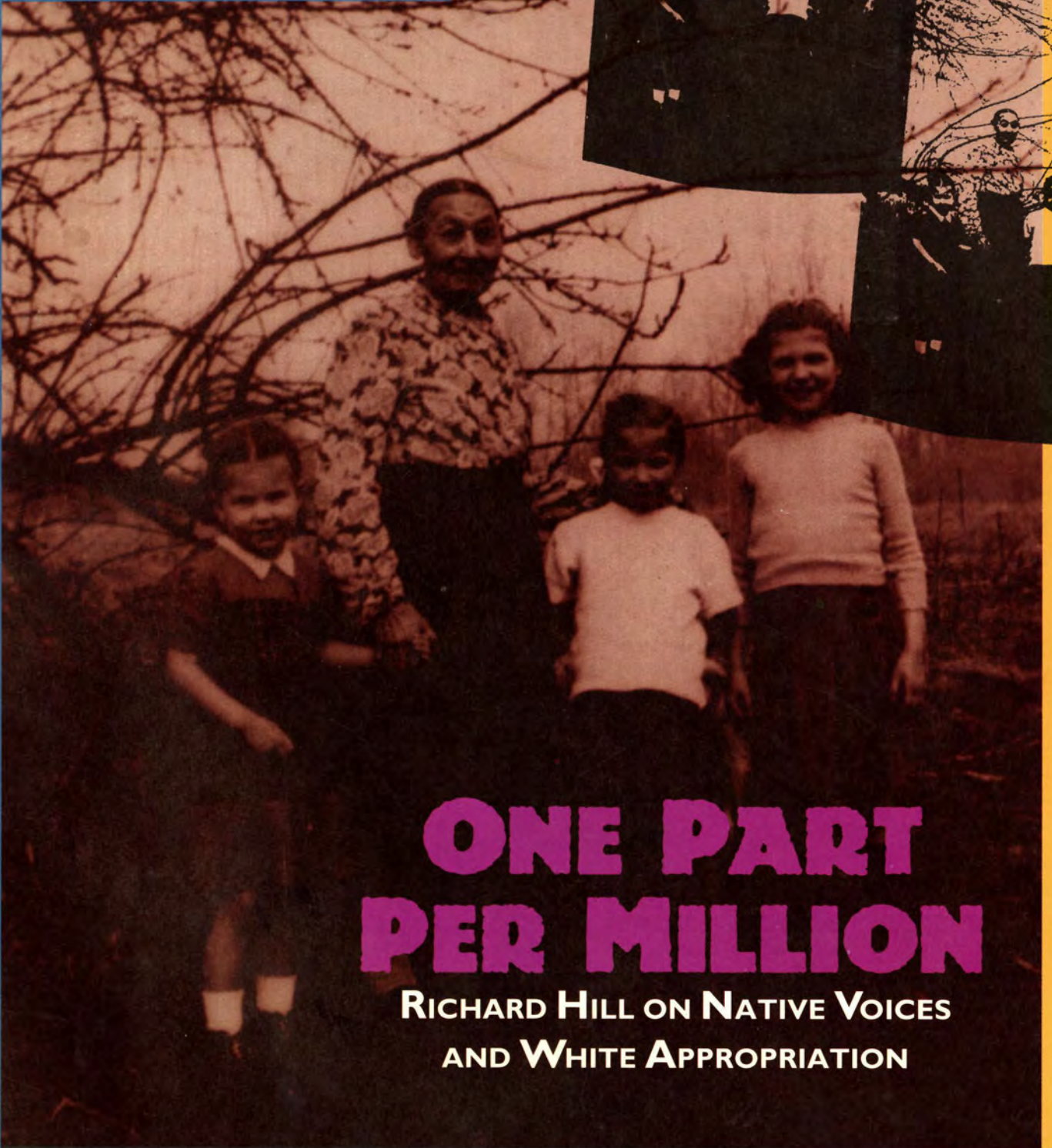


WINTER 1992 VOL. 15 NO. 3 \$3.50

FUSE

MAGAZINE

INTER-RACIAL RELATIONS EXAMINED IN HISTORY AND FILM • IN-SIGHTS INTO AIDS DISCOURSES



ONE PART PER MILLION

RICHARD HILL ON NATIVE VOICES
AND WHITE APPROPRIATION

ALSO: CONFERENCE ON DEMOCRACY & COMMUNICATION; BOOK ON ART IN MULTICULTURAL AMERICA; VIDEO ON LESBIAN BODY & THE STATE

ARTIST'S PROJECT: ASHOK MATHUR, FLIPPING THROUGH SOUTH ASIAN IDENTITY

YOUR IDEAS ARE NEEDED FOR METROPOLITAN TORONTO'S ARTS & CULTURE PLAN

The cultural life of our community belongs to everyone. Metro Council is currently developing an Arts and Culture Plan for Metropolitan Toronto, and is interested in your views.

We have already consulted with many individuals and groups about the roles and responsibilities of Metro Toronto in the arts. Consultation is continuing, and we will need to hear from a wide range of people in our community ... including you.

"Metro's Role in Arts and Culture: A Discussion Paper" has been prepared outlining options and various topics under study. For a copy of the paper or the summary, or to obtain more information on how you can participate, contact:

THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S DEPARTMENT
CULTURAL AFFAIRS DIVISION
(416) 392-8674



Note: Publications and information available in English only at this time.

METROPOLITAN TORONTO ARTS FUNDING 1992

Application packages for 1992 funding for arts groups in Metropolitan Toronto are now available.

Metropolitan Toronto has supported arts and cultural activities in the Municipality since 1957. Metro-based organizations providing activities which are in part or in whole professional, and available to the general public, are priorities for Metro support.

In 1992, assistance will be provided for projects or activities in the following four categories:

OPERATING * PROGRAM * PROJECT
COMMUNITY INCENTIVE

Deadlines for applications for Project and Community Incentive Grants are February 3, June 1, and September 1, 1992.

Deadlines for Program and Operating Grants are March 2 and September 1, 1992.

For information on your group's eligibility, or for other details, contact:

THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S DEPARTMENT
CULTURAL AFFAIRS DIVISION
(416) 392-8674



Note: Publications and information available in English only at this time.

FUSE MAGAZINE

WINTER 1992
VOL. XV NO. 3

EDITORIAL BOARD

Catherine Crowston, Pat Desjardins, Daria Essop, Sandra Haar, Sunday Harrison, Laura McGough, Lloyd Wong

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Bruce Barber, Jane Farrow (Halifax), Marusia Bociurkiw (Montreal), Clive Robertson (Ottawa), Dot Tuer (Toronto), Joane Cardinal-Schubert (Calgary), Sara Diamond (Vancouver), Tom Folland (Brooklyn, NY)

CONTRIBUTORS

Marjorie Beaucage, Abou Farman, Richard Fung, Richard Hill, Laura U. Marks, Ashok Mathur, Chris McCormick, Gillian Morton, ki namaste, Bruce Russell, Patricia Seaman

STAFF

Sandra Haar (Production)
Lloyd Wong (Administration)

DESIGN

Blackbird Design Collective

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karl Beveridge, Catherine Crowston, Pat Desjardins, Daria Essop, Clive Robertson, Tom Folland

FUSE is published five times a year (includes one double issue) by Arton's Cultural Affairs Society and Publishing Inc., a non-profit artist organization. Our offices are located at 183 Bathurst Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5T 2R7, tel: (416) 367-0159. All news-stand inquiries should be sent to this address. Publications Mail Registration No. 4455. Copyright ©1992 Arton's Publishing Inc. All rights reserved under International Copyright Union. Copyright is shared equally between the authors and the publishers. Any reproduction without permission is prohibited. Arton's Publishing assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts. Manuscripts not accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope will not be returned. Publication of an advertisement in FUSE does not include endorsement of the advertiser by the magazine. Opinions expressed outside of specifically marked editorials are not necessarily held by members of the editorial board.

FUSE acknowledges financial assistance from the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council and the many hours of volunteer and partially paid labour which are provided by everyone listed on our masthead.

Subscription rates: \$16 per year; Institutions \$26 per year (in Canada only). Outside Canada \$18 per year; Institutions \$30. Decisions regarding who qualifies as an 'individual' subscriber remain the right of the publisher.

ISSN 0838-603X.

FUSE is indexed in the Alternative Press Index
FUSE is a member of the
Canadian Magazine Publisher's Association
Printed in Canada by Delta Web Graphics

CONTENTS

ISSUES & EVENTS

- 2 COMMUNICABLE DEMOCRACY
Laura U. Marks
conference on Democracy & Communication Technologies, Ithaca
- 5 A NEW LOOK AT AIDS
Bruce Russell
Re-voir le SIDA, Montreal

COLUMN

AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF INTER-RACIAL RELATIONS 7
Abou Farman

- 12 FEATURE
ONE PART PER MILLION
Richard Hill
White Appropriation and Native Voices

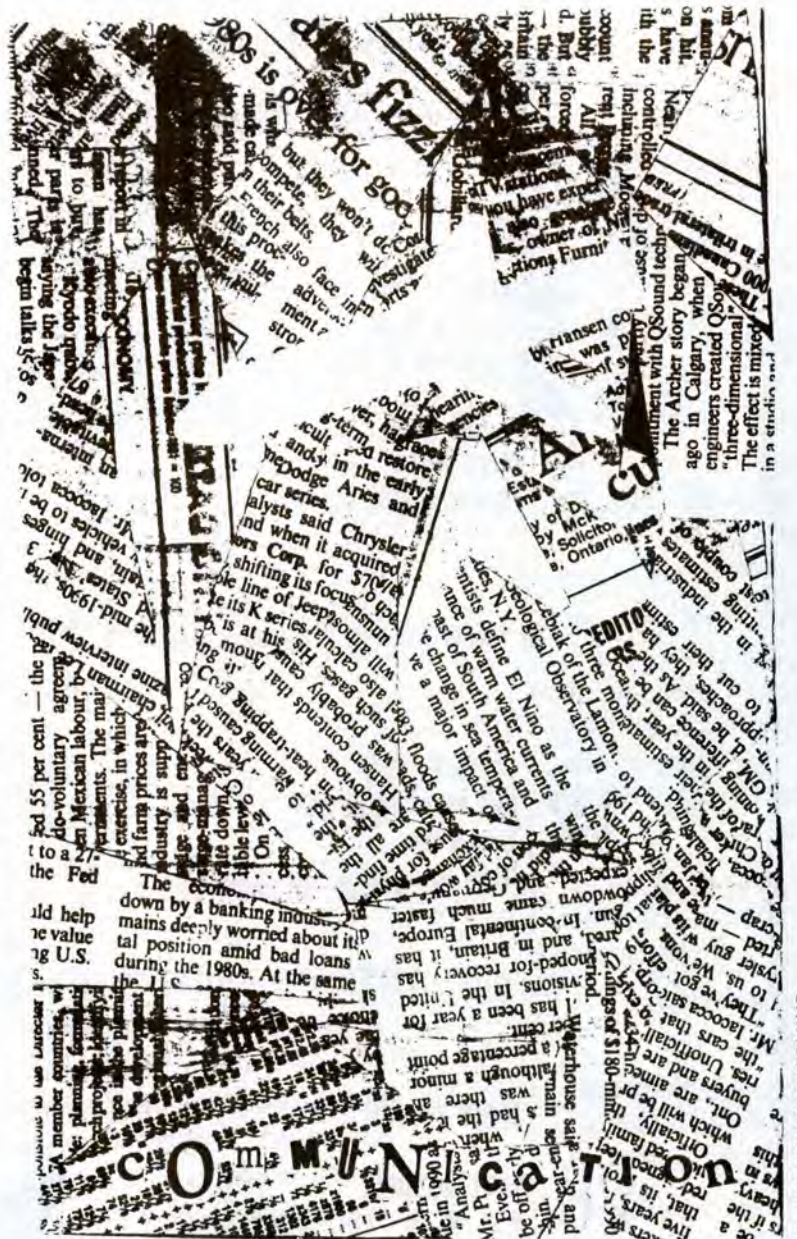
Buffalo head illustration
by Cheryl Henhawke.
See One Part Per Million
page 12

ARTIST'S PROJECT 23
Ashok Mathur

REVIEWS

- 26 MIXED BLESSINGS:
NEW ART IN A MULTICULTURAL AMERICA
Gillian Morton
- 27 FESTIVALS OF FESTIVALS
FILMS ABOUT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
Marjorie Beaucage
FILMS ABOUT INTER-RACIAL RELATIONSHIPS
Richard Fung
- 33 MAINTENANCE OF THE GYNAECIUM
Chris McCormick
- 35 KARATE KIDS
ki namaste
- 37 THE MAKING OF 'MONSTERS'
BODIES IN TROUBLE
Patricia Seaman
- 38 LETTERS & ERRATA





ILLUSTRATIONS BY SANDRA HAAR

Communicable Democracy

BY LAURA U. MARKS

RECENTLY I ATTENDED A CONFERENCE in Ithaca, NY called *Democracy and Communication Technologies*. The ironies in the title are clear. With multinational corporate control of satellite broadcasting,

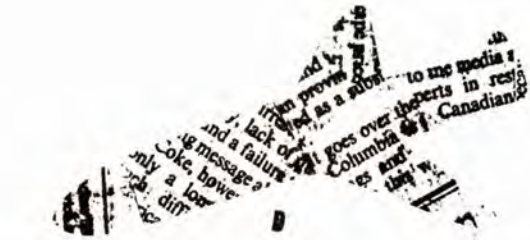
Department of Defense-sponsored research into computer communications, and de-regulation of media to better permit the influx of U.S.-manufactured culture into every nook of the planet, it seems that

democratic communication technology is now an oxymoron. The three-day conference, which was sparsely but earnestly attended, managed to suggest a few ways that technologies can serve small-

scale democracies, despite their sources in large-scale control.

Arguably, the words "communication" and "technology" have come to be coupled largely thanks to the interests of militarism and capitalism. Ministries of defense dating back to Sparta have needed efficient means of intercommunication; and the fourth estate (the press) arose as, with the spread of trade among medieval cities, far-flung merchants needed to keep in touch. Their communications became the basis for a public sphere, separate from the interests of the state. Now it seems that the fourth estate has merged back into the political state, as corporate interests merge with national political interests—or more accurately, as the recent oil war attests, national political interests are intently jockeying to meet multinational corporate interests. In any case, most people are disabused of McLuhan's dream that communications might create a benign "global village," in which all people have equal opportunities to make themselves heard around the world. If communication technologies are to be made democratic, it will be through efforts external to those that produced them.

Yet, as Richard Fung pointed out at the conference, technology alone doesn't make for democracy. Using communication technologies for "resistance"—for example, the use of fax machines by the Chinese student movement during the 1989 repression, or ACT-UP's raid of *The Dan Rather Show* during the Persian Gulf war, or the tape documenting Los Angeles police brutality—is great, but it can't compete with organized, corporate media. The question is less "Who are we



able to hear?" than, as Herbert Schiller has asked, "Who can afford to communicate?"

Schiller opened the conference with a windy rant that touched on some of the central points of his (well-founded) conspiracy theories about corporate domination of culture and communications. He said that his academic colleagues accuse him of being simplistic in his analyses; but he noted, "Whenever I hear the word 'simplistic,' I feel I'm on the right track." He pointed to several examples: when former Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze decided to announce his resignation, he called Ted Koppel of ABC; or how CNN virtually dominated media representation of the Gulf war, while journalists from many nonaligned or Third World countries were prohibited altogether from entering the region. So, given the overwhelming power of U.S.-based

media and the international corporate interests it represents, is there any space for democratic communications?

Along with Schiller, Ithaca College professor Patricia Zimmermann provided the conference with a note of pessimism. Her presentation on the popular press and the Gulf war quelled any notion that the mainstream media are a possible site of resistance. The situation of the press working hand-in-glove with the military and dominant political interests, to the point of using military technology to "capture" images, is nothing new, Zimmermann noted; but what may be

different with this war is how the speed of photographic transmission changed the act of viewership. The print news services could transmit 50 images digitally per day during the Gulf war, in contrast to the handful of images produced by analog transmission which occurred during the invasion of Grenada. The resulting "spectacle of instantaneity," she argued, was as much an object of consumption as the images of shiny planes and raining bombs. Zimmermann's words evoked an image of the public sphere as a space that expands and contracts in inverse proportion to the flow of images and "information" from the media. Accordingly, the barrage of images from the Gulf war, their connotations of American corporate and patriarchal control already overdetermined, stifled any possibility of debate.

It's a truism that this is an age of "information pollution." Yet, as Schiller's and Zimmermann's remarks underscored, the so-called information that is available for free to the public is often no more than corporate promotion disguised: for example, program-length commercials, PBS specials on the environment underwritten by Exxon, and tapes on women's health available through your doctor and sponsored by pharmaceutical companies. The sources of free "information" are remarkably few. As Howard Frederick of the PeaceNet computer network pointed out at the conference, 96 per cent of the worldwide flow of news information is controlled by four news agencies. Similarly, Schiller has written that our traditional sources of free and unbiased information, such as a public library, cannot afford to keep up with new infor-

mation, precisely because the new communication technologies are out of reach for many public and nonprofit services. Thus, as these resources are increasingly privatized, public sources of information are threatened with irrelevance. If it costs to obtain useful information—from corporate training videos to credit-checking databases—while useless information goes for nothing, then a gulf is widening between the info-rich and the info-poor.

