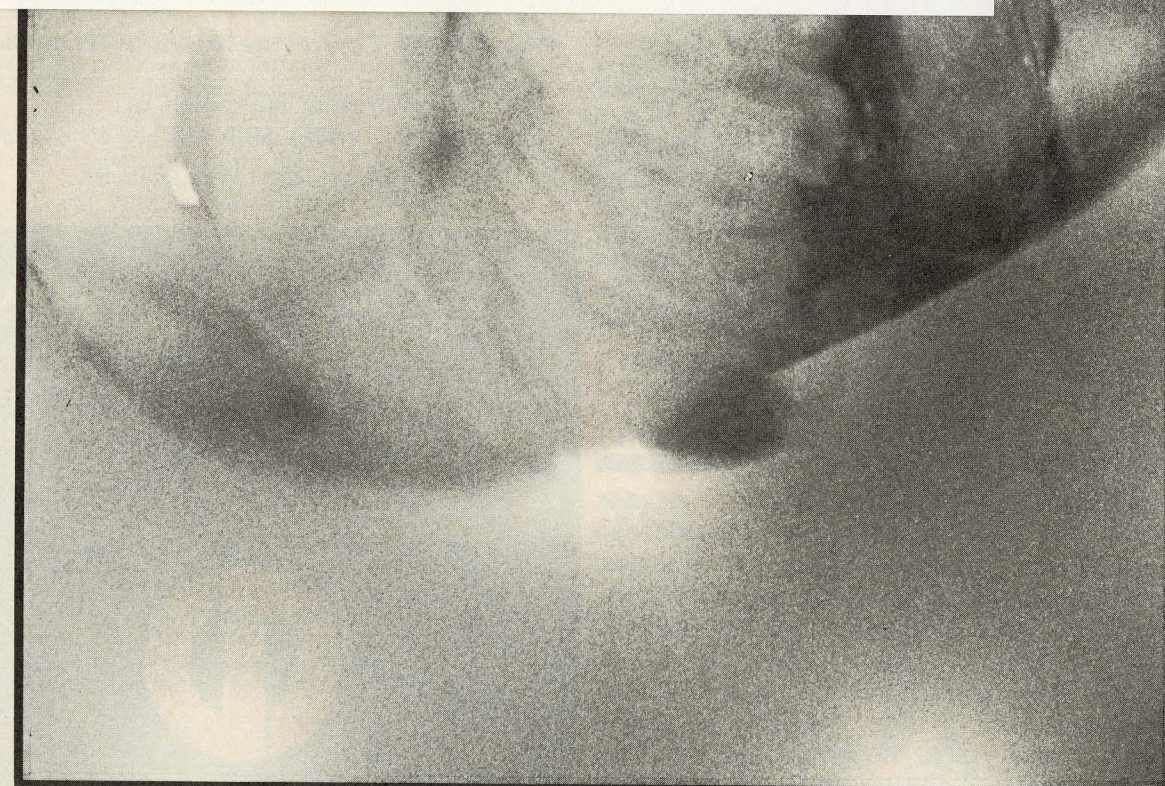
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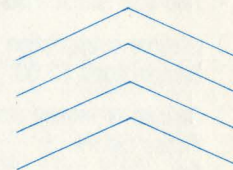
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F.B.I.'s notations which appear throughout the file. Therein lies the potential to transform merely edited information into an artist's book which seizes the subject on its own terms.

Assuming another dimension of biographical inquiry, Nancy Holt's new book *Ransacked*, presents the events that overtook the artist's aunt during the last year of her life and the house in which these events occur. The book is divided into two parts. The first, "In Aunt Ethel's Words," is comprised of excerpts from an audiotape of Ethel describing what it had been like to live as a virtual prisoner of her housekeeper, Pat, in the house where Ethel had grown up, the house she had come to consider her alter-ego. In this section, bits of text are placed as captions under photographs of the house after it had been ransacked by Pat and her friends, the act which ended their reign of destruction. In effect the opening section is a layer by layer examination of the remains. Each image and its caption require the reader's complete focus before moving on; a theme and all its variations are quietly posited. The tone set in the text is calm and

related. Ethel was Holt's last living relative. The simultaneous deteriorations of the woman and the house that represented her family history are metaphorically linked with blood, genes, fate, and finally one's sense of place in the world.

