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RAISING
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WOMEN'S SPEAK:
 A Gala Celebration of Canadian Women Poets/Le gala de la parole des femmes canadiennes on the occasion of the launch of *SP/ELLES: Poetry by Canadian Women/Poesie de femmes canadiennes* (ed. Judith Fitzgerald, Black Moss Press).
 Saturday, November 8, 1986
 A Space
 183 Bathurst Street at Queen
 Second Floor, 364-3227
 7:00 P.M.

<i>Gay Allison</i>	<i>Dorothy Livesay</i>
<i>Ayanna Black</i>	<i>Daphne Marlatt</i>
<i>Nicole Brossard</i>	<i>Lesley McAllister</i>
<i>Louise Cotnoir</i>	<i>P.K. Page</i>
<i>Louise Dupre</i>	<i>Lola Lemire Tostevin</i>
<i>Maxine Gadd</i>	<i>Ann Wallace</i>
	<i>Betsy Warland</i>

FUSE
 FALL 1986 • VOL. X NO. 3

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CONTRIBUTORS
 Heather Allin, Rob Champagne, Alvin Comiter, Sara Diamond, Rosemary Donegan, Abbe Edelson, Isobel Harry, Gary Kinsman, Alan O'Connor, Barbara Pavlic, Marlene Nourbese Philip, Clive Robertson, Pat Wilson, Toby Zeldin

PHOTOGRAPHS & ILLUSTRATIONS
 Sandro Botticelli, Mike Constable, B-Bond, Isobel Harry, Pat Jeffries, Peter MacCallum, Fumio Takashima, Toby Zeldin

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 Delta Web Graphics, Scarborough

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The Ontario Arts Council offers grants to professional artists who are residents of Ontario, working in the following media:

PHOTOGRAPHY

- Projects: assistance for new projects or work-in-progress.
 Deadlines: February 1, August 15
- Exhibition Assistance: towards the cost of an upcoming show.
 Deadlines: February 15, April 15, June 15, August 15, October 15, December 15.

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 Deadlines: February 1, August 15

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

- to facilitate creation of works of art using electronic media; to facilitate research of potential significant benefit to the arts community into the creative possibilities of electronic media.
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FILM

- to assist with the production of documentary, dramatic, animated or experimental films.
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Film, Photography and Video Office
ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL
 151 Bloor Street West, Suite 500
 Toronto, Ontario M5S 1T6
 (416) 961-1660

Taking Exception

AS ONE OF TORONTO'S LEADING presenters of performance art, I take exception to certain statements and inuendos in Clive Robertson's article, "Performance Art Re-visited," printed in your May/June 1986 issue. Danceworks has been a supporter of performance art in Toronto for the past six years and has presented some of Toronto's most prominent performance artists, including Colin Campbell, Margaret Dragu, Tanya Mars, Elizabeth Chitty, Randy and Berenicc, Foodlist Productions, Frances Leeming, Johanna Householder, Rhonda Abrams, John McKinnon, Tom Dean, Marcia Cannon and many others. In fact, many of the early performances in Danceworks, though labelled "Post-Modern Dance," were essentially performance art operating within an open concept of dance.

In the first place, I would thank Mr. Robertson to not arbitrarily include Danceworks in criticisms of other organizations when the article/review has otherwise nothing to do with us. In particular, I object to the reference that we use this art form as a "needed source of extra funding." Funding for performance art is scarce and difficult to obtain. Furthermore it is not an easy form of art to market, either at the box office or to prospective sponsors. The suggestion that we or anyone would be in it for the money is not only erroneous but downright absurd.

Further to the money issue, I would like to point out that Danceworks fees to performance artists are much greater than what you suggest by your close equation between Danceworks and Rhubarb. In fact, our fees this year far exceed those you quote for either Rhubarb (\$350) or Six of 1001 Nights (\$1,000). Performance art fees even exceeded those to some of our choreographers this season. Having presented many artists over the years we recognize the artists' need for financial assistance. We do not, however, profess to cover the total cost of the artists work as you suggest, but mainly the costs of preparing the work for our production. We urge all of our artists to seek their own funding for the development of their work and even help them write their grants if needed.

In his article, Mr. Robertson asserts that "performance art is many things, but it is not theatre, nor is it dance — a fact that both Buddies and Danceworks chose at best to overlook or at worst to ignore," making it quite clear that he, too, knows what it is not. However, he very carefully avoids an attempt at a definition himself, choosing rather to describe various activities carried out in the name of performance art. He leaves us only with the conclusion that it is simply "many things."

In the first place, we present performance art as performance art, not as theatre or dance. We do not overlook or ignore a definition, but recognize that the art form by its nature continually defies simple definition. We offer a public forum to artists who will by their actions define and redefine the parameters of the art. In fact, theatre and dance do not necessarily have such definable limits. There are "grey zones" in the overlap of artistic disciplines that must be explored to encourage the transfer of communicational structures and ideas.

There is one thing dance, theatre and performance art have in common, and that is the element of "performance" — the use of time, space and audience to convey a message. There are differences in style, logic, content and intention, but the medium is essentially the same. What makes performance art important is its defiance of tradition and definition, as well as its constant search for new approaches and perspectives on society. The qualities of exploration and experimentation inherent in performance art are much valued in our programming and I do not support Mr. Robertson's view that it is an "experimental come on."

When he says that "the theatre/dance audience admires the 'experimentations' and gall of the performance but essentially faults it for its poverty" he makes a serious slam against the artists themselves, narrowly suggesting that their performances are ineffective and underdeveloped. I do not share this view, and would contend that our audiences show much greater respect for performance art than Mr. Robertson.

It is interesting to note that three of the four sponsors named in the article are not visual arts organizations. The visual arts discipline lays claim to performance art as a sub-category of vi-

sual art and should therefore be first in support and nurturing of its artists. In fact, over the past several years there has been a veritable drought of support to performance art from visual arts organizations in Toronto. I applaud A Space for recognizing this situation and joining us in providing this much needed support.

Danceworks is proud to be one of the longest running series of performance art in Toronto. We admire and appreciate the work of the artists in spite of occasional difficulties. They have helped to set a standard of innovation in Toronto and across Canada. We intend to uphold the artists' freedom to express themselves artistically in a public forum, within the limits of the theatre, and will continue to support performance artists as long as there is a need.

If in Mr. Robertson's mind it is not acceptable to present performance art in a theatre or to a theatre/dance audience, then his vision of the art is narrow and potentially limiting to the development and growth of the art form. The purpose is to communicate artistic vision with society and if a venue can support the performance, it has a responsibility to do so.

—Don MacMillan
Executive Director
DANCEWORKS, Toronto.

Clive Robertson replies:

The point of the piece, aside from reviewing new works, was to provide some institutional critique which would have to include DANCEWORKS. The piece was written from a performance artist's viewpoint in conversation with many other such artists who have worked at all the venues mentioned. From 1970 performance has been used by non artist-controlled institutions as peripheral programming. The poverty of the form is such that Performance artists are again re-making their work for video allowing them to gain both theatrical and cinematic advantage over low-budget stage events.

Danceworks has very recently substantially increased its fees and presented a Performance-only event at the Ice House. Aside from the inflated self-promotional rhetoric, I have no doubt that Mr. MacMillan is serious in his commitment to performance artists.

This letter has been edited for length.

Confused Update

Court Ruling Undermines Artists' Rights

SARA DIAMOND

VANCOUVER — On February 21, 1984, the Vancouver Art Gallery cancelled Vancouver artist Paul Wong's video installation, *Confused, Sexual Views*. It had been slated to open three days later. Then director, Luke Rombout contended the work was "not art" because of its use of interview formats. Behind the decision was the fear on the part of the director that a new clientele, attracted by the VAG's move into a renovated courthouse, would be made uncomfortable by the frank discussion of sexuality in the tapes.

The cancellation left both artist and art community up in arms. Not only was the conservatism of the gallery's fears and the obvious censorship disturbing, but fundamental issues of contract rights for artists were at stake. Wong contended that the gallery had made a formal verbal contract with him, one that did not mention the possibility of the show being cancelled. The curator had been familiar with the theme and approach to the work for many months. Yet the "employer" (the gallery) cancelled the exhibition without compunction. The anger generated a number of protests by local artists, including a picket of the VAG. Funds were raised and the artist was encouraged to take the institution to court.

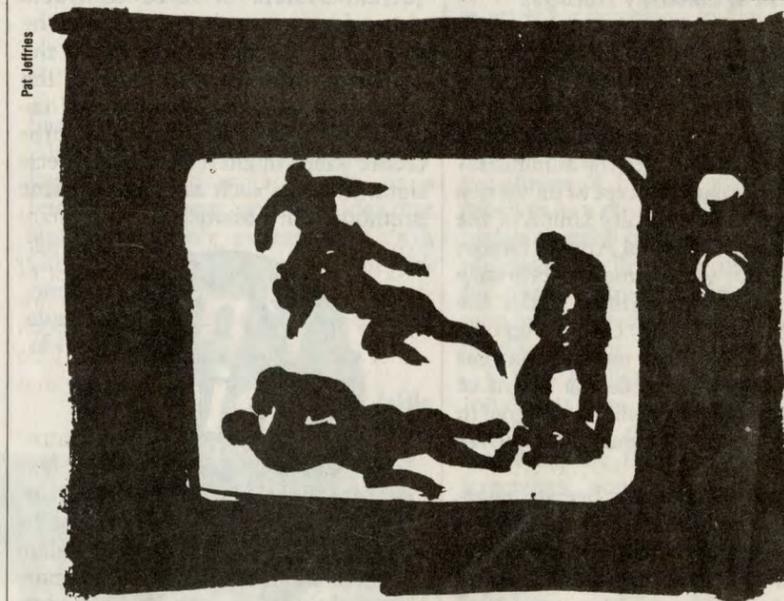
Paul Wong versus Luke Rombout and the VAG was finally heard almost two and one-half years later. The ensuing years have been filled with stress for the artist — the case entails a possible financial risk on his part and he remains notorious. Invitations from public galleries are not flooding his mailbox.

Lawyer Lorne Maclean's case rested on the artist's demands for personal

damages and the exhibition of his work. Charges were filed against both the VAG as an institution and its former director Luke Rombout. Maclean demonstrated that the gallery was familiar with the work; the destructive quality of the precipitous, eleventh hour cancellation; that Wong has been personally and professionally damaged as a result of the show being jettisoned. The case was fought and decided within the terrain of contract law and did not directly address the issues of institutional cen-

lawyer, claimed that the tapes were not ready until eight days before the show for screening; therefore a contract was not in effect. She insisted that the cancellation was of benefit to the artist's career because it placed Wong and his work in the public eye.

Despite the expert testimony of A.A. Bronson (General Idea, Art Metropole) and Renee Baert (curator) who argued the legitimacy of the work and the impossibility of the VAG's procedures on the matter; the fact that the National Gallery had



sorship. Although the gallery director used the excuse that the work "was not art" for cancelling the show, the court felt that the issue of deciding whether the work was in fact art or "not art" was not in its jurisdiction.

The gallery's case rested on the right of the VAG to see the total and final work before proceeding with the exhibition. Wendy Baker, the gallery's

recently acquired the work as "art"; the evidence supporting Wong's dramatic loss of income and commissions because of the cancellation and court case, and the testimony from then-curator Joanne Birnie-Danzker that she fought for the installation to proceed, Justice Reginald Gibbs dismissed charges against both Rombout and the gallery. In addition, he informed

the gallery that Wong was liable for court costs.

Gibbs concluded that there was a contract but decided that the gallery could choose to cancel that contract on the basis of "taste, sensibility, suitability and acceptability." In making this decision, he neatly nullified artists' contract rights across the country. Director Birnie-Danzker responded with relief that stronger contracts would inhibit gallery administrators. The case was precedent setting in backing up the rights of institutions to cancel shows at will.

At present Wong has filed for appeal in order to meet his consistent desire for compensation and a showing of his work. He may yet be hit with not only his, but also the gallery's, court costs.

This unending saga is further proof that strong artists' organizations, not just individual heroic efforts, are needed if artists' rights are to be respected. The constraints placed by court procedures and available laws, and the delay involved in getting a case into court mean that legal action is a last recourse. A union contract might work more effectively.

Without question, Paul Wong deserves a hand from all of us, for the outcome of the case and the appeal affect us directly. The very fact of the court battle indicates that artists are no longer willing to turn the other cheek when slapped by public institutions.

Sara Diamond

FUNSCAD Union Battles Board

The following report originally appeared in the *CAUT Bulletin*, (paper of the Canadian Association of University Teachers).

HALIFAX — The current labour relations crisis at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) reveals an ironic disparity between the school's avant-garde image and the administration's reactionary concept of university governance. The Faculty Union of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (FUNSCAD) was formed in February of 1985 and was certified under the Nova Scotia Trade Union Act the following May. After more than a year at the bargaining table the Board of Governors is still unwilling to agree to even the most fundamental employee rights.

The Union's goal has been to negotiate terms and conditions of employment in line with those at other universities in Nova Scotia and across Canada. Their priorities have been Academic Freedom, Grievance Procedures, Job Security, Consultation on Academic Matters, Hiring and Dismissal Procedures, etc. — principles that other institutions take for granted as being fundamental to quality university level education. Unfortunately, the College's progressive image masks some very primitive ideas on labour relations. For example, the Board has

refused to accept the idea of continuing appointments as an alternative to the current system of fixed contracts renewable at the sole discretion of the employer. The Board also claims the authority to be the final judge of the competence and qualifications of faculty and refuses any grievance procedure which might review Board decisions on issues such as reappointment promotion or sabbaticals.



At the end of June, the Board presented the Union with its final contract offer and broke off negotiations. To the Union's amazement, significant agreements that were secured during the months of negotiations in the spring were reneged on in the Board's final package. On July 17, the membership unanimously turned down the Board's proposals. William McCallum, a provincial conciliator who has been at the negotiating table since

February, filed his report on July 18, placing the College in a legal lockout/strike position on August 1.

The faculty at the College remains united in its determination to achieve its original objectives. FUNSCAD is particularly proud of the fact that it has 100% membership — all members of the bargaining unit have voluntarily joined the Union. FUNSCAD has further demonstrated its commitment to the collective bargaining process by filing an application to bring sessionals and part-time faculty into the Union. The Nova Scotia Labour Board has given the Union direction for achieving this goal and further applications will be filed in the near future.

FUNSCAD had received a great deal of support from CAUT as well as invaluable assistance from the Nova Scotia Confederation of University Faculty Associations. In response to the worsening situation at the College, the trustees of the CAUT Defense Fund have voted to provide FUNSCAD with benefits in the event of a lockout. In addition, the Fund has agreed to provide loans to FUNSCAD should the employer cut off premiums on its existing benefit package. To underline their concern, the trustees have moved the next meeting of the Defence Fund from Montreal to Halifax. Other Faculty Associations across Canada have recognized what's at stake at the Art College bargaining table and have rallied to FUNSCAD's support. Letters of concern may be sent to Mr. David Dibblee, Chair of the Board of Governors, 5163 Duke Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 3J6, (copies to the Union).

Unfortunately, the College is also in the midst of contentious debates on academic issues. In February of 1985 a petition signed by faculty and students was submitted to the Dean requesting an emergency faculty meeting to deal with what many felt to be a crisis of confidence in the administrative decision making process with regard to academic matters. Still another controversy emerged after the Dean of the College resigned to become President of the Emily Carr College of Art in Vancouver. Despite the fact that the College Policy book details specific instructions for filling senior administrative vacancies, the President and the Executive of the Board unilaterally restructured the administration and appointed new Deans without even the

pretense of a search. In addition, the administration has repeatedly violated the "freeze" imposed by the Trade Union Act and they have harassed faculty and threatened their continued employment at the College.

The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Canada's only degree granting art school, was founded almost 100 years ago. With an enrollment of approximately 500 students, NSCAD offers undergraduate programs leading to the Bachelor of Fine Arts, Bachelor of Design, Bachelor of Arts in Art Education, as well as graduate degrees in Art and Art Education. Faculty and graduates have distinguished themselves internationally and have earned NSCAD the reputation of being one of Canada's most valuable art and educational resources. It appears that the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design's reputation for nurturing new ideas and responding to change does not extend beyond the classroom into the Boardroom.

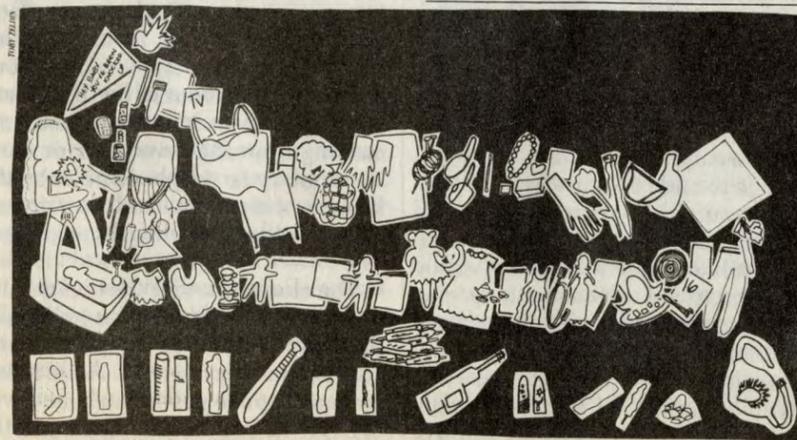
Alvin Comiter, President
FUNSCAD

Pages Epilogue

TORONTO — "IT'S A GIRL," months in the making, ten days in a window, six months in police custody, seven days on trial, nine months in basement boxes, a few minutes on the glass of a photocopier... and to date, the most offensive objects (plaster phalli, menstrual pads) remain in a police lock-up. Fragmented and misread, out of context and invisible, "It's a Girl" has stood trial as a disgusting entity which some say should never

have been exhibited, let alone created. Although now deemed permissible by law as a valid work of art, as a feminist statement, and as an idea that should be freely expressed, "It's a Girl", never to be seen again, will continue to exist as a subject for discussion and as a shadow on the activities of its creators, WOOMERS.

Toby Zeldin
Barbara Pavlic



Artist's rendering of *It's a Girl* (1985), window installation by Woomers at Pages Bookstore, Toronto

Censorship Rears Hydra Head

HAMILTON — At Hamilton Artists' Inc. on September 4, 1986 tapes from Ireland were premiered. The Irish-Canadian Video Project co-ordinated

by Cinaedh Ui hUiscin and Ken O'Heskin is an exchange program between Irish and Canadian independent video producers. The two Irish tapes



Still from *Plastic Bullets* produced by Gerard McLaughlin

PROVOS: Mural at the Rosswell Flats, Derry, Ireland

selected for screening in Canada were *Planning* and *Plastic Bullets*. *Planning* deals with the changes in Derry brought about in the last ten years by the military having assumed a major role in urban planning. *Plastic Bullets* tells the stories of families who have lost relatives as a result of the use of plastic bullets to quell uprisings. It shows the policies of the British security forces in the north of Ireland and the families who have been directly affected by the deadly weapon, the plastic bullet gun.

One of the new members of Hamilton Artists' Inc., an artist from Cayuga by the name of Mary Galli, upon receiving the flyer announcing the screenings, contacted the gallery to cancel her membership as she "... didn't expect to get involved with an art group that was so political in its outlook."

Ms. Galli, without viewing the tapes, was quoted by the *Hamilton Spectator*, "I sympathize with the Irish. But the troops would not be there unless the government asked them in. Nobody wants to fire real bullets. But there have been more troops killed than Irish people."

Ms. Galli continued her self-assumed role as censor by writing the Ontario



Out of the Ashes: Mural in West Belfast, one of hundreds

Arts Council and by approaching the City Council of Hamilton to request that funding be cut off from the Hamilton Artists' Inc. because they showed these "political tapes."

Nancy Hushion of the Ontario Arts Council responded by saying: "What is of concern to OAC are artistic concerns, not political positions or points of view. Artists are the conscience of society. They pose questions and present a variety of different viewpoints... art is not necessarily meant to make you comfortable."

The City Council of Hamilton has not to date responded to Ms. Galli's demands.

Ms. Galli was further quoted that she feared the Hamilton Artists' Inc. and other sponsoring organizations such as the ICVP would "...send the

money donations at the door to Ulster to support the IRA."

The forty-one dollars collected as voluntary donations were distributed — \$20 to the artists and \$21 to cover costs of the gallery.

Thus the "...sinister plot to export all this largesse we are supposed to be raising for the IRA, exists only in Mary Galli's agitated imagination... By attempting to browbeat the City of Hamilton and the OAC...into cutting the Hamilton Artists' Inc.'s funding... she is advocating nothing less than censorship by hysteria...which creates a climate of intolerance...and can result in a society that is ruled by jackboots..." stated Ken O'Heskin, ICVP, Toronto.

Pat Wilson

The Friends of Spadina

TORONTO — *The Friends of Spadina* consists of many residents, garment and fur workers' union representatives, artists, shop owners, restaurant owners, representatives of the Chinese senior community, and neighbourhood residents who are together primarily to oppose the proposed plan by the Toronto Transit Commission to run a Light Rapid Transit line down the middle of Spadina Avenue.

The LRT would have 12 stops on each side of the avenue between Bloor Street and the lakefront where it would enter the domed stadium. The line would be banked on both sides by

a 6 inch curb, making left and right turns impossible, except at a few intersections, and effectively creating two expressways for cars on either side. The angle parking would be made parallel and the boulevard sidewalks reduced in width. Spadina Avenue would become a heavily trafficked route to and from the domed stadium; many of its traditional industries like garments and furs would be forced to move because there is no access except on the avenue itself and the roadway would make loading and unloading impossible; shop owners who place goods for sale on the sidewalk would be forced to remove

them; the boulevard shopping would no longer exist as there would be no boulevard; access to Kensington Market would be more difficult; Spadina Avenue would be much diminished as one of the most unique avenues in the country.

The TTC didn't want much opposition the night of October 1st at the Cecil Street Community Centre, where they had put up their beautifully reproduced plans on easels around the back of the auditorium that used to be a synagogue. Five representatives of the TTC sat on stage and showed slides of typewritten points they were making such as: better plans for the street would make it more efficient, more parking garages



would be built, improved transportation, and sidewalks would be narrowed less than originally planned.

After the TTC made its presentation, 37 speakers signed up to respond at a microphone that had been set up in the centre aisle. Each person stood up and either read from notes or spoke spontaneously, and not one person was in favour of the TTC plan. Some people had learned about the meeting from the newspaper or from signs put up on telephone poles by the *Friends of Spadina*, and they joined the group that evening by signing a list.

The eloquence that the community displayed that evening was politically dazzling. All kinds of people and groups were represented. A fur union executive spoke passionately and wittily, yet he had all the figures on the

millions of dollars made in those blocks on Spadina south of Queen; a Ladies Garment Workers Union rep spoke of the reduction of stops making travelling to work early in the morning or late at night more hazardous; a man who identified himself as a Greek fur shop owner explained how his company could have torn down the old building at Spadina and Queen, but they decided to renovate and restore it to its former landmark status; Rotman, the hat shop man was there, Bobby the cigar store man, Gwartzman the art supply store man; a representative of the Chinese business community; everyone spoke of their ties to the area, some having been born on the avenue or on adjacent streets. Residents spoke of the street being busy enough now without turning it into an expressway; mothers with young children did not know how they would cross the street with carriages or carts; someone in the Chinese community spoke in Chinese which was then translated by an interpreter from the Centre: she said the senior citizens and those in old age homes in the area loved it quiet and calm, which it wouldn't be with the accelerated traffic.

Some, including Rosemary Donegan, the author of the recent book *Spadina*, spoke of the history redolent in the area, including the building we were meeting in; many spoke of the misconceived plans that the TTC had brought, calling them stupid or full of mistakes; and most reiterated everyone's thought: NO to the LRT. Jack Layton, the area's alderman, spoke about having to fight very hard to get them not to do this; Paul Magder, who has been fighting Sunday shop closings for years, said he would take this issue right to the Supreme Court.

The applause was deafening after each speaker. People spoke colourfully and humourously, many citing that they had never seen such solidarity across so many ethnic, age, and issue lines. The reactions were instantaneous, loud, and supportive in the opposition, instilling a wild optimism and renegade spirit in the 400 who had come. Now the real work starts.

The Friends of Spadina may be contacted c/o Carol Wood, 73 Oxford Street, Toronto M5T 1P2. Telephone: 862-8948.

Isobel Harry

NEWS+EVENTS

TOOLS FOR PEACE — Tools for Peace is one of the largest people-to-people aid campaigns in the world. Last year, the Canadian people raised well over 1.5 million in material goods. With over 100 committees in cities and towns across the country, the campaign represents a true grass roots effort at halting the war in Central America and calling on both our government and that of the United States to seek a peaceful solution to the current conflict there. This year the campaign is redoubling its efforts to assist Nicaragua — no doubt because of the \$100 million given to the contras by the Reagan administration and the ongoing anti-Sandinista propaganda coming out of Washington. Tools for Peace is placing its focus on six specific areas: agriculture, labour, women, education, displaced peoples and health. During the campaign, Tools for Peace will be combining both fund-raising and material goods collection with political education. On November 16, Manteca will be playing a benefit for Tools for Peace at the Concert Hall, 888 Yonge Street, Toronto. Tickets are available at The Record Peddler, Records on Wheels, D.E.C., Drum Travel, The Centre for Spanish Speaking People and the Big Carrot. Ticket prices are \$8.00 in advance and \$10.00 at the door. The show starts at 8:00 p.m. and there will be free child care for those who need it. For more information call 922-0852.

WORKING ARTIST PROJECT — The Community Arts Committee of A Space is inviting submissions from Canadian artists who would like to participate in the Working Artist Project scheduled for May 1987. The focus of this project is to examine the working life of the artist and to address some areas of concern to the artist and the arts community. Areas which can be addressed are: economic survival, censorship, housing, marketing, working conditions and discrimination. The project is multidisciplinary so artists are invited to submit works in film, video, performance, painting, installa-

Compiled By Jocelyn Grills

tion, drawing, writing and sculpture. The project will be shown at A Space and feature the work of artists selected from the submissions received. The deadline for submissions is February 28, 1987. Send work to: A Space, 183 Bathurst Street, 2nd Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 2R7 — c/o Community Arts Committee.

BLACK PERSPECTIVES BENEFIT — On Tuesday November 25 at The Bamboo Club, 312 Queen Street West, Toronto reggae band Sunforce will perform at a benefit for Black Perspectives, a cultural program for Dixon Hall. The cover charge is \$6.00 and all proceeds will go to Black Perspectives, a programme that uses the cultural traditions of the Black Community to encourage pride and creativity in Black youth. Performance groups and visual artists use their own experiences to express their lives in settings and with the assistance of professional artists arranged through this programme. The benefit kicks off at 9:00 p.m. For more information call Coreen Gilligan or Brian Birch at 863-0499.

PUBLIC MEETING — "NICARAGUA DEMANDS PEACE" — On Friday November 14th at Convocation Hall, 31 King's College Circle, University of Toronto, Nicaraguan Vice-President Sergio Ramirez will be speaking about the current state of affairs in his country. Doors open at 5:00 and the event begins at 5:30. Admission is free and there will be free child care available for those who need it. For more information call 534-1766.

