

W I N T E R 1987 • 88

No. 48

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# FUSE

M A G A Z I N E

## FROM THE FATHER'S HOUSE

WOMEN'S VIDEO AND  
FEMINISM'S STRUGGLE  
WITH DIFFERENCE.

*by Dot Tuer*

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FREE TRADE • THIRD CINEMA • ART & FEMINISM • MUSIC

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is an up to date guide and workbook for cultural trustees and administrators of art galleries, theatres, museums and performance companies.

- **Part one** defines not-for-profit organizations, public trust concept, legal and moral responsibilities, and outlines the role and functions of a Board.
- **Part two** examines four essential management processes: Planning—what, when, who, how much? Policy—characteristics of good policy? Board membership—recruitment, education, evaluation? Meetings—agendas, actions lists, role of chairperson?
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\*A project of the Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation\*

### WOMEN, ART AND THE PERIPHERY / MUJER, ARTE Y PEREFERIA

Chilean Artists-Curators Diamela Eltit, Nelly Richard and Lotty Rosenfeld will be in Vancouver November 11 - December 19

#### As Co-curators at Women In Focus

An Exhibition of Thirteen Chilean Women Artist's Recent Multimedia Works  
November 11 (8pm) Opening  
November 11 - December 19 Exhibition  
December 10 (8pm) Walking Tour of Works with Chilean curators

\* A talk on Women & Literature in Chile by Diamela Eltit at local universities (details forthcoming)

#### As Foreign Artists-in-Residence at Video In

November 21 & 22 (evenings) Video Screenings: Recent Video Art by Chilean Women  
November 27 (8pm) Video Installation: Opening  
December 4 Art Action (details forthcoming)  
December 5 (10am - 5pm) Workshop: Women and Art in Chile  
December 11 Art Action (details forthcoming)  
December 12 (noon - 6pm) Workshop: Interchange With Canadian Artists

#### As Foreign Artist-in-Residence at the Western Front

November - December Lotty Rosenfeld

#### For Further Information Please Contact:

Video In 1160 Hamilton Vancouver, B.C. V6B 2S2 (604) 688-4336	Women in Focus 204 - 456 W. Broadway Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1R3 (604) 872-2250	Western Front 303 E. 8th Ave. Vancouver, B.C. V5T 1S1 (604) 876-9343
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# FUSE

MAGAZINE

WINTER 87•88  
VOL. XI NO. 4

INFORMATION / DIFFUSION  
COVER ARTWORK: from *My Mother is a Dangerous Woman*, a Video Tape by b.h. Yael.



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## INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Curated by Andy Patton

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FEBRUARY 3 - 27

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## ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL

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 exhibition.

Deadlines: February 15, April 15, June 15, August 15, October 15, December 15

#### VIDEO

- to assist with the production of original video art.

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.

Deadlines: May 1, December 1

#### FILM

- to assist with the production of documentary, dramatic, animated or experimental films.

Deadlines: April 1, November 1

For information and application forms, contact:

Film, Photography and Video Office  
ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL  
151 Bloor Street West  
Suite 500  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5S 1T6  
(416) 961-1660

## A Space

### CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS CRITICAL VISIONS

The Community Arts Committee of A Space is inviting submissions from Canadian artists who would like to participate in the CRITICAL VISIONS exhibition scheduled for May 1988.

The intention of CRITICAL VISIONS is to reveal the realities which pertain to the working life of the artist. This exhibition is the second in a series which provides artists with an opportunity to share a vision that exposes, critiques, and proposes creative possibilities to change the harsh realities facing the artist. Please send proposals which deal with issues such as:

- freedom of expression
- safe working environment and housing
- economic security
- racism
- sexism
- respect for cultural diversity

CRITICAL VISIONS is multidisciplinary and artists are invited to submit works in video, painting, drawing, performance, writing and installation.

The exhibition will be held at A Space and will feature the work of artists selected from the submissions received. Please send your proposals to:

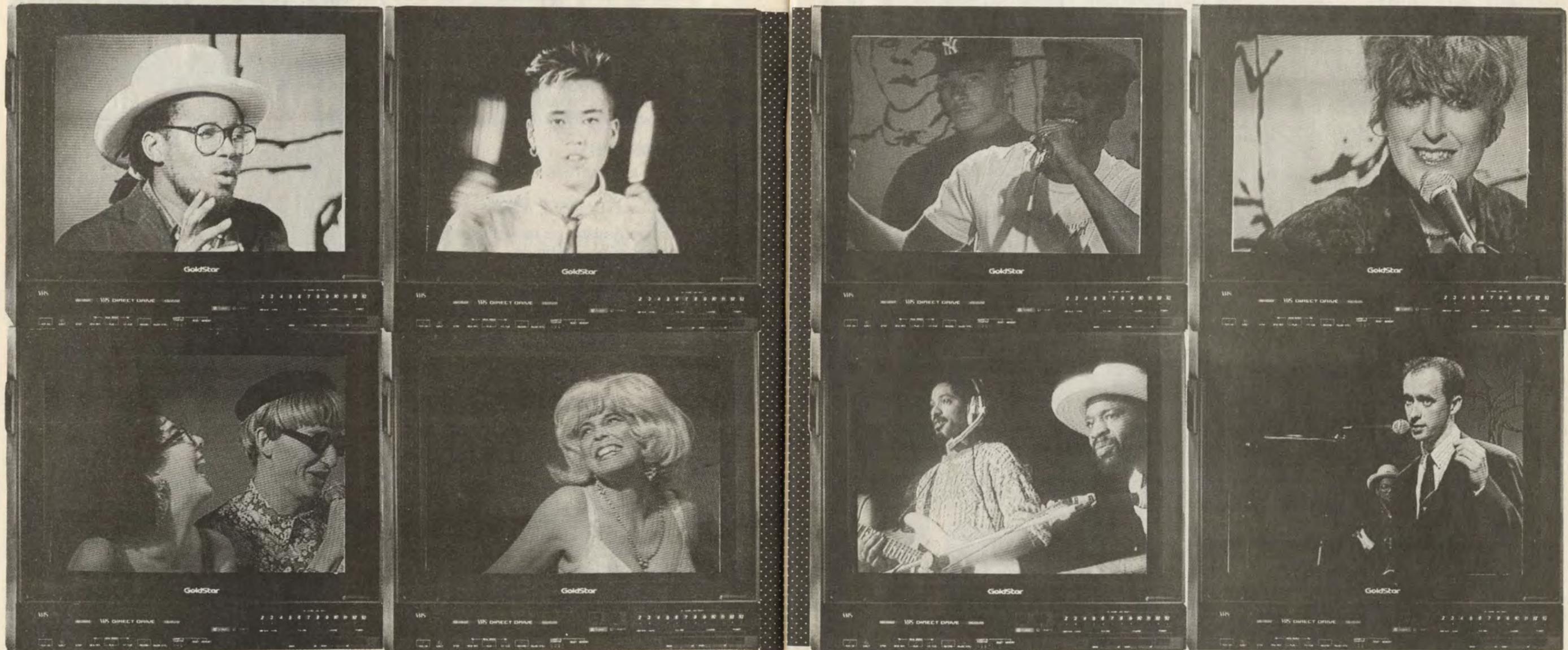
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c/o Scott Marsden  
Community Arts Committee

The deadline for submissions is March 31, 1988.

# LATE NIGHT WITH FUSE

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 4 9:30 LEE'S PALACE

**Not Just Another Benefit:** Late Night was conceived as a FUSE profile/FUN-Raising talk show which would bring Toronto video artists, musicians, writers and performers from diverse communities on to the same Late Night couch. Backed up by the Livestock house-band, the flamboyant and wonderful team of Louise Garfield and Clifton Joseph co-hosted talk spots and performances by over 25 invited guests. The three-and-a-half hour programme was performed live to a packed crowd, and featured custom-designed video ads produced by FUSE supporters which will be included in the four-part Rogers Cable 10 upcoming broadcasts LATE NIGHT WITH FUSE.



**LATE NIGHT WITH FUSE THANKS TO:**

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## VIDEO NEWS

Kim Tomczak

**THE MEDIA ARTS SECTION** remains in the news with Dennis L'Esperance resigning his position as an arts officer in the Media Arts Section of the Canada Council. The Council is accepting applications for this position which handles video, electronic art and sound art. That makes three out of four officers in the Media Arts Section tendering their resignations within the past year. Who says these new arts forms aren't exciting? Contact the Canada Council, Media Arts Section, 99 Metcalfe Street, P.O. Box 1047, Ottawa, Ontario, K1P 5V8 for more info.

son if you would like information on how to preview material for broadcasting on TV Ontario. The address is: TVO, 2180 Yonge Street, Tor. Ont. M4S 2C1.



**THE Grierson Documentary Seminar** recently concluded its week long session which included many video producers. Among the invited film and video participants were John Greyson, Gary Kibbins, Stuart Marshall (U.K.), Kay Armatage, Marilyn Burgess, Emile de Antonio (USA), Kevin McMahon, Laura Sky, Robert Frank (USA/Can) Sara Diamond, Helen Klodawsky, Michelle Parkerson, Julian Samuel, Liette Aubin, Fernand Belanger & Dagmar Gueissaz-Teufel, Marie-Helene Cousineau, Yves Dion, Isaac Julien. For more info write to: The Grierson Seminar, Nora Curry, 88 Wellesley St. E. No. 206, Toronto, Ont. M4Y 1H4.

**THE BRAND NEW** Catalogue of Catalogues issue from Vtape is out. Christine Martin, Calerie Boudreau and Kat Cruikshank have spent the last six months compiling the most up-to-date information about independent video available. This catalogue is so up-to-date, so big and so good it's scary. Contact Vtape, 183 Bathurst Street, Toronto, M5T 2R7 (416) 863-9897. If you want to see a copy but don't live in Toronto try the following video distributors who all have copies of the catalogue on hand: Women in Focus, No. 204-456 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1R3; Video Out, 1160 Hamilton St., Van. B.C., V6B 2S2; Video Pool, 100 Arthur Street, 3rd Floor, Winnipeg, Man., R3C 4B3; Videographe, 4550 rue Garnier, Montreal, Que. H2J 3S6; Groupe Intervention Video, 718 rue Gilford, Montreal, Que. H2J 1N6; Video Femmes, 56 St-Pierre No. 203, Quebec, Que. G1K 4A1.

**BIG PRIZE WINNER** Dennis Day has won first prize in Geneva's 2nd International Video Week for his tape *Oh Nothing*. Day will receive a substantial sum for his prize from this prestigious international video festival.

**ANDRÉE DUCHAINE** is distributing Canadian Video Art in Europe from Paris, France. Producers may see a sample contract on request from Duchaine by writing to her at 19 bd. des Batignolles, Paris, France, 75008.

**VIDEO PRODUCERS** have wanted their tapes available to the public through the Public Library system. In New York City, the Donnell Library (Donnell Media Centre, 20 West 53rd Street, New York, 10019) has had a programme like this for years, and now, so does Toronto. Laura Murray, the chief audio-visual librarian for the Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library has purchased a series of videotapes for inclusion in the collection. These tapes are now available, for free, to the public throughout the Metropolitan Toronto region.



Stills courtesy of Vtape

Stills from, TOP: *The Measure of Success* by Cherie Moses, 5 min., 1987 and ABOVE: *Elements: Air* by Peter Taussig, 22 min., 1987.

**RICHARD JOHNSON** has put together a show entitled *Moving Images*, of independent film and video for Ontario's educational television station, TV Ontario. Several video artists have had their tapes purchased for airing over the TVO network in Ontario. The money is not great, but it's a foot in this broadcaster's door. Write to TVO, Attn. Richard John-

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**88**  
POINT ONE

## ■ RETREAT TO BOHEMIA

CAMERON HOUSE



WINTER 1987 • 88 FUSE 7



Photo: Barbara Badessi

Inside the plant: art alongside United Technologies; latest.

## CORPORATIONS

# High Tech Soft Touch

## Sponsorship at what Cost?

BY BRUCE BARBER

HALIFAX — In mid-September, artist members of Visual Arts Nova Scotia (VANS) received an invitation from the new Halifax Aerotech Parks' first major customer, Pratt and Whitney, to participate in their grand opening bash in early November. The letter announced that Pratt and Whitney of Canada Inc., a subsidiary of the

U.S.-based United Technologies Corporation, was planning a major exhibition of art by Atlantic artists. The company's five-member art committee requested that artists send in two works, any size in any (mostly traditional) media. Further, they suggested that selected works would be purchased for the Pratt and Whitney collection, and, as there

would be thousands of visitors visiting the new facility, artists could expect to pick up a few more interested buyers on the way. In a concluding "note of interest" the committee stated that "our colour scheme is basically along the lines of blue, grey, silver and rose."

Two hundred and fifty artists responded to the solicitation letter. A few groups met to discuss the issue of corporate sponsorship of exhibitions. However as Maritime artists had already benefitted from corporate largesse — most recently, in an exhibition of local artists' work toured by the Montreal engineering company Lavalin Inc. — little opposition was raised. For the most part the local community welcomed this opportunity to exhibit and sell their work. The Canadian Artists Representation executive was split on the issue, voting at their October meeting to direct a letter to Pratt and Whitney protesting the lack of artists' fees for the exhibitors and

some rumblings were heard within the VANS membership that the mailing list would be made available to whomever wanted it, for whatever purposes.

So, what is the problem with Corporate Sponsorship? According to a report from Raymond D'Argenio, senior vice-president of communications for Pratt and Whitney's parent company, United Technologies Corporation, \$12 million dollars is spent annually by the company in contributions, much of it to cultural institutions. Most of this money can be written off in tax breaks. The surplus value represented in this sign of corporate beneficence arises from, in the case of U.T.C. and its nine operating groups (Pratt and Whitney included), military contracts. The corporate dollars, in one sense, do a round trip; from tax dollars, to government-initiated military contracts, then sales to the various arms of the defense establishment. The surplus value results in some money going back into the

production, R and D expansion, spin-offs for P.R./advertising and the silencing of critics through expensive OpEd (advertising) campaigns. Finally any contributions awarded to culture, education, health, etc, become the subject of applications for federal and state (provincial) tax breaks. In effect, producers of culture pay twice for receiving corporate largesse, and are happier for that. Is this a political chestnut?

Consider these facts. According to its own corporate reports United Technologies Corporation is the 45th largest company in the world, seventh largest manufacturing contractor and in 1983, the second largest defense contractor in the U.S. In 1981 U.T.C. was 21st on the *Fortune* 500 index of the top U.S. corporations. After Ronald Reagan was elected for his first term of office, U.T.C. quickly moved to 7th position (1983) on the *Fortune* list. The result, significantly, of increased expenditure by Reagan's administration on the military, which we are now in the process of financing.

As one of the largest of the nine U.T.C. operating groups, Pratt and Whitney has its fair share of military contracts. They are the world's leading producer of gas turbine (turbojet and turbofan) engines. They are also a major producer of jet engines for military aircraft. Other products include fuel-cell power plants for use in space and industry, solid-fuel propellant motors for use in the Titan II launch vehicles, ramjet propulsion systems and liquid-fueled rocket engines which have been used for propelling NASA's Atlas Centaur and Titan Centaur launch vehicles. With Norden Systems, Chemical Systems and Sikorsky, Pratt and Whitney provide the bulk of the defense contracts for the parent corporation. Together with other major companies they produce thousands of items and combinations of components for the military, from electrical insulation parts to radar and digital display systems, to engine controls, flight systems, launch vehicles, and helicopters. Pratt and Whitney's high-tech facility in Halifax will be producing a range of cast components for gas turbine engines and other as yet unspecified aircraft engine components.

U.T.C. is not as benign as

many believe. One of their ads placed in *Aircraft* magazine has a full-page slogan printed in U.T.C.-designed black robotech simulated type on a silver ground: "HOW TO GET KNOWN AS A HOT COMPANY IN MILITARY AND SPACE SYSTEMS." Before taking up his post as Ronald Reagan's first Secretary of State, Alexander Haig was for a time the chairman of the board of U.T.C.

United Technologies opinion editorials (propaganda statements) and their sponsorship of cultural events have been the target of many protests in the U.S., England and Canada. Last winter a U.T.C.-sponsored exhibit *American Folk Art* was the subject of a boycott when it was installed in the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (see *FUSE*, Vol. 10, no. 6). This form of involvement has been hailed as a necessary result of an increasingly complex

and alienating world, one of the "megatrends" identified by best-selling author John Naisbitt in his pop psych/soc/pol studies text *Megatrends* (1982, 1984). According to Naisbitt "high tech" needs "high touch" in order to reverse or ameliorate the alienating conditions of the high-tech workplace and the increasingly one-dimensional world (Marcuse) we are living in.

Maybe it's simpler than Naisbitt contends. Even if the president of Pratt and Whitney is a painter himself and has a couple of one-man shows and sales to his credit, he and his company are *not simply* in the business of endorsing and arranging art exhibitions for their therapeutic value. The sponsorship of art shows *continues* to make good business sense. As effective and cheap P.R., exhibitions soften the company image. Better, they help spread the surplus value into

more palatable, and most importantly, *recoverable* forms.

So when you read the endorsement for Naisbitt's book made by Harry Gray, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of United Technologies — "*Megatrends* is 'full of insights on the shape of the future...that will be of value to business leaders seeking to understand and take advantage of the fundamental restructuring that is taking place in our society'" — read between the lines.

The minority of artists who decided not to participate in the Pratt and Whitney exhibition did so in the belief that their work would be misused in this context, that Pratt and Whitney's lure of sales was a mis-representation of the opportunities provided. Their art was not to become the pink ribbon on the blue, grey and silver bullet of United Technologies.

## CONFERENCE

# Tightly Strapped

BY JOHN GILLIS

HALIFAX — The Atlantic Provinces Association for Continuing University Education (APACUE) held a conference on October 29th and 30th, 1987. Co-sponsored by Dalhousie University, St. Mary's University and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, the conference listed as its main theme the cultural aspects of regional development and their implications for training and education.

The conference attracted members of Continuing Education Departments from all four Atlantic Provinces and gave them the opportunity to discuss some of the ways that each has been involved with the cultural sector.

One of the most thought-provoking and inspiring panelists was Susan Wood of the Extension Department of Memorial

University in Newfoundland. She spoke at length about that Continuing Education Department's accomplishments in the Newfoundland community. Some of the many cultural activities that the Memorial University Department has been involved in include: providing rehearsal space for the Newfoundland comedy troupe, Codco, to rehearse for an upcoming CBC television series; producing high-quality programmes for loan to community groups and broadcast on the University's Educational Television — one of the tapes centered on the debate over the controversial anti-pornography bill; assisting St. Michael's Printshop, an internationally recognized artist-run printmaking centre; assisting marginal groups and projects with administrative skills and resources

when they approach government agencies, the corporate and public sector for financial aid; and establishing an agreement with the Newfoundland Filmmakers Cooperative (NIFCO) whereby the university would turn over expensive film production and editing equipment to NIFCO free of charge with the stipulation that the university be given continued access to the equipment if needed — this ensured that the much-needed equipment would remain in the community and continue to encourage local film production. Susan Wood not only spoke of the success of the Extension Department community services but she also mentioned some of the failures and the challenges that make it difficult to accomplish all that they would like to with a tightly strapped budget in tough financial times.

Jaffray Wilkins, Federal Economic Development Coordinator, spoke on behalf of Senator Lowell Murray who was unable to attend the conference. Mr. Wilkins, who talked about the mandate of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, was expected to reveal how that agency viewed the role of the "cultural industries" in regional development. However, it was apparent that Mr. Wilkins had very little to say specifically about this aspect except that the agency was open ▶

◀ continued from  
previous page.

to suggestions and that they "wanted to do it right this time."

Ken Pitman, filmmaker from St. John's, Newfoundland, cautioned people against the use and abuse of the term "cultural industries." He said that the efforts that went into establishing the economic credibility of the arts sector in the economy must now be re-evaluated so that cultural groups do not get trapped in market terminology as the only method to justify their existence. He strongly emphasized the necessity for arts and cultural activities to be recognized by society as vital and worthwhile components essential to establishing a quality of life.

Pitman also stressed that the new policies for the Atlantic Canadian Opportunities Agency should be made specific to the needs of each of the provinces with "respect to their differences." Pitman felt there was a great need for an apprenticeship training programme in the region so that young people interested in developing new skills would not necessarily have to leave the area to pick up valuable work experience. He felt this need was particularly acute in film and video but that the training programme would also provide quality employment in arts administration and other media as well.

Although attendance at the conference was greater than expected, it would have been beneficial to have present more artists, producers, and representatives from arts and cultural groups, since the majority of the participants were from the administrative areas.

It was encouraging to see APACUE continuing to play such an important leadership role in drawing attention to contemporary cultural issues in the Atlantic Region. They should be encouraged to continue to play such a role, for they seem to be one of the few groups thoroughly prepared to act as a significant lobbying force in determining the kind of attention that government agencies should give to one of our most commonly overlooked resources: the cultural sector. ●



Photo: Justin Hall

*I Sent My Creature Scouting the Globe* triptych by  
Gerry Squires

ART

## No Support

### Nfld. Artists Send Work to France

**ST. JOHN'S** — Two years after nine artists held an auction to send their work to an international exhibition in Cognac, France, pieces from that show were featured at the Emma Butler Gallery in St. John's, Nfld.

The jury for the Salon des Vendages, which looked at work from countries as various as Britain, Argentina and Morocco, selected work from Newfoundland artists Gerry Squires, Julia Pickard, Frank Lapointe, Jean-Claude Roy, Ilse Hughes, Bill Ritchie, Lise Sorensen, George Horan, and Scott Goudie. Roy had first initiated the artists' involvement, and Squires and Horan helped develop the idea. Goudie won the Grand Prix of 5,000 francs for his watercolor, *King Nait*.

It was the first time Newfoundland artists had submitted work to the exhibition, held to celebrate the region's annual grape harvest. They managed this despite a lack of provincial government funding or support.

The arts come under the auspices of the Department of Culture, Recreation and Youth (known to local artists as CRY). The cultural responsibilities are often overshadowed by Minister

Bill Matthews' emphasis on sports, to the point where many artists "have just about given up on them," said Goudie.