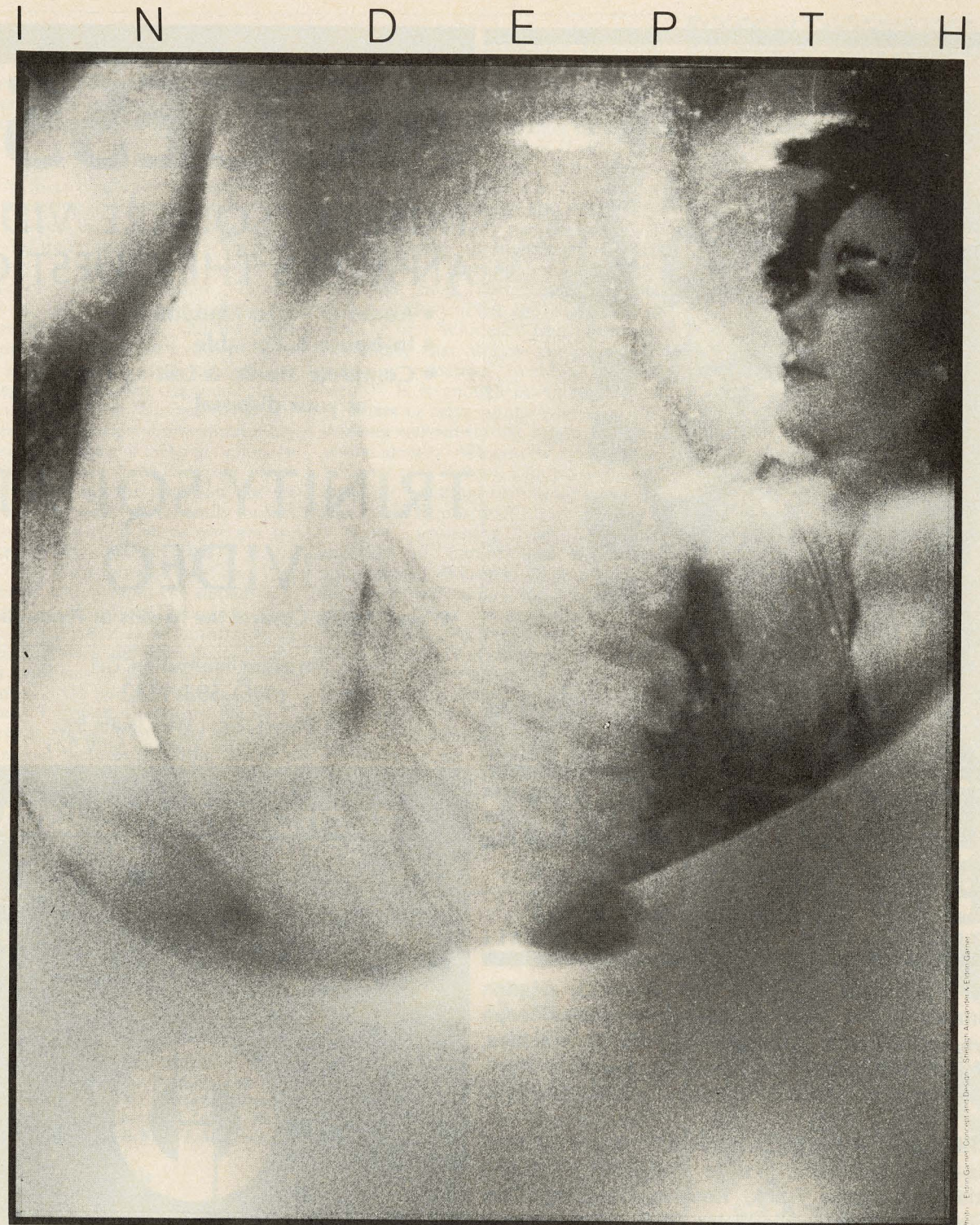
Ransacked is the second instance in which this house, this place has been the subject of Holt's work. Her videotape, *Underscan* (which has a soundtrack composed of excerpts from letters by her aunt) used photographs of its interiors. With the death of Ethel so ends the role of the house as a monitor of the Holt family history. In the artist's words, "All of the memories of the Holt family reside now only in the house which has passed into other hands, and in myself, the last member of my family."