PERFORMANCE ART — ON November 13th the Bamboo Club (312 Queen Street West) hosts the return of Anne Wilson and Marty St. James — two performance artists from England. The last Canadian project was their 1983 involvement with the British/Canadian Video Exchange. On November 13th, new material will be presented.

FUSE encourages submissions for the News & Events page, particularly regarding independent cultural production and regional events. Send to: FUSE, 5th FL, 489 College St., Toronto, Ont. M6G 1A5

What Ever Happened To QUEEN ST. WEST?

by Rosemary Donegan

“There’s this vitality about the Queen St. West scene with its loose ends and experimentation as people try to capture the sentiments of this time and place, and in the best tradition of the arts, it represents a break from the past.”

John Sewell
The Globe and Mail
August 27, 1986

With the coming of age of the Queen St. West scene, Toronto of the 1980’s appears to have developed its own official ‘art scene,’ full of budding artistic potential and style.¹ The scene not only focuses on music and the visual arts, but is also associated with theatre, design, fashion, and the perennial favorites — eating, drinking, and dancing. In recent years, the community has also developed a consciousness of black, feminist, gay and lesbian issues.

While being promoted, eulogized and sarcastically critiqued by local media interests, the implicit assumption is that this is a first, although occasionally Yorkville in the dim-dark past of the 1960s is noted. Meanwhile, the scene is being massaged by local politicians for votes, assaulted by local moralists and the police, and deciphered and number-crunched by the planners; Baumol’s theory — that the arts are justified as a creative lost leader for the local restaurant and hotel industry.

The artists and musicians of Queen St. engendered all this attention because over the last 20 years they have developed a network of institutions — galleries, bars, production and distribution co-ops, magazines and

restaurants — which responded to their own needs and aesthetic concerns. However, it is the very success of the Queen St. scene that may have already transformed Queen St. into a caricature of itself, another conventional ‘lifestyle’ commercial venture. This has been accelerated in the last few years as a second wave of more capital intensive businesses — commercial galleries, expensive restaurants and clothing stores — has been established on the street. This phenomena is not limited to Queen West and can be observed in slightly different patterns on Bloor West, the King and Front area, and the Summer-hill area.

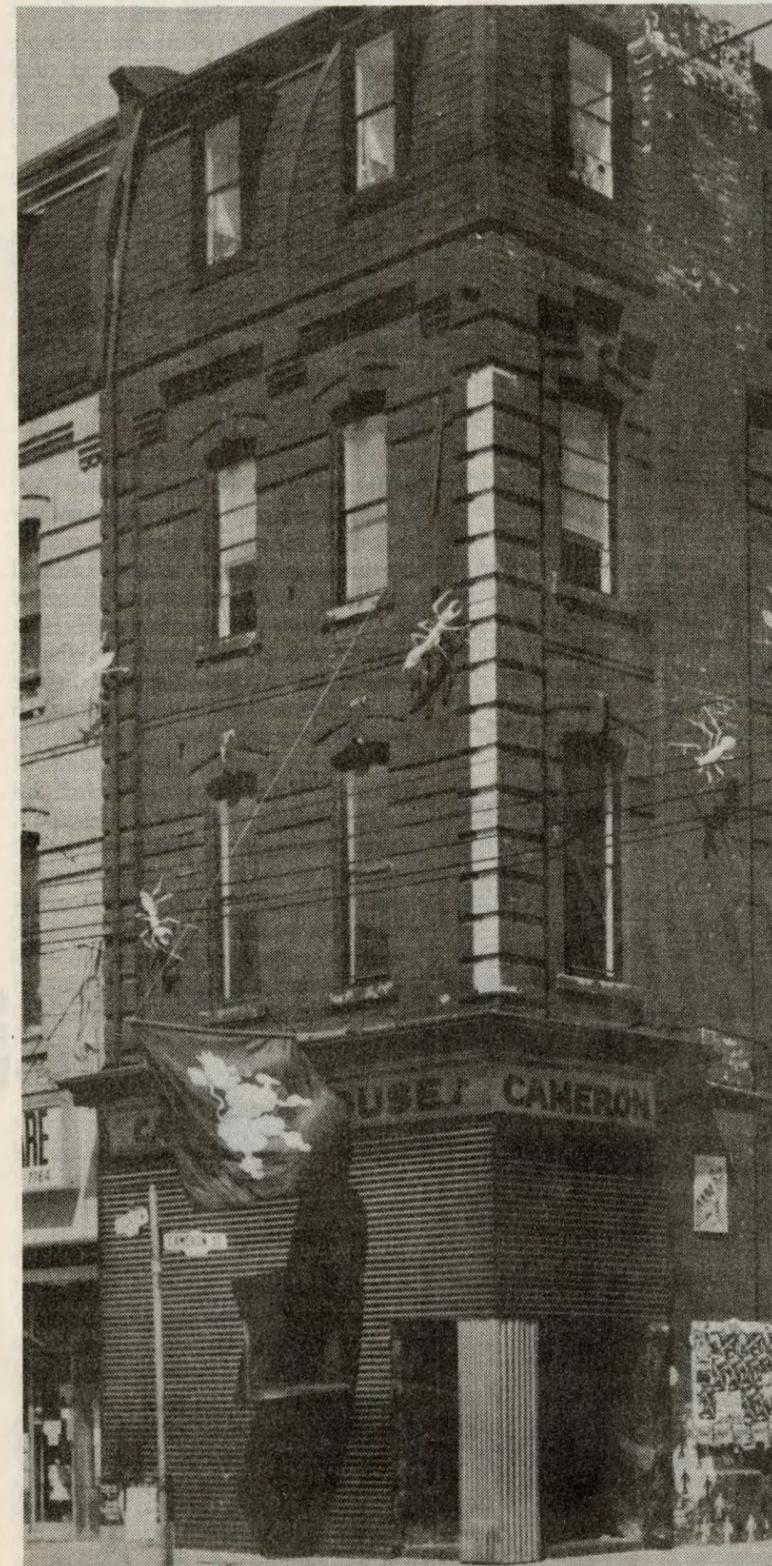
However, more threatening is the larger scale redevelopment of the area to

the south, the planned King St. West Communications Plan, which will include the new CBC Headquarters and the growing ubiquitous franchise fern-bars surrounding Roy Thomson Hall and Ed Mirvish’s Empire, between Simcoe and Peter Streets. All of these developments are directly connected to the Railway Lands, the Domed Stadium and the proposed Spadina LRT. As the focus of the city moves west, the entire area from the Lakeshore to Dundas St., and as far west as Dufferin, is in transition.

Queen St. is also going through a shift determined by the generational aspect of the community, rather than by the crass economics of the real-estate world. The present community could be loosely categorized into three generations, differing in artistic baggage, politics and priorities. The first arrived on Queen St. in the 1960s, a second group in the mid-to late 70s who are now in their 30s, and then a 3rd generation of young artists and students of the 1980s. It is always changing and shifting and is not a singular, homogenous scene; but it is aging. The generation which originated the Queen St. scene is approaching mid-age. Some have children, wages and salaries, and therefore more disposable income, and most are tired of cockroaches. The semi-public lifestyle in bars and after hours clubs has its limitations when you’re coming up to 40. Their departure as residential tenants from the neighbourhood is having an immediate effect on the daily interaction and public life on the street and the area.

The artist/musicians and their cohorts — people who have worked and lived in the area for a number of years — are quite conscious of this process. Indeed, they are hardly able to ignore it. They grumble about escalating rents, tourists, teeny-boppers and up-towners taking over their local hang-outs. There is much lamenting for the way it used to be; the authenticity and originality of which are never clearly defined. Yet there is an implicit unspoken understanding of a community and its meaning.

This is the second in a series of investigative articles. Rosemary Donegan looks at the gentrification of Queen Street West juxtaposed against the rise and fall of various arts communities in Toronto from the end of the 19th century to the 1980s.



Peter MacCallum

Cameron Hotel, 1984



Chris Reed

Shoppers on Queen St. West, 1986. The corner of Queen St. & Soho St. Wall murals by Barbara Klunder (above) and RUNT (street level)

Defining an Arts Community

The development of physical communities/neighbourhoods is part of the process of coming to terms with the confusion and complexity of urban life. People congregate around and develop their own mental maps of the city based on what are important locations for them as individuals.

In the city, one of the primary delineations of an arts community is its geography and physical location. Its location is defined by the larger urban economic framework and by real-estate values, core suburb pressures, the role of the civic government, the market factors affecting the creative-cultural service industries, and the specific age and architecture of the neighbourhood.

The production of the visual arts, especially traditional painting, sculpture, photography, is usually regarded as a private activity... the individual creative act. What is unusual about the 1970s and 1980s, specifically in the Queen St. area, is the development of co-operative spaces, workshops, audio-visual studios and performance spaces. These production, exhibition and distribution centres are more than work spaces, but are in fact points at which the community of artists can meet, exchange valuable information, make production contacts, or socialize. Both the traditional visual arts and the newer related fields of video, performance, and audio art require a public social context, within which the implica-

This idea of community exists in the local historical mythology, although it is dependent upon who you talk to, and when they arrived in the area. Factually it can be traced through primary source material archived in the artist-run centres. It is specifically these artist-run non-profit institutions (and many small business ventures) which have been forced to relocate (some twice) in the last 5 years, due to local real-estate pressures and a range of cutbacks in Federal arts funding. In trying to understand the present process underway on Queen St., it is necessary to look at the street in a broader context to get beyond the inflated media hype and the impending doom of gentrification.

First, as a geographic community in the city, it needs to be placed in an historical perspective, as it is not the first arts community in Toronto, nor will it be the last. An artist's life in general has two important geographic focuses: the public gathering point and the point of production. The former includes galleries, bars, restaurants; the latter is the place where as independent producers they work — the studio, both electronic and easel.

The first geographic focus of the Toronto arts community in the late 19th century was the Bohemia of the Adelaide/Yonge St. area, the heyday of the art clubs, societies and the private studios of Toronto the Good; in the 1920s and 1930s this continued in the studios and galleries of Grenville St. and the folksy Bohemia of the Gerrard

Village in the 1940s; to the first flings of the local beats in the 1950s; and the intensity of the 1960s in the Yonge/Bloor/Yorkville area; this eventually moves south down Spadina and Beverley St. to Queen in the 1970s with expansion continuing to the south and as far west as Dufferin in the 1980s.

Second, to examine the reality and difference between an 'arts community': which is a process and product of people, work and ideas; and an 'arts scene': which is a phenomena engendered by the media, the art market and the real-estate boom.



Peter MacCallum

Early Queen St. Types, Phoebe St. Schoolyard (behind Queen St.), 1975. L to R: Peter MacCallum, Robert Roy, Peter Blendell, Ann Whitlock, John Dennison

tions of the work... its quality, significance, economic value... are established. It is the response by the public and one's own peer group that defines one as an 'artist' or as a 'musician,' and as a member of the 'community.'

Obviously, the essential element within the 'arts community' is the producers — the visual artists, musicians, designers, and artisans. This is overlaid with the inter-related services. On the one hand, there is the intellectual and economic infrastructure of the art world: the curators, critics, dealers, magazines, and managers. On the other hand, there are the technical services: the copy shops, hardware stores, film laboratories, sound studios, the stat house, typesetters and printers. Finally there is a whole range of associated bookstores, antique shops, street pedlars, second-hand clothing stores, design shops, restaurants and bars. All of these elements together form a geographic locale identifiable as an art scene.

Another pattern contains a much more amorphous and mythological element; the community as a network of information/interests which involves a high degree of self-recognition. Artists' reputations are part of both the creation and the consequence of the local community. Internal recognition, based partly on estimations of potential in the younger artists, begins the process of establishing individual credibility — which in turn helps to recreate the ongoing reality of an 'arts community.' This element of 'potential' is part of the developed consciousness of the contemporary artist's role, as the artist's lifestyle always has the possibility of becoming part of his/her status as an artist and experimentalist.

For the established artists in the community in their thirties and forties, reputations, seeded through an early peer and self-recognition phase, are now based firmly on a large body of work made visible through exhibition, the media, by recognition extended through the peer jury system developed at Canada Council and adopted by provincial arts councils, and finally through international recognition and exhibitions.

Within this community, a series of value judgements and successes/failures, takes place both in public — in the magazines, exhibitions, performances, screenings, lectures and discussions — and in private — in the bars, at parties, at home. It is the over-lapping of this complicated infrastructure and artistic

ideological framework that defines the cultural and social power of the arts community.

To recognize the phenomena of a community or a scene externally, necessitates an ability to 'read' its signs, codes and meanings. It requires a certain amount of specific information and/or pre-conceived assumptions of who's who — what's where — and what the inter-relationships are.

Queen Street's Success

Queen Street is a centre of cultural activity due to a complex inter-relationship of economics, ideas and physical-geographic location.

The basic 19th century architecture of the two and three story store-fronts and houses maintains a consistent wall to the street. In summer the relationship between the store fronts and the trees creates a sidewalk canopy that shelters the sidewalk and defines the street. The surrounding streets are integrated into Queen, but due to the slowness of the streetcar, fast-moving traffic tends to avoid the street. This traffic passes through the area on adjacent Adelaide, Richmond and Spadina.

The scale of the streetscape from Beverley to Spadina Ave., especially the extra widening from east of Soho Street to Spadina, was part of the original plan as laid out by William Baldwin in the 1820s when he designed Spadina Ave. north from Queen St. (then known as Lot St.) to the house on the hill, Spadina. The increased width of the sidewalks gives the street a focus, which differentiates it from the norm in Toronto's grid pattern.

The commercial and residential composition of Queen St. hasn't really changed that much since the mid-19th century. It has seen a fairly cyclical pattern of working class immigrant communities, starting with the Irish, the Finns, the Jewish community on Spadina, the Black district south of Queen out to Bathurst, and the post-World War II Eastern Europeans. In the 1960s, Queen St. contained a mixture of small stores, often run by Eastern Europeans, light industrial supply shops, bars and greasy spoons.

Tavern-hotels such as the Black Bull — opened first in the 1850s — or the Cameron House — built in the mid 1890s — and the Horseshoe Tavern — known for its country and western music — were well established and had a com-



Peter MacCallum

Twist Contest, Cabana Room, Spadina Hotel, 1979

mitted, although not wealthy, clientele. It was not a slum, although the houses and stores were up to 150 years old, and the area had never attracted the 19th century wealth and grandeur of Jarvis and Sherbourne.

What attracted the artists, musicians and their cohorts to the area in the mid 1960s was that it was cheap and central. It had photography labs, typesetters, copy shops, generous studio space in loft buildings, and an accessible transit system. It had a few inexpensive bars like the Beverley, the Horseshoe, and later the Spadina Hotel, where the music policies attracted groups of young musicians fleeing Scarborough and Etobicoke. The area was close to the Ontario College of Art, and many of the students were already housed in the area. The AGO, although only a few blocks away, was not of major importance to the networking of artists in the area. One of the landmarks of the area was the Ryerson Building, a formal Gothic castle commanding the corner of John and Queen. Once the home of Ryerson Press, and later Trinity Square Video, A Space, the Immigrant Women's Skills Centre, and FUSE magazine, the building is now in the hands of CITY-TV.

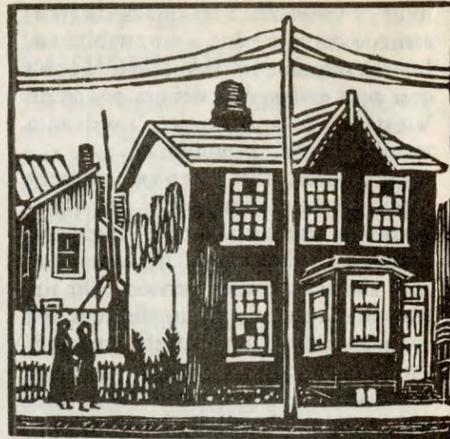
The Baldwin St. area had developed in the late 1960s, when an influx of students from OAC, young out-of-town artists from the regions and Quebec,

along with US draftdodgers and entrepreneurs converged on the street because of cheap rents. It was a shabby block with two rag merchants, several craft shops, and the Baldwin Street Photography Gallery. This small street was significant for artists in the area, as was Kensington, and the apartment studios on Spadina.

Artists and musicians were originally able to enter the area on their own terms. In the somewhat anonymous quality of the area they didn't create much of a stir. They rarely displaced former residents as they tended to occupy non-residential space. As well, apart from a few enclaves like Alexandra Park and the Niagara Housing Project, an unusual number of the local working class homes were owner occupied, which did mediate and slow the process. However, the pressure began to increase in the early 1980s and continues, especially west of Bathurst St., as bars, old shops, and restaurants are snapped up as soon as they come on the market.

The Gerrard Street Village

There are remarkable similarities between the present Queen St. area and the Gerrard St. Village, that developed in the 1930s, as geographic phenomena within the city. What came to be known



Metro Reference Library

as the Gerrard Village refers loosely to the area west of Bay St. to Chestnut St. and included LaPlante, Hayter and Elizabeth Sts. Originally part of The Ward, by the 1930s the area was very mixed, with a residue of the earlier Jewish and Italian communities and a small and culturally isolated male Chinese community, to the south on Dundas and Elizabeth Sts.²

The Gerrard St. Village was not a single community, it was rather a geographic, business and social phenomena, that involved a series of interlocking communities of visual artists, dress-makers/milliners, jewellers, potters, antique and book shops and a few specialty gift shops, which extended over a period of 40 years from the 1920s, through the Depression, World War II up to the early 1960s. Similar to Queen St., the attraction of the area was the centrality and cheapness of the rents. As late as the 1960s, the shop rents were often less than \$100/month, compared to \$300-\$400 in Yorkville. The housing stock consisted of one and two-story stucco frame houses, built anywhere between 1820 and 1850, which were in serious disrepair. The Gerrard area was not prime real-estate investment in the 1920s and 1930s.

What the area did have was a number of public social gathering points, which was unusual for 'Orange Toronto.'

(Above) Rudy Renzius Studio, Gerrard St. West, 1934. A woodcut by W.F. Godfrey

(Left) Gerrard St. West & LaPlante Ave., 1940s.



Ontario Archives

There were places like Angelo's with its Italian food, red-checked tablecloths and bottles available on the second floor, if you were discrete; or Mary John's, 'the' social centre of the Village, where multi-varnished travel posters covered the walls, known for its butter tarts, and the fact that Albert Holmes would hand-deliver meals on a tray in the neighbourhood. Everybody from the Group of Seven, Steven Leacock, Ernest Hemingway to doctors from the nearby hospitals hung out there. There were a number of blind-pigs in the area and bootleggers, like Sam, the Italian, at the corner store at LaPlante and Gerrard. The Little Denmark on Bay St. was famous for its breakfasts and cleanliness. It is the public places and popular stories which are synonymous with the Gerrard St. Village, and identified it to both the Village residents and the rest of the city.³

The Idea of Bohemia

Identifying it as 'the Village' was common. Toronto artists drew their models and ideas about being an artist from the international metropolises. Montparnasse, Soho, Bloomsbury, Greenwich Village, the East Village; these 'villages' kept alive a model and public concept of the 'artist.' Principally Parisian in origin, the nineteenth century concept of the 'Bohemian' artist originated in and is modelled on the Montparnasse of the Impressionists and their experience and interpretation of Haussmann's Paris.⁴ In the 1930s, New York's Greenwich Village would become another model, which by the 1950s had become the alter-ego and primary artistic tension for Toronto artists.

All of this has a marked similarity to the fairly recent kerfuffle with some elements of the Queen St. Business Association, which were pushing the name Soho as an identification of the specific Queen St. area where the sidewalk and street widens. Another group of local businesses and artists fought back to stop the obsequious colonial

reference to New York. Yet the irony of the situation was that there is a little street which crosses Queen St., which is called Soho Square and always has been. It was named after the London district Soho, the 19th century Bohemian hang-out.

The Scene and/or the Community

It is through the media process that the Queen St. artists and musicians have become a marketable product — a commodity. This packaging and self-conscious selling of the artists within the media is a recognition, albeit a very limited recognition, of the artist's power as a cultural and intellectual sign-post. In analyzing this process, the object is not to locate and label the artists who have sold out. The artists haven't sold out! In reality there are very few people buying. On the other hand, the artists has been sold as an idea, a lifestyle, a scene. Artists and musicians will not reap the profits from the situation; few own property in the neighbourhood. Rents are going up and good cheap places are impossible to find. It is property that is selling like hot cakes — not paintings, records, sculpture, videos or magazines.

Attempting to arrive at a definitive historical chronology of the scene or the community is difficult and somewhat premature at this time. Rather than seeing it as a chronological development of who came first or who's more authentic, it is more informative to visualize it as a Madame Blavatsky-like chart. A series of intersecting circles, composed of the various specific scenes, visual arts, music, video, theatre, magazine publishing, commercial galleries, and the media. Although each group is inter-related in the Queen St. milieu, they operate on their own terms of reference, which are defined by the larger national and international factors. (For example, the union rate for cutters in a garment factory or the amount of funds the Canada Council

dispenses from Ottawa to Toronto parallel galleries.)

A fair number of Queen's early businesses developed from the fringes of the music and art communities, begun by ex-art students and ex-actors turned dealers, musicians turned bootleggers, and staffed by video producers and out-of-work dancers. In turn, some businesses have been able to maintain a commercial interest and a personal commitment to support and make space for local artists and their issues. Events like the Women's Cultural Building Festival; the recent Anti-Apartheid Pub Crawl, the Pages Anti-Censorship case; and exhibitions like Monumenta and the New City of Sculpture, are the public 'spectacles' of this inter-relationship and arts scene.

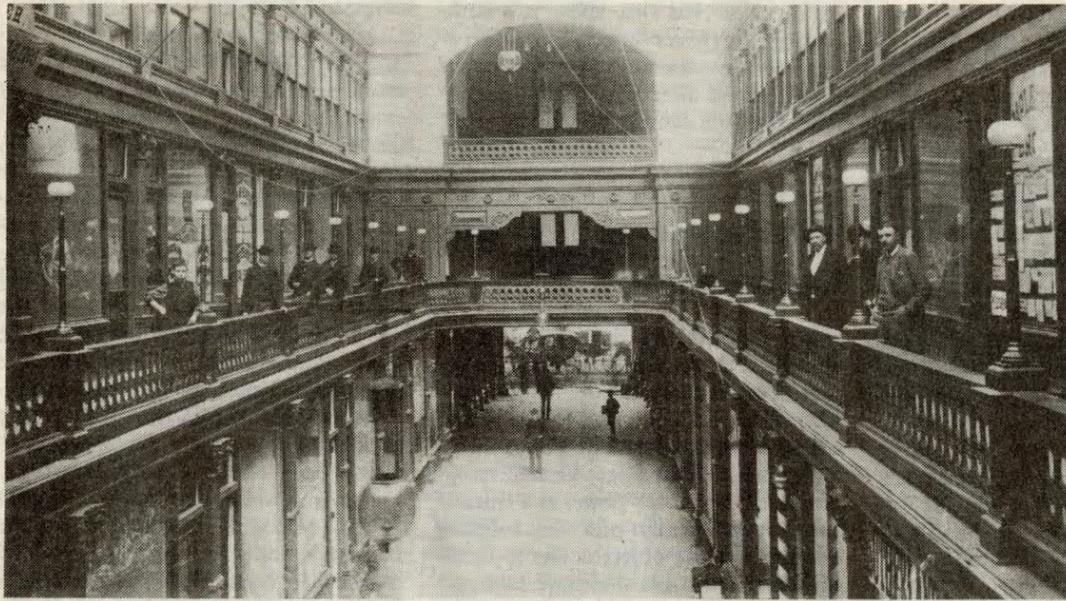
A strong identifying mark of Queen St. in the 60s and 70s was the style of the bars, restaurants and shops. The rule of thumb had been: Don't over-reno- vate, let the design evolve, maintain the historical context, add a few artistic touches. But with the coming of the 'scene,' 'chic' defined itself in over-designed stores that arrogantly deny the local context.

Some older businesses have been astute in their dealings with the arts community. They have had to solve the problem of how to cater to artists, their tastes, friends and their need for jobs, while maintaining a basic cash flow... and artists by and large have a very limited disposable income. The Cameron House for example, retains their day time clientele — the regulars ('the' authentic Queen St. types) — by serving draft at set prices before 9 p.m. and limits sales to bottles in the more chichi hours of the evening. Or the Bamboo, which will let virtually anybody have a benefit on the premises, allowing the door to go to the cause but always taking the bar profits.

The Queen St. business scene has an innate sense of opportunity. They were smart enough to be in the right place at the right time; and with a small amount of capital, some are making a fairly handsome profit for their work. ▶

"At this moment the physiognomy of the Romanische Café began to change. The 'artists' withdrew into the background, to become more and more a part of the furniture, while the bourgeois, represented by stock-exchange speculators, managers, film and theatre agents, literary-minded clerks, began to occupy the place — as a place of relaxation. For one of the most elementary and indispensable diversions of the citizen of a great metropolis, wedged, day in, day out, in the structure of his office and family amid an infinitely variegated social environment, is to plunge into another world, the more exotic the better."

Walter Benjamin
A Berlin Chronicle
1932



The Toronto Arcade, located on the east side of Yonge St. (note carriages seen through the open walkway) c. 1885, Artists studios were on the 3rd floor.

Metro Reference Library

Bohemia at Adelaide and Yonge Streets

Located east of Yonge, on Adelaide, King and Toronto Sts., were the favourite restaurants, exhibition rooms, clubs and studios of the visual artists, writers, architects and bon vivants of the Bohemian set of the 1880s and 90s. By 1885, Toronto St. and the immediate vicinity was the location of Toronto's architects, with the visual artists' studios being located on the 2nd and 3rd floors of buildings on King, Adelaide, Victoria and Toronto Sts.⁵

From its opening in 1888, the Toronto Arcade at 131-139 Yonge St. between Adelaide and Richmond, running east to Victoria St., had as tenants a number of established artists: George Reic, Sidney Strickland Tully, William Cruikshank, Mary Wrinch, Edmund Morris. The central passage was 3-1/2 storeys high with a peaked glass roof which provided natural light to the studios on the 3rd floor (a precursor to the Eaton's Centre). At street level were 24 shops, with offices on the 2nd floor, reached by an open balcony on the central passage way. The arcade with its elegant light-filled interior public walkway was a showpiece of the city.⁶

Documentary evidence indicates that artists who could afford studios often occupied the same space for 10-20 years. In the 1980s, the average length of occupation of studios is 3-5 years. Rents, at the turn of the century were in the range of \$5.00 per month for a 2nd or 3rd floor room. Although the vast majority of

names listed as artists are male, there is a continual presence of women who had their own studios (10-20%).

One of the major attractions at 39 King St. East would have been Notman & Fraser Photographers (on the present site of the King Edward Hotel). It was an important employer, having a sizeable staff of artists who touched up black and white photos, painted backgrounds for portraits and group montages, and hand-tinted coloured photographs. Both mature artists, full-fledged Society members, and young apprentices would work labouriously retouching negatives and colouring photographs.⁷ Notman & Fraser's, Grip Ltd., and art goods shops such as Art Metropole, at 131 Yonge St., Matthews & Brothers, 95 Yonge St. and Robert & Son (a direct antecedent of the present Roberts Gallery on Yonge St.) at 79 King St. West would sell artists supplies and occasionally exhibit original art work, but the number of exhibition outlets was severely limited.

