

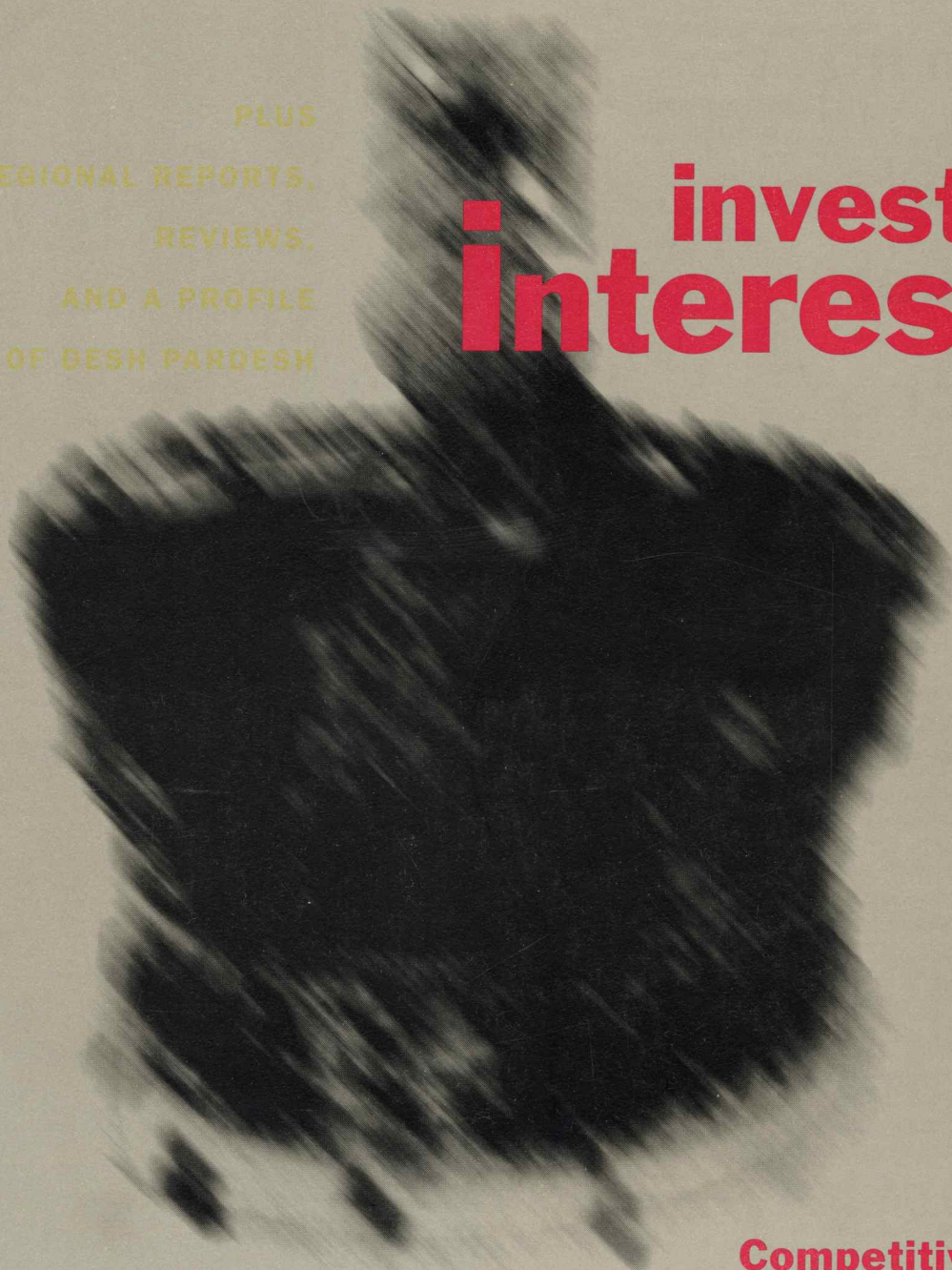
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**Competitive and
Dysfunctional Autonomies
in the Canadian Art System**
by Clive Robertson

81331



This issue of FUSE is dedicated to the memory of Greg Curnoe (1936 – 1992)

Artist, founder *Region Magazine*, co-founder 20/20 Gallery, *20 Cents Magazine*, the Forest City Artist Run Gallery, London and Canadian Artists Representation

I am not a
boxer,
rocker,
mechanical
genius,
Master of Wine,
thrasher,
celestial body,
piece of earth,
lemon,
wrestler,

excerpt from *Blue Book 8*, Greg Curnoe 1989
courtesy of Art Metropole

FUSE

MAGAZINE

CULTURAL APPROPRIATION THEME ISSUE

CALL FOR ARTISTS' PROJECTS

In recent years, the term "cultural appropriation" has become one of the most contentious terms used in discussions of the exercise of social power in the realms of culture and creativity. The Summer 1993 issue of FUSE Magazine will attempt to analyze the various applications of this term, the various contexts in which it has been used as well as specific examples of cultural appropriation and its relation to exploitation and access to institutional power and information.

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Sheila Gostick

12 feature

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3 letters
7 issues & events

Refusing Censorship
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Complicity
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25 reviews

Black Looks:
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From Mediascape to Landscape
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20 Witnesses Festival

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Clustering: The Memorial Project
review by Christopher Eamon

Internal Instincts
review by Andrea Ward

Acoustic Phenomena
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contents

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FUSE acknowledges financial assistance from the Canada Council, the Ontario Arts Council and the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Culture and Communications 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.