"They said they had no money for us. Squires even went to them and asked for a Newfoundland flag, which the mayor of Cognac wanted to fly at the City Centre. And they wouldn't even give us that."

"We just don't have the money, and what we don't have we can't give," said Assistant Deputy Minister for Culture, Bill Frost. "I realize the show was very successful, and I recognize the need for that type of funding, but we just don't have a programme for it. And with the government's financial restraint programme, there are no new monies coming in."

"That's why we established the arts council. We don't have money to send amateur art out of the province."

All the nine artists chosen are professional artists.

The auction of fifty-one works included pieces from David Blackwood and Mary Pratt. "It was a collective idea, we just said to hell with the government," said Goudie. Over \$16,000 was raised to transport and insure the works, and to help the artists pay

their own travel costs. Crates were donated by the Memorial University Art Gallery.

Goudie feels the auction showed that "a lot of the public thought it was important. This was an international exhibition, we weren't just going to Joe Batt's Arm with it. People were really proud."

The Newfoundland presence in the show also exposed a different aspect of the provincial culture to Europe. Anti-seal-hunt activists have painted their own picture of cruel, fur-clad barbarians.

The works ranged from Pickard's shimmering impressionism to Squires' aching surrealist imagery. One of his pieces, a triptych entitled *I Sent My Creature Scouting On The Globe*, was central to the show. In the Emma Butler Gallery, St. John's, two of the four works by each artist shown in Cognac were exhibited. The artists have discovered that their work hangs well together, and several joined forces in a *Human Form* exhibition last spring (which they also funded themselves). Goudie "imagines another show is likely," possibly on landscapes. ●

INSTITUTIONS

## Whose History?

### Caribbean Studies Under Fire

BY ERICA SIMMONS

**TORONTO** — The University of Toronto history department has carefully divided the world into six "areas" of study. Western Europe, Russia/Eastern Europe and Britain are each separate areas, as are Canada and the U.S. The rest of the world is compressed into a single area currently designated "Asia-Africa-Latin America." This category was until recently called "Third World" and its new title, one would guess, was chosen to avoid the taint of politically loaded terminology.

This past year, however, a new course was introduced by the history department: "Caribbean History and Culture, 1600-1940" taught by Professor Bernard Moitt. This course was unusual in two respects. First, it proposed to study the Caribbean alone and not as part of a broader survey course on Latin America or the Third World. Second, the course's title indicated that the study of culture was a necessary adjunct to the study of history. Nobody expected the forty-five students who greeted Moitt at the first class — spilling out of the tiny seminar room that had been arranged for the course. Thirty-four of these students registered, and the course had to be transferred to a larger lecture hall.

But two months later, these students were no less surprised than Professor Moitt by the department's announcement that the course would not be offered the following year. In a move unusual for U. of T. undergrads, students organized to protest the cancellation of the course.

All complaints were met with polite but firm resistance from the university, and students were frustrated by the absence of any formal grievance channels. The department said it had paid for the course with funds left over

after all essential or "core" courses had been arranged, and that the course might be offered in the future but there were no guarantees.

But the history department's reluctance to continue the Caribbean history course could not be attributed solely to financial constraints. Peter Blanchard, past-chairman of the history department and a specialist in Latin American history, explained that the history curriculum is heavily influenced by the views of tradi-

tionalist, European-oriented scholars. These academics are resistant to the introduction of such courses as Caribbean history which they see as a weak field with a dearth of relevant scholarship, and they believe that Caribbean history is more properly approached as a component of European imperialist history. Hence, the French West Indies may be studied as a part of French history, the British islands as a part of British history, and so on. Blanchard con-

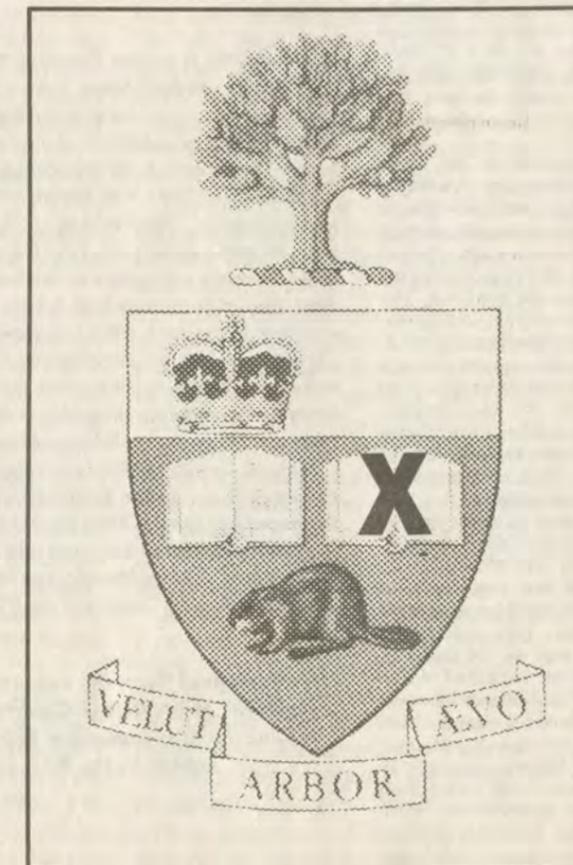
ceded that such attitudes are "Eurocentric, even racist."

Chronic underfunding exacerbates this problem by forcing courses like Caribbean history to compete with other "marginal" fields (like women's studies) for increasingly scarce funds. It also means that when new lecturers must be hired, the department looks for candidates who are proficient in more than one branch of history; when the current specialist on British imperialism retires, the department could try to replace him with someone specializing in both British imperialism and the Caribbean. But the difference between such a European-centered approach and the perspective of an Africanist-Caribbeanist like Bernard Moitt is enormous.

As Blanchard pointed out, the department is also guided by demands of graduate students for strong programmes in European and North American history — when graduate students demand courses in fields like Caribbean history, the department will be more responsive. But of course this is a "catch-22" situation. If undergrads do not study Caribbean history at U. of T., it is unlikely that they will return as graduate students to demand it. And those undergrads who study Caribbean history elsewhere surely will not look to U. of T. to continue in this field. Without some sort of principled commitment to broadening the scope of the history programme to include courses like Caribbean history, it is difficult to see how the curriculum will ever change.

If there is a lesson to be learned from this, it is that the battles of cultural politics must be fought not only in the arts but also in the academy. This case at U. of T. raised serious questions about whose history, and whose culture is worth studying. Such questions are clearly political — whether the history of colonized peoples should properly be taught from the perspective of the colonizers or even whether such history will be taught at all.

There is a small victory to report, however. The U. of T. history department announced late in the summer that the course will be offered once more. But is it reasonable to expect next year's students to battle again for the course's survival? ●



Collage: Bryan Gee

## FUNDING

## Bacon &amp; Eggs

## The New B.C. Film Fund

BY CRAIG CONDY-BERGGOLD

VANCOUVER — Earlier this year, Meg Thornton, Maria Insell and myself, sat in Bill Reid's office, the provincial Minister of Tourism, Recreation and Culture responsible for the new B.C. Film Fund. We were lobbying for a Special Projects category which would provide support to short films, art films, documentaries, and any low-budget or non-theatrical film productions. We assumed it would be a difficult task to convince a Social Credit cabinet minister of the economic viability of art; of how, dimes for dollars, short films and low-budget features were the best investment. Such films produce the greatest number of productions per dollar and the potential for the best return for the smallest risk. He read our executive summary, looked up and said "Yep, I agree with this." We had rehearsed and prepared ourselves with money talk and stats. After a half hour he told us he really liked artists because we were so positive.

In September, the B.C. provincial government announced their long-awaited film development fund, called FILM B.C. The agency is set up to invest 10.5 million dollars from lottery proceeds in British Columbia's indigenous film industry over the next three years. No, the Social Credit government is not a bleeding heart, \$10.5 million is not a lot, and any money received has to be paid back to the fund. There are no grants in this package. The agency is modeled on Telefilm, whereby a film production receives loans or equity investment if it appears market driven. "Collateral" is determined by guaranteed sales contracts from theatrical distributors and broadcasters, and the percentage of private capital invested in the film production.

The other support programmes of FILM B.C. include script development, pre-production, production, promotion and distribution, and professional development.

"From day one we will be looking for real commitment from our partners. You all know the tale of the bacon and egg breakfast. The hen was involved in the project, but the hog was committed. We will be looking for this kind of commitment when we are considering partners in the FILM B.C." These words, spoken by the government when announcing FILM B.C. drew nervous laughter amongst the audience. More than one film producer in B.C. has been hog-tied.

The objective of the Social Credit government towards a film development fund is to make money through economic development, job creation and the movement of private and federal monies into the province. This market-driven approach to developing the film industry is further underlined by the appointment of Wayne Sterloff to head FILM B.C. He was Telefilm's Western Provinces Project Manager, and their record for financing short films, documentaries and art films is dismal.

I don't want to be too pessimistic about the future of FILM B.C. There was a surprise for low-budget film producers; the non-theatrical film assistance programme. This programme will finance by way of equity investment or loan for up to \$10,000 "film projects not normally destined for theatre or television exhibition and which may utilize the following formats: 16 mm, video, videodiscs, film strips with audiocassette, or in some cases including related computer software." The eligi-

bility of a non-theatrical project appears weighted towards commercial viability as factors include "size of commercial market" and "export potential." What will be accepted in this programme still seems vague, as there is no track record. However, it will be juried and applications will be accepted beginning November 1st.

The stumbling block for non-theatrical projects will be how FILM B.C. negotiates recoupment on their investments with producers. Non-theatrical distributors, such as CFDW, do not guarantee a film's pre-sale, only a commitment to distribute a film. They establish a contract of consignment between the filmmaker and distributor. Revenues are not guaranteed, as they are with theatrical films by pre-sales to broadcasters. Unrealistic regulations on methods of recoupment could stifle FILM B.C.'s non-theatrical programme. Let us hope this jury will be made up of filmmakers and not bankers.

Perhaps the most embarrassing moment in the B.C. film community this year was a press

statement by Chris Bruyere, President of the British Columbia Association, that art films should not be funded by FILM B.C. In his zeal for the film establishment Chris Bruyere must have feared that the pie was getting too small. Perhaps he feared that the Social Credit government was about to derail FIA's lobbying efforts because groups like Cineworks, Women in Focus, and CFDW were lobbying, not only for art films, but for all non-theatrical films. BCFIA's membership was not consulted on this public position concerning Art, with a capital A, and it is doubtful that Bruyere represented their views. There are many artists in the industry. It's "wait and see on Film B.C." in the meantime, British Columbia is still without a provincial arts council and many independent filmmakers continue to work on Hollywood film productions in town. For the most part, they are working as production assistants who pick up cigarette butts and direct traffic, camera assistants or location managers — whatever pays the bills.

"FILMMAKING in western Canada suffers from a legacy of economic and cultural underdevelopment. We are faced with two major disadvantages: a lack of any provincial or municipal support for film production, and our geographic isolation from the major centres of capital and distribution. The following set of interdependent problems have resulted from this situation: a) Only 2% of Telefilm financing comes to B.C. We do not have a strong B.C.-based industry and therefore cannot leverage our fair share of public-sector federal funding nor private-sector funding, i.e. banks, investors and theatrical distribution contracts. b) Some of our most talented filmmakers have left the province to develop their skills elsewhere in the more viable and growing film production centres. c) Through sheer will and determination a small percentage of local filmmakers do manage to put together financial packages for production. However they still face the problems of marketing and distribution to make a return on the capital invested and continue production.

Many of Canada's well-known feature filmmakers got their start by making small, low-budget, experimental art films, i.e. Sandy Wilson, Phil Borsos and Jack Darcus. These examples demonstrate that a full-fledged film industry is based on a community of interest that has depth and vertical integration. The development of an infrastructure requires the support of a Special Projects Category in the B.C. Film Fund."

— Excerpted from the executive summary of "The Development of the British Columbia Film Fund," prepared by Cineworks Independent Filmmakers Society and presented to the B.C. government this past June.

## INDUSTRIAL IMAGES

by Sara Diamond

NEWS &amp; VIEWS FROM THE WEST

*Industrial Images, Industrial Consciousness* provides a comprehensive historical overview of Canadian art works about the industrial environment. The exhibition was curated by Rosemary Donegan, commissioned by the Art Gallery of Hamilton and is travelling to Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, and Halifax. It is one of the most comprehensive Canadian historical exhibitions to tour in the last ten years.

While the theme provides unity, the images represent diverging vantage points. Some pieces are by artists who are in solidarity with the lives and struggles of working people. Several are works by industrial workers themselves. There are pieces commissioned by specific industries, government and world exhibitions to eulogize the contribution of workers or of industry to the development of Canada. There are advertisements which deployed artists' images of the workplace and workforce.

The dominant medium is paint, although lithography, sculpture, union buttons and cards and photography are also present. Pieces range from the late 19th century to the 1950s. The exhibition surveys all of the major regions of Canada, from the East to

the Prairies to the West Coast, including the industrial belts of Quebec and Ontario. This provides "a series of specific geographic sites, both urban and regional, reflecting the fact that the location and availability of natural resources and labour power have been determining factors in Canada's development as a productive industrial nation." (From Vancouver Art Gallery pamphlet.)

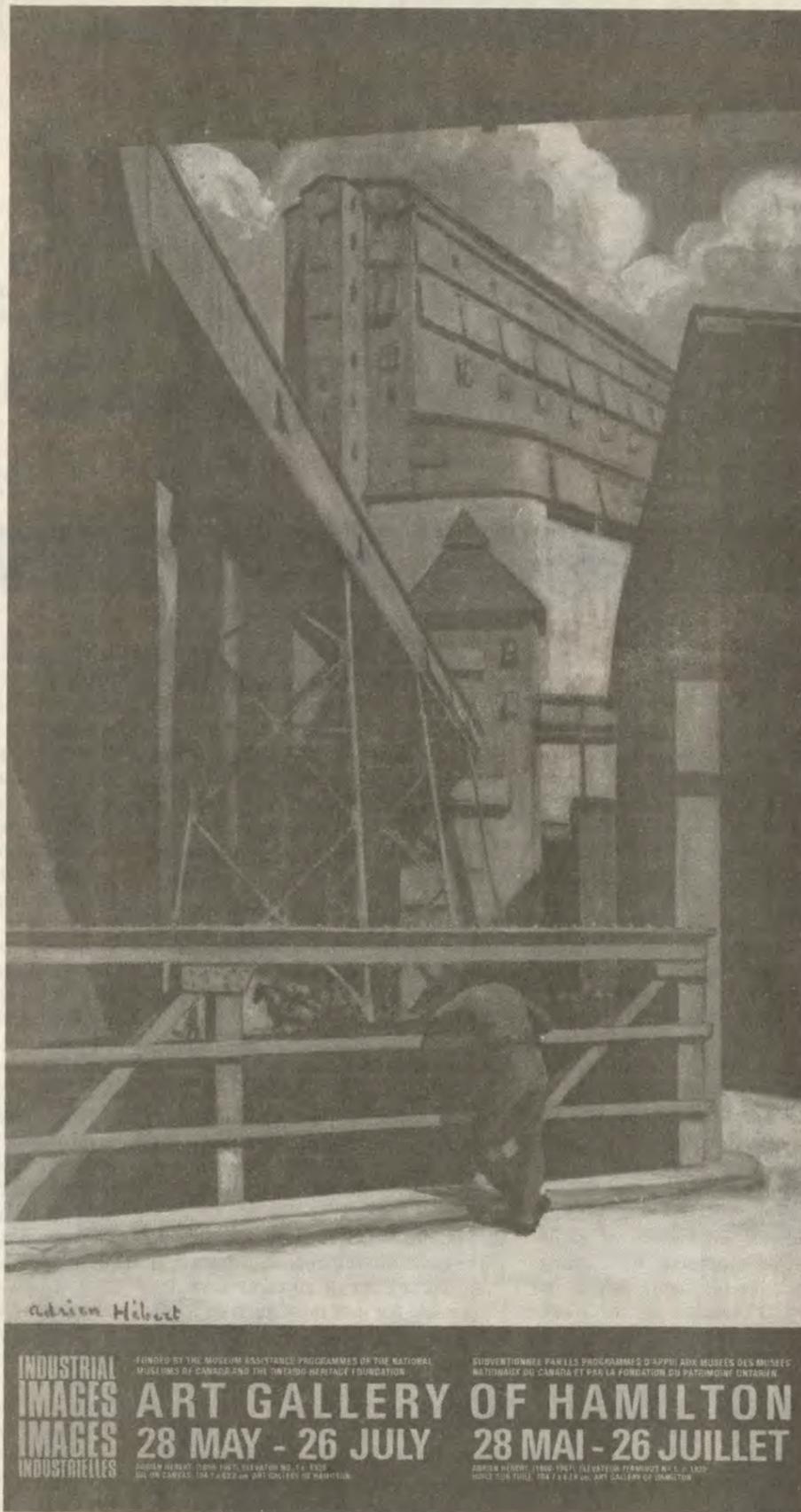
The interpretation of Canadian history embedded within this exhibition implies that Canadian development and cultural identity were motored more by economic conditions and the social consciousness that resulted than by great individuals, parliamentary initiatives or specific works of intellectual or cultural production. It is unique to see this expressed in a gallery setting because the dominant culture concentrates on the production and images of individuality and artistic "genius," not the culture of social forces and movements.

A shifting set of conditions makes it possible for a curator such as Rosemary Donegan to emerge at this level of the public gallery structure. She has a proven track record and is exceptional in her capacity to conceive and unite the themes and works into a meaningful dialogue. Yet she retains a critical analysis of Canadian culture within this ambitious and well-real-

ized exhibition. Donegan is an emblem of a larger, positive process: the ascension of a generation of curators schooled in the eclecticism and social theories of post-modernism into positions of power as curators with tangible links to the public gallery system.

Within this environment, Donegan successfully presents a series of highly politicized moments (such as the drive for industrial unionism, or the post-war attacks on communist influence in society and unions) and the translation of these into cultural artifacts. Her show informs the discourse and assumptions of modernism, providing concrete evidence that there were other cultural strategies in the North America of the 1940s.

Donegan manages to span a terrain of troubled waters by firmly establishing both grounds of the industrial magnet. Labour and management are allowed to speak through images, and their visions sometimes converge. By presenting several oppositional vantage points the show educates a broader public without entirely confronting gallery patrons and boards. In fact, the Vancouver exhibition was in part sponsored by Pioneer Metals Corporation. As Donegan herself suggests it would be very difficult to curate an historically sound exhibition that relied solely on labour advocacy art. ▶



Elevator No. 1, c. 1929  
by Adrien Hebert on  
exhibition poster.

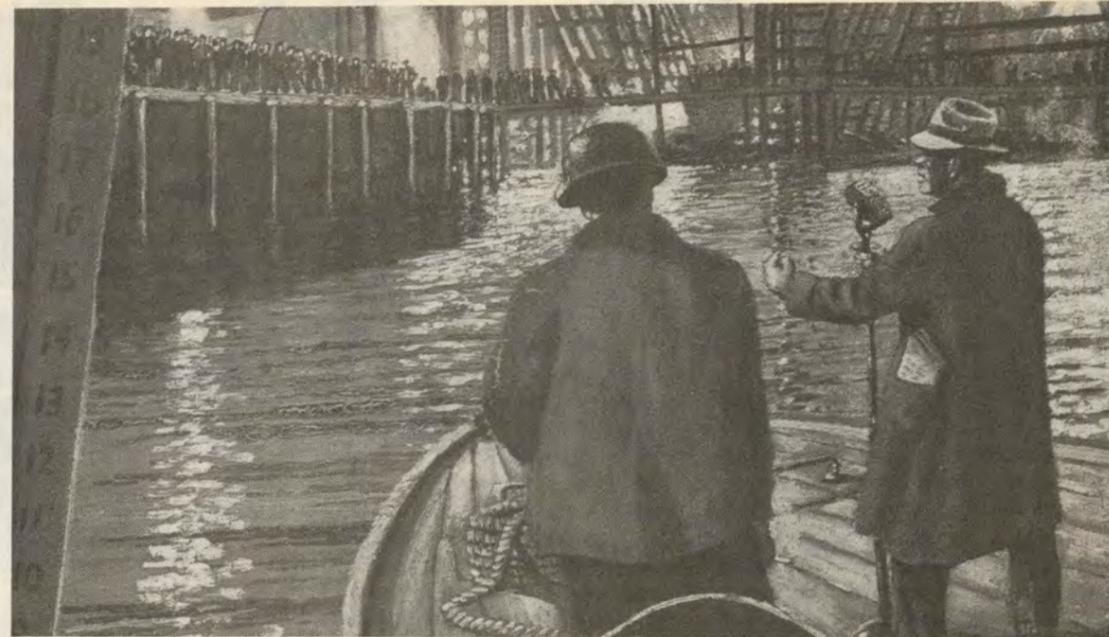
INDUSTRIAL IMAGES  
INDUSTRIELLES

FUNDED BY THE MUSEUM ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF CANADA AND THE ONTARIO HERITAGE FOUNDATION  
SOUTVENIRÉE PAR LES PROGRAMMES D'APPUI AUX MUSÉES DES MUSÉES NATIONAUX DU CANADA ET PAR LA FONDATION DU PATOIMOINE ONTARIEN

ART GALLERY OF HAMILTON  
28 MAY - 26 JULY  
28 MAI - 26 JUILLET

ADRIEN HEBERT, 1890-1971, LE GAZON-FRANÇOIS N° 1, C. 1929  
MUSEE DU TRAVAIL, 100, 7, 8, 9, ART GALLERY OF HAMILTON

Detail of  
Organization  
by Fraser  
Wilson, 1944.



The labour movement, particularly its 20th-century industrial version, did not leave many images behind on the cultural terrain. Only occasionally did union locals maintain a photo record beyond posed images of union executive members. With the exception of the episodic and stylized imagery constructed by the communist workers' art movements and publications and the labour arts guilds of the 1940s, there was little visual art produced within the union movement. This is partly because by the late 1930s the mass culture of film and radio was already beginning to supercede the arena of localized popular culture. As well, it required a major effort of organization and patronage to stimulate art work and exhibition.