The Clubs and Societies

In the late 19th century, professional recognition as an artist was defined by one's membership in art clubs and societies — where the public role of the artist was played out. From a contemporary perspective, they seem like rather odd men's clubs masquerading as formal organizations.

Most clubs/societies of the period had a strong 'Bohemian' tone to their activities and antics, and in a day-to-day manner were informal fraternal organizations. It is important to understand their role as artist-originated and self-determined organizations — which had formalized internal democratic structures based on hierarchical peer judgement. They were simultaneously middle-class in their aspirations, and tied into a professional system of recognition and rewards among their peers. There are remarkable similarities between both the art clubs of the 1890s and the parallel gallery system of the 1980s, and the juried society exhibition and the present peer jury system of the arts councils.

The only major exhibition outlets were the yearly Royal Canadian Academy (RCA) and the Ontario Society of Artists (OSA) exhibitions. Based on similar British societies, the OSA began in 1873 and held its first exhibition at Notman & Fraser's on King St. East.⁸ The RCA was officially started by the Marquis of Lorne, Governor-General and Queen Victoria's son-in-law, to foster the arts and establish a National Gallery.⁹ The annual exhibition, held in the major centres of Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa, were juried by members, and anywhere from 300-500 paintings would be hung corner-to-corner, three to four deep on a wall.

As the societies were virtually the only outlets for exhibition work, their power and their structuring role within the arts community can't be underestimated.

However, it was through locally organized art clubs that artists came together regularly to work, discuss and socialize. The clubs were the artistic and social focus for the younger artists, who could not afford a private studio and were not full-time artists.

The Toronto Art Students League was started in 1886 by a group of graphic artists who wanted to draw directly from the live model. The League held exhibitions and published a yearly calendar illustrated by its members. The first meetings were held at 56 King St. East and later rooms were obtained just to the south on Leader Lane and Wellington St. West. The League's most important function was as an informal network of artists who met monthly to submit compositions for 'friendly discussion and criticism;' afterwards the Club would spend the rest of the evening in relaxation and good cheer.

Across from the Toronto Public Library at Adelaide and Church, the Mahlstick Club appears to have been slightly more energetic and jocular in its activities. It provided drawing from the model — nude or costumed — three nights a week, with a composition class on Saturday evenings. The Saturday classes were followed by a sing-song and then an assault-at-arms with boxing, fencing, singlesticks!¹⁰ The club seemed to die a natural death around 1903 (perhaps from injuries suffered in club events?) and re-emerges in combination with members of the original Art Students League, as the Graphic Arts Club. The Graphic Arts Club had studio space on Victoria St. and subsequently in the Toronto Arcade. A somewhat similar sketch club, the Little Billie, met at 27-29 King St. West in the 'Bohemian' precincts of McConkey's Palm Room and would have their meals sent up to them.

Galleries

It was not until the 1920s that Toronto would start to develop exhibition outlets outside the societies — and not until the 1940s when private galleries would start to play a major role in the production of exhibitions.

By the late 1920s Grenville St. was the nucleus of artists' studios in the city. Running for 2 short blocks west from Yonge St. to Elizabeth St., north of College St., the street is now dominated by Women's College Hospital and various government office buildings, including the Ontario Archives.

Lucius O'Brien, the first president of the RCA, had lived in the Tudor style house at 20 College West (presently boarded up) during the 1880s-1890s. It was this house on College, with an addition on the back at 23-27 Grenville St. that became the Jenkins' Art Gallery. Jenkins' (which still stands on Grenville St.) advertised itself as "Palatial Antique and Art Galleries, specializing in old English furniture and pictures by old and modern masters." The rather sumptuous gallery space showed primarily local private collections, occasionally exhibiting more established Canadian artists, such as Homer Watson and J.W. Beatty (artists who pre-date the Group of Seven era). Malloney's Art Gallery, down the street in a converted duplex at 66 Grenville, was where individual members of the Group of Seven exhibited.

When Jenkins' closed the gallery, they opened the Jenkins' Studio Building across the street at 18-22. It is during the 1930s and 40s that the street would become known and identified with painters like Fred Varley, Yvonne McKague, Marion Long, Manly MacDonald and the sculptor Don Stewart and photographer John Steele. There was the Hayden Street or "Studio Group," artists like Barker Fairley, Aba Bayefsky, Isabelle Reid, John Hall, who rented a communal

studio space off Yonge St., south of Bloor St. from 1938-1943. There was also Douglas Duncan's Picture Loan Society on Charles St., which showed David Milne, Paraskeva Clark and most members of the Canadian Group of Painters in the 1930s and 40s. The small literary magazine *Here and Now* published out of 76 Grenville for a few years in the late 1940s. It worked with writers like Ethel Wilson, James Reaney and P.K. Page and felt it had "achieved success at great sacrifice on the part of a small group of people responsible for its production" (a familiar refrain in any alternative magazine in Canada).

There were always framing shops and craft studios in the Gerrard Village area, but it is not until the 1950s that an actual network of galleries appeared. Avrom Isaacs opened his first framing shop at 77 Hayter St. in 1950: the Greenwich Art Shop moved to 742 Bay St. in 1956 and continues today at 832 Yonge St., as the Isaacs Gallery. The gallery was and still is integrally connected with the second generation of Toronto abstractionists: Gordon Rayner, Dennis Burton, Joyce Wieland, Michael Snow and Graham Coughtry.¹¹ The Greenwich was known for its backroom jazz sessions: it was the first home of the Artists' Jazz Band, and the Contact Reading Series,



Jenkins Antique and Art Galleries, Grenville St. presently being re-developed as a condominium

Peter MacCallum

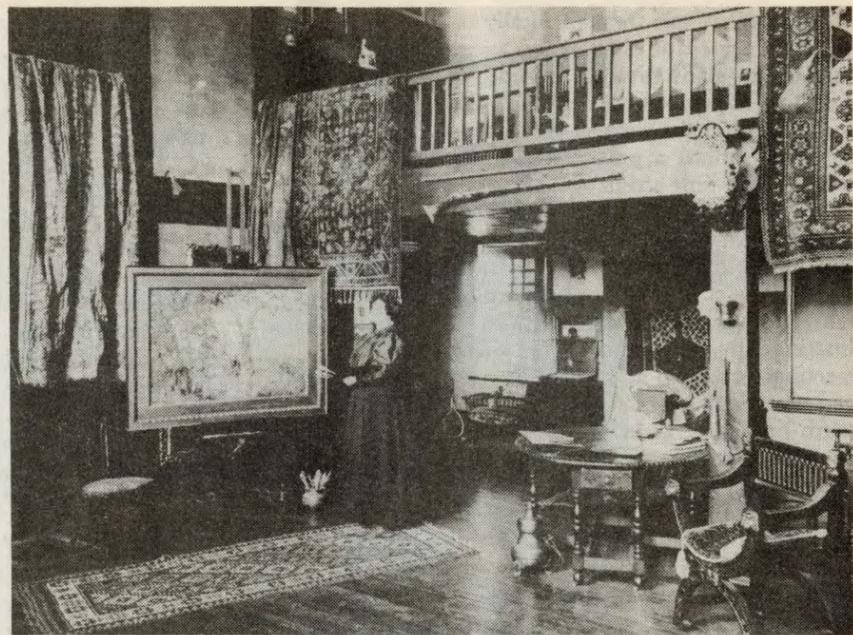
organized by Raymond Souster, a local poet.

In 1956 Barry Kerneman opened the Gallery of Contemporary Art, on Gerard, which showed the work of Allan Fleming, Kazuo Nakamura, Robert Hedrick and Tom Hodgson. Gradually the galleries moved to the Bloor/Yonge area. Dorothy Cameron opened the Here and Now gallery, an important early sculpture gallery on Yorkville and later Yonge St.; it was forced out of business by obscenity charges, not dissimilar to the recent charges against Pages Bookstore. The location was taken over by Carmen Lamana, who had previously had a framing shop in the area.

What is important and different in the development of the Queen St. gallery scene is that it was created and established by the artists. The artist-run spaces (now formally institutionalized as parallel galleries) developed in the early 1970s: A Space, Open Studio, Trinity Square Video, CEAC, Art Metropole, the Music Gallery, and later Gallery 76 (OCA funded), YYZ, Chromozone, Mercer Union, ARC. Some similarities between the non-profit artist-run spaces of the 80s and the late 19th century art societies are worth noting. They came together for reasons of exhibition space, art school experience, stylistic ideas, political groupings, production needs, and friendship.

It was with the arrival of the commercial galleries that the area took on official status as the art 'scene.' Some of these new galleries, like Ydessa's, S.L. Simpson and David Bellman, were started by dealers with private backers and family money. The second phase of this change arrived with the centralization of established galleries at 80 Spadina; a number of these had moved south from Yorkville. Arrival of these commercial galleries, increased notice from the public media, and suddenly Queen St. was a major centre of the art market, not just in Toronto, but nationally.

One of the attractions for the galleries and studios was the number of light-industrial loft buildings in the area — the scale of the interior space, high ceilings, natural light — made available for appropriation by a weak and deteriorating garment industry. Codified by New York's Soho and East Village, the present taste for large industrial scale exhibition space is partially connected to a nostalgia for a rapidly passing industrial age and an intellectual attraction to the concept of inhabiting abandoned archi-



Elizabeth McGillivray Knowles in her studio she shared with her husband Farquhar McGillivray Knowles, Toronto, 1900s.

ture (a common continental European phenomena).

The Studio

It is interesting to look at the role of the studio as an historical phenomena and more specifically as a work site. Traditionally, the studio was where the process of artistic creation took place and therefore it assumed a metaphoric significance in the iconography of the visual artist's lifestyle. This can be seen clearly in documentary photographs of the period which portray the self-conscious interaction of the artist's ideas, traditions and economic realities. Turn of the century studio photographs are not casual snapshots of the artist at work, but posed ceremonial images, encoded with all the symbols of the 'Bohemian' artist. Formal in tone, they are about bourgeois display and stage setting, which is acted out in the exotica of the Middle East and the Orient — Persian carpets, draperies and so on. From a contemporary perspective the deliberate use of these photographs as ceremonial images makes a fascinating contrast to the chaotic mayhem of 1950s abstract expressionists' studios or the cool immaculate asceticism of the formalists' or experimentalists' studios of the 80s.

Two studios from this era are still standing — the Studio Building and 'the Church.' The Studio Building at 25 Severn St., on the edge of the Rosedale Valley Ravine (immediately to the east as the Yonge St. subway emerges from the tunnel north of Bloor St.) is intertwined

with the early story of the Group of Seven, Tom Thomson and their patron Dr. MacCallum. The building was conceived on a non-profit basis with 3/13 of the original financing from Dr. MacCallum and 10/13th from Lawren S. Harris, heir to the Harris family fortune from the Massey-Harris farm implement company.

Designed by Eden Smith and opened in 1914, the simple three story loft building still sits in its park setting. The individual studios constructed under Harris' supervision, contain a large studio space, a bedroom, kitchenette and bathroom, with a high ceiling; a large expanse of windows, and a large brick fireplace. Some of the early tenants were: A.Y. Jackson and Tom Thomson, who shared a studio; Lawren Harris, J.E.H. MacDonald, J.W. Beatty, A. Heming, Marion Long, Curtis Williamson and Yulia Biriukova. Tom Thomson, who had moved into the building with a subsidy from Dr. MacCallum, later moved to a small carpenter's shack behind the building. The building was well known as a privileged site within the artists' community and much coveted as a work space.

The other studio that was to become a major social and artistic centre in the city was fondly known as 'the Church' and was the home and workplace of the sculptors Frances Loring and Florence Wyle. They met in 1910 at the Chicago Art In-

stitute, moved to Toronto in 1912-13, and worked in a studio on Church in the Adelaide/Yonge area, until they moved to the church schoolhouse at 110 Glenrose Ave. (near St. Clair and Mount Pleasant Ave.) in 1920. "The Girls," as they were known, were no doubt lovers; although they never took a public stand, their response to local gossip and innuendo was "you can't go through life worrying about what the public is going to think."¹³

The Church was the scene of many Saturday night gatherings for friends, musicians, local artists, the Group of Seven and visiting dignitaries, like Emma Goldman and Robert Flaherty, the filmmaker. While neither the Studio Building or Wychwood Park played a visible social role in the community, 'the Girl's' studio was well-known as a Bohemian milieu and centre for parties and gatherings, for artists, their friends and their children.

One of the most fascinating patterns that emerges from looking at the historical photographs and documents of the period (circa 1900 around Adelaide and Yonge St., the Gerrard Village of the 1930s and 40s, the Queen St. scene of the 1970s and 80s) is the subtle, but noticeable, shift in class identification and economics of the artist.

It is interesting to see the activities of the Art & Letters Club in this context. The Arts & Letters Club was organized over a series of meetings in 1907-08, in the Toronto Arcade. Its intention was to develop "By crossing the boundaries of the arts, to get rid of the illusion of art for the sake of artists." The club, which included writers, poets, architects, painters, musicians, academics and some laymen, was a sort of men's club which saw itself as an intellectual and frolicsome social institution.¹⁴

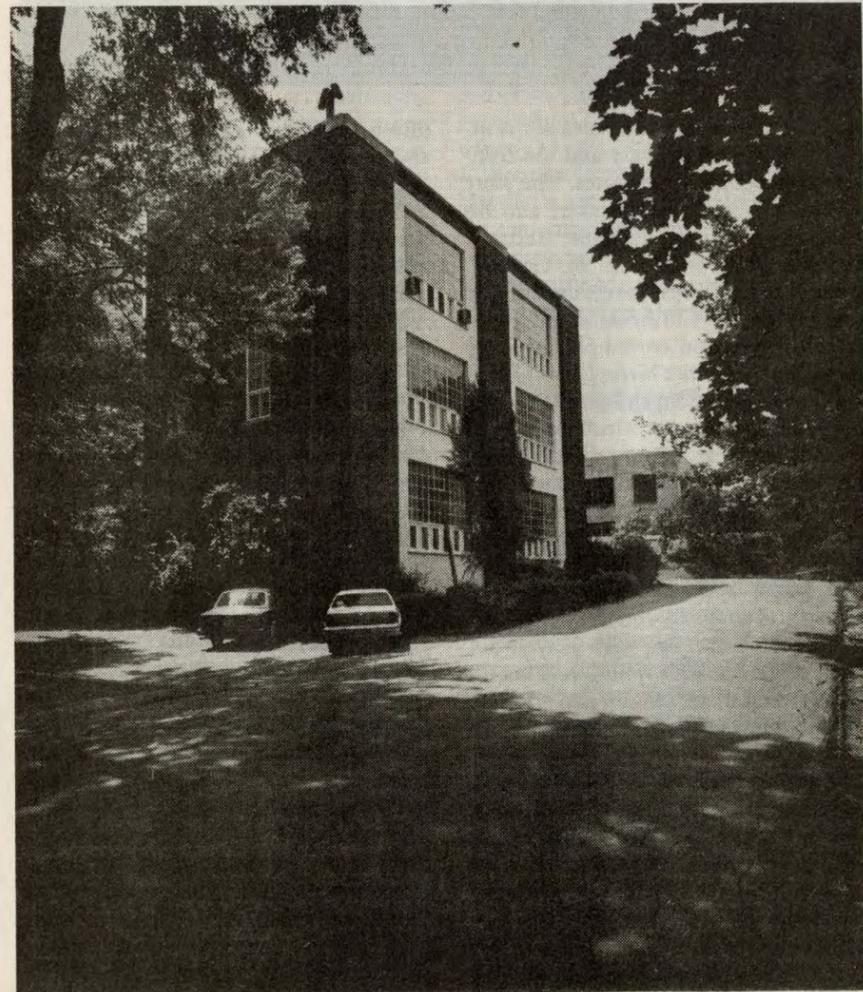
The club held monthly meetings at a variety of locations in the Yonge/Ade-

laide area: the St. Charles Restaurant, the OSA Rooms, the Brown Betty Tea-room and at the Palm Room of McConkey's on King St. West. In 1910, they moved to more permanent quarters on the upper floor of the Court House on Adelaide St. West (presently Adelaide Street Theatre). The major activities of the club were daily luncheons and a monthly dinner with guest speakers such as W.B. Yeats, Rupert Brooke, and Sir Wilfred Laurier. The most celebrated members of the club were the Group of Seven. The most famous photograph of the Group was taken at the Club at lunch. Members provided their own entertainment, either musical performances or story-telling. Such performances were customarily encouraged, as each table was supplied with 4 dozen beer, 2 bottles of Scotch and 1 bottle of Rye.

The Club moved in 1920 to its present location of St. George's Hall at 14 Elm St., a rather elaborate Dutch Gothic building off Yonge St., south of Gerard. The main hall was redesigned by Sproatt & Rolph, architects, who added Gothic windows and a huge central fireplace. The other main decorations around the hall were large fabricated heraldic crests, based on puns that played with specific members names and attributes. The continuous references to medieval ceremony and secret male societies, although very often humorous and mocking in tone, place the Club within the British tradition of men's clubs.

From its beginnings in 1908, club membership was composed of the younger generation of painters, poets and writers of the early 20th century who identified with Canada and saw it as a source of artistic inspiration. Yet, what appears to be somewhat strange for such an association is that it still shared premises with the St. George's Society and the Empire Club. The class position of organizations such as the Arts & Letters Club — they were the fuzzy edge of the middle class — was white, male and predominantly Anglo-Saxon.

Compare this to the situation of contemporary independent producers; they are obviously more economically marginal now because they attempt to live on their incomes and bursaries as artists. The average self-employed artist's per annum income is \$6,391.00.¹⁵ The economy of the artist is further strained by the fact that from 1971 to 1981, there was a 244% increase in the number of

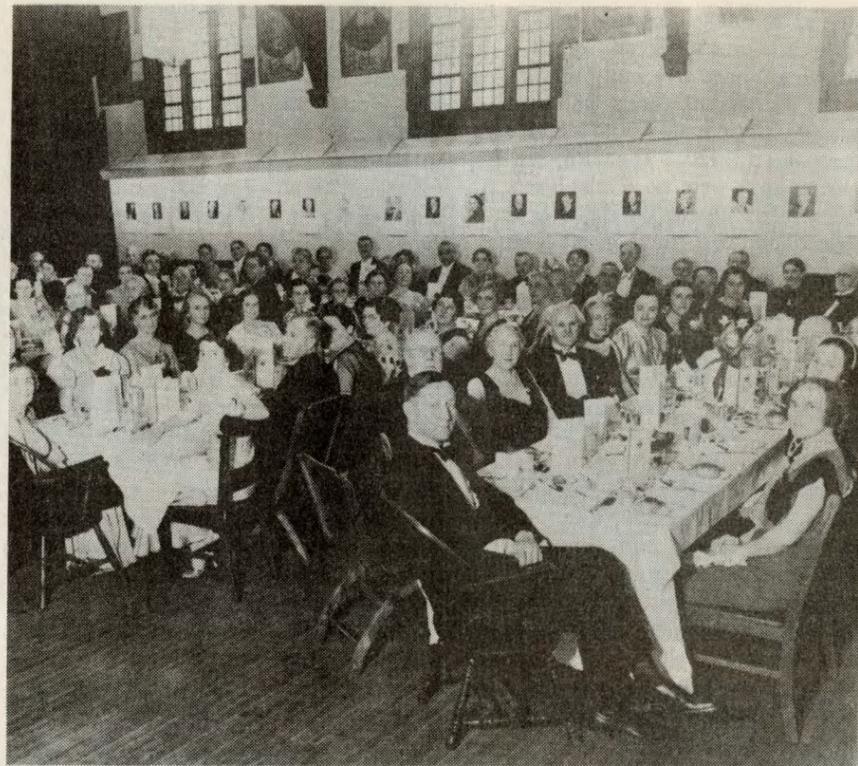


The Studio Building was designed & built as artists' live-in studios in 1913

painters, sculptors and related artists in Canada (which does not include photographers, video producers, etc.)¹⁶ It is definitely a growth labour force — not a growth economy.

The contemporary artist's class identification is therefore more paradoxical than at the turn of the century. Disdaining the middle class, the ascetic sensibility of the experimentalist of the 1980s demands a stance of social and aesthetic marginality. This ideological stance of marginality is lived out in the economic reality of most artists' lives. Yet at the same time the oppositional style is expected to push ahead at the leading edge of intellectual and creative society in direct relationship to the dominant classes and the cultural institutions.

Canadian Authors Dinner,
Arts & Letters Club, Elm
St., 1930s



Metro Reference Library

Gossip, Information and Identification

The arts community identifies itself internally from a mixture of public roles — exhibitions, magazines, dealers, jobs; and the private roles — in the bars, parties with friends and lovers. A large part of this identification process is based on what one could politely call informal information, mythology or simply gossip. This is part of the process of identification, recognition and self-consciousness that is inherent in both the 'scene' and 'the community.'

A good early example of this can be found in Harold Town's affectionate introduction to the book on Albert Franck, the Toronto back yard painter of Gerrard Village. "[They were] part of the only real Bohemia Toronto had ever known, a Village crowded with people totally unaware of eccentricity as a commodity." (One could never say this about Queen St., where eccentricity is often the status-quo.)

Albert Franck and his friends, who lived and worked in the area and shared the experience of poverty, were a generation trying to break with the tedium of Toronto the Good. The stories define and elaborate the local mythology. For example, the often told story of the loudspeaker wars between Willie Fedio

and Albert Franck gives an idea of the intensity of the community and the complexity of people's memories. The story goes that Fedio, a lampmaker, and his wife, the sculptor Pauline Redsell, shared a shop/studio at 84 Gerrard. Fedio installed loudspeakers outside the shop during the Christmas season to attract shoppers, and started playing — at full volume — either Mario Lanza Christmas carols or Russian military marching songs, depending on which version of the story you hear. Franck, directly across the street, was so upset that he installed his own loudspeakers and started playing — at full volume — Wagner, Beethoven and Bach. The battle of the loudspeakers went on for weeks and was a source of tension and embarrassment in the neighbourhood, as the two men played out their ego games. This would have been a real source of strife, tension and gossip in the community; 40 years later it is an anecdote.

There are many similar stories about Queen St.: the complicated scenario of Charlie Pachter and his real-estate empire; the dealers/curators who have never heard of 'conflict of interests;' the internecine wars and reconciliations in the various collectives; whether Isaacs and Carmen Lamanna are going to move south, etc.... If you delete the specific names it isn't very interesting as gossip, but it is actually the infrastructure of the

information that provides its meaning and significance. To a large extent, the 'scene' exists in the talk about it, as much as it does in any physical location. It is the process of identification, recognition and self-consciousness, both at a public and private level, that produces it.

The 'community' is also a construction of written and spoken language, created in private conversation, the mainstream press and the alternate media. However, it is the individual and collective work of the artists and musicians and the labour of the galleries, studios, production co-ops, magazines and collectives that are the basic infrastructure of the 'community.'

Queen Street and the Past

In asking the question — what is to become of Queen Street? — the simplest and most cynical view would be based on recent experiences of urban gentrification. The scenario is that the artists and musicians of Queen St., as marginal elements in the city, are playing out a process of urban gentrification, defined by a larger urban economy of Domes, parking lots and real-estate developers. Artists move in — due to the low rents, improve local real-estate values, then they are pressured out by the bourgeoisie

and developers who move in — redesign, renovate, restore — and make money. Meanwhile the artists and musicians are still looking for a cheap place to live.

The history of Yorkville, primarily a music scene with craftspeople, bars, restaurants and hippies, in the mid-1960s is a perfect example. By the early 1970s the street was completely rebuilt, physically and economically, and is now the carriage trade of Toronto: designers, antique shops, night clubs and upscale mass tourism.

Yet, if one looks at the historical examples pre-dating the 1960s, one sees different versions of 'village' stories. The Yonge/Adelaide arts community offers an interesting contrast as it does not fit any of the contemporary economic and planning theories about an arts community. When the artists were hanging out in the studios in the Toronto Arcade in 1900, it was 'the' centre of the city. The post office, registry office, court house and some of the most important office buildings were in the immediate area; it was not marginal.¹⁸ Canadian artists at the turn of the century were oriented to the middle classes. This is most clearly seen in the location of their studios, social clubs and exhibition halls within the larger city.

Gerrard Village, which Pierre Burton called 'the Village that Refused to Die,' although continuously threatened from the late 1940s, succumbed to the inevitable in the 1960s. The Toronto General Hospital, which owned the block bound by Gerrard, LaPlante and Elizabeth, started to evict people in 1963, in order to demolish the houses to make room for a parking lot. The tenants organized a 100,000 name petition and gained the support of the Toronto Planning Board. Jack Pollock, a local gallery owner, as President of the Gerrard Street Village Association, pledged with numerous others to sit in the streets to prevent bulldozers from demolishing the houses. Yet, in the end, they moved out fairly peacefully and the houses were demolished.

Some of the former residents went to Yorkville, which was starting to develop with coffee houses, bars and boutiques. Pollock and a few other shops moved to Mirvish Village, where Ed Mirvish was trying to artificially induce his own version of 'the Village.' Most of the young galleries had moved to the Yonge/Bloor area, near the Pilot Tavern, the Bohemian Embassy, the Riverboat....



Peter MacCallum

Gerrard St.
West &
LaPlante
Ave., 1986

All that remains of the original village is the one block of houses on the north side of Gerrard St. between Bay and LaPlante. In retrospect, the death of Gerrard Village was inevitable, due to both real-estate pressure and the movement of generations and ideas. The greatest tragedy of the Village is not that it died — because it lives on in other forms — but that it was demolished to be replaced by two monster concrete towers and parking lots — a very prosaic end for a neighbourhood and community that had been creative and productive.

Queen Street and the Future

Queen St. is a potential victim of its own success, as the larger patterns and pressures of the economy of the city increasingly impact on it. As the 'scene' becomes progressively recognized outside its real or imagined borders, the pressure mounts to turn a higher profit, and it becomes an inevitable place for investment by outside interests which have no historical or cultural commitment to the area. These investors will naturally demand the highest possible rate of return, whether from retail or real-estate investment. This in turn requires a higher profit per square foot, which leaves the food, bar and retail merchant with two potential choices: sell a much higher volume of goods while maintaining low prices, or sell fewer goods at much higher prices; the latter choice engendering the carriage trade.

There is also another economic pressure in the Queen St. area. Like a wild card, new investment money flooding into Toronto from Hong Kong is throwing the usual market forces into disarray.

In the face of both these pressures, the arts community is somewhat powerless. There are, however, two elements within the present community which give artists some power. One is the presence of the non-profit cultural institutions which they created; the other is the ability of the community to organize and act politically to affect issues of housing and urban planning.

The community is defined by its own institutions, fragile as they may be. The importance of these parallel galleries and production houses should not be underestimated. They were the essential element in creating the artists community in terms of geographical and political focus. They are integral and critical to the community as they provide access to production and distribution of art work and they are the sites for its public identity. If they were to leave, either voluntarily or through economic pressures, the entire community would fragment.

Through the cultural institutions which are artist-run, the power base already exists. Members of A Space, Trinity Square Video, YYY, The Music Gallery, Toronto Community Videotex, Art Metropole and the Independent Artists Union are involved — on an ongoing basis for most of the groups — in the development of political strategies or in real actions that have in some measure brought public and/or government attention to matters ranging from city



Ontario Archives

housing problems or provincial censorship to the economic status of the artist nationally.