Printed in Canada on recycled, acid free paper, with vegetable-based inks by The Rewco Printing group.

ISSN 0838-603X

FUSE is indexed in the Alternative Press Index
FUSE is a member of the Canadian Magazine
Publisher's Association

CENTRE DE DOCUMENTATION
ARTEXTE
DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

contents

3 letters

7 issues & events

Refusing Censorship

Kika Thorne

Memory Works

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Academics and Activists: Acknowledging Institutional Complicity

ki namaste

10 column

Probing Pagliaganda

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12 feature

Invested Interests: Competitive and Dysfunctional Autonomies in the Canadian Art System

Clive Robertson

23 artist's project

Shani Mootoo

47 profile

Desh Pardesh
Prabha Khosla

25 reviews

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review by Dennis Lewis

Sign Crimes/Road Kill: From Mediascape to Landscape

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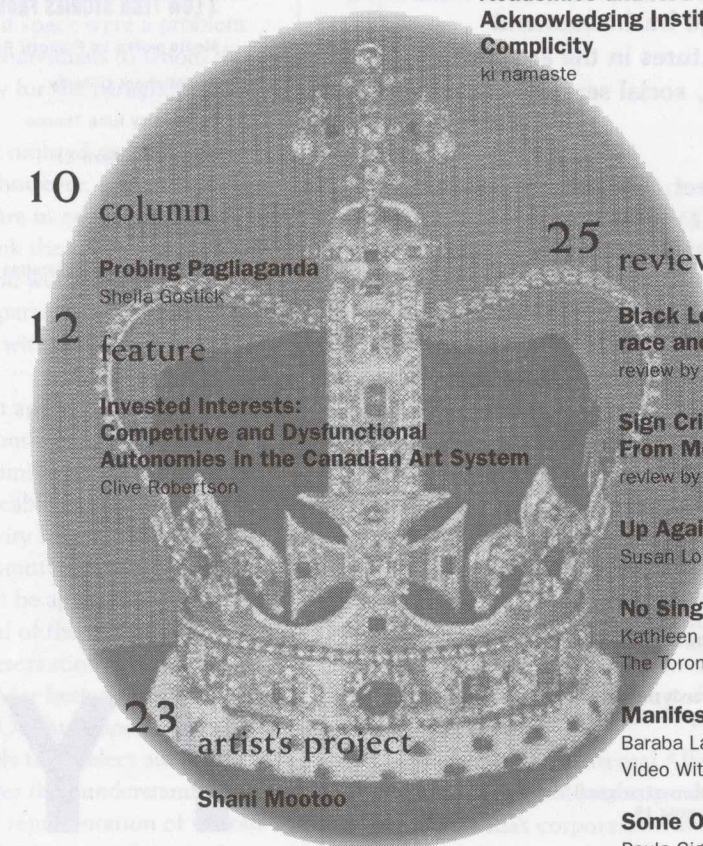
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Council; the Province of Ontario, through the Ministry of Culture and

Communications; the City of Toronto, through the Toronto Arts Council;

and the Municipality of Metro Toronto, Cultural Affairs Division.

November 16, 1992

Dear Fuse Editorial Board:

In your 15/6 1992 issue you published a letter by me. During the process of editing I had discussions with Fuse concerning a paragraph of my letter. The paragraph had been cut from my letter and the reason given was that the issues raised in that paragraph would be raised in the accompanying piece by Cameron Bailey. There were also concerns expressed about the length of the letter. I explained the importance of the paragraph by letter (see enclosed excerpt from my letter) since I felt it widened the issue from a personal one between myself and the TAC Board to include more systemic issues. In my last letter to Fuse I said that if space were a problem that I would prefer that the list of individuals to whom the letter was sent be removed to allow for the paragraph to be included.

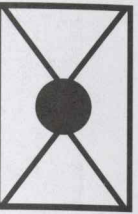
In publication the paragraph was omitted and the list of names left in. What concerns me, however, is that the issues I raise in the paragraph in question are in no way addressed in the piece by Cameron Bailey. I think these issues too important to be ignored and I am sure you would agree with this. I am, therefore, requesting that the paragraph that was omitted from my letter be published along with this letter.

The paragraph follows:

Should an arts council ensure that applications by artists from African, Asian and First Nations backgrounds be submitted to committee members of similar background; are these cultural heritages interchangeable for the purposes of grant assessments, or must exclusivity reign; in other words, would assessment by an Asian committee member, of an application by a First Nations artist be appropriate? Must councils be trying to reach the goal of the widest possible spectrum of racial and ethnic representation on their committees, to meet the very real need for better and more informed panels and committees? Ought councils to be concerned with whether the individuals they select are reactionary or 'progressive', and whether they understand the politics of funding, or is numerical representation of various ethnic groups solely the goal? And, of course, there is always the challenge—'what about excellence?' floating in the background. Does this challenge apply only to the applicant, or must it apply to the members of selection committees and panels as well. These are but a few of the complex thorny issues that arts councils must engage with if they are sincere in opening up the granting procedure to all members of Canadian society. Some of these issues are of particular relevance to a granting process such as the TAC has, where applications are, in fact, vetted in private.

Yours truly,
M. Nourbese Philip

letters



Copy to FUSE Magazine

December 8, 1992
Jacques LaRochelle
Department of External Affairs
BKRE
Ottawa, Ont

Dear Mr. LaRochelle,

As you will remember from our conversation today, I am a film critic and programmer (based in Toronto, but living temporarily in New York) looking to attend the 15th PanAfrican Film and Television Festival in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Known as FESPACO, this bi-annual festival is world renowned as the largest showcase of cinema from Africa and the African diaspora. I attended FESPACO in 1991, and as a programmer and critic with a background in African film, I feel it is in my professional interest to attend again next year.