Ideally, in a democracy, the people's voices are heard publicly and they have real political effect. But in these times—or, one might argue, ever since the public sphere came to be dominated by commercial interests—public representation is always already hijacked as spectacle. From the pre-election polls published in newspapers to "America's Funniest Home Videos," our public voices are contained and neutralized by the media that represent them. We need to take such pessimism seriously to cut through the feel-good haze that surrounds a successful event of computer-network mobilization or TV piracy.

Any hope for the possibility of democratic communication technologies rests with particular ideas about what democracy is, and how those technologies might work. People at the Cornell conference pursued an idea of democracy that turns away from large-scale communication to communication within small communities. As Cathy Scott of Paper Tiger insisted, "The masses in the United States have never changed anything"—and her point holds for any contemporary Western democracy. If we are going to recreate a separate, critical public sphere, it'll be back on

the "feudal" scale of local interest. The new interest groups are defined, to some degree, without reference to geography: they are linked by satellite, computer network, radio, or videotapes bicycled from village to village.

The emphasis is on decentralized technologies, those that are not corporate- or government-controlled and that have the potential to make connections among communities of interest. Low-income activists are always pioneers of appropriate technology: as people pointed out at the conference, sometimes radio, 'zines, or the federal mails are the most efficient way to reach our audiences. Yet others were quick to stress how little some of the higher technology costs: If you embrace low production values, you can make activist tapes for \$50 on a \$1200 Hi-8 camera, as the New York City-based video collective Paper Tiger did during the war. You can then beam them up on satellite, with a potential continent-wide viewership. Satellite time costs about \$300 an hour (although the difficulty is arranging publicity so that people know when you're broadcasting). Or, to give another example, grassroots computer networks such as The Web in Canada, PeaceNet in the U.S., GreenNet in Britain, and others, linked by satellite, permit quick transmission of alternative news around the world. It costs \$3-10 per hour to connect to PeaceNet and other international computer networks.

During the conference, Howard Frederick expressed tremendous faith in the power of a "metanetwork" of decentralized technologies, such as fax, VCR, modem, and cellular phone. This faith was based on Frederick's controversial claim that technologies, even those developed on Defense Department con-

tracts, "tend to decentralize themselves." Frederick's assumption is surprising, especially given his observation that access to information is becoming increasingly polarized throughout the world. The vast majority of communication technologies, and the information to which they allow access, are available only in a few Western countries. The potential for greater decentralization is there only if altruistic and nonprofit networks such as PeaceNet survive. It becomes a question, then, of keeping a sort of parallel democracy alive, working "outside the system" of mainstream communications.

Yet choosing to work outside the system carries its own limitations. In the ghettos surrounding São Paulo, for instance, extremely low-power pirate TV stations broadcast news exclusively by and for the community. Reactions to the network news, critical commentaries on soap operas, and issues of local interest, such as how to get rid of your garbage, jostle the networks' dominance and create, at least within that community, a genuine public sphere. But how long can this mini-democracy exist without challenging the power of the official means of representation—especially when those media do pretend to address your interests?

A couple of examples from the conference posed this same dilemma of empowerment within isolation. Film- and videomaker Ayoka Chenzira, in a moving talk called "The Art of Public Dreaming: Using Technology to Approach the Possible," argued that "one problem of liberalism is it doesn't allow us to dream." The rhetoric of liberal inclusionism—whose democratic ideal is representation within the main-

stream—impels African Americans to represent themselves to outsiders, rather than to strengthen connections within their communities. The technology most relevant to Black communities right now, Chenzira said, might be portable cameras, to make and show tapes right in the neighbourhood.

Another example was a project in Colombia, presented by Mary Jo Dudley of Cornell's Latin American Studies Program, in which women domestic workers learned the basics of the camcorder in order to document their oppressive conditions. The project was inspired by the media strategies of the Kayapo in Brazil, who used video to record their struggle against destruction of their culture and environment. With the help of anthropologist Terry Turner and later, Sting, the Kayapo were able to bring international pressure on the Brazilian government. The Colombian workers similarly used the camcorders to create a public dialogue about their situation. In on-the-street interviews, people appear taken aback by the confidence of these working-class women, especially some men in a park whom they confront about the sexual harassment of domestic workers. Dudley said that the primary purpose of the tapes was for self-empowerment, and that they might be circulated, through unions, for example, to workers in other cities. However, the lack of broader distribution channels raises a conundrum voiced by a member of the audience: "It seems they can have just the shell of a camcorder and go to the park and have the same power." Empowerment of individual groups is crucial to democracy, but the issue of how to engage with the broader public sphere remains. Unfortunately, not everybody has Sting to legitimate their

concerns in the eyes of the world.

Looking to the possibility of working "within the system," videomaker Philip Mallory Jones is working on one project that would take advantage of high tech—not to mention of U.S. international cultural domination—to connect an alternative community. For years Jones has been exploring the common aesthetic language of the people of the African diaspora. Jones's project is to assemble short programs about various aspects of diasporic culture and broadcast them to African cities on Afristar, a commercial satellite scheduled to begin broadcasting over the continent in 1993. By showing how African cultures have lived through transformations around the globe, Jones hopes to help reweave communications among the people of the diaspora.

One hope for democratic communications is the blurring of the categories of "inside" and "outside." Cable access and satellite transmission, for example, are dependent on private corporations, and thus "inside" the control of corporate/government interests. But they are "outside" in the sense that the specific groups that use them are more or less free to represent themselves. And in the blurring of the two, as these alternative representations spill over into the commercial "public sphere," they may reach people who had no idea that such opinions or such communities existed. Small, localized communities, then, have the potential to infect our large non-democracy with a spore of genuine democratic communication. If anybody realizes the decentralizing potentials of technology, it will be the outsiders.

Laura U. Marks is a writer and artist living in Rochester, NY.

WORK BY LORNE MAIN,
IN APPRENTIS SAGES.

THIS PAST JUNE, Montréal was once again the host to international activists and specialists concerned with public awareness of the AIDS crisis. If on a very different scale than the 5th International Conference on AIDS held here in 1989, *Revoir le SIDA* was one of the most ambitious AIDS-related events ever held in this country. Primarily directed towards the interested public rather than the research and treatment professionals, its focus was, appropriately, on cultural representations and documentation. Its goal, in the words of the programme, was "to inform and understand HIV/AIDS through the arts." Two exhibitions and performance, literary, film, and video presentations predominated during the two weeks of events. Yet, visitors from England, France, Morocco, Netherlands, the USA, and various regions of Canada, were able to exchange their experience in community health care and education, as well as in AIDS-related cultural production, with Montreal PWAs, activists, professionals, and anyone else motivated to come to these public events.

BY BRUCE RUSSELL

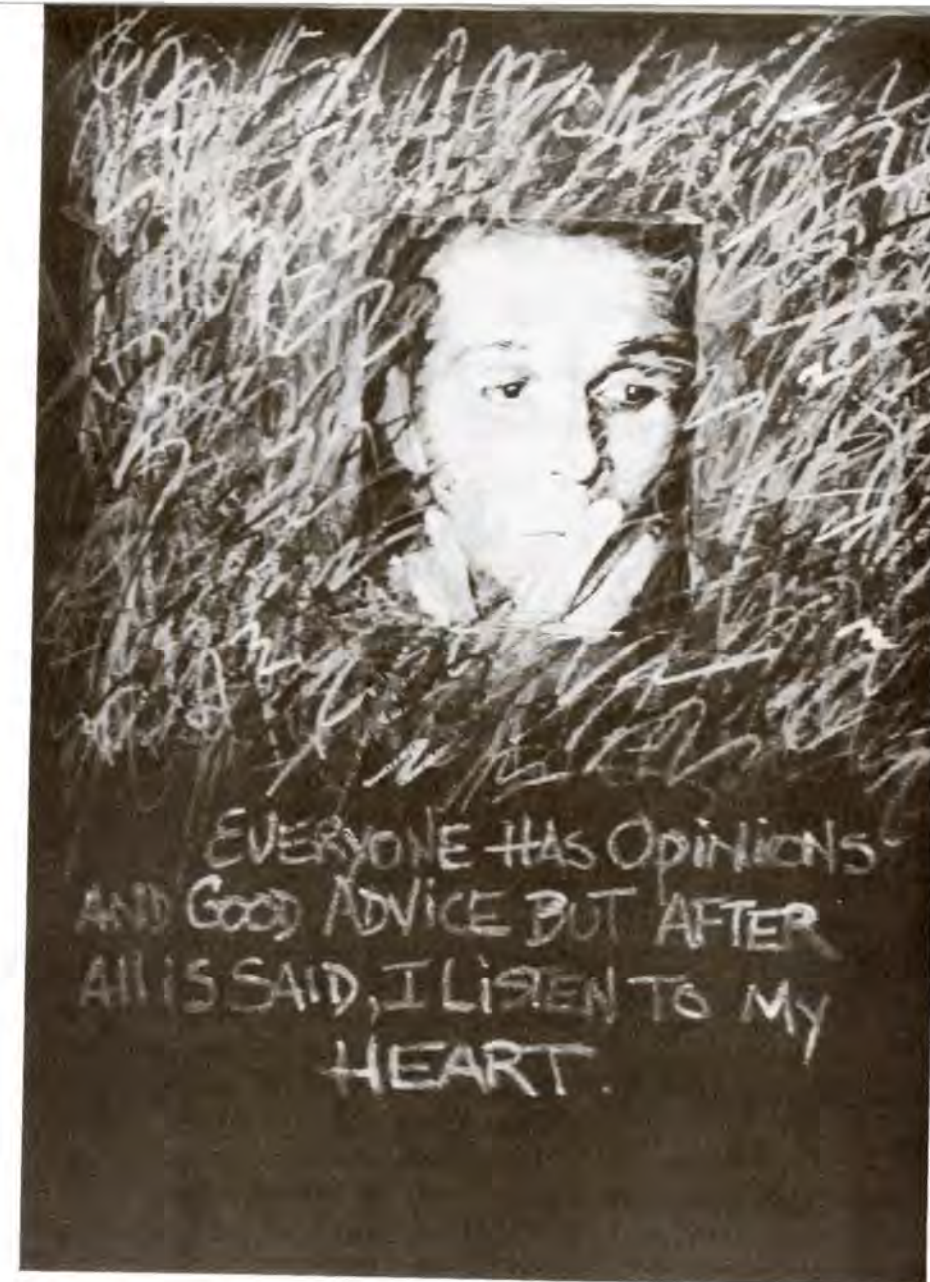


Revoir le SIDA was organized by Diffusions Gaies et Lesbiennes du Québec (DGLQ) at the City's Maison de la culture Frontenac and

at the Cinéma theque québécoise, both public venues within walking distance of the city centre and both the Plateau and Village neighborhoods where many gays and lesbians live and socialize.

Panels for public health workers and educators, which brought together their peers from three continents, were particularly poorly

attended. Sadly, they missed presentations which could have offered new perspectives for their own work. Win Zuilhot illustrated the innovative use of video in safe sex education for gay men in Holland. Christophe Farnier discussed the uses of film in struggling against the stigmas which IV drug users in France must overcome in order to



EVERYONE HAS OPINIONS
AND GOOD ADVICE BUT AFTER
AIDS SAID, I LISTEN TO MY
HEART.

A new look at AIDS

AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF INTER-RACIAL RELATIONS



ILLUSTRATIONS BY GITA SAXENA

with free-thinking, and such an ad finds its outlet in the liberal bastion within the city's media.

The popular discourse around race embodies the situation at large: the liberal use of "racism" allows people to erase a moral burden by denying racism on the exterior, and then, because there hasn't been enough self-examination, the effects of a racist society

heard, for it is equated with the brand of "racist." This allows for the avoidance of deep questioning and critical thinking around the more complicated and pervasive forms of racism. Any negation is accepted as opposing its positive, in this case racist versus anti-racist. An inter-racial couple is considered the negation of race-specific relationships, or in a White-centric perspective, the negation of a White (purist) couple. As such it becomes automatically qualified as anti-racist. The fundamental questions are run over by this clumsy bulldozer of an argument.

Coming home on the Métro one of my first days in Montreal, a Black man told me racism was not a problem in Montreal, "at least not as much as in the States." I had often heard this from White Canadians in the act of soothing their own consciences. For the first time I was hearing it from a Black person. But it continued as a refrain I was to hear over and over from Black Africans and Caribbeans, South Asians and Southeast Asians, Arabs and Iranians—some of whom felt oblivious to any possibility of racism directed against them—as if all had rehearsed it at the department of multiculturalism. I heard it from women and men, young and old—but men much more than women who are sensitized to the subtler detection of

ety are relegated to the subconscious where it resurfaces in more subliminal ways.

In general the talk around race, well spread into everyone's vocabulary, has only moved as far as its own negation; "I am not a racist" simultaneously becomes a manifestation of a person's awareness of raceness, and a common and accepted disclaimer on the tip of everyone's tongue.

The more honest "I have not purged all my racism" is rarely

CANADIAN FREE THINKERS:

THAT WAS how an ad for an inter-racial dating service caught people's attention. It was an ad bought in the back pages of the *Montreal Mirror*, billed as the city's alternative weekly. Symptomatic and revealing, it is a classic. Inter-racial relationships are immediately associated



in Canada, the overall impression was that this was the diverse expressions of a heterogenous community, of individual responses to a devastating public crisis. While in another context some works would not stand up to objective critical criteria, in this context it was their sincerity rather than more formal issues which merited inclusion.

The only disappointment was the poor attendance, as Montréalers chose to otherwise involve themselves on the early summer nights of last June because they, like most of us, are uncomfortable with sickness, death, HIV drug use, and the implications of sexually transmitted illness. Klusacek and associates presented as skillfully balanced and excellent a programme on this painful theme as has been carried out anywhere. Yet the discomforted response it engendered is indicative of the very need for such events. Until we can confront HIV infection and AIDS without fear, morbidity, moralism, ignorance, or sentimentality, we will not be able to change our lives enough to survive it.

Bruce Russell is a writer and curator living in Montréal. He has written and lectured on a wide range of subjects relating to architecture and museology, as well as the history of homosexuality. At present he is curating an exhibition to be presented in November 1992 on the history of gay experience in Montréal.

Julien contributed to the strong British presence in *Re-voir le SIDA* which also featured *Ecstatic Atibodies*, an exhibition of works by eight British visual artists. This circulating exhibition, accompanied by a widely-distributed catalogue (available from most gay bookstores), presents visual art responses to the experience of AIDS. These range from highly personal expressions of loss to works which explored the implications of AIDS and HIV on the homophobia and racism experienced by British gays and lesbians. This strong international presence in *Re-voir le SIDA* was complimented by the Montréal participants. One of the first events was a performance of *Tu peux toujours danser* by Louis-Dominique Lavigne, an AIDS awareness play which has been developed for high school audiences. Other presentations included readings by Montréal literary writers and screenings

While in another context some works would not stand up to objective critical criteria, in this context it was their sincerity rather than more formal issues which merited inclusion.

Until we can confront HIV infection and AIDS without fear, morbidity, moralism, ignorance, or sentimentality, we will not be able to change our lives enough to survive it.

obtain health care and justice. Jan Zita Grover, former editor of *OUT/LOOK*, presented her experience as a community health worker in California and argued that the most effective prevention programmes are those which are developed within the communities they must serve. Lati-

fa Imane discussed the cultural specificity of AIDS through the example of Morocco where Islamic tradition has complicated safe sex education for women and where sex tourism has had a tragic impact through male and female prostitution.

A retrospective of films and videos which have explored living with AIDS were screened, including what now seem classics of the genre such as *Buddies* by Arthur Bresson and *A Virus Knows No Morals* by Rosa von Praunheim. Also shown were more recent productions such as Colin Campbell's *Skin* and a group of films from France which are relatively unknown to North American audiences. Works by Stuart Marshall, including the North American premiere of his most recent work *Over Our Dead Bodies*, as well as videos by Pratibha Parmar and Isaac

bookstores), presents visual art responses to the experience of AIDS. These range from highly personal expressions of loss to works which explored the implications of AIDS and HIV on the homophobia and racism experienced by British gays and lesbians. This strong international presence in *Re-voir le SIDA* was complimented by the Montréal participants. One of the first events was a performance of *Tu peux toujours danser* by Louis-Dominique Lavigne, an AIDS awareness play which has been developed for high school audiences. Other presentations included readings by Montréal literary writers and screenings

COLUMBIAN

racism because of its magnified impact in a White-supremacist patriarchal society.

Meanwhile, I lived with racism daily. Not one day passed leaving me unexposed to racism either as a witness or a victim; and it has been "at least" as bad as anything I've experienced in the States.

That was when I realized to what extent the "verbal negation of racism" worked on a wide societal level, for this is precisely the motto of multicultural Canada: we are not racists like others. And people, people of Colour included, buy it. There's a constructed gap between the scale of racism and its social repression. This gap, this space between the real, daily, multitudinal existence of racism and its extensive denial provides the backdrop for inter-racial relationships, the void in which so many couples tumble hand in hand.

Often when I talk to other people of Colour whom I believe have White lovers and ask if their lover is White, an aura of extreme discomfort descends on the room. I've intruded. It's either an irrelevant question, or an impudent one rudely shoved in their face. Or else, in a recurring scenario, they might argue with a barrage of post-modern lingo about "positionality" and "essentialism," achieving the objective of removing themselves from the intimacy demanded by the question. When the foundations of desire for a lover are questioned, everyone becomes uncomfortable, feeling attacked on a personal level.

To a large extent, feminism's banner that the personal is the political claimed issues of gender as universal and of political concern; the gay and lesbian movements did the same for sexuality. For race the problem is different, almost the reverse. Race has been reserved only for the traditional political realm: votes,

courts, police, jobs, welfare, advertising, various forms of discrimination, and recently, representation such as on TV and in cinema. When race enters through portals of the (very) personal, it loses its political edge. People rarely rise to review their desires, to analyze them and see where they might have taken root.