The essential elements of the Queen St. community, then, are the infrastructure of artist-run spaces, the mixture of small scale commercial operations, and low-cost residential accommodations. Even if the idea of fighting for a 'locality' seems a bit odd and rather provincial, you have to decide what's important. For if artists/independent producers/musicians believe a geographic community is important, they're going to have to define what they want and make a claim for it within urban politics.

The second source of potential effectiveness is the ability of the community to act politically by developing and defining its own interests. The issue of housing for artists in this community is part of a larger economic crisis within the downtown core. That larger crisis affects all who are poor and marginal — artists, musicians, the working poor, single mothers, pensioners, ex-psychiatric patients, and immigrants. In this context, artists are among the most skilled and able, socially and politically, to organize to obtain the housing they need. The new Harbourfront studio co-op provides a potentially interesting, but perhaps limited, answer. Collective studios, similar to the art clubs of the 1900s, are

also a potential solution, and have been adopted as a strategy by video artists and filmmakers.

This raises the intricate question of what to do about the (il)legal status of loft-studios in the industrial zoned area. The City's position, so far, arising out of the need to address the larger questions of industrial policy in the downtown core, has been to avoid legalization in favour of a vague enforcement policy. However, the obvious solution, the legalization of lofts, does not offer artists or other marginal groups an answer to the crisis of affordable housing because legalization would force loft spaces into the general market; they would then be subject to the cost escalation that has affected other desirable residential space in the downtown core. Without adequate rent controls and zoning protection, it is precisely their 'illegality' that keeps lofts affordable, and it is artists who are most willing and able to put up with the precariousness created by the questionable legal status of the loft. Artists should therefore approach this question with some care.¹⁹

Queen St. has been a generative scene for a whole group of artists/musicians/performers. It has been open to new talent, occasionally rewarding and sometimes pretentiously Post-Modern. Although the Queen St. arts community is

a marginal economy — it is an outlet, as they say in the industry, a distribution point. And as the difficulty in maintaining a distribution system — a showcase to a major audience — is one of the endemic problems within Canadian culture, Queen St. should not be dismissed. The present Queen St. community, for all its recent pseudo glitz, is a focus for a culture and ideas that are locally rooted and sometimes even locally controlled. What will prevent the community from being gobbled up will be the artists and musicians community developing a more conscious and public understanding of itself, its own needs within the city and acting on them. ●

With thanks to: Jody Berland, Robert Clark, Ross Irwin and Peter MacCallum. This article is part of a larger historical research project on the history of artists' communities in Toronto. Any further historical information or ideas would be most welcomed.

Rosemary Donegan, a Canadian art historian noted for her work in cultural policy and planning, has been active in the Toronto arts community for a number of years. She was curator of the exhibition and author of the book Spadina Avenue, Douglas & MacIntyre, 1985.



Lambeth

(Above) Head-table at *The Conference on The Conference on the Arts*, Maison Dorie, 1961, Toronto

(left) The Group of Seven, lunching at the Arts & Letters Club, 1920s. Left to Right: Varley, Jackson, Harris, Barker Fairley (non-member), Johnston, Lismer, MacDonald (absent, Carmichael)

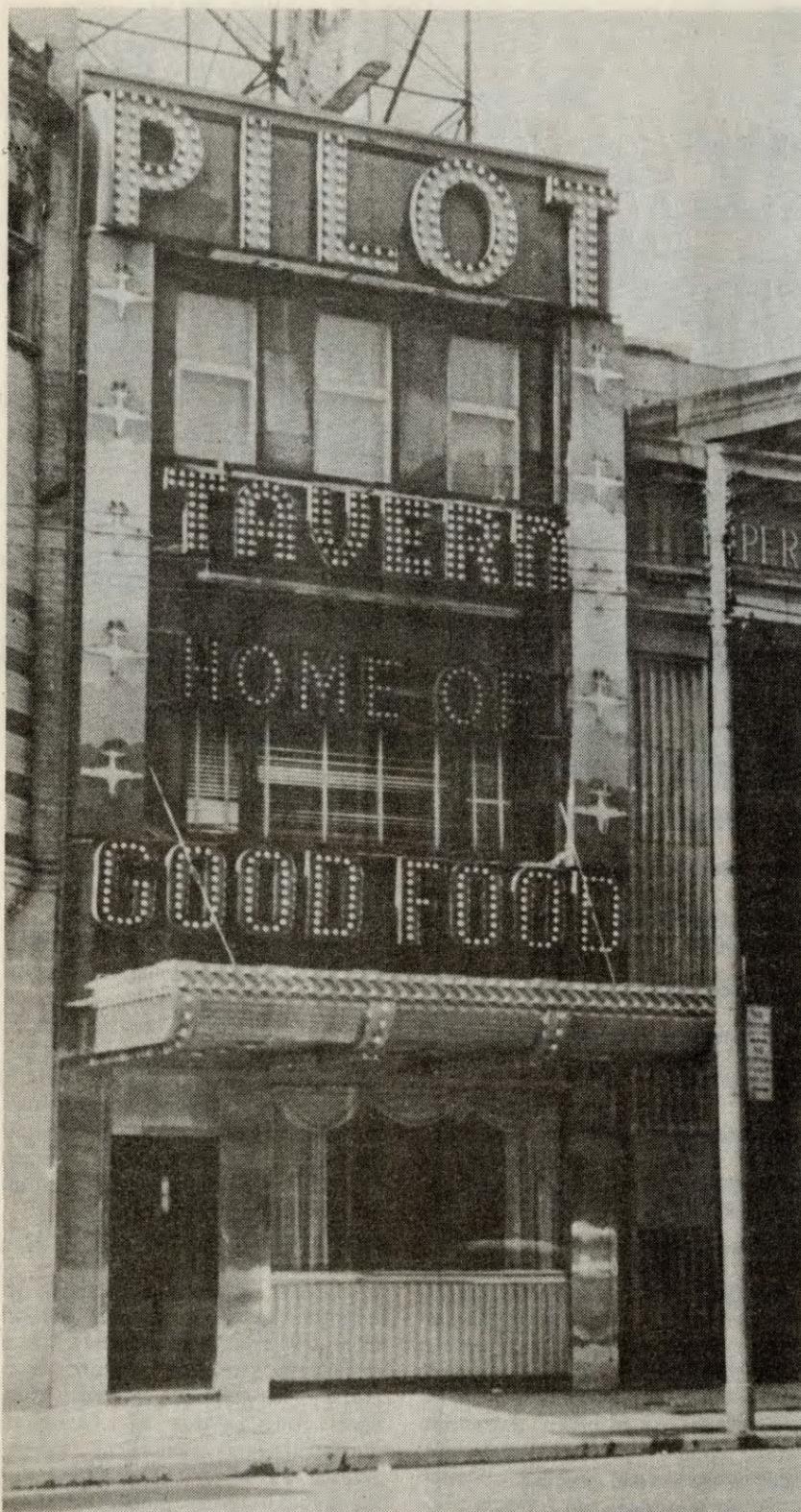
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT ALONG QUEEN ST. WEST

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>McCaul St., north of Queen, west side:
Cityhome housing development
140 assisted units, 10-12 storeys</p> | <p>Beverley & Queen St., north east corner (vacant lot)
Japanese restaurant approved (owner may seek changes)</p> |
| <p>McCaul St., north of Queen, east side:
Artist non-profit housing co-op
20 units, 12 storeys</p> | <p>Soho & Queen, north west corner (vacant lot)
Retail development connected with fashion industry
2-3 storey</p> |
| <p>John St. & Queen, south east corner:
CITY T.V.
Renovation of existing building</p> | <p>Portland & Queen St., south west corner (vacant lot)
Development unknown
Probably consisting of mixed housing and retail</p> |
| <p>John St. & Stephanie St.:
Low rise housing development
20 units</p> | |

ZONING IN QUEEN ST. WEST AREA

The area south of Queen St. from Simcoe to Dufferin is zoned for purposes. Restaurants (under 5,000 sq. ft.), banks, and other service retail outlets are permitted (plus existing non-conforming uses).

The area is presently the site of the garment industry, the film and recording industry, and increasingly the communications industry (publishing, etc.). This conforms to existing city zoning, as an industrial area, new office/commercial or residential uses are not permitted.



The Pilot Tavern, a well-known artists' hangout at Yonge & Bloor in the 1950s and 1960s.

NOTES

¹Although this article focuses exclusively on Toronto, it does not mean to imply that it is the only art community in Canada. It examines the popular notions about the art scene and the metropole and how they are represented (i.e. a Saskatoon art student would have a pre-conceived idea about Queen St. from the art press and mass media). The article attempts to provide an alternative interpretation that is not purely Toronto-centric.

²See: John E. Zuchi, "Italian Hometown Settlements and the Development of an Italian Community in Toronto, 1875-1935;" Steven A. Speisman, "St. John's Shtetl: the Ward in 1911;" Dora Nipp, "The Chinese in Toronto;" in Robert F. Harney, *Gathering Places: Peoples and Neighbourhoods of Toronto, 1834-1945*, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, Toronto, 1985.

³Based on interviews with: Avrom Isaacs, Sydney Katz, Nancy Meek Pocock, Allan Suddon, David Smith and Harold Town's *Albert Franck: Keeper of the Lanes*, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, 1974.

⁴T.J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers*, Thames & Hudson, London, 1985.

⁵Newton McTavish, *Ars Longa*, Ontario Publishing Co. Ltd., Toronto, 1938.

⁶William Dendy, *Lost Toronto*, Oxford University Press, Toronto, 1978, pp. 153-155.

⁷Ann Thomas, *Canadian Painting and Photography, 1860-1900*, McCord Museum, Montreal, 1979, pp. 26, 29.

⁸Joan Murray, *The Ontario Society of Artists: 100 Years*, Art Gallery of Ontario, 1972.

⁹See: Charles Hill, "To Build a National Gallery: The Royal Canadian Academy, 1880-1913," National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1980 (broadsheet).

¹⁰See William Colgate, *Canadian Art, Its Origin and Development*, The Ryerson Press, Toronto, 1943, Chapters 4, 5, 6.

¹¹Barrie Hale, "Out of the Park: Modernist Painting in Toronto, 1950-1980," *Provincial Essays*, vol. 2, Toronto, 1985.

¹²Christine Boyanoski, *The 1940s. A Decade of Painting in Ontario*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, 1984.

¹³Rebecca Sisler, *The Girls*, Clarke, Irwin & Co., Toronto, 1972, pp. 26, 29.

¹⁴Augustus Bridle, "How the Club Came to Be," *The Lamps*, Dec. 1919, pp. 7-14.

¹⁵Statistics Canada, 1981 Census Data in *A Canadian Dictionary and Selected Statistical Profile of Arts Employment*, Canada Council, 1984.

¹⁶See: "Growth in Experienced Arts Labour Force by Occupation," Table 13, *Profile of the Visual Arts*, Canada Council.

¹⁷Harold Town, *Albert Franck: Keeper of the Lanes*, op. cit., and interviews mentioned in note 3.

¹⁸See: Gunter Gad & Deryck Holdsworth, "Building for City, Region and Nation. Office Development in Toronto, 1834-1984," in Victor L. Russell, *Forging a Consensus: Historical Essays on Toronto*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1984, pp. 281-282.

¹⁹The overall experience of New York artists, especially in the Soho area, was that once lofts became legalized and therefore were on the open market, rents skyrocketed and the artists could no longer afford to live in the area. The former industrial tenants were also forced out, being unable to compete with Manhattan residential rent rates. See also: New York City Planning Commission, *Lofts: Balancing the Inequities*, February, 1981.

Kissing Cousins

Artists and Unions in B.C.

SARA DIAMOND

SINCE THE 1940s, LITTLE ATTEMPT has been made to link unionism and visual art in British Columbia. Folk musicians, writers and independent radio have dealt with workplace issues more consistently than other media. Even so, the pickings have been slim.

Given the strong labour tradition in the province and the large numbers employed in working class occupations in service, industry and the public sector, the discrepancy feels inappropriate. In the 1930s there was an active and heterogeneous working class cultural milieu that combined ethnic community events and institutions; a strong left-wing theatre tradition; union-hosted picnics, concerts and dances. In the 1940s, shop floor theatre groups appeared and the Labour Arts Guild, which brought together visual and performing artists sympathetic to labour, emerged. The Guild organized labour art exhibitions, film screenings and concerts, in union halls, industrial worksites and galleries.

The factors that dissipated an art based on working class institutions were both economic and political — the growth of universally available mass culture combined with the stagnation of political art forms and a period of conservatism and institutionalization of trade unions. The Cold War may have been good for abstract expressionism, but it was lousy for locally based politicized culture.

Like other parts of North America, B.C. experienced a post-war boom. Urbanization, large scale migration and immigration transformed traditional community structures. Ethnic groups such as Ukrainians and Yugoslavians had previously maintained strong left-wing cultural organizations which administered community halls, newspapers, choirs, and theatre groups. These people were integrated into an

English speaking, reactionary culture.

In the economic boom that followed the war, unions were able to stabilize their membership and establish check-off systems for dues and a trained leadership cadre. With numbers and stabi-

NEWS & VIEWS

FROM THE WEST

lity came bureaucracy. This process coincided with a right-wing backlash in the States and a play for power within the national union movement by Canadian social democrats. B.C.'s major unions became internally divided on the leadership level between the Communists and their opposition. The eventual defeat of this left in the unions led to a rejection of programs and institutions identified with their ef-



Running off Song Sheets for Post-war Labour Choir

ports, such as women's auxiliaries and cultural committees. One notable exception was a labour choir organized during the early 1950s. A separation between the union as an economic tool and electoral political parties (first the CCF, then the NDP) left little room for education, social life or politics inside the union.

In truth, the erosion of the left within the unions was more symptomatic than causal. The consciousness industries were on the rise at a time when conditions made economic well-being and integration seem viable for working people. Cultural control became centralized into the institutions of mass culture as community structures eroded. Avant-garde art became increasingly inaccessible and engaged in an alienated and internalized dialogue. The star system, begat by the market economy in the sphere of culture, made notions of artists' unions or cultural production as work process unthinkable. Yet, no system is closed: within the hegemony of bourgeois culture in the 1950s and 1960s, unionism neighbourhood based community structures and workplace consciousness continued. Formal cultural expressions did not, however, abound.

A number of factors began the slow move back to a class conscious cultural milieu in the province. The homogenizing elements of mass culture resulted in a radicalization known as the counter-culture in North America — B.C. was no exception. Working class youth who had entered the university environment or who rebelled against the tedium of the industrial or public sector workplace became politically active and interested in music, lifestyle changes and unionism.

B.C.'s labour movement was very militant in the 1970s; there was a large, active left and a nascent interest in

theatre, efforts such as *May Day Magazine*, a wave of politicized bands, the revitalization of Born-in-B.C. folk music, the Union Made programme on Vancouver Cooperative Radio. Artists working with media forms such as graphics, video, photography and film became interested in representing labour as part of the resurgent documentary tradition. Until recently, however, two elements were missing: the participation of visual artists in these projects and the active cooperation, sponsorship and commission of art by the labour movement.

The shift in economic conditions and the resulting swing to the right has begun a redefinition of trade unionism. B.C. has experienced an unprecedented level of unemployment. Unions have had to fight to stay afloat as members watch hard-earned benefits and wages disappear and plummet. Union culture has emerged as a glue that strengthens allegiances and that is an expression of the need for a strong defence beyond the workplace in the face of hard times. Productions have been developed that can be used as organizing tools, for educational purposes and to entertain in the context of resistance.

At the same time, artists have *slowly* begun to respond to the economic and political situation, making a different quality of work possible. Initially, and even during Solidarity, the art community for the most part separated itself from the anger and mobilizations against the cutbacks budget of 1983. The implications of the B.C. budget have become clearer at the same time as federal cutbacks and censorship are on the rise. Artists are frustrated: there are few jobs, art education is drastically cut and social services such as childcare, that make artistic production possible for women, disappear. Artists have organized to defend themselves through the Vancouver Artists League, which functions as a lobbying group.

The formal attempt to bring artists and unions together began with Cultural Workers Against the Budget. This organization was part of the Solidarity movement of 1983. It grouped performers, artists and technicians, as well as art students into a coalition within the larger coalition. It was responsible for addressing specific cuts to arts education on one hand, and for providing entertainment for rallies and publicity for the cause. CWAB were

responsible for rescuing a number of key Solidarity mobilizations from falling into interminable depths of speechifying and boredom.

At the same time, the Canadian Farmworkers Union was beginning to provide a model for the use of culture within the organizing process. The CFU has drawn from both traditional East Indian repertoires and from North American art forms. Their projects have varied from *Picketline* (a drama-



Unemployed Demo — 1930s

tization of a strike), to a traditional dance company, to film, to photomontage works about health and safety to video art. They have drawn on the skills of their own membership and on emerging younger artists and media producers.

In the last three years a workers theatre has begun to re-emerge in B.C. Works have included pieces by Headlines Theatre, a consistent and talented group who do send-ups of the Socreds and full-length works about affordable housing and other issues. The Carpenters Union developed their play *Talking Union*, which was performed for numerous union locals. More recently, *The Midnight Operator* opened featuring striking B.C. Tel operators from the 1919 Vancouver General Strike. Soon to open is *Opening Doors*, a work adapted from an oral history of working class East Vancouver. These plays raise an interesting issue. Some are written by union activists who consulted with professionals, while others are written by "fellow travellers" of the union movement.

Labour art events have coalesced around the Vancouver Centennial. An official labour committee was established which included historians, artists and union leaders. It organized a series of projects, some oriented to labour art, others to labour history. These included a walking tour of the downtown east side from a labour perspective, a series of historical and current post cards, a labour calendar featuring 100 years of labour history through old labour photographs and text; inserts for labour papers, a massive picnic and a series of six labour issue posters by Vancouver visual artists.

As a follow up to these latter events, the labour centennial committee will be banking any revenue generated and recycling it through the community in a series of juried grants to labour art and history projects.

As part of its Centennial celebrations, the Vancouver Artists League gave money towards the development of a labour arts slide show for use in educational contexts. Labour film series and video events have begun to occur through the Capilano College Labour Studies Programme. Interest has extended beyond documentary forms recently, as an organized context has evolved for visual artists and as a body of initial work has developed. "Experimentation" has become more possible.

Despite the progress, a formal committee of artists who would liaise with organized labour does not exist yet in B.C. Such a body could begin a series of discussions within the art community and sympathetic labour organizations. A series of questions remain to be answered: what place is there for non-instrumental (in the immediate sense) art versus art for organizing? How do artists (writers, singers, filmmakers...) relate to unions and produce for their memberships without their work being defined by the perceptions of the union leadership? How can artists avoid a stagnation of their forms (into traditional documentary and enforced realism) and still make their pieces communicate? Should artists unionize? These are not new questions, but the answers to these, both historically and in the current context will be critical in forming a renewed labour arts movement.

Sara Diamond

FALL/86

VIDEO



Rodney Werden



Shalhevet Goldhar

1986 THE NEW WORK SHOW

TORONTO

SEPTEMBER 22 - 25

MONEY TALKS, BULLSHIT WALKS RODNEY WERDEN

"Money talks, bullshit walks" is a quote from a prostitute I picked up off Church Street in the winter of 1985. During this time, I picked up and interviewed nine hookers. The tape is an assemblage of this information. **60 minutes 1986**

MYTH OF THE FISHES RHONDA ABRAMS

A woman's first experience of fishing is expressed in an Opera style. When finally given the chance to go fishing, a woman must face the sad reality of cleaning a fish. The two expert fishers in the boat scoff at her. She is horrified because she believes the fish is still alive as she guts it. When she dips it into the lake to rinse it, it swims away. A True Story. **8 minutes 1985**

CURIOSITY YVONNE DIGNARD

An experimental videotape combining black and white film and colour video. A short fiction exploring aspects of voyeurism from the camera's point of view as well as from the activities of the protagonist. **20 minutes 1986**

ENCOUNTER — THROUGH GLASS RIC AMIS

An encounter at a zoo between people and gorillas. The video blurs the relationship between the observer and the observed; the bias that people place upon an animal that has such human characteristics; the institutionalization of animals for our cultivation and illumination. **2:50 minutes 1984**

BLEACHABLES SHALHEVET GOLDHAR

The tape is comprised of three acts about love — with no devotion — at different stages. It flirts with the notion that women's liberation is dead while Prince Charming is alive and well. **40 minutes 1986**

FALL/86

PORTRAITS OF P.J. JOHN BOWMAN

Toronto artist Pat Murphy departs from the classical idea of the portrait in his abstract combinations of bright colours, shapes, and words. In conversation, he describes how the work developed over four years, culminating in an exhibition and new directions for the future. **10 minutes 1986**

A PLACE TO CALL MY OWN DENNIS DAY

A tape about displacement. A woman, vacationing somewhere in the south, sends a postcard to a close friend in a northern city. As the text of the postcard is recited in a voice-over, the two women are portrayed through the stylized landscapes which shape their loneliness and longing. A tired, "beautiful" piece about a similar world. **9 minutes 1985**

ABSENCE SU RYNARD

Absence: a fragmented narrative, dislocated from normal perceptions of time. Desire: the viewer seeks explanation/completion/comprehension. Expectation: a young woman searches within a void created by her own self-abnegation. **5 minutes 1985**

UP TO SCRATCH CRAIG CONDY-BERGGOLD / CLIVE ROBERTSON

"Here in the North got the Blue machine / Flies across the country on a banker's scheme / Like dogs from a kennel, money set 'em loose / People went on strike. They faked a truce." Based on a bus ride across Canada, both soundtrack and visuals are content collages that celebrate the work of oppositional community cultural groups: womensbands, black poets, community radio against a backdrop of unemployment. **5:30 minutes 1985/86**

FUSE

27

Christa Schadt



QUARTER MOON
DAVID ASKEVOLD

Two excerpts from the five part work, taped in Halifax and surrounding areas. In a barnyard, a local musician plays a violin, with a horse, a dog, and a sheep as audience. A classical composer learns to sing the song "Honkey Tonkin" at a kitchen table. **11 minutes 1986**

NO VOICE OVER
COLIN CAMPBELL

Focussing on the close bond between three women artists and the correspondence that occurs between them via audio and video tape as they travel to Italy, Brazil and Texas, the tape details a series of visions or second-sight experiences that one woman has about the other. These events are disturbing and seem to contain some ominous portent, which remains unclear until the end, when it is revealed that the visions are in fact premonitions. **27 minutes 1986**

SOUTH AFRICA IS NOT FAR AWAY
MICHAEL CONNOLLY / MALCOLM HARRIS

Shot in Toronto on the weekend of a mass demonstration against South African apartheid (June 1, 1986), this documentary examines the views of blacks in Canada. On-the-street interviews focus on their relationship to black South Africans, the involvement of Canada in supporting apartheid, and what Canadians must do to put a stop to it. **27:20 minutes 1986**

SEE EVIL
LISA STEELE / KIM TOMCZAK

See Evil was produced in the summer of '85 to address the current situation of state censorship in Ontario. The tape focusses on individuals who have all had direct experience with censorship. The tape also employs a brief narrative from the perspective of two policemen discussing resistance by anti-censorship people. **26 minutes 1985**

A BIRD FLEW IN MY WINDOW, I HAD TO DO SOMETHING
STEEV MORGAN

"To exorcise the omen of a bird flying into my bedroom, I stole its soul and then released it slowly." The tape relives a moment over and over as in memory (distorted and exaggerated). There are few recognizable images even though everything comes from the event and subsequent verbal recollections. **5:16 minutes 1985**

BREATH
MARGARET DRAGU

In a nutshell, it is the pursuit of the diaphragm, the execution of diagonals thus forming an 'X' going from a textured inner focus to a textured outer surface, forming a spiral. It employs flesh, fur, and silk. A Western Front Video Production. **15 minutes 1986**

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE U.S.S.R.
GEOFFREY SHEA

This subjective documentary shot during two months' travel in the U.S.S.R. presents several facets of life in the U.S.S.R.: including the joys of family, work, art, and relaxation as well as the standard Western obsession with repression and fetishization of the state. **29 minutes 1984**

Ruth Bishop/Marusia Bociurkiw/Harriet Hume



HENRY KISSINGER WON THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE
GARY KIBBINS

The complex, symbolic dimension of human feces — the symbolic relationship people have towards their bodies. The ambiguous and contradictory attitude towards shit is openly portrayed — exoticness and banality, moroseness and humour, loathing and fascination, aggressiveness and acceptance, and so on. The inability to confront the body with honesty is related to an inability to confront larger, more seemingly pressing social topics with honesty. **12 minutes 1986**

ONE MAN'S ILLUSION IS ANOTHER MAN'S TRUTH
CHRISTA SCHADT

A collage of images that creates a feeling of movement and an impression of learning — something like watching a film in geography class. The tape has an open feeling, taking the viewer up in the air, under water, out to space — everywhere. An impressionistic combination of out-takes from public domain films and original footage. **14 minutes 1985**

HISTORY
RANDY & BERENICCI

Telephoto live footage of a video performance. From the 31st floor of a Vancouver office tower, a classical string quartet accompanies our intrepid travellers as they traverse the city far below to an unknown collective destiny. A Luminous Sites Performance. **10 minutes 1986**

JERUNGDU
MICHAEL BALSER

An examination of sex roles in popular media and primitive culture incorporating a second level of information in the form of a 'science program' about black holes and the origin of the universe. "Is this science or fiction?" Belief systems are juggled, sex role stereotyping is pulled apart. The Beaver experiences homosexual panic while his mother solves domestic problems and a science lecture becomes a metaphor for modern relationships. **14 minutes 1986**

CONUNDRUM
LANA DANIELSON / NANCY REID

Based on an artist who has a block and goes about trying to find release. Frustration — no inspiration. **5:30 minutes 1986**

HYGIENE
ANDREW PATERSON / JORGE LOZANO

Melodramatic fiction interrupted by dispatches from an 'objective' world outside of the principal characters. This tape is visualized in terms of both prime-time soap operas and the Sirkian/Fassbinderian melodrama; witness the beach, the fireplace, the shower, the lover's photograph and the candles. But the melodramatic formula is deconstructed by the juxtaposition of the heroine and provocative external information — the women reading Adrienne Rich on the beach. **42 minutes 1985**

Tanya Mars



NO SMALL CHANGE:
THE STORY OF THE EATON'S STRIKE
RUTH BISHOP / MARUSIA BOCIURKIW / HARRIET HUME

For the first time in their lives, 1,500 Eaton's workers — women — walked off the job. The women describe what it was like to be on the picket line, the difficulties dealing with a male dominated labour hierarchy, and the frustration they felt as negotiations started and the 'Boycott Eatons' campaign failed to take effect. **54 minutes 1985**

JAIN WALKS THE LINE
YAEL BARBOUR

We place value, monetary or otherwise, on specific behaviour, politics or institutions. How do we come to these points of value? This tape does not clarify or instruct but rather whimsically presents the dilemma of having to draw the line — "I'll do this, but I won't do that." Jain performs a barter with her father, getting him to do a specific act for a certain amount of money. **5 minutes 1986**

2 SPEAK
ROBIN LEN

A description of the play *The Supermale* 'superloosely' adapted from Alfred Jarry's novel. This videotape develops an interpretation of a theatrical vocabulary by evoking sensations and impressions of the event. Texture, movement, and atmosphere are emphasized while plot and character definition are obscured in order to reveal the nature of the event rather than the annotation of its occurrence. **16:30 minutes 1986**