In *Ransacked* Holt has used the medium of the artist's book to convey the facts and emotional results of situations that remain incomprehensible while growing in dimension from disquiet to emergency. Choices she has made in layout and design, language and photo-documentation impose an order that allows us entry into the situation. These decisions do not dilute its impact nor do they leave us feeling as though our



Invited with makeup this time as a male impersonator I thought I was

A double-page from Martha Wilson's *Autobiography*.

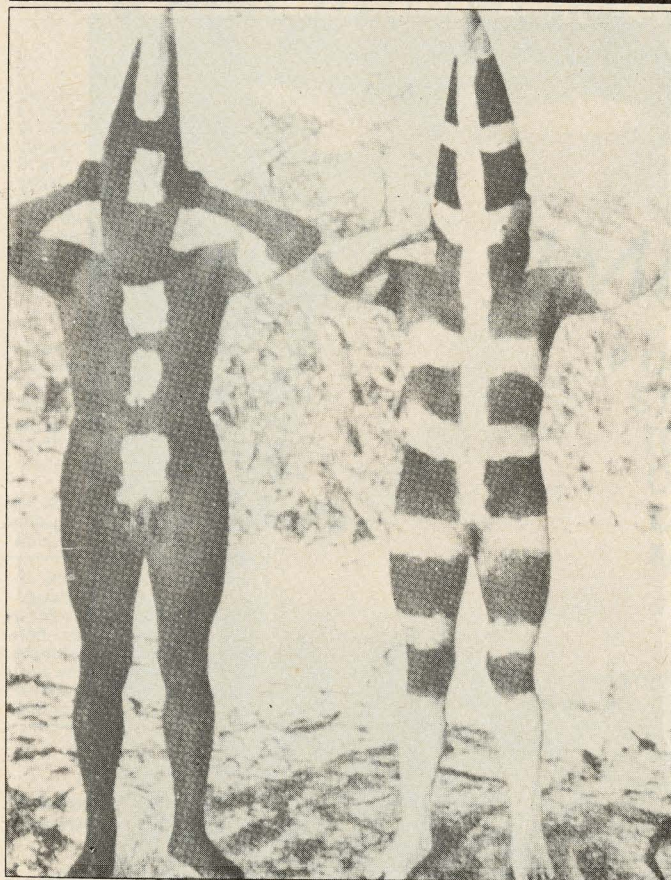


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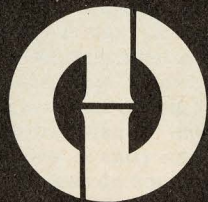
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involvement has been unwarranted. This work is engrossing not only because of the story it tells but also through the mutual reinforcement of the narrative and the visual structure.

In creating a biography one runs the risk of distorting facts into something close to fiction. One line of sight may scan a well-defined picture but, through selectivity of details, leads to nothing short of misinterpretation. In an autobiography that risk is increased a thousandfold for the author/artist supposedly is privileged to more details than anyone. However, the control over the degree of distortion, one would guess, increases at the same rate since the author has the ultimate right and responsibility to assign the labels of fact and fiction. In Martha Wilson's *Autobiography* all of the roads to misinterpretation are set before us but we are never really pushed toward any one of them nor are we pointed in any other direction.

