



Centerfold

distributed free to artists, arts centers and publications throughout the world

[Vol. 1] No. 5&6 1977



CENTERFOLD is published by
The Parachute Center for Cultural Affairs
318-10th St. N.W. Calgary, Canada T2N 1V8
(403) 283-6536

Editor Clive Robertson
Associate Editors Marcella Bienvenue
..... Eugene Chadbourne
Photography David Hargrave
Layout & Design Bienvenue & Robertson
Typesetting Maxwell Typing
Printing North Hill News Ltd.

Zonko reading letters; Gerry Gilbert on monitor; still from tape Birthday by C. Itter and G. Gilbert
from Archive Show (Martha Rosler); Martin Bartlett's Black Box 1969-; Martin Bartlett sings Gertrude Stein
George Lyon and Alan Carter - N. Ireland; Video window: C.C.C.T.
Two views from In Video Traction (Clive Robertson), nurse: Marcella Bienvenue

CRITICAL OPINION, JINGOISM, VANITY PRESS, AND THE EXIT OF 'AN AUDIENCE.'

Editorial:

PoliticArt

1

Every now and then we enter zones which are marked by the lack of personal critical opinion. New directions eventually get arthritis, the strong support, the strong, and inventions become tarnished. Essays become purely descriptive and any antitheses remain within the safeties of artfulness — something poetic or satirical or just simple popularisms.

Within Canada, though its not limited to a country, our present range of magazines, journals and newspapers (whether artist begun or not) have become spaces for Descriptive as opposed to Critical opinion. (Those publications which have a specific non-editorial, anthological policy are exempt). When critical opinion arises it is usually found within daily newspapers where the criticism comes from a writer who is tired of art's little tricks and consequently criticizes the audacity and wastefulness rather than evaluating the artist against his/her own peers or, better still, evaluating the artist against him/herself. There is a third category of evaluating the artist's gesture or statement against its social background or condition, but in most cases the reviewer cares less about Socialism than they do about art even though they are prone to make "value" noises. The breakdown of critical opinion in other contexts is usually due to over-familiarity between the reviewer and the reviewed: friends writing reviews or non-writers wanting the position (of writer) and so getting it by engaging in close-to-the-subject or I-can-prove-I-can-understand-what-you're-doing review. To balance the observation we are certainly well into a saturated art situation where it is difficult, hence the need for ploys, exchanges, favors, to get a reasonable article descriptively, let alone critically, written about your work. The majority of mini-reviews I have written within the last year have been descriptive because any feedback in print is presently useful. Likewise, and I suspect for similar reasons, *Only Paper Today* is, for the most part, descriptive.

Is there a point where descriptive becomes destructive? Possibly there is a ratio — but lets say it does under all circumstances. For instance, in the January 1st issue of *Canadian Magazine* (a coast-to-coast weekend newspaper supplement) there is an embarrassing profile of **Michael Snow** — painter, sculptor, musician, filmmaker. It's the type of article which is well-meaning and supposedly a great reward for a great Canadian "investment", but as far as I am concerned it is deadly! It has a great separating effect between Michael Snow and his contemporaries: Snow, an accomplished filmmaker and artist is made out to be the sole new renaissance man in Canada and it goes on: since the death of Duchamp "no one else can lay claim to so much deep engagement in so many different fields." The gross exaggeration can be written off as ignorance but the article is indicative of the most disgusting object wrapped in a security blanket, that being Nationalism. Snow's career, since it broke through, has been shadowed by that phenomena so that now after the seeming forgetfulness of the last thirty-one years of world history the closest he can get to a truthful review is anachronistic Jingoism. Arguing that the *Canadian Magazine* is not an arts or literary journal and so therefore that type of review is not paid attention to is a fallacy. What I am saying is that Snow has and is continuing to be handed out as a public sacrifice and that is the destructive nature of descriptive opinion working.

Working against the lack of public space but not necessarily dealing with the critical factor, in fact again adding to its avoidance, is the reaction known as Self-publishing. Self-publishing is for the most part a healthy activity which has its roots based at the beginning of this century with the publication of political pamphlets and other essays or work that was too long to be published in magazines and too short to be published as books. How long artists unaided financially have acted as publishers is difficult to date but one non-encouragement is the classification of this type of activity as VANITY Press. How the adjective 'vain' can be reserved solely for the self-publishing creation seems both hypocritical in judgement and politically disturbing in implication. If there is a lack of magazines and publishers that can be taken seriously or, for that matter, offer a sufficient amount of accessibility then there will be alternate bodies who will publish first their own work and then, as editors,

their choice of what is being neglected. Each country has its rags like *artsCanada*. Equal opportunity is a worn but applicable response. Alternate periodicals that have proven their existence should be subsidized in an equal manner which means real advertising and distribution budgets, color capability where required and free-access into the educational market of their choice. If there is not enough money, perhaps it's time for the coated-stock magazines to sweat: re-distribute what is available. If the commercial galleries and public museums complain from coast-to-coast let them organise the means to produce an "artsCanada," after all it is their mouthorgan not ours.

Valid and effective magazines within Canada would include *Parachute* (Montreal), *File*, *Strange Faeces*, *Impulse*, *B.C. Monthly* and when its back on its feet *Queen Street T Magazine*. *Only Paper Today* and *Spill* are essential, in fact there should be at least three others like them, and all five should mix and match the critical with the descriptive. It's not a large number and it does not cover all that is needed. The problems of publishing at least magazines within Canada are still solvable and avoidable, there has been more than enough of the latter.

2

The second half of this section which was to include a comparison between *Art & Language*, *Contextualism*, *Behaviouralism*, *Sociological Art* and *An Exemplativist Manifesto* was not ready to typeset and will be published at a later date.

Canada within the last ten years has proved itself an active sensory receptor for many ideas and ideologies that have been created elsewhere. Whilst this may seem obvious or too widespread within the art-context to warrant any comment, there are some technical differences that are useful to mention. Firstly this process can be considered infinite, or it can be cut short:

An allegory:

'h' is yours, its always been yours but it is not sufficient, it needs to be modified — it can certainly be improved. Along comes idea 'a', you are attracted to 'a' but you are rightly cautious. You test 'a', you try it out in short you make 'a' undergo more than you ever would with 'h'; finally you take the plunge: you add 'a' to your 'h' — ah! You live with your new identity for a while until one day you receive a parcel in the mail. The parcel contains a botanically inscribed lock — it has one key (the sender keeps the duplicate). After admiring the lock you pass its hook through the hole in the 'a' and around the leg of the 'h', you close it tight. Along comes ideas 'b', 'c', 'd' through 'z', you could have made *bah*, *cah*, *dah*, through to *czah* but for some reason the key they sent you does not fit the lock. Even though you are attracted by these new ideas you must defensively state that 'ah' cannot be improved.