An exception was the wartime Labour Arts Guild in British Columbia led by John Goss. It created a conducive climate, with classes in visual and performing arts offered to workers as well as a series of large-scale exhibitions and concerts. The Guild attracted young, committed artists and allowed them to mix with trade union activists. It encouraged unions to support and commission works, such as Fraser Wilson's mural in the former old Boilermakers' Hall, recently retrieved from demolition during the Vancouver Centennial. The Guild organized two exhibitions of labour art in support of the war effort, working in concert with The Vancouver Allied

Arts War Service, so that artists and audiences could gain perspective on the role of industrial workers in the fight against fascism. The *British Columbia At Work* exhibitions in 1944 and 1945 showed both at the Vancouver Art Gallery and the Boilermakers' Hall. The unions provided prize money and publicized the show in their local papers. Fraser Wilson's *Organization* was one of the works included in the VAG exhibition forty-two years previous.

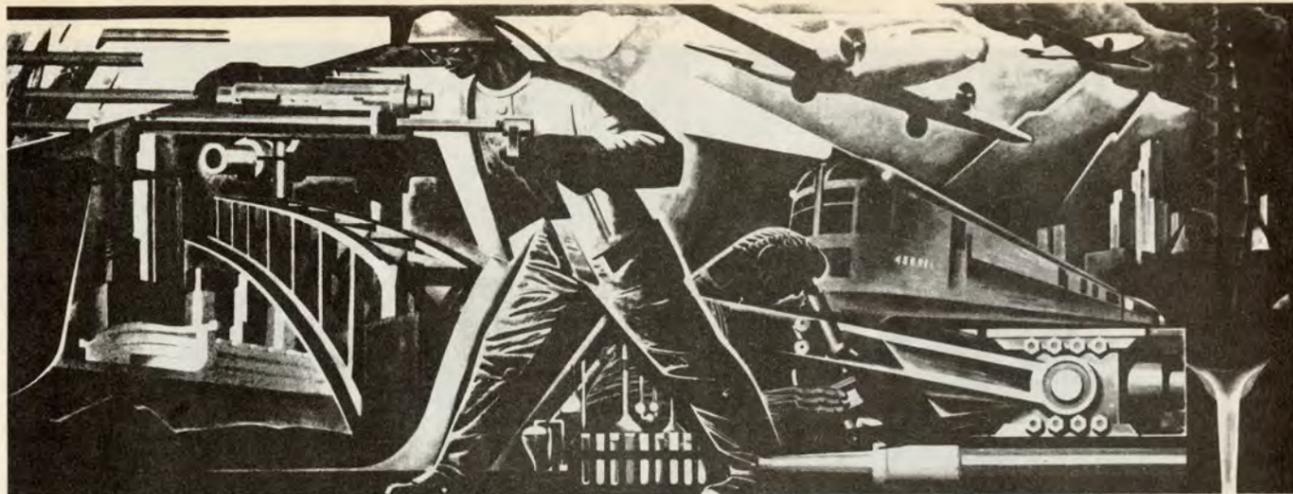
A strong feature of the exhibition was the inclusion of a variety of imaging strategies. This is despite the dominance of social realism. Donegan includes works that attempt in different ways to capture the vigour of industry and its workforce. Whether it be Sir William van Horne's impressionist *Steel Mills at Sidney, Cape Breton* Fritz Brantner's cubist *City From A Night Train* or Bertram Brooker's expressionist *Recluse*, what dominates is the artists' attempts to capture the scale, motion and intensity of industry and its impact on human development. The use of colour, distorted picture plane, and perspective often highlight the concentration and skill of the human effort in these environments.

One feature of the exhibition requiring additional commentary was the ways that the works produced by industry and the works produced for labour or in celebration of labour by progressive artists and organizations used similar codes. The parallels are

the most apparent in work embracing the power of industry, such as Fisher, Goranson and Hughes' *Industry (Railroad)*, 1939. In this mural for the Golden Gate Exposition, the team of rail workers labours in the foreground. The round lines of their frames and muscles contrast with the angular machines and warehouses surrounding them. The sense of human power and centrality in the industrial configuration speaks through this commissioned work as it does in the independent painting of Miller Brittain (*Workers Arise, Longshoremen*). However, Charles Comfort uses similar elements (worker, industry) in *The Romance of Nickel*, 1937. In this mural, the worker is again forefronted but he is isolated and blends into the systems of production and transportation in the image like a cog in a machine.

The majority of works were produced in the 1930s, Second World War and immediate post-war period. These were times of mass social and cultural change, of wartime cooperation and propaganda followed by a final figurative gasp before the tidal wave of modernism drowned the content out of form.

Many of the works of the Depression hover between despair and rage, providing a cross-Canada picture of the lives of the unemployed as interpreted by themselves and artists. Leonard Hutchinson's satirical *Canadian Homes and Gardens* is a linocut of workers' shacks, with a man working



The Romance of Nickel by Charles Comfort, 1937.

in his garden cultivating cabbage. The title counterposes subsistence and survival with luxury. *Protest*, another Hutchinson piece of 1937 is an evocative close-up of a worker's resolute face. These portraits contrast with Lawrence Hyde's less representational engraving, *Grain Factory*, executed in 1932, an image reminiscent of early Soviet poster art. A smoke stack of a darkened building is dominated by a male figure with arched legs, who stands in the dark rays of the sun looking down on his surroundings. Similar imagery emerges in *Hamilton—Its Commerce and Industries* published in 1933, a red, grey and black lithograph in which a red, open-armed figure stands over the skyline. The purpose of this print is to advertise Hamilton's development, while Hyde's work suggests the power of the worker and the factory's dependency on his presence.

**T**he war art suggests a heightened merging of labour art representations and the war propaganda of government and industry. This is due to a political convergence. The communist network was most active in organizing and channelling the work of artists and workers into representations of industry. At the same time, their politics focused on the defence of the Soviet Union and the fight against fascism. Unions exchanged their traditional militancy for government recognition, adhering to a no-strike pledge for the duration.

Progressive artists harnessed their skills to the war artists' programmes and to representing work processes within the war industries. They became the creators of propaganda for official agencies. Frederick Taylor's

*The Drillers, Teamwork* shows workers not uniting to organize unions but to get the job done, echoing almost 100 years later Courbet's respectful and controversial *The Stonebreakers*. Alma Duncan's *Riveting Ships* of 1943 conveys the same themes — the dignity and dedication of the worker. The image of brawny straining bodies and raised fists emerges equally within government production propaganda. Union rights were not abandoned as a theme — Fraser Wilson's painting *Organization* of 1944 captures the Boilermakers' mass meeting at Burrard Drydocks. Workers line the harbour as the organizing boat calls them to a mass meeting.

Post-war imagery was more versatile in its exploration of form. Artists seem, with some exceptions, less concerned with advocacy and more engaged with the landscape of industry (Shadbolt's *Abandoned Mining Town*) or capturing the process and feeling of work. Especially notable is Henry Orenstein's *Self-Portrait of a Fur Worker*, a surreal image with off-kilter perspective in which the viewer looks down with concentration on the artist's head, hands, tools and work while other workers form a tableau in the background. Sybil Andrew's *Coffee Break* offers us stylized loggers at rest. Frederick Taylor's *Talking Union* and Louis Jacques' photographs of the shipping strike give a sense of the embattled landscape of industrial unionism. The idealism of the 1930s and 1940s is vanquished in these labour images.

With the exception of images of World-War-One war workers (*Munitions, Heavy Shells*, 1918, by Dorothy Stevens and Florence Wyle's *Munitions Worker*, 1918, for example) women are for the most part absent

from the images of industrial work. They offer a strong presence as artists however, producing imagery throughout the time period represented by the exhibition.

What is lacking within the exhibition are works by minority communities sympathetic to labour. Because of the convergence of the fight for workers' rights with an attempt to preserve original immigrant culture against the racist climate of B.C., many immigrant organizations had their own cultural vehicles. Some production was ephemeral, taking the form of music and plays. However, publications such as *Borba*, *Struggle*, from the Ukrainian community included prints, cartoons and illustrations. The Japanese community was very active in unionization during the 19th and 20th centuries, with working class papers and social groups forming a part of organizing strategies.

However, the intensity of research and sleuthing invested in the exhibition is evident. Donegan has collected works that are housed with individual artists, with corporate archives throughout Canada and in museums and galleries. *Industrial Images, Industrial Consciousness* is a groundbreaking exhibition. It allowed a wider and less committed audience to see art works that celebrate the physical and intellectual power of working people, establishing these images as part of a valid cultural movement. The exhibition suggests that there was no purely "proletarian" art and allows the relationships between patronage, the absorption of radical codes and an ongoing radical production to emerge. These are issues that continue to concern socially conscious artists today. ●

Sara Diamond

COVER

# FROM THE FATHER'S HOUSE:

## *Women's Video and Feminism's Struggle with Difference*

by Dot Tuer

### PART ONE: Fragments Towards A Context

#### A QUOTE

"We had gone to the International Women's Day Coalition and brought up the issue of women's poverty. Until last year there wasn't a lot of interest. Well, this is Canada. This is Capitalism. Women who are part of the organized women's movement also work for social services. They deal with us all day long in paid work...so they don't exactly think of us as their friends — or that they can learn from us...We've got things to learn from them and they've got things to learn from us...We've got things to say and if you listen to us your whole movement will be different because you've got missing pieces."

Excerpts from an interview with a member of Regent Park Sole Support Mothers Group  
*You Can't Keep Us Down*, 1985  
Regent Park Video Workshop & Dixon Hall

#### A STORY

It is early in November, 1987. Sylvia Frazer is reading at the McGill Club from her autobiography, *My Father's House*. With the passion of the first person, she speaks her unspeakable experience of "incest and of healing." Her pain hovers below the words she recites. The audience, all women, all white, all middle-class, is in tears. She tells us she began to write the book at the age of forty-seven when memories of an incestuous relationship with her father began to surface. She tells of her crumbling resistance as a child to her father's advances when he threatened her with the knowledge that "everything in this house belongs to me ... your mother will do what I say." At the age of seven, she decides to repress all memories of sexual contact. In order to do so, she creates a secret accomplice: another self who will continue sexual relations with her father without her conscious knowledge until she leaves home at the age of eighteen. She names this condition a split personality.

It is a condition in which survival is predicated upon forgetting; in which complicity is refused a place within the conscious construction of identity. It is also a condition where the psychic walls of women's sexuality as virgin/whore; pure/dirty; innocence/knowledge intersect with social and economic edifices which house the father's authority. Through Frazer's eyes, it has become an autobiography about silences and speaking, about amnesia and remembering. It is also, in her own words, "a middle-class story with built-in loopholes and rescue stations and options and timelocks and safeguards."<sup>2</sup> It is a story where "I was given the poison and the antidote at the same time and by the same people. Specifically, I was of the first generation of my family to receive the education and the social resources and the personal support to fight back."<sup>3</sup>

## A CLIPPING

It is late in November, 1987. The days are shorter, the nights are colder, and everywhere there are people living on the streets as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless draws to a close. Privatization schemes proliferate. Buildings grow taller. The suburbs grow bleaker. Black Monday offers a momentary confirmation of an economic squeeze only to vanish from the television screen like one more engineered spectacle. In *The Globe and Mail* June Callwood's series of articles chronicle the housing crisis of Canada's poor. In Halifax, a young mother on welfare tells her that "if I had known what it would have been like, I think I might have stayed with my husband and taken the beatings. He was violent only every second day. Poverty like this is violence every day."<sup>4</sup>

## TWO PAINTINGS

In October, 1987, two large figurative paintings by Beatrice Bailey and Grace Channer were installed on the far wall of the Parkdale Library as part of the *A Space Women on Site* exhibition. They are still hanging there; a visual testament to the writings, histories and stories by women of colour which the library has showcased under glass; a visual empowerment of Black women's struggles.

*Tender Mercies*, by Beatrice Bailey, foregrounds a woman washing the window of an office building. She and her two older children have their backs to the viewer, but face a glass wall of bureaucracy, a clouded vista which obscures the activities of the social planners but reveals an unemployment training file marked Confidential lying on a table. The smallest child, crouching and sucking her thumb, stares back at us. She does not give the impression that the view is less occluded from her perspective. The family is positioned within a boxing ring, perched upon a precarious scaffold which places them at eye level with the social workers who do not see them. Faced with the glass edifices of a socio-economic

structure where implicit racism and explicit sexism are intertwined, the woman has wiped a tiny corner of the window clean. She has begun to speak her story, define the parameters of her struggle. Hers is a story without loopholes or safeguards. Her father's house is not a two-story dwelling on a shady suburban street, but the indifferent façade of government resources where the racism and class oppression of our society are re-produced by the social servants of the state apparatus.

Grace Channer's painting called *Black Women's Work* is a huge sprawling mural of bold figures; of Black women serving, cleaning, exhausted, picketing, detained, shopping, hugging, talking. The texts which are painted right onto the canvas leave no ambiguity about who owns the father's house and who works as servants within his walls. The texts are a condemnation of oppression. The images are an affirmation of struggle. Together, they challenge the amnesty of privilege that isolates gender from class from race. Channer writes along the bottom of the mural, "There will never be enough money when you follow what is right/purposefully underdeveloped to produce the world's working class." Across the top, in a zigzag fashion, a parallel text reads:

**WOMEN  
HALF THE WORLD  
ONE THIRD OF THE LABOUR FORCE  
DO TWO-THIRDS WORLD WORK HOURS  
RECEIVE ONE-TENTH WORLD INCOME  
OWN LESS THAN ONE-HUNDREDTH  
WORLD PROPERTY  
RUN 52% WORLD'S HOUSEHOLDS ALONE  
BLACK WOMEN  
LAST HIRED  
FIRST FIRED  
PROVIDE CHEAPEST DOMESTIC LABOUR  
THROUGH IMMIGRATION AND SLAVERY  
POLICIES  
WORK 80% OF AFRICAN AGRICULTURE  
EARN 40-90% LESS THAN ANYONE ELSE  
RUN 82% OF CARIBBEAN HOUSEHOLDS  
ALONE  
BUT WHO CARES EXCEPT BLACK WOMEN.**

## A PHOTOGRAPH

It is my mother who has invited me to Sylvia Frazer's talk. After the reading, she buys *The Father's House* for me and has Sylvia autograph it. On the cover is a photograph of Sylvia Frazer at the age of three or four holding a doll. The photograph is severed in half. Another woman glances at the book and says, "that's strange, I already have a copy but it has a different picture on the front." She shows us her book, in which the torn photograph is of Sylvia at the age of fifteen or sixteen. For some reason this bothers me. Perhaps it is easier to identify

with the innocence of a golden-haired child than to understand the complicity of an adolescent. Over coffee my mother inquires, "you didn't like your father very much, did you?" "No," I reply, "but then I don't have many memories of when he was alive."

Later, I leaf through old journals, sorting scraps of paper collected over the years. It seems that I am searching for memories, for a subjectivity, an identity that will challenge the inheritance of my father's house. I, like Sylvia, have been given the tools to survive in my father's world. But perhaps it is these very tools which protect me from recognizing my own complicity in the building of the glass walls I strain against. Perhaps it is these very tools which have created the paradigms and the language which trap my voice into a structure where speaking is built upon silences. The poison which is also the antidote is difficult to pinpoint. It is subtle, unacknowledged, but ever-present in the intersection of sexuality, class, gender, and race which weaves a web of differences into hierarchies. And while it allows those of us with privilege to exist within the walls of the father's house, it does not guarantee our safety.

## PART TWO:

### The Challenges of Difference

Once upon a time, or so the story goes, there was a Golden Age of feminism. In those halcyon days of consciousness-raising and consensus-building, gender was the dividing line of the struggle. Radical feminists fought to tear down the edifices of our father's house. A call went forth for the end of the nuclear family and a dismantling of the patriarchy. Father was the Enemy. Mother was the Monster. It was a clean break with the past and collaborators were not to be tolerated. Feminism in process, however, was never as clear-cut or as purely oppositional as its rhetorical imaginary. For as ideologies and socio-economic conditions and political events intersected with the lived experience of women, the struggle to dismantle the father's house produced a labyrinth of contradictions. Women's Studies, Women's Presses, Women's Bookstores institutionalized feminism on the margins of power. But with the establishment of infrastructures came the complicity of power. Abortion rights, alternative health care, midwifery, rape crisis centres, battered women's shelters became the sites of organized political interventions. But with the establishment of organized strategies came cooperation with the rulers of the castles.

The struggles of questioning language and structures, of interpreting experience and reclaiming history, gave rise to conflicting paradigms. Positive imaging of women clashed with deconstructionist and conceptual approaches to dismantling cultural stereotypes. In the heady clouds of theoretical



Still from *Frankly, Shirley* by Marg Moores, 10:34 min., 1987.



Still from *The Bisexual Kingdom* by Elizabeth Schroder, 22 min., 1987.



Still from *Twins*  
by Chris Martin, 3  
min., 1987

Still from *Influences of  
My Mother* by Sara  
Diamond, 24 min.,  
1981-82.



Stills courtesy of Vtape

practice, the construction of identity and gender became a focus of intense debate. Biology squared off against culture, with the translation of the French feminists giving the unconscious an uneasy North American debut. "Woman" became a discursive and representational site of debate between psycho-analytical and essentialist and constructivist positions.<sup>5</sup> As intellectual paradigms became more complex and activists became more entrenched, theory and practice were estranged. With the empowerment of speech came the silencing of others. With the proliferation of voices came the fracturing of consensus. The collectives which had formed in passion often disbanded in heated disagreement. As women pried open the doors to the father's houses, they failed to hear voices still without shelter. The victim as Other became a fetishization of the margins. The fervour of an oppositional politic had splintered into acrimonious divisions, revealing hierarchies within the ranks. It seemed that feminism's tools for dismantling the father's house had only succeeded in building a spare bedroom.

As women began to speak of differences between them, to define the shifting grounds of a struggle against oppression, their words did not always fall neatly into a narrative of the victim written by others on their behalf. Lesbians spoke out against an explicit homophobia on the part of heterosexual women who sought to sweep homosexuality under the carpet in their strategy to give feminism a public face. They struggled against an implicit homophobia, an ever-present but subtle evasion of their attempts to articulate a female desire. Working-class and welfare women began to voice their frustration at a feminism which presumed to speak for them, which excluded their experience by assuming certain commonalities of a cultural and social conditioning. Sex workers began to speak out against a patronizing moralism. The anti-pornography struggles ran head on into a struggle to articulate deviance and eroticism within female sexuality. Black women confronted feminism with the racist implications of white women's struggles and strategies and assumptions. They pointed to Black women's exclusion from feminist organizations, their absence from feminist representations, from feminist histories of women's liberation. Hispanic women, Native Indian women, East Indian women, West Indian women also levelled their analysis against a feminist politic, bringing as Black women had, the specificity of a critique based on socio-economic, cultural and racial oppressions.

With the articulation of these differences, the Golden Age of a purely gendered oppression was over, contextually fractured beyond its own utopian mis-recognition. The appeal of its oppositional logic, however, lingered. In face of the difficult questions posed by the relationship of privilege to oppression, of speaking to silence, of power to marginalization, women clung tena-

ciously to the concept of the Other. The dialectic of slave/master, outside/inside, us/them, was turned inwards as the enemy became each other. Hierarchies within the ranks became inverted as a hierarchy of oppressions. There was no longer one feminism, but feminisms, each radiating from a different intersection of privilege and oppression. From this vantage point of dis-integration, a complex interstice of disavowal and recognition, of silencing and listening emerged. Some women chose to excise difference, making their feminism an exclusionary club of commonalities. Others became paralyzed by the dissimilitude of voices and retreated to an individualist isolation. Still others attempted to bridge the chasms which had frequented unity only to discover the depth of their own internalized racism and class biases. All was not well on the Western front. Feminism(s) had become messy, disheveled, no longer a rallying point of unity against a ubiquitous patriarchy.

### PART THREE: For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house (Audre Lorde)

Listening to the fragments of voices which speak of oppressions outside our own autobiographies; faced with the silences revealed within feminism's universalizing claims of gender; it seems that the Golden Age antidote of articulating experience is in danger of becoming our contemporary poison. Yet it is the very challenge of understanding the heterogeneity of experience and oppression which is feminism's strength, not its weakness. Difference is not a sign of disunity but a recognition that there is no one Other, no one infrastructure of oppression and liberation, no longer the privilege of the imaginary outsider. In its contradictory and often bitter accusations, difference radically challenges the isolation of oppression from a complex diffusion of social, economic and cultural vectors which draft the architectural blueprint of the master's house. Difference calls for an acknowledgement of absences, for an understanding of how speaking and silencing are intertwined. It asks for a radical evaluation of the master's tools we have utilized in our struggle: the conceptual paradigms of an oppositional politic which collapses difference into the one and only Other or a liberal pluralism which tolerates difference within the individual victim.

For underneath the master's roof we discover many father's houses. The windows of each are cloudy, obscured, like the window of Beatrice Bailey's painting. Isolated from each other, we can maintain a construction of our own experience as the oppression of the master. We can become blinded by his gaze, seduced by our mas-

tery of his tools. Difference does not ask us to abandon the struggles which are fought on this terrain, but to recognize that a battle won within a father's house does not dismantle the master's Winter Palace. For the master's house is not an edifice which can be stormed, but one to be worn down through an understanding of how speaking and silencing are interlocked with privilege. We can afford neither the romanticization of an outside nor the security of an inside. We must step from our father's houses while continuing the struggle within. We must understand not only our oppressions but our complicity. For it is not the master's tools which will dismantle patriarchy, but our own abilities to recognize complicity, to acknowledge absences, to link our small renovations within glass walls to others' voices and others' struggles.