In this thin volume we are first presented with a rapid-fire outline of a day in the life of the artist, or more precisely the artist as administrator, in the form of black and white photographs and a typed run-on text. Then the pivotal statement, "Oh god how flat and sorry. Actually I live an alternative life..." marks the change from black and white rectangular pictures to cutout or oddly shaped color ones, from type to large loose handwriting. We are led to believe that we are in for a little excitement, and that is exactly what we get. Glimpses of

many facets of the artist's life, projected through her changing self-image, flash by as we rush through the virtually unpunctuated text in an attempt to find the completion of a coherent statement. That is never really found. Just as our lives, from time to time, roll on quickly without a clear goal, so moves Martha Wilson from suicide fantasy to lunch at the Plaza Hotel ("a performance"), in and out of drag, through flirtations with fashion, back to her infancy in a Skinner box; the book becomes a veritable rogue's gallery of her alter-egos. This is modern life? With each transformation or fantasy that Wilson puts forth the question remains, "What does this mean?" Is it enough on three distinct instances to bring up the issue of cross-dressing without further commenting on sexual identity? Why throw in a Skinner box and say, "I think I look exactly the same..." without elaboration on how that could be possible?

While possessing the admirable qualities of humor and a certain spontaneity, Wilson's book as autobiography is disappointing if not finally irritating. From another point of view, however, it begins to pose real questions about the nature of making art, how one begins to transform, make sense of the largest portion of our lives, that which is unresolved, that which cannot be expressed adequately in a language of absolutes. The stuff necessary to approach that expression is all present in Wilson's book -- fantasy, family, sexuality, politics, economics -- but too often only in incomplete notation. ■

TELEVISION

Access For All? Not Yet.

LOCAL TELEVISION: PIPED DREAMS?

By Andrew Bibby, Cathy Denford, with Jerry Cross. Available from The Centre for Advanced TV Studies, 42 Theobalds Road, London, WC1X 8NW, U.K. £ 1.60 (U.K.) £ 1.80 (abroad) 1979.

reviewed by Lisa Steele

Due primarily to a difference in licensing practices, there are very few cable television stations in England compared with the proliferation of these stations in North America. In fact, there are only two: Swindon Viewpoint and Milton Keynes Channel 40. The authors of this short book are quite familiar with these cable projects: Bibby and Denford are ex-Milton Keynes' employees and Cross is currently working at Swindon Viewpoint. Their 'view from the inside' of cablecasting in

the U.K. is both complete and critical.

Beginning with a simple and clearly written explanation of "What is Cable", the book goes on to detail the financial backing, licensing, staffing policies and overall philosophies of the two main cable stations in the U.K. But the specifics of their research are applicable in a general way to all cable systems.

Although more of a process than a product, cable television is similar in promise to other kinds of 'do-it-yourself' technology that have become available to consumers in the last 20 years; i.e. polaroid cameras, portable video-recorders, audio cassette recorders and a host of other cheaper 'participatory' products ("Big Mike - sing along with your favourite records", to name one). The more unattainable the original is for the consumer, the greater the promise of