When we spoke today, you told me that I might not be successful in obtaining a travel grant from External Affairs because "Africa is not a priority." The priorities of External Affairs, you said, are "Europe, the USA and Asia".

As you must know, these priorities reflect trade and foreign policy concerns, *not* cultural ones. They serve to reinforce a status quo where the interaction of Canadian and international cultures lies at the mercy of past and present business interests.

The department of External Affairs should surely be aware that Canada's cultural landscape does not precisely match those of Canada's corporations and government. The scope of the work being produced, the new audiences being reached has changed dramatically in the last 20 years. In fact, it is in areas like cultural production that we can get a more accurate picture of what this country is *now*. Ottawa's agenda-setters actually lag behind artists, writers and filmmakers in representing contemporary Canada. To tie cultural priorities to government and corporate ones seems clearly backward.

If Africa, for example, is not a priority for External Affairs, how does that affect Canadian artists of African descent who want to make connections there? If Latin America is not on your list, how can Latin American Canadian artists have the

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same freedom to reach out to natural audiences that white Canadian artists enjoy? Lastly, how can global cultural concerns ever hope to align themselves with trade priorities and not suffer in the process? The two are simply not the same thing.

I was shocked to have both yourself and Nathalie Bradbury in the International Cultural Relations Program "explain" to me why I or any other Canadian working in culture could obtain assistance to travel to some parts of the world and not others. Is it not substantially more productive to use Canadian culture to make links with parts of the world who do not know this country as well?

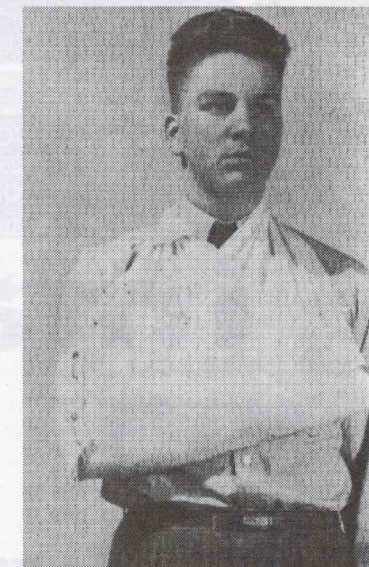
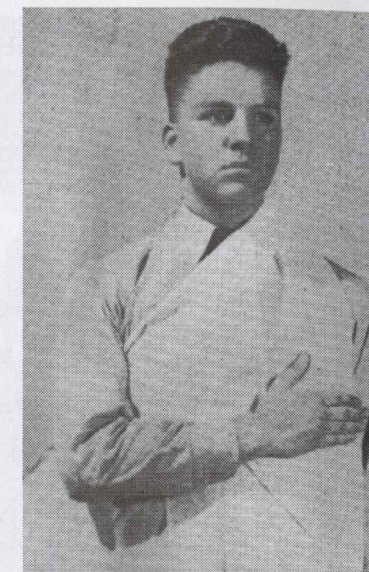
The Department of External Affairs current policy on setting geographical priorities for cultural spending is a disservice to Canadian culture that ought to be corrected or made much more public. It remains appalling to me that your Department effectively discourages Canadian artists from making new bridges rather than treading familiar ones, and reinforces a vision of Canadian culture that denies the contribution and the interests of artists of colour. I urge you to reconsider both your priorities and how they are set.

Sincerely,
Cameron Bailey

c.c. Nathalie Bradbury, International Cultural Relations Program
York Davis, Africa and Middle East Bureau
Editor, *The Globe and Mail*

errata

Fuse Magazine sincerely apologizes to Clare Barclay for the misspelling of her name in two places (FUSE Volume 16 Issue #2), and wishes to acknowledge once again her significant contributions to that issue. In the same issue, quotations from interviews with Visnja Cuturic of Libra Films, and artist Martha Judge, in the portion of "Obscenity Chill" written by Elaine Carol were not formatted as quotations. On page 21, the paragraph beginning: "Also the Theatres Act and the Project P division of the police don't seem to agree with each other," is actually a quote from Visnja Cuturic. On page 23, the paragraph beginning: "With regard to the Butler decision, there seems to be some question as to what the real issue is..." is the continuation of a quotation of Martha Judge.



Spaces Like Stairs
Essays by GAIL SCOTT



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- Rosemary Sullivan,
THE GLOBE & MAIL

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Michael Fernandes: *Sensible*
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Refusing Censorship

Toronto - *I think that by the time women of all nations and classes are emancipated we will hear stories and see colours so brutal, you'll wearily dismiss your current standards of obscenity.*

your Censorship debates, a mere fractal of the given power structure, are rife with divisions. How these divisions signal where we are now was the topic of discussion during the Refusing Censorship Forum. Organised without funding (\$0) by the Ontario Coalition Against Film and Video Censorship, Lisa Steele nevertheless managed to gather together a wide range of artists, activists, and academics who were interested in sharing their experience and analysis of censorship.

Unbeknownst to Max Allen, who had secured the CBC's Glenn Gould Studio as the venue for the forum, it was the management of the new building who provided (un)necessary controversy by demanding that the Hamilton AIDS Crisis Centre's display of gloves, dams, and free condoms be removed from the premises. When asked why, the management would not or could not respond, and eventually saw fit to back down. While some people felt it was a paradigmatic or exemplary moment of action, others dismissed the

incident: claiming it was being blown out of proportion. Of course this only begged the question, "When silencing is taking place, what is important?"