It is not easy because we are fighting the momentum of years of history; but for the same reason it is all the more necessary. The modern history of inter-racial relationships weighs with exploitation, rape, and domination, usually as the aftermath of a military conquest or invasion. These patterns are repeated through today, but with time have been sublimated to less apparent manifestations.

The apocryphal origin, in this hemisphere, is Cortes's mistress (never married), an Indian woman called La Malinche, or *Malintzin*, who had been sold to Cortes. She bore him a son and today she's considered the mother of all *mestizos*. At the same time, with the military conquest, the Spanish male libido ran so rampant—usually meaning buying Indian women, or raping them, or simply taking them as mistresses and leaving them with "illegitimate" off-springs—that Cortes, despite La Malinche, had to require all men serving under him to come to the "New World" with their wives.

In Canada, when some of the first European men arrived with the Hudson Bay Company, it was part of their policy to wed Native women in order to have greater access to the furs of the land and bring increasing profits to the company. Not such an innocuous link, especially since it was carried by the same minds which, in the words of one civil servant, made "the savage . . . no more than a

memory."

This exploitative and explosive combination of race and sexuality didn't stop with the decimation of Natives in both Americas, North and South. Nor was it limited to men or heterosexuals. With the mass importation African slaves, a whole new arena of exploitation opened itself for the White colonial libido. Every slave narrative, without exception, describes at least one incident in which a slave, man or woman, was beaten because of a liaison to a White person, or, in the case of women, because she refused such a link—as punishment, men were sometimes dismembered, and women whipped nude or raped.

In the dynamics surrounding a master-slave relation, the masters and their wives could allow themselves to abuse slaves as they wished without any moral implications or guilt. That provided a sense of total power, acting itself out sexually because all previously repressed barriers were now removed in relation to the realm of the Other. Sexually-focused punishment was even meted for non-sexual offences. Sexuality and violence went hand in hand, one-way and wanton.

Olaudah Equináo describes scenes from his master's vessel which carried slaves to various islands: "[I]t was almost a constant practice with our clerks, and other Whites, to commit violent depredations on the chastities of the female slaves. . . . I have even known them to gratify their brutal passion with females not ten years old."

Despite the patriarchal society in which they lived, White women were as complicit in the abuse as were men, and often there was a lesbian dynamic with the female slaves. Mary Prince recounts one of her mistresses abusing two young black boys: My mistress was not content-

ed with using the whip, but often pinched their cheeks and arms. . . ." and continues to describe abuses she herself suffered by her mistresses hands: "I was licked, and flogged, and pinched by her pitiless fingers in the neck and arms. . . . To strip me naked—to hang me up by the wrists and lay my flesh open with the cow-skin. . . ." Since these narratives were meant for publication we can only guess at what has been omitted. Oral sources, unrecorded stories transmitted through the generations, give a more realistic description of sexual abuse during slavery, confirming both its violence and its occurrence outside of a heterosexual and male paradigm.

The paradigm continued in European history and culture, particularly at the height of colonialism in the 19th century. Indeed, the unrestrained and massive European expansion allowed for the development of a racial-sexual culture with unrestrained, irrational behaviour and a specific, though as irrational, discourse obeying the dictum Foucault ascribed to the development of European sexual discourse: "You will seek to transform your desire, your every desire, into discourse." An incredible amount of energy was spent talking about miscegenation, the sexuality of the colonized, the sexual prowess of Black people, and sexual practices in the colonies: for a cursory glance at the volume just refer to the footnotes and bibliographies of Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and J.A. Rogers' *Sex and Race*, and titles such as *L'Art d'Aimer aux Colonies* (1927) by Louis Jacolliot, and *La vie sexuelle en Afrique noire* (1950) by Dennis Pierre de Pedrals.

What Foucault documents as the polymorphous play of power and pleasure in European discourse, became, in his own words, "anchorage points for the different varieties of racism of the nineteenth and

twentieth centuries." So not only had power and sexuality been linked, but with the third force of racism there was a three-way menage. Whether preceding or proceeding colonialism, the fact is this discursive menage became a form of conscious and rationalized power that grew with and benefitted from Europe's domination of the world. This opened up the flood-gates for the twentieth century and its array of inter-racial relationships.

I would argue, however, that by the second half of this century (post-WWII), the discourse of power, sexuality and racism had been established, in the White mind it was now an "ideology," that which is made to seem natural, beyond evidence, and inherent in every aspect of their attitudes. Thus, as compared to the obsession of the late 19th and early 20th century with miscegenation and sex, very little ink was spilt on the matter later. The colonized as sexual object (as well as other objects, like the object of various studies in anthropological discourse) became an accepted norm. Also, since the second half of this century neither marked the cessation of the obsession nor implied the evening out of the power dynamics, I would argue that due to political and ideological trends the arenas of this power play were multiplied and its manifestation sublimated.

Possibly the most painful example I've come across was the recent case of a Portuguese man from Mozambique. After Mozambique's independence in 1975, this man took a Black woman and her daughter back to Portugal with him and kept them as slaves. They were locked up, beaten, forced to serve and perform sexual deeds as the man ordered. Residents in the man's home area knew about this but never challenged or stopped the man. It is easy to blame the man, somewhat more

difficult to blame the neighbours. But were the neighbours not complicit? Moreover, were they not, perhaps, sharing in a fantasy?

Similarly, accounts of abduction and drug-induced prostitution of Black and Third World women (there is an enormous trade on children from the Third World into the West) by White Westerners, are disregarded both by activists and media. Here, again, there is a complicity that is defined by a shared ideology, a passive acceptance, possibly a shared but repressed fantasy.

Prostitution has always been a terrain of legitimized—or at least unhindered—fantasy plays. In the twentieth century it has taken on incredible dimensions. Southeast Asia provides the largest, most rampant, and accepted example. After British soldiers moved into Malaysia they ran crazy forming inter-racial bonds with Malay women—the highest number of officially recorded inter-racial relationships in the area. In the end they had no qualms about leaving the women and their bi-racial progeny on their own to return home. And as with most military settlements prostitution mushroomed alongside inter-racial relationships.

Rape and prostitution have also accompanied any lengthy deployment of American troops—Guatemala, Vietnam, the Philippines. Take the last: only in the areas surrounding its bases has the number of prostitutes burgeoned to 30,000, ranging from seven to 70 years of age. In both the Philippines and Vietnam male prostitution has also become a lucrative affair.

CAN WE MERELY DUCK THE MOMENTUM of this history whose surface has not even been scratched here? obliterate its impact on us by merely denying it, close our eyes so it doesn't exist?

The question I ask is more than just rhetorically begging a "no!" The point is that motivations are not always accessible; often not even questionable to most people. Yet, the subconscious maestro collects the residues of this history and plays them back to us; it plays them back in the motivations of our slightest gestures and articulations. As long as the continuation of this history in its modern form is not dealt with consciously, as long as the media, White progressives and people of Colour refuse to put all the cards, of race and gender, on the social and personal table, we will bear the consequences of this history. Why? Because that history continues to be reinscribed in films and books, the news and events in daily life; because the nature of power is multiple and deep, and penetrates our desires; and, because power itself, like fantasy, can constitute a desire, sometimes a masochistic one. If repressed these don't disappear. They continue to exist, as most psycho-analysts agree, in the unconscious waiting for an opportunity to make themselves known; soon they come back into consciousness in a form that makes them difficult to recognize.

So what I'm asking really is, can people stop that unconscious by an act of conscious will, or have progressive Whites and people of Colour merely sublimated the unconscious because of a moral and political blackmail? Are liberals, the civilized anti-racists, behaving in this way due to the sway of current political morality, while their unconscious is not flushed out in accordance with that morality? Here the rhetorical answer is "yes."

Two events brought on this form of sublimation. The advent of a political morality which condemned racism, and the assertion of the Third World as subject after WWII. With liberation movement

after liberation movement, the colonized object of sex was trying to assert its subjectivity. As a result of this challenge to "traditional" attitudes and arenas of racial-sexual fantasy play, new domains and modes had to be created to play out

For 300 years she was invisible, she was not heard. Many times she

She remained faceless and voiceless, but a light shone through her veil of silence.



ILLUSTRATION BY GITA SAXENA

wished to speak, to act, to protest, to challenge. The odds were heavily against her.

the sexuality of the colonized.

Historically, there was a precedence for this in the intellectual and literary life of Europe and Euro-centred America. If European male writers of the late 19th and early 20th century didn't actually go

the continued but now repressed fantasies towards the ex-colonized object. The post-modern media and music scene replaced the infinite story-weaving and storytelling disguised as scientific fact about

to Senegal or Mozambique and rape African women and men (although there may well have been such cases not disappeared through the sieve of history), sexual exploitation of the land, its people and

culture was reflected in their work. Projecting fantasies of deeds disallowed or idealized desires onto a "savage" or "immoral" context acted as a valve for the writers but also served to objectify and dehumanize the colonized. Take Tenyson for example:

There the passions cramped no longer shall have scope and breathing space

I will take some savage woman she shall rear my dusky race.

From Shelley and Poe in the 19th century, this tactic was passed down to 20th century writers like Paul Theroux, John Barth, and Bruce Chatwin in the latter part of this century. Simply because Chatwin or Barth do not present race in the outward garb in which we are taught to recognise racism does not negate their unexamined and sublimated racism: in *Songlines* Chatwin acclaims the sexual desirability of every blond woman he meets in Australia while being repelled by native sexuality; in *Chimera* Barth uses the backdrop of "The Arabian Nights" to voyage into and experiment with post-modern sexuality (with a male feminist tinge).

More than anything the music and fashion industries, which produce the majority of images in Western culture, have become the playground of the interracial. Madonna's Black dancers as well as her "Vote" advertisement, in which Black leaders are linked to sex in verse (Martin Luther King, Malcolm X—Freedom of speech is better than sex), surface as the first example. There is also the Public Service Announcement from the "liberal flank" of musicians which shows a White woman, a Black man and a young Black (bi-racial?) boy smiling at each other. The caption is "Love knows no color." If the arguments of this paper follow, it would

seem that one of love's most intimate links is, in fact, to colour. Apart from a string of nationalist rappers, even Black musicians glorify inter-raciality.

ONE OF THE WALLS WE MUST BREAK down is our own, Third World and Black, progressive or not. It's the old question: merely because we have experienced racism, and then, in the case of some of us, analysed it, have we also filtered out our internalized racism, the assault of daily and historical racism coupled with sexism and their power to shape our reactions? How much of our own desires are fed by racism?

In looking at ourselves let me ask three questions which I deem essential to understanding an inter-racial relationship:

Are you sure that your history and identity is treated with equal respect, value, and subjectivity?

Are you not being exoticized?

Are you not being used to prove your lover's political tendencies?

Alot of will and alot of thought went into identifying racism, then sexism, at various conjectures in modern history. Power adapts and multiplies. We need to be able to identify racism beyond its outward manifestations and see it in the multiplicity that constitutes power in every sphere: the classroom as well as the bedroom. One of the ways in which the racial-sexual culture of the past has repressed its desires, which not so long ago were freely entertained due to the creation, as we saw, of two distinct realms, has been through its privatization. It seems that the private has replaced the second realm. Where privacy, or the absence of public scrutiny, can be achieved, then all is permissible again. So,

as long as motivations and physical spaces are not shared in common consciousness, admitted to, "outed," then that second realm is safeguarded.

Since political morality blackmails desire in public (and the constitution protects privacy), the private space has assumed the role of a steam valve—which makes the symbolic bedroom a more intense domain of analysis. Pornography, for example, is privatized; it is thus an arena beyond moral blackmail and as such tends to indulge in the racial-sexual culture of the past more unabashedly. The privatization of the racial-sexual culture expanded with the advent of home videos, mass-produced images, and things such as phone sex.

Besides the private domain, the racial-sexual culture in public has been sublimated through media obsessions under the guise of music videos and news stories. There are more arenas still unexamined. We need a new map, a new language to identify these new guises and insist that they be put on the table; insist that they be talked about—but not in some po-mo-lingo about images and production of meaning. We need to see where it is that the stranglehold of these images emerges from and what their actual effects are, what the real psychological or physical scars look like. We need a sort of an archeology of images in order to identify continuing trends.

Abou Farman is an Iranian freelance writer and researcher. His present project is an oral history of Iranian refugees. He has been published in *The Globe and Mail*, *History & Anthropology*, *Genders*, and *Montreal Serai*.

ONE PART PER MILLION

WHITE APPROPRIATION AND NATIVE VOICES

BY RICHARD HILL

IT HAS BEEN PAINFUL AND UNPLEASANT FOR ME, AS A person of Cree ancestry, to write about White appropriation of Native images and culture. It's been difficult to speak back to "experts" who are working from a powerful and established domination of images and texts about my culture. However, now that this article is completed, I find that working on it has also been an empowering experience.

Still, I have other qualms about writing on this subject. The foremost is that this debate, despite the fact that it is about "Native issues," inevitably perpetuates a focus on White artists. Perhaps this is why it is such a hot topic with Western art communities. Now that I have gotten the issue "out of the way" for myself, that is to say, cleared some room from which to speak, I'd like never to deal with it again. I'm much more interested in looking at the way Native artists are choosing to construct their work and the issues surrounding it.

At times I try to state my positions in this debate in strong terms. It's my experience that Western culture will turn a deaf ear to you unless you address them in their own conflict-oriented manner. But this is not the way I'd prefer to write and I don't plan to do it in the future.

I learned a different approach to this problem in one of Ian Carr-Harris's classes at the Ontario College of Art. Previously, Rebecca Belmore and Liz Magor had been members of a panel discussion that ended up focussing on the appropriations of Native cultures in Magor's work. Some time later, another panel discussion was scheduled because it was felt that the issues hadn't been suitably aired and that there was a great deal of tension as a result. Rebecca asked me and her brother, Michael, to attend, which we did. Personally, I dreaded the "debate" that was to come. Just before the class was about to begin Rebecca looked at Michael and I and asked, half-jokingly, "Why am I doing this?" "Just for the sheer violent spectacle of it all," I replied, only half-joking myself.

As the "debate" commenced Rebecca did an interesting thing. Rather than constructing arguments in her defence or attacking Magor's work, she simply told the class about her personal history and projects. She explained where she was from and told us that she was considering getting away from the mainstream gallery system to do things that would be seen by her own community. I found her strategies more useful than those provided by Magor, who spent a lot of her time trying to rationalize or trivialize the power she held as an established White artist. At one point she said something to the effect that people always make it sound as if it's impossible to get into the National Gallery. The statement seems fairly insensitive when you consider how long it's taken them to open their doors to Native artists.

There's one last (and most important) thing I need to mention before starting. I'd like to express my thanks and debt to the elders who have and are preserving our traditions so that younger people like myself can experience aspects of our culture which otherwise might be



lost. Especially I would like to thank my Great Grandma and her Mom who taught many things to my Grandma, Aunts and Mom, who in turn have given so much to me. Also I'd like to acknowledge my debt to the Native writers who have raised and dealt with these issues before me.

The question of appropriation has been with me my entire life; in fact, it has shaped it in many ways, but it is only recently that I've felt up to writing about it. I approach it now because it's more difficult to keep quiet than to speak up. Recently, as I've become aware of more and more texts and images created by others about Native peoples, I've found my voice rising almost inevitably—not simply because they are racist or misrepresentative individually, but rather because they seem to dominate discourse and become the central notions about us. Challenging the "authority" of these "experts" involved an effort on my part to understand the legitimacy of my own experiences.

In a letter to *Fuse* magazine, the Fastwurms accused First Nations artist and writer Joanne Cardinal-Schubert of being, "a self-appointed spokesperson for Native artists." They were responding to her article "In the Red"² in which she confronted them and other White artists for their appropriation of Native cultures.

Fastwurms' statement is ironic considering that, if anyone has appointed themselves to speak to Native cultural issues, it is the Fastwurms themselves. After all, I'm well aware of how many First Nations people support the demand for sovereignty over our own culture, including such articulate writers as Lenore Keeshig-Tobias and Loretta Todd, to name just two. I hope to add my own writing to this discourse because each voice that is raised makes it that much more difficult for White people to disregard us, as the Fastwurms did with Cardinal-Schubert by naming her concerns "a personal gripe."³ This denial and trivialization of personal experiences of racism is infuriating. Their accusation that Cardinal-Schubert appointed herself to represent her own culture can be recognized as an attempt to alienate her from the "good Indians" they imply exist, silently supporting the Fastwurms' appropriations. Such an unconscious use of the old colonial tool of divide and conquer I find disturbing. After all, Mulroney used it as well in his attempts to isolate the Mohawk Warriors from the Canadian public and other First Nations' peoples.

Some White people have suggested that cultural sovereignty is divisive, leading to further disharmony between cultures. In Andy Fabo's response to "In the Red," for example, he states that "the unfortunate thing about Cardinal-Schubert's polemic . . . is that she attacks us [himself and Fastwurms] as enemies when we are such likely allies. We endorse her issues . . ." ⁴ I find it presumptuous for Fabo to assume that they "endorse her issues" one sentence after disagreeing with the very issues Cardinal-Schubert raised in her article. If Fabo

or any White person is serious about being allies they must first listen to what we feel our issues are. Too many times in the past "experts" have tried to define what is important or "best" for us, assuming that they were "on our side" while turning a deaf ear to the areas in which our critiques applied to them.