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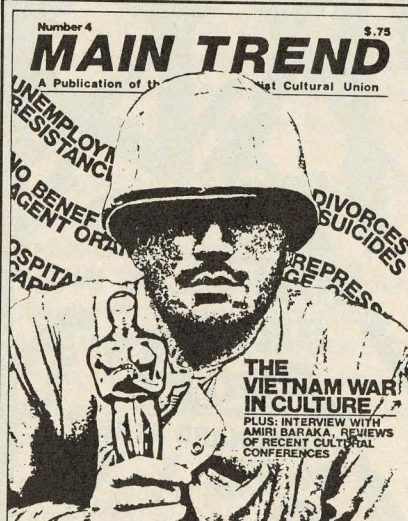
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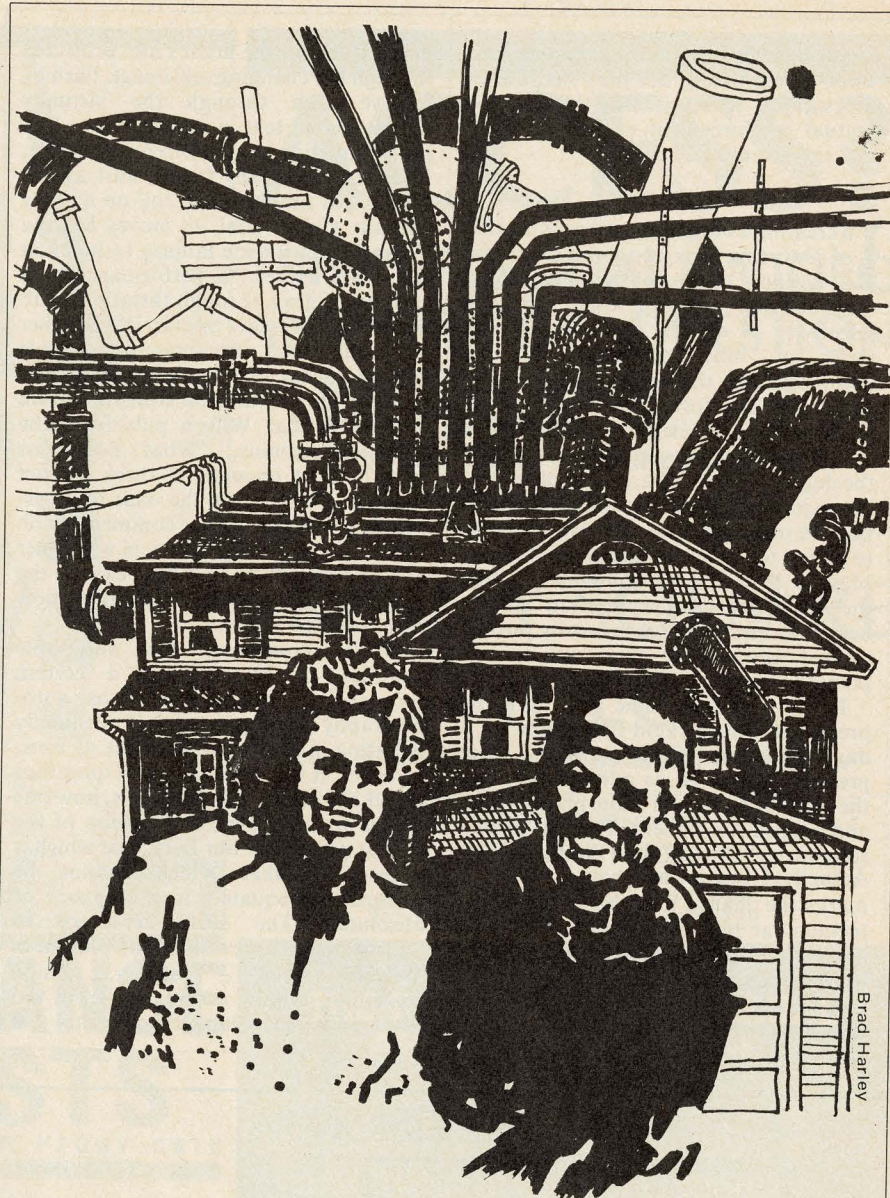
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Brad Harley

the 'cheap' version: so that portable video recording equipment tickled imaginations on a global scale in the late '60's. Make Your Own TV. What a dream. The possibility of cablecasting grew out of this cheaper low-gauge video recording equipment: a 'participatory' product encouraged a 'participatory' process and thus community access television was born.

With so much apparent promise, why has the dream of community-originated and controlled television via cable transmission withered into just another Get Rich Quick Scheme (at least in North America) called Pay TV? Why wasn't locally-originated TV able to transform the whole notion of television, both as it is viewed and as it is produced? The easiest (and least accurate) place to lay the blame is with the viewers themselves.

We know the story: the passive audience, only interested in being entertained, sitting hypnotized night after night in front of The Boob Tube. Television: the medium everybody loves to hate. Another, more accurate, place for blame is with the corporate nature of broadcasting itself. Television, after all, is a business whose main concern is to create and maintain an audience for its advertisers.