That is the lock of Nationalism. Now you could have used a paper bag and with a pencil you could have written 'ah' on the outside and if you were at all worried that someone would have removed the bag's contents you could have gently squeezed the top of the bag in a spiral motion. When 'ah' was no longer your bag you simply add or subtract its contents and make the appropriate change on the outside in pencil. With the paper bag you have identity, security and changeability. With the lock all you can ever have is embarrassment.

Some early Canadian paper-baggers were *Intermedia*, *Image Bank*, *W.O.R.K.S.*, *General Idea*, *A Space* some at *Coach House Press*, *Video Inn*, to name a few. Now thankfully there are a few more — but what about those lower-case letters in secondary quotation marks? We read them, we discuss them, but how do we react? How many ideas are we filing as "non-applicable"?

"Basically, as an artist in the high art world, you exist strictly as a symbol. What you say and what you do doesn't matter a damn. The audience is taken care of by the fact that your efforts don't get beyond a very specialized and limited group . . . we can write vicious diatribes . . . we would be behaving ideally as symbols, if you like, of the liberalism, of the so-called "freedom" in this society. We are symbols to the rest of the world of a kind of freedom that really doesn't exist in this economic system! The kind of freedom we have, and which artists revel in, is a sort of "freedom" which is permissible because we are marginalized. The artist is out on the social and cultural fringe with virtually no impact. You're free to be meaningless. You're free to have no voice. On the other hand, the closer you get to the center of forms of communication which do have impact in the society, the kinds of controls change drastically." 1

Having had a moderate but sufficient amount of conscious political experience within the last twelve years 2 — I am still optimistic that if dealt with on the basis of conviction and creativity (no one will react positively when belittled or humiliated) that artists as a sub-group can make use of an often dormant but ever-present conscience of political and social considerations. Just as the *Art & Language* group is a self-described loose-collective of "white, male, middle-class artists" with political aspirations seeking a post-Marxist ideological base that is realistic for N. America, so too I think that the readers of this essay (who are by no means all artists, by choice) should see that the affectations of the Artist's Rights movement will mature and move on from its safe and conservative trades-union mentality. (Whilst within all unions there is still the basic mechanism to make the abused less abused and the poor richer, most of its present mobility is directed towards making the rich richer and giving those who mimic crass power-structures more power) 3.

Whilst percentage-wise there is not an abundance of art-histories that prompt such optimism, there are certainly systems-failings that artists seem more willing to face.

If we think for a moment of all the art which considers the "audience" as an integral part of the work, as a constituent to make the statement, production, analysis or event complete we can make several observations. One could say that in spite of good intent the normal consideration produces a situation which is imperialistic in nature; or, to make a point I will say it is an unbalanced dialogue that large groups of people are willing to enter. We can see the planning of such works could be used as a model for Capitalism (the marketing of a surplus-product), Socialism (the marketing of an equality of everything that a democracy omitted) and Theism (the marketing of a divine philosophy where the author's name is clearly visible).

For the poet, dancer, graphist, performance artist, sculptor, filmmaker, video artist, musician (and so on into Behavioural artist, Sociological Artist, etc.) to consider "an audience" it is necessary to work from certain parameters, the most important being — how do you define "an audience?" Say for instance that the artist has somehow restricted his/her interest in an audience to its physiological and perceptive habits, which traditionally is the most common field for all of the above artists and their pre-guessings. How important is time? As the "audience's" in formation and cultural (in its wider sense) digestion is changing minute-by-minute so the role of receptor cannot be defined as a generalised constant. 'Fashion' is the presence of slow assimilation, not slow digestion.

If, and I suggest the past definitions of "an audience" are a systems-failing — then there are two choices: one, is to continue working with inaccurate and largely barren generalisations, the other (if the enquiry is to have the audience realistically in mind) is to question the mode and function of the work itself. Many artists are involved in the efficacies of social development and chaos, in N. America the role they play is essentially game-like because the effects of social breakdown are not yet effective enough.

"The real issue is whether you use Socialism as a kind of form to make art, or whether you become involved and informed by the real Socialist process" 4

"Ideology is becoming a justification for a variety of motives, often it is simply liberal guilt." 5

1. Ian Burn: p.53 — *La Mamelie*, No. 5

2. It began whilst at art school, explaining to the local press why we were on strike and how the Principal was using his war-time experience as an Intelligence Officer to disorganize and scramble his own administration with the intent of forcing new staff out.

3. I have faced union leaders on several occasions whilst trying to get their support on the Environment or Energy Conservation and found that they are not much interested in social issues which are not of their origination.

4. Karl Beveridge: p.22 — *The Fox*, No. 3

5. Joseph Kosuth: p.14 — *The Fox*, No. 3

HOW CAN YOU PLAY IN TWO PLACES AT ONCE WHEN YOU'RE NOT ANYWHERE AT ALL?

EUGENE CHADBOURNE

I have been living in Canada and playing music here for about five years. This doesn't particularly give me any right to say anything about music in this country, but I don't see anyone else speaking up so I might as well.

The music I am talking about is improvised music, or creative music as some like to call it. (The best way to avoid labels is not to use them. Someone wrote once "even a skillet has to have a handle" but we're making music, not breakfast. But that's another story). I don't know all that much about the state of what they call European-American classical music, the kind they teach in the Universities. The only time I go near a University is to put posters up and from these trips I have noticed that the lights and drinking fountains seem to be working so everything else is probably okay, too.

There are close-knit little (sometimes big) groups of musicians involved in some form of music where improvisation is the main consideration in every community I've ever been in. Getting the music heard, keeping it healthy, communicating and exchanging sounds and thoughts with people in other cities who are involved in the same experiences are all fairly difficult things in Canada, despite the fact that there are some situations here that improvisers in other lands envy.

I'll describe a few of those situations below. We're not doing all that badly in Canada in terms of survival tactics.

Those who look on playing music as "fun" will probably raise an eyebrow at the word "survival," and I don't mean to be contrasting the efforts of someone who plays baritone saxophone in an improvising ensemble with the plight of Third World refugees.