In an entirely different context, similar questioning was posed within the conference by activist and dub-poet Lillian Allen in her account of the concerns of Black artists. For many poets of her generation, she said, sexuality was a luxury, not a priority. Internal censorship, limited access to resources, the influence of the church in the Black community and the fact white people are not doing enough work to empower communities of colour, have created a climate in which issues of race take precedence over sexuality. She suggested that the necessary reinvigoration of the censorship debates should include the welcoming of younger poets of colour who, critical of the politics and post-colonialist optimism of a previous generation, include in their politics a commitment to the exploration of love, sex, and eroticism.

in Carol Vance detailed the history of anti-porn vs. pro-sex feminists battling in the US back to back with Varda Burstyn's syn-chronistic account of the Canadian 'Porn Wars'. Persimmon Blackbridge told of

how she began as an anti-porn protester in the early '80s: picketing by day, firebombing by night. She recalled how, after some exposure to the didactics of travelling anti-porn slide shows, she began to try and locate her own desires, wondering where the 'good' feminist erotica was. She has since become a collaborator in Kiss and Tell's efforts to produce sexy and fabulously multilateral videos, performances, and photo shows, such as *Drawing the Line* and *True Inversions*. On Saturday night we saw the Toronto premier of *True Inversions*, directed by Lorna Boschman, Kiss and Tell's video used a number of visual interventions—such as black bars and obscuring of images—in order to mimic the multiple forms of censorship, from interior shame to the effects of Section 163(8) of the Criminal Code.

my Persimmon's description of her evolution from anti-porn activist to pro-sex producer opened a space of safe passage for those who have been or currently are pro-censorship to 'cross the floor'. Allowing them to come to gripes with their hard-won understanding that, as Carol Vance would put it, "an exclusive focus on the elimination of sexual danger makes women's actual experience with pleasure invisible. It overstates

"I think that by the time women of all nations and classes are emancipated we will hear stories and see colours so brutal, you'll wearily dismiss your current standards of obscenity."

danger until it mobilises or monopolises the entire frame. It positions women solely as victim... The notion that women can't explore sexuality until danger is totally eliminated is a strategic dead end."

Thelma McCormack suggested that we look to the history of modern politics to demystify our current legal labyrinth. She outlined how in the nineteenth century the advancement of democracy was based on freedom of expression, while in the twentieth century the dominant issue is equality. That these civil rights were established at different points in our history means that they are under two different sections in the charter, with Section 2B covering freedom of expression and Section 15 addressing equality.

However, she went on to argue "from a feminist perspective, equality and freedom of expression are not separable." In the course of her analysis it also became obvious that in current debates this division is part of what makes it possible for censorship advocates to trade off both the old name of national security and the new wine, equality, while all the while remaining within a paradigm that should rightly be called infantilising dependency.

On a more positive and progressive note Thelma pointed to various tactics being taken up by anti-censorship leagues. The affirmative action (dream) of female producers flooding Yonge Street with their own juicy porn, for instance, or, the deconstructivist positioning which highlights and undoes points of identification by asking: what is pornography? how are images degrading? and, what do you want to see in pornography? Future possibilities opened up further with the recognition that there is no reason why these strategies

need be divisive. We can do both: hybrid.

A case in point is the pastiche positioning of professor and performance ejaculator Shannon Bell. Her 'post-modern porn production', in the warmth of the Sprinkle Salon, draws from parts of Katherine McKinnon and parts of Camille Paglia while refusing the totality of either. As a pornographic woman, she is proud to publish in erotica magazines, "to be with the women who are showing the beauty and power of their bodies, their pussies. I've learned a lot about the power and dignity of human sexuality from images that are banned or would be banned by the Butler decision...seventies gay porn...lesbian...SM...a lot of really rough stuff..."

Both Gwendolyn and Chris Bearchill pointed out the absence of sex workers at the conference. Gwendolyn agreed with Lillian Allen that not everyone has had time to prioritize censorship issues, noting that sex-workers, for instance, are often too busy dealing with police violence, social stigmatization, and the demands of their livelihood to dedicate time to political organizing which seems to focus on sexual imagery rather than sexual practices. She also drew attention to the fact that even at a conference such as this, some forms of communication remain more legitimate than others.

Chris drew attention to another related underlying prejudice when she stated that "I happen to know people in the porn industry who aren't solely concerned with their profit margin, who are also concerned with freedom of expression, who might come at this issue from a civil libertarian point of view instead of from the perspective

of sexual politics, but, who nevertheless represent a lot of people with a lot of potential political clout. And these are the people who, like it or not, end up in the supreme court setting our legal precedents. These are the people we have a political obligation to make coalitions with if we are at all serious about affecting obscenity legislation." It was a passionate end to an exhausting forum, and yet it felt as if we had barely begun to speak, let alone share.

— Kika Thorne

YOU*
*p.s. Project P isn't yet sure whether F to F fisting is illegal



Memory Works

Vancouver — There has been no shortage of conversation in Vancouver's visual and media arts scene about issues of cultural appropriation and the politics of representation. And, what is growing out of these discussions is a significant and dynamic body of work which enhances the articulation of the importance of memory and the presentation of, up until now, absent historical subjects.