What this book points out is that some of the blame (or cause) for the shortcomings of cable television lies within the philosophy of its practitioners. First the authors look at the idea of *access for all* — a basic premise of all community television. In the stations they are discussing, the practice doesn't come close to the ideal. Most programme producers in those stations are middle-class men, no matter what the supposed community served is. "Women, young people and the elderly are rare amongst programme

TELEVISION

makers," they report.

They also challenge the idea of 'audience' in cablecasting. The very nature of transmission via cable (rather than over the airwaves) as set out by the licensing bodies (The Home Office in the U.K. and the C.R.T.C. in Canada) defines an audience by its physical locale. That is, cable companies are licensed to broadcast to a particular section of a city. This arbitrary sectioning-off of an audience allows those living on the east side of a street, for example, to be within the range of one particular cable company's signal, while their neighbours across the street would be unable to receive the same company's signal on their sets. Thus cable's 'audience' is an artificial one.

Applying the word 'community' to this arbitrary audience creates more problems.

"...the 'community' philosophy assumes that there is an identity of interest based on residence in a particular locality. It is in essence denying the possibility that fundamental conflicts of interest may exist between sectors of that society. (It is, on a small scale, an exact replica of the traditional ideology of nationalism.) "...by denying such conflicts, and by promoting 'community' togetherness, organizations such as (the cable companies) are taking a political stance."

The authors are very critical of this stance of supposed 'neutrality'. In their view, by attempting to address everyone equally, cable, in fact, addresses no one in particular.

This book offers suggestions for altering and strengthening the position of community television:

"(the Cable companies) at present try to work to absolutes; the cable facility is open to *everyone*, *totally free* of charge, and the station attempts to exercise *no* control over programme content... All absolute philosophies like this are impossible to achieve; they treat the world undialectically, and disregard practical limiting factors. We therefore do not offer an alternative philosophy to the 'access' model. (We instead offer) "some practical guidelines...". "...we feel that a policy of 'positive discrimination' is preferable to neutral 'access'. By this we mean discrimination *in favour* of those sectors of society at present generally discriminated against, who have least access to the media, and whose views are rarely presented."

While very specifically analyzing the British cable television system, *Local Television: Piped Dreams?* does have application to North America where hundreds of cable companies have been licensed to operate within the last decade. A similar analysis of cable in North America might suggest a way of resurrecting the more positive aspects of community produced cable television before the possibility disappears completely with the advent of Pay TV. ■

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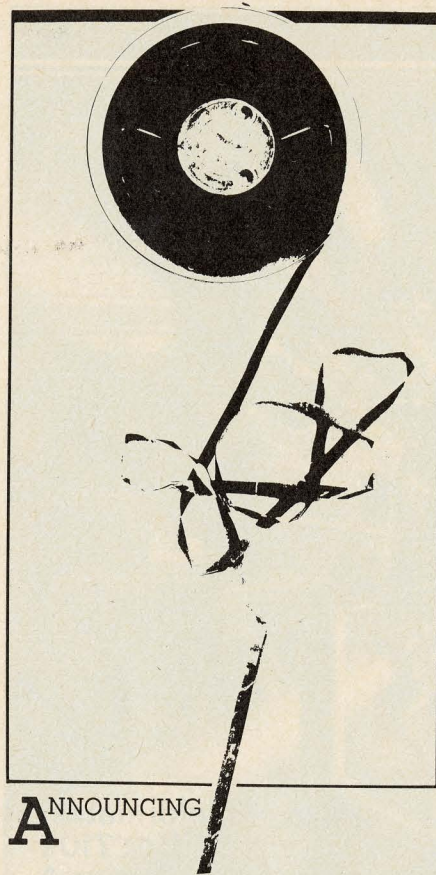
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THE PLASTIC PEOPLE, PRAGUE

Egon Bondy's Happy Hearts Club Banned. A double album consisting of a record and a sixty-page book. Recorded live in 1973-74. Co-production: LTM and Bozi Mlyn. (Produced without the knowledge of The Plastic People.) reviewed by Ian Cochrane

"You'll sew your apparel
from vanity and sin
Questing endlessly for
the Wondrous Mandarin...
And when you're forty,
worn out and done in,
You'll know your life
is just a bozi mlyn."