CADENCE OF INSANITY (A REACTION) PART II
PAULETTE PHILLIPS

A modern tragedy, a feminist reaction to the Promethean dilemma of living in a technological society. The piece is delivered in a narrative structure which entertains deeper notions of self-determination, desire, fractionalization and the incongruity between one's self and one's environment. The narrative is told in the third person once removed, like a cousin or a stain. Recorded at Harbourfront, March 1986. **25 minutes 1986**

THAT OTHER ANIMAL
AMANDA HALE / DONNA GOLAN

A Middle-Eastern expert returns to her apartment (represented by the rib-cage of her own body) after a successful lecture. She is agoraphobic, and the struggle to retain her emotional equilibrium takes her on a journey towards self-realization. The stream of consciousness exploration reveals a collage of personal and political experience. Fragments of her lecture on Arab women blend with fantasies. **17 minutes 1986**

THE LADY KILLER
ELIZABETH SCHRODER

This tape plays off the conventions of 'film noir' by placing them in a new feminist context. It examines a character who is obsessed with film noir — the style, the look, the roles, and the finite conclusion of such films. She is manipulated by what she sees and is destroyed by her desire to be 'that kind of woman' as represented by the genre and/or her own desire to play the role; to make her life a movie and herself a movie star. **11 minutes 1985**

Richard Fung



MARIE ANTOINETTE
BYRON AYANOGLU

Marie Antoinette is a satire, the first part of a triptych entitled *Power*. Each part of the work satirizes people in power in an attempt to demystify; to poke fun; to condemn; to judge. These are the people who have the power of life and death over entire populations. And they just as readily opt for death when life would have been sufficient. To judge them, we felt, was not only our duty, but our pleasure. **10 minutes 1985**

LOST ART: A CARGO CULT ROMANCE
VERA FRENKEL

The worship of specialists has strange consequences, leading to cult practices. Creation of an image from unrelated parts is the event in *Lost Art* that opens up the hidden workings of the millennial fantasy. The tape reveals the curious and contagious desire for us to betray our senses and believe in norms (from rules of representation to false messiahs) that are out of whack. **28 minutes 1986**

YOU TASTE AMERICAN
JOHN GREYSON

Michel Foucault and Tennessee Williams have an affair in Orillia, Ontario, and get caught up in the washroom arrests of 1983. This fictional mixed-media performance work (adapted for video) uses humour, pop music, and 100 rolls of toilet paper to document this case of police surveillance which destroyed the lives of the new caught. **25 minutes 1986**

ISLAND TO ISLAND
VIDEOCABARET

In the past 18 months, theatre artists from Toronto (mainly the Toronto Islands) and Trinidad have collaborated to design and produce two Mas' (querade) Bands for CARABANA 85/86 and to build epic pieces for Trinidad's CARNIVAL 86. This tape is a preliminary edit of the documentation of *Island to Island*, the Shadowland/Bamboo/Videocab presentation for CARABANA. **10 minutes (excerpt) 1986**

PURE VIRTUE
TANYA MARS

Pure Virtue investigates the broad topic of women and power. By conflating the historical images of Queen Elizabeth I with those of popular culture, it illustrates how the relationship of women to power has not significantly changed since the 16th century. An aging Queen Elizabeth I talks to you about such things as virginity, love, and deception. **15 minutes 1985**

"I AM AN ARTIST, MY NAME IS..."
ELIZABETH MACKENZIE / JUDITH SCHWARZ

102 women artists make an affirmative statement about themselves as artists. Each speaker begins with the statement, "I am an artist. My name is..." Each section was shot in 'real time'. Each artist was given as much time as she required, and none of the statements was edited afterwards. Upon completion of her statement, each artist was asked to return the camera's gaze in an affirmation of her statement. **220 minutes 1986**

Derek Graham



**I DIDN'T KNOW IT HAD A NAME /
ESTO NO TIENE NOMBRE**
PHYLLIS WAUGH

In one of the earliest cases of sexual harassment in the workplace to be taken up by the Ontario Human Rights Commission, six Spanish speaking women, workers at a Commodore Plant in Toronto, won a decision against their foreman, who had a history of sexual harassment. The tape provides a detailed outline of the procedures for filing a complaint with the Commission and includes a discussion by a group of Spanish speaking women analyzing why it is often difficult for women to identify sexual harassment and to take action against it. **35 minutes 1986**

CHINESE CAFES IN RURAL SASKATCHEWAN
TONY CHAN

A documentary which unlocks the doors of Chinese cafes in small town and rural Saskatchewan. A look at the people behind their businesses that attempts to broaden our understanding of race relations in North America and our knowledge of rural people. **26 minutes 1985**

SNAKES IN THE GRASS
BARRY NICHOLS / GREG WOODBURY

A subjective exploration of the root of sexual guilt, using the vehicle of childhood memories. Four discrete events, centering around the same character, are interwoven to evoke a feeling that authority is somehow opposing the character's attempt to release his sexual guilt. **9 minutes 1986**

THE WELLAND CANAL
JOHN WATT

The latest in the series *Industrial Track*, this tape utilizes split-screen and split audio techniques to follow the three-way communication between a ship passing through the Welland Canal, Lock Control, and the St. Lawrence Seaway Control Centre. **25 minutes 1985**

CHINESE CHARACTERS
RICHARD FUNG

Chinese Characters examines the ambiguous relationship between gay Asian men and white gay porn. Through fantasy voice-overs, staged interviews and humorous re-enactments of scenes from Joe Gage porn classics, the tape forces viewers to question their own narrow definition of what constitutes gay desire. **21 minutes 1986**

LOVE ROLLER COASTER
CHRIS MARTIN

The image of leisure is used as a metaphor for the fiction of pleasure and the simulation of emotion. Using the format of a typical advertisement for an amusement park, the question is asked: "Is our desire for levity, liberation and love superficial in the face of the entertainment industry?" **7 minutes 1986**

Tess Payne



SCHOOL OF THOUGHT
CHRISTIAN MORRISON

This tape deals with an historical adaptation and projection of the issues of knowledge and representation as depicted in the texts dealing with appearance and the stranded soul of a dead youth. The tape is preoccupied with its own unhappiness and serves to elaborate upon a de-politicized consciousness of sexuality and faith. **16 minutes 1986**

BON VOYAGE MY LOVE
(THE SUMPTUOUS MONTAGE OF AN IGNORANCE)
DAVID MACLEAN

Within the structure of a 'one night stand' is a tale of love found and love lost. Through the use of role playing and fantasy, a gay writer struggles to create within a hetero-sexist, hierarchical, image system, while trying not to lose his individual sensibility in the process. **21 minutes 1985**

WATER STUDY
DEREK GRAHAM

Using the surface of water as a lens and motion as a model, this tape reproduces the sensation of floating. An occasional figure is distorted by the optical quality of water and sunlight, creating images both tranquil and sensual. **6 minutes 1986**

THE FLOW OF APPEARANCES
TESS PAYNE

A narrative fiction that emphasizes that we live in a connotative culture. The characters have been affected by the language of various media — T.V., magazines, movies, and advertisements. This is shown by images which are revealed as metaphors and motifs. **14 minutes 1986**

SHUT THE FUCK UP
GENERAL IDEA

The tape uses excerpts from a *Batman* episode, with the Joker character and an excerpt from the film *Monda Cane* to explore the relationship of the mass media to the artist. It points out how media nourishes gossip and spectacle to make artists novel or freakish. Fast paced and very humorous. Commissioned by Talking Back to the Media Festival (Holland). **14 minutes 1985**

THE 1986 NEW WORK SHOW is produced by the participating artists.

For videotape distribution information contact:

V/TAPE
489 College St., 5th Floor, Toronto M6G 1A5, Canada.
Telephone (416) 925-1961

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REFUSING TO REFUSE

**The
PLEASURES
Of
THE BODY**

by Gary Kinsman & Rob Champagne

Sexuality and Its Discontents
Meanings, Myths and Modern
Sexualities

Jeffrey Weeks, London: RKP, 1985

PUBLIC SEX. S/M. INTERGENERATIONAL SEX. PORN. THESE are some of the hot issues addressed in Jeffrey Weeks' broad ranging and insightful new book, *Sexuality and Its Discontents*. More than ever before sexuality is in crisis; sex and sexuality is being talked about, debated, struggled over, praised, decried, exhorted, denied, bought and sold. Sex is the subject and object of diverse discourses and practices centred on the search for the "true" meaning of sexuality. It seems at times that if we could only discover the truth of our sexuality, we could tame, harness, control, liberate or free our sexuality. Or could we?

The current crisis manifested in the lack of consensus on appropriate and moral sexualities has emerged out of shifts in gender and sexual relations, the commercialization of sex and the emergence of contemporary feminism and gay liberation. Rooted in the current battlefields of sexuality, Weeks interrogates the roots and development of the various sexual discourses in this 'history of the present,' examining "the historical, theoretical and political forces that have created the framework of this crisis of sexual meaning." He traces the complex interactions of sexual theories and sexual practices, making a history that is politically useful for the furthering of the aims of radical sexual movements.

REFUSING TO REFUSE

The moral conservative and New Right response to this sexual "crisis" is all too clear with their calls for the restoration of a sexual regime based on notions of a "golden age" of heterosexuality and patriarchal family life. They call for the retrenchment of 'traditional' familial ideology and attempt to close the recently opened closets on "unnatural" forms of sexual expression. On the other side, socialist, left and progressive movements, including much of the feminist and gay movements, have been unable to respond adequately to this sexual crisis — unable to develop our own alternative vision of sexual relations that responds to people's needs, hopes and desires. *Sexuality and Its Discontents* is an attempt to develop new solutions and visions for progressive sexual and social change.

Jeffrey Weeks is one of the finest theorists that the gay men's movement has produced. His passion and commitment has been inspired by his involvement in London, England's Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Left Collective. These involvements led him to embark on a project of exploring the foundations of contemporary sexual politics. This has led to three books: *Coming Out*, on gay politics in England from the 19th century to the present; *Sex, Politics and Society*, on the regulation of sexuality in England since 1800; and now *Sexuality and Its Discontents*.

Week's work has been held together by a commitment to gay liberation, progressive social politics, social and sexual democracy, and the 'social construction of sexuality' approach of which he has been one of the leading exponents. This social constructionist approach rejects the naturalist assumptions which pervade the sexual traditions we have inherited — those approaches that presume an inner natural or biological essence that determines the nature and truth of our sexuality. Instead, social relations are seen as crucial in defining sexual meanings, definitions, identities and cultures. In *Sexuality and Its Discontents*, Weeks extends and develops this approach exploring how historically situated definitions and categories of sexuality have contributed to the making of the historical present. One of his key arguments is that the current crisis of sex stems from relying on theories of sex-

uality as 'natural.' Challenging sexual essentialism for failing to examine the complex social and historical forces organizing our experiences and identities, he argues that it narrows the ways we can think and live our sexualities. It substitutes an unjustified picture of a unified sexual nature for the complex realities of sexual identities, pleasures and choices.

Critique of Sexual Science

SEXUALITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS is an important contribution to the development of progressive sexual politics, providing a critique of the main discourses of sexuality in western capitalist and patriarchal societies ranging from sexology, anthropology, psychoanalysis through to sociobiology. Weeks surveys the work of Havelock Ellis, Krafft Ebing, Freud, Kinsey, and Masters and Johnson. Weeks challenges the neutrality and objective status of the sexual sciences by pointing out that the sexological profession that emerged in the 19th century, classifying and categorizing sexual deviations and perversions, while at the same time constructing sexual norms, played a crucial role in establishing sexuality as the 'truth' of our beings. Professions and disciplines such as sexology are not outside the power relations in society but are an integral part of organizing the social norm of heterosexuality and at the same time labelling homosexuality and lesbianism as deviant.

While he is critical of the dominant traditions of sexology he does not see sexology as a unified discipline. He sees the role of sexology in the organization of sexuality as a contradictory one, at one and the same time both limiting and enabling. On the one hand, the sexologist's authority and privileged claims to truth have led to an erroneous search for a natural basis for sexuality, which, in turn, has led to the privileging of heterosexuality and the stigmatization of other sexualities. Yet, this process of naturalization is itself contradictory. Sexology creates definitions but these can be lived in different ways. In naming the deviant sexualities, the sexological tradition also provided part of the basis for the emergence of a politics of sexual identity on the part of the stigmatized. For instance, some of those of us who would come to be labelled and to call ourselves homosexual or lesbian have made very active use of sexological categories, transforming them in a more progressive direction so that we could begin to name our differences and experiences through them. We perverts now have a name. Since the last century there has been a battle involving many different social groups, including sexologists as well as lesbians and gays ourselves, over the meanings of homosexuality and lesbianism.

The Challenge to Sexual Tradition

WEEKS DEMARCATES THREE main positions that have made up the sexual traditions of the Christian west: absolutism, liberalism, and libertarianism. The absolutist position is the conviction that there is a single clear cut morality — usually marriage and heterosexuality — which must guide personal, sexual and social life. This morality is to be enforced through state legislation. This position is today most clearly expressed by the forces of moral conservatism such as the fundamentalist trends in the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches and particularly by the New Right.

Weeks views the liberal tradition as one organized around notions of competing sexual "rights" and often through distinctions between public

and private activities — the duty in this case being for the law to preserve public order. This liberal perspective lay behind the 1969 criminal code reforms in Canada which decriminalized homosexual acts occurring in "private" between two consenting adults. All homosexual acts in "public" and involving those under 21 remain illegal. While this liberal perspective may open up some space for a more 'permissive' atmosphere this was not a strategy for liberation but a different strategy for sexual rule.

The libertarian approach, popular in some gay liberation circles, argues for the liberation of our 'natural' but repressed sexuality which it accepts as the truth of our beings. This celebration of sex can easily become the glorification of all existing manifestations of desire thereby obscuring how relations of oppression continue to imprison our sexual lives. This can in the end reduce sexual liberation simply to individual self-expression and doing-your-own-thing.

All of these traditions have been challenged and undermined by social changes and recent developments in sexual politics for relying in different ways on naturalist notions of a sexual essence. According to Weeks, the emergence of the radical sexual movements, under which he includes "sex-positive" feminists, lesbian and gay liberationists, and lesbian and gay S/M cultures, has challenged the dominant sexual traditions, opening up new agendas and debates. Building on the progressive elements within the sexological tradition, radical sexual movements have demanded the right to our sexualities, affirming our sexual communities and identities. Paradoxically, the demand for the acceptance and legitimacy of the sexual "deviations" has begun to undermine the naturalist traditions pervading social thought about sex. These demands have made us aware that

sexual identities are historically and socially made. Recognizing the self-creation and self-activity of these sexual movements, we challenge the arbitrary and socially constructed character of the present organization of sexuality. These politics of transforming sexual identities can lead to the subversive conclusion that sexuality is in the end a matter of political choice, and not of destiny. Sexuality has no essential meaning other than that which is made of it socially. What sex "is" is what we must now decide on and shape in our collective strategies.



Radical Pluralism

YET AS WEEKS POINTS OUT, THIS politics of identity affirmation is difficult and contradictory. Sexual choices remain bound up with the social relations of class exploitation, sexism, racism and ageism. The political nature of choices about sex necessitates discussion and clarification of the criteria for any politics of sex. Week's book advances an argument for a 'radical pluralist' perspective which learns from but moves beyond the liberal and libertarian trends in building such politics. This is based on an acceptance of the enormous and growing diversity of sexual possibilities and focuses on the social nature of sexual identities, the criteria for sexual choices, the meanings of pleasure and consent, and the relations between sex and power.

Unlike the libertarian position this perspective does not adopt a laissez-faire approach to sexuality but argues for the need to think through and discuss different values and distinctions. There is in this view no "true" sexuality and no single sexual morality. Radical pluralism embraces the legitimacy of the various denied forms of sexual expression, while remaining sensitive to the social meanings and contexts in which sexual acts are embedded. In contrast to the moral absolutist position which focuses on a morality of acts (which prohibits some acts as taboo, deviant, or criminal), radical pluralism shifts our attention to relations rather than acts, and to an emphasis on meaning and context rather than rules. In this developing perspective there are no absolutes and there is an emphasis on choice. There is no attempt to impose a single standard appealing to a greater truth but instead an argument that we have to take into account the quality of sexual relationships and activities for those involved. The aim of radical pluralism is to democratize sexuality by expanding the possibilities of non-exploitative sexual choices. This approach transforms the sexual agenda towards collectively clarifying the criteria on which to build our sexual communities and lives.

In one of the most fascinating parts of the book, Weeks uses this radical pluralist perspective to explore some of the current sex debates within and between the feminist, gay and lesbian movements. Debates over these issues have often taken the form of situating particular sexual acts or persons in a hierarchy of politically correct sexual desires. In shifting attention away from acts to relations, and away from any "true" sexuality, Weeks is able to open up a number of new avenues for discussion that can begin to move us beyond the current impasses we have reached in the sex debates — allowing

"THESE POLITICS OF TRANSFORMING SEXUAL IDENTITIES CAN LEAD TO THE SUBVERSIVE CONCLUSION THAT SEXUALITY IS IN THE END A MATTER OF POLITICAL CHOICE, AND NOT OF DESTINY."

REFUSING TO REFUSE

us to move beyond moral absolutist and libertarian polarities. Bringing in new vantage points on these debates, for instance, he suggests that we need to redefine the notion of right to privacy so it can become a radical demand; suggests that intergenerational sex should not be seen as a unitary category but as referring to diverse experiences; and explores the contradictions and tensions between individual and social meanings in S/M erotic theatre. He suggests we can make consent a positive concept, focusing on how power presently limits people's abilities to consent, and the transforming of these relations so that conditions for fuller consent become possible. Perhaps most interestingly, he suggests that through these debates the meaning of sex is being transformed and the body itself has become an object of debate and a site of struggle. He argues that in these debates we have to refuse to refuse the various and diverse social pleasures of the body.

Limitations

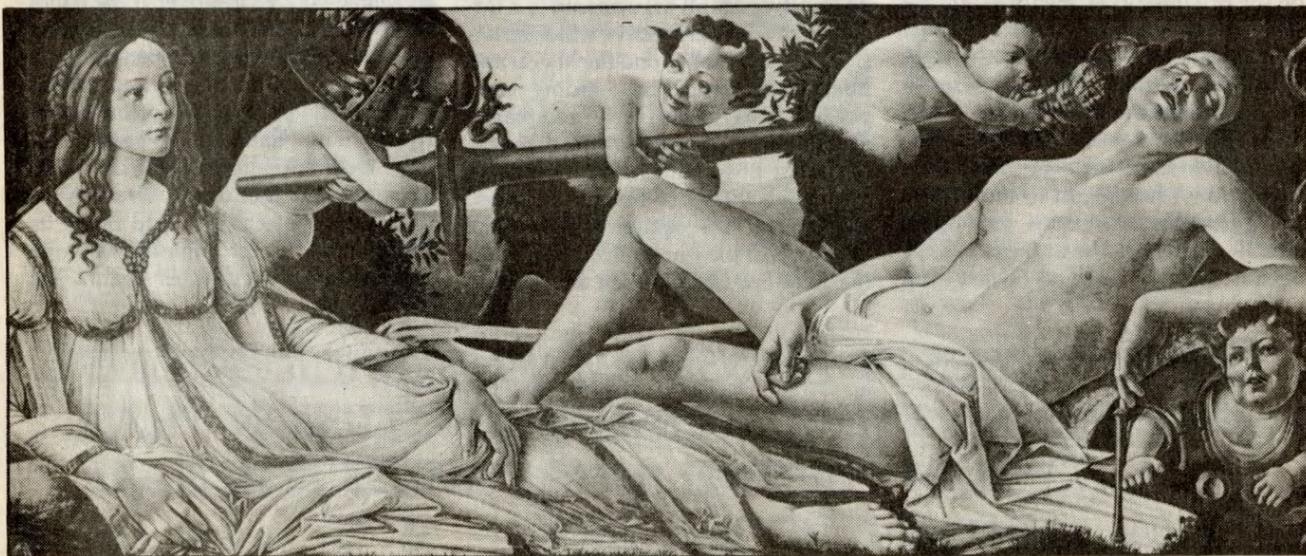
SEXUALITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS, as is to be expected for such an innovative book, has a number of omissions and limitations. Weeks tends to rely on an analysis of the history of

the various discourses about sexuality and does not always locate these discourses in their actual historical settings in social institutions, relations and people's lives. The realm of ideas often seems to be considered in isolation from class relations and state formation. For instance, the ideas of sexology often seem to float on their own. He fails to always explore how these ideas are embedded in an apparatus of sexual rule. Sexological categories of homosexuality, for instance, regardless of the individual intentions of sex researchers, came to be used historically in legal codes, court decisions, police raids and harassment, and media coverage. They were used to organize the oppression of lesbians and gays and the hegemony of heterosexuality as part of a broader process of class, gender, racial and sexual rule. This weakness in the book is related to a series of other limitations.

Weeks in his analysis tends to displace class relations and struggles as a major shaper of sexual relations and struggles. He is able to do this because he uses narrowly defined economic categories of class and capitalism. If instead, he had seen class as a lived historical experience, involving social, moral, gender and sexual relations, he may have been able to illustrate more of the connections between sexual and class struggles, developing

a vision of a socialism that included erotic freedom as an integral aspect.

Since his critique focuses on the history of *ideas* about sex, he often tends to separate sexual discourses from their actual social contexts of production. He therefore tends to group together sexual ideas that appear to have common features across the divides of historical change. For instance, he directly compares social and sexual purity activists in the late 19th century with the "moral majorities" and "anti-sex" radical feminists of the present. Social purity feminists of the last century become the ancestors of radical feminists of the present and both are grouped together as moral absolutists. In emphasizing this apparent continuity he obscures the tremendous social and political transformations that have taken place since the last century which have radically changed people's sexual lives. In a sense he uses history in some of these paragraphs as metaphor or analogy. This constitutes a partial or ideological use of historical data separating ideas from their different social and historical practices. By blurring these different groups and positions into overall categories, he tends to deny the differently located character of these positions, preventing us from adequately distinguishing between different political positions.



Sandro Botticelli

Venus and Mars, 1485

As Lucy Bland, an English feminist has pointed out in a critical review, Weeks tends to suffer from "gender blindness" in this book. Given his focus on the autonomy of the sexual he tends to neglect the contemporary feminist critique of socially organized masculinity, male sexuality, gender relations and patriarchal social organization. For instance, the development of the pill and reproductive technology which has had such dramatic effects in the lives of many women is barely mentioned. While noting a very real social process that is leading to a certain separation of sexuality and gender, he separates sexuality far too radically from gender relations. In the process he makes them into two almost entirely different social experiences, thereby preventing us from fully viewing how they also continue to be interrelated in so many intimate ways in our lives.

In an exaggerated claim he argues that "Sexual identity, at least in the lesbian or gay subcultures of the west has broken free from gender identity." Here he confuses a shift in the social organization of sexuality in which some gay men have broken free from 'effeminacy' and lesbians from 'masculinity' with a breaking free from gender identity itself. Both the 'macho' gay man and the 'new' lesbian who does not see herself as a gender invert continue to be defined by gender relations just as much as in the past. This is true even though the notion of gender inversion has now been generally discarded to be replaced by naturalist notions of sexual orientation.

These problems lead to an ambiguity in the way in which 'radical pluralism' is posed. Since questions of state legislation and sexual regulation are never central in the book it is never completely clear to us as readers whether 'radical pluralism' is only intended as a way to resolve differences among the oppressed (i.e., in laying ground rules for productive discussions among feminists, lesbians, and gay men and others in the contentious sex debates) or whether it is also a perspective for challenging state policies and for the making of a democratic and erotic-positive socialism. Nonetheless, we feel that it is very useful on both these fronts. An emphasis on choice, relationships, context, pleasure and consent could provide us with the initial

basis for alternative sexual policies that could be part of a broader socialist transformation of society, as against the present public/private, adult/youth, normal/deviant, male/female, act-specific, categories that dominate and organize sexual rule. This is an important avenue to pursue in developing radical pluralism.

There is also a tendency in the book to see diversity and the affirmation of social differences only in terms of differences over erotic practices. This in a curious fashion parallels some of the problems with sexology. While it is no longer sex which is seen as the "truth," sexual or erotic differences seem to take over this central positioning within Week's perspective. This fails to fully move beyond the boundaries of the sexological which reduces all pleasure and desire to sex. If other forms of social diversity or difference, for instance, the recent affirmation of Asian, Black, people of colour and youth identities and cultures within the lesbian and gay communities, had been fully integrated into this book, it would have provided a firmer basis for challenging sexology. The unitary character of sex-based cultures has been disrupted by the association of sexual identities with non-sexual aspects of social experiences. An even broader and more diverse basis for celebrating the pleasures of the body and the possibilities for identity affirmation will only happen by acknowledging these other social differences. These also suggest other forms of solidarity and community as resources for progressive social change.

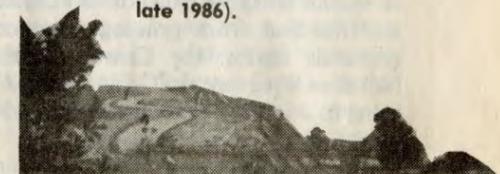
These limitations should not, however, prevent us from using and being inspired by this impressive book. In challenging sexual essentialism as an intellectual and political tradition, Weeks makes a significant contribution to the burning questions of how to build an adequate basis for a truly liberating theory and politics of sex. As Weeks says:

We have the chance to regain control of our bodies, to recognize their potentialities to the full, to take ourselves beyond the boundaries of sexuality as we know it. All we need is the political commitment, imagination and vision. The future now, as ever, is in our hands. ●

ROB CHAMPAGNE is a member of the *Canadian Lesbian and Gay History Network* and is researching gay history in the 1950s.



GARY KINSMAN is a member of the *RITES* collective which publishes a magazine for lesbian and gay liberation, and is the author of the forthcoming book, *The Regulation of Desire on sexuality in Canadian history (from Black Rose in late 1986)*.



I Almost Forgot to Laugh

CLIVE ROBERTSON

Who Pulled the Penis?

The film poster advertising Denys Arcand's award-winning film, *Decline of The American Empire* recently sparked a rash of unnecessary self-censorship. Elephants jumped at the sight of a small mouse. The offending item was officially described as a "(commercial) art poster of a man and a woman — the man having the male genitalia exposed via graffiti and the woman having breasts exposed in the same manner." As required by law, the film's advertising material was submitted to the Ontario Censor Board and was approved. Bear in mind the many theories that explain why the mouse, penis, weiner, dick must not appear in public, and read on...

Cineplex-Odeon placed ads for Arcand's film in the major Ontario dailies. There, for example, on September 5th, gracing most of a page of the *Globe & Mail* was the art poster complete with its "symbol of generative power." According to a source at Cineplex-Odeon, the same ad ran in the *Toronto Star* where 700,000 copies made it through the press. The very next day, both the *G&M* and the *Star* censored the ad by placing a piece of black paper on the penis and a less effective ink spray covering the white outline of the woman's breasts. The initial response from the *G&M* to the advertiser was that their paper was "too conservative" to run such explicit material. Such "conservatism" does not stop both the *G&M* and the *Star* from printing eloquent editorials against the Censor Board. Nor does it prevent the *G&M* from carrying its annual quota of articles defending its own "freedom of the press."