Andy Fabo's question, "Are we really the enemy?"⁵ also from his letter to Fuse, seems to use the position of the alternative artist to deny his legacy of White power as well. Am I saying, "You are the enemy"? I don't think the issue is that simple to delineate. My point is that you are inheritors of a complex and diverse power structure that can't be undone simply because you are innocently good-intentioned. We have to dig deeper than that for real changes. I believe that solidarity is vital to fighting oppression but friendship must come on mutual terms or it is not friendship at all but paternalism.

This, in an indirect way, has brought me to the question of histories. Not only has the dominant culture's "history" established the mechanisms of disempowerment that affect First Nations artists and art writers in the present but, for example, the Fastwurms, by claiming that they consider themselves "intrinsically, to be a non-western culture"⁶ have attempted to escape inclusion within their culture's histories altogether. This escapist fantasy may be entertaining to them but it's politically useless. Until Whites can acknowledge and respond to their histories of power and racism as it affects all areas of culture, as it inscribes itself in their own minds, an equal and meaningful dialogue is impossible.

Columbus's first contact with the original North Americans was shortly followed by the first case of White misrepresentation and, not so coincidentally, murder, of First Nations people. Not only did he misname the Arawak people he met "Indians," he also proceeded to write authoritatively about their lifestyle, although no one on his crew could even speak to them in their own language. He also felt obliged to represent them more concretely to Europe and thus kidnapped a number of his new acquaintances to display upon his return. Inconveniently, these people quickly became sick and died.

Before long Europeans began debating whether or not we were totally irredeemable and if not what would be "best" for us. The science of craniology, as practised by J.C. Nott, has this to say, "[C]ertain savage types can neither be civilized or domesticated. The Barbarous races of America . . . although nearly as low in intellect as the Negro races, are essentially untamable. Our Indian tribes submit to extermination rather than wear the yoke. . . . Can anyone call the name of a single Indian . . . who, except in death . . . has done anything worthy of remembrance?"⁷ Imperial powers, using Christianity as their rationale, decided it was their "responsibility" to "civilize" (i.e., conquer) the First Nations and take the land that they had been "wasting." Artists and writers constructed images and texts of savages "[h]aving little of Humanitie but shape."⁸ Such ideas were often evo-

lutionist in construction, propped up by scientific, rationalist thought. They proposed that First Nations peoples were biologically less developed than their rightful White masters. Later, notions of White superiority were transferred by anthropologists to the cultural realm. We were, they decided, at a more primitive stage of a natural, cultural evolution, and we needed their guidance to convert us to a decent, civilized, Christian state.

Another notion, that of the "noble savage," was popularized by the French philosopher Rousseau. It proposed that life in nature led (naturally!) to a good and wholesome existence. Such an argument, allegedly positive, reduces our elaborate and various cultures to mere "forces of nature." It has been pointed out often that the proponents of the "noble savage" theory were much more concerned with critique and reform of European society using "the savage" as an abstract construction with no regard for our existence in the real. You don't have to look far to see how this notion has influenced such people as hippies, environmentalists, new agers, and, of course, Kevin Costner.

Not surprisingly, the idea of the noble savage was not popular among early colonial capitalists. They traded with the First Nations, but before long it was more profitable to simply take the land itself. The Beothuk Nation who occupied the island of Newfoundland were hunted for sport by "settlers" there. The Western invasion resulted in the total annihilation of these people whose nation once numbered an estimated 50,000.

Eventually Native peoples were pushed on to ever-shrinking reservations. Whites began to consider our cultures on their way to becoming extinct and thus it became safe to romanticize us in North American culture. We became noble but doomed savages. Writers and painters began to eulogize our "destruction," ghoulishly devouring our "dead" culture. One author wrote that, like the buffalo, "their [our] race will expire and their [our's and the buffalo's] bones will bleach together."⁹ Fortunately, and despite White expectations, the First Nations did survive. We even managed to preserve traditional ceremonies, despite the fact that they were illegal for many years.

On the Canadian prairies many First Nations people took up farming on their reserves, successfully using the machinery of the day. Their success, however, was resented by competing White farmers whose complaints soon reached government ears. Using anthropological theories like those of Edward Tylor, "the man who is usually claimed to be the founder of modern anthropology,"¹⁰ it was decided that Native peoples must go through the necessary stages of cultural development (evolution) before using the "complex" agricultural tools of the times. Thus, by 1885 they were being forced, for their own good, to farm by hand.

As White officials began to witness the intense poverty and hardship their oppression was causing, they chose to blame it on the degenerate nature of First Nations culture. The problem, they decided,

could be solved by the total destruction of Native culture. The words of Duncan Campbell Scott to the House of Commons in the 1920s are clear: "I want to get rid of the Indian problem. . . . Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian department."¹¹ The means that were already well established towards our assimilation were the now-infamous Residential Schools. Under this system, First Nations children were forced away from their families and indoctrinated with White culture in prison-like boarding schools. Aside from the horror inherent in being torn away from one's own family, students were often the victims of physical, sexual, and racial abuse. Many have reported that they were beaten for speaking their own languages. First Nations writer Jeannette C. Armstrong addresses the Residential School with a powerful question: "You writers from the dominating culture have the freedom of imagination. You keep telling us this. Is there anyone here who dares to imagine what those children suffered at the hands of their so called 'guardians' in those schools?"¹²

By the 1960s First Nations children were being sent to Residential Schools less often and Provincial Child Welfare agencies received increased power, including the legal mandate to apprehend First Nations children from reserves. This period became known as "the sixties scoop,"¹³ as First Nations children were apprehended in numbers hugely disproportionate to their White counterparts, often with slight or culturally-biased reasons. Some reserves lost almost all the children of that generation, who were nearly exclusively adopted into White foster homes, many in the United States. Siblings were often split apart and, as with the Residential Schools, a flood of reports of abuse have surfaced. I personally knew of a White couple who wanted to adopt a First Nations child "because Indians are so close to nature." Such a stereotype is clearly derivative of the "noble savage" ideal and reflects once again the harmfulness of allegedly positive notions. The B.C. Native Women's Society has quite rightly pointed out that forcibly transferring the children of one group to another is considered by the United Nations to be an act of genocide.¹⁴

At the same time as White social workers were apprehending First Nations children to protect them from the horrors of growing up in their own communities, the '60s "counter-culture" once again re-wrote notions about us. As with Rousseau, we were seen as an ideal with which to critique "the establishment." It is easy to see that this ideal was more of a mirror than a window—a White fantasy constructed around previous stereotypes and the concerns, radical or otherwise, of '60s counter-culture.

Histories are unruly things. Some squirm to avoid the very meanings they feel they've learned through experience, and the dominating histories that have been constructed to lay their bloated, smothering forms on top of smaller, quieter histories. Right now I'd like to talk



about a very small history indeed—that of myself and my family as it was narrated to me. I believe it is best examined in contrast to the dominant history that I was taught in public school as the objective, singular, “true” narrative of North America’s “settling.” In the ten public schools I attended, I never once saw notions of history significantly outside of this racist paradigm. I quickly learned to dread and loathe my history classes and would become nauseous from anxiety when the topic of “Indians” came up.

In grade two I remember a classmate of mine came to the hallowe’en party dressed as an “Indian.” He had a bit of brown make-up on his cheeks to represent dirt because “Indians are always really dirty.” The sentence which seemed to slip past the rest of my class easily, reverberated in my grade two head. The image was irreconcilable with my own family who were scrupulously clean. I argued with the kid for awhile but we never came to an agreement, especially after he re-confirmed his notion by asking his parents, who “proved” him right. Fortunately I also had my family to back me up in this and many other similar incidents, giving me enough positive ideas and examples to prevent me from despising myself in the ways mainstream culture suggested I should.

As I grew older and better able to defend my positions during class discussions, I came more and more into conflict with my teachers who resented my questioning the total authority they claimed for themselves and their view of history. I would try to resist being pulled into discussions about, for example, Jacques Cartier, who as far as I could tell was a thieving murderer, but none the less, valorized in class as a hero of Canada’s past. My stomach would commence its familiar churning as I tried to suppress my comments. Eventually, inevitably, it would become too hard to remain silent and I would speak up, only for the most part to be ridiculed or disregarded by the teacher and, worse still, to receive the angry glares of my classmates. It was this sort of institutionalized racism which deepened my disillusionment with the public school system until I finally “dropped out.” I saw no reason to stand for the continuous, painful attempts to colonize my mind.

Sadly, my younger brother had to endure similar conditions. A student in his history class said, “I don’t want to be racist . . . but, Indians just aren’t like other people. They’re dirty, drunk, and if they’d just do something with themselves nobody would discriminate against them.” When my brother responded, “That’s extremely racist,” his teacher chastised him saying, “Dennis, if you can’t say something constructive, leave the room.” To his credit, my brother got up and left. After class some of the students came after him and tried to beat him up.

So, we had to learn a lot of history from our family. My Mom and Grandma could tell stories very well and us kids were always eager to listen. One story that they used to tell about our past rela-

tives I found especially empowering and funny. You see, my Grandma’s Great-Grandad was named Loneman. This was because he always liked to travel by himself. Loneman knew a path through the Rocky Mountains to the States that nobody else did. One of his favourite tricks was to travel down to the U.S. and steal horses from the cavalry. He would then sneak them up into Canada and sell them to the Mounties. If he was feeling especially tricky he would wait awhile and then steal them back and take them to the States to sell again. Because this story belongs to my whole family, before I set it down I called my Mom to ask her if she thought anyone would mind me using it in an article. She said, “No, I think it would be a good thing,” and then laughed, “besides, they can’t arrest old Loneman now, can they?”

Mass Media, Racism and Anthros

What meanings can be extracted from the histories I’ve brought together, that are useful to a discussion of White appropriation of First Nations culture? Certain aspects of appropriation fall somewhat outside of the scope of this article which is focused on art and art writing. I deal with popular culture only in reference to how I see it impacting on White artists’ work. This approach does not mean to underestimate the power of mass-cultural images, rather it sees them as best dealt with in more depth than this article affords and in a venue geared to their audiences. Certainly a First Nations critique of pop culture is vital and needs to continue until no White person can sit nostalgically watching, for example, “John Wayne vs. the Indians” movies without being aware that they are celebrating acts of genocide.

This article deals with the large, very White, discourses of anthropology only obliquely as well. They too deserve a much stronger response than this writing can give. Quite frankly it would have to be done by someone with more patience or will to challenge their mountains of boring, racist shit than I have.

White Supremacy in Canadian Art

The question central to this debate is that of the construction of power. You White people are so secure in your power that you rarely recognize that you hold it. Even in the allegedly liberated world of art, however, ask yourselves: Who owns the major commercial galleries? Who runs the alternative spaces? Who teaches in the art schools? Who dominates and shapes discourse through criticism? Who hands out grants? Who runs and curates the Art Gallery of Ontario, the National Gallery, etc.? Who writes and teaches art history? Yes, there are First Nations artists, but, if they are, for example, to appear in a National Gallery Biennial as Edward Poitras did (showing his excellent work in 1990), it must still be through the benevolence of a White curator. If such an imbalance of power exists amongst this “alternative” art community then what, I ask, is my alternative to your alternative?



(FROM LEFT TO RIGHT)
MY MOTHER,
HER GREAT-GRANDMA,
HER COUSIN BEATRICE
AND HER SISTER EVELYN.

I have heard White people complain that sovereignty is a form of censorship against White artists and writers. If someone is convinced of this they should first ask themselves by what means First Nations people, the most disempowered and impoverished group in Canada, would enforce this censorship? We can’t, and wouldn’t, “force” Whites not to appropriate. The only power we have to keep Whites from using our culture as they please is our ability to convince them, on moral grounds, that they shouldn’t. Even this is hard to do because we have little access to mass media and thus, when our culture is represented, it is filtered through a White person’s sensibility first. This is the true censorship at work in Canadian society, censorship coming from the dominating, homogenized media. Last year the federal government drastically slashed funding for Native communications in a blatant attempt to silence us further. Obviously the term freedom of speech, the way that some Whites use it, is really just a reference to the privilege a few have in their access to mass media. In this context does a White artist’s decision not to appropriate, based on his or her respect for the wishes of First Nations peoples, sound so ominous? Does the fact that they might actually question the representations they create seem dangerous? Some Whites have become so comfortable with, and perhaps dependent on, their use of First Nations culture that they mistake criticality for censorship.

Another argument against our request for sovereignty is that we have benefited from or appropriated White culture as well. Anyone with an historical perspective on First Nations culture will be aware that we didn’t so much appropriate White culture, as had it shoved down our throats. The “give and take” between cultures Whites like to talk about has been a matter of us giving and them taking. First Nations artist Loretta Todd has written, “While making a presentation on cultural autonomy and appropriation . . . I quoted Walter Benjamin. Someone challenged my use of Benjamin as an appropriation of Western culture.”¹⁵ Again this White perspective fails to examine the imbalance of power in discourse. Benjamin’s reputation as a cultural theorist is well established in Western criticism and there is no chance that Todd’s use of his work will replace his voice. Also, because Western culture has forced its mass media and other racist power structures on us, it seems only fair that we also be allowed the use of theories such as Benjamin’s, critical of these systems.

One form of cultural appropriation that has always struck me for its lack of respect and understanding occurs in the area of spirituality. White people are often eager to learn about our spirituality, apparently seeing it as the latest self-help opportunity. Counter to this notion, however, is the way spirituality and its transference as knowledge and experience is constructed in First Nations cultures. It is based on respect and is meant to be taught in somewhat specific and often personal ways, the meanings of which are ruined by translation into a classroom or mass venue. The same is true for spiritual images that

get used in ways wildly out of their cultural contexts. I can't tell you how hurtful it is to have a sacred image come back to you horribly disfigured by a White artist. If a First Nations artist chooses to use our culture in a new or different way then that will be a subject for debate within our culture. If a White artist uses (and invariably alters) our cultural images then this is an intervention in our culture, another of many.

A useful entry point to examine how power is used curatorially is *The Salvage Paradigm* show mounted in the fall of 1990 at YYZ and Wynick/Tuck galleries. The show's curator, Janice Gurney, asked a group of predominantly White artists to provide work which would address how they see their own practice in relation to the early 20th century anthropological notion of "the salvage paradigm." This theory proposes that Western culture should "salvage" "weaker" cultures from its destructive influence.

The show did not focus specifically on Native culture (although some pieces of work did) and Gurney refers only to "other" or "non-Western" cultures (in the show's catalogue). However, when reading it, I, being a very specific "other," couldn't help but substitute "First Nations culture" for her more general references. Thus I use a Native perspective throughout my critique of the show. If this is problematic it falls back on Gurney who chose not to be specific.

Despite the fact that the show posed itself as an objectively organized forum for discussion of the salvage paradigm issue, the very fact that its curator and most of the artists showing are White demonstrates two things: first, that what we are dealing with can be read as a response to the critique of appropriation raised by other cultures; and second, that the show, by existing in the form that it did, inherently supported the White "right" to appropriate.

The show was further strait-jacketed (or should I say gagged?) by the incredibly limited parameters of the nearly century-old theory of the salvage paradigm. It's baffling to me that, with the amount of intelligent debate raised by other cultures about the effects of White infringement, Gurney chose to frame this show within the limits of an anthropological debate which precedes them. I see this as a regressive attempt to appropriate the very issue of appropriation itself, to look back (nostalgically?) to a time before Western culture lost control of the debate to "Others."

Notice how Gurney frames the show in her introduction to its pamphlet sized catalogue:



This belief [the salvage paradigm] has recently been criticized as another form of Western ethnocentrism in that it does not recognize the strength of other cultures and their ability to change and grow in response to new situations.

But if the salvage paradigm is totally rejected, there is a risk of denying any responsibility for the destructive impact Western culture has on other cultures."¹⁶

A First Nations person, if constrained by the internal logic of the above statement, would seem to have only two choices: either concede that our culture is inferior and needs protecting, or else admit that it must "change and grow" (i.e., become more White). I don't see how anyone could help but agree that Western destructiveness towards First Nations cultures occurred, not because we couldn't help but be made "impure" (shades of Rousseau) or "inauthentic" by mere exposure to it; rather what Western culture exposed us to was its genocidal greed for our land and authoritarian attempts to wipe out our culture. By this definition, any culture becomes "weaker" before superior fire-power.

With its uncommitted (i.e., liberal) approach to theory, the essay ignores decades of non-Western critique, bothering only with a passing remark about a "recent critique" of unspecified origin. The only thing recent about this critique is its emergence in the mainstream. If Gurney had grown up in my family she would have seen my Mom laughing at White wannabe "Indians" twenty years ago.

Most offensively of all, nowhere in her introduction does Gurney really suggest that First Nations peoples' liberation might come at our own impetus, or that we might have the central role in preserving our cultural heritage. Either we must wait around until some White person decides we're worth "salvaging" or else we must show we're strong by, as Gurney says, "changing and growing" in the presumably fertile soil of Western culture. It seems that the only thing worth salvaging from this whole show is Carl Beam's painting, upon which he wrote "Salvage your own fucking paradigm."

The White-run printed media has been the most responsible for dominating discourse and defining what "Indian art" is to the mainstream and alternative art communities. Fortunately this monopoly has been crumbling around the edges, perhaps even weakening at the centre, as First Nations cultural theorists establish their own voices.