A bozi mlyn is described in the liner notes as "God's Mill" from a proverb "The Mills of God grind slowly but surely." A comment on the state-promoted pop artist, or just a comment on making art?

The lyrics, all written by poet Egon Bondy, are at once ironic, satiric and direct. He is considered by other poets in the Czech underground as the 'father' of their poetry, having been writing and distributing it through *Samizdat*, an underground, hand-circulated publication since the early Fifties. The music of the Plastic People is similar to Bondy in spirit. Recorded "on largely homemade apparatus and simple recording gear", the sound is like that of a good live album; it has a roughness that underlines the sophistication of musicianship while supporting a spontaneous rock and roll excitement.

The tape itself was smuggled out of Czechoslovakia, the album and book that accompanies it produced without the knowledge of the Plastic People by SCOPA/Invisible Network in Paris and The Plastic Defence Fund in London, England. The album cover reads "Recorded in Czechoslovakia, produced in France, pressed in Ireland, printed in England." The claim is that all of the work done was volunteer and non-profit.

Ian Cochrane, Toronto, is an artist and editor of "Sic" Magazine.



Friends and members of the Merry Ghetto. photo courtesy Plastic People Defense Fund

The book, called *The Merry Ghetto*, takes the place of another record in the double album cover. Besides photographs, poetry and original material from the underground, there is a short statement by Professor Jan Patocka and major documents by Ivan Jirous and Vaclav Havel. Patocka, a philosopher of 'older generation', died before the publishing of this material in mid-1978 after "an especially gruelling interrogation by the secret police". He was one of the original spokesmen for Charter 77, a group set up to formally protest increased persecution of those in the underground, and specifically to protest the conviction of two of the members of the Plastic People in 1976.

Vaclav Havel, a prominent Czech playwright and a second of the original three spokesmen for that group, writes of that trial, in which Ivan Jirous was sentenced. Jirous, the artistic director of the Plastic People, presents their history synonymously with the history of the underground. As well, an article by Ivan Hartel — listed in the credits for having helped produce the book/record — entitled "A New Era Has Begun" appears.

The visual design of *The Merry Ghetto* booklet is unified chaos: photos, drawings and texts are collaged over and around each other to give a lively if at first confusing layout. It provides a similitude of everyday bedlam through which the direct language of the documents speaks clearly as a product and process lived in. As a result, *The Merry Ghetto* is a manifesto that generates emotional as well as intellectual energy.

The Plastic People was formed in December of 1968 by bass player Milan Hlavsa, during what Jirous calls the second Czech musical revival — a time when "... in Prague alone there were several hundred rock groups."

Jirous writes: "At the beginning of the Seventies, the establishment took drastic steps which practically speaking destroyed rock music as a movement. Groups were forbidden to have a repertoire sung in English, bands with English names were forced to change them. ... The Plastic People of the Universe decided to reject all the changes demanded of them by an alien will. ... They kept their name, their repertoire and their appearance intact. The group lost its professional status; weaker individuals left it and the core of the new Plastic People — around Hlavsa and Janicek (lead guitarist) — started off ... with no equipment ... but with an absolutely clear conception: that it is the musician's responsibility to play the kind of music that his conscience tells him to play ..."

At this time, the Aktual Band had an impact on the Plastic People. Aktual was influenced by the ideas of John Cage and Edgar Varèse, in particular "techniques of aleatoric music and serial composition", and passed these on to the Plastic People. Another Aktual influence is the exclusive use of Czech lyrics.

The Merry Ghetto was a reality. Performances called "The First Music Festival of the Second Culture" and "The Second Festival of the Underground" were staged. Gatherings in private homes to celebrate birthday parties or weddings avoided raids and charges against the bands of "illegal earning". Finally, Jirous defines The Merry Ghetto, "We must learn to live in the existing world in a way that is both gay and dignified. ... In Bohemia, the underground is not tied to a definite artistic tendency or style, though in music, for example, it is expressed largely through rock. ... The underground is a mental attitude of intellectuals and artists who consciously ... determine their stance towards the world in which they live. ... The underground is created by people who have understood that within the bounds of legality nothing can be changed, and who no longer even attempt to function within those bounds." The essay is dated February, 1975.