Sharyn Yuen's *Like a Plague of Locusts* opened at the Pitt Gallery, January 5th. This installation of photobased works on handmade paper is a reassessment of the early history of the Chinese Labour movement in Canada. It raises issues about the social, political, economic, and psychological discrimination experienced by these workers by re-examining the history of the Chinese labourers in light of the present social and economic climate.

A new video installation *Chinaman's Peak: Walking The Mountain*, by video artist Paul Wong, opens at the Contemporary Art Gallery on January 23 to coincide with the Chinese New Year. This instal-

lation honours the spirits of the past and unites seemingly isolated people through the communal act of remembering. A 25 min. videotape of the installation will be available through Video Out Distribution.

Chances are if you are not physically bashed then your body is taken over and beaten by the plague. Back on the schedule after an earlier postponement is Joe Sarahan's *Curse of the Homo*. This multimedia installation uses video, sculpture, and computer generated images with text to deal with anticipations, expectations, and fears about death and the future amongst the gay communities that are affected by the AIDS epidemic. The show opens on Feb. 5 at the Pitt Gallery. A video tape document entitled *West Coast Homo Love Story* will premier at Video In and will also be available for distribution from Video Out in the early spring.

A related upcoming event is the Video In premier of a new work by video artist Cornelia Wyngaarden on January 29th. *The Dead Man Was a Woman* is a murder mystery gender-bender set in the Vancouver lesbian bar scene around 1965.

— Andrea Fatona

Academics and Activists acknowledging institutional complicity

Montréal — November 12 -15, 1992, Concordia University and the Université du Québec à Montréal jointly sponsored *La ville en rose: premier colloque québécois d'études lesbiennes et gaies*. The conference brought together academics and community activists from Canada, Québec, the United States, and Europe. Attended by more than 700 people, it was an historic event in the city of Montréal—a city whose own lesbian and gay communities are fractured by issues of sex/gender and language. The conference organizers are to be commended for their efforts to create a space for dialogue across these positions. Simultaneously, they made an effort to include those people who are variously classified as "academics" and "activists". Several panels were devoted to community AIDS/HIV issues, particularly in the context of Montréal.

Other panels were more explicitly "theoretical", and many had a mixture of these apparently opposite positions. In other words, the conference attempted to provide "something for everybody". It is this desire to identify, create, and satisfy all positions that I wish to address.

When the conference organizers put out a call for papers two years ago, it was for an academic lesbian and gay history conference. While there were a number of papers

addressing this question. The conference as a whole seemed far from the development of critical historiography. One of the most productive debates that took place throughout the weekend—and I hope it continues—addressed the relevance of postmodernism/post-structuralism for lesbian and gay historical work. This debate is located between both geographic and disciplinary boundaries. While English Canadian lesbian and gay research is strongly influenced by Marxist thought and socialist activism, and while it originates in the social sciences (history, sociology), the emergence of "queer theory" within the United States is firmly located in the humanities (film, literature) and is concerned with providing a detailed reading of cultural texts in relation to sexuality.

English Canadian social scientists, however, have been careful not to disavow entirely the humanities-based methodologies such as semiotics and deconstruction. Rather, they insisted that we show the relevance of these approaches for a specifically social analysis. In other words, we need to remain committed to action-oriented research.

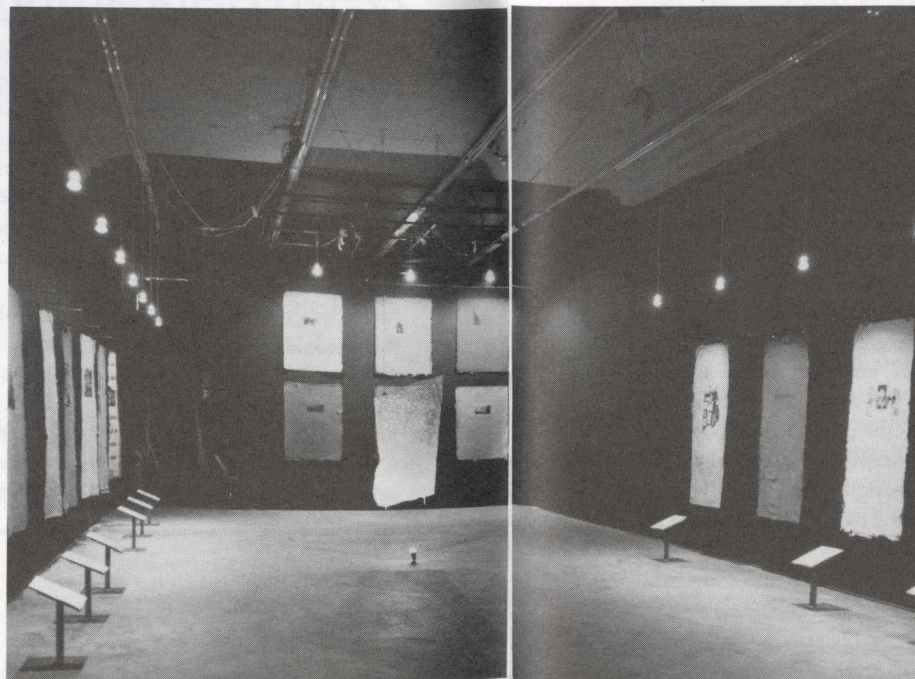
Unfortunately, the care these scholars have taken to frame the relevance of post-structuralism for lesbian and

gay studies is not indicative of many people's relation to this question. After hearing a paper on poststructuralist understandings of critical historiography, one conference participant responded "There's a lot of talk about words here and that scares me." Here, anti-intellectualism operates in the most unproductive way. Refusing to think about the politics of reading (in its broadest possible sense), the participant rejects out of hand those theories characterized as elite and textualist which address this issue.