Still, however, *Canadian Art* magazine chose to deal with these issues exclusively from the perspective of the dominant culture, using a reportage approach, rather than hiring a Native person to speak to them. This is the usual method that mainstream newspapers use to screen information—through a writer invested in their own political views. However, even the conservative *Globe & Mail* hired Lenore Keeshig-Tobias to address the question of appropriation of voice. *Canadian Art* hired Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, who wrote them an article called "Cultural convergence: or should white artists appropriate

Native imagery."¹⁷ Despite the title Danzker often had to stray away from Native issues to illustrate her points. She quotes Ken Lum and Gilane Tawdros, both non-First Nations people, mistakenly assuming that our issues are identical to those of all non-Western peoples.

After quoting Lenore Keeshig-Tobias's revelation that, "in Native culture, stories are so potent that one story-teller cannot tell another's story without permission." Danzker responds by writing, "Unfortunately obtaining permission is not as straightforward as it may appear—as the Royal Ontario Museum's recent exhibition, *Into the Heart of Africa*, demonstrated." What!? First of all, Keeshig-Tobias never for a moment suggested obtaining permission is straightforward, quite the opposite; and secondly, who mentioned a thing about Africa? I don't think there are too many Indians there. It's amazing the way White people keep getting all us primitives confused.

It's also unfortunate that the only way Danzker can interpret Keeshig-Tobias' statement is as a new hurdle Whites must leap before doing business as usual. She entirely misses the point that that's not what our culture is about. It is based on respect and there are some things that can't be "bought," either with money or by jumping through the right hoops.

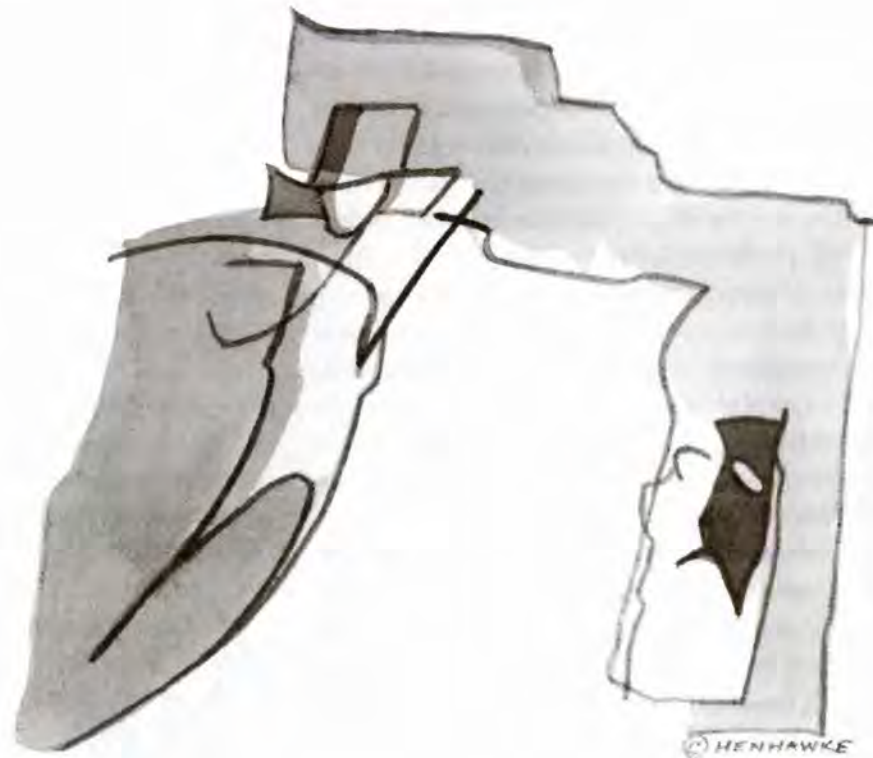
Art As Therapy—but for whom?

The first time I saw Liz Magor's art was at the 1990 Biennial held at the National Gallery. It made me feel shitty. To reach the exhibition space you must pass through a huge, high-ceilinged room that makes any mere mortal feel like a bug. I suppose it is meant to emphasize the importance (i.e., power) of Canada and the National Gallery, which in turn lends that authority to the art works shown there. Typical nationalist architecture in other words. Entering this space I couldn't help but feel like an intruder in someone else's wet dream of what Canada is supposed to be about—but I bet Brian Mulrone (or Albert Speer) would feel right at home.

Anyway, I made my way into the exhibition space and began to look over Ian Carr-Harris's installation located just inside the entrance. I noticed fairly quickly, however, a piece of art across the room using Native imagery. "Is this an Indian artist?" I asked myself, getting a bit excited as I walked towards it. The work was composed of a sculpted bird's head which held a child's sweater in its beak. It seemed to be derived from a west coast, First Nations tradition and perhaps that is why it was unfamiliar to me. To this day I still have no idea what the piece was about. After standing confused, and feeling stupid for a few moments, I looked to find the artist's name. "Liz Magor . . . ah I know of her—she teaches at the Ontario College of Art . . . a White woman."

My stomach began to get queasy (shades of public school history classes) as I realized I was confronting another appropriation. Fuck, not again. I looked to see if there wasn't something around to tell me





about this work, an explanation, maybe, that would make me feel better about it. I noticed the photographs on a nearby wall. In black and white they depicted a man paddling a canoe, a blond hippie-looking woman in a head-band, people camping on the beach, etc. . . . The title of the photo of the blond woman was called "(C)heyenne type." What!? Surely, she's not suggesting that paddling canoes and wearing head-bands will make someone a First Nations "type." This must be done ironically . . . or is it?

Things White people have said to me in the past began to come to mind: "I feel really close to Indians because they're so . . . [insert stereotype—perhaps "in tune with nature" or "patient"]." I mean, people have really said those things to me. I've actually met a few White people who consider themselves to be "Indian" because they "share our values" or some such thing. I knew a man whose family adopted a Native child when he was young and who now goes around telling everyone he's Native—even to the point of complaining about how "his" people are treated. Weird or what?

So, could I say for sure whether or not Magor's work was ironic? Maybe she was trying to point out the overlap of cultures or the richness of First Nations culture as a resource for White artists. I left the work not knowing what the fuck was going on and feeling troubled because of it. I couldn't help but feel I was never meant to be the audience for it at all. Perhaps it was merely another case of White people talking about themselves, using First Nations culture as their "medium"?

Sometime later I read a statement by Magor (in the *Salvage Paradigm* show's catalogue) about the photographs mentioned above. She said that she wanted to deal with her personal history of appropriating from First Nations cultures "slowly and gently"¹⁸ and indeed she does. So slowly and gently in fact that the work loses any serious claim to criticality. In effect, it seems to do more to prop up old stereotypes than to aggressively call them into question. This is especially true when the work is shown in the context of the National Gallery, which inevitably lends its authority to the piece; the very authority that oppresses Native people in the first place.

She defends her project on the grounds that, although the photos are embarrassing, "a disavowal of my own history is equally uncomfortable."¹⁹ I don't intend to suggest Magor isn't allowed her personal history. However, if she is really embarrassed of this past to the point that it has kept her from addressing the issue with the vigour it demands, then perhaps she would have been better off keeping these pictures in her photo album. I certainly believe that the personal can be political, but if the politics of a work serve only to offend another group in society with a familiar gesture of power then perhaps the National Gallery is not the place for such acts of self-analysis (indulgence?).

In another part of Magor's statement she explains why she used the title from Edward S. Curtis's photograph: "On the shores of Nootka," for a picture of her own taken in the same region: "As the

title describes place, not people, it becomes evident that visually the landscape remains unaltered from Curtis's pictures to mine."²⁰ Magor's photograph shows people camping on a beach, but somehow she is able to extract them in her reference to this picture, deliberately separating them (and thus culture) from landscape. Why? Isn't this just the old cliché about "eternal nature" being above the politics of land ownership and representation? Who does this concept serve, as First Nations struggle against violent resistance to their land claims?

Difference and Differences

The term "difference" has worked its way fairly deeply into cultural theory, but I can't help but feel that some people think naming difference is the same as understanding differences. The fact is, however, that whatever theory that Phillip Monk or Dianna Niemerof, for example, might absorb about "difference," they will never be truly qualified to curate the work of First Nations artists because, upon examination, "difference" explodes into millions of differences, tiny or huge, that one picks up by living their culture.

In his letter to Fuse, Andy Fabo defended his work against Cardinal-Schubert's accusation of cultural plagiarism on these grounds: "The first art museum that I ever visited was the museum of the Plains Indians in Browning, Montana. I was eight years old at the time and for better or worse the experience had an incredible impact on me."²¹ To me this claim to authenticity implies more of a relationship with the museum (an edifice of White's power to write history) than First Nations cultures themselves. After all, authenticity of voice certainly can't be achieved by experiencing objects and stories robbed of the context of their living cultures. Also, I'm curious as to how Fabo chose the term "for better or worse." It seems to imply an inevitability which I would hope his own criticality would attempt to subvert once he became aware of it.

In an article about Magor in *Canadian Art* magazine she is quoted as saying, "It [First Nations' cultures] is [are] our [Whites'] heritage, although only in a second cousin kind of way."²² This statement is presumptuous to say the least, although quite familiar. I doubt Magor would be so willing to claim our heritage of poverty, Residential Schools, racism, or our long and painful struggles for self-determination and land claims. Rather, she'd prefer to claim those positive aspects of our cultures that we've preserved. Or, more accurately, she'd like to be allowed nostalgia for a time when White artists could "innocently" play at the fantasies about us that were created by their dominating culture. The article about her ends with the following line which I think says a great deal: "Magor enriches our understanding of ourselves and Canada."²³ This designation of "our" (your) identity shows quite clearly who the author perceives her audience to be, as well as telling us whose Canada we're talking about after all.

Identity: Exploring the Self of Self-Determination

Joanne Tod's artist's statement for the *Salvage Paradigm* show stomps on (perhaps unknowingly) the value of identity. She states: "The salvage paradigm is an anachronistic desire to define and categorize. Circumspection, for all its anthropological value [that is, value to Whites], is latent xenophobia—a paranoid need to name, and therefore delineate boundaries. Quantification could thus be seen as a means to inhibit evolution."²⁴

Why is the only critique she mounts against the salvage paradigm the accusation that it is "a paranoid need to name"? While she seems to be defending other cultures from anthropological dissection, the lack of cultural specificity in her statement makes it easy to turn it around against, for example, Native people. Is it xenophobic for people to "delineate boundaries" that define their difference and structure a common identity according to their cultural background? Considering that issues of identity have been central to so many critiques of mainstream culture (including feminism, and First Nations issues), I find her statements universalist and homogenizing. Such an argument seems to be constructed much more in the service of her own numerous cultural appropriations than as a critique of the salvage paradigm. Also the term "evolution" is loaded with Darwinist connotations that suggest an upward movement (and thus hierarchy) of cultures. She seems to be saying that naming difference will "inhibit evolution" which, she implies, should be allowed to proceed undisturbed by theories about cultural identity. Following this logic, Tod might feel less inhibited if we threw criticality out the window altogether. Her blindness to the relations of power apparently keep her from seeing that a so-called "uninhibited evolution" would inevitably be held in the mainstream and would thus only be uninhibiting to those who hold the values of the dominant culture.



My concluding point is actually a question to myself. In light of our present situation, in what way do we, as Native peoples, wish to construct our identities in (or outside of) art, art history, and cultural theory?

A few Native artists have said to me that they would prefer to be "just artists" without specific reference to their cultural heritage. This fits in with the modernist notion of the artist autonomous from society and can be a tempting escape from painful cultural issues. I know this personally because I once tried to make it my own. Art for art's sake seemed a safe haven, but even the most infrequent brushes with the institution of Western art forced me to be aware of the way in which the machinations of White power affected all areas of culture, including the construction of my own escapist fantasy.

One reason I think some First Nations peoples have refused to be identified as "Indian" artists is because "Indian art" has previously been defined almost entirely by White writers of art theory and history. Why would anybody want to attach a dominating culture's label to themselves? Perhaps in the future, as we write more and more of our own art histories and theories, some of us will be able to reclaim the term "Indian artist" and use it with pride.

This is not to suggest that the question of identity is an easy one. We are all trying to decide where to draw the line between ghettoization and autonomy in our negotiated relationship with the institution of Western art. This does and will vary from person to person, but I believe that issues of identity have been and will remain central to the cultural writing of First Nations peoples. One reason I wrote this article was to empower myself and it has felt liberating to speak back to representations I've felt powerless against in the past. More importantly it has cleared some room for me to work at the question of who I am in terms of my culture. After all, one of our most important demands is for self-determination, and I'm certainly interested in just what this collective "self" might look like as art.

Richard Hill is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art, currently looking for work in the construction industry, and doesn't want to write about appropriation anymore.

Thanks to everyone who contributed their help and advice on this project.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY
CHERYL HENHAWKE

Endnotes

- 1 Dai Skuse, Kim Kozzi, Napoleon Brousseau. Letter, *Fuse Magazine* 12:3 (Winter 1989-90), 2.
- 2 Joanne Cardinal-Schubert. "In the Red," *Fuse Magazine* 12:1&2 (Fall 1989), 20-28.
- 3 Skuse, Kozzi, Brousseau. *op. cit.*
- 4 Andy Fabo. Letter, *Fuse Magazine* 12:3 (Winter 1989-90), 4.
- 5 Fastwurms. *Untitled Artist's Statement*. In *The Salvage Paradigm* (exhibition catalogue) Toronto: YYZ Books, 1990.
- 6 Fabo. *op. cit.*, 2.
- 7 Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. *The White Man's Indian; Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.
- 8 *ibid.*
- 9 *ibid.*
- 10 *ibid.*
- 11 George Erasmus. *Drumbeat; Anger and Renewal in Indian Country*, ed. Boyce Richardson. Toronto: Summerhill Press Ltd., 1989. 11.
- 12 Jeannette C. Armstrong. "The Disempowerment of First Nations North American Native Peoples And Empowerment Through Writing," *Gatherings, The En'owkin Journal of First Peoples* 1:1 (Fall 1990), 143.
- 13 Patrick Johnston. *Native Children and the Child Welfare System*. Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1990. 23.
- 14 *ibid.*, 61.
- 15 Lorretta Todd. "Notes on Appropriation," *Parallogramme*, 16:1, 24.
- 16 Janice Gurney. "The Salvage Paradigm." In *The Salvage Paradigm* (exhibition catalogue). Toronto: YYZ Books, 1990.
- 17 Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker. "Cultural Convergence: or Should White Artists Appropriate Native Imagery," *Canadian Art* (Fall 1990), 24.
- 18 Liz Magor. *Artist's Statement*. In *The Salvage Paradigm* (exhibition catalogue). Toronto: YYZ Books, 1990.
- 19 *ibid.*
- 20 *ibid.*
- 21 Fabo, *op. cit.*, 4.
- 22 Gillian MacKay. "Liz Magor," *Canadian Art* (Fall 1990), 80.
- 23 *ibid.*, 83.
- 24 Joanne Tod. *Artist's Statement*. In *The Salvage Paradigm* (exhibition catalogue). Toronto: YYZ Books, 1990.



Artist's Project by Ashok Mathur

Ashok Mathur teaches at the Alberta College of Art (Calgary), co-publishes the alternative poetry series *disOrientation chapbooks* and works with the literary magazine *absinthe* and the South Asian arts journal, *Rungh*. This project came out of a presentation at the 1991 *Desh Pradesh* conference with co-performer Aruna Srivastava.

i view i dent i in i inter identi i view

keep constructing, keep playing with new variations and different possibilities hearts clubs diamonds spades postcards to and from to and from each other replaying redealing re-addressing ourselves.

The photographs, as you've no doubt noticed, are all of Indians. Oh, that is, born in India. I'm in those photographs, too, the voyeur on the other side of the camera.



There she was: A picture of Indianness with for-India-grown black tresses, not a strand of her usual yellow or green or purple hair to be seen.



I identify with Gunga Din

Aruna: Name?
 Ashok: Gunga Din.
 Aruna: Present occupation?
 Ashok: Pani-wallah.
 Aruna: Present occupation?
 Ashok: I carry water.
 Aruna: I see. And what would do you see yourself doing in five years' time, Mr. Gunga?
 Ashok: I aspire to be a dead corporal, Sir.
 Aruna: Very good. We'll call you.
 Ashok: Yes sir, jolly good sir. Your deal, sir.



Time to fold. Take my cards and go home. I still haven't constructed an identity for myself—not because I can't do it, but because I can't stop doing it.

MIXED BLESSINGS: NEW ART IN A MULTICULTURAL AMERICA

LUCY LIPPARD

NEW YORK: PANTHEON, 1990. 279 pp.

BY GILLIAN MORTON

THE PUBLICATION OF LUCY Lippard's *Mixed Blessings*, a book dealing with "New Art in a Multicultural America," coincides with the increasing virulence of racism in North America. The art world and the academy, never remote ivory towers, have not escaped—George Bush himself is leading the attack on political art and the politically correct (read: left, feminist, anti-racist, and lesbian and gay activists). Cultural strategies of resistance and empowerment are crucial. *Mixed Blessings* elucidates such strategies, developing the concepts of "multivocal art" and "intercultural aesthetics."

Billed as an "exploration of the issues and the ideas that illuminate the visual art created by Latino, African-, Asian- and Native-Americans today," *Mixed Blessings* is an ambitious undertaking. Lippard explicitly rejects the notion of an encyclopedic survey, or a book "about" artists of colour. She intends *Mixed Blessings* to demonstrate

the acts of claiming turf and crossing boundaries now, in 1990, two years before the five-hundredth anniversary of Columbus's accidental invasion of the Americas. (p. 4)

The breadth of art practices that Lippard outlines, with accompanying thumb-nail social/political histories and accounts of struggles both within and outside of the art world, give *Mixed Blessings* a survey-like feel nonetheless. The book covers a huge range of art forms, from conventional modern and postmodern "high" visual arts to quilting, Texas sweet funk, graffiti, community-based art collaborations, Rasquachismo (a kind of Chicano camp) and other "low" or "pop" art.