But improvised music is quite a non-conformist act in its relation to this society, which likes its goods in one package and labelled, and also to audiences, most of whom expect to be entertained by a "show" — as if improvisation was like starring in a Hollywood movie.

As a result, the music becomes an underground activity that you have to know about to know about. There are no listings for improvised music in the yellow pages. It is not accepted by this society as rational behavior. The improvisational musician who is unable to make himself bend one way or another — "Listen jazz musicians, we all know you're in it for the music but for God's sake, be able to entertain a dine-and-dance crowd if worst comes to worst" — goes through all the problems any musician playing any music must — shortage of gigs, bad money, blah blah blah — and at the same time often undergoes the scorn (mixed with the condescension) of a community which feels he/she is not playing "real music."

Here's a nice, appropriate quote from Archie Shepp: "The question is not whether one chooses to be 'far out.' It is rather the sudden, wonderful, intuitive transmogrification of one's entire biological, sociological, political being into a single living line—so that the moment of performance is less a technological feat than a prayer."

Of course I have a feeling the response of a lot of people I know to such a statement would be "Oh yeah? Stick it up your ass!" Now just like there are small groups of improvisers in every community, there are also small audiences that listen to the music and have their own experiences from it. What improvised music doesn't have, however, is the simple knowledge and acceptance of its existence that practically every other art form I can think of does.

An essential consideration for improvisers has always been making the community aware of the seriousness and (maybe) beauty of what it is that is being done. If this smacks of wanting to get some kind of message across, that's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about being able to go about our affairs in the same manner a truck-driver or a plumber does: efficiently, with no chickenshit over whether or not we are going to have enough money to buy a head of lettuce at the end of the month.

The survival tactics are, of course, the understanding that the only way we'll be able to do this is to do it ourselves. A few years ago, some musicians were still trying to convince others that there is nothing wrong or embarrassing about setting up your own concerts, putting out your records, putting together your own tours and in the process completely dodging the trappings of "show-biz." I think the many musician-generated record-labels, organizations and performing situations that exist all over the world today clearly indicate that all this certainly was the right advice, and most musicians who haven't done something like this already are probably thinking about it.

Toronto is a nice example of when those thoughts become reality. There are three things I'd like to point out. The first is **THE MUSIC GALLERY**, which is the **Canadian Creative Music Collective's** combination performance, recording and rehearsal space, bathroom, warehouse, garage, living-room or whatever. It is one example of the sort of musician-run spaces that are cropping up everywhere. It is funded by grants; others, such as San Francisco's **The Blue Dolphin**, are run by the musicians themselves. In the case of the Music Gallery, the CCMC is an actual "group" which performs together although various sub-groups and other groupings do take place. Other musician-run spaces are run by a variety of individuals or groups. Obviously, being in control of a creative space that can function in all the capacities a musician needs — performance, rehearsal, recording, etc. — is the ideal situation both for regularly presenting your own music and for keeping alive a "circuit" for travelling players . . . it becomes an instant space for others to play in. Musicians who are not involved in something like this should think about it.

2) **A SPACE**. This is an example of a Canadian parallel art gallery — like the **Western Front** and the **Parachute Center**, among others — that has a music program with plenty of improvised music in it. These situations are encouraging because, ideally, an audience for non-classified creative activity of any sort has the potential of developing. (The musician I heard complaining about 'those fuckin' silly pictures up on the wall' at A Space ought to know better).

3) **THE JAZZ AND BLUES CENTRE**. Since **Bill Smith** of the **Jazz and Blues Centre** is directly involved with the A Space program, as well as with the CCMC, it is natural to mention it — and also, how could you leave it out? Here is a place that, in all the various activities Smith and partner **John Norris** are involved in, makes available jazz and blues albums and books, puts on concerts, puts out records (!) and publishes a magazine. Nobody can hope to please everybody, and as a result many Canadian improvisers aren't too keen on the magazine, **CODA**, because they feel it doesn't give enough coverage to Canadian musicians. They would also like the record label, **SACKVILLE**, to record more Canadian musicians. In the United States, **CODA** is quite a respected magazine (it sure beats the hell out of **DOWN-BEAT**, any way you look at it) and **SACKVILLE** is considered an example of what American record companies should be doing. Clearly, John and Bill are busting their asses working on what is important to them and my attitude is more power to them. Musicians who worry about what kind of "coverage" they are getting could certainly put their energy to other matters; try to learn all of **Monk's** tunes, for a start. Musicians who are not being recorded in their own country should do what American musicians such as **Roscoe Mitchell** did (and still do) — go somewhere else. Travelling is fun.

Anyway that's Toronto — I forgot to mention the **CN Tower**, but who cares? If there was a Music Gallery, an A Space and a Jazz and Blues Centre in every city in Canada things would be less difficult for improvising musicians.

In a sense, these three represent a balance of organizations and energies that are needed in any community where improvised music is to flourish. (Of course, like ragweed, it always seems to flourish wherever it is, no matter what is going on, but that's another story).

The Music Gallery represents a musician's space for musicians, by musicians. A Space represents a broadening out into an artist's space where involvements in different aesthetics can be exchanged. And the Jazz and Blues Centre represents a "cosmopolitan" link with the outside world where the artifacts from similar pursuits — recordings, writings — can come in and be experienced, filtered through. All these situations can easily evolve into power trips or cliques for the "in-crowd" of musicians, closed to any outsider who doesn't quite fit, but most people with strength or stamina can get what they need out of them and dodge the crap.

I've noticed some crap in Canada, and that's the final thing I'd like to mention. All energy must have a source. The ultimate source is the true spiritual power of humility, but too often — and we've all been guilty of this — people recharge their engines with the hot-air hoopla of "I over them." The ego intrudes and improvised music becomes a competition in which musicians that invariably do something else for a living follow or choose not to follow the "glamour" and "excitement" of the U.S. jazz scene and its personalities: as if it were some big-time they were waiting

to break into. Bitterness inevitably sets in, and in Canada it often takes the form of nationalism. And so help me, I can't think of anything more useless or stupid than nationalism. How can one silence be Canadian? And another American? The nationalist attitude inevitably takes the line that while the local musicians of any city — let's make it Moose Jaw — work on their music faithfully and play to small crowds, well-known American musicians come in and are treated as if they had fallen from the sky replete with halos. The local musician syndrome — in which nobody ever is as interested in you as people seem to be somewhere other than where you live — does create its frustrations, and it is easy to take them out on the **Anthony Braxtons** and **Roscoe Mitchells** and **Cecil Taylors**, the people that due to their hard work over years and years are finally at a stage where they work a bit and can come to Canada and play.