On September 23, 1976, Svatopluk Karacek, Vratislav Brabanec, Pavel Zacicek and Ivan Jirous were sentenced to eight, eight, twelve and eighteen month jail terms respectively. Brabanec was the saxophonist for the Plastic People, Karacek a folk singer, and Zacicek, a poet who had done work with the Plastic People. Reproduced in the book are reports from the daily paper *Rude Pravo* condemning those arrested as 'hooligans', spreaders of 'moral filth'. The charges were "criminal acts of disturbing the peace." The trials continued through 1977.

Partially as a result of the trials, a petition for solidarity against the cultural oppression of the first regime emerged. It was called Charter 77, and it was signed by almost a thousand Czechs from all walks of life. According to Ivan Hartel, "The trial had opened their eyes to the deeper significance of what was going on in the underground." Police and state harassment of the signatories culminated in a series of arrests in 1977.

The Plastic People and the underground were able until 1976 to function as covert guerillas working both 'inside' and 'outside' the first regime. Their existence is described in *The Merry Ghetto* as "semi-legal"; this and the apparent policy of the Soviet Mother Regime — that the Czech police obey the letter of the law — meant that the Plastic People could go to the edge of the law and beyond. They were tolerated; no actual laws were broken publicly. Had they or any of the other underground groups attempted to play at a pop festival, they would have been immediately charged for performing illegally. So they played at private celebrations of their friends.

Their impact, however, was thus limited to the underground itself. Jirous expresses concern in his essay for the 16 to 19 year olds, put to sleep by the only music the state allows them to hear on the radio. The pop culture, then, was officially regulated. As long as the underground and the Plastic People remained outside of the media, they didn't exist for most of their fellow citizens either. They were more or less helpless to prevent any distortions and caricatures which the media chose to project to the public at large. Though legally inside the Czech community, they were unable to function effectively.

The ingenious solution was a kind of 'self-kidnap'. If, while inside the law, they are outside the community, then logic follows that when they are outside the law they will be inside the community. By breaking a relatively minor law, they are brought to court. In this public forum, they are able to refute the official media presentation of them as human garbage. Their trial gives them access to the official press. Thus the Russian regime is forced to work against itself and bring the ideology of the Merry Ghetto to the entire Czech people.

In the trials of 1976 the first regime quickly realized their error in allowing the Merry Ghetto a public forum. With the introduction of charges such as subversion, the Soviet regime showed itself unaware to some extent of the power of the second culture.

It has become a direct confrontation, as the arresting of the Chartists in May, 1979, proves. ■

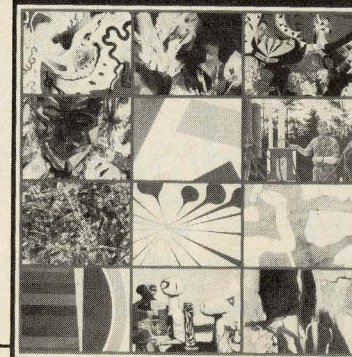
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Now you can duplicate the special effects on those sports telecasts!

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SelectaVision 625 lets you do all these just by pushing buttons—from your armchair.

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The 625 comes with a remote control unit that lets you add the effects you want from up to 20 feet away. The unit also lets you pause and change channels without leaving your chair.

6-hour recording.

And you won't be leaving your chair to change cassettes in the middle of a program. The 625 gives you 6-hour recording capacity—still the longest available on any VCR.




Optional color camera lets you tape your own TV shows!

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And the 7-day programmable timer lets you record your favourite shows even when you're away for up to seven days! Touch a few buttons and you've programmed the timer. The rest is automatic. The 625 will turn itself on at kick-off time, record the game and

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Plus all those features that have helped make RCA SelectaVision the best-selling VCR in North America. The "Special Effect" SelectaVision 625 has it all. Go see it at your RCA dealer.

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