This strain of anti-intellectualism was notable (and seemed to proliferate) throughout the conference. Many people who gave "theoretical" papers felt dismayed at the absence of a space for this type of discussion. This relates back to the structure of the conference. Attempting to balance its composition with "academics" and "activists" serves to establish the mutual exclusivity of these categories. In a too-quick desire to satisfy everyone, the inclusion of "community activists" within the institutional setting of the university, in effect, apologizes for one's privileged position as an academic. This public apology is simultaneously a denial of one's complicity with the structures of power of the academy.

The argument, implicitly, goes something like this: "I am an academic organizing a conference. But, especially in the midst of debates on 'political correctness' I want it to be clear that I am a responsible academic. I can organize a conference which responds to many people's agendas. If I include (people I designate as) "activists", I will show that I am not one of those self-indulgent academics. In other words, I am part of a community-based lesbian and gay 'us', not a uni-

Sharyn Yuen, *Like a Plague of Locusts*, photo-based installation, 1993



versity-based (straight) 'them'."

Here, the inclusion of community activists as necessary Other consolidates academics as a homogeneous Self. The axis of community-Other is aligned with lesbian/gay (also Other), while a parallel conjuncture is made between academics (Same) and straights (Same). The first casualties of this proposition, of course, are lesbians and gay men who do work on "theory". If the elitism of theory is seen as a definitive part of the oppressive structures of power of the university, then lesbians and gay men who take part in that experience are more than ideologically-duped subjects who perpetuate those inequalities; they are traitors to the cause of sexual liberation.

It is obvious that this line of reasoning necessarily sets up "high theory" in opposition to empirical studies, academics versus activists. In so doing, it denies that lesbian and gay historical work is itself informed by—and offers—a theory, if by the term "theory" we understand an explanation of how we see the social world. The force of such anti-intellectualism can only be maintained if one first identifies an academic/activist split, and then proceeds to claim the centrality of one particular term, a move which reifies the binary opposition.

Now, I am not suggesting that when "we academics" organize conferences, "we" not include "community activists". But I am suggesting that we interrogate our desire to establish and maintain that split, particularly in regard to how that desire itself indicates a denial of one's place within the university. To recognize that, as academics, we are *inside* the university seems to me the first crucial step in moving beyond this stalemate. Studying and teaching theory as a way of reading the social world are

significant aspects of our pedagogical and institutional responsibilities. Academic conferences are designed to advance this process.

In this light, we need not apologize for being academics: we need to demonstrate the role we can play in movements for social change. That work can only be done when we acknowledge our institutional complicity.

—ki namaste



Illustration by Fiona Smyth

A common technique of the aggressive right is to publicly attack progressive social movements so that the energy of revolutionaries and reformers is diverted into time-consuming self defense against the right's well funded offensive. I, for one, refuse to invest my days in firing simply-worded fusillades at the likes of American telereactionary Rush Limbaugh. They would only be edited into more ammunition for his own war against what he claims is the real global threat—"uppity" women. Any woman who objects to the rampant life-killing effects of pervasive misogyny, he labels a "Feminazi". Reasoning with Rush is impossible.

How then to deal with the newest weapon in the mounting anti-feminine arsenal—pop author Camille Paglia? I would gladly ignore the bloated bombast of this attention-starved female fink if the media would agree to do the same. Airwave execs, however, are not about to bar from the box a purported scholar who praises TV as the pinnacle of modern culture. This concept is only a corollary to the main attraction—the thesis that has rocket launched its particular sty into the

Probing Pagliaganda

public eye—that feminism is bad and wrong and that all things male are good and right.

Professor Paglia speaks and writes in the only truly modern world language—double speak. She claims that she is free to promote contempt for feminism, and by extension, the desires of women, because she is—you guessed it—a feminist. She seems indifferent to the fact that it is precisely her timely choice of target that ensures her current favoured rabid lapdog status. Safe to say Ms. P. would not be enjoying the rewards of life as Man's Best Friend had she reserved her vociferous attacks for the Master and his unabated reign of terror.

A 'feminist' who hates women?! She's made to new world order! Finally, a real woman whom men can back because she's adamantly behind men all the way without any of that sticky religious stuff that kept Phyllis Schaffly from becoming a bigger star.

Male writers fall over themselves to re-interpret Camille Paglia's presentation of rape as just another rich male experience that women are too ignorant to appreciate. Men and all the toys they produce are held up as the 'luxury principle'. Women have historically represented the poverty principle. We fulfill man's mania for more by getting by with less. According to the masculine scale by which all else is measured, women are miserable failures. We have been too busy making stone soup and knitting sweaters for people to turn out enough blobs of egocentric high art to satisfy Professor Paglia's slavish worship of the gonadic id.

Presumably, strictly man-made wars, the macho destruction of the entire planet, along with plans to do the same in outer space are more proof of the intrinsic inadequacy of the unsporting female.

The same people who grudgingly admit that racism exists will vehemently deny the existence of women's chronic oppression. We women are told this so often that we question our own perceptions. If we are right about anything, we might be right about everything. Therefore, we must be convinced, that in every detail of our lives, we are wrong. A case in point: it is by no means accidental that, in current parlance, everyone, including little girls and women, is referred to as "man" or "dude" or "Hey, you guys!" When I take umbrage at this insult I am invariably set upon by a pack of instant linguists who can bastardize every other word in their limited vocabularies but hold a special reverence for what they claim is the archaic meaning of the word 'man'. That the king's English denied the existence of women merely made it easier for kings to dispose of their wives.