People usually hear of these musicians not by running into them on the street or dropping in at a performance they are giving (unaware of who they are) but through all the coverage in the jazz press. Now if you had five people at your last concert and are wondering why **Anthony Braxton** always gets 200 and have had it up to here with reading that he is the new 3-in-one-oil **Tranemanbirdolph**, then maybe you can attend his performance and emerge with the attitude that he isn't perfect and you aren't perfect, and so why is he famous and you're not? There are so many ways of reacting to this question — in my case all quite vehement — that is hard to restrain oneself to simply listing the answers like some kind of grocery list. But here goes:

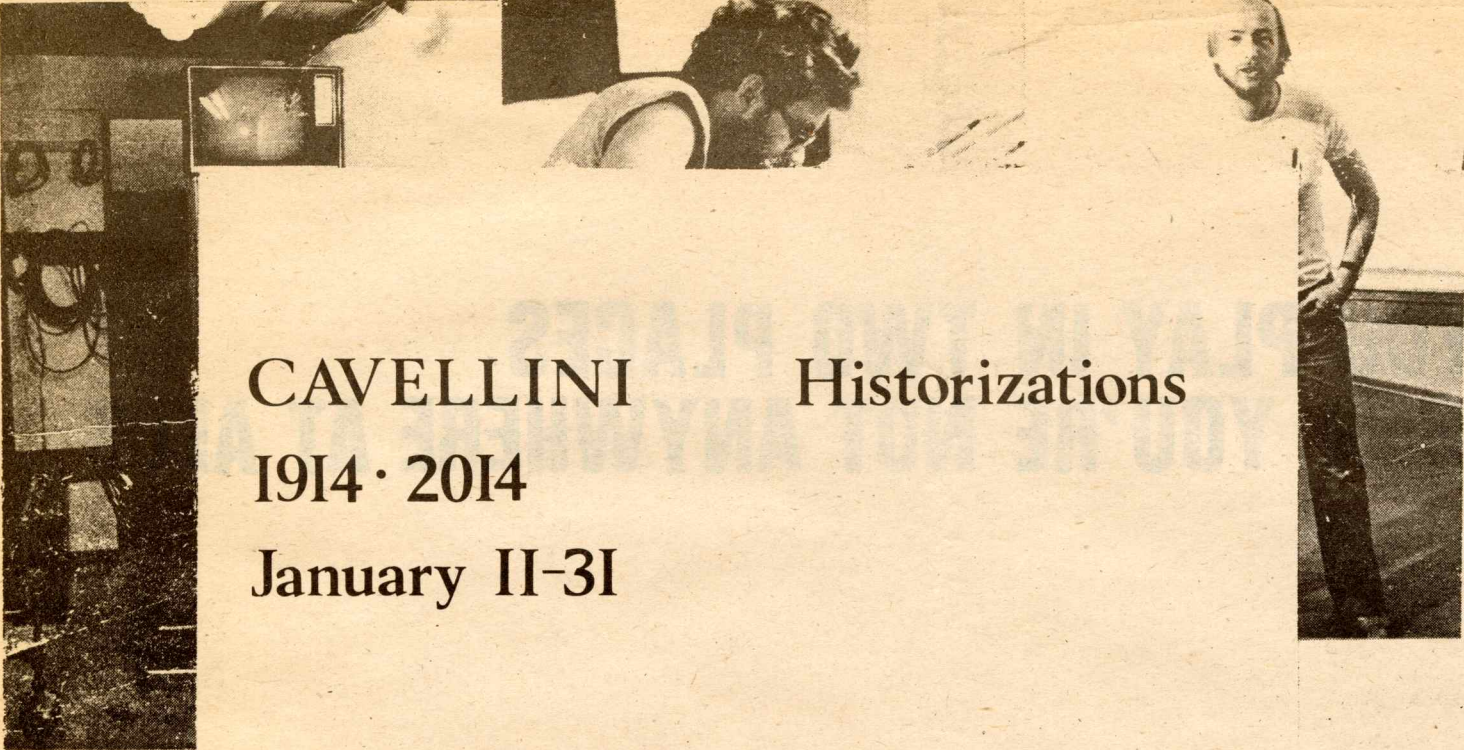
1. He isn't really "famous." No one is "famous." What does "famous" mean? Why are you worrying about it? If you want to be famous, do something violent. Don't just mess around with sound. There are other attention-getting devices.

2. He is there because he worked very hard at it and has for years had nothing but a complete and utter dedication to what he is doing. Have you?

3. There is no way a musician should ever compare someone else's music with his own. You are living with your music all day. You are inside it. You live with his music when you hear it played and then later you attempt to conjure up memories. **Dolphy**: "When you hear music . . . etc. you are outside it." Maybe everyone's music feels as nice to you as yours does once you get invited "in."

4. If you resent the audience's interest in musicians from the U.S. or "black" musicians (someone told me they definitely would go see **Leo Smith** and **New Dalta Ahkri** because "they're the right color!") just remember that what people who are not playing music — the audience — chooses to do in its spare time is none of your business.

The thing to remember is this: We are all into this together. Everyone. Everywhere. An important thing in any community — just as important as you getting your own space to play in — is to make sure that musicians from elsewhere are able to come in and play concerts, so that audiences can realize that improvised music is a serious activity on a world-wide scale, not just something you and your friends do on Friday night. So they can see the variety of concepts and music that take place in this field, and hear all the different manifestations of the music — **Dexter Gordon**, **Al Neil**, **Thelonious Monk**, the **Artists' Jazz Band**, **Derek Bailey**, **Leo Smith**, **Muddy Waters**, **Elizabeth Cotten**, **Roscoe Holcomb**, **Andrew White** and, hopefully, you.