If we are to accept difference's challenges, we must begin to occupy a position which understands feminism, not as fragmentation, but as a theory and a practice strategized simultaneously on many fronts. We cannot turn a blind eye or a deaf ear to contradictions by homogenizing oppression, but must recognize an inside/outside construction where specific experience can both illuminate and mask the hierarchies of power. There are as many strategies of confrontation, co-operation, intervention, and alignments to be considered as there are father's houses to occupy. Feminism's radicality lies not only in the insistence that the "personal is political" but in the recognition that the "political is personal." For in accepting the challenge of difference's heterogeneity, we have the tools not only to survive within our father's houses, but the possibility of challenging its foundations.

### PART FOUR: Video in the Borderlands

To enter the father's house of art of the late eighties is to enter a mirrored hall of images where nothing is quite what it seems, where double-speak and co-option reign supreme. At odds with the notion of a direct voice, contemporary art criticism emphasizes the mediated nature of experience, the role of artistic practice in critiquing dominant structures of the "real." Particular emphasis has been placed on deconstructing or reconstructing representations which veil oppressions inherent in the relation between the sexes. Men cite feminism as instrumental in the break from a modernist obsession with the meaning inherent to the object. In the same breath as post-modernism, they thank us for drawing their attention to social and psychical oppressions implicit in the identity constructions of subject/object, of male/female, of self and Other. Yet when one produces images which are outside the grasp of a white heterosexual male construction of the

subject, they are somehow ignored, eclipsed. Grace Channer and Beatrice Bailey's paintings are, after all, hanging in the Parkdale Library and not in the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Binary oppositions tend to reproduce the dominant on the margins, to double back difference as a reflection of the self. It is as if the art world fractured a mirror, and looking at the splintered image of itself imagined it had caught the site of difference. For beneath the homages to radicality evoked at every turn, and the sweeping declarations which declare an end to master narratives, the institutionalized art world seems particularly adept at maintaining a homogeneity of power. Faced with the challenge of differences which would clarify the complicity of art with the dominant systems of oppression, the claims of art's heterogeneity somehow end up as issues of form and style. Absences, steadfastly denied, slip between the cracks of gender, race and class.

Video, within the institutionalized world of museums and councils and galleries and magazines, occupies an ambivalent position. Its formal properties and mediated images support the art world's notions of heterogeneity within a self-proclaimed simulacrum. Its status as a non-material object with a non-traditional history is more uncertain within the marriage of art to a state marriage of dominant ideologies and market forces. For video, like feminism, also had an imagined Golden Age as the oppositional Other. In this utopian past, conceptualized in an era before Reagan and Thatcher ascended to conservative economic thrones, and well before Mulroney and Chirac were elected in the pendulum swings of democratic politics, video was to become a medium of socialist and populist dimensions. Envisioned as a tool which would allow artists to critique dominant culture outside of High Art's object-orientated and capitalist structures, guerilla video would provide alternative windows to the world. Community-controlled cable stations and public TV would replace the mass-media's images with a culturally diverse democracy of representation.

Not only do the master's tools not dismantle the master's house, but sometimes access to them at all is a prohibitive aspiration. Thus despite the optimistic fervour of a satellite revolution, the development of video's technology remained embedded in the demands of a capitalist infrastructure. And the distribution of time-based images remained subject to the control of the political and economic broadcasting elites. Faced with the difficulty of dismantling the fortifications of mass-media and the global networks of television, artists in Canada chose to strategize around the establishment of non-profit centres for the production, distribution and viewing of videotapes. Trading one father's house for another, video artists found themselves in a hybrid

world, inside the father's house but on the margins of its institutions, outside of television but cognizant of its cultural domination.<sup>7</sup>

For women, video's hybrid context within a dominant art seemed to offer an advantageous site of intervention. As a new medium it was unfettered by a constraining history of do's and don'ts enforced by the male-dominated infrastructure of schools, museums and galleries that had traditionally excluded female artists. The medium provided an instant feedback system where live performance could be intercut with prerecorded images. A conceptual space was created where the limitations of narrative could be challenged or dominant genres such as soap-opera re-invented. Autobiography blurred the boundaries between fiction and documentary. Addressing the audience directly, or utilizing voice-overs, women were able to articulate the context and the critique of their representational strategies. The mechanisms of voyeurism were called into question. The historical objectification and passive positioning of the female was challenged through an alternative framing of female identity and subjectivity. Gender oppressions were cross-examined through the appropriation and deconstruction of mass-media images. Representations that were specific to a female imaginary were envisioned. The implicit and explicit structures of sexism were under seige.

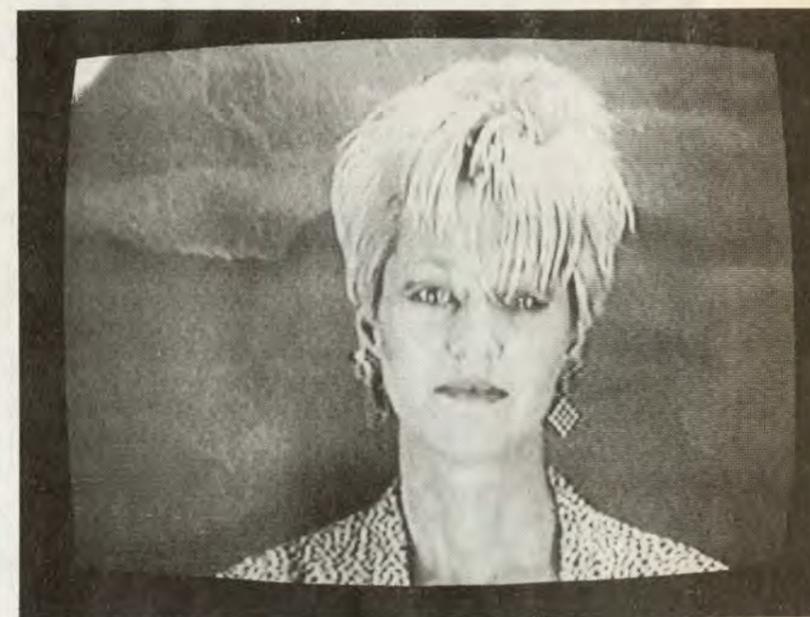
The utopian hopes for a gender-inspired revolution within the video medium, however, soon became entangled in the same contradictions which had confronted feminism in general. For as video became absorbed into the institutions of the art world, its site as a medium for feminist intervention became circumscribed. Taught within colleges as a time-based art, video presented the difficulties of any technical trade where the mechanics of the language are mystified and denied by the boys in control. The "tech" department of the Ontario College of Art, as street rumours would have it, being a case in point. A network of festival and gallery screenings and museum acquisitions ensured video's survival but began to homogenize the parameters of its interventions. Video's technological imperative interlocked with an art world's fetishization of formal issues where style was privileged over content. This, in turn, translated itself to the community standards applied by the arts councils for the funding of independent work. And as everyone knows, the bottom line in any medium is access to the resources and time and money to produce.

For women video artists, the consequences of this shifting terrain were double-edged. Struggles fought on a platform of gender oppression had insured their inclusion as video became contained by the infrastructures and expectations of the dominant art world. On the other hand, women's video could no longer be claimed as a site of categorical opposition. For in taking up con-

temporary feminism's challenge of differences engendered between class and race and sexuality, the limitations of strategies framed by gender as the dividing line of oppression became evident. What was the radical outside in the 1970s became an inside reflection of a dominant 80's imaginary. Images framed within a heterosexual economy of difference were doubled back into the hall of mirrors, re-producing an homogenous Other. The use of genre irony and camp became questionable strategies, as easily reinforcing as dismantling stereotypes. Appropriations from mass-media ended up re-presenting women as white, rich, and glamorous. Formal innovations and sophisticated technology to express the internalization of oppression did not lead from the father's house to the self-absorbed altar of his simulacrum. For the voracious appetite of the dominant culture quickly swallowed innovations produced on the margins, turning electronic tricks into the pabulum of rock videos.

Confronted by a context where the use of the master's tools has helped to renovate the exterior façade of the father's house but left the interior structures intact, feminists within the video community have begun to question their position within the father's house. The articulation of female sexuality as a desire between women and the exploration of mother/daughter relationships have begun to challenge the oppositional construction of the Other that folds difference back into compulsory heterosexuality. The examination of theories and structures of representation have deconstructed/reconstructed the underlying assumptions of women as Other. Video has been utilized as a documentary tool to give women the opportunity to voice differences of class and race, to articulate their struggles. These strategies are a beginning, but only a beginning, in taking up the challenge of difference's heterogeneity. For there are still complicities to be examined, questions to be asked, absences to acknowledge.

We must begin to re-evaluate the privilege of our oppositional convictions, to be conscious of silences while we speak, to examine our own participation within a structure of galleries and funding agencies which reproduce these silences. We must begin to ask why there are no women of colour actively producing as video artists, why the articulation of old women's, poor women's, immigrant women's and women of colour's experiences are so rare. We must begin to be accountable not only to visible oppressions, but to those rendered invisible by their exile. We must begin to question when our strategies present differences as a narrative of the victim, as a window-glimpse of oppression, rather than as the articulation of voices we can learn from. For difference is not asking us to add token representations to a collection of images, nor to abandon



Still from *I Am An Artist, My Name is...*  
by Elizabeth MacKenzie  
and Judith Schwartz,  
3 hrs 40 min., 1985.

Still from *It Depends* by  
Paulette Phillips, 29  
min, 1984.



Stills courtesy of Vitape

our own articulation of experience and oppression, but to examine our own complicity within the father's house, to no longer fear our own contradictions nor fear that our "own truths are not good enough."

In return, the challenge of difference points the way from the father's house. It offers the possibility of claiming video as a borderland medium where women's images can exist both inside and outside of master narratives. It charts a path from the simulacrum of social inaction towards a place where the deconstruction/construction of representation will create a heterogeneous culture of alignments and empowerment between women. Understanding difference as it interlocks across the vectors of race, class and sexuality, will begin to free our blinkered vision. Amnesias constructed within the father's house will become uncovered, memories recovered. Voices and images will emerge as we begin to heal the split personalities which have enabled us to survive through sensory deprivation. For in turning a deaf ear and blind eye to each other's oppressions, we have ended up building walls instead of dismantling the barriers of the father's house which lie between us.

## POSTSCRIPT:

### The Mestiza Way (Gloria Anzaldúa)

"Her first step is to take inventory. *Despojando, desgranando, quitando paja*. Just what did she inherit from her ancestors? This weight on her back — which is the baggage from the Indian mother, which baggage from the Spanish father, which baggage from the Anglo?

*Pero es difícil* differentiating between *lo heredado, lo adquirido, lo impuesto*. She puts history through a sieve, winnows out the lies, looks at the forces that we as a race, as women, have been a part of. *Luego bota lo que no vale, los desmentos, los desencuentos, el embrutecimiento. Aguarda el juicio, hondo y enraizado, de la gente antigua*. This step is a conscious rupture with all oppressive traditions of all cultures and religions. She communicates that rupture, documents the struggle. She reinterprets history and, using new symbols, she shapes new myths. She adopts new perspectives toward the darkskinned, women and queers. She strengthens her tolerance (and intolerance) for ambiguity. She is willing to share, to make herself vulnerable to foreign ways of seeing and thinking. She surrenders all notions of safety, of the familiar. Deconstruct, construct. She becomes a nahual, able to transform herself into a tree, a coyote, into another person. She transforms the small "I" into the total Self. *Se hace moldeadora de su alma. Según la concepción que tiene de si misma, así será.*" ●

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# S W E E T E R



Photo: Sunil Gupta

## Eyes on Black Britain

an interview with ISAAC JULIEN

**THE PASSION OF REMEMBRANCE**  
DIRECTED BY MAUREEN BLACKWOOD  
& ISAAC JULIEN  
Sanfoka Film and Video Collective  
16 mm, Colour, 1986

by Richard Fung

**WHENEVER OPPRESSED GROUPS** — women, people of colour, gays and lesbians — manage to get across to media, a priority has always been to correct stereotypes that have been perpetuated about us. We want to reach out with "our" positive images in replacement of "their" negatives ones. But in rectifying stereotypes, we have often found ourselves trapped in the terms of dominant discourse. We have implicitly accepted "their" terms for constructing "our" positive images.

As a result of this thinking, many gay films meant for the mainstream market downplay the representations of problematic issues like drag or outdoor sex. Because the dominant media portrays Black peoples as criminal and savage, we must bend over backward to promote our wholesomeness. Witness the recent editorials in Toronto's *Contrast* which characterize AIDS and homosexuality as white afflictions. ▶

◀ **IN MANY OPPOSITIONAL FILMS**, the protagonists are constructed as victim-heroes. Among the oppressed there may exist personal tensions but never political contradictions. *The Passion of Remembrance*, produced by Britain's Sankofa Film and Video Collective, and co-directed by Maureen Blackwood and Isaac Julien, is a rare bird in independent Black cinema. Its subjects are precisely those thorny issues so often overlooked by a narrow vision of the anti-racism struggle.

*The Passion of Remembrance* is constructed in three separate layers. First, narrative segments revolve around the Baptistes, a Black working-class family in contemporary England. Maggie, the daughter, goes to gay clubs and has gay friends. This brings her into conflict with some members of her Black study group, and also with her father. Maggie works in video; at points in the narrative she plays her tapes, which then become the footage we, the audience, are watching. It is made up of solarized images of demonstrations and celebrations: the riots in Brixton mixed with gay rights marches. This documentary footage of resistance forms the second layer of the film. It is also used as a kind of parenthesis for the various events in the story. It underlines how personal conflicts are informed by larger social struggles.

Providing a third layer of meaning, a Black female speaker in a spatial-temporal vacuum re-evaluates the Black movements of the Sixties and Seventies from a feminist point of view. She remembers how women were relegated to a secondary role and confronts a Black male speaker with the accusation, that they were fighting "for their rights to be men." Through the juxtaposition and interaction of these three layers, *The Passion of Remembrance* manages to raise a range of issues which the mainstream of the Black movements has been very reluctant to address: gender, sexuality, and generational conflicts between Black British youth and their immigrant parents.

*The Passion of Remembrance* is the first Black feature film from Britain since *Burning an Illusion*\* in 1983. It represents along with films such as *Handsworth Songs*\*\* a new wave in Black British filmmaking. Heavily informed by film theory, these works deal with complexities as well as struggling to find a language in cinema that can represent a Black British experience.

Co-director Isaac Julien was in Toronto for the Grierson Documentary Seminar, where *Passion* was screened, and for a special benefit for Sistervision: Black Women and Women of Colour Press, and Grassroots: International Conference for Lesbians and Gays of Colour (upcoming in Toronto '88). This interview was conducted in Los Angeles in the Spring of 1987 at the L.A. International Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival.

INTERVIEW

**Richard Fung:** How did Sankofa come together, how did you actually meet each other?

**Isaac Julien:** We met each other really through one woman called Nadine Marsh-Edwards — she was at college with Martina Attile and Robert Cruz. I was at St. Martin's School of Art and Maureen Blackwood was at Polytechnic of Central London. From there, we decided to form a Black film workshop, and to make an application for a franchise to the television union, the A.C.T.T., and for financial support to Channel 4 and the Greater London Council (which has now been abolished).

\*Round about the advent of Channel 4 in 1981, there was the Independent Film Association and a number of Independent filmmakers and film workshop collectives, working on either political fronts or agitprop or avant-garde films, who made institutional demands to Channel 4. (Channel 4's basic mandate was to cater to alternative media, unrepresented voices, etc. — to do what other channels weren't doing.) And within that, there was a workshop agreement drawn up between the A.C.T.T. and independent filmmakers and workshops

to enable collectives of filmmakers to form workshops which would involve an integrated practice. They would do distribution, exhibition and production and the people that worked in those workshops would be the producers and would be the owners of the materials produced. But although Channel 4 funds several workshops up and down the country, Black workshops weren't really involved in that kind of negotiated decision and institutional demand-making. However, after the '81 riots, the institutional response was that there should be Black workshops. So, in a sense, we were encouraged to apply.

**Richard Fung:** Other than yourselves, I know of the Black Audio/Film Collective. Are you the only two Black workshops?

**Isaac Julien:** No, there's Retake Film/Video Collective, there's the Ceddo Film and Video Workshop, Star Productions, and Asian Film Workshops based in London. And then there are other workshops in the regions such as the Black Film/Video Workshop in Wales; Macro which is based in Handsworth, Birmingham; and Liverpool Black Media Workshop.

**Richard Fung:** How would you characterize Sankofa in a way that would differentiate it from the other groups?

**Isaac Julien:** All the Black workshops are different. For example, Retake is a Black workshop drawing on the Asian experience. Ceddo produces documentaries in a more traditionalist mode. Black Audio/Film I suppose is concerned with a similar preoccupation as Sankofa in terms of dealing with form and finding a film language that would express the Black experience. I suppose really what does make us different from the other workshops is our make-up around gender and sexuality. Sankofa consists of three Black women and myself, a Black gay man. Although there are workshops that have women and gay members, these issues have been a central political starting point for us.

**Richard Fung:** Were you all born in Britain?

**Isaac Julien:** Martina Attile is the only member that wasn't.

**Richard Fung:** Is that something that holds you together as a group?

**Isaac Julien:** Well, yes, because we all definitely see ourselves as part of British society and we want to challenge notions of Britishness and Englishness in terms of its definition around white ethnicity. We want to disrupt those notions of Englishness that have been traditionally propagated by films such as *Chariots of Fire*, etc.

**Richard Fung:** One of the things that I find most exciting about your work, is that you deal with all the pressing questions of political content and take up issues of form and film language. The codes of traditional cinema have been used to interpret and regulate our lives but when oppressed people take up the camera, we often reproduce this language. It's almost as if it's seen as inappropriate for us to experiment.

**Isaac Julien:** Negotiating one's identity around being a filmmaker is something that is not really meant for Black people to do. One realizes that the technologies of cinema are usually in terms of racism, in terms of sexism, in terms of who is in control of that technology. So, to negotiate your identity as a Black filmmaker around making experimental films is doubly problematic in terms of formulating strategies, in terms of speaking to your own communities and other communities of interest. One struggles on several fronts around notions of what sort of films Black filmmakers should be making and what kinds of films audiences desire, and what the

\* *Burning an Illusion* was a 1981 UK production, directed by Menelik Shabazz (colour, 107 min.).

\*\* *Handsworth Songs* was produced in 1986, UK, by the Black/Audio Film Collective, directed by John Akomfrah, producer Lina Gopaul.

filmmaker desires to make him- or herself. And so there are several things that have to be fought and weighed and played with.

I think the exciting thing for us is that we can take any form of film we like and use it to our advantage. If somebody wanted to make a documentary film that drew from an experimental style or wanted to use techniques that drew from avant-garde films around the '70s and the '80s or even wanted to look at mainstream cinema and use those kinds of narratives, I think that all those options are open because if one looks at how the Black subject is placed within cinema, one can see there has never really been a film language that has ever involved us in any progressive mode. So for me there aren't really rules that hold as such and I find that an exciting thing.

**Richard Fung:** But do you ever feel a responsibility to communicate more broadly? Is there a tension between formal experimentation and political effectiveness?

**Isaac Julien:** Well, I think that the discussions that we've had have been with Black communities of interest and other practitioners working within the same area that we're working in. We've now been able to come to a notion that people are really dissatisfied with films that show Black people in a very one-dimensional way, i.e., in riots, comedies, or you know, the stereotypical ways that Black people have been constructed in the cinema. So, we were concerned with not duplicating the approaches that have been made by other Black filmmakers and we took our context by looking at other films such as *Blacks Britannica*, *Burning an Illu-*

*sion*, and *Pressure*. We also looked at independent film work in America, and the Black Diaspora.

We came to the conclusion that if we were to start negotiating our identities within the cinema that we'd have to somehow start to negotiate a film language that would actually try not to reproduce dominant ideology but would reproduce our desires and our politics. We also wanted there to be politics of representation within the work that we produced. Now I think it is a very delicate position when you do that without having dialogues with communities of interest. I think in Sankofa we've always tried to state that we speak from rather than for the Black communities and we try to express that work either in terms of autobiography or in terms of narrative oral traditions.

**Richard Fung:** The other thing is that when people talk about a film relating or not relating to the Black — or, in my work, to the Asian — community, there's a problem in how it posits one community with only one level of relating. You don't always have to be going for the same level, you can choose parts of that community to relate to, and to speak to, at a time.

**Isaac Julien:** Well, I think that when we talk about communities and speaking from the communities, we stress the "ies" and the several communities within one community, that it's not a monolithic community. I think that one of the problems that Black filmmakers inherit is the desert of representation around the Black experience. I think that our audiences, Black audiences, also feel that scarcity of Black representation, and the emotional desire to see those images is very strong.

And to see them in a way that can be pleasing for everybody — that is really quite an impossible task for any filmmaker. There probably will always be people that will be disappointed with what you do, because there are only one or two films that relate to us at any one time. Also there's a kind of history of discontinuity in Black filmmaking, so the burden of representation is very much a kind of baggage that is inherited within a Black filmmaking tradition. There are also advantages to that. We have to be aware of what we make and who we're making it for, but I think we have to be very honest as well, that we actually make things for ourselves.

**Richard Fung:** Whether it be from a feminist, gay or anti-racist position, many activist films tend to fall into a kind of victim-hero representation. *Passion* focuses on the problematical, the neglected spaces, yet it ironically constructs a more total picture by doing that.

**Isaac Julien:** I think there's heterosexism in the Black communities and there is racism in the gay communities, depending on where you place yourself. As a strategy I thought it was very important to bring things back home, to be able to talk to the communities that I was part of. And in a sense, for the Black communities, and other communities of interest, to address issues and political agendas that to me were very important in order for those communities to move forward. If those communities were going to survive, they'd have to be able to start negotiating different identities, negotiating the multiplicity and plurality of identities that existed within them: that's what I feel we're doing in *The Pas-*



Co-directors of *The Passion of Remembrance* Maureen Blackwood and Isaac Julien.

Courtesy of Sankofa Film/Video Collective.



Image from *The Passion of Remembrance* courtesy of Sankofa FilmVideo Collective.

tion of *Remembrance*. There had been a lot of silences, lots of absences. The woman in *Passion* is calling Black male leaders into question, absolutely.