Many of the criticisms that can be made of *Mixed Blessings* Lippard herself articulates. She alludes to the West's appropriation and misrepresentation of "other" cultures, of critical errors caused by the inability to see fundamental cultural differences. She laments the art world's tendency to "swallow cross-cultural influences rather than to savour them," (p. 5) and the fact that she finds herself speaking for others whose voices she is hoping to make heard. (p. 10)

Mixed Blessings' chapter titles are gerunds, reflecting Lippard's insistence that the book be understood as part of a process. Amongst the processes set in play by cross-cultural practices, Lippard includes naming and being labelled, coming to terms with self-representations, telling stories and histories, being displaced, returning home, mixing it up, resisting colonization, reinventing and reclaiming identities, dreaming, and so on.

The format of *Mixed Blessings* is equally process-oriented. Illustrations of work are woven with biographical information about the artist, artists' statements (both published and unpublished), and thematically related writing by such authors as James Baldwin, Maxine Hong Kingston, and Toni Morrison. Fragments of critical theory by writers like Trinh T. Minh-ha, C.L.R. James, Edward Said, and Homi Bhabha make their appearance, as do one or two examples of right wing idiocy (Lippard quotes Ronald Reagan speaking at Moscow University about Native-Americans, for example).

Much of the art and commentary is placed in the book's margins. The type face in both the margins and main body often changes (font, point size, boldness,

etc.). This format demands an active reading, a consideration of the parallels and divergences of ideas and illustrations in the margins to those in the pages' centre.

Mixed Blessings' layout challenges the tendency to totalization inherent in Lippard's project. The assortment of critical readings and counter-readings by the artists, Lippard, and other art critics further disrupts any homogenous interpretation. Lippard's historical contextualizations allow us to understand the specificity of a particular piece as well as its connections to other work, relationships which often have their basis in differences within communities (of class, generation, countries of origin, etc.). Lippard also explicates how art can embody differences between communities, for instance the histories of conflict, solidarity, and cross-cultural pollination and/or appropriation between Latinos and Native Americans.

Lippard's "hostilities" as a critic are difficult to pin down, evidenced more by a brevity or absence of commentary than explicit critiques. She is most interested in artists who venture "outside of the imposed art context—both as viewer and as artist, in and out of one's work—to make contact with people both like and unlike oneself." (p. 195) Hence her commentary on work with a public or activist focus is more compelling than her explo-



rations of more conventional art. She is at her best documenting the all too often ignored interaction of the artist with the community to whom it is intended to speak. Lippard valorizes artists who resist the decontextualization of their work and the demands of the art market, who move beyond museum walls into local struggles.

Mixed Blessings' first chapter opens with the forceful words of James Baldwin, who said (in 1963), "So where we are now is that a whole country of people believe I'm a 'nigger,' and I don't, and the battle's on!" On the next page, Lippard cites Eduardo Galeano, whose assessment is "We are what we do, especially what we do to change what we are: our identity resides in action and struggle."

These words are rallying cries. Lippard's language is more contemplative as she attempts to develop the notion of an intercultural esthetic. At times it seems inadequate in relation to calls for action. For instance, she writes that we should focus our gaze not only on the familiar and unfamiliar, but on

that fertile, liminal ground where new meanings germinate and where common experiences in different contexts can provoke new bonds. The location of meaning too specifically on solid ground risks the loss of those elements most like to carry us across borders. (p. 9)

We may need solid ground to distinguish between art/theory that is about the desire for power from that which recognizes the need for and facilitates becoming empowered (a distinction made by Barbara Christian, quoted by Lippard). Much of *Mixed Blessings* is about art and ideas that are empowering; we need a critical framework that allows us to clearly understand the processes, contexts, and effects of such art.

Gillian Morton is an activist and writer living in Toronto.

FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS, TORONTO

SEPTEMBER 10 - 19, 1991

FILMS ABOUT INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

BY MARJORIE BEAUCAGE

landscapes of dreams and violence . . . Movies have re-discovered the "noble red savage" and have made him "green" with the New Age consciousness of the environment. All non-native directors treating native stories at this year's *Festival of Festivals* have the landscape as the centerpiece of their work. For example, the film *Black Robe* is marketed as "a breathtaking portrait of our landscape" and "a spectacle of haunting beauty." Similarly, *Clearcut* describes the Canadian Shield as a "wild and unvanquished expanse of bush that is fast becoming extinct on our earth." (Notice the use of "our" in both references to the land.) *Lung Ta* features "never before photographed regions of the 'forgotten Tibet,' Amdo and Kham, where wild life is decimated, rivers polluted with nuclear waste and vast virgin forests cut down and stolen" while a people struggle for their liberation, without violence.

Violence. A word that was often used to describe the actions of First Nations peoples in the two "Canadian" features made by foreigners. But what about the violence of centuries of being dominated and taken over by the Church, the government, and industry that is at the heart of the matter? That violence is not seen as barbaric and evil. The films made by indigenous filmmakers who know this reality of colonization from the inside out, are permeated with this knowing. The stories told in films like *Te Rua*, *Learning Path*, and *Tikinagan* are the medicine that can bring us to new visions of change and places of healing.

The gala opening of the festival offered *Black Robe* by Australian director Bruce Beresford as its first choice. It is the story of a young Jesuit missionary and his com-

panion who set out to establish a mission and convert the natives. Raves about the beauty of the Quebec winter landscape are what people talked and wrote about, ignoring the disgusting barbaric torturing of a people. The violence continues as the story gets told from the colonizer's point of view. Once again, paradise and salvation are offered to "savages." Cultural and spiritual world views collide. In the Medicine Wheel teachings, a gift of the Red Race to the Human Race is Vision. But this vision is lost to the blindness of missionaries who refuse to see and acknowledge another way of being! The dream sequence in the film is beautifully shot, but its meaning and prophetic power were lost on the missionary and the audience. The gift was not honored or even understood.

The violence of dogma, politics, and economics is the reality that is lived. But somehow the perpetrators are the "stars." The nightmare of blood-letting in the mad world of the Inquisition, the Burning Times and the Reformation that is part of the European context for this trade domination of the British, French, and Dutch in North America, is not the story that is told. The Hurons who were pacifists were eventually destroyed as a people. The Iroquois who had an agricultural base were pushed to fight for their land. And the Algonquins were the warriors protecting the life at the centre of the circle against all these invaders. These stories are not told either. Instead, the film ends with a "victory" scene as the Jesuit baptizes the people. There is no sense that the acceptance of baptism was a strategy for survival which eventually led to a spiritual tradition being lost.

STILL FROM
THE LEARNING PATH
BY LORETTA TODD



photo Sima Khorrami, courtesy The Festival of Festivals

Clearcut by Polish director Richard Bugajski is also about this violence. Not one individual's rage, seen through the Eurocentric concepts of morality and justice, but the history of violence to a people, to our mother, the earth. "Can't you hear the trees crying?" asks the elder, Wilf Redwing (Floyd Westerman) in the film.

Clearcut makes the audience hate Indians. What is seen is the "kidnapping" and "torture" of a papermill owner by an

enraged and violent Arthur (Graham Greene), rather than the forces of evil that have created the poverty and the clearcutting of the thousands of square miles of boreal forest of jack pine, white birch, and spruce. What is not grasped is the desperateness of the situation.

The city lawyer with a pacifist ideology who fights for land claims and environmental issues loses his case and yearns for revenge. He is unwilling to confront his own dark side and takes his anger into the sweat lodge. In the Ojibway culture, one goes into the womb of the mother to understand the power of creation and be cleansed. Peter, the lawyer, does not transform his anger.

Rudy Martin of the American Indian Community House in an interview on Channel Four points out: "They want to

deal with the image—that spiritual image of us—and tap into it to fulfill themselves. And yet on the other hand, they ignore all the real issues that affect us." By being taken into the sweat lodge, the lawyer and the mill owner are offered a gift—a chance at transformation—but they still don't get it. Their scientific and environmentalist view of the world does not include the spiritual relationship with the land. So once again, the desire of First Nations people get relegated to the backdrop. There are no clearcut answers here, but the dream as a source of power and change is lost. "You dreamed a dream and the dream is real," says the elder. But they still don't get it; they are responsible for what is happening there.

As Long As the Rivers Flow is a series of five one-hour documentaries that show the "Native Canadian Search for Self-Determination" (Tamarack Productions promo). Three of the five stories are directed by native filmmakers. Gil Cardinal's *Tikinagan* and Loretta Todd's *Learning Path* premiered at the festival. Again we see the systemic violence of the child welfare bureaucracy and the education system but we also sense the dream of change and the struggles to move from victim to self-determination.

In the portrait of Angus Chapman, a social worker for *Tikinagan* (a native agency in Northwestern Ontario), Gil Cardinal shows the tension between the Child Welfare System's rules and caseloads, and the needs of a community that is trapped in gas sniffing, alcohol abuse, unemployment, and poverty. This is not a politician's rhetoric but a real look at some of the complex issues involved in the reclaiming of cultural values and practices amid the history of government legislation and control. Having native social workers in the same system does not take away the fear of children being taken or the powerlessness one feels in the face of a system that reduces people to "cases and forms and rules."

The women in *Learning Path*, by Loretta Todd, are not victims but sur-

vivors who have learned to transform their pain into a source of guidance and energy for change. The patience, kindness, and respect that flow from these women is the real medicine that is needed in communities like Osnaburgh where the young women don't see a future for themselves. Eva Cardinal, Olive Dickason, and Ann Anderson are teachers and healers who have survived the cruelty and abuse of the residential schools. And Loretta Todd who, with her own reverence for learning, juxtaposes the past, present, and future in a creative and beautiful way that offers light in the darkness.

Maori director Barry Barclay had his second feature film, *Te Rua*, at the festival. In the clash between European ideals of art and Pacific traditions, *Te Rua* affirms the rights of indigenous people to their own spiritual heritage. The film is a "recovery" of what was taken by colonial powers: three Uritoto carvings that are stored in a Berlin museum. "See the carvings stand/the soul of the forest/In the house of our people," says Nanny Matai, the elder who guides Rewi (a lawyer who has been away from home for eleven years) and Peter (a performance poet) to bring the carvings home. The film is set in Berlin, a city which houses indigenous art from around the world in its museums, and on the Wairarapa Coast of New Zealand, where the carvings originated, in the Meeting House. The hijacking of three German historic statues and holding them hostage provides the dramatic tension for the story. This is an action film in every way. We can make moving pictures!

Lung Ta, the forgotten Tibet, is a story of another tribal people suffering the violence of genocide and dreaming peace in the face of military oppression. The "National Geographic" landscapes and Richard Gere voice-overs dilute the intensity of the Tibetan people's struggles. In an area never before photographed, the people are still not given a voice. There is no understanding of the issues of repression and genocide, where over 200,000 people have been killed since September

1949. The Dalai Lama of Tibet introduces the film in the context of human rights struggle of Tibetans and the dream of turning Tibet into a Zone of Peace for the world.

The memories of massacre, and grief and humiliation are written on the people's faces. The camera invades them and follows them through their five-day festival and the Day of the Dance. The Khampas, the people—peasant and warriors—dance the inner meanings of suffering and the means to overcome it. Here, there is no armed struggle; no violence. Patience, simplicity, and compassion are the way the Dalai Lama promotes and the people practice this non-violence though "the world is in agony, burning in the fire of desire and anger" as the Buddha says.

Despite the silence of the people, the film is a testimony to the survival of a people and a land that is forgotten. If Tibet is allowed to die, we know that a part of the world's wisdom will die too.

A hidden treasure at the festival, in the "Que Viva Mexico!" series, is *Tejiendo Mar Y Viento: La vida de una familia Ikoods* (*Weaving Sea and Wind: the life of an Ikoods family*) by Luis Lupone Fasano and

Teofila Palafox Herranz. It is really two films in one. The first part documents twenty Zapotec women weavers de-constructing Hollywood images of Mexicans and learning to use the technology to tell their own stories. The simplicity and truth of their lives and their delight in recording it are in vivid contrast to the lush exotic portraits we are first presented with. The women choose to document a day in the life of their village and the everyday issues of survival.

Access to the tools of creation and self-representation is the beginning of self-determination. For too long our stories have been told by others and our dreams and visions misrepresented. Now is the time.

All my relations.

Marjorie Beaucage is a Franco-metisse filmmaker and cultural worker from Manitoba currently based in Toronto.



STILL FROM
LUNG TA

photo courtesy The Festival of Festivals

FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS, TORONTO

SEPTEMBER 10 - 19, 1991

FILMS ABOUT INTERRACIAL RELATIONSHIPS

BY RICHARD FUNG

IT USED TO BE THAT IF YOU WISHED to cause a real stir, if you wanted to test the liberal tolerance of a film or television audience, you would depict an interracial relationship. And it still works; ask Madonna. The corollary is that if you wanted to stay within the line and you had non-white characters, you either had to find them "one of their kind" or else make the character celibate. (Even as a child, I noticed that the Bill Cosby character in *I Spy* was always alone, while his white counterpart, Robert Culp, was forever having affairs.) In this context, any film or TV show that did cross the colour line was liberal and a work of conscience. A positive portrayal of interracial sex became the ultimate progressive statement on race.

Now what was assumed here, and what was always assumed, was that "you" the producers and "you" the audience, are white. No one else mattered politically or economically. It never occurred to ask how black or Native or Asian or Latino people might see the issue. Besides, the liberal framework had no analysis of systemic power and therefore no room for the depiction of what might be seen as "coloured" prejudice. People of colour had to be shown as victims, not as subjects. And, in any case, it was taken for granted that they would simply be grateful to have some amorous (white) attention thrown their way. Now, with the highly touted "Black Wave" in American film, all this is beginning to change.

At the end of Spike Lee's *Jungle Fever* (1990), the film's protagonist, Flipper Purify, is firmly returned to "his kind" and

his community, contrite after an affair with his white secretary. He was just "curious about white" he tells her, explaining the unilateral breakup. Despite a modifying sub-plot (the Italian store owner's budding affair with his black customer), a standard Lee device, the film is pessimistic about the possibility, or even the desirability of black-white relationships. My reading of the film is that Flipper's eventual rejection of the white woman is the condition upon which his status as hero is constructed within the film.

It is precisely this assumption about race and sexuality—that the colour of someone's bedmate is taken as an indicator of their politics—that British filmmaker-intellectual-activist, Isaac Julien, challenges in his most recent feature film, *Young Soul Rebels* (1991). The film asserts not only the possibility and the pleasure but especially the fact of interracial relationships. Set in 1977, during the royal jubilee and a period just before the birth of the autonomous black culture that Britain has since become known for, the film follows two soul boys, Chris and Caz, in uncovering the circumstances around the murder of their friend, T.J. Julien successfully subverts established stereotypes about the relations of race, gender and sexuality in the mainstream, and also in the Movement. Chris is half-white, the "softer" of the two, heterosexual, and becomes involved with a successful, black woman. Caz is dark-skinned, unapologetic, gay, the more "active" of the two (in terms of the film's structure), and forms a relationship with a white, anti-racist punker. Although *Young Soul Rebels* is as

consciously strategic in its character development, casting, structure, and plot as *Jungle Fever*, Julien's purpose is the opposite to Lee's. The effect of *Young Soul Rebels* is to disrupt the notion that skin shade, sexual orientation, or racial-sexual preference determines a person's sense of black identity or political commitment. And the film celebrates the transgressiveness of interracial sex, not from a liberal white point of view (as in *Guess Who's Coming To Dinner?*) but against the tenets of black nationalism.

There is only so much that can be dealt with in any single film, and *Young Soul Rebels* is not principally about interracial sex. At the same time, the film is sure to elicit resistance from some viewers

QUEEN ELIZABETH,
SOPHIE OKONEDO,
AND VALENTINE NONYELA
IN ISAAC JULIEN'S
YOUNG SOUL REBELS



photo Sunil Gupta, courtesy Miramax films

because it does not address the reasons why there is a demand for the representation of black-black relationships in the first place, especially in a gay context. This may be rooted in essentialist politics to be sure. But one does not have to espouse determinism to recognize that racialized notions of beauty and desirability, and questions of power also inform individual taste. These matters cannot simply be dismissed as they involve long-standing historical issues.

In *Black Skins, White Masks* (Grove Press, 1967, p. 47), for example, psychiatrist and revolutionary intellectual, Franz Fanon, makes the following observation in the chapter on "The Woman of Colour and the White Man":

The number of sayings, proverbs, petty rules of conduct that govern the choice of a lover in the Antilles is astounding. It is always essential to avoid falling back into the pit of niggerhood, and every woman in the Antilles, whether in a casual flirtation or in a serious affair, is determined to select the least black of the men.

Fanon was writing specifically of his native Martinique, and his statement is rather sweeping even then. But judging from Curacao director Felix de Rooy's *Ava and Gabriel* (1989), his analysis holds a general truth for the Caribbean under its various forms of colonial rule.

The unofficial language of Curacao is Papiamentu, which is a sort of naturally evolved Esperanto, consisting of an admixture of Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and English mixed with African languages. From the polyglot nature of the society, one can devise that this is a racially mixed populace. Yet what de Rooy demonstrates with utter clarity is how, in the colonial context, colour equates with power even in this seeming melting pot.

It is the late '40s. Ava is a young teacher of mixed race, engaged to be married to the white police major, Carlos. This opportunity for upward mobility is derailed when Ava is chosen to model for a painting of an "Antillian" Virgin Mary, destined to grace the local church. Ava falls in love with the black Surinamese painter Gabriel, much to the chagrin of her mother and the fury (and sheer disbelief) of her fiancé.