CAVELLINI

Historizations

1914 · 2014

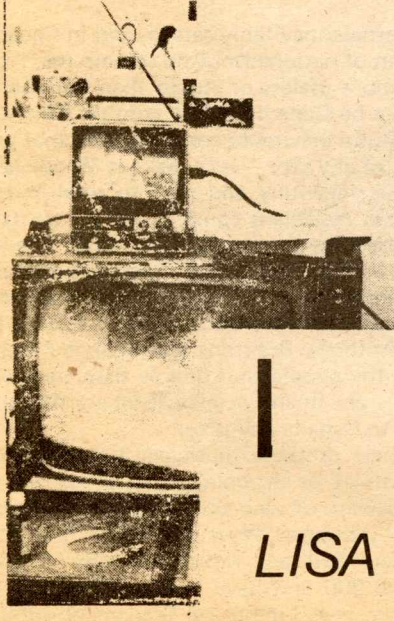
January 11-31



JAK

JETS @ CENTRE of GRAVITY

February 11-19 exhibition



1

LISA STEELE



2

DAN GRAHAM
RODNEY WERDEN
COLIN CAMPBELL

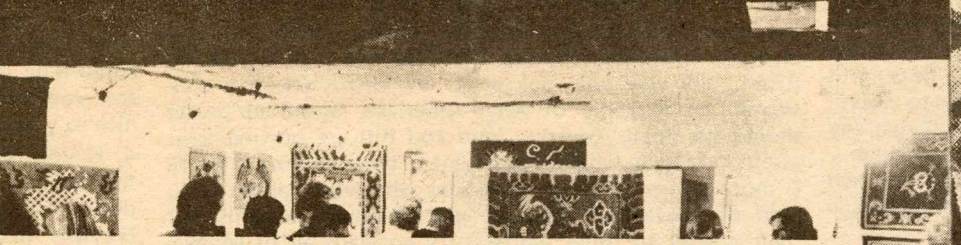
JAN 9

SUNDAY

free to members

JAN 16

VIDEO



feb

*window:
Intermedia Press*



**DANCE from
Toronto**

Elizabeth Chitty
Terry McGlade

Feb 18


8pm



membership to the

center

318-10 Street N.W.



DAVID BUCHAN: *Wardrobe, A Diary*
Feb 9

perform at 9pm

3

CLIVE ROBERTSON
GENERAL IDEA

JAN 23

SUNDAY

each sunday at two

tapes from art metropole

music

EUGENE CHADBOURNE
February 11, 12

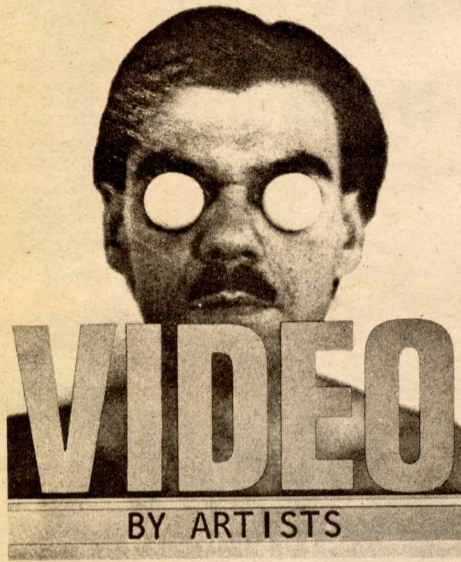
8.30pm

POSTFACE

Contributors:

J. Brooks Joyner, Brian Dyson, Leila Sujir, Clive Robertson

Video



'Video by Artists', edited by Peggy Gale and published by Art Metropole in Toronto, is a new publication cataloguing the video work of some sixteen artists or art groups who are working or have worked in Canada or with Canadians in the past. The first part of the book is actually an expanded version of the video section of the Art Metropole catalogue and provides a vitae on each contributor plus several pages of visuals, and in some instances, statements by the artists offering insight into their commitment to the video image. Artists working in all of Canada's video centers are represented, from Halifax to Vancouver, and as well as providing a good geographical spread, the book covers most areas of investigation including the social theatre/performance work of Ant Farm and Mr. Peanut, the video installation pieces of Dan Graham, the video-with-slide presentations of Noel Harding, the personal and intimate investigations of self of Colin Campbell and Lisa Steele, Michael Hayden's interest in landscape, video documentary as in some of the work of Rodney Werden and Bruce Emilson, and so on.

The illustrations, although quite extensive, convey nothing of the experience of watching the actual tapes and never could, and because of this I think the book would have had more value if some of these pages had been forfeited to the second section of the book which consists of essays on the medium and critiques on some of the artists themselves. This section again offers excellent coverage of different attitudes towards video, from Peggy Gale's perceptive analysis of the work of Colin Campbell and Lisa Steele to the intellectual non-sense of David Askevold and the predictability of Jean-Pierre Boyer's socio/political attitude, and includes two particularly lucid contributions from Les Levine and A.A. Bronson.

The third section of the book is a very comprehensive bibliography of books, catalogues and periodicals which covers most if not all of the major artists and exhibitions in North America and Europe. The shortcomings of the book are inherent in the subject matter itself, and faced with the problem of conveying information about video in book format, Peggy Gale and A.A. Bronson have done an excellent job under what one suspects were very limited circumstances. The book fills a conspicuous gap by providing the most comprehensive overview of Canadian video art since arts Canada's Video Issue of October 1973 and for this reason alone should be sought out by anyone interested in the subject.

The book is available from Art Metropole at \$9.00 per copy including postage. B.D.

Events

Gerry Gilbert

Gerry Gilbert is an effective poet. If you can, listen to his special on Radio Cora (for scheduling see elsewhere in Centerfold). It is a re-mix and re-recording of some of the material he read at Parachute (Dec. 10th), plus a few things extra. It's very difficult to review poets who at their best are very much, for me, like aural television: that is they have the articulations, the poetics to soothe, better humour than most paid comedians and if they want to incite us, can do so with all the grace that is available.

Gerry Gilbert's work of ten Springs will be published by Coach House Press later this year — the reading contained many excerpts, notes and conversations dealing with the book project.

There are without doubt many co-existing contradictions within what we all are presently thinking, and the poet's mind is the easiest to tap: "I don't know how evolution or anything else works — I just keep on writing . . ." or . . . "If I join the union (ACTRA) from now on I'll get paid union scale. But do I want to get in the union if that means I can't do things co-operatively?"

Music

Eugene Chadbourne

Volume Two: Solo Acoustic Guitar
Parachute Records P-002 (Dec. 1976)

Should there be any doubt for those of you who have heard Volume One, Volume Two was not written and recorded at the same time as Volume One, that is it is not a double publication issue in two parts.

I am of the opinion that Eugene Chadbourne's music must be seen as well as heard and it has nothing to do with the usual comments of capturing live music on records. Prior to the release of Volume 2 I watched (and listened) to two excellent concerts (one in May, the other in September) both of which showed accelerated development from Chadbourne's first album. I hope that eventually the May concert or at least its program will be released. Volume Two is closer in content to the September program.