**Richard Fung:** Did you get flack from the Black press for doing that in a way that goes beyond the Black community — for “hanging dirty linen in public”?

**Isaac Julien:** Not as much, no, in fact people probably honed in a lot more on the homosexuality.

**Richard Fung:** How did that manifest itself, how did people react to that?

**Isaac Julien:** Well, some people reacted in a fairly positive way and others in not so positive a way. But the fact that it was being discussed was what was important. We were saying we weren't invisible members of that community, that we were there and we had always existed in that community, and that we were finding a voice and putting ourselves in a political agenda.

**Richard Fung:** The film does transgress many political orthodoxies. For instance, the family in *Passion* is treated with a lot of warmth. There's been a very anti-family sentiment within both the white gay/lesbian and the white women's movements.

**Isaac Julien:** I think that the critique around patriarchy has always been very Eurocentric and that Black families, when they're being policed and coerced by the state, when Black men are being bumped off in prisons, in police stations and when on the other, the social, side of the state, where women come more into contact with this kind of coercion around family care, around medical and health issues — there have been several fronts where the Black family is more or less oppressed.

**Richard Fung:** It's interesting that whereas they fight, and there are tensions within the family, there's still a basic understanding that they are “a family.” The

mother is also quite a strong character — she's the one that confronts the father on his homophobia.

**Isaac Julien:** Also, we wanted to produce and construct a family that was not — not that it was not a problematized space, ‘cause I think that things are problematized within that space — but not a pathological Black family which has been a stereotypical representation both in Black films and in white films that include the Black family, both documentary and fiction. That was also very important.

**Richard Fung:** The scene where Maggie and her friend put on make-up is also strikingly unusual in a political film.

**Isaac Julien:** Well, feminism and politics and lipstick are compatible, and I think that for a long time those things haven't been seen as compatible. I also think that for young Black women to find pleasure in their own bodies, by dressing up, by stylizing themselves and going out and dancing, is very important and has been a political discourse of resistance for Black people as well. I suppose it's making all those statements. At the same time it's making statements about the generation thing, you know, women getting dressed upstairs, getting ready to go out and the men downstairs — the kind of clash that happens between the different kinds of attitudes.

**Richard Fung:** On the other hand, there's a real stridency to the Black female speaker in *Passion*. She might almost be read as arrogant. She says, “I don't have the answers and if I did you wouldn't understand them.” How do you react to such a reading?

**Isaac Julien:** I think there are several kinds of readings of the film. I do think, also, that the male speaker is guilty of not ever having listened to what Black women have

to say. There's only a certain “position” that they have occupied within the movement.

Basically he's asking the woman for political direction, but before he can ask that of her there has to be a kind of exchange where she is able to make him accountable, and I think that's very important — that she makes him accountable. I also think that people are not really very used to seeing women, especially Black women, in roles that are very strong, that actually have the upper hand. We see men in films — be they avant-garde films, experimental or art films — talking and nagging all the time, we're far more used and conditioned to seeing men talk all the time.

**Richard Fung:** At the end of the film, after all this struggle, the man walks away leaving the woman alone. What does this signify for you?

**Isaac Julien:** For me, after the woman talks about negotiating between complexity and confusion and they toss a coin and it comes up “heads” — which means that things are complex — he then says that he has wasted enough time playing and he will find his own way home; he turns around, looks at her once, and once is enough, and then walks away. So, it's an ambiguous ending for me. He walks away and she's left in a sense, but in the last image you don't see him totally disappear as the screen fades to black. You have to be honest about where you see your political position at this particular moment in time. He had to think about what she had said, and though he was trying to find his own way home, he won't really find it unless they — unless we — find it together. ●

**Richard Fung is a Toronto video producer who works in film and video distribution.**

MUSIC

# Shoot From the Lipp

## SHOOT FROM THE LIPP

DAVE LIPPMAN  
Urgent Records, California  
33 rpm, 1987

by Marva Jackson

HERE IS a wonderful mix of Latin-American rhythms, care-free pop melodies and original paintings by Dave Lippman about American big-business needs invading life everywhere on planet Earth. *Shoot From The Lipp*, produced by Lippman and engineer Oliver DiCicco, is full of political innuendo and downright “tongue out of cheek” sarcasm. Lead singer Lippman also plays rhythm guitar, calculator and electric typewriter. He's accompanied by a fantastic band who weave their way in and out of the words, liberally laying down tango beats and all-American-apple-pie type tunes. Not everyone participates all the time but the mainstays are drummer Dave Rokeach and in the horn section, trumpet player Glenn Appel, saxophone player Melecio Magdaluyo and trombone player Ross Wilson.

Outspoken and very direct, Lippman's lyrics deal with the dynamics of caring as in *Nice Car*. We encounter that all-too-familiar view, “I ain't got the time/Somebody else'll do it,” juxtaposed with images of issues that need constant attention — social inequality between men and women, between people of different ethnic backgrounds, and between rich and poor.

Too many taxes, battle of the sexes  
Demonstrations at my door  
Some fella got a thousand dollar bed  
Some other fella don't got a loaf of bread  
Somebody rich while somebody poor  
But I don't think there's a real connection  
Don't go takin up no collection  
Cos I'm just not absolutely sure!  
Anyway I've got a Nice car and troubles of my own.

Lippman brings into focus the injustices that are heaped on the poor whether the locale is Harlem, Detroit or El Salvador as in *Truly Needy*. Against the backdrop of Appel's “super pleasant” horn arrangements, Lippman muses,

But these are not the truly needy  
in truth they are the truly greedy  
They get sick for free on Medicaid  
They wouldn'ta got sick  
If they just woulda paid!

Lippman attacks the present American political climate in *The Current Group Of Scoundrels*, a scathing vision of “Casper Weinbergerland.” It's a world peopled with Ronald Reagan and George Bush set against a landscape of shrivelling social programmes versus the reality of the MX missile. The soundtrack is created by Tom Solinger's violin, Dave

Lippman's cash register, Laurie Battle's piano and bits of the Lone Ranger's theme-music thrown in by Jim LeBrecht.

The coin that is the bloodiest must surely be the Krugerrand  
And we've been seeing lots of them here in Casper Weinbergerland  
Casper worked for Ronnie back in California  
I was there back then and he's no dummy, lemme warn ya  
He's healthily suspicious of Russians on our flanks  
So he's taking all the food stamps and investing them in tanks.

On side 2 Lippman and his band treat us to an even more elaborate medley, *Submarine Corps Hymn*. Melodies from songs like *Glory, Glory Hallelujah!*, *Mack The Knife* and *Take Me Out To The Ball Game* accompany Lippman's lyrics:

Take me out to the war game  
Take me out and be proud



Jacket Design: Jan Norling

Buy me a popgun and maybe a WAC  
Don't be surprised if we never come back.

Jane Norling's album-jacket design shows Lippman carrying some pretty heavy artillery, an automatic rifle and an acoustic guitar, kneeling on a map of the world. The messages are clear from a worthy participant in the minstrel tradition, Lippman encourages the individual to counteract the age of mis-information. *Freedom's Just Another Word For Working On Your Tan* takes to task the role that major news media sources play in undermining the average person's ability to make informed decisions.

The right to assemble, petition and speak is strongly supported by Time and Newsweek  
But by leaving out the most important things you need to know  
They elevate awareness to a new all-time low.

The world is changing at an ever-increasing rate due to many technological advances. Lippman urges us not to lose control as we move forward. With *Do We Know*, the album's last selection, Lippman spits in the eye of cynicism gone to seed.

And we have surely reached the point  
Where the world must cooperate  
Loving different kinds of people  
cos there is no room for hate  
We have the capability to feed, clothe, house and educate  
Why do we waste our wealth on weapons  
Must we learn when it's too late?

This song, accompanied by Steve Erquiaga's excellent guitar work, is reminiscent of Bruce Cockburn's work, melodic with intense lyrical content.

*Shoot From The Lipp* contains much that many of us consciously prefer not to acknowledge but Lippman is determined to elevate awareness of our responsibilities to ourselves and to each other. ●

**Marva Jackson is a freelance writer who hosts a weekly radio show on CKLN 88.1 FM**

# Sex In Venice

## THE ADS EPIDEMIC

JOHN GREYSON

Distributed by V/tape, Toronto

IN THIS NEW TAPE, John Greyson tells us that safe sex is fun. At the same time he shows us that representing one's own issues can be a blast, too.

The *ADS Epidemic* is a "risk group-to-risk group" talk — from a gay video-producer to sexually active youth. This is not, however, a prescriptive tragedy about the horrors of AIDS. Rather, the tape describes another health crisis, one Greyson calls "ADS," or "Acquired Dread of Sex." The tape challenges the myths that have distorted the way we see and deal with AIDS in this upbeat call for common sense.

So upbeat, in fact, that it's a music video. Considering the tape's intended audience and site — installed as part of the

Public Access video wall in a Mississauga shopping mall — this format choice is right on the money. *The ADS Epidemic* is cut to a pop tune written by Glenn Schellenberg with lyrics by Greyson. The tape opens this way:

The ADS Epidemic  
is sweeping the nation  
Acquired Dread of Sex

Fear and panic  
In the whole population  
Acquired Dread of Sex

This is not a Death in Venice  
It's a cheap unholy menace  
This is not a moral message...

Then we see, aboard a ferry in a harbour, a character from Thomas Mann's *Death in Ven-*

*ice*, Aschenbach. The song tells us that he's a "liberal fellow," and that he even has a "few gay friends." But, he has caught Acquired Dread of Sex. The effects of this malady are apparent when he recoils as the winsome Tadzio (another *Death in Venice* character) and his boyfriend frolic on the same ferry.

The two boys touch and embrace without embarrassment or fear of displaying their affection. We're shown that, although Tadzio was initially frightened by reports of AIDS, he's learned about condoms. According to the lyrics, they're now "his very favourite thing to wear." We see the youths happily playing with rubbers as the ferry docks. Poor Aschenbach just can't abide the sight of it all.

All this implies that these boys are not willing victims of the "liberal" vision of AIDS. They won't be party to the romantic relation between homosexuality and death. They understand that you don't get AIDS because you're gay. They've learned that you can protect yourself if you practice safer sex.

The second part of the tape is devoted to all the ways that you can get Acquired Dread of Sex. A woman standing in front of a map pantomimes the song's words. With joke-shop props, she shows us that you can get ADS from watching TV, Sex Ed classes, ignorant folks, doctors and cops and even high school jocks.

Greyson then returns us to the happy lovers and their sunny coastline. As they horse around an Italianate fountain, and shower before running onto a beach, we hear:

We don't need a plague  
of bigots  
Don't get sick with all the shit...

Aschenbach watches in pain. As the boys wrestle in the sand, the older man rises to berate them.

Aschenbach died of fear  
and hatred  
He succumbed to an  
ADS attack.

Tadzio then stands, and like every good beach boy, strikes a pose. He pulls out a condom package, rips it open, and holds up the "condom" — a small disc which reads "shut up."

Tadzio rejects the rednecks  
tells them to shut up  
and don't come back.

Now, though condoms are not infallible, they certainly are useful in preventing the spread of AIDS. Videotapes like this one might be pretty effective, too. Unlike the Canadian Public Health Association's mystifying and sex-negative TV advertisements broadcast earlier this year, *The ADS Epidemic* is sex-positive. It acknowledges that young people will engage in sex. And that to enjoy it safely, they should be encouraged to practice safer sex. The tape is attractive, well-paced and fun to watch. Greyson has even put the song lyrics in subtitles, so that the tape can be understood in a noisy mall. Viewers are not likely to turn away because they're bored or because they can't make out the lyrics.

If there is a danger of losing the audience, it lies in Greyson's ironic use of the *Death in Venice* narrative. If viewers don't know the original story, which is structured on society's equation of homosexual desire with disease and death, it's unlikely that Greyson's refutation of this oppressive idea will be clear. Though the tape makes plain each character's function, there's room for a little more explanation. Thomas Mann's Edwardian novel is hardly mandatory reading for Ontario students, and the film version is seldom seen these days. For a younger audience, using a foolish Aschenbach and a liberated Tadzio to send up a complex and powerful construct may obscure, rather than clarify, the tape's meaning. ●

# Three Women Speak

## FEMINISM & ART

A CONFERENCE

Organized by Women's Art Resource Centre  
Ontario College of Art, Toronto  
September 24 — September 27, 1987

by Gail Bourgeois, Beatrice Bailey and Lesley Turner

**FEMINISM AND ART:** A Conference was meant to bring together feminist cultural producers, artists and educators from across Canada and to address issues of national concern. This was the second conference of its kind, and in the planning stages women artists wanted more specific Canadian content and speakers as well as more visual supporting materials.

The goal of WARC, the conference organizers, was "to discuss issues of common concern and to initiate concrete strategies to facilitate the development of women's and feminist art production." On a rudimentary level this goal was achieved. However, some important issues which were raised never led to satisfactory discussions. For example, potential debates around the relationship between white women artists' communities and Black women artists' communities, or the relationship between feminist theory and grassroots political action were not adequately addressed — which in turn led to a certain amount of frustration. On another level, racism within the women's movement was frequently seen as a Toronto issue which served to disrupt and disorder the national conference. Another view was that racist tendencies mark artistic and cultural production across the country — for the most part in subtle and nearly indiscernible ways — and that this issue is fundamental to any feminist discussion. Or, to return to the polarity between the more theoretical and the grassroots camps, each tendency reiterated basic issues, but in starting with basics prevented either side from making substantial contributions to the conference as a whole.

For the organizers, pulling together disparate information from organizations, artists, educators and critics concerned with feminist art practice was an important component of the conference. By logical extension, this information had to be readily accessible to conference participants. In practical and valuable ways this was ensured by WARC on a number of levels.

Firstly, all panel presentations and a number of workshops had simultaneous English-to-French or French-to-English translation. This service went a long way towards including Francophone participants as an integral part of the whole by providing a vehicle for expression which could move in two directions. Also, the quality of translation and the excellence of the audio equipment must be commended. Secondly, there was useful and abundant information in the form of posters and handouts about conference activities and the surrounding visual art events. Thirdly, most of the conference presentations were audiotaped and cassettes are available for purchase.

Most importantly, the overall ordering of the panels and workshops was highly effective; but the opening panel presentations for "Feminist Art and Cultural Production Strategies" proved most exciting. Through the discussion of their critical strategies, artists as diverse as Rita McKeough, Lani Maestro, Beatrice Bailey and Cyndra MacDowall emphasized differences as sites for production and meaning. Along with the remaining panelists, Barbara Louder, Mary Scott and Marcella Bienvenue, this selection of artists provided an intelligent cross-section of current feminist art practice.

One presentation in particular had an overpowering impact. Beatrice Bailey, with deliberate calm, outlined the situation of Black women's art production. Speaking from her heart and from her experience, she confronted her audience with the fact that access to funding bodies is severely limited for Black women. She also argued that the language needed to access art institutions is not part of Black culture. These factors result in an absence of influence outside the Black community.

In protest against such marginalization, Thato Bereng withdrew from the panel "Women's Art Organizations." Her refusal to participate was a protest against the unequal number of Black women presenting at the conference. While I respect her thoughtful decision, it contrasted too negatively with

**Feminism and Art: A Conference** began with a night of multi-media performance at the Rivoli. Marian Lydbrooke and Jennifer Gilmore explored the psyche of Alice, a woman who had been working in a laundry for thirty years. Various media including a sheet hung on a laundry line which also served as a slide screen and a shadow screen for a cut-out of a fish were used to tell the story of how Alice in her drudgery longs to return to the sea. Marilyn McCallum performed a corporal mime piece entitled *Three Studies of the Female Body*, which despite the distracting noises of the crowded bar, was a moving articulation of the physical dilemmas of female development. Leena Raudvee going round and round the vacuum cleaner treadmill portrayed the enclosed nihilism of the domestic environment (complete with video dog) that I've been secretly yearning to escape to. Paulette Phillips used video to humorously counterpoint her deadpan delivery of her disturbing tale of urban assimilation. Shauna Dempsey and her talking vulva act, backed up by the guitar playing of Sandy Alexander and Susan Sturman, finished off the evening with a rap about female anatomy that one wishes could tour the censorious high school circuit as an information strategy. Although there were some technical problems which interfered with the pace of some of the performances, Janine Fuller and Ana C.P. Santos organized a diverse and enjoyable way to begin the conference.

L.T.



Colin Campbell as the afflicted Aschenbach.

CONFERENCE



Photo: Ana C.P. Santos

Women Perform at the Rivoli. ABOVE: Marian Lydbrooke. BELOW: Marilyn McCallum.



Photo: Ana C.P. Santos

the visibility of those artists and educators whose participation provoked thought.

Ideally, feminist gatherings should provide a focus for negotiating and defining our positions as individual artists and groups. But how can we come together when we represent so many diverse interests? Moreover, if we were able to break down regional, philosophical and racial isolation, what would we have in common as feminists, as artistic and cultural producers? That *Feminism and Art: A Conference* dramatized and begged such questions was

**I CANNOT TELL** this story from my point of view without telling how I became involved in this conference, to omit this part would not give my true perspective.

My first thoughts about the, then, upcoming *Feminism and Art: A Conference* were, "yet another event for white women to complain about their half empty glass," that is, opposed to my empty glass; because I did not picture myself being involved. Nor was I asked to be involved, because I was not familiar to the women of the community. I got a phone call from an acquaintance, which went something like this: "I went to a meeting with the organizers of the conference and one of my concerns was that there were no Black women who would be participating in this important conference. They agreed that this omission should not have happened and would remedy the situation by recommending some women." She then met with another Black woman to discuss the situation, and together they suggested some names, one of which was mine. "Are you interested? We suggested you for a panelist on the 'Feminist Art and Cultural Production Strategies' panel. If you are interested, give WARC a call." "Well," I said, "if they are interested in me, and what I might have to say, give them my name and phone number." The conversation ended at that.

About four days later a woman from WARC called to ask me to be on the panel. I hesitated, and then asked her if she knew anything about me, about my work, or my politics. As a matter of fact, had she ever seen any of my art work? Did she think I would reflect the politics of the conference? I just did not want to fill a quota gap that satisfied the organizers' need to cover up or look politically correct.

She convinced me that she had seen my work, and was confident that my politics fit perfectly with that of WARC. All in all it was the fact that I would be paid and be given a chance to say my piece that convinced me to participate.

What I chose to speak on was, not so much my feminist politics, but "Cultural Production"

not the fault, contrary to what a number of participants suggested, of the conference organizers. Such a conference is never merely a success or failure, nor a closed self-determined system. What it did confirm is that our common ground leading to common action can only emerge within an ongoing dialectic. ●

**Gail Bourgeois is an artist living and working in Montreal and a Board member of Galerie Powerhouse.**

because, as a Black artist, my race is much more of a problem in getting funds to create art. So my topic was going to be "Racism in the Art Community," even in "Alternative Art Spaces."

I did not feel that I would be given the support of the community I was setting out to criticize. The night of the conference, I was quite surprised to see the large number of people who turned out for the conference. I met the other six panelists, none of whom I had even met before, and I had only seen the work of Cyndra MacDowall in a recent group show at A Space. I looked around the auditorium for friendly faces, a woman of colour, a Black woman — none, except that of my own and Lani Maestro on the panel. There was only one familiar and friendly face, that of a white woman I met in school. Except for her face in the crowd I felt alone and walking into the lion's den, because I was about to challenge the position that I believe to be held by white feminist artists. I mean feminism is a direct result of male oppression, therefore, one would hope for recognition, understanding and support; but from my experiences of the past, I did not expect any.

Apart from a slight delay the event started without a hitch. The panelists would speak first and the audience ask questions after. At the start of the evening we were introduced to the audience, and then we took up our position in the order in which we would speak.

At this particular point in the history of the event, I can't remember the specific individual issues, all I do remember is that except for three of us the issues were personal and specific, not inclusive of the wider feminist spectrum.

However, I found the talk by Lani Maestro memorable. And this is my interpretation from memory. She finds working here in Canada isolating and safe as opposed to where she is from, the Philippines, which is torn apart by civil war and politics. The work she does is to call attention to the evils of the movement in her homeland.

Another memorable speaker was Cyndra

MacDowall. She showed slides of her work entered in the A Space show *Sight Specific: Lesbians and Representation*, bringing into the arena the subject of lesbianism, access to materials, and the lack of role models of the past.

When I spoke I asked the audience to use the same understanding and consciousness to fight against racism in the community, not only in others but also in each of their lives. Because, I believe there cannot be a feminist consciousness that festers in racism. I stated to the audience that some of you here tonight

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will some day be in the position to sit in judgment of our work, and I would like those of you who say you are not racist to realize that racism does not have to be overt actions.

I was quite surprised at the support from the audience, they agreed that there is quite a bit of racism, in many subtle ways, working to keep us out, and their need to do more work toward awareness and change. ●

**Beatrice Bailey is a Toronto artist.**



Photo: Ana C.P. Santos

"Feminist Art and Cultural Production" panel at the conference.

**EACH OF THE** three panel discussions at the WARC conference presented between eight to ten cultural producers and organizers. The necessary presence of recording/translating equipment required the panelists to speak slowly into microphones. A situation which contributed to a formalized structure and which appeared to intimidate some of the speakers. Each woman had ten minutes to speak. This produced vital insights into the national activity of feminists involved in art, but little dialogue between the representatives. More time at the end of the panels for discussion between panelists would have been beneficial. A suggestion was also made at the closing plenary that future conferences allow more time for informal networking amongst conference-goers by allotting breaks in the packed schedule.

Many of the representatives spoke of their organization's commitment to a non-hierarchical process. Most groups described themselves as collectively run, or if a more specialized division of labour had become necessary the structure had been developed through a process of trial and error rather than by automatically separating roles into a pre-determined chain of command. Louise Giguere from Video Femmes said that they wanted to explore everyone's talent and that the group had only gradually become specialized.