The second instalment of a trilogy, which includes the prize-winning *Almacita di Desolato* (1986), *Ava and Gabriel* is a loose restaging of the Christian messiah myth, with Ava as the mother of Jesus and Gabriel as the archangel of the Annunciation. But while spirituality is a major theme in the film, its breakthrough lies in the insightful depiction of the social and political forces that inform everyday life in the Caribbean.

The predicament of Ava's and Gabriel's mutual attraction and the eventual tragedy that befalls Gabriel because of it, is framed by an elaborate set of intermingling sub-plots. Balancing Ava's engagement to Carlos is Gabriel's flirtation with Louise, the (white) wife of the governor. Gabriel's eventual rejection of her in part leads to his downfall. There is also a gay relationship which is effectively treated and furnishes further observations on class, colour, and sexuality. However, particularly significant is the contextualizing narrative of the resistance of the Catholic church hierarchy and the local white elite to the heretical and subversive image of a black Virgin.



photo: The Hybrid State Films poster

**THE TWO LOVERS IN
AVA AND GABRIEL
BY FELIX DE ROOY**

The cinematic representation of interracial sex as threatening, in fact goes back to the beginnings of Hollywood itself, with D.W.Griffith's negrophobic *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and his (ostensibly) sinophilic *Broken Blossoms* (1919). In the former, an epic glorification of the birth of the Ku Klux Klan, the evils of miscegenation are most clearly embodied in the character of Lynch, the film's villain, a mulatto. In *Broken Blossoms*, a film about bigotry which was meant to foster liberal (white) tolerance for Asians, the Chinese hero—like Lynch, played by a white actor—is portrayed as sympathetic, only in so far as his love for the tragic, white heroine can be established as chaste and unconsummated.

Since that period of early Hollywood, television and mainstream Western cinema have continued to depict miscegenation as threatening, but also, increasingly, as tragic or even, optimistically, as a (defeatist) strategy for overcoming racial conflict. Yet the topic is rarely taken up from the perspective of experience rather than as metaphor.

In her autobiographical film, the ironically titled *Coffee Coloured Children* (1988), British filmmaker Ngozi Onwurah developed a personal lexicon of images to evoke the pain and confusion of growing up the child of an English mother and a West African father in racist Britain. In Onwurah's most recent work, *The Body Beautiful* (1991), the starting point is her mother's mastectomy. Featuring Madge Onwurah as herself, with actresses playing Ngozi at different stages of her life—from the innocent malice of childhood to the self-absorption of young adulthood and a fashion model career—the film is an unabashedly emotional, though never sentimental, confrontation with the conflicting feelings of guilt, resentment, admiration, embarrassment, and love that constitute the mother-daughter relationship.

It is of course through their bodies that these two women are connected. Yet, it is their bodies, as carriers of racial and sexual meaning, that separate them as young and old, beautiful and "disfigured," and black and white. This is summed up most eloquently towards the end of the film as the two women lie naked, side by side, on the mother's bed. The voice of the daughter explains that a child is made in the image of both its mother and its father. Yet, in a world which sees solely in terms of black and white, she is regarded only as her father's daughter; but it is her mother who has shaped her thinking.

Though she draws on established cinematic codes, mixing them freely as she goes, the effect of Onwurah's filmmaking style is one of freshness. Not only does she take up topics not often treated in film—and there are few of those—but her approach is sometimes daring to the point of challenging even "progressive" orthodoxies. *The Body Beautiful*, for example, features one of the most transgressive sex scenes I have ever seen on film. As the two women relax in a snack bar, the camera takes up the look of the mother as she watches a handsome, young black man. This transposes into a

fantasy sequence in which the mother and man are naked, making love in a dream-scape of gossamer curtains, with the character of Ngozi orchestrating and at times inhibiting the action.

The fantasy sequence is at once an affirming presentation of Madge's sexual desire and a depiction of aching nostalgia: for being desired, for youth, for her breast, and for her estranged husband. I find this scene exhilarating for its bravado and at the same time profoundly unsettling because it foregrounds those sensitive issues of power surrounding the cinematic gaze. Many viewers will no doubt raise the question of who has been more victim of cinema's fetishization—black men or white women—and therefore who has more of a right to represent their fantasies in their own terms. (Remember the controversy that surrounded *A Winter Tan* (1987)?)

Jungle Fever, *Young Soul Rebels*, *Ava and Gabriel* and *The Body Beautiful* each takes up the issue of interracial sex in distinct terms. Their filmmakers work at varying levels within the industry, in separate countries, and with very different aesthetic and political concerns. In a highly publicized incident at Cannes, for example—which Isaac Julien says is basically a fabrication of the press—the filmmaker (who won the critics' prize there) supposedly refused to pose for photographs with Spike Lee, saying that his films were sexist and homophobic. However, what these films have in common—whether they highlight the oppressiveness, the celebratory, or the ordinariness of interracial sex—is that they take up the question differently than it has ever been asked before in commercial cinema.

Richard Fung has been in love with the same white man for sixteen years and is writing a script on inter- and intra-racial sex in the context of gay Asian men.

EXHIBITION

MAINTENANCE OF THE GYNAECEUM

ANDREA WARD

ANNA LEONOWENS GALLERY, HALIFAX

MARCH 1991

BY CHRIS MCCORMICK

ON MARCH EIGHTEENTH, 1991, an exhibition by Andrea Ward entitled *Maintenance of the Gynaecum* opened at the Anna Leonowens Gallery. The exhibit featured two suites, "Personal Maintenance" and "Hairstories," and a process room, which are part of an ongoing series on the social construction of women's bodies. Further suites are planned, including one on cosmetic surgery.

The gynaecum historically, in Greco-Roman times, was a room in large houses to which women were relegated, and which also became a place for women's resistance as they came together to collect their experiences. It is used as a metaphor for the female body, its exclusion from and compartmentalization in a male-dominated society. Constructing this gynaecum serves two purposes. The gynaecum-as-record serves as a way for the artist to recover her experiences growing up in her family and forming relationships with parents and siblings. The gynaecum-as-exhibit serves to collect together women's experiences in the world and in learning the language and expression of the body. The exhibit is personal and, through this, the gynaecum is a place for women to display and contemplate their collective place in an historical context.

Suite One, "Personal Maintenance," portrays various ways which Andrea Ward considers her childhood. In the work "Mother: I Begin to Recognize," we see beautiful knitted sweaters under glass, in waist-high coffin-like boxes on legs. These items of clothing are from a moth-

er who shied away from touch/ing. We come from a history of mothers, and here we see their hands cherishing us. The sweaters are not used, they are idolized; the cherished memory becomes the sacred momento. Displaying the creations for view in this way protects them, and also removes them from touch.

In "My Father's Study," a page from a childhood diary recounts a daughter trying to please her professor/father. Less accessible is a story about the relation-

ship between a husband and a wife which includes an incident of female infanticide written on a large blackboard in Mandarin Chinese. In both stories men appear distant, privileged, owners of a scarce resource—approval, expertise. The English translation does not appear with the Chinese story, which could have made the parallel more effective.

"My Sister Debbie and I: Accidental Recording circa 1978" is an actual audiotape recording a childhood squabble over

**FROM THE "ARCHIVES"
OF THE SECOND SUITE:
"HAIRSTORIES"**



KARATE KIDS

NATIONAL FILM BOARD AND STREET KIDS INTERNATIONAL, PRODUCERS

BY KI NAMASTE

eyeshadow between the artist and her sister. It is a competition for valued beauty resources, for potential male validation. The audiotape is activated when the viewer pulls out the drawer in a schmaltzy jewelry box that rests on a white and gold night table. This is not a cynical observation on childhood, but a matter-of-fact fabrication of a memory, with all the junk jewelry intact. In "My Sister Judy as Baubo," Andrea Ward's relationship with her eldest sister is paralleled to three variations of the story of Demeter, one previously untranslated. This work, which includes a large antique framed black and white portrait of the sisters cuddling on a couch, reflects the strength of women's bonding and intimacy.

As explained in her exhibition statement, the artist, as a child, categorized and boxed her toys for safekeeping. In her work "Pickle Jars of My Life," Andrea Ward bottles her life fragments, grade school report card, photographs, toys, and correspondence. There are 25 bottles, one for each year of her life. It is all there: the kitsch, trivia, and impedimenta of how institutions define our lives. Through this display of how we are controlled, history becomes controlled, managed, and ensured. Here the bottling serves the purpose of showing us a process for recovering control of the self.

These are the various items in the "Personal Maintenance" section of the gynaecium. They are not beautiful, but moving. They serve as reminders of how

we maintain our relationships with our family, our social institutions, and ourselves. It is evident they are from a process of self-reflection and their message is neither didactic or elliptical. They are fragments of the body recovered by the artist working out her subjectivity. It is difficult in working through one's personal history to avoid being too isolated, too revealing of incidents which can be portrayed only voyeuristically or idiosyncratically, but the feminist perspective which informs this work enables the viewer to be reminded of her own experience through this iconic collection of relationships.

In Suite Two, "Hairstories," Andrea Ward reclaims the scientific method of classification by employing the archive to preserve women's stories about their hair for reflection. There is a small process room off this suite, where viewers can see the beginning of classification. This suite examines the cultural construction of women's subjectivities through the maintenance of their hair. The artist interviewed women, and presents comments from the interviews with a sample of the women's hair compressed between two plexiglass sheets and framed in mahogany. Many of the individual works are placed tilted against the wall, with more in two mahogany archives on the floor. There are voices of elderly women recalling their childhood, of black women straightening or retaining their natural hair, of lesbian women seeing their hair as

a symbol of resistance; speaking of pubic hair, leg hair, and facial hair.

This is a simple suite, reminding us of a very complicated process for women: the cultivation and evaluation of women's appearance. Everywhere in society we are reminded of the differences between men and women, in advertisements, commercials, television, and magazines. Women are portrayed as sex symbols while men are shown to be success symbols. Men are encouraged to reflect about their hair in our society as well, but neither to the extent nor in the same way that women do.

The gynaecium is a place for reflecting the separateness of women's experiences. It begins as a personal reflection and becomes a reflection on/of women. Analysis begins with the personal and becomes a gathering in of what is social about our individuality. As women's values are constructed within patriarchy, women both internalize and resist structures of oppression. There is a politics to the body, a fetishization which is accomplished in part through self-surveillance, through the maintenance of the body. But that watching needn't be docile; it can be inspected and changed. Andrea Ward's *Maintenance of the Gynaecium* is both about this reflection and sponsors it.

Chris McCormick teaches sociology at St. Mary's University in Halifax. His research and writing explore issues of culture and gender.

IN 1991, AIDS EDUCATION IS being specifically developed and targeted to gay and bisexual men, lesbians, and heterosexual women; Black, Latino/Latina, and Native communities; sex trade workers; and transsexuals.

What I will address here is AIDS education in the "developing" world. To do this, I will focus my discussion on *Karate Kids*, a video produced by the National Film Board (NFB) and Street Kids International (SKI) with the aim of providing AIDS education for street kids in the developing world. Anyone who has screened *Karate Kids* will know that there is so much to critique within it, from the representation of gay men as pedophiles to the complete avoidance of how kids can talk about AIDS and HIV. I will concentrate, however, on issues around gender as exemplary of the ways in which Western misunderstandings about AIDS and HIV get entrenched into the kinds of AIDS education created "for" the developing world.

The video is meant to be screened worldwide, in community centres and out of portable vans and vehicles. The characters represented are all different colours,

shapes, and sizes. The plot is fairly simple: take a brave, informed young man, provide him with a requisite girlfriend (thereby establishing his hetero-masculinity), represent him as caring for several street kids, and throw in a few words about that killer virus, HIV. Add lots of action—karate kicks, punching, car chases—to pique these young kids' (read: boys') interests, and concoct a villain, in this instance a pedophile and also a foreigner. Solve everything karate-kicking it to death, and you've got yourself AIDS education in the developing world.

Karate Kids focuses on "Karate Hero," a young man whose role is to provide factual information about AIDS and HIV to the homeless kids in the community. The video attempts to talk about these issues in the contexts of daily life for street kids: kids who often have to beg for food, or who earn small amounts of money by entertaining tourists in the area. It presents a character known as "Smiling Man," a villainous, evil man who is preoccupied with luring these children into his car, presumably so that he can have sex with them. This man, the video tells us, will stop at nothing to have his way; he offers



the kids candy, jewellery, and money in exchange for going for a ride with him. The video also erroneously asserts that the evil of this man can be detected by the way he looks. The narrator recounts in the video:

There were bad people at the market, too. Like Smiling Man, with the black car. Pedro did not like the look of him.

Karate tells the children that this man may be infected with HIV, and that having unprotected sex with him may mean that the children become very sick, and eventually die. The appropriate response, as evidenced by Karate's actions, is to karate-kick his car door closed when he approaches the area in search of children to "go for a ride." This scene is, unfortunately, quite representative of the kind of AIDS education *Karate Kids* offers: education which is concerned with who people are in relation to AIDS and HIV, and education which consistently skirts around issues of communication and negotiation.

Nowhere is *Karate Kids* concerned with actually engaging street kids in developing countries in a dialogue around AIDS and HIV issues. The plot centres around a



Still courtesy of National Film Board of Canada



young adult male telling these kids what—and who—is safe, what it is they can and cannot do. The video presents no room for street kids to explore their feelings around AIDS and HIV, no opportunities for discussing their fears, their confusions, their sexualities. For *Karate Kids*, sex and sexuality are things that happen to kids; they are not issues with which kids struggle, think about, and engage.

Just as any discussion of youth and sexuality is silenced within the video, so too are any representations of individuals who do not correspond neatly with Western middle class understandings of gender and sexuality. The video focuses exclusively on male characters; females have merely auxiliary roles, and rarely speak. What is more, the representations of little boys and little girls provided are shocking in their blatantly stereotypic qualities. In the 1990s, for SKI and the NFB, it appears unproblematic that the boys wear blue shirts while the girls wear pink dresses. Throughout, we see little boys riding motorcycles and scooters, playing with hammers and tools, and fixing mechanical things. Little girls, on the other hand, congregate around Rosa, a passive older female (the partner of Karate), and take to docile activities like combing each other's hair. Perhaps most disturbing, these images are accompanied

by the narrator claiming that "Rosa and Karate taught the kids many good things."

Throughout the video, Karate kicks the car door of the "evil man" closed, effectively asserting his dominance. By the end of the video, a boy character, "Pedro," has also taken to kicking this man's car door closed when he drives through the area. The place of gender is secured everywhere: in the context of AIDS, little girls are most vulnerable, and are to be protected by a more aggressive (heterosexual) male.

The NFB and SKI maintain that the main characters of *Karate Kids* are modelled after (Western) popular culture hero Bruce Lee. In this light, it becomes even more clear that the characters are not uncoincidentally gendered as male, and that the video is implicitly directed at little boys who are living on the street in "Third World" countries. Indeed, at the premiere screening in Toronto in October 1989, when questioned on the issue of gender dynamics, a panel representing SKI and the NFB replied that there were more little boys than little girls living on the streets. It was presumed that this somehow merited the kind of exclusionary and regulatory education which *Karate Kids* offers.

Karate Kids is useful, then, but not for what it teaches us about AIDS education in developing countries. It is useful for what it teaches us about the ways in which we come to discuss AIDS/HIV issues, and the difficulties in doing education which steps outside of the racist, sexist, homophobic, and imperialist

boundaries of Western AIDS discourses. The video is revealing in the extent to which it forces mainstream, Western understandings of AIDS issues into the context of the developing world.

The challenge, for AIDS cultural activists and AIDS educators alike, is to create an AIDS education video which addresses the complexities of the issues, and which does so outside the confines of cultural imperialism. For this type of video we are still waiting.

ki namaste is studying Semiotics at UQAM (Université de Québec à Montréal).



THE MAKING OF 'MONSTERS'

JOHN GREYSON

BODIES IN TROUBLE

MARUSIA BOCIURKIW

THE EUCLID THEATRE, TORONTO

JUNE 20, 1991

BY PATRICIA SEAMAN

The continuity of the ego is a myth. A man is an atom that perpetually breaks up and forms anew. —Brecht

ON JUNE 20, THE EUCLID screened two new works by Toronto artists John Greyson and Marusia Bociurkiw as a benefit for the Centre for Lesbian and Gay Studies. Greyson's, *The Making of 'Monsters'*, is a musical film about anti-gay violence and *Bodies in Trouble*, by Bociurkiw, is a video examining the relations of the lesbian body to the state. These works provided a critique of conventional representations of the body and sexuality. Using music, humour, narrative, and a variety of visual strategies, the artists investigated notions of sexuality and the marginalization of "anomalous" sexual activity. Playing on the pleasure of the look, these films provided alternative representations and worked to expand the site of sexuality.

In *The Making of 'Monsters'*, Greyson investigates the production of meaning by bringing together a variety of elements in a unique and engaging way. The film makes use of musical segments, dance sequences, drama, narrative, and the juxtaposition of subtexts, in an agit prop manner, in its advocacy of gay rights. In this film-within-a-film, Brecht, who has been re-animated as a fish, is directing a film about the murder of a Toronto school teacher by five teenage boys. Brecht's "film" investigates the socialization process that leads to anti-gay violence. Greyson uses Brecht as a device to exemplify personal agency as an effective resistance to social determinism. Greyson

gives a strong critique of the process of "normalization" and society's unwillingness to examine its own assumptions.