If you have not yet come across Chadbourne's music allow me to pass on a few insights. Apart from being prolific and studious in the development of his own music, its inventions and connections within the furtherings of creative music — Chadbourne's capability as a performer of his own work is something of a rarity for post-modern composers. Whether as a composer and an improviser it is a theoretical asset to exactly reproduce works which are titled and therefore re-programmable is questionable. But the capability to do so is an advantage for any (random) listener who attends any (random) concert.

Acoustically, Chadbourne's music is very much concerned with the subtleties and cataloguing of resonations — once a prepared guitar is not always a prepared guitar. Using fretted and fretless twelve string (minimum) guitars which have gut, steel, nylon, rubber, cello and harp strings attached plus mbira keys all of which are stopped by frets, fingers, silver paper, safety pins, slides, wood, felt and an occasional brick and are further agitated by more strings, wooden pipes, etc., you are just beginning to describe some of the sequenceable resonations.

Having dwelt on acoustical properties I don't think it is too important to discuss musical legacies — except that an open-ended attitude towards influences has been one advantage and the use of the acoustic guitar rather than the piano, synthesiser or soprano saxophone has been the second advantage. For the second reason alone Chadbourne can play Oliver Lake's Rocket on Volume Two and not destroy it.

Side Two opens with The Shreeve and is the only cut on Volume Two that 'sounds like' any other cut on Volume One: its mate is Marcella Bienvenue. Both volume's are well recorded, well mastered and well cut/pressed — I can detect very little difference, if any, between them.

That's All Water Under the Bridge is a superb piece on Side One with bowed sections and bending of the notes from behind the Bridge: Sufficient Space is probably the closest an acoustic guitar has ever come to white noise — there is also interesting impeded articulation in 1811 Bluff St.

Side Two includes a suite that has been spliced together: Making it go Away, Brass, We are together again and Ginger Shelp. Using a stopwatch as reference, 5.8 minutes into the suite (it's most likely Brass) there is an excellent section with a Dexterous finger (rubbing the body).

My only real criticism is that copious printed notes about the discoveries, the compositions and preparations should accompany the release of each album which brings me back to my initial comment: having seen the music performed I have an intimacy with the recording. Had I not seen the concerts I would have a tendency to take much of the music's subtleties for granted, there would be no other way to inquire further. This is not, I suggest, a failure of the music as Music, but a consideration and unique property of Eugene Chadbourne's music.

C.R. (Parachute Records are available from Buckdancer's Choice, 330 - 10 St. N.W., Calgary, Alberta, Canada)

Film

Some Notes and Thoughts after viewing "Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Shoen," for English speaking audiences.

An encyclopedic work, in duration, 4½ hours, cataloguing instance after instance of differences between accepted illusion — what appears to be the case and what is. Simple differences begin with one accepted illusion of film: the sound comes directionally out of two speakers at the sides of the theatre, not out of the mouths of the persons on the screen. The sound creates the illusion of space on the screen.

As distortions in language-sounds and vision occur, the appearance of reality changes. The chaos for our senses as viewers begins. A clue: the film is for English speaking people. In one sequence, a man, Dennis Burton, seated at a desk is speaking what appears to be a foreign language. A question, in English, is asked off-camera. Burton answers slowly, painstakingly. What he is speaking is English; the spaces between the words, the syntax have been shifted, transforming the language-sounds to sound. The visual information remains clear. It is a foreign, but not foreign, "language film."

The film plays with the speed with which visual information can be given on a situation, in contrast to the slowness of a spoken language to describe the same scene. In one scene, the action of hands arranging objects on a table is seen, while a voice describes with language what events are occurring. Tension is created as the voice falls hopelessly behind the changing visual information. In the opening credits there is a similar tension as the voice reading the credits fails to read the written information before it leaves the screen. The voice reading the rolling credits stumbles over the most ordinary names, and is corrected by another voice.

Throughout the film there is the contrast between what is seen and what is heard. In one scene, a question is asked, "is this table real?" Various people offer solutions: "Seeing is believing," and "Touching is believing." One person smashes the table with a hatchet but there is no sound of smashing. An image of the table reappears but people's hands can move through it. Later, a couple, after having having made love, musingly ask, "I wonder what the table would say if it could speak." Then, smashing sounds are heard; someone comments, "it only remembers the pain." In another sequence, a man, a woman and a child are applauding and listening to laughter heard off-screen. The film shows next a microphone and an empty chair which is laughing; that is, the sound of laughing accompanies the empty chair and continues and continues.

There is humor in the film for the viewers. Laughter — the explosion outwards of tension created through unexpected juxtapositions. For instance, in a pun there is a collision of two meanings, one to another, resulting from the sound the words have in common. In the plane sequence, words are taken in their literal sense. One person states how many thousands of feet high the plane is; this is followed by "I'm hanging onto every word." Question: what if one were to fall between the words? The syntax of language and the arrangement of space become a concern.

This film plays with our assumptions of sense — our habits of perception about film, about language, about sound. The film moves through an entire range, a play in thirty some acts. It demands much of the audience: endurance and tolerance for what to a viewer may be ambiguous. It is an interesting thing to involve one's self in chaos. The mind struggles to make sense, to find reference points for meaning. At times, the meaning may be the music of the sound and the image. In a foreign country, one relies on the visual information and what the sound is — what emotions are being expressed, what rhythms there are. As the visual information too, shifts, rushes by, one seeks, sees patterns in the flashes of light. L.S.

Events

Gerry Gilbert joined ACTRA (Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists) not as an actor but as a poet. Unfortunately the answer that followed the above question was not as interesting as the question itself.

However G.G. does have some "good advice." "The only material you can make history out of is honesty. Honesty is judging time in terms of space and not the other way around. The other way around: time, the money, the lie is the death of space."

Beginning and intermitting with video tapes — two monitors: a ping-pong tournament at the Western Front and Carol Itter's and Gerry Gilbert's Birthday, with extra audio tapes. It was a very fine evening with a very full program.

"It's only hard to hear your own voice when you are talking." C.R.

A beautiful poem titled Moan which on the re-mix tape was changed to have a moan(s) recorded behind the voice... "Moan now, and pray later" or "Moaning, noon and night."

G.G. is by admission a 60's anarchist (perhaps it was 50's) heavily laced with Romanticism, which, in a phrase, probably best describes the middle-to-late 30's age-group to T. I don't say this as criticism (being part of that group myself) but that combination is predictably the product of ironies: "5.40 am. I don't know whether I'll bother bothering them they're so uptight — the money I did make from working on TV I bought a color TV set with — Everyone should have to go on TV before they are allowed to watch it."