When *FUSE* called the *G&M* for clarification, the advertising sales

manager passed the ball to his boss, R. Dick Fish. Mr. Fish eventually made a return serve to Mr. Drake who said it was "a question of taste" — inferring in this case, bad taste.

On September 11th, Promotionally Yours (acting on behalf of their clients, New World Mutual Films — distributors of *The Decline...*) arranged a press conference where the film's producer, Rene Malo made the following statement: "I believe it is ironic that after this artwork has been approved by the Ontario Censor Board, the advertising departments of some of Ontario's major newspapers would take on the role of censors themselves and alter a significant work of art."

NOW, Toronto's weekly arts-entertainment tabloid appeared on the same day as the press conference with a cover story, "Building on the Empire's Decline" — an interview with Denys Arcand. On page 41 of that issue was a full-page Cineplex-Odeon ad including

BEHIND THE LINES

a censored version of the film poster. *FUSE* called NOW, who informed us that, no, they had not pulled the penis — the whole page had been prepared by Cineplex-Odeon.

Steam irony. A week later (Sept. 18), Cineplex Odeon (as a member of the Motion Picture Theatres Association) appeared before a tribunal of Ontario Supreme Court judges in support of the OFAVAS (Ontario Film and Video Appreciation Society) case against the Ontario Censor Board (Ontario Film and Video Review Board). This case, in pro-

gress, alleges that the Censor Board is violating the freedom-of-expression guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and is therefore acting in an unconstitutional manner.

FUSE again contacted Cineplex-Odeon to ask why they were now censoring their own ad. Spokesperson Linda Friendly informed us that the original artwork, while suitable for Quebec, was no longer appropriate for English Canadian markets. The current advertisement for the Arcand film has the film's title set in a box, covering the anatomical area previously reserved for the man and woman's genitalia.

Lizzie Borden Comes To Cut

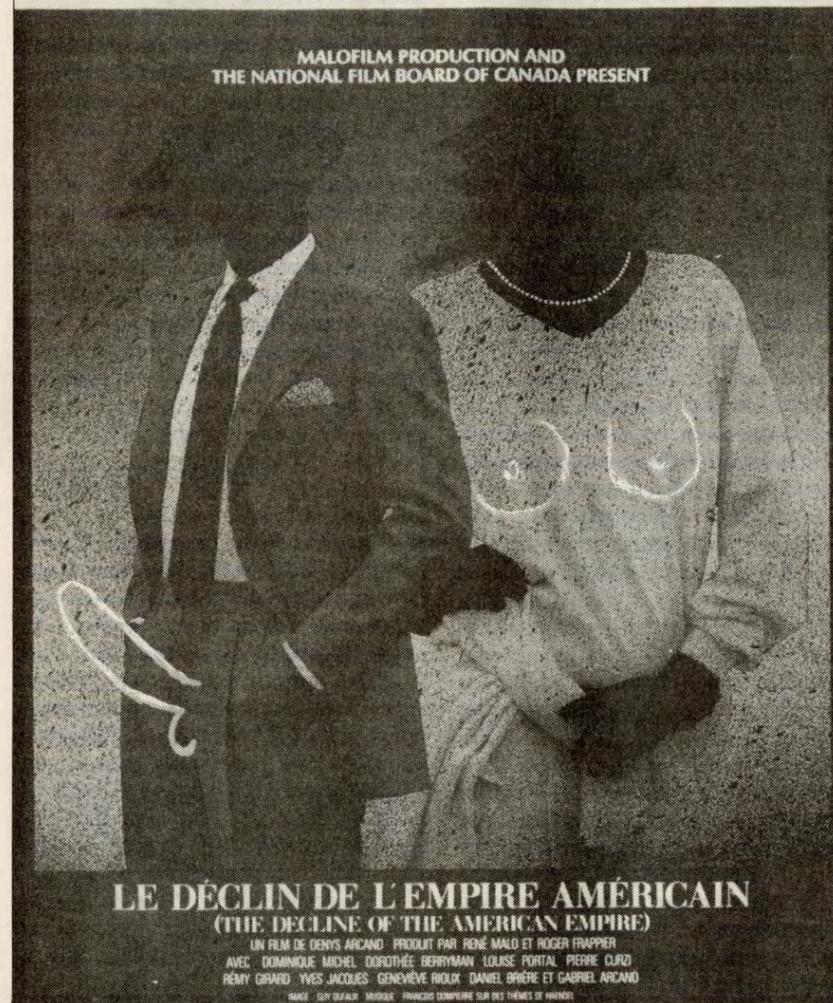
Ontario anti-censorship advocates were pissed off with U.S. film director (*Born In Flames*) Lizzie Borden's decision to comply with the Ontario Censor Board's decision to 'cut'* a scene from her new feature, *Working Girls*, which depicts a prostitute masturbating one of her clients. Borden complied because "she is seeking an 'R' rather than an 'X' rating for the commercial distribution of her film in the U.S." (*Globe & Mail*, Sept. 7th). Lizzie Borden was considered to be one of the best-educated American independent filmmakers on the ongoing struggles against Ontario's film and video censorship.

Video/filmmaker John Greyson comments: "Two years ago DEC, *Broadside* and *FUSE* went to bat for (Borden's) *Born in Flames*. We came out with a victory that prevented the Censor Board from censoring an important feminist film. Now she sells us down the river. Her commercial U.S. distribution is an entirely different issue. People here

*The cut was an opaque mask over the workprint.

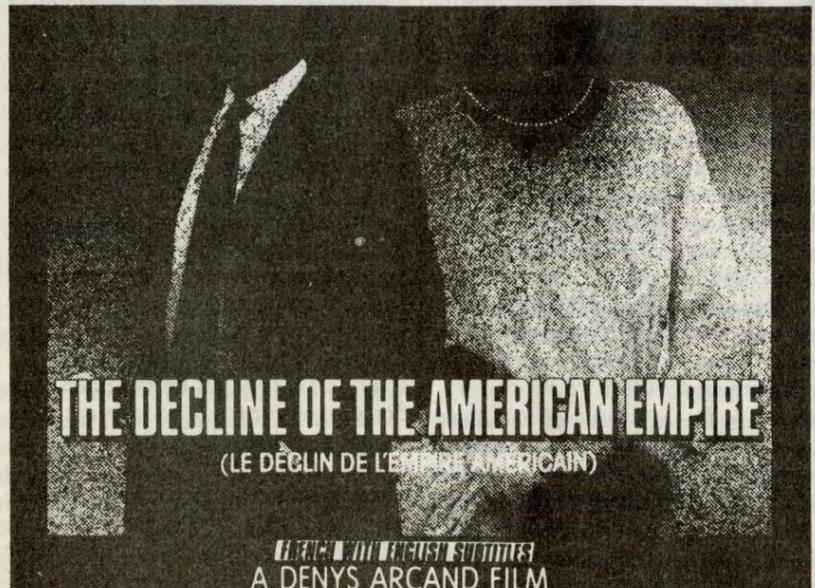
OPENING NIGHT FILM • FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS • TORONTO, SEPTEMBER 4th 1986

MALOFILM PRODUCTION AND THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA PRESENT



(Top) As the Creator Intended It

(Bottom) As the Free Press Amended It



were ready to organize a public screening of *Working Girls* outside of the (Toronto Film) Festival, and there were Festival people ready to support an uncensored version."

"Shit-Eating Grin"

This Magazine, currently celebrating its twentieth birthday, is always reliable for its pithy investigative features. (See "The Right Stuff" by Nick Fillmore, June/July 1986, or the recent "Inside Dope" by John Satsky and Harvey Cashore.) *This Mag* also, on occasion, attempts to upbeat itself with forays into popland — here a cover story on the Dead Kennedys and there, in the summer issue, another promo piece on Moses Znaimer and MuchMusic.

Written by *Globe & Mail* writer, Tom Hawthorn, this four-page piece of fluff read like it was meant for *Saturday Night* or any one of the *Globe & Mail's* three "world class" magazines. I found but one critical comment in the whole piece, and that was a quote from a woman in Halifax who said that, "videos...are so sexist and degrading to women...they put women back thirty years." Hawthorn seemed content just to grovel before the "biggest shit-eating grin in the world," and the man who "says he is bringing democracy to television by being the black sheep in broadcasting's Family Compact."

As an independent video and music producer, I found this re-run of the "Official Moses Znaimer Story" offensive. Znaimer's claims to creativity, inventiveness and democracy remind me of another northern magus, who's sassiness and adeptness at manipulating the media was also bullshit. No, I didn't miss the message of the piece, which was that Znaimer's TV programming is a relief in an industry that holds itself in suspended animation somewhere around the year 1970. But there is another easily accessible story behind 'the story.'

Obviously, the 'creation story' of City-TV's "New Music" is an historical fiction. Almost every TV station in the sixties had aired programs which brought together rock music, interviews and TV. And it wasn't until 1978 that "New Music" director, John Martin, acted upon his mind-boggling idea to "fish-wrap music for television." Martin himself came from a country where programs such as "Six-Five Special" and

"Ready, Steady, Go!" are as well remembered as Winston Churchill. Even TVO had a talk/music/expanded cinema program in the late sixties! But this isn't the story that needs writing.

The story to be written would ask musicians across Canada what their ideas for a TVMusic Channel would be. What do they think of MuchMusic? Similarly, the question could be asked of those who already have had dealings with Znamer, such as video producers, playwrights, ex-employees or any of the 15 non-profit (housing, film, video, magazine, art gallery) organizations who were kicked out of the Ryerson Building (Queen St. West) to make room for City TV's new "world headquarters." Why was it that, between them, those organizations alone lost over \$100,000 to make room for expansions to this Canadian "success" story? Yes, there is a lot of dirt surrounding Moses Znamer and City-TV, but not one speck of it fell on the pages of *This Magazine*.

Access to the Broadcasting Debate

The best story of the month, if you happen to be a cultural prod, is also the most frustrating. The issue is access, in this case access to an audience. How do you have a national debate on broadcasting when the best means to do so is broadcasting itself?

Fresh from the ovens of the federal study bakery comes the appetizing aroma of the Caplan-Sauvageau Federal Task Report on Broadcasting Policy — "Task Force assails private TV's failure in boosting culture." Coming, as it does, to coincide with the broadcast license renewal applications of CTV, CBC-Radio Canada, Global and TV-Ontario, the air is so thick with promise that it's hard to see your hand in front of your TV set. And in the time it takes to open a bottle of something to celebrate the moment, the major TV networks and their affiliations will have galloped away to safety.

Which is not to slur the report itself, or its recommendations. But the 'debate' on the future of broadcasting is one of the clearest illustrations of the sleight-of-hand possible within our existing political process.

Under one upturned cup we have the CRTC (Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission),

which the new study accuses of "coddling and protecting private broadcasters" and which has yet to refuse a TV license renewal. Then we have the CBC (quite different from the French network, Radio Canada) which aside from its news/information service, has notions of contemporary drama and entertainment best exemplified by such classics as "Good Rockin' Tonite" and the "CASBY Awards Show." CBC, remember, is the publicly-owned network that has fought so hard to keep independent Canadian film, theatre, music, art, journalism, video and dance off the air these past sixteen years. And the issue is *not* arts programming. The issue is allowing the participants in an expanding culture to have TV airtime on the terms that those expressions are given and received outside of the television medium. But I digress.

Maclean's magazine attempted to jump the gun on the release of the broadcasting report with a cover story "TV Boils Over." Aside from misrepresenting Britain's Channel Four, it was hard to find anything that hadn't been said before. You begin to wonder whether professional news journalists are experts on anything, apart from professional news journalism. Not that that ever stops them from affecting public policy, or having substantial access to writing and publishing books that are poor substitutes for historical commentary.

So, once again, the inquisitive must place a quarter in one of those "new look, more contemporary and understated" grey and blue boxes wherein lie copies of the *Globe & Mail*, always willing and waiting to act as the 'nation's conscience.' Jeffrey Simpson weighed in with several columns on the broadcasting story: "Giving Them An Inch," "A Dramatic Void" and "A Stirring Indictment." "Dramatic Void" goes after CTV, one of two wrist-slaps — the next delivered in an editorial, "A Canadian Voice (2)" Sept. 25th, which tells us that in 1984/85, "only 3.4 per cent of the revenues of CTV and its affiliate stations went into investment and license fees for Canadian feature-length films and television series."

Simpson himself softened the blow on the CTV (Eaton's-Bassett) combine by praising David Bond ("one smart cookie") of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters for "lavishing praise" on the critical federal study. What Simpson only barely implied was that

the CAB knows damn well that the government and/or the CRTC has no intention of disrupting the \$163.3 million of pre-tax profits enjoyed by Canadian TV broadcasters. And furthermore that CTV, despite being a licensee failure, is about as close to losing its licence as Simpson is to becoming the next Prime Minister.

Communications Minister, Flora MacDonald's initial response to the Task Force report was that it was "full of good ideas for the next 10 to 15 years and on into the next century" — no point in rushing into things.

In broadcasting, aside from community radio, there is *no* intention of changing who can act as the broadcaster. Obviously, 'ordinary Canadians' — including ourselves — do not have the means to buy a TV station. Nor do we have any hand in public television. Even the provincial TV corporations (such as TVOntario) have opted out of their community-servicing licence mandates and are run in much the same way as the CBC. The stable of resource people and on-air specialists is uniformly consistent whether it's CTV, CBC or TVO, with the executive producers themselves holding the strings of editorial policy. It essentially means that debates on the nation's business, including broadcasting policy, are closed debates.

It is worth looking at the access-to-audience rations that exist between the mainstream and alternative media. A periodical, such as the one you are reading has an annual audience of 20,000. The CBC's National (with a nightly viewership of approximately 1,000,000) has an access-to-audience advantage which is 30,000 times greater than magazines or papers such as *FUSE*. Similarly, the Entertainment Section of the *Globe & Mail* has an access-to-audience advantage which is 12,200 times greater.

A smarter alternative to the present status quo and the complex re-channeling recommendations of the Federal Task Force, would be to allow every Canadian city to have a community-operated and owned low-power TV station. This would be financed by a direct percentage of advertising revenue gained by private broadcasters, production income from the existing Broadcast Fund, and a similar tithe from the advertising profits of at least the major Canadian newspaper chains. Such community-operated TV

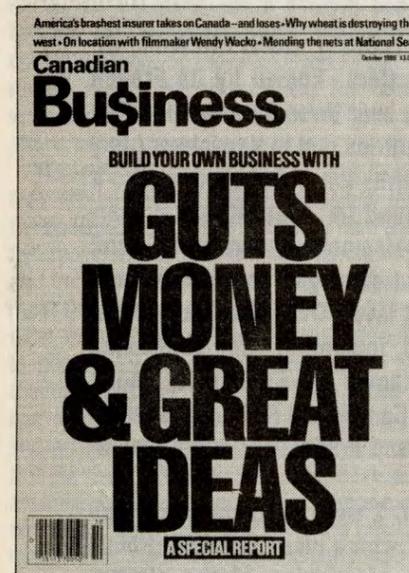
stations would naturally form a national network that could bicycle local productions across the country. 'TV and Canadian content' would thereafter become a less irritating question for at least those who produce the content.

The CRTC, as it exists, should be put out of its misery and its policing responsibilities should be tendered out to civic-operated tow-away companies.

As for the English-language CBC network, while I have sympathies for its employees — its management could best serve by becoming auxiliary labour for the country's struggling farmers.

The Small Business

Towards the end of the sixties, the 'counterculture' spawned a wave of new businesses in every town and city. The operations were part-business, part-vocation: clothing stores, vegetarian restaurants, community newspapers, etc. Such owners considered themselves separate from the capitalist



class, and were careful not to 'rip off' their sensitive clientele.

A decade later, a younger generation of new wave pragmatists entered the field as media consultants, club owners, record distributors, video production companies, more restaurant owners and magazine publishers. Polite identification with the clientele became the watchword, profit motives became more sharply defined, and the

"bottom line" began rolling off a chorus of tongues.

What makes today's successful small business person, you may wonder. According to a recent issue of *Canadian Business* Oct. 1986, the new analogy is football. "It has certain rules: you can jump on people, break their bones and do just about anything but grab their face mask." Included in an article titled: "Could You Make It?" is a cute questionnaire prepared by the Toronto resources consulting firm, Cash, Newton & Associates. To have a successful small business today the following are some of the requirements that you must "strongly agree" with. (10.) You know that you want success and there is nothing worse to you than failure. (30.) You have little patience for human ignorance and incompetence. (38.) Your life could not be happy without a lot of money. (40.) You have no qualms about taking what you want in the world. (41) You look after your best interests first.

Now Then!

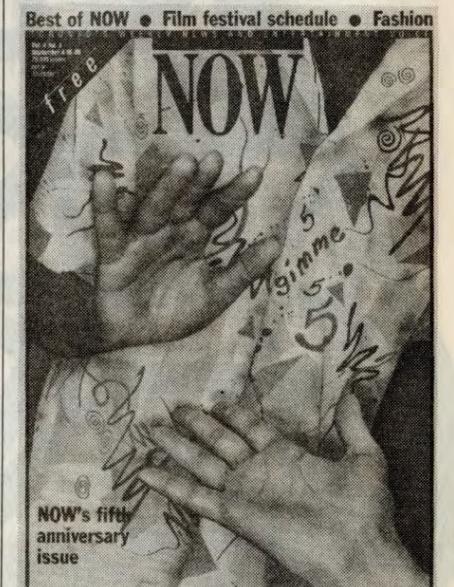
NOW, Toronto's weekly arts-entertainment news/listing paper celebrated its fifth anniversary with a jump in circulation to 75,000. NOW is free, is aimed at the 18-35 age group, and has virtually no competition as an off-Bay St. entertainment promotional vehicle.

NOW has a lively and often revealing letters section, front-end coverage of civic politics, and excellent regular women writers, namely: Alice Klein, Deidre Hanna, Ellie Kirzner and Susan G. Cole. In short, it is a progressive commercial newspaper. NOW gains revenue (stats not available but rumoured at being over \$1,000,000 a year) entirely from display and classified advertising. Because of its success, coverage in NOW almost always has an effect on audience attendance for music, theatre, video and art events. (The non-profit arts sector places ads in NOW expecting news coverage in return.)

When NOW first appeared in September 1981, it capitalized on the past readership of papers like the *Toronto Clarion*, *Only Paper Today* (art/literature), *Spill* (dance), *Toronto Theatre Review*, *Shades* (music), *Musicworks* (music), as well as *The Body Politic* and *Broadside*. At various times dur-

ing the mid-seventies some of those papers had discussed merging into a N.Y. style *Soho News*, but raising capital and sharing goals was essentially impossible for such community specific papers. NOW entered the market, independent from the non-profit communities of interest and the commercial entertainment sector.

The most common criticisms of NOW are that while it has defined goals of gradual and systematic growth, its editorial size cannot meet the combined expectations of both its advertisers and readers. NOW runs supplements: Books, Travel, Visual Arts, Music, Fashion, etc. which increase advertising revenue while decreasing the usefulness of the editorial copy — a common problem for all such tabloids. A more serious problem because of its editorial independence, is an inability to know exactly what is 'fit to print.' While ignoring festivals like Caribana or Gay Pride Day, NOW overpromotes the news of its largest advertisers (film and music) resulting in competition and duplication of material covered by the dailies. Hence the Festival of Festivals promotion,



and the endless interviews with foreign-owned record company talent.

In days past, the rise of a commercial counterculture weekly would have prompted the appearance of its grassroots alternative. Until that happens, NOW is certainly preferable to a "world-class" newsprint version of T.O. magazine, though the difference at times is admittedly subtle.

COMMUNITY

RADIO

Reports on AMARC 2 the Conference

AT THE SECOND WORLD CONFERENCE OF community broadcasters, known by its French acronym AMARC 2, over three hundred and fifty delegates from thirty countries met in Vancouver (July 25-29) to exchange information about their work. It was a conference designed for political action; participants shared their diverse political concerns — and in some cases developed strategies to motivate solidarity at an international level. Over sixty workshops and six panels were held, including: Communications for Peace and Justice; Women and Community Radio; Structures and Finance; Community Radio/Community Organizing; Programing and Production; and Cooperation and Exchange.

Represented at AMARC 2 were radio stations which are "coalition" stations, where many different groups share the running and programing of the station. "Free" radio stations that operate independently, and in some places still illegally as "pirate" radios. Development and rural stations whose primary focus is providing educational programing, such as literacy and health information to rural areas. And "movement" radio stations that are directly connected to a specific political or social movement. Many community radio stations are combinations of these different forms.

Radio In Opposition

by Alan O'Connor

SOMEONE SAID THAT FOR A GROUP OF radio broadcasters there were a lot of hitches in communications at AMARC 2. Ordinary conversation worked best as usual — the organizers had even arranged for translators if needed. There was useful printed material, for the conference itself and in an excellent resource centre. Personal contacts and documentation alone would have made this conference worthwhile.

Elsewhere at the conference there were problems with tape-recordings, Spanish-English translation, crowded scheduling and unnecessarily formal plenary meetings. Those from the Third World said that many workshops were not relevant to their needs. Given the limited resources available (some grants and much unpaid work) it may be useful to ask if a world conference is an *appropriate technology* of communication for those involved in community radio. This is especially the case when many Third World countries cannot afford to be present.

We are starting to realize that radio itself may not be an appropriate technology for the oppressed parts of the world. There are two reasons. The first is that radio studios and transmitters are usually expensive and must be imported. They also require technical maintenance which is usually difficult to provide locally. The second reason is that the industrialized cultural form of radio has historically developed under political and economic pressures that have shaped this form of communication. We have all assimilated this cultural form. It shapes our notion of "good radio." This is not only a matter of content. It also includes such fundamental matters as silence and timing.

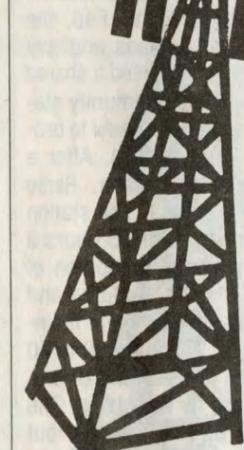
Less than one percent of the world's radio stations even have the *intention* to break with the dominant pattern of commercial or state-organized radio. And it seems to me that only a minority of those stations actually succeed in becoming a significant oppositional voice. Let me give some examples.

The Mahaweli Community Radio station in Sri Lanka started to broadcast in April 1986. It broadcasts to a farming commu-

nity for one hour a day — at 7 p.m. It is part of an educational-community centre which trains youth leaders and teaches agriculture. The station uses locally produced tapes which are not intended to be of a professional standard. The station broadcasts on AM and also on FM using an excellent transmitter designed by UNESCO for local broadcasting in the Third World. Unfortunately, the FM transmitter broke down and at the time of writing the station is broadcasting only on AM while waiting for a replacement part from UNESCO.

The Homa Bay Community Radio Station began regular broadcasts in 1982 to a community around Homa Bay on Lake Victoria in western Kenya. It was one of a small number of alternatives to centralized

OPPOSITIONAL
RADIO



broadcasting in African countries. The low-power FM station was set up with assistance from UNESCO. All of the electronic equipment had to be imported but the cost was under US\$1,000. Homa Bay had until then been very poorly served by existing media. The new radio station broadcast in the early evening and took care to be relevant to local needs. UNESCO encourages FM broadcasting because of its low cost. Very few people around Homa Bay own FM receivers and the Kenyan government seems to have blocked the distribution of low-cost FM sets. Late in 1984, with no prior notice a government Landrover appeared and under orders from the government in Nairobi dismantled the station and took the equipment away. The main reason apparently was a fear of regional separatism and an anxiety that local radio might be used to overthrow the government.

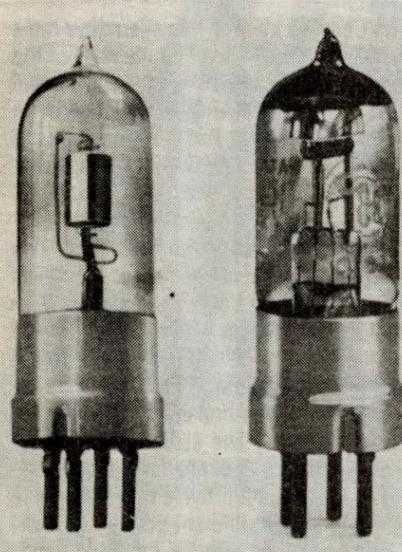
The best known examples of radio in struggles for national liberation today are in El Salvador. Radio Venceremos broadcasts from FMLN territory in the Morazan mountains three times a day. The station started regular broadcasting in January 1981. A little over a year later, at the time of the 1982 elections in El Salvador, the station's signal started to be jammed by the United States ship *Caron* in the Gulf of Fonseca, equipped with a sophisticated communications system. The station continues to broadcast but it is often difficult to pick up its signal. Radio Farabundo Marti is a sister station of Radio Venceremos and broadcasts from the FMLN controlled territory in the North of El Salvador. It first broadcast in January 1982. The station broadcasts under conditions of war, frequently coming under air and artillery fire. It has gained a reputation for its reports and information on the war in El Salvador. I listened to a tape of an actual broadcast from Radio Farabundo Marti in the AMARC 2 resource centre. It is an uplifting, wartime broadcast as one would expect in these exceptional circumstances.

In Chile we know of two alternative radio stations. Radio Freder is a member of the Latin American association for educational radio (ALER). AMARC 2 also heard an urgent report about Radio Ventisqueros in Coyhaique, an isolated regional capital in the south of Chile with a population of 40,000 people. The station provides regional and international news. It also has programing which allows access for critical discussion of the Chilean dictatorship, including reports on kidnappings, torture and killings. The government has put pressure on the station and its advertisers. In June 1985 it was broken into and equipment destroyed. The station continues to broadcast but it is in financial difficulties.

The broadcasting system in Nicaragua faces somewhat different problems. Radio is extremely competitive in Central America and audiences are used to Mexican and North American models of high-pressure music radio. Since 1981 there has been a significant increase in stations outside of Nicaragua which aim programing at the Nicaraguan population. It is estimated that 14 stations now broadcast anti-Sandinista material into the country. A powerful station in Costa Rica repeats the broadcasts of the Voice of America. The Nicaraguan system of about 20 community radio stations operates with great difficulty using old equipment. In the "ratings war" with sophisticated foreign broadcasts the stations have tried to combine popular music with locally produced programs. The US

economic blockade has resulted in an extreme shortage of equipment and spare parts.

In spite of the extreme difficulties in Nicaragua there have been many innovations. One development which may prove to be very important is the new experimental Radio Universidad at the school of journalism in Managua. Set up in 1984 with the aid of a solidarity group in West Berlin, Radio Universidad broadcasts at 80 Watts on the FM band. Its importance is that it may allow a space to develop for serious rethinking about radio as a cultural form. The purpose of the station is to act as a centre for cultural and scientific work; to search for and experiment with new forms of expression; to be a participatory radio in opposition to bourgeois models of authoritarian and vertical communication; and to be a centre for popular empowerment. Like other radio stations, it encourages the training of *Reporteros Populares* — ordinary people who report on everyday life and are given only a little "technical" training.