Because these women are not following the patriarchal model, the consequences of a concept outlined by Lisa Steele, a video artist who works within the Ontario College of Art, called "Agenda Setting" need to be understood. Agenda Setting is an unstated but understood method by which groups in power decide on what is acceptable. For instance, panelists spoke of Modernist art standards as the general criteria against which art is judged worthy of funding. Despite claims from the media that we are in a post-modern post-feminist era — and who knows what Modernism is anyway — art which is not Modernist falls outside the funding bodies' "Agenda" and is therefore unacceptable. The demise of women-operated galleries currently funded by the Canada Council is happening at a rate approaching extinction. Gallery 940, a defunct Toronto women's art gallery, was reported to have had its funding cut off because the Council said it was not up to other galleries' standards. The question arises: whose standards are being used?

Gail Bourgeois from Galerie Powerhouse in Montreal, the *only* woman-run gallery currently funded by the Council, noted that: "Women were energized by contact. Uniting creates impact..." If women are to build a culture there must be the means to do so. Carla Murray from WARC declared that lack of funding is one of the major issues facing wom-

en's groups today, and that hand in hand with this, WARC is facing an exhaustion of volunteer labour. Carla explained that "Growth needs continuity and requires an economic base." WARC received only 52% of the funding they requested for this conference. Sparkes Gallery, a women-operated organization in Toronto, reported a major financial crisis due to the doubling of their rent, a situation which is forcing them to look for another space. Connie Eckhart of A Space stated that women's art is a sub-agenda outside of "an old boy network that young boys enter... through an elaborate system of validation — that at the end of that, this is what we call art." A major contradiction for groups like WARC is that the very support systems they are building are not recognized because they go against the dominant ideology, and are consequently not funded. It appears that organizing to change the funding bodies' standards of evaluation would go a long way toward altering this situation.

The feminist challenge of developing alternative group dynamics and self-validation strategies carries a danger of reproducing similar exclusionary situations as those produced by patriarchal ideology unless we are continually self-critical and include all women in our "Agenda." For example at this conference many women felt alienated by the overuse of academic language. After the "Women's Art Organizations" panel, a respondent said, "These two days have left me confused... (words like) appropriating, super-ideological, contextualize... The people I connect with don't understand these things. We have to speak to all women. Not just the university-educated white women." Along with the issue of language and class, groups like Video Femmes spoke of wanting to demystify other exclusionary systems such as that of technology. Lisa Steele likes to tell her video students that the equipment is so simple even a monkey could operate it. Shop talk is a tool of communication. It is not inherently intelligent to use it.

*Feminism and Art: A Conference* was a valuable gathering of women that I had mostly only read the names of here and there. A problem for me was the lack of a discernible theme. Apparently it was to bring together women who were at various stages of organizing. This was too vague and did not include an adequate representation of diverse communities. It was an enlightening exercise of the intellect to attend. But one which created a schism for me between the art that engages me and how that art is discussed. ●

**Lesley Turner is a full-time student studying film theory.**

# Hand It Over

## THE 1987 JUNO AWARDS

Canadian Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (CARAS),  
O'Keefe Centre, Toronto  
November 2, 1987

A GLANCE thru the Juno list of winners over the years reveals an almost "white-out" of Black artists, with only two, Claudja Barry and Dan Hill, having received awards. The Black Music Industry, left to fend for itself in this de-facto "segregated" Awards show, has responded by honouring their artists since 1979 thru The Canadian Black Music Awards presented by the Black Music Association of Canada (BMAC) and more recently thru the Canadian Reggae Music Awards. Hardcore lobbying of CARAS didn't start until the mid-eighties though when the militant Toronto chapter of the Black Music Association (BMA(T.C.)) sent a letter to CARAS calling for three Black music categories (Calypso; Reggae; and R&B/Soul) in the Junos. CARAS responded by forming a Black Music Advisory Committee partially administered by the less-militant, more accommodationist BMAC. This resulted in two categories, R&B/Soul and Reggae/Calypso, being included in the 1985 Junos.

This move coincided with some overtures to R&B by the Industry while it steadfastly continued to ignore Reggae and Calypso artists, the work being done by the Toronto-based Dub Poetry Movement, the pungent creativity of the Hip-Hop scene, the gospel choirs, steelbands and more. R&B nominee Errol Starr's single "The Key" sold over 20,000 copies and received reasonable airplay; Kim Richardson got airplay on radio; Liberty Silver's video got rotation on Much Music; CBS signed Billy Newton-Davis; and at the 1986 Junos, all 5 R&B/Soul nominees performed during the live music segment of the show and



"tore the place up" to resounding applause.

With the 1987 show however, CARAS seems to be shying away from these symbolic overtures: there was only one live performance by an R&B act; there were no Reggae or Calypso performers (Reggae great Leroy Sibbles was not even shown on camera accepting his Reggae/Calypso Juno); and confirming some fears that Calypso particularly would be

given a hard time in the nominating process, there were no (yeah, that's what I said: No) Calypso nominees this year in the Reggae/Calypso category. Somewhat anticipating this state of affairs, The BMA(TC) and The Calypso Association of Toronto sent a letter to CARAS requesting that the Reggae/Calypso category be split in two to give these two distinct styles an equal chance at accessing the Industry. In part, the BMA(TC) said that "the fact that Black music and its creators are denied recognition and equality of treatment in the Industry, is unacceptable...While it is a fact that not many Calypso artists are recording in Canada, it is also a fact that many...perform on the live concert circuit...It is a glaring fact also that the record companies do not sign Calypso artists; that radio does not play the available recordings. The artists therefore, should not be blamed for inadequate recorded material, since the Industry, by ignoring the music, has destroyed the incentive for calypso artists to record. We believe therefore, that with the Junos giving recognition to the music in a separate category, the incentive...can now begin to be created for those who have been locked out of the Industry."

This kind of commentary gets/down to the "nitty/gritty" of the virtual de-facto "segregation" of Black Music and artists in the Canadian Music Business. It is a system in which Black artists are not regularly signed by the record companies; they don't get the gigs in the choice places; they don't get the exposure in the media; and their independently-produced records are not regularly played on the airwaves.

by Clifton Joseph

In terms of radio, there's less than a handful of Black music shows or DJs on mainstream radio and except for megabuck cross-over superstars, Black music is not integrated into radio programmers' regular playlists. This situation has helped fuel an alternative Black radio scene mainly on college and multicultural stations. Presently there are over 30 weekly programmes catering to Black music tastes. It is within this context of this segregated milieu that the Juno Black music categories must be analyzed. As things are now, Black artists around Canada producing dynamic music in many categories are relegated to a zone in which they are on the peripheries of even the "Independent" scene. So the works of The Satellites, Messenjah, The Livestock Band, Leroy Sibbles, (Dmitri) Pascal Cornel, Kingsley Etienne, Demo Cates, the Work of the Dub Poets, Carlton Vaughan, the rappers, scratchers and beat/boxers, the gospel groups, the reggae deejays and a capella sensation Four The Moment, Jason, Young Beginner, Buzz Upshaw, Tony Springer and many more are arrogantly, meanspiritedly and systematically excluded from the Canadian Music Industry. It is to this larger and much more pressing problem that CARAS and its agent, The Black Music Advisory Committee, will have to turn their energies to if they are really serious in helping the Black Music Industry. It's time to "put peddle to the meddle" and replace symbolic gestures with real actions; time to "tear the roof off the mothersucker" system of segregation within the Canadian Music Industry. The BMA(TC) put it aptly in its letter to CARAS: In our view, it is neither just nor respectful to exclude the true creators, the creative force behind this multi-billion dollar industry — BLACK PEOPLE — from full participation in the benefits of the Industry. ●

**Clifton Joseph is a dub poet, political activist and occasionally a journalist, who lives and works in Toronto.**

# Despair

## WORK

PAULETTE PHILLIPS & GEOFFREY SHEA  
YYZ, Toronto

October 27 — November 14, 1987

by Shonagh Adelman  
& Bryan Gee

WORK interweaves the lives of three characters whose oblique connection to one another is implied through their relationships to work, the media and religion. The title of the tape is its point of departure rather than its thematic centre: what starts off to be a simple story about an unemployed man develops into a multi-layered narrative incorporating a complex of formal and dramatic strategies. Documentary interviews, personal confession and media simulations are juxtaposed with evangelical diatribes, a surrealistic dream sequence and lip sync, all contributing towards a climax of existential despair and alienation.

### "GOOD BOY"

In the first sequence we encounter the unemployed Alex returning to his bachelor apartment after buying the three daily papers. He tosses them onto the kitchen table revealing headlines of death and disaster. Overlooking these, he turns directly to the want ads section while we hear a woman's voice announcing the same news stories over the radio.

Later we follow Alex through the bureaucracies of an employment centre where he is sent off to watch a series of "career options" videotapes. These documentary profiles literally overwhelm him by expanding outside the monitor frame to quadruple their original size. Montage techniques such as these are employed in later scenes where Alex crosses paths with a number of people who, unlike him, have jobs. He accumulates stories about the futility and drudgery of their blue-collar employment. Keyed-in backdrop tableaux give us clues to his perceptions, and add an extradiegetic layer of

irony which, when contrasted with the mediated "career options," underscores the tape's general ambience of alienation.

Despite this fragmentation and hyperbole, a cool documentary style predominates through most of the scenes featuring Alex. This corresponds to his matter-of-fact disposition which is challenged by his repeated encounters with "religion": in the employment centre, religion is offered as one more career choice; on a streetcar



courtesy of Geoffrey Shea/Paulette Phillips

Alex is cornered by a preacher; and in a park, a woman sings an inspirational song to her children. In the context of Alex's job search these incidental encounters seem curiously peripheral and it is only when we are confronted with the character of Grahame that the religious content of *Work* takes hold.

### SUPPORTED SOLELY ON GOD'S WILL

Grahame is a young religious fanatic who lives next door to Alex. His megalomaniacal self-image emerges in a lip-sync delivery of a Robert Schuller broadcast. Unemployed by choice, he spends most of his time indoors glued to the TV soaking up religious doctrine and apocalyptic news stories. Both Grahame and Alex are defined in part by their distinct re-

lationships to the media. While Alex blocks out all messages which have no direct relationship to his immediate experience, Grahame has come to identify with the media so intensely that he assumes personal responsibility for all reports of sin and suffering. Through his quest for a job Alex stumbles upon the question of the "meaning" of work and comes to associate identity with employment: "How can you think about who you are if you're unemployed?" he asks Studs Terkel during a radio phone-in programme. Grahame on the other hand, "having no need for anything" (ie. being dependent on God's will and his sister's support), rejects work as an activity that promotes false identity and alienation from God. At one point he recites from the Bible:

on Alex's deaf ears, they are the indirect cause of her brother's guilt. Throughout the tape she interrupts her programmed broadcasts with disclosures of her personal views and details of her private life. At one point she addresses Alex directly: "...and what about the gaps in your life Alex? The ones you can see, like your perennial unemployment, and the ones only the viewer at home knows about, like your mislaid desire, your oblivion as you plunge into the abyss."

In the final scene Grahame sings a song, projecting his voice through the wall which separates his apartment from Alex's. For the first time in the tape Alex takes notice and is distracted from his preoccupation with work. Visibly disturbed, his attempts to grapple with his problem on a radio phone-in programme are cut short as Grahame's nihilistic song ends with sardonic laughter. The song is repeated as the credits roll, emphasizing its effect as closure.

"Oh I'm sad for never having courage  
and I'm sad for this feeling of fear  
Closer to the sun now and further from the heart."

*Work* is a story of alienation. The tape's narrative of unemployment is disrupted and gradually eclipsed by the religious themes embodied in the character of Grahame. The intensity of his evangelical diatribes overrides the elements of satire that are present throughout most of the tape. Individuals are shown as isolated from each other and themselves, and the causes of their condition are attributed to their "mislaid desires" and personal psychologies. A social framework which might connect the alienation of the three main characters to the larger spheres of labour, religion and the media is absent. *Work* represents a world reduced in its possibilities where unemployment leads to disillusionment, "alienated labour" is a trap, career options are intangible and religion is lethal. ●

# Retro Retch

## TRAGEDY OF MANNERS

DONNA LYPCHUK

Theatre Passe Muraille, Toronto

October 1 — October 13, 1987

SOONER OR LATER, someone had to write a play like *Tragedy of Manners*. All the ingredients were present and ready to be exploited: an art "scene" rapidly becoming overpopulated and exhausted in the New York style, an art bar housing all the most appropriate elements of that scene, and the spectacle of art which has become sufficiently detached from a grounding in salient cultural purposes. Donna Lypchuk's *Tragedy of Manners* involved a cast of almost forty — and is both performed by and about artists who live on Toronto's Queen Street West. Yet the numerous contradictions apparent in the play make any chance of this performance functioning as legitimate critique impossible.

Ultimately, *Tragedy of Manners* ends up in a position of total abnegation, doubling back on itself and cancelling any potential meaning out. By resting almost entirely on the reiteration of clichés and stereotypes, the play fails to situate itself successfully either as critique, parody or accurate social commentary. The characterizations used are all too hackneyed to those already engaged in "art discourse," and meaningless and reductive to those looking in from outside the local art milieu. Thus, *Tragedy of Manners* closes itself off to any meaningful dialogue with either side. If the play is designed for those who recognize the players, the experience becomes purely one of an identificational who's who engaging the audience on a level of personal investment. If, on the other hand, it is meant as a "slice of life" (as the popular press would have it), it merely serves to reinforce the fashionable and indifference of marginalized lifestyles.

*Tragedy of Manners* ends up promoting that which it seeks to

condemn. Its surprisingly conventional mediation usurps its capacity for emancipatory critique, and its predetermined structure leaves no room for intervention. All the devices of mainstream theatre are accommodated: an opening dramatic monologue; the audience's identification with a central, neutral observer who determines the extent of our understanding (Grace, the thinly disguised alter ego of the playwright?); the obvious use of symbolism; the insistent distance between audience and performer; the rigid and inorganic acting style which belies the participation of those involved in the production.

This structure might be as-

sumed to be oddly inconsistent with the "experimental" subculture which it takes as its subject. However, as a tourist trap for the uninitiated, it functions quite logically as an invitation to the perverse and wacky world of the Toronto avant-garde.

Even more disturbing than the play's failure to function as critique or parody is its treatment of female characters, one so negative that it is difficult to imagine a woman is responsible for the characterizations presented. In an age when even Madonna is arguably viewed as a positive female icon in her ability to present at once an open sexuality and an unapologetic aggressivity and independence from male control, the fe-

male characters presented by Lypchuk do not function outside of masculine discourse.

Aside from the squeaking and squealing female characters (of which there are far too many), even the more "progressive" types are given no autonomy from the bad boyfriend or vindictive fag.

The dykes are either butch or femme, subscribing to mainstream ideas about lesbians, or worried that they will lose their lover to a man. Feminists are presented as out-of-date martyrs who can't get laid, and the main female character of identification is paralyzed by her love sickness for her ex-boyfriend. Even the figure of the female art critic (one of the only female characters endowed with some intelligence), is depicted as a cruel dominatrix, who manipulates others and abuses her power.

None of these portrayals acknowledges a female perspective that has transgressed the bounds of male/female relationships, and regress instead into a post-feminist nostalgia for the position of battered spouse, hysterical victim or manipulative siren. It is perhaps no accident that the play's representation of the "ideal" woman, who prims and preens in front of the mirror above the proceedings, turns out to be a transvestite. Homosexual men do not fare much better, occupying little space between the sexually deprived, plague-carrying vampire and the opera queen.

Although *Tragedy of Manners* attempts to use humour as a strategy for analysis, (as humour can be an aggressive and oppositional tool) the play does not manage to transcend its oppressively cynical undertones. Yet the ultimate irony of *Tragedy of Manners* lies in another contradiction: the spirit of cooperation and community support that must have been present in the process of staging the play is conspicuously absent in the show itself. ●

**Su Rynard is a Toronto video artist. This review was written in consultation with Bruce la Bruce, a writer/filmmaker who is part of the Cineaction magazine collective.**

by Su Rynard



Photo: Susan Ross

# Artropolis

## ARTROPOLIS

EXHIBITION OF CONTEMPORARY  
BRITISH COLUMBIA ART

Vancouver, B.C.

October 3 — October 31, 1987

by Sara Diamond

VANCOUVER'S three-story, multi-media show *Artropolis* was another in this city's series of salons de refusés. The tradition began in 1983, when the community organized *The October Show* in response to the Vancouver Art Gallery's conservative gala opening of its new home in the renovated old courthouse. This first show was a breathtaking display of work by Vancouver's set of younger artists. The works were notable in their hard-hitting critique of cultural institutions, their engagement with art theory and their irreverent use of media.

The even larger *Warehouse Show* in 1984 was housed in a grubby and massive warehouse space with endless floors stuffed with art. Works concentrated on a sense of interior fantasy, on intensive urban angst and on biting political satire. Two years later, with the Vancouver Artists League's Centennial exhibition, the warehouse show moved into the home of its initial antagonist, the Vancouver Art Gallery. It shrank, changed name and character, and became the highly curated *Art and Artists* which concentrated on established Vancouver artists. Nonetheless, in the gallery context, it was a breath of fresh air.

This year's version lies somewhere between the public art gallery and the warehouse. The site was clean and renovated. The work was well organized and spaced so as to be visible. The show was inevitably overwhelming — the unkind compared it to department-store shopping. Rather than the open submission policies of earlier shows *Artropolis* was curated by individuals whose specific mandates resulted in a less collective selection process. What had begun as an overview of artists in the province was mediated by response to curatorial statements and, now, by curatorial choice.

Still, the warehouse shows are part of the west coast's strategy of using exhibitions to argue against current cultural policies. The emphasis in this year's initiative shifted from challenging "establishment" art to lobbying for better fiscal support. The combined resources brought to bear in such an extensive exhibition, along with the strength of location and visibility, help to break the crisis of

audience and attract the uninitiated as well as the vast range of the traditional art consumers.

*Artropolis* united various generations of artists under its roof, including art school students, their instructors, established B.C. artists and those outside of the traditional art community. It explored the range of artistic media, with a music programme curated by Danielle Peacock and Alex Varty, a Friday night performance series curated by Anna Banana, an in-house video library coupled with several planned out-of-house screenings and the three-story warehouse show of visual art, installation, photography and sculpture.

These latter were presented in four sections: "Urban Renewal," curated by Willard Holmes; "Self-Image: By the Artist, As the Artist," curated by Marion Barling; "Vox Populi," curated by Todd Harris; and "Les Enfants Terribles," curated by Donna Hagerman. None of the curatorial statements problematized the relationship between cultural production and socio-political environ-

ment, although the lack of funding for various art forms was acknowledged by both Elizabeth VanderZaag (video) and Donna Hagerman. VanderZaag excluded video works that used documentary language or form. For most of *Artropolis*, social commentary emerged in diffused and mediated ways.

"Urban Renewal" concentrated on the "modern city's diffuse and decentred nature," providing a variety of vantage points on the urban environment, and crossing over easily into Barling's self-image series with the inclusion of intensely expressionist and alienated personal landscapes. Some works were figurative and incorporated commentary on the politics of individual survival. For example, James Lindfield's *The Line* captures a brave-new-world sensibility, the terror and intensity of the regimented city as rows of skull-like faces parade through a surreal downtown. In Brian Roche's *Les Desmoiselles de Seymour* — a Picasso revival — prostitutes are sinister, surrounding a suited man and stripping him of his jacket.

Other artists abstract the city, whether into expressionist paint or grids, sites and processes. In Philippe Raphenel's *Nocturne* paint strokes are bold and emotive. Don Gill's surrealistic photograph *Kaledon* places the shell of an emptied building within a rural intersection. Some pieces approach the urban experience from a more fantastic level. By pulling the stripes out of men's suit jackets, Ruth Sheuing's *Pin Stripe Suits* suggest the disorder that lies beneath the surface of even the most controlled yuppie. ▶

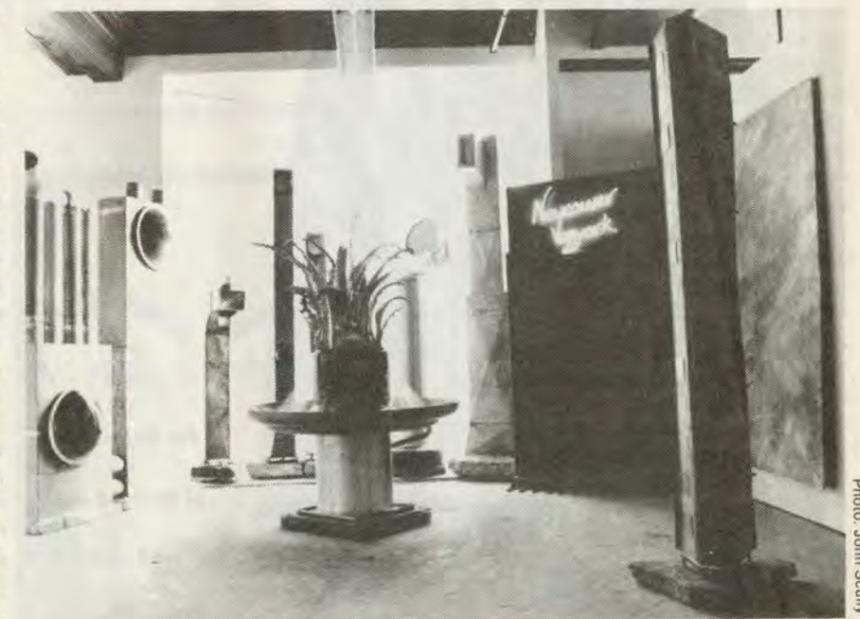


Photo: John Scully

*Newcover, Vanyork* by Kaaly Levan, neon, steel, lead, concrete, glass, 1986-87

EXHIBITION

ONE OF THE more politically acute landscape themes in *Artropolis* is the impact of Vancouver rapid development during EXPO '86. Localized in their context, the referents of these artworks are the viewers' experience. *Expo Trees* by Martin Roland, refers to the decision to import trees for landscaping from the USA. The imports all died. In the cibachromes, the bound trunks of trees are set against a pale shadow of forest. Ingrid Yuille's *Untitled* chronicles the demolition of a home. Kaaly Levan's *Newcouver*, *Vanyork* is a whimsical installation using fountains, panel landscapes and ventilation pipes. Aubrey Dayman and Glen Paul's self-explanatory *The Big Trick* shows an American flag constructed of continuous lines of colour snapshots from B.C. Place and EXPO.