The Making of 'Monsters' also critiques the CBC's intent to make a drama based on the same incident. Greyson questions the ability of the dominant media to present an unbiased representation of gays or to present violence against gays in other than a sensationalized way. The film's self-referentiality reminds us to be suspect of the discourse of the dominant media as its purpose is to disguise and obfuscate its own ideological needs. By visually and narratively incorporating the process of filmmaking as he does, Greyson investigates notions of the violence inherent in conventional cinematic practice.

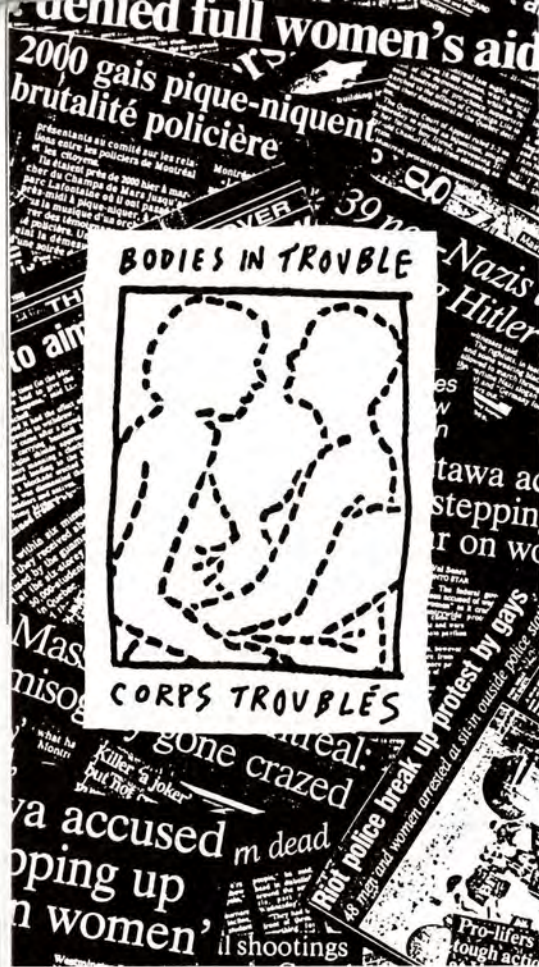
The film cites significant social ills, particularly the promotion of aggression in boys and young men and the subsequent acting out of that aggression in vandalism, violent sport, and violence toward marginalized people. Greyson uses the Hagersville tire fire as an example of one of the consequences of this socialization process. He exposes the absurdity of what currently falls within the culturally contrived bounds of normal and acceptable behaviour.

The Making of 'Monsters' is entertaining and successfully exposes gay-bashing and the societal attitudes towards it. However, Greyson's attempt in the film to be inclusive of other marginalized groups is somewhat problematic. The film ends with a musical segment in which a black woman exhorts us to "bash back." While some may find this advice empow-

ering, others may find it impractical at the least, and likely to increase one's vulnerability in an already dangerous environment. Other avenues of resistance and education may be more effective.

Bodies in Trouble, a video by Marusia Bociurkiw, deals with two interconnected themes. These are the (in)visibility of lesbians in our culture and the aggression of state forces, including border officials and police, as well as ordinary citizens, in threatening and containing visible lesbians. *Bodies in Trouble* is the story of a woman who travels to visit her lover and who subsequently comes in conflict with the police at border crossings, in the streets, and in other public places. By making this expedition into forbidden territory, the lover discovers the harassment and threats, usually hidden beneath society's surface, that are reserved for those who resist compulsory conventions of "acceptable" sexuality. This love story emphasizes the necessarily political consequences of lesbian relationships.

Bociurkiw makes use of several discursive strategies to overcome the limitations and potential misrepresentations structurally inherent in conventional narrative. In *Bodies in Trouble*, Bociurkiw's suspicion of narrative leads to a process of fragmentation in which she combines a voice-over, urban and domestic scenes, stills, including an alternatively labelled map of the body, with technical manipulation. Bociurkiw also interjects images of written news accounts of the Oka crisis and the Montreal massacre, among others, as a strategy to prevent history from getting lost. With this, Bociurkiw



"HER BODY IS
CONTESTED TERRITORY,"
POSTCARD FOR
BODIES IN TROUBLE

women, especially images that actively resist participation in the conventional terms of representation. Because of the specificity of the images and the narrative line, the film questions ideas of the look and of spectatorship. The characters discuss the consequences of being visible as feminists and as lesbians. Visibility provides the space for self-recognition and the recognition of community; however, in gaining visibility lesbians become targets for harassment, surveillance, and scrutiny, for the purposes of intimidation and repression.

Bodies in Trouble is a warm and fervent portrayal of some of the hazards and pleasures of a lesbian existence. Like Greyson, Bociurkiw expands the space for sexual representation. The film critiques the limitations and aggression of the dominant ideological structures, advocating resistance, self-actualization, and solidarity.

John Greyson and Marusia Bociurkiw are an indication of the work being done to deconstruct conventional representations of the body and sexuality. Witty, intelligent, and critical, these artists are expanding the space for pleasure and for self-generated definitions of identity.

Patricia Seaman is a fiction writer and author of *Hotel Destiné* (gynergy, 1989). Her work has been published in various periodicals and anthologies, including *Coming Attractions* (Oberon, 1991).

ERRATA

In volume 15, nos. 1&2, these captions were missing: "Sharon Cook and Dorothy" from the smaller photo on p. 37; the piece pictured on p. 42 (wrongly attributed to Mary Anne Lacey) is "Paper Tombstones" by Alexandra Waschtschuk; "Your Future Wife" is the title of the piece by Evelyn Mitsui on p. 45; the other piece on that page, unattributed, is "Sanctuary" by Mary Anne Lacey.

In Andrew J. Paterson's report on *Images 91* (p. 6), the organization of *Race to the Screen* was accredited to *Full Screen*. In actuality, *Race to the Screen* was organized by the Euclid Theatre; *Full Screen* is an independent organization for emerging and aspiring film- and videomakers of colour.

As well, the *Fuse* staff would like to apologize to Gillian Morton and to retract the flippant writer's bio we concocted for her review in the previous issue.

LETTERS

Dear FUSE;

While it was obviously inadvertent, the short summation by Florence Sicoli of my panel paper at *Healing Images* inferred that I believe that women are "deserving of any violence they get." Quite the opposite. This idea of justifiable retribution is how media representations portray women who are subjected to violence, and my own position adamantly attempts to expose this tendency as itself further violence against women.

Monika Gagnon

PAPER TIGER TV

The Gulf War Revisited:
The Gulf Crisis TV Project
January 8 - February 8

NANCY DAVENPORT

TATYANA GUBASH
January 15 - February 8

SADIE BENNING

JENNIFER MONTGOMERY
Screenings
February 12 - March 14

JOHN ARMSTRONG

Agency and Flowers
February 19 - March 14

INFERMENTAL 9: VIENNA 1989

Video
March 18 - April 18

MADELEINE SALM

Boîtes Obscures/In Any Case...
March 25 - April 18

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

YYZ invites artists working in time-based media to make submissions for exhibition of their work in the screening room.
Deadline: January 15

YYZ

Artists' Outlet

1087 Queen Street West, Toronto, Canada, M6J 1H3

tel. (416) 531-7869 | fax. (416) 531-6839

YYZ acknowledges the support of The Canada Council; the Ontario Arts Council; the Province of Ontario, through the Ministry of Culture and Communication; the City of Toronto, through the Toronto Arts Council; and the Municipality of Metro Toronto, Cultural Affairs Division.

ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL 30TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

March 13-16, 1992

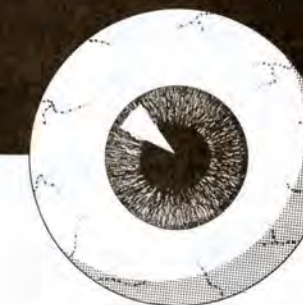
30 YEARS AND BEYOND:
CELEBRATING THE INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER

Featuring:

Major voices in independent film presenting workshops and film exhibitions, and participating in panel discussions

Open screenings for conference attendees

A retrospective screening of awarded films from the past 29 years



30TH ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL CALL FOR ENTRIES

March 17-22, 1992


Entry fees for each film:
\$25 US entries, \$30 foreign entries

16mm independent and experimental films - all genre:
documentary, animation, narrative, and experimental

Call or write for brochure (includes Conference registration form and Festival entry form):

Ann Arbor Film Festival
PO Box 8232 Ann Arbor, MI 48107
313/995-5356

Deadline for Conference early registration
and Film entry: February 15, 1992

**TORONTO
WOMEN'S BOOKSTORE**

73 HARBORD ST.
TORONTO, ONT. M5S 1G4
(416) 922-8744
NEW HOURS:
MON-THURS., SAT. 10:30-6
FRI. 10:30-9, SUN. 12-5
WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

art icule

SALLE 1
empreintes de distance
(l'exil)
Sylvat Aziz, Catalina Parra,
Solomon Tzeggai-Teferi
Conservatrice: Carole Beaulieu
du 11 janvier au 9 février

real effect, installation
Denise Hawrysiw
du 15 février au 15 mars

working title, installation
Michael Fernandes
du 21 mars au 19 avril

15, mount-royal ouest, #105, montréal H2T 2R9 842 9686
art icule est subventionné par le Conseil des Arts du Canada, le ministère des Affaires culturelles du Québec et le Conseil des Arts de la C.M.

DUNLOP
Art Gallery


Colonization, Gender and the My Body
A film and video series curated by Sheila Petty

Alile Sharon Larkin Marlon Riggs February 25	<i>A Different Image</i> <i>Tongues Untied</i>
Yvonne Rainer March 3	<i>Privilege</i>
Helen Lee Laleen Jayamanne March 10	<i>Sally's Beauty Spot</i> <i>A Song of Ceylon</i>
Marusia Bocuirkiw Mona Hatoum Marie-Hélène Cousineau March 17	<i>Night Visions</i> <i>Measures of Distance</i> <i>Women in Black</i>

Screenings 7:30 pm,
Regina Public Library Film Theatre.

Regina Public Library P.O. Box 2311, 2311 12th Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3Z5 (306) 777-6040 Fax 352-5550

**LIFE
AFTER
TELEVISION**



183 BATHURST ST, 1st FLOOR
TORONTO, ONTARIO M5T 2R7
TELEPHONE: (416) 863-9897

VIDEO FROM V TAPE

HERIZONS IS BACK!

HERIZONS *Join Us!*
WOMEN'S NEWS & FEMINIST VIEWS

We're ready to print the first new issue of Herizons magazine and we can't wait to send out a copy with your name on it!

WHAT REALLY HAS TO HAPPEN TO STOP THE VIOLENCE?
ABORIGINAL WOMEN DEMAND JUSTICE

Before we can start the presses, we need at least 3,000 charter subscribers to invest in Herizons' future. With your help, Herizons will become a self-sustaining feminist magazine.

See For Yourself

We'll deliver — in-depth feature articles, interviews, news, reviews, regular columns and great illustrations. Canadian too! Some of Herizons' regular writers are back to stimulate feminist debate and we've found a few new voices. You won't want to miss a single issue.

We know how busy you are. So fill out your subscription on the bus, in the bathtub or while you're talking to your mother on the phone. If you don't get paid til next week, postdate your cheque. Mail it today!

Yes! I want to be a charter subscriber. Enclosed is my cheque for \$21.40 (\$20 plus GST) for a year's subscription (4 issues). Send me the first issue when it comes off the press in February '92. My cheque will be returned unless there are 3,000 subscribers. Send to: Herizons, P.O. Box 128, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 2G1.

Name _____
Address _____
City/Town _____
Prov. _____ P. Code _____

SUBSCRIBE NOW

CARO

CANADIAN
ARTISTS'
REPRESENTATION
ONTARIO

**AN ASSOCIATION OF
INDIVIDUAL ARTISTS
SERVING WORKING VISUAL
AND NEW MEDIA ARTISTS**

183 BATHURST STREET
TORONTO ONTARIO
M5T 2R7
PHONE: (416) 360-0780
FAX: (416) 360-0781

**WINTER
WORKSHOPS**

**PRODUCTION AND
POST-PRODUCTION**

INTRODUCTORY

- **WOMEN IN PRODUCTION**
An Extended Video Production Workshop For Women Only
- **INTRO TO VIDEO PRODUCTION & EDITING**

ADVANCED

- **TIME-CODE EDITING**
- **ADVANCED LIGHTING** with Kim Derko
- **SCRIPTWRITING** with Janis Cole
- **DIRECTING ACTORS** with Maruska Stankova

CALL 593-1332 FOR WORKSHOP & MEMBERSHIP INFO.
TSV 172 John St., 4th fl. Toronto, Ontario M5T 1X5.

**TRINITY SQUARE
VIDEO**

BREAKING BREAD

**INSURGENT BLACK
INTELLECTUAL LIFE**

by bell hooks
and Cornel West

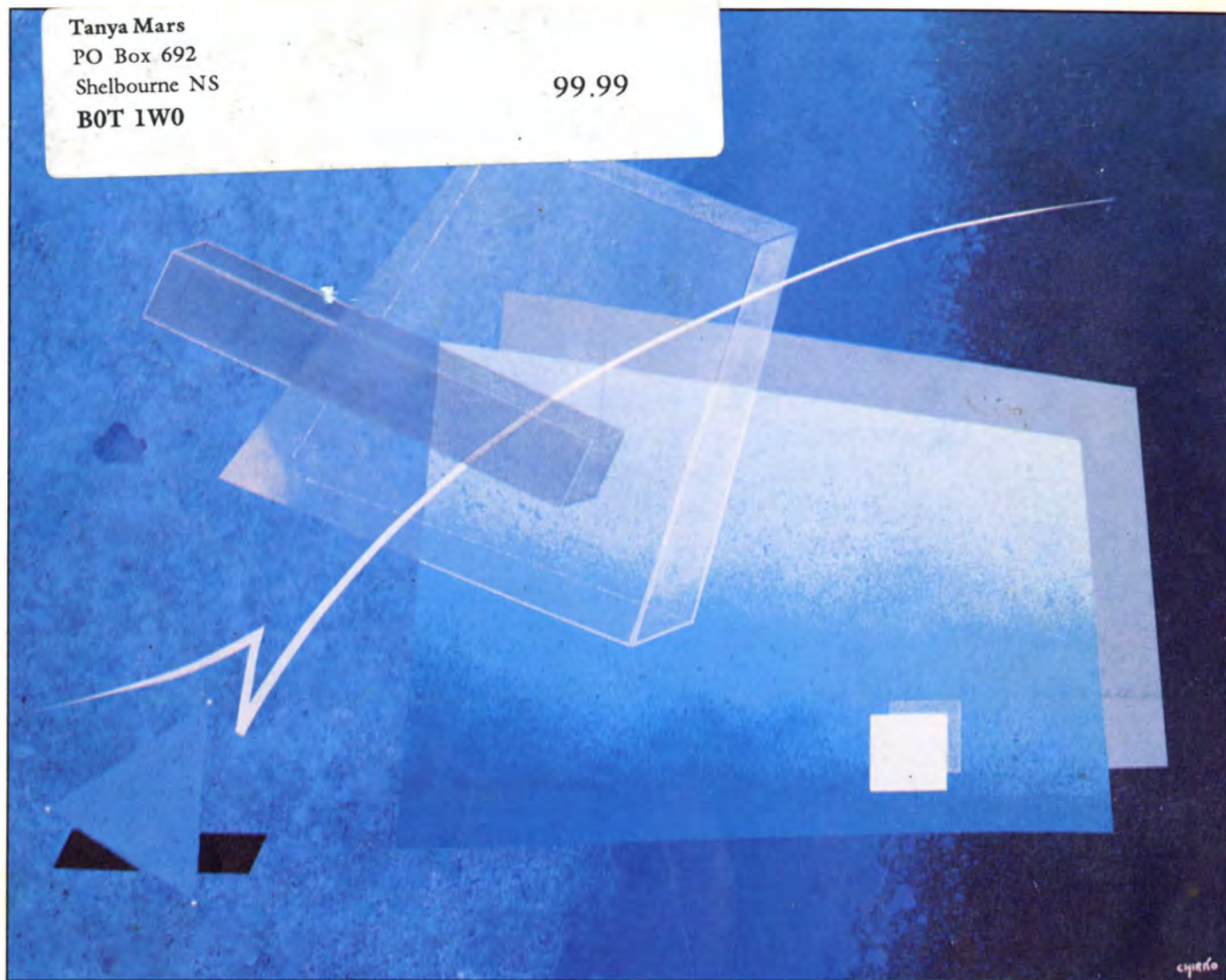
Through captivating dialogue and passionate essays, hooks and West grapple with the dilemmas, contradictions, and joys of Black intellectual life.

092128456X \$14.95 pbk
0921284551 \$34.95 cloth

between the lines

Tanya Mars
PO Box 692
Shelbourne NS
B0T 1W0

99.99



"Shapes Of The Blues" by David Chirko, SCA Liquitex (Acrylic) On Canvas 24" x 30"

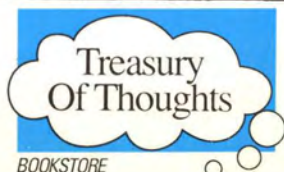
"THE MOMENT IS HERE -- THE VISION IS WAITING!"

abstract artist extraordinaire

DAVID CHIRKO

"...one of Ontario's most creative and exciting modern painters."

DEALER



154 Durham Street
Sudbury, Ontario
P3E 3M8

(705) 673-BOOK

DAVID CHIRKO IS A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF CANADIAN ARTISTS