The most famous community radio station in North America is KPFA in Berkeley, California. Founded in 1949 in opposition to the repression of free speech in the McCarthy era, it is now one of five stations in the Pacifica radio organization. Pacifica stations have had their licences challenged, the organization had to fight for its right to take a position against Apartheid to the U.S. Supreme Court and its Houston station was bombed off the air twice in its first year of existence. Pacifica pioneered listener-sponsored radio and provides special access for programming by women and minority groups. Financial difficulties in recent years, in part caused by deregulation

Fumio Takashima



Daikanyama Two & Half in the Studio

of broadcasting under the Reagan administration, mean that KPFA and its sister stations must pay serious attention to holding their audience if they are to survive.

In 1983 a new law in Denmark allowed local broadcasting on an experimental basis. A group of people within F48, the Danish organization for lesbians and gay men, applied for and were granted a shared frequency with three other community stations. The problem remained of how to produce radio and what to produce. After a short course in radio production, Radio Rosa was born in June 1983. The station broadcasts in Copenhagen for 25 hours a week. It broadcasts a high proportion of spoken programmes: news, features and reviews. Rosa apparently has quite mainstream musical tastes. There are 30 to 40 lesbians and gay men involved and all programmes are produced by volunteers. The station is funded in part by listeners but mainly by \$10,000 a year from F48. It is a strong movement-oriented radio station.

There is clearly a need to make careful distinctions when discussing alternative radio. It is an important if sometimes perplexing phenomenon. There are some 25 community radio organizations worldwide. A world organization must therefore be a coalition for the rather different needs of radio in struggles for national liberation, in beleaguered revolutionary nations, for radio in opposition to the entertainment and information business in North America, and in the rather different situations which are found in Europe. I have never seen a coalition work without enormous amounts of human-scale communication: talk in rooms, talk in hallways, talk over a beer (or whatever), newsletters, and the exchange of written material. Our most urgent need is for serious thought about forms of communication.

I don't want to take away from the enormous amount of work that went into organizing AMARC 2. (Thank-you.) But this kind of world congress, with workshops producing resolutions for a final plenary session seems to me to be wholly unsuited to our needs. The aim should not be to reproduce parliamentary procedure, piling up a list of actions for an Executive to carry out. Instead of a resolution about the need to aid alternative radio in Third World nations, how much better it would have been if the conference had concluded with each station in the South "twinning" with a station in the North. Alternative radio in America and Europe is not wealthy. But a microphone, or a spare part, or three \$100 tape recorders can mean a lot in Sri Lanka or Nicaragua. If 30 people have enough interest to participate in a workshop on "Radio in Revolution" they should leave the room three hours later, not with a resolution to the plenary, but with a project that those 30 people can carry out.

A world conference is a place for caucuses to meet: women, lesbians, gay men, native broadcasters, Black radio programmers, Latin American broadcasters, different linguistic groups, and so forth. But in order to make a coalition the different groups must also speak with each other. A crowded plenary session is no place to do this. Many of us in the North have little idea of the problems of radio in the Third World. But we will learn little from impassioned political speeches about Reagan's policy in the Caribbean. If that kind of basic political information is needed it should come in preparatory documents.

The difficulties of alternative radio worldwide are enormous. We are engaged in a struggle against powerful commercial and political interests. The cultural form and technology that we are using has been shaped for more than 50 years by people with no interest in cultural democracy. By arguing for "appropriate technology" for progressive communication I don't mean that we should give up radio. But it is important to keep in mind that it is a technology and cultural form that is in many respects not of our choosing. The aim of most existing radio is to broadcast. Our aim should not be to broadcast in the world but to change it.

Alan O'Connor is a graduate student at York University. He is concerned with social and political aspects of communications. He has worked for alternative magazines in Canada for a number of years and has recently started to work as a producer of radio documentaries.

Women Representation and Radio

by Abbe Edelson

AT THE AMARC 2 CONFERENCE STRONG emphasis was placed on women's programming. Several workshops took place including, "Defining Our Communities — Their Inter-Relationships with Women's Programming," "Perspectives on Global Issues Facing Women," "The Birth of Women's Music," "Women's Radio Collectives — The Best Alternative?," "Women's Radio Networking," "Training Women in Production Skills," "Women's Involvement in Decision Making," and "Does a Women's Culture Exist?" A panel discussion, "Empowering Women" was also held, plus a women's caucus meeting originally scheduled as a separate women's plenary.

Participation in the women's section of AMARC was predominantly North American, with little representation from third world delegates and women of colour. What's defined as "women's programming" at an international conference raises serious questions. While women delegates were present from the third world and play an active role in their community radios, it was clear that their concerns were not adequately represented at the women's workshops. The lack of representation from third world delegates and women of colour in the women's section of the conference severely diminished its political significance internationally.

Women's radio programming in North America grew out of the women's liberation/feminist movement. Many women's programs operate in a collective structure autonomously, but in association with their community station. These programs give an important voice to the feminist movement. And in music programming, support music written and produced by women, is often not heard anywhere else. Undoubtedly, the participation of a women's collective helps to change the gender-make-up of a radio station: their presence encourages other women to participate as well. Some concern was expressed for the "ghettoization" of women's issues — that the concerns of women, and women's music be incorporated into daily programming and not isolated to the weekly time slot of the "women's" show. Elsewhere at

AMARC, the importance of the autonomy of women's programming was affirmed.

What became clear at the "Defining Our Communities — Their Inter-Relationships with Women's Programming" workshop was the fact that women's programming geared towards the feminist movement is exclusive by its very mandate. Women's radio programming reflects the make-up of the feminist movement, which is dominated by a white, middle class. Women are not a homogeneous group, and if it's the job of community radio to reflect the racial and cultural diversity of its community, other women's programming must reflect that diversity as well. At the "Global Issues Facing Women" workshop, the issue was raised that it's not enough for programmers to include women of colour as interviewees, and the contents of their programs, but that women of colour must be involved as the developers, producers, employees, and executives of the community stations.



What evolved at the women's workshops was a serious discussion about racism in the women's movement. And the way in which women's programming relates to that movement. As an action-oriented conference, AMARC offered participants the opportunity to move from theoretical discussions to resolutions which encourage concrete, positive action. Unfortunately, this was not the case in most of the women's workshops I attended. Several very patronizing and insulting remarks were made by white women to women of colour. Their display of ignorance was racist, despite what they may have thought

were their good intentions. It became virtually impossible for constructive dialogue to take place in the hostile environment that was created.

The debates which took place regarding racism amplified the urgent need for all participants to take action and educate themselves about the racism present in their station. While much of the focus of the discussion revolved around changing the racial and cultural make-up of the work place, mere representation of people of colour is not enough. An anti-racist politics must be developed throughout a station's programming and operations.

Radio is a relatively simple medium. The technical skills needed to produce programming are not difficult to learn. Training programs should be designed to "demystify technology." Technical skills empower people to become independent and maintain control over the development and production of their programs. Some community stations are running training programs for women only, taught by women, to ensure that training occurs in a supportive, group atmosphere. At the "Approaches to Training Women" workshop, it was agreed that training programs must also be designed to meet the cultural needs of the trainees, with attention paid to the background of the teacher, language differences, and anything else that's important to the group.

The notion of accessibility to the community radio station is a two-way street. It's not enough for community stations to self-claim themselves as maintaining an open door policy — without publicizing it widely. Person to person contact and active recruitment from community groups ensures greater participation, rather than waiting for groups to knock at a station's doors. And it is important to have an appropriate training program in place that facilitates active participation.

Talking about approaches to news reporting and public affairs programming means confronting not only the politics of the issues, but our own political convictions and the way in which our ideas shape the presentation of the material. I attended the first part of a workshop on "Community Radio and Popular Protests," "Alternative International Information Broadcasting," and "Radio for International Solidarity and Cultural Awareness."

Clear differences exist in the relationships between community radio stations and popular movements. Some concern was expressed that radio stations must report both sides of a controversial news story, and remain at a distance from

political groups. However, for the most part, support for popular movements was unanimous elsewhere. Objectivity is undoubtedly a myth in news reporting. While giving air-time to both sides of a story may appear to be democratic, it's definitely not the only way to present controversial material in a critical manner. At CKLN's news department in Toronto, much attention is given to coverage of local social justice groups. Directly following international news broadcasts, live interviews and features which cover the activities of a local, political group are very common. Interviews need not be confrontational, but are often supportive, which encourages listener participation in the groups' activities. Documentaries and features can be produced with a narrative that takes a stand, rather than attempting to establish a mask of neutrality. As well, documentaries can be produced without any narrative, that simply give people the chance to speak for themselves.

The reporting of news in the mass media alienates the listener/viewer from the subject of the story. When neutrality is a goal of reporting, people are left with little stimulation to take control over their lives. The reporting of local, political activities decreases people's sense of alienation. It also encourages increased awareness that can motivate involvement. The relationship, then, of the community radio station to popular movements becomes that of an advocate, without necessarily defining itself as such.

One of the most exciting developments for news programming that emerged at AMARC 2 is the beginning of an international network of direct correspondents or sources, from many different countries. Regular reports from El Salvador, Nicaragua, Cuba, and Chile are now becoming a part of news programming at CKLN in Toronto.

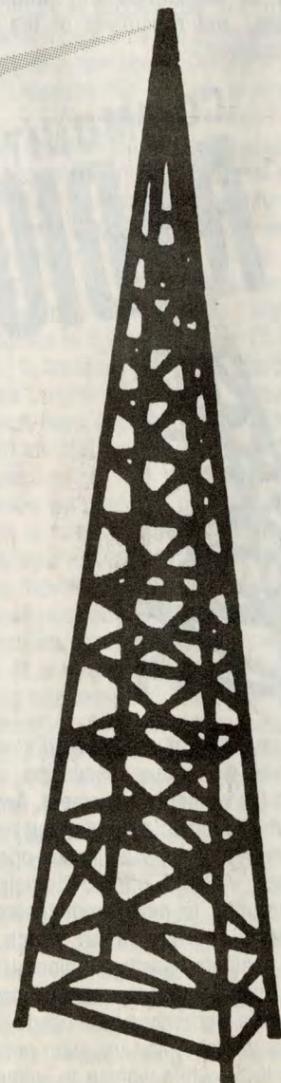
What I have been able to write about AMARC 2 is limited not only by the constraints of my own participation, but also by my own viewpoint as a woman volunteering in the news department of an "alternative" downtown campus-community station located in a major market in Canada.

I was incredibly inspired by many of the people that I met and heard, who gave freely of their time, in their commitment to community radio. Several people spoke about producing and broadcasting in places where their lives were in danger — their commitment and zeal for their work was overwhelming. An international working group was struck to organize AMARC

3. Plans are now underway to hold it in Nicaragua, if possible.

Community radio is so new in English Canada, it's hard to say exactly how it will develop and grow and whether or not it will respond to the challenges of a changing political, social, and cultural climate. And strive to be truly representative of the diversity of voices in its communities. As witnessed in other parts of the world, community radio can be an effective vehicle for social change. That new spot on the FM dial, that sometimes plays disharmonious sound experiments, may be playing an important part in helping to change our immediate world; at least a little bit.

Abbe Edelson produces and hosts Thursday's Newswave on CKLN Radio. She is also involved in freelance radio reporting.



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ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

Canadian Broadcasting in the Age of Television Sprawl by Joyce Nelson

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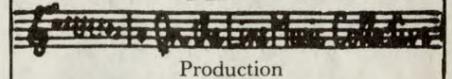
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TERMINAL SHOCK

by Isobel Harry

Terminal Shock The Health Hazards of Video Display Terminals

by Bob DeMatteo
published by New Canada Publications
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M5H 1H8
Distr. in U.S.A. by Independent
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Port Washington, NY 11050

BOB DEMATTEO IS THE CO-ORDINATOR of Occupational Health and Safety for the Ontario Public Service Employees Union, who directs occupational, health and safety research and educational programing. In the preface to this important, thorough analysis of the effects of working with video display terminals (VDT's), Karen Nussbaum, Executive Director of 9 to 5, the National Association of Working Women, indicates that "as use of VDT's in the workplace has risen, so have the problems associated with their use." *Terminal Shock* is the first comprehensive information source to deal not only with health problems, but with radiation, ergonomics,* and the legislative initiatives now being made in this field.

The computer industry has been understandably slow in admitting to any problems with the use of its technological miracles. This book is timely because VDT's are in offices, schools, and homes; the video graphics industry is booming, and corporations continue to seek cheap Third World labour. The graphic industry's exploitation of starving artists in video production lines surrounded by terminals and the corporate urge for cheap labour means a lot of VDT work transferred there (or here, with our low dollar) into high-tech sweat shops. And, as *Terminal Shock*

*Ergonomics is the science of adapting the work place and work practices to meet the needs of workers' physiological and psychological well-being.

mentions, most of the work now done on VDTs is "low status," "devalued," and most often performed by women.

Stress is one of the three major health problems experienced by VDT operators, and it is suffered more in low-status jobs (with low wages) than in high status jobs. It is caused by high noise levels, poor lighting, poorly designed workstations and chairs, crowded space, poor ventilation, pulsed radiation in low frequencies, and static electricity, among other causes. The majority of employers refuse to believe this bad news, although prevention of health problems should be the enlightened manager's prime responsibility. Most companies prefer to save money rather than design the workplace ergonomically to benefit the workers. The work is often monotonous, repetitive, isolated, timed, and as mentioned above, considered to be of low status. Bob DeMatteo says it is also dangerous. As our society moves toward a technological base, most of the work that will be available will be in a computerized environment. *Terminal Shock* becomes, then, the perfect companion guide.

The other two major health problems associated with VDT use are visual impairment, and musculo-skeletal posture impairment. These kinds of jobs are much more hazardous than working at MacDonalds or in a doughnut shop, but they often pay the same. The book outlines many cases of shocking negative effects on metabolism, behaviour, reproductive organs, blood pressure, hearing, and vision.

DeMatteo begins by stating that "a VDT is a radiation emitting device." Then he works his way through case studies of clusters of adverse pregnancy outcomes, reproductive problems, birth defects, cataracts and skin rashes in Canada, the U.S., Europe and Asia. He also looks at the entire electromagnetic spectrum of ionizing and non-ionizing radiation and the effects of the frequencies, with line diagrams of radiation sources, molecules, amplitude waves, so everything is plain to see. The readers begin to understand what pulsed electromagnetic fields are, how they are emitted from a VDT, and what can be done about it.

Then two chapters follow on how to monitor and control radiation emissions from VDTs. This section is invaluable as it deals with shielding the terminal case and filtering the VDT

screen with a conductive micromesh filter. These shielding devices can reduce emissions to almost nothing. The names and addresses of firms that provide shielding materials and also do proper radiation testing are listed in the appendix.

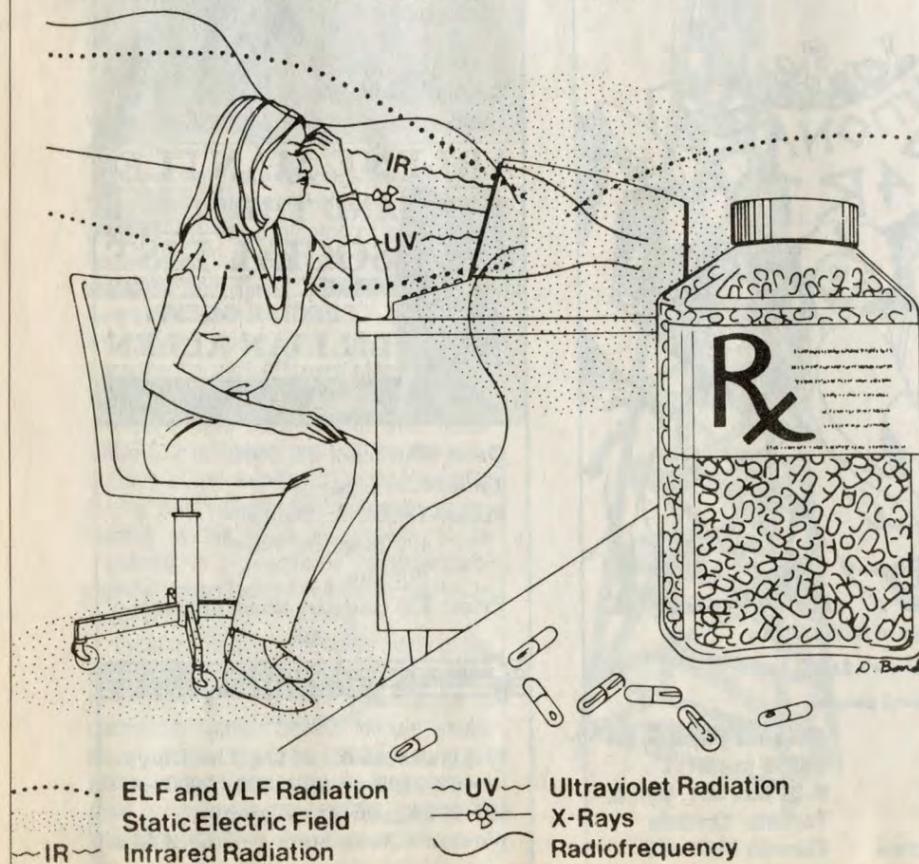
The final chapters of the book deal with the law as regards standards developed by international organizations, proposed legislation, workers compensation and recommendations in Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, West Germany, France, the UK, Japan, various states in the U.S., and Canada. Many summaries and lists are included,

such as companies that market ergonomically acceptable furniture, VDT provisions in collective agreements in Canada in the U.S., a glossary and a bibliography.

This book is indispensable. It gives the straight goods on what kind of work environments we can build for ourselves tomorrow. It is especially useful for those working or planning to work in the field, union organizers, employers and, of course, the enlightened managers.

Isobel Harry

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This advertisement for "computer accessories" appeared in *Computer World*, March 25, 1985 for Ericsson Information Systems

I'se a Long-Memoried Woman*

MARLENE NOURBESSE PHILIP

IN NOVEMBER 1985 AN AMNESIAC turned up in Italy; he believed himself Canadian, and evidence for his belief, the *Toronto Star* reported, lay in what he remembered — three names: Joe Clark, Brian Mulroney, and Pierre Trudeau. Three men; three whites; three politicians. I remember laughing — not at the amnesiac — but at the detritus of his memory and at the savage workings of the unconscious. What if David (he believed this was his name), the amnesiac, had remembered

*Article title from poem with the same name by English-Caribbean poet, Grace Nichols.

three women — any three women would do—Jeanne Sauvé, Flora McDonald or dear Mila. Or what if he had remembered Louis Riel, or Mary Ann

NOTES FROM THE MARGIN

Shadd, the first Black journalist in Ontario, or even the word Haida, or Grassy Narrows? Had I read too much into what this man remembered; and

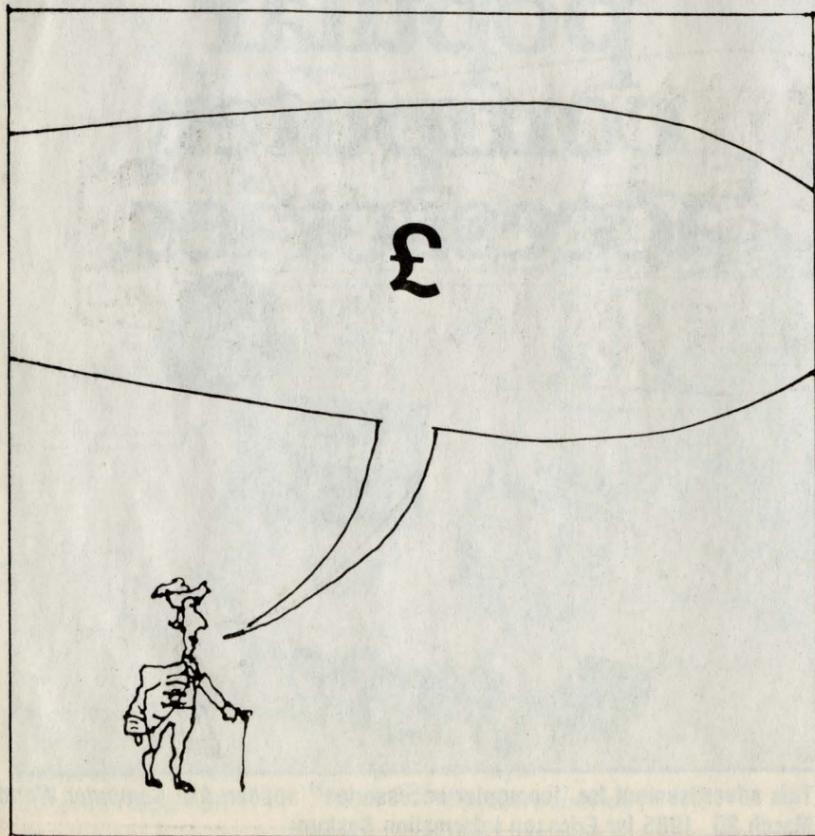
should any more significance be attached to the residue of memory other than the possibility that he may have, shortly prior to losing his memory, read a newspaper article mentioning these three men.

I chose to see significance in what he remembered: it identified him and put him in context. I chose also to draw an analogy between the loss of David's memory, what was left, and the attempted erasure of the memories of the Africans brought as slaves to the new world. In the latter case, what was left would also be of significance.

The policy of all slave-holding nations was to wipe clean the mind of the African slave; how else prevent rebellion, ensure passive workers and guarantee good Christians? The effect of this policy was the separation, wherever possible, of slaves from the same linguistic groups. Slave owners prohibited and punished the expression of African culture: music, religion, or dress; denied any validity to their world view. Whatever remained of this process must, I believe, be inestimably precious and significant; as in the case of the amnesiac, it identifies and places in context the descendants of those first Africans in the New World. "They had," Katherine Dunham says of those first Africans, "an inborn intelligence to know if they kept up their tribal movements and rituals they would be saving themselves."**

In the course of writing a long poem recently I listed some of the reasons why I consciously try to remember what did not happen to me, but which accounts for my being here today: to defy a culture that wishes to forget; to

**From film *Divine Drumbeat* in which Katherine Dunham records her involvement and study of Haitian dance and religion.



rewrite a history that at best forgot and omitted, at worst lied; to seek psychic reparations; to honour those who went before; to grieve for that which was irrevocably lost (language, religion, culture) and those for whom no one grieved; to avoid having to start over again (as so many oppressed groups have had to do); to "save ourselves." In making the list (by no means exhaustive) I found that even the mere determination to remember can, at times, be a revolutionary act — like the slave who refused to forget his or her rituals, or music, or whose body refused to forget the dance. All these acts of remembrance are, I believe, in the service of saving ourselves; as well, they replenish the scanty fund of memory we in the West started out with, but which identified us as indisputably as David's did.

Too many on both sides of the journey and the problem have forgotten the fifteen million that perished in the middle passage; too many are even more eager to forget the millions who continue to live marginalized lives because of that journey. (There is the Cosby show after all.) Far too many exhibit the

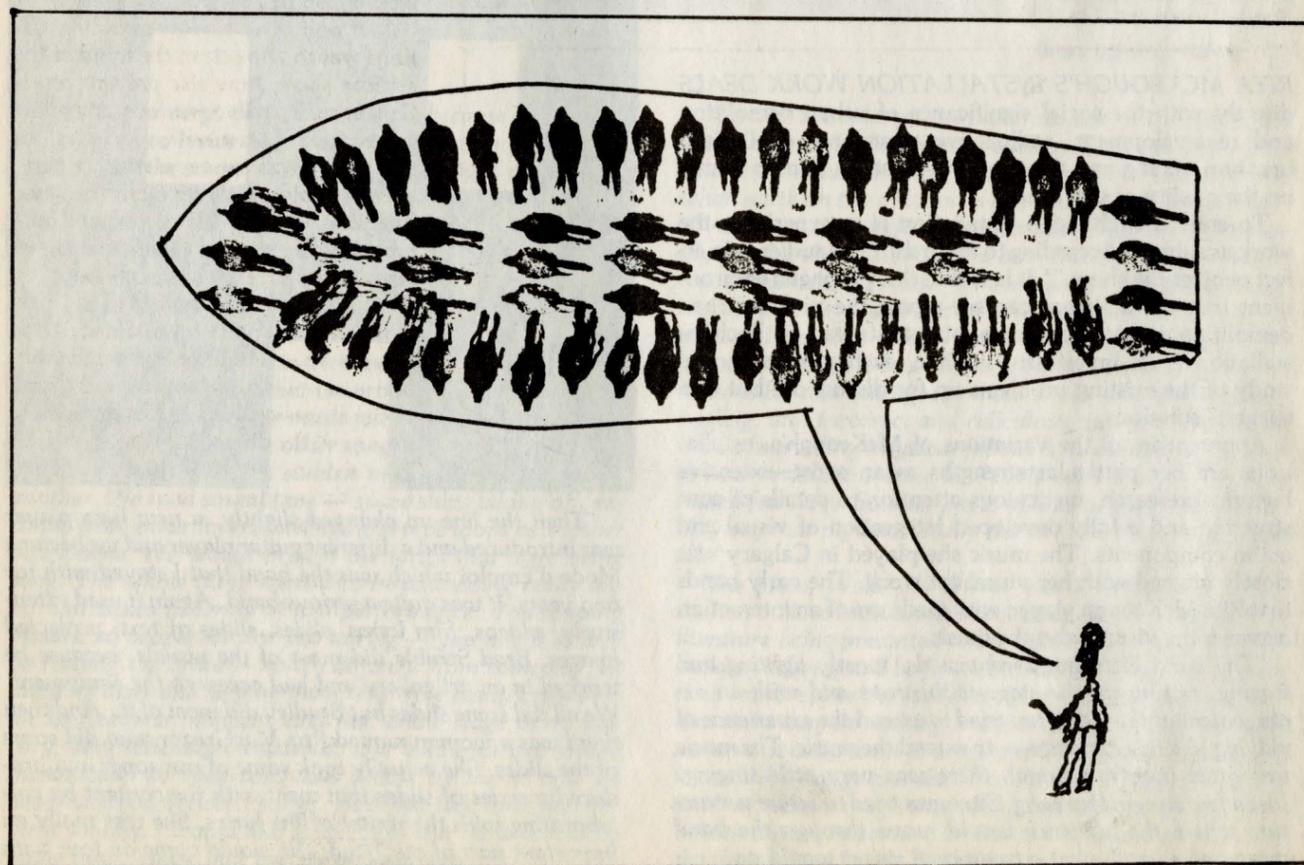
social amnesia which, as Russell Jacoby argues, results when the "vital relationship between mind and memory turns malignant; oblivion and novelty feed off each other and flourish."

Some events, however, help stimulate the memory: the revolution taking place within South Africa being just such an event. I can but only imagine the life of the South African Black in Soweto or Cross Roads, but I remember; I remember what I do not know and never lived, whenever I read of the death of yet another Black in South Africa; and when I witness the obscene contortions of the white Western powers over the imposition of sanctions and their fundamental refusal to act in any meaningful way, I remember; I remember that the slave trade only came to an end when it was no longer economically feasible for the slave-owning, slave-trading nations; I remember the Wilberforces and the many others who, like those who condemn South Africa today, saw the appalling immorality of the trade in Black humans, and I remember that their platforms only gained credence when those nations — France, England,

Spain, the United States — many of the same ones who today refuse to impose sanctions, saw that continuance of the trade meant economic suicide. I remember. And I believe that only when apartheid becomes too expensive for the West, will the latter become unequivocal in its condemnation and willingness to act. I remember, and believe that most Blacks of the New and Old Worlds — even those who think they have left the struggle a long way behind — remember. In remembering I hope they see the continuum that stretches from the West across the Atlantic, across the centuries to South Africa and those early Africans who came West — unwillingly. It is probably the greatest honour we pay the fifteen million that died on that journey, as well as those who died on land — to remember.