Craig Conde-Berggold's *Stop Child Labour*, extends the geographic boundaries of the city to its industrialized outskirts. His subject is the death of several farmworkers' children while their parents were away working. The artist uses a realistic paint-by-number background, and photo-images in which the children become monuments within a three-dimensional plane.

Marion Barling's first goal in "Self-Image: By the Artist, as the Artist," was to provide

a forum for artists to represent themselves and to comment on the social and historical representation of the artist. One grouping of artworks in this section explores the artist's sense of individuality at times using analytical tools, at times expressive. Other works make a formal use of the body as a socio-political site.

The second direction was to define "the artist" as a construction within an historical and cultural nexus. The very act of self-portraiture comes under attack in Michael Hornsby's jesting *Self-Portrait*. Ronnie Tessler's *Blueprint for An Artist*, uses X-rays, a snap-shot and a blueprint to allow us an internal and external view of the artist as a purely structural form. Other works suggest the culture's roots in a humanistic anthropological past. These include Ruth Beer's giant cedar *Leaf Totem* and Evelyn Armstrong's *Culturally Altered* which uses bird wings in an installation to chart the changing significance of these symbols. Doreen Jensen's *Gitksan Woman* made of carved alder and paint combines historical references with self-portraiture.

A series of works by women artists explores sexuality as a location of identity and control. Marianne Rae Forsyth's *Would I Lie*

to *You* is a joke on Man Ray's woman and fish. In Forsyth's work, a naked woman in a vaginal forest speaks to a grinning fish which she holds in her hands. Marian Szijarto's *Fish* is a mixed-media installation of Greek amphoras decorated with vaginal orifices flanked by pyrrhic columns: The phallogocentric landscape is invaded by the wandering womb.

Wendy Lewington's *Thread* quilt incorporates tiny squares of perfectly handcrafted fabric which carry written descriptions of domestic violence and child abuse. The care embodied in the work resonates the efforts of women to keep families functioning and repaired despite that institution's profound internal damage. Marilyn Mylrea's austere blue and blood-toned *Dancing The Song of Death With David* is a powerful figurative oil painting. The back of the female image blocks our view as she faces a looming and indistinct shadow. The work speaks both to sexual violence and to the threat of disease and death.

Todd A. Davis' "Vox Populi" centered on narrative forms, invoking artists to explore the diverse languages that surround us and the "narrative of process which has become an artistic strategy." This book work collection became a natural site for social criticism and the exploration of theory, because of the formal ability to reference visual concepts with words. Michael Thorne's *Freedom of Association* dissociates images and their codes, using allegories of portraiture, text and clothing. In one frame Romantic Love and sado-masochism are counterposed; in another, a text which discusses the differences between romanticism and naturalism resides next to a woman in a 1950s beaded sweater.

"Les Enfants Terribles," curated by Donna Hagerman, centres on the playful art strategies that she perceives as "indigenous to the West Coast." She suggests that this humour is fostered by the ingenious means that artists draw on to survive in the unsupportive economic climate of B.C. Artists in this section are united in their unwillingness to bend to an authority of materials or established art-world hierarchies.

Anna Banana's programme provided a cross-section of the performance medium. Disparate styles included Edam's sculptural danceworks, Christina Farmilo's mythic exploration of memory and history and Tom Graff's theatrical extravaganza. Some of the most successful performance addressed issues of fashion terrorism, the construction of femininity and the body.

The *Stupid Hairdoos*, comprised of Ann McDonnell, Bessie Wapp, Derek Simons and Naomi Singer, work in the satirical tradition



Still from *Milk on the Dining Room Floor* video by Corry Wyngaarden, 15 min., 1986.

of Canadian performance art, echoing the approach of Toronto's Clichettes and the Hummer Sisters, deploying slide projections, video, historical texts, ads and a series of stupid hairdoos. Hair is revealed as a vehicle for the passions of history and taste. Rollers, combs, and hair-dryers become cultural icons, embodying layers of history. "The Anatomy of Stupid Hairdoos" is an "exploration of the urge to pile things up" (programme). Naomi Martin's *Torso: Identification of the Body* was presented during intermission. Four women pose as mannequins, dressed in fantastic aggressive breast plates, body masks, fabrics, all accentuating female body parts as armaments in a fashion war.

THE VIDEO exhibition consisted of non-documentary recent works. The curator included formalist experiments, reworked performances, new narrative statements and more experimental examples of work for the commercial market. A positive aspect of the video exhibition was the presence of a newer generation of video artists, centred around the artist-run centres like Video In and Western Front and the Emily Carr College of Art.

Most of the experimental work deployed narrative content — fixing on issues of cultural production. Kate Craig's *Mā* provides a mesmerizing survey of Buddhist religious sites

melding into the mnemonic patterns of Western culture's religion of pleasure and immediacy — amusement parks. Corry Wyngaarden's *Milk on the Dining Room Floor*, uses music as a guide through imagery, as the protagonist himself moves from the insulated inertia of classical scores to the uncontained explosion of a cyclotron.

*Gitksan Woman* by Doreen Jensen, acrylic on alder.

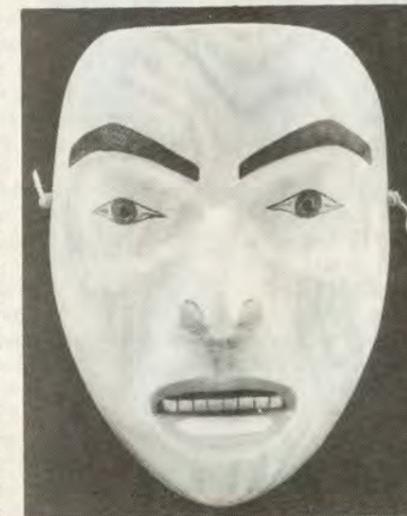


Photo: Trevor Mills

The new narratives emphasized visuals and sound over plot. Joe Sarahan's *Holy Joe* testifies to the interdependency of all varieties of religious fundamentalism and the overbearing sexual repression and guilt within this culture. Sarahan's powerful rock music track is intercut with off-air sound and interrupted by text from 1950s pornography. Images flit between Tammy Fay and Jim Bakker, S&M ritual, religious symbols, disengaged TV news coverage, the uncovering of a dumped body, a motor cycle rider...linking the pleasure of consumerism and devotion and the threatening horror that lurks between spectacle and experience.

Patrick Hughes provides hilarious insights into the universal manipulation of information by television news formats. His video cartoon *6,6,6, O'Clock News* centres on a news commentator who repeats images and information in a rainbow of languages, moving the audience in sequence through a car accident which auspiciously becomes a romantic swim and series of commercials.

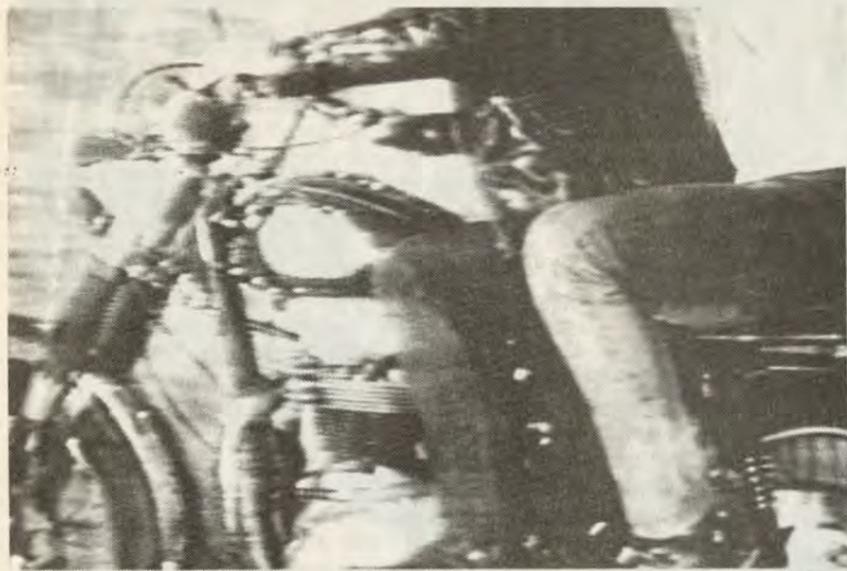
*Neurestalgia*, by Susan Milne, *Bennu* by Judi Norris and *Mother, May I* by Jeannette Reinhardt are works in which memory and fantasy rule the imagination. All three producers deploy a visual language that is rich in images, but repetitive as it recalls the haunting and obsessive.

Photo: Trevor Mills



*Pin Stripes*

by Ruth Scheuing, altered man's suit, 1986.



Still from *Holy Joe* video by Joe Saharan, colour/b&w, stereo, 11:37 min., 1987.

Unfortunately, the video exhibition itself became a locus of crisis, one which could have been avoided. The video community in Vancouver has consciously decided not to acknowledge the B.C. Classification Branch. This includes a decision to not negotiate soft censorship in the form of exemptions. Once groups collaborate, censorship can take a variety of forms as exemptions become occasional refusals and then occasional submissions (as has been the case with the experimental film community in Canada). This posi-

tion has been elucidated in position papers of the Coalition for the Right to View in many public forums.

Video curator, Elizabeth VanderZaag sought a venue which would allow the video programme to reach a larger audience. She chose Pacific Cinematheque, a film exhibition society that happens to comply with censorship. She also chose to ignore the anti-censorship tradition in the video community, contacting the B.C. Classification Branch, informing them of the planned exhibition and



Photo: Trevor Mills

30 min. performance by "The Stupid Hairdoos."

Sara Diamond

requesting an exemption for the work in the show. Sadly, this was the first time that the video community in B.C. had ever acknowledged the right of the Film and Video Classification Branch to intervene in its exhibitions.

At the eleventh hour, immediately before the exhibition was to open and the screening to occur at Cinematheque, the artists realized that their work was being brought to the attention of Classifications by the curator and felt compromised by this process. They issued a statement expressing the lack of consultation, noting that this was the only medium in the show subjected to censorship. They asked that the venue of the screening be changed to the *Artropolis* site or to another space which neither submitted to nor acknowledged censorship. All but three of the twenty-one video artists agreed to this position. Finally, the venue was changed for one screening, and the other evening was cancelled. However, the curator moved the works by artists who had not signed the anti-censorship statement to the rescheduled screening, cancelled a number of the signers and then added other completely unscheduled work to the evening's programme.

Hopefully the result of this trauma will be better consultation in planning exhibitions on the part of organizations and curators and a more active response on the part of artists. The simple statement "I don't want my work submitted to any censorship or classification procedures," on the part of artists would go a long way.

**A STRONG** direction of the works in *Artropolis* was inwards — whether towards whimsy, angst or despair. This is in part a characteristic of the period, as artists return to the art world as site, and to art-making as an exercise of skill and of discovery. In post-modernism, meanings are easily absorbed or made redundant, the self becomes a kind of steady sign-post. In B.C., the weight of social crisis and the lack of tangible resistance encourages inward flight. The curatorial statements may have discouraged a more analytical or activist art, or influenced which works artists chose to submit. If one could identify a lack it would be the general absence of works that were socially engaged or referenced in a considered politics of representation. Some artists emphasized that the "personal is political," and others approached the embattled issues of our time. Still, there is a danger when the primary value of art becomes a linguistics of the psyche, a mystical centre of creativity. It will be challenging to bridge the gaps between our realities and representations in 1988. ●

## Delinquents with a Difference

by Chris Martin

**PUBLISHED** locally with no money, **J.D.s** is a home-made pornozine. It is inspired by the fanzines which cover the underground punk music scenes. But the magazine is attempting to stake out ground for a gay and political punk that will stand as an alternative to the white-male-macho-crap which is over-represented in other fanzines.

Punk — now ten years old — has been a vulnerable movement. It has been represented as straight, apolitical and dead by the dominant media. But the punk that **J.D.s** represents is different. It is gay, political and alive. It is a culture that has been supported in music and mail art. One of the most important projects for punk (and **J.D.s**) today is the opposition to the fascist and racist skinhead community.

**J.D.s** resists oppressive forms of control and authority like censorship, capitalism and straight culture. With its raw format, it makes fun of big-business gay pornography. Fifteen to twenty pages of over-xeroxed photos of girls and naked young guys, cut-and-paste sex stories, adventure comic strips and amateur drawings of sexy dykes, are stapled together to make the magazine whenever the material is available. Homemade porn like this necessarily opposes the corporate monopoly on gay sexual and erotic imagery.

There are other kinds of monopolies which lock the gates against difference. More than one Toronto gay bar has refused entrance to Blacks, Asians and punks. Incidents of discrimination have been recorded over the last several years in *The Body Politic* and *X-tra* magazine. Women and

*"J.D.s is a soft-core pornozine for hard-core kids produced by the New Lavender Panthers (NLP) and dedicated to the explosive world of gay punks who get their kicks from putting the gay back in 'punk' and the punk back in 'gay'."*

*Soft-core same-sex porn for hard-core kids. A truly different kind of 'zine. Check out how the 'other half' lives and fucks. Recommended even for hets."*

— The New Lavender Panthers



Photo courtesy of JD

**Diesel dykes on bikes: Gloria, from the pages of J.D.s.**

men have been shut out to preserve the illusion of a monolithic middle class gay culture.

Gay punks have been shut out of popular gay culture in the same way that they've been turned away from these bars. Bands and publications have had little exposure or support. **J.D.s** has met with resistance from an unexpected source. Toronto's gay bookstore, Glad Day Books, failed to display the magazine when it was delivered to it for sale. A bookstore spokesperson said that they had "...many other far more important things to worry about."

Another condition that makes **J.D.s** interesting is the anti-pornography movement which has arisen within feminism. Those who hold this view blame women's oppression on pornography, ignoring the social and economic forces that are responsible. To combat this kind of repression, it's essential that

women and other minorities have control over their own sexual culture.

One portion of the 'zine is full of young lesbians in punks bands — recognizing the roots of progressive punk in all-girl bands. There are illustrations of sexy 'Tom Girls' by Tab Twain, a world of women without men in black leather jackets and army boots. These women know how to fight and ride bikes, because "that's who you want to sleep with." (NLP) These are not glamour girls, these are dykes. This is not style, this is sexual and political difference. It is refusal, it is erotic.

The sex stories in **J.D.s** come in a variety of styles. Worth mentioning are the ongoing adventures of Butch, a real juvenile delinquent, told in a J.D. Salinger-style narrative. But, the female characters, Kit, Katy and Cookie get left out of the action; even though Kit gets "a bike of her own." Only the

third edition has erotic stories by and for women. "Untitled" by Anita, a titillating tale about a lesbian pick-up on Toronto's Yonge Street. "Patty K" by L.L., is dated by language and fashion. It's still a cute story about an unexpected reunion between two friends who recount their not-so-naive, pre-adolescent Dracula games.

The hard core of the magazine is heavy metal drawings of punks with big cocks, girls with tattoos, diesel dykes on bikes. Safe sex and rape fantasies find a home in the same publication. There are interviews with young punks in bands that play explicit gay and political material. There's a list of the best new homocore hits by bands like the Butthole Surfers, Nip Drivers, The Leather Nun, etc.

The New Lavender Panthers say: "This is not art and it is not theory, it is the way we live — photos of our friends, stories people send us."

They recognize that art and theory have limitations as tools for social and sexual change. Their community-based exchange of sexual stories and pictures seem progressive. Their self-conscious 'perversion' makes progress against the racist skinheads, sexist punks and the conservatives in the women's and gay movements.

**J.D.s** is not altogether innocent. There's an uneasy feeling of nostalgia permeating the 'zine. Its form — raw xerox and photomontage — is contrived. This graffiti aesthetic, which the collective claims is unintentional, can only go so far. It is difficult to read, and too dark, alienating instead of engaging the reader who ends up dismissing the content rather than taking it seriously. Sentimental for an absent and idealized past — **J.D.s** undermines itself as a social and political alternative. But the 'zine still provides a radical model for the representation of sexual difference and the production of porn. ●

**Chris Martin is a Toronto video artist.**

**Edited by Rowley Mosop for the FUSE Editorial board.**

# Against the Grain

## THE 1987 THIRD CINEMA FESTIVAL

Waterloo, London, North York, Toronto  
November 4 — November 13, 1987

by Cameron Bailey

Because our culture is an impulse towards emancipation, it will remain in existence until emancipation is a reality: a culture of subversion which will carry with it an art, a science, and a cinema of subversion.

—Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino,  
"Towards a Third Cinema"

### THE BUS STATION

that serves Kitchener-Waterloo sits kind of abjectly down the street from Kitchener's big patio furniture outlet ("Closed For The Winter"). Inside it's as unreal as you would expect, stocked with people wearing the usual vague, grotesque masks of the traveller. Some of them move around in the grey light; some just sit. Transient places like this always seem to have their own timeless time — usually it's the mid-fifties — and the Kitchener bus station is no exception. Everything here is drained of urgency, drained of colour, pallid. The only subversion going on here takes the form of two teenagers playing Galaga near the door. This is my introduction to the Third Cinema Festival; it does nothing to prepare me for it.

This part of the festival is actually taking place in Waterloo (there's a stretch of King Street between two parkettes that separates the twin cities), mostly at the University of Waterloo and the repertory cinema in town, the Princess. For the few days that the festival inhabits this small city it's probably the most vital place in the province.

Organized by Renate Wickens, the Third Cinema Festival began in 1985 in Waterloo as a showcase of "socially relevant" film and video from the "third world." Wickens

\* There is some question about the festival's name. For all the obvious reasons the organizers didn't want to use "third world," so settled on the phrase coined in the Solanas and Gettino article. In part, third cinema is defined as "films that the System cannot assimilate and which are foreign to its needs...films that directly and explicitly set out to fight the System" (Fernando Solanas and Octavio Gettino, "Towards a Third Cinema," *Movies and Methods: An Anthology*, Ed. Bill Nichols, Berkeley: U. of California P., 1976, p. 52). Of course the derivation of "third cinema," using a dominant society as the base, follows the same line of thought that arrived at "third world." Using "south" as an alternative only slightly softens the implications of the term (north is still to south as top is to bottom). Besides, it's geographically inaccurate: not all of what "third world" connotes — Mexico and the Caribbean, for example — is in the southern hemisphere. So in the meantime we're trapped by convention. I'll place the term "third world" in quotation marks to remind myself that it is convention.

firmly believes in countering the monopoly Toronto enjoys in non-commercial film — hence the Waterloo location. This year the 10-day festival took place in Waterloo, London, North York and Toronto, depending for assistance on the universities in each location, as well as libraries and community groups concerned with "third world" issues. The London component included a seminar on "Third cinema theory": among the participants were filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-Ha, and academics Robert Stam and Manthia Diawara. I attended the Waterloo portion of the festival, where most of the films and tapes were shown.

There was something present in this festival that's usually lost in others. The organization wasn't seamless, as it can be for big, slick festivals. There was a complete lack of hipness, which was as refreshing as it was disorienting; to their credit, the organizers (Tim Barnard and Marilyn Burgess programmed) put their energy into getting the best works and artists available for the festival. The "quality" (or effectivity or whatever qualitative register you care to use) varied wildly, but in all of the films

you were likely to find political urgency, an agenda. It's rare. It's rare to find an art film, for instance, that isn't wrapped up in layers of solipsism. In one guise or another, the films and tapes at the Third almost uniformly dealt with issues of the land, or the burden of colonialism, or the pressures of Western modernity. It was also one of the few festivals where you could expect to see an animal sacrifice or a circumcision ceremony more than once a day. In other words, the films and tapes, even when most abstract, always seemed grounded in the social, in the distinct reality that produced them. Maybe that's because the accurate representation of lived experience remains an important political issue in "third world" cinema. If there is anything common to these films and tapes it is a need on the part of the artists to show something *real* of their worlds, to counter the lies and misapprehensions that we ingest when we watch James Bond in the Orient, or Meryl Streep in Africa.

Although they vary in technique, the following films were all powerfully revisionist in what (and how) they represented: *Perfumed Nightmare* (Philippines), *Macunaima* (Brazil), and *Wild Mountains* (People's Republic of China). Some of my own favourites were *The House of Mr. Hagh Daust* (Iran), a Chaplinesque story of the Islamic Revolution; *Marca Registrada* (Brazil), a brilliantly unsettling glimpse of women in Brazil; and *The Passion of Remembrance* (U.K.), the Sanfoka Collective's complex analysis of power structures within and against the British Black communities. There were other films that were expectedly impressive, such as *Man Facing South-east* (Argentina); Suzanna Amaral's *Hour of the*



Video Still from *Con Guerra O Sin Guerra* by Martha Wallner courtesy of the Third Cinema Festival.



Image from *Bombay, Our City* by Amand Patwardhan courtesy of the Third Cinema Festival.

*Star* (Brazil), already a feminist *locus classicus*; and Anand Patwardhan's searing documentary, *Bombay: Our City* (India). Not everything was wonderfully progressive, of course. Some of the African films, for example, take a stand against the West that ends up being repressive internally. Sao Gamba's *Kolormask*, Kenya's first feature film made by Kenyans, does just that. The film cautions against embracing Western ideologies that conflict with African traditions, but its most powerful message is explicitly anti-feminist, and possibly anti-woman.