The reason that I like Gerry Gilbert's poetry and the poetry of a few others is that its own criticism is contained within it, and so as writing is very complete: "Hold it! How can you go on writing after that poem, I mean after a poem like that. And treat it like a product you're thinking of selling, I asked myself today."

Zonko — December 11th

"A sculpture called **civic responsibility** to be constructed in every civic hall plaza everywhere, a twenty foot parabolic microphone."

There is one aspect of Zonko (a.k.a. Bill Little) which is a frustrated science-fiction radio playwright and from what I hear from Radio Co-op, Vancouver and Lux Radio he does get opportunities to fulfill himself in that direction:

"... perhaps we'll invent the portable tombstone, poly-vinyl with imitation ebony handles; It'll be perfect — everybody afraid of dying alone will carry it around with them wherever they went. In some areas of the world it would be as vital as a passport — I can see people walking along Wiltshire(?) Boulevard with neon black plastic tomstones."

The largest part of Zonko's reading was a reading of letters to Victoria Walker. He also read from several new suites one called **Motes** (Moats?) or **New Canadian Hits**: "This poem's called Nothing: That was nothing, I was afraid."

"This poem's called Self-Criticism: You're no good. Get Out. Send the next one in."

Zonko also read a position paper in answer to Sharon Fawcett (part of a four/three way dialogue). The paper revealed Zonko in a manner which I had never heard before that is, orthodox seriousness. The paper was somewhat like religious research quoting all and everybody to back up a life-view and a life-style. The life-view and philosophy being a recognisable west coast attitude, which is inaccurate to call it that but what else can we call it:

This is not a quote from the position paper but from one of the letters-pieces:

"This is it, now I know what I'm doing right down this road for the next hundred years and it ain't never that whether its a religious hat, or a political hat or a no-political hat whatever hat it was always looking for those straw hats. I think I've found out its a waste of time — there is no hat to wear, just keep moving around and changing clothes, that's the best — thats all that goes on — change."

If the writing is supposed in parts to be taken seriously I would suggest that the hat to wear as we approach the eighties is a steel hat and I further suggest that very soon we will enter a period where we will need more to survive than as Zonko says: "Morsels of intelligent gibberish."

Its not that I don't like Zonko's poetry and its performance — I do, its just that the analysis should stay skin deep.

C.R.

Martin Bartlett's concert on Dec 8th was worth the waiting... After reading some of the Gertrude Stein songs, the singing was like reading — in fact the two syllable words ending with '-ing' was the clue.

His custom synthesiser was used as if it were an acoustic instrument, his hands would gently bury themselves in the stalks that were patches and slowly turn the pots or flick the miniature switches that would first use one module then another; the whole four by two box could have been a box of seedlings — such was the touch.

He called the piece an improvisation and the quadrophonic configuration was complex enough not to be as if your ears were over the plughole in a bath listening to the water draining.

After an intermission he sang more and played a tape work. The pieces both live and taped were layered by design and in the layers is the infinite combination that so much electronic music boasts but rarely produces.

C.R.

The recent performance by Clive Robertson on Dec. 21 with the aid of video monitor and audio recorder was a rather interesting experiment in the art of metaphysical musical chairs with the all too reluctant audience gently manipulated into the clinical atmosphere of a hospital waiting room, where they were entertained initially by the calming influence of television and the effects of their being united by the consequences of the unknown. Gently called on an individual basis by the nursely attired figure of another, in this case knowing participant, the audience was introduced to the doctor and patient, Robertson and a heavily bandaged video monitor, engaged in a bedside dialogue which centered around the current exhaustion, in fact terminal fatigue, suffered by the monitor. As one listened and absorbed the conversation an acceptance of the superreality of the video image became apparent, particularly after having enjoyed through ridicule the pacifying influence of the television in the waiting room. One became transfixed with empathy for the altogether authentic personification of man through the video screen. At one point the patient looked apprehensively toward the visitor in embarrassment. Beyond the force of play with its excellent cast of characters, the brief but convincing conversation reinforced this participants belief that emotional experience however fraudulently packaged the source may be is far more immediate and appealing than all the intellectualization one can achieve. This very lengthy performance, In Video Traction — **So Glad You Could Come**, was a well taken experiment in behavioral expectation, a heady analysis of the reality of our unrealities and an altogether marvelous opportunity for one to get together and talk to friends.

JBJ

Radio Cora

The Parachute Show can be heard every Thursday at 9.30 pm

- recordings of live events at the Center
- profiles
- tastes of things to come

January 13th ... Roscoe Mitchell (1)

January 20th ... RADIOFREERAINFOREST — Gerry Gilbert

January 27th ... CCMC — New Release

February 3rd ... Voicespondence Issue 2 — The Telephone Issue

Herald Forum

This article first appeared in The Calgary Herald, January 6th, 1977. The issue was understated to secure publication.

Community access within the public media

By Clive Robertson

(Mr. Robertson is director of the Parachute Centre for Cultural Affairs, "an artist-run centre which operates a community access video facility for creative and social dissemination".)

As we enter a civic election year and are also being asked to re-think federalism, with direct encouragement to "shop around", have you ever wondered by what means our opinions can be heard?

To what broadcast media have we given the power to allow us to represent ourselves?

One of our greatest democratic assets and one, unlike our political system, in a late stage of erosion is the Broadcast Act.

Why do we need community access? It gives us an active role of choice as to what ideas, occurrences and events within the community deserve diffusion to the community.

* * *

The term used is "narrowcasting," as opposed to broadcasting.

The access function is political in that it ideally allows no community interest, grievance or celebration to be "censored" by the press, radio or television.

The media, it can justifiably be argued, does not have the time, staff and sometimes the intention to cover all that is important to all of us unless we lend our active assistance.

But how, or rather why, do those who own media businesses allow us, the community, that access?

* * *

The reasons "why" require us to look at access attitudes of specific types of media.

Newspapers, for instance, carry community activity notices, advances and sometimes reviews partly because they need the content, partly because certain coverage encourages some paid advertising, and partly because many community organizations have on hand a public relations person whose job it is to menace the relevant desk until it gives in, and gives up some precious space.

Broadcast media offers access because of something called a licence, which the Canadian Radio and Television Commission gives under the Federal Broadcast Act.

The CRTC not only gives licences; it can also take them away. And if for no other than financial reasons — retaining one's licence is a very serious business.

The broadcast company, in return for the licence, has to abide by sets of regulations which if we, the community, take an interest, will be abided by.