Deep in my soul I remember; je me souviens; I'se a long-memoried woman.

Marlene Nourbese Philip



THE HOUSE THAT RITA McKEOUGH BUILT

RITA MCKEOUGH'S INSTALLATION WORK DEALS directly with the social significance of urban demolition and re-development, radioactive wastelands, pollution, uranium mining and the effects of these, in human terms, on the quality of our future.

To enter a McKeough installation is to experience the work as subject. According to the artist, "the audience in effect peoples the show."* It is within this prophetic environment that the audience can see where the violent urban demolition and environmental pollutants lead us. Each installation is an investment in time, each piece a careful study of the existing problems up for discussion, but also suggests solutions.

Apparent in all the variations of McKeough's installations are her particular strengths as an artist: extensive historical research, meticulous attention to details of construction and a fully developed integration of visual and audio components. The music she played in Calgary was closely aligned with her visual art work. The early bands that Rita McKeough played with made use of an interaction between the visuals and the music.

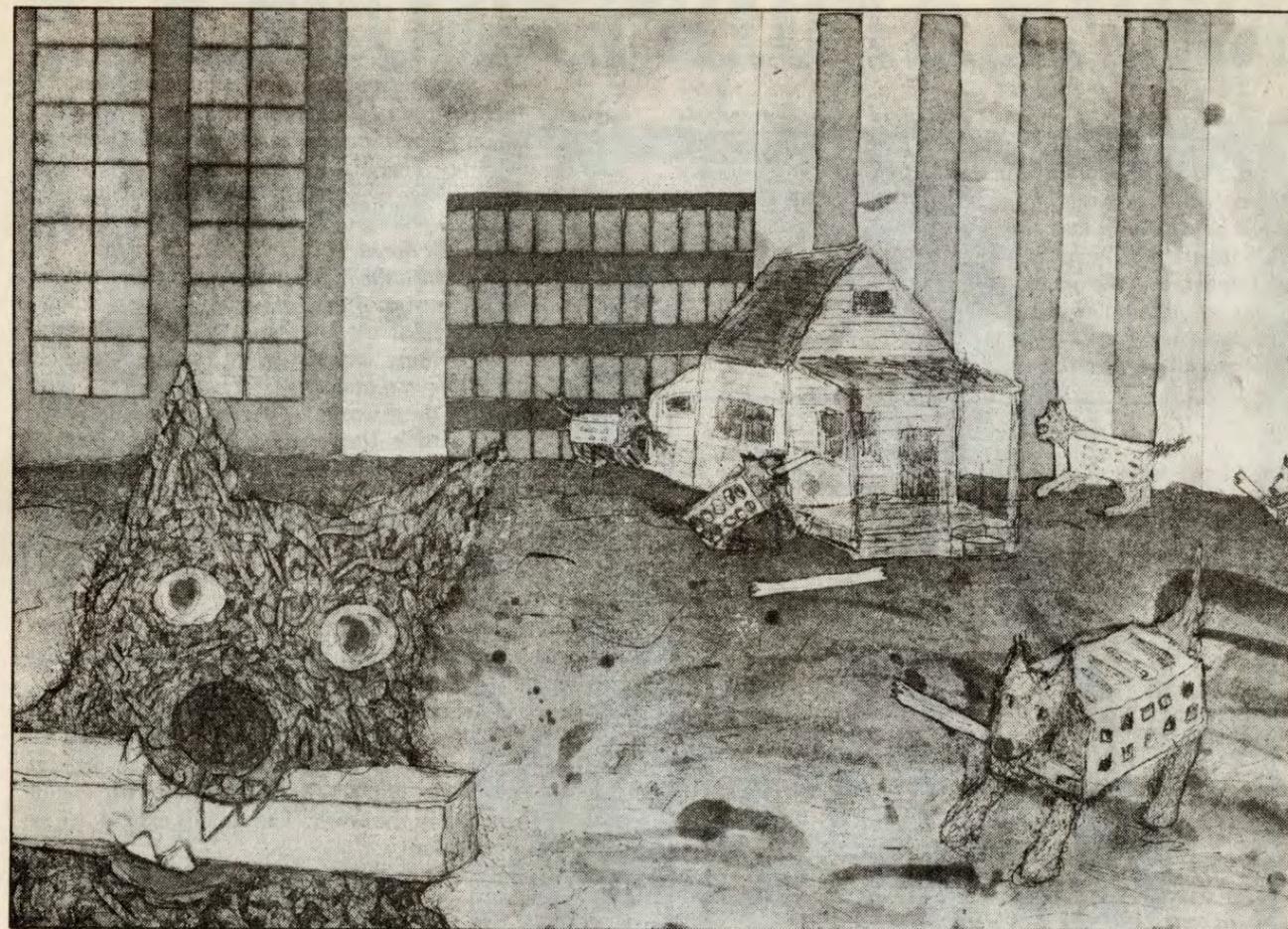
"The band Sitcomm used visuals, mostly lighting and staging, setting up the stage with props and with an arrangement of the band that tried to extend the experience of playing to a live audience — to extend the music. The music was quite improvisational, there was very little singing. Just a few songs were sung. Sitcomm tried to set up a structure where the audience would move through the band more and extend what a traditional singer would do.

Rita McKeough, born in Nova Scotia, is a printmaker, sculptor, installation artist, musician, d.j.... She has been exhibiting art since 1975 on the East Coast and in Western Canada. She has been producing major installations and site works since 1977. She has been a drummer since 1979, participating in *Sitcomm*, *Made d'Emploi* and now *Demi/Monde*. Her work as a d.j. put her on *Radio Radio*, an alternative radio station in Calgary, and now, living in Toronto, she does occasional spots for the *Sound Women* program on CKLN.

by Heather Allin



"Then the line-up changed slightly, a new bass player was introduced and a different guitar player and we became *Mode d'Emploi* which was the band that I stayed with for two years. It was quite a serious band. Again it used extensively: videos, film loops, slides, slides of text, projected images. Brad Struble did most of the visuals, because he worked in an art gallery and had access to the equipment. We all did some slides but Bradley did most of it. And then there was a woman named Roz MacGregor who did some of the slides. She actually took some of our songs and produced a series of slides that went with the content by collaborating with the writer of the lyrics. She was really an important part of our band; she would come on tour with



Urban Uprising, Etching, 1984

us. She had a very, very complex job because everything was cued up to lyrics and to changes in the songs. She had to know all the songs and change at the right places. The slides were timed because each song was only so long and was divided into parts: 16 slides for the first, 32 for the second. She had to pace it so they ended when the song ended. She was amazing. She was as important as any of the musicians. She was a video editor by trade, so she also did a video for us.

"We would wear t-shirts with words that related to our songs. Even the screens that we projected everything onto were made as objects. Our music was somewhat improvisational, pretty wild, while other songs were very structured and traditional. All of a sudden we'd move from one to another. We used sound tape — space ships taking off, excerpts from other live recordings and tape loops as another instrument. We would project the lyrics that were being sung. The whole thing seemed to be addressing really important issues in terms of live performance. You're using visuals, so people are not just staring — you might as well be reading the lyrics — so it's different from someone just standing there and singing them. We were really extensive, we had several monitors and the whole stage thing was very, very seriously considered. Our whole set was joined thematically so each song was linked by theme and we never stopped between songs, we'd just talk over the ambient sounds. I would like to see what our band would be doing now, 'cause that was three years ago."

"I wanted to address the ludicrousness of the pamphlets about how to build a fallout shelter. They tell you to use concrete because it does resist radioactive fallout somewhat, earth on top of wood is helpful, but you have to have 33 inches of earth before it's tolerable. They tell you to use plywood and build yourself a box, but the last sentence in one pamphlet has a line, which I use in *Afterland Plaza*, that says one drawback of this structure is its use of plywood. In this piece I have a figure that's dead, it's disintegrating in a box. I was trying to point out how irresponsible and outrageous these books are, and how misleading, and incorrect and ridiculous they are. The whole issue of surviving a nuclear fallout is ridiculous, if you look at how serious the issue is. People can't survive for more than a few days. So after pages of how to build this shelter, they say that plywood really doesn't resist radioactivity at all."

The piece, *Wake An Other*, was a radioactive fallout shelter, built to McKeough's specifications. "So much of the literature being presented to the public pretends that if you build a shelter you'll be fine. And none of it addresses emotional survival or the fact that the shelter may not work or that there may be nothing to come out to, or that you may not emotionally want to come out. I tried to build it so that it could be my grave, that I could die in there. So in the sense of eastern religions, I took objects from my life, symbols that were important to me, and I embedded them into the floor, like a fossil. The piece, in many ways, was a way

for me to deal with the issue of impending nuclear disaster.

"There are door to door salesmen all over the country selling these shelters. No one is dealing with what people are going to do for that length of time in those shelters. Since I took the position that this shelter might just possibly be my grave, it was going to be positive, festive, what was good in my life, it was going to express clearly-as-fucking-hell what's lost, what's going to be lost if I allow this holocaust to take place. This piece also was to document people's political activism, specifically of women in the peace movement. I wanted it also to be an environment that would nurture the resident."

A DRAWBACK OF THIS
STRUCTURE IS ITS USE OF
PLYWOOD.

Drawing from
Afterland
Plaza,
Installation,
Saskatoon,
1985



The environment was built knowing that things like daylight, natural sounds and companionship, would not be available. Each room therefore was built to comfort, stimulate, or to calm. There were objects cut out of plywood such as mountain ranges, women, drumsticks, guitars, tears, animals, birds, hands, vegetables, painted and embedded in the walls, floors and ceiling, and the shelter was stocked with literature about work that women and other activists had done about changing political situations. The shelter used earth as the surrounding material. In McKeough's words, "It was two things. It was a reference to the 33 inches of earth needed to protect you from the radioactivity, and it was also a grave, a place where you might go to die, or choose to die, or choose to come out and try and survive."

As evidenced in her early visual art work, such as the print *Does a Ball Have Bones?*, McKeough explores animism. Her early installation works, done in Calgary, Lethbridge and Winnipeg, dealt with urban redevelopment, specifically, the demolition of houses before their useful time is up. She explains this as a loss, a waste: "perfectly good houses, beautiful houses, being destroyed to put up parking lots.

The same thing would happen time after time: I would walk to work in the morning and see new abandoned houses. The next day, there would be holes in the windows from stones being thrown at them. Later, there would be boards put up over the windows. Then the homeless, bums, would move in. Then the buildings would be slotted for demolition and boards would go up around the houses and within a week they would be torn down.

"As the cranes push the houses to the ground, the houses make sounds, almost as if they are crying or screaming. It was such a waste, particularly because the boom in Calgary was over and nothing would replace these homes. This would happen over and over and over again. So part of my reasons for doing these works — *Defunct*, Alberta College of Art, 1981; *Destruck*, University of Lethbridge, 1983; *Urban Scrounger*, Off Centre Centre, 1984 — was because of people's resignation to the demolition. I wanted to show what was happening in those neighborhoods. In showing... then destroying these beautiful doll houses [the Houses in her exhibitions], I wanted to show how ludicrous the demolition is — the loss and violence..."

But is the audience the real victim of this demolition, violence and waste, or the subject of criticism for not doing anything about the situation under debate?

When producing these works for exhibition, McKeough would use sound as a major element. She would often ask her band, *Sitcomm*, or *Mode d'Emploi*, to record improvisational music, with the same themes as her exhibitions, to accompany the work. The sounds extend her exploration of animism.

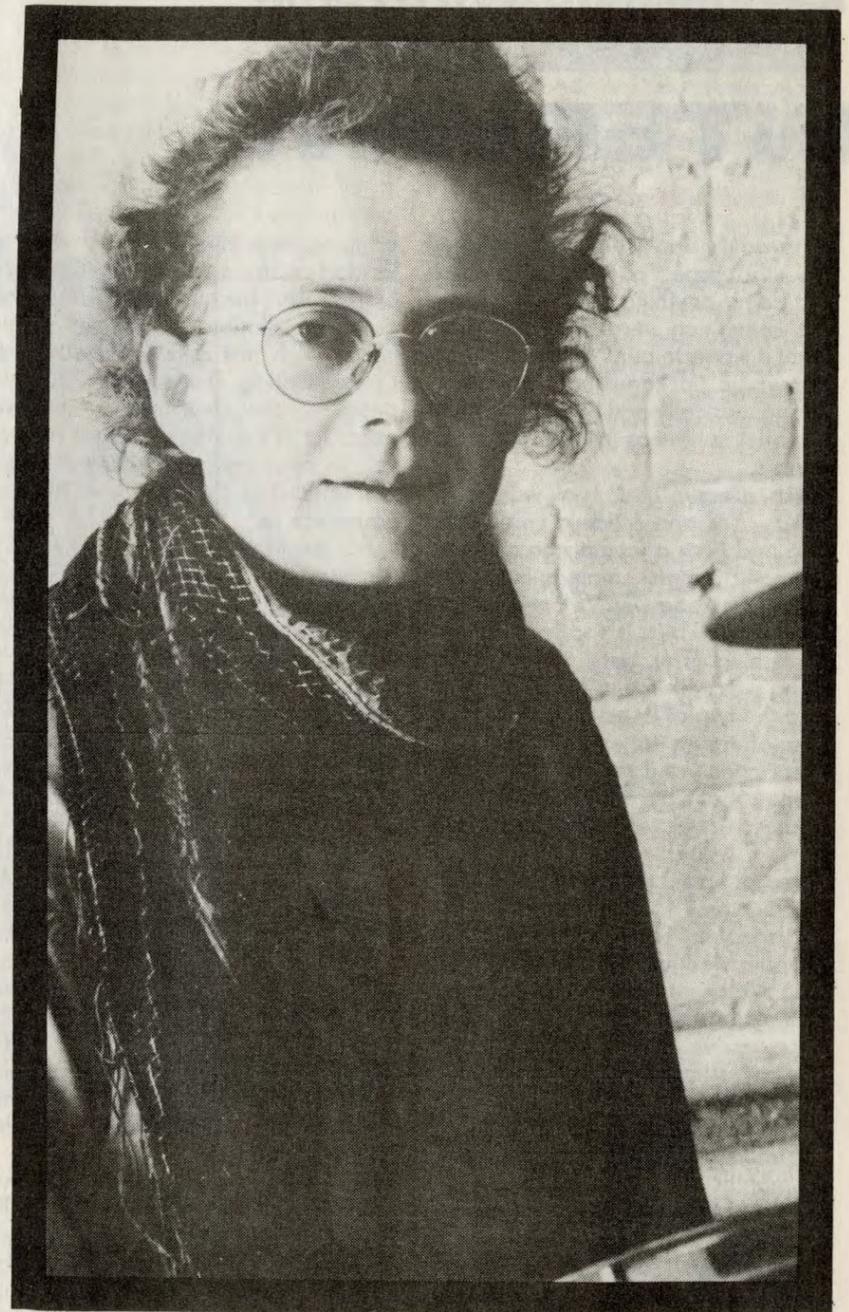
McKeough refers to the subjects of her works as if they had life — the balls, the houses have bones and carcasses, adding emphasis to the violence and waste. In each of her installations, the materials of her exhibitions are recycled or sold, an important action, consistent with the objective of her works — minimizing waste. That particular aspect of reusing materials was developed into a theme for another piece where she posted signs on many construction sites around Calgary, stating that the construction materials were available for recycling and to "please contact the owners of the buildings for details."

Her latest works, *Afterland Plaza*, at the Mendel Art Gallery in Saskatoon, 1985, and *Wake An Other*, at Latitude 53 in Edmonton, 1986, deal with housing after nuclear pollution has made the ground radioactive, and with living in a nuclear bomb shelter. *Afterland Plaza*, was designed as a shopping mall — shopping malls are typical of urban redevelopment in Saskatoon — at a time when the air, land and water is so heavily polluted with radioactivity that housing is built on stilts. The show consisted of individual 'shops': real estate companies selling homes and property built on radioactive polluted land; model homes; images of water, land, agriculture, food, animals, fish, shown with a symbol representing the precise places where radioactive substances concentrate; a map of Saskatchewan showing where all mining was being done, labelled by kind, and information about radioactive properties in milk, grains, water, land. McKeough wanted to show the kind of future in store for us if we continue producing radioactive products and by-products. "One day, while I was at the exhibition, some kids who came to see the show said, 'Ugh, this is awful. Who'd want to live here?' — they caught on right away. ▶

INTERVIEW

DRUMMING up a STORM

▶ Rita McKeough
in her studio



Isobel Harry

Heather Allin: The first piece of yours that I saw was the book, *How to describe a Musk Ox as a Ram*. In it, the concern is primarily for the animal, with no emphasis on human needs. What is the underlying symbolism behind the piece?

Rita McKeough: It has the same kind of concern for the future as in my later pieces, where urban redevelopment carries us further and we start populating everywhere. I was thinking about the effects on lambs, the effects on the change in the quality of life and of taking away the wilderness. Wilderness for me is a soother — knowing that there are places to go, to become a recluse, to retreat to. So urban development begins to encroach upon wilderness space.

I tried to take it to a time in the future, where I presented a musk ox that checks out domesticity, where maybe the musk ox could look at man differently. What got me going on that piece was something I read — they were beginning to domesticate the musk ox to get its inner wool, to make clothing, and my thoughts were — this is the ultimate. Why do we need this wool? Why don't they just leave them alone? They were going to create musk ox farms to harvest their wool. And that stuck with me. Wanting to do the book was like wanting to take something to its extreme. My feeling was that the musk ox wouldn't like domestication, though it would have little choice — the musk ox could hide, become more elusive, it could rebel, could refuse.

HA: You're still playing in a band. How much of your band work overlaps with your art work?

RM: There's very little. The band I'm playing in now, *Demi/Monde*, doesn't use visuals, just uses traditional rock format — a singer sings and the band stands there and plays — but it's a really good band with good lyrics and interesting music. The music has some nice twists, it's quite complex. The timing changes

are different so it interests me as a musician. *Mode d'Emploi* dealt with personal politics whereas *Demi/Monde* is about dealing with the world we live in, it's about issues. I agree with the lyrics and I think they're strong. Sometimes when I'm playing, I put myself in the position of the audience and it's really good to hear those lyrics. I don't write them, but I respect them. Musically I had a lot of input into *Mode d'Emploi* but

DRUMMING up a *STORM*

INTERVIEW

not lyrically and I really felt detached from that aspect of it. *DemilMonde* is not doing anything new, but it's saying something very different about what it wants to be. What's exciting is the whole package that you get — strong musically and lyrically, and it's feminist whereas *Mode d'Emploi* wasn't.

HA: *DemilMonde* is all women.

RM: Yes and *Mode d'Emploi* was two and two: a woman bass player, woman drummer, male guitarist and male singer. So *DemilMonde* is more traditional but it's about saying something. The bass player in this band was with me in *Mode d'Emploi* and the two of us come from a tradition of trying to extend the actual performance and making it a phenomenon that's more interesting to the audience, but we're not quite sure how it would relate to our lyrics. Three people in this band are artists — one woman's a cartoonist, Marian Lydbrooke; Susan Sturman is a graphic designer, and then there's me. We're interested in using props and extending the visuals because once you've done it with one band, you get restless just standing on stage. I started playing drums when I was in graduate school so I was 29 going on 30, and I just did it for a lark for about six months.

HA: In the whole of your art work, you use a lot of inanimate objects as your subjects. To this date I haven't seen any reference to human beings and yet that human presence seems to be the primary, underlying reason for your productions. How do you feel your audience responds to that? Do you feel that a human presence is an element lacking from your work?

RM: The audience becomes the people in the work. I represent a reality in the future. The people who arrive at it, come to an environment that's in a context which presents a criticism. I'm giving them my view by

bringing them into my reality which is loaded with my criticism and my biases. And because of its existence as an installation, it's critical of the issue which has allowed this reality I'm presenting. The audience are the people in the environment, so they people it. It's not important for me, as yet, to have representations of people, other than the audience. There's no reason to.

For example, in *Defunct* it wasn't necessary to have people living in the houses, because people were represented by voices, part of the sound element of the installation. I wanted to combine sound with the quality of the house, and that was the only efficient way to do it. Also in a very practical sense, in terms of building an installation like that, the only way I could represent people would be in some kind of inanimate form like sculpture, but sculpture doesn't interest me. At this point it's more interesting to have the audience people the show. Even though the show is not to scale, there's still a human presence. The people I would add would function in a different way than the audience, they would be the people that would exist in the future, and my thinking hasn't evolved to the point where I can identify that image.

HA: When you showed me the Winnipeg piece, *Retrieval* [Plug in Redux, 1985], building three houses to scale on three parking lot rental spaces, you said that people from the office buildings around the parking lot came to talk to you about the show. You talked about how these people were really intrigued with the idea of renting parking lot spaces — these being the remains of housing demolition and urban redevelopment in Winnipeg — and building homes on them. You mentioned that some homeless people actually moved into one of your houses. And you also mentioned that few artists or critics

ever saw your show and that disappointed you. Who do you want to see your work?

RM: I work towards having my audience existing in the piece once it's completed. And my reason for doing the piece is to bring the issue to public debate. That means people who are personally affected by it, people who have access to media, the general public. That audience includes artists.

HA: So you were obviously disappointed that they didn't come.

RM: The experience with Winnipeg taught me something different. I was going to say that in terms of my past experience, artists would be the ones who would be willing to give of themselves and to risk enough to enter into a discussion and ask: How does this work function? Is it successful? Why do you do it? But the Winnipeg piece taught me that if the particular piece is successful in a certain way, that the general public would be willing to do that as well. The people in Winnipeg actually answered the questions that an artist might ask, such as: How does the work function? By discussing the piece with me they answered that question. But they actually never said to me: Well, why do you do this? As an individual why do you choose to do this? That's what they don't talk about, whereas an artist might. That interests me. I'm interested in art, why people make it.

I like discussing work, mine and other people's, so I missed that. I felt a sense of loss, because of the nature of my shows — they all go to the dump or get recycled or sold, so they exist for such a short time and for only a few people — the opportunities for discussion are limited and very little has been written about them. I would never want to recreate the work because it takes so long to produce. I would never want to invest the time twice — life is short and there's so



"The Dirt and Dust Proof House," Installation detail from *Afterland Plaza*, Saskatoon, 1985

much to do. When people come to see a work, and they don't say a bloody word, I think, God! what a loss, because I'm going to move on soon and go on to the next one. All the work has problems and I'm interested in addressing that. It's crucial for my work that the general public see it and talk about it.

HA: In terms of your work being site-specific, do you go to a place and live there, or do you have an idea located in that place — about which you develop an idea for a piece of art or installation? For example, when you went to Winnipeg, you were still

producing work that was about urban re-development and demolition.

RM: They're all different, actually. The only time that I've transferred a piece without being aware of the social and political conditions was in Lethbridge. That's because it wasn't about Lethbridge at all. It was a piece I really wanted to do and I was invited by that gallery. Because of the nature of my work, it's very rare that I get invited to do a piece. Art galleries are afraid of my work — damage to the gallery and difficulty for the audience. I have to know the whole construction of the building, of the gal-

lery, the blueprints, the lighting.

In Winnipeg, my approach was not so specific. It was a more general kind of thinking and an awareness of having lived in Winnipeg, of the kinds of political conditions downtown and the new developments taking place there.

In the Saskatoon piece, a huge percentage of my decision of what to do had to do with Saskatchewan. See, every piece is different. I'm learning and changing as I go along. At the time, even now, I was personally and emotionally upset by the possibility of a nuclear war. But because I was invited to do the show in Saskatoon, I did extensive research for months on Saskatchewan and Saskatoon. I read newspapers, looked at issues and from my research I took concerns that were important enough to be worthy of the time that I would have to invest in the installation. One was a carry-over from the urban re-development — it was the boom from uranium mining which was creating speculation and a building boom in the city of Saskatoon. The other was the actual pollution from the uranium mining and its negative effect on the quality of life — projections into the future carried things to an extreme. The fact that it could be carried to such extremes comes from my experience of the boom period in Calgary. When I was invited to do the show, my first thoughts about Saskatchewan were that, of all the provinces, it's the one province that I visualize and imagine as being empty, unpopulated and incredibly beautiful and remote — wilderness. And to think of it as also being one of the world's largest producers of uranium — radioactive substances being the most dangerous pollutions, as compared to industrial pollution produced in other provinces — was too much. So my feeling was, if Saskatchewan can be destroyed, then there is absolutely no hope — there will be no refuge. The show was partially about radioactive pollution and partly about the issue of selling polluted land. The piece in Edmonton, being so close to Cold Lake and with peace camps and peace activists being centred in Edmonton, took the idea one step further.

Heather Allin is an artist/writer living in Toronto.



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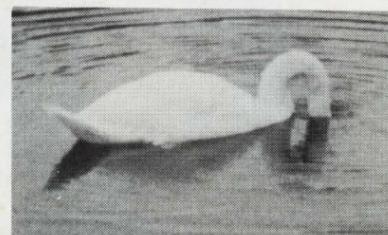
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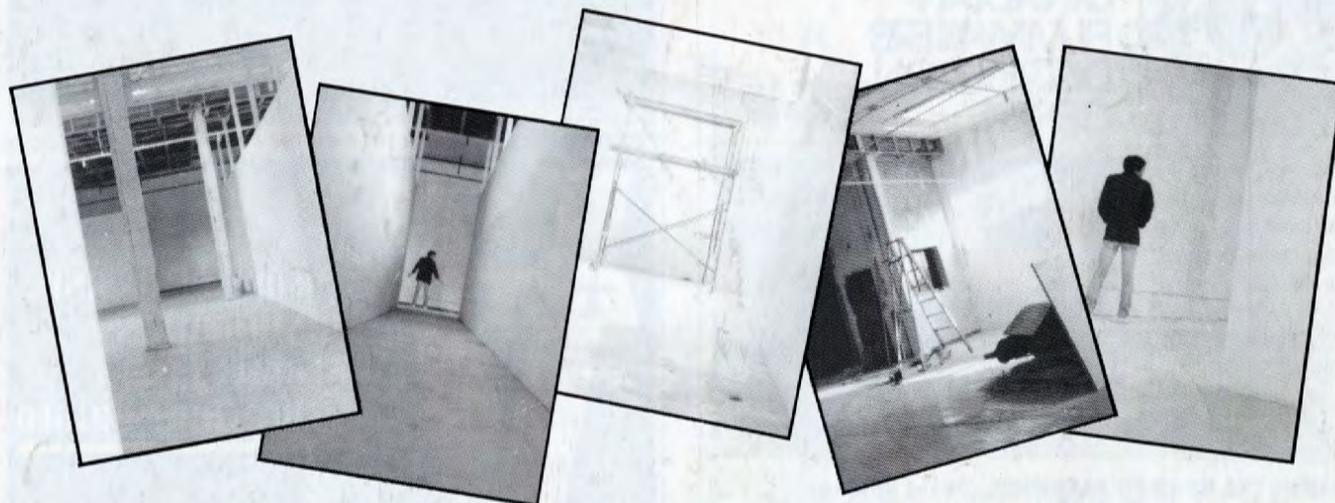
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