Psychological warfare is a powerful back up to physical force in the modern campaign to obliterate the feminine. Abused women are encouraged to blame themselves because they "love too much". Women's recollections of torture administered by men are discounted by other men, who, coincidentally, rival Ms. Paglia for press coverage when they claim what women really suffer from is 'False Memory Syndrome'. In other words, women are lying. But why should these

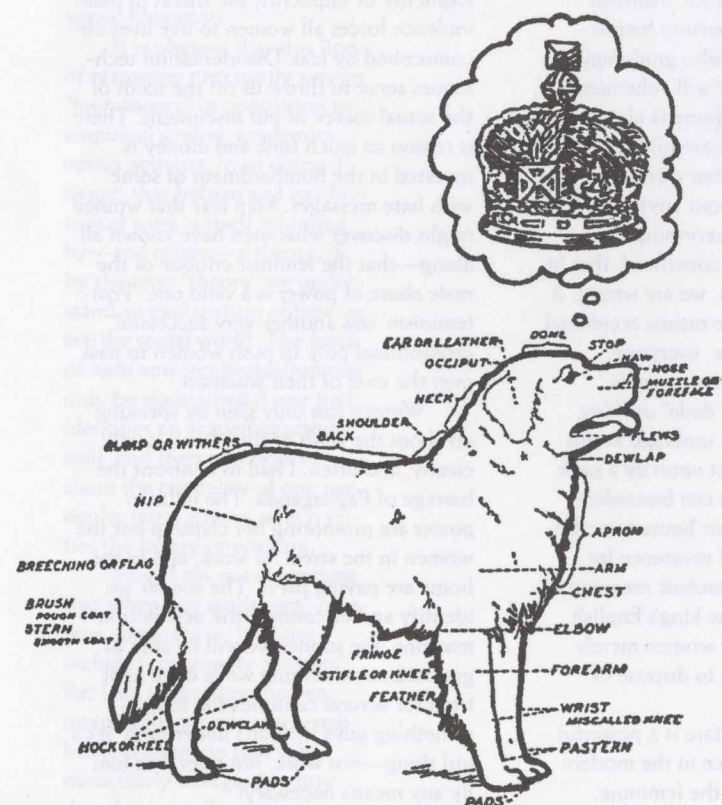
women lie for free when Camille Paglia gets paid for it? PAGLIA is just a code-name for disorientation technique. Explicitly or implicitly, the threat of male violence forces all women to live lives circumscribed by fear. Disorientation techniques serve to throw us off the scent of the actual source of our discontent. There is reason so much time and money is invested in the bombardment of some with hate messages. Men fear that women might discover what men have known all along—that the feminist critique of the male abuse of power is a valid one. 'Post-feminism' was another very successful promotional ploy to push women to pass over the crux of their situation.

Women can only gain by speaking up about the truth of their lives, loudly, clearly, and often. I had to confront the barrage of Pagliaganda. The fellas in power are promoting her claptrap but the women in the street, at work, and in the home are paying for it. The sooner we identify and disconnect the destruction machine, the sooner we will be able to get back to something we've been kept from for several centuries too long—something guys wouldn't understand, it's a girl thing—not work, not rules, but fun! By any means necessary!

Sheila Gostick's ambition is to earn enough money to become a female poverty statistic.

invested Interests

Competitive and Dysfunctional Autonomies within the Canadian Art System



TOPOGRAPHY OF THE DOG
Illustration Design Tribe

Autonomy as a movement

Historically, autonomy was born in the large factories of Northern Italy in the early 50s. "Autonomy at the base" was originally devised by emigrant workers from the the south in defiance of the union bosses—backed by the Communist Party—who pretended to represent them. Autonomy soon moved beyond claims for higher wages and questioned not only labour relationships, but labour itself. It devised original forms of collective action (autoreduction, sabotage of production, etc.) which entailed numerous confrontations with the State. This whole theme crystallised in 1965 with the refusal of wage labour which still remains directly tied to the struggles of Italian Autonomy. Autonomy is a way of acting collectively. It is made up of a number of organs and fluid organizations characterized by the refusal to separate economics from politics, and politics from existence. Autonomy never unified.

—Sylvère Lotringer, *Autonomia*, Semiotext(e), 1980.

Autonomy within contemporary social and political theory

In principle, the discourse model is based upon a strong assumption of individual autonomy and consent; thus even in discourses which renegotiate the boundaries between the private and the public the respect for the individual's consent and the necessity of their voluntarily gained insight into the validity of general norms guarantees that this distinction cannot be re-drawn in ways that jeopardize, damage and restrict this autonomy of choice and insight.

—Seyla Benhabib, *Situating The Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism In Contemporary Ethics*, Routledge, 1992.

Reviewing the state of the Canadian art system from the perspective of both primary and secondary producers within the chain of cultural production is an important undertaking, one intended to help ascertain where we are going, what we have done, and perhaps most importantly, how we are going to survive in a climate where economic determinants are overriding cultural change. Such an institutional discourse has, over the last twenty years, been developed at various meetings and conferences organized by artists and others interested in looking at the differences and similarities of function and privilege amongst individual artists, artist formations, and art institutions, in an attempt to scrutinize who does what for whom and who does what to whom. What often appears as a serialized clash between different economic classes or different ideological élites proves to be a complex web of dysfunctional relationships which are, as the growth of the self-help publishing industry suggests, difficult to resolve.