### Whites Facing south, East

Within the festival there were several films and tapes made by whites in the "first world" about the "third world." Most of them — Bob Connolly and Rob Anderson's *First Contact*, for example — are very responsible, carefully locating their own subjectivity, knowing just what is impossible to say. Others, like the festival's "special presentation," *A Winter Tan*, were considerably more problematic. Programming *A Winter Tan*, the film made by Jackie Burroughs et al. about a woman's sexual adventures in Mexico, has got to be the festival's worst judgment call. At best the film's treatment of Mexico and Mexicans is tricky, both celebrating and gaping at their otherness. At worst, and this is my opinion, it is deeply, clearly racist. Its subject, a woman mistakenly seeking spiritual redemption through the "huge cocks" Mexican men have, is unarguably racist. And the film does nothing to distance itself from her. In fact it gets as close as it can, playing the "clinical objectivity" game like it was still valid. It is a

### Marca Registrada (Trade Mark)

Leticia Parente

11 min., silent b/w video, 1980

In Bahia, an impoverished region in the northeast of Brazil, the young women often embroider the soles of their feet and the palms of their hands as a form of decoration. Bahia is to Brazil what the Ozarks are to the United States: an entirely other world, a culture unto itself that only looks foolish when brought under the glare of urbanity. In *Marca Registrada*, we watch in real-time, in one-shot, as a woman embroiders the words "Made in Brazil" into the sole of her left foot. Beyond a squeamishness that's never really relieved, the process of watching the tape is one of shifting perspectives. First it's about women's work directed at the body, a transcendent self-mutilation, perhaps. But as you realize what's being written, all thoughts of an *écriture* feminine created in opposition to tattooing go out the window. This is strictly commodification we're watching — Parente has compared the act to the branding of animals. The submerged idea, as I read it, is that national identity, especially the national identity of oppressed groups, is imposed from above and then internalized: it makes us easy marks, products. This is something we Canadians live every day ■



Still from *Yellow Earth* courtesy of the Third Cinema Festival.

film completely at odds with the rest of the festival programme; seen in that context it seems all the more bizarre.

The larger question of "first world" whites looking at "third world" cinema is implicit in the structure of the festival itself. The position is a classic liberal one (it's anthropology and sociology in their crude stages), and we do not escape it by pleading Canadian. We have to ask ourselves what it means for us in the English-speaking western world to watch films made *against* us. No, we're not the strong arm of imperialism that the United States is, but does that make us any less complicit? For its economic size Canada has a very strong presence in the "third world" as a benefactor and mediator, as a father. We shouldn't have to be told that in a revolution with any substance, fathers are the first ones up against the wall.

So we have to be aware of how the "third world" places us and where we've placed the "third world." Guilt is not inappropriate; it's just not effective. More is required.

### The Gleam in the Third I

There is a potential for the Third Cinema Festival, a "best-case scenario" that will keep it from remaining Problematic. The festival will

have reached maturity when it is organized and programmed primarily by Canadians of "third world" origin, when it is as much for us as it is for white Canadians. When it is less a showcase, less a riot of catharsis and scopophilia, and more of a link in a chain of communication, then it will have fulfilled its potential. As it now stands it is "us" looking, however sympathetically, at "them." They are still the objects. It's a shorter, less troubled link when the people facilitating the communication between "first" and "third" worlds have some connection to those cultures they presume to present. The organizers have done an admirable job, but sooner or later they'll have to go quietly. This is, of course, not to negate the importance of the work done by those who made this festival happen. But the structure of this festival does have to be rethought seriously before it's mounted again in 1989, and questions of audience are critical: who is this festival for? And why?

Other criticisms, while we're at it. It's a mistake to mount the festival in more than one city. Avoiding monolithic Toronto might be an admirable goal, but you cannot generate a festival spirit in three or four locations over ten days. Also, few of the films and videos were shown in all three locations, making it al-

most impossible to see everything available. Very few people are economically able to travel all over southwestern Ontario tracking down the films they want to see. And, if the festival is at all for the members of the communities in Canada of the countries where those films and tapes come from, then Toronto, where those communities are largest, is the likely place for it. The best of the programme could tour Ontario, or the country, afterwards.

Where the festival goes from here will depend on its organizers and funders. But it is crucial that it continue. We need to see what the rest of the world is doing, and the parts of the world the Third covers may in the end turn out to have produced some of the most interesting and committed films and videos anywhere. But their biggest difficulty in producing work lies in finding audiences. The Third Cinema Festival is capable of reaching a large, influential audience, but it needs to do it better. ●

**Cameron Bailey is a freelance writer and graduate student in film theory.**

# Scenes of History

## BACHELOR-MAN

WINSTON KAM

Theatre Passe Muraille, Toronto

Opens November 12, 1987

by Beverly Yhap

BACHELOR-MAN is the first mainstage theatrical production to deal with the experience of the Chinese in Canada. It follows in the wake of R.A. Shiomi's ground-breaking *Yellow Fever* (1983), which placed Japanese Canadians at the centre of a recognizably North American genre: the hard-boiled detective story. It was clear that Asian Canadians had arrived on stage: in *Yellow Fever*, they weren't shadowy, laconic figures added to the background of the story (servants, chauffeurs); they were the story.

*Bachelor-Man* concerns the treatment of the Chinese in Canada, specifically the effects of the Exclusion Act which, when passed on July 1, 1923, barred Chinese women from emigrating and, in so doing, artificially created the bachelor society depicted in the *Passe Muraille* play written by Winston Kam. In Toronto, additional restrictions were made forbidding Chinese from employing white women, further inhibiting contact between the sexes.

Set six years after the Act was passed on July 1, 1929, five men gather in a tea house on Dundas Street. There they rail against the Act and the life it has forced on them. Two older men, John, the teahouse owner, and Grandad Lian, fondly recall their "rice cookers" — the wives they left behind in China. A younger man, Kao, a veteran of WW I stumbles in. For Kao, both July 1 and the Dominion Day parade he shuns are bitter reminders of the racism that prevents him from leading a normal life, a life that includes women. One-armed, and with a volatile temper, Kao provides the catalyst for the others' pent-up rage. They collect money to buy him a woman, setting on Mme. Wu,

the most attractive, but not the only available female. The alternative, Queenie, an old street prostitute who hovers outside the tea shop, makes her entrance in Act Two. After the men learn of Mme. Wu's subsequent

spoken or written. The play ends with the tea house deserted except for the two older characters, and the young boy. Throughout *Bachelor-Man* reference is made to the Monkey King, a folk figure, and the play



Photo courtesy of Theatre Passe Muraille

Scene from *Bachelor-Man*.

suicide (precipitated, it would seem, by the men's offer of money), Queenie assails them for their smug self-righteousness. If you think your lot is bad, look what you've done to us, she contends. And she pulls up her baggy trousers to reveal the evidence of cruelty practiced traditionally on Chinese women — a pair of tiny bound feet. The younger men are shocked; the older men are scandalized, they insist on throwing Queenie out for bad-mouthing her own heritage. Huang, the scholar among them, attempts a reconciliation; he shows Queenie that the written Chinese characters for "woman" and "child" when combined form the character for "good." Thus, he says, far from degrading them, the Chinese honour women each time the word "good" is

intersperses stylized interludes of tai-chi-based choreography that break up the play's naturalism. These elements add welcome theatrical flair to what is an unremittingly bleak picture of early Chinese urban life in Canada.

Which Chinese characters to present on stage, and what their attitudes should be, given the lack of models, has no doubt weighed heavily with first-time playwright Winston Kam. A Trinidadian emigré of Chinese descent, Kam has no "inside" claim on this material other than that of race. In choosing his subject, Kam carried out careful research on particulars. And the play that resulted has a case to make. Its targets are two-fold: the discrimination practiced in Canada against Chinese men, and the discrimination inflicted

in turn by the men against Chinese women.

Kung: I don't know what happened. It's as if some darkness fell on us and we're still paying the price...even today.

Huang: We brought that darkness with us.

Kao: And it hangs over Chinatown like mustard gas.

Kam's position is clearly critical; unfortunately, it is transparently evident from the play's first scene and never lets up. The problem is too much hindsight; Kam has it all over his characters. As a result, revelations ring hollow as it is clear they come not from anything the characters learn, but instead directly from the author's intention. The sequence in which Queenie recounts her awful life should be heartrending. All the elements are there; and yet, it isn't — despite actress Brenda Kamino's considerable efforts. Director Peter Hinton has attempted to vary the play's tone by introducing stylized elements, but he starts the play at full-blast, and seldom turns the level down.

*Bachelor-Man* tackles a difficult subject with guts and conviction. That conviction has been matched in Hinton's direction and the work of a cast that unflinchingly plunges into the dark emotions Kam unleashes. At times, particularly in Denis Akiyama's nakedly alarming Kao and Brenda Kamino's Queenie, there are glimpses of genuine power.

One could discuss the difficulties of rendering a subject that might be construed as being hostile to the very community it portrays. Then there is the question of political correctness. *Bachelor-Man* is certainly that — in fact too much, and too stridently so. Its limitations lie not in its attempts as a tract, an apology, or even as a document, but within the unresolved ground often occupied by a first work. Next time, I hope Kam includes those troublesome ambiguities that add dimension to otherwise undeveloped characters. ●

**Beverly Yhap is Artistic Director of Cahoots Theatre Project, and the author of *Settlements*, a play about Japanese Canadians in WWII.**

# FEAR, GREED, & DEPENDENCY

LESSONS FROM THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

by Leo Panitch

**T**hat the actual Free Trade deal entered into by the Mulroney Government is a lousy one is no longer news. It was, from the beginning, spurred on mainly by fear. Our deeply entrenched status in the American Empire as their hewers of wood, drawers of water and drillers for oil, as well as the assemblers of their cars and the greatest consumers of their cultural commodities, gave us a rather peculiar standing in the international capitalist economy. It made us a dependency, with all the limits to our political, cultural and economic independence that such status entails in an empire; but it also made us, in comparative global terms, a rather rich dependency. The fear was that this peculiarity would be undermined unless we obtained guaranteed exemption for the massive concentration of our U.S. exports from a discernible mood of protectionism in the Congress. That the deal itself produced no such guarantees virtually everyone acknowledges.

The best that can be said is that, to the American judicial system — which already interprets whether a restrictive trade action falls within American law — we have added a new appeal body which will include Canadian representatives. It may pronounce more quickly than do American courts, but it will have no authority to overrule

American trade law. For this, the deal trades away the Canadian state's present abilities: to discriminate in favour of Canadian consumers in the regulation of the prices and exports of our natural resources; to apply sanctions with respect to how much auto production is actually undertaken here by American car companies; and to use tariffs as a means both of inducing other American branch-plants to stay here and of discriminating in favour of Canadian apparel, wine and other producers who sell to the Canadian market. Not least important, the deal has meant the abandonment of specific policies, such as the one which limited monopoly pricing by multinational drug companies and the one which manipulated postal prices to the benefit of Canadian magazines — not to mention the long-awaited policy which promised finally to redress partially the stranglehold that the Hollywood majors have over the distribution of films in this country.

The existence of Canada is not ended by all this. Canadians who enjoy reading *FUSE* or *Maclean's* or *Canadian Dimension* over a glass of Bright's wine may be willing to pay more. (Just as they will continue to pay more for the pleasure of doing so over a bottle of Labatt's beer — Canadian brewing capitalists were repaid for their status and their contributions to political

party coffers by being exempted from Free Trade.) What else we have given away, and what the long-range costs will be in terms of jobs or social, fiscal and cultural policy, will remain murky for many years to come. What is clear is this: that the marginal vestige of bargaining power retained by the Canadian state by virtue of our being a neo-colony rather than a mere colony of the American Empire (the difference between Puerto Rico and Canada in formal terms) has been further reduced. Margaret Atwood has used a brilliant metaphor to describe what the Mulroney Government has done: the beaver was noted in medieval bestiaries for biting off its own testicles when frightened and offering them to its pursuer.

But let's not exaggerate how much we have lost. The Canadian nationalists who bemoan the loss of tariff protection today are the ones who yesterday taught us the important lesson that we were a branch-plant economy because tariffs were not enough to guarantee our independence, that American companies set up assembly operations here to jump the tariff barrier and sell to a Canadian market which they always regarded more as an extension of their domestic market than as a foreign market. This created manufacturing jobs but left us without the capacity to export much, to

substantially improve our means of production, or to engage in much research and development here. And it drained the surplus by way of dividend and profit flows to the American owners of the branch-plants.

The same nationalists taught us another important lesson: that all this was connived at by Canadian banks who provided the Americans with a good share of the money capital they then used to dominate our economy. When *The Toronto Star* tells us today that our financial system used to be controlled by Canadians but that it is being lost due to the Free Trade deal, read carefully between the lines. The people who owned (and still own) the banks were Canadian citizens; but "Canadians" — if by this is meant the people of Canada who are represented democratically through our political system — have emphatically not controlled the banks. On the contrary, it may be truer to say that Canadian bankers not only have been indepen-

dent of any significant control over what they did with the savings of Canadians, but also have had a much more direct influence on government policy than the majority of Canadians did, and perhaps even more than did the American corporations or Washington.

Even under the Free Trade deal, we are still not Puerto Rico. This is not only because of the immense resources our massive territory is blessed with, nor only because of the education, health and skill of our people. It is also because we do have strong and powerful *Canadian* financial capitalists, who have always been senior partners in the branch-plant economy so well designated once as (*Canada*) Ltd. These capitalists, especially those who own our banks and property development companies, turned to Free Trade not only out of fear, but also out of greed. They came to feel big enough and confident enough that they saw opportunities for increasing

capital by extending their sphere of operations over the full continental market. And they hoped a Free Trade deal might remove the restrictions imposed by the American state on their doing so.

The fact that the Canadian Bankers Association has admitted that the Americans got a better deal on financial services, speaks volumes for how lousy an agreement was actually struck, even from the point of view of the most continentally ambitious of Canadian capitalists. Still, as the experienced partners in (*Canada*) Ltd., the bankers take what they can get: "What's good for Canada," CBA President Robert MacIntosh told the Commons' External Affairs committee, "is good for the banks, so the banking industry is supportive of the deal." Such altruism is only surpassed by General Motors itself. What's good for Canada, even if the opportunity for Canadian financial capital to accumulate in the U.S. is



Collage: Bryan Gee

COMMENTARY

not all it might be, was defined for the rest of us many decades before the Free Trade deal by both General Motors and the Canadian Bankers Association, and their assorted brethren: what's good for Canada was dependency status in the American Empire. They were and remain practical men, testicles or no testicles: they have seen the Free Trade deal as a renegotiation of the terms which govern their own place in the Empire, but they are not and cannot be associated with any project that entails Canada breaking with the Empire. On the contrary, one of the reasons they still endorse the Free Trade deal, despite its failure to secure the guarantees and opportunities Canadian capital sought, is that they have always also seen it as one means of bringing more directly to bear on Canadian society the reactionary economic and social agenda of American business in the 1980s. The continental rules of competition and supply-side economics we have to play by under Free Trade are those that have been put into effect in the imperial heartland under Reaganism.

**T**he costs to Canada of the Free Trade "leap of faith" may well be immense, and the deal must be opposed strenuously. But it must not be forgotten that the costs of our dependency have *always* been immense. Rick Salutin has expressed well, for instance, what Canadians who have worked to build an indigenous culture in this country must feel about the Free Trade deal: "We have a lot to be proud of culturally, but it's also true that we have barely a foothold in our own society. Our culture is not so much a reserve to be protected from Free Trade as a foretaste of its dangers." It is one of the more disappointing aspects of the otherwise admirable opposition to the deal that there is a tendency to concentrate on this deal alone, while rather falsely and opportunistically romanticizing the sovereignty and allegedly beneficent interventionist traditions of the Canadian state. In fact the deal is an outgrowth of our already lamentable dependency and reflects the severe limits, in democratic terms and in substantive policy terms, of a Canadian state that has almost always accommodated its inter-

ventions (and its negotiations with the Americans) with the primary concern of reproducing the structures of power and class in this country. Ultimately, it is this deeper structure of dependency and class that must be overcome.

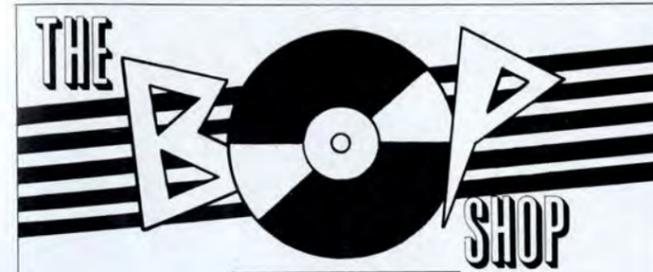
Overcoming this will entail a fundamental change in the power relationships *among Canadians first of all*. The monolithic support that spokespeople for Canadian business have given to this deal is remarkable indeed. And what it demonstrates is that all the attempts by previous governments to address our dependency — from the Gray Report, to the establishment of the Foreign Investment Review Agency, to tax breaks for investing in Canadian films, to the National Energy Programme — failed to achieve their main purpose of encouraging the development of a *national bourgeoisie* in this country. A national bourgeoisie is one that takes as its goal the accumulation of capital with a distinctive Canadian polity, economy and culture as its base. What the Free Trade deal shows above all is that any attempt to develop a strategy for national independence that relies on inducing Canadian capitalists to become nationalists must fail. Without such a national bourgeoisie, no capitalist society or political regime can escape dependency. All of the "alternatives" currently being raised regarding the adoption of Japanese or Swedish "industrial strategies" for competing in European and/or Asian markets, rather than in the American market, avoid the central issues of power and class *in Canada*. We can only begin to think realistically of alternatives to dependency once we foreground the necessity of breaking the power of a class of Canadian capitalists which long ago forsook any ambitions of national independence for the Canadian community.

The underlying dynamic that has led to Free Trade can only be overcome if Canadians come to recognize and support the necessity of at least taking into the public domain the Canadian-owned financial system. Only with this as a base can we begin to redirect our energies and wealth towards democratically determined ends. Indeed, only when we realize that this is necessary and possible can we even start to redefine those ends in a way that is profoundly different —

above all more egalitarian, humane and cooperative — than we have been able for as long as Canadian financial capital has remained dominant in our society and our state. The theme that was raised by the Waffle in the late 1960s and early 1970s — and which was side-tracked via support for policies that tried to induce Canadian capitalists to adopt a nationalist project — can be renewed with greater viability in light of both the failure of those policies, and their succession by Canadian business's project for Free Trade. There can be no substantive independence for Canada without socialism; and there can be no socialism without independence.

Socialism need not mean statism: public ownership can be decentralized, democratized and even leased to cooperatives of producers and consumers in a manner completely outside the imagination of the bankers and bureaucrats who oversaw the creation of the CNR or Ontario Hydro or PetroCanada. At the same time, it must be admitted that a good deal of the importance of defeating this Free Trade deal, however the campaign is conducted, lies in the fact that the impediments to socialism and independence in Canada are great enough without the addition of new layers of dependency. Further, even if we took the banks into the public domain, we would still then have to confront the Americans. This will never be easy, but who now could deny that we would have a better chance of doing so without our hands tied behind our backs by Canada's own most powerful capitalists? All the social revolutions of modern time have been in good part based on a popular desire for national independence which the old ruling classes were incapable of fulfilling. The terrible failure of Canada's ruling class to secure Canadian national identity and independence can become a powerful basis for a new appeal for popular support for a democratic socialism. It's the only way out of the American Empire. ●

Leo Panitch is a Professor of Political Science at York University and the author of *Working Class Politics in Crisis* (Verso: London, UK, 1986) and *From Consent to Coercion: The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms* (Garamond: Toronto, 1985 — Revised ed. forthcoming Spring 1988).



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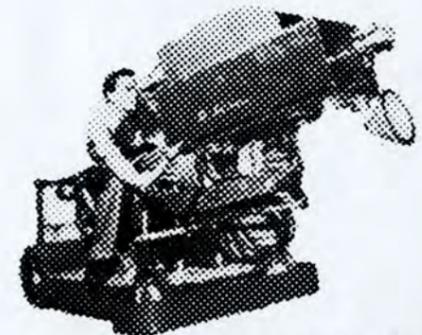
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COMMENTARY

not all it might be, was defined for the rest of us many decades before the Free Trade deal by both General Motors and the Canadian Bankers Association, and their assorted brethren: what's good for Canada was dependency status in the American Empire. They were and remain practical men, testicles or no testicles: they have seen the Free Trade deal as a renegotiation of the terms which govern their own place in the Empire, but they are not and cannot be associated with any project that entails Canada breaking with the Empire. On the contrary, one of the reasons they still endorse the Free Trade deal, despite its failure to secure the guarantees and opportunities Canadian capital sought, is that they have always also seen it as one means of bringing more directly to bear on Canadian society the reactionary economic and social agenda of American business in the 1980s. The continental rules of competition and supply-side economics we have to play by under Free Trade are those that have been put into effect in the imperial heartland under Reaganism.

**T**he costs to Canada of the Free Trade "leap of faith" may well be immense, and the deal must be opposed strenuously. But it must not be forgotten that the costs of our dependency have *always* been immense. Rick Salutin has expressed well, for instance, what Canadians who have worked to build an indigenous culture in this country must feel about the Free Trade deal: "We have a lot to be proud of culturally, but it's also true that we have barely a foothold in our own society. Our culture is not so much a reserve to be protected from Free Trade as a foretaste of its dangers." It is one of the more disappointing aspects of the otherwise admirable opposition to the deal that there is a tendency to concentrate on this deal alone, while rather falsely and opportunistically romanticizing the sovereignty and allegedly beneficent interventionist traditions of the Canadian state. In fact the deal is an outgrowth of our already lamentable dependency and reflects the severe limits, in democratic terms and in substantive policy terms, of a Canadian state that has almost always accommodated its inter-

ventions (and its negotiations with the Americans) with the primary concern of reproducing the structures of power and class in this country. Ultimately, it is this deeper structure of dependency and class that must be overcome.

Overcoming this will entail a fundamental change in the power relationships *among Canadians first of all*. The monolithic support that spokespeople for Canadian business have given to this deal is remarkable indeed. And what it demonstrates is that all the attempts by previous governments to address our dependency from the Gray Republic to the Review Agency, to investing in Canadian national Energy Programs, to achieving the development of a *bourgeoisie* in this country, all of which are the goal the accumulation of a distinctive Canadian economy and culture as a result of the Free Trade deal show that any attempt to develop national independence by inducing Canadian nationalists to come nationalists to such a national bourgeois society or to "escape dependency natives" currently regarding the adoption of Swedish "industrial competing in European markets, rather than the market, avoid the power and class issues only begin to the alternatives to de-foreground the ne- the power of a class talists which long ambitions of national for the Canadian.

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