For local commercial radio and TV, the local programming input is relatively inexpensive to produce and can be used as direct advertising, which tells us that station X or Y is "our" station, that it serves us, and so on.

They can further emphasize the community by using their on-air personnel to advertise local car distributors, department stores and banks — helping the business community to help us?

Their local afternoon talk shows can fit us in for a light chat about what it is that we are involved in, and of course we are grateful.

* * *

But hasn't there suddenly been a switch?

They have been granted a licence which specifically allows us time, but doesn't it always seem as if the licence doesn't exist, and that only out of their generosity are we sitting in their studio?

The switch, I suggest, takes place due to our apathy rather than their power, and it is our understanding of the relationship that is the key to maintaining or strengthening our much-needed access-resource.

What about educational TV?

* * *

Within Alberta, a young corporation called ACCESS has been set up by the provincial government. Their name has proved to be an unfortunate, if not misleading, title, but again the cure-all is to make demands upon (this time) our facility.

Community access within cable TV is not, I should be fair to point out, an easy task.

Within the last five years, the two local community access television companies have had a turnover between them of five production managers.

Recently, I began jointly producing a series of programs with one of the cable companies.

The first program was aired and the second was to be broadcast on Dec. 12.

Half way through transmission of the second program, the special was cut.

I phoned the station and was told that the general manager removed the program.

The special had been produced in their studios and was directed by their production manager.

The following day, I saw the general manager and asked him why the program had been cut. His reply was that it was irrelevant to community programming.

In other words, his action disregarded the procedure of: 1. an access request; 2. an acceptance; 3. a production; 4. to add injury — payment by us for the persons to appear on cable TV; 5. transmission.

Of all the broadcast media outlined above, this type of facility is in the weakest position with regard to its licence renewal, let alone its upcoming rate increase request, to do something as blatant as cut community access.

Now, under what illusion do you think that this specific person would impose his dictatorial attitude and infringe on not one but four clear-cut access regulations laid out by the CRTC?

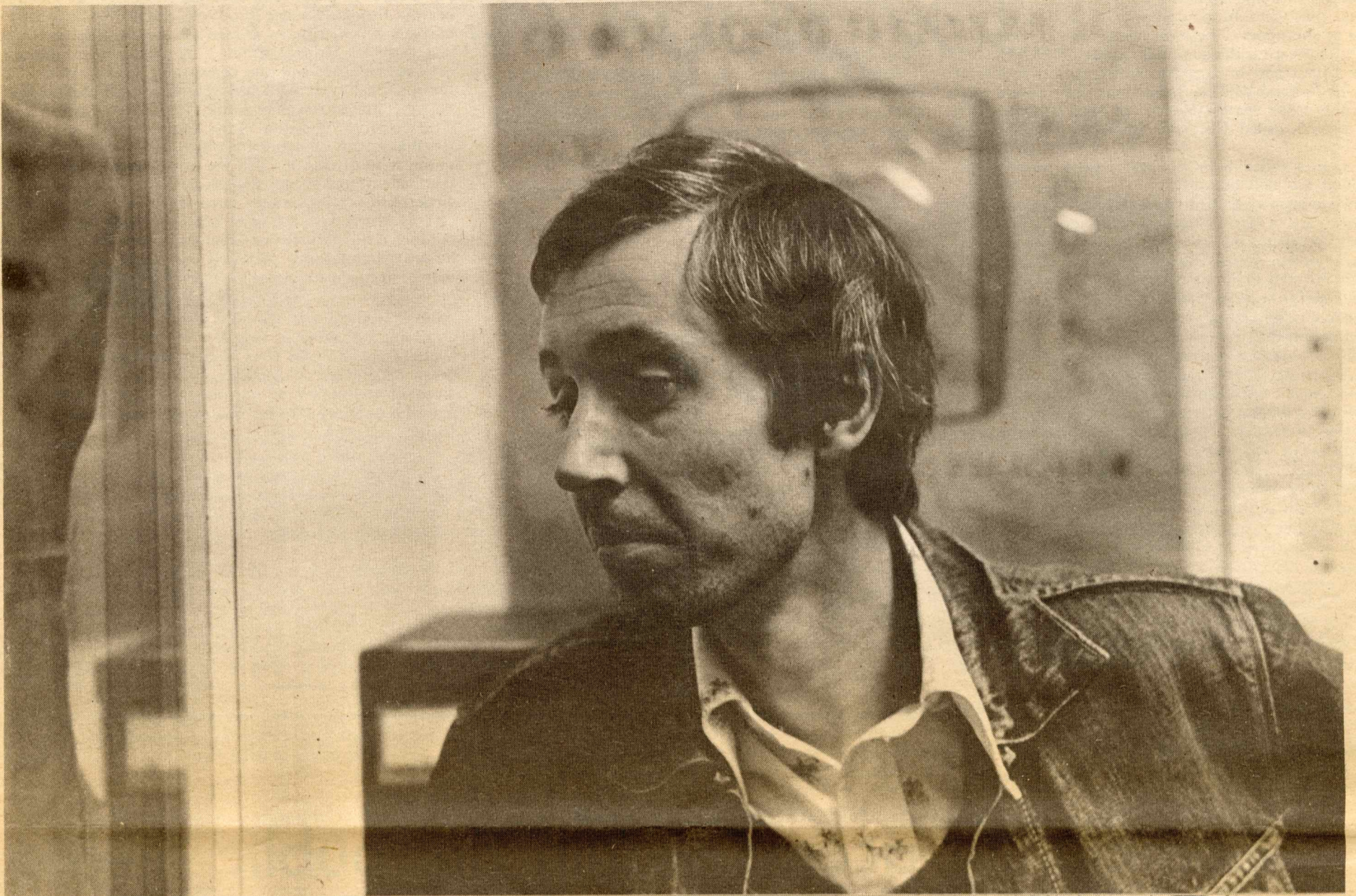
* * *

(Herald Forum welcomes your comment. Typewritten submissions of up to 800 words are invited on any topic of public interest. Address them to: Herald Forum, The Calgary Herald, 206 7th Ave. S.W., Calgary T2P 0W8.)

CENTERIFUGAL:

photos: D.Hargrave

OPAL L. NATIONS from Fresh-Poetry-in-the-Flesh Series



NEW DALTA AHKRI in conversation for Parachute Center Video
L. to R.: Paul Maddox, Wes Brown, Anthony Davis, Leo Smith, Eugene Chadbourne (guest voice), and Oliver Lake.