These tensions are very much affected by the histories of institutions and the unstable definitions and positionings of artistic occupations as they have evolved within our market dominated society: a society in which to be outside of the market amounts to being outside of society itself. (Watkins, 1992). What, then, are we to make of our cultural situation when much of contemporary art practice has little connection to the marketplace? And, what are we to anticipate when the market, such as it is, is de-regulated at the same time as government sources of financial support diminish and, where the situation is such that ethical, social, and intellectual values are increasingly downplayed or neutralized?

Within the rhetoric and legalized marketplace monopolies of intellectual property, we can observe the relativizing of cultural autonomies. For in the processes of defining authorship, property, and legitimate realms of circulation, the legal system establishes definitions which limit the cultural resources available to cultural producers.

While the moral of the larger life-and-times-of-the-artist

Autonomies of the artist and art institution

The gallery cannot offer you an exhibition at the present time. The reason for that decision basically comes down to the decision that in our judgement, the work you are now doing does not measure up to the various criteria which the professional staff here combine to define that very elusive term "quality". This does not mean "forever". However, if you do want an exhibition in an institution like the Vancouver Art Gallery as part of your career, the onus is on you to work at your art in a way that adapts to the reality of that world.

—Willard Holmes, VAG in a letter to Oraf, 1991. Published in *Front*, Vancouver, September 1992.

story may be one of following your dreams, instead of becoming snared within institutional dysfunctions, there are nevertheless two basic collective responses to these proprietary restrictions: one conservative, the other critical.

The first more or less stable position belongs to those who desire an efficient and harmonious collaboration between various art institutions, regardless of differences in scale, origin, or function. (It is this position that we contribute to the maintenance of when we act primarily in reference to the necessity of alleviating economic or mental stress, or in reference to social convenience.) One of the key objectives of this conservative response is to increase the public standing of the visual and media arts in order to increase its market and ability to secure sponsorships. Its rhetoric downplays traditional privileges in terms of access to artistic occupations and attempts to define the supportive art institution as a 'free trade zone' with few fixed regulations.

A second ever-formative grouping, is one which, in the course of demanding an equitable distribution of finite resources, routinely confronts the universalisms of the imperial middle. One effect of these encounters with the various institutional authorities that determine and inscribe cultural values is that in the course of operating within the art institutional context artist-run centres seem to have become an institutionalized hybrid of impulses: on the one hand aimed at being self-governing and self-determining, on the other organized so as to secure state-support and be marketable in terms of government agencies. Thus, what we are often dealing with is an on-going friction between competing autonomies with different but frequently intersecting or overlapping dysfunctions.

In this context, I am using 'dysfunctional' primarily to refer to the way in which art institutions work to maintain authority over and above any 'programme' changes or suggested structural reforms. 'Dysfunctional' can also be employed ironically to view the peer system within the academy or the rabbit warren of art institutions as our own peculiar version of family values.

The following focuses upon two of the most commonly contested but unresolved issues between artists in relation to artistic formations and art institutions. They are 1) authorship, legitimation, and social meaning and 2) employment.

Denial is not just a river in Egypt: myths and anti-discourse

If we are going to re-visit the history of artists gaining autonomy by initiating their own formations (Williams, *Culture*, 1981), and if we allow that in part such formations proposed to alter who qualifies as an artist, curator, critic or art historian, then we must re-examine the historical origins as well as the effects of prevailing definitions of the status of the artist.

The concept of autonomy institutionalised within the notion of the new "artisan republic" in early 19th century America culture—and thereafter successfully exported around the world—was, according to American historians, truly reduced to rhetoric and wishful thinking by the late 1820s. Not only did the integration of culture and the newly developing markets of the Americas seriously limit the emergence of the "artisan republic", so too did the fact that from the very beginning the principle of independence as the supreme value was inapposite for women and slaves, who together made up the majority of the population. (DeMott, 1990)

As it is currently used within our own discourse, the term 'autonomy' has become a very fluid, some would say diluted and contradictory, concept; one which can refer to the self-determination of a group of artists, the arms-length principle of independence that a government allows a government-funded arts funding agency, or, the undemocratic board structures of any number of arts institutions.

In the complex relationships between artists, their formations, and the public art institutions, contemporary art practice is still dominated by residues of 19th century Romantic radical thinking that declared a "sovereignty and autonomy of the imagination" to offset the changed social role of artists as minor commodity producers. (Eagleton, 1983) This inherited concept of the artist clearly warned artists to stay away from their common collective or political projects, recommending instead the solitariness of the presumably classless, creative mind. (An idea that dramatically re-surfaced in the mid-1980s art criticism of Kuspit, Fuchs, and others)

In practice, the definition of art and the professional identity of the artist, curator, critic and historian is affected and influenced by an array of interlocking art institutions that have all developed their own independent functions and authority. The chains of art institutions now includes art colleges, university art departments and other art educational bodies, artist-run centres, public galleries, municipal galleries, private galleries, art museums, art periodicals, art libraries, art consultants, art distributors and rental services, art publishers,

art foundations, government arts funding, art funding agencies, regional and national associations that represent artists and their organizations, associative bodies that represent art educators, librarians, curators, historians, and associations that represent their institutions of employment. It is therefore obvious that the existing public practice of art and its relationship to earning a living cannot be autonomous from the public gallery or art museum, the artist-run centres, the traditional commercial gallery, or the art periodical. And while the art system bears all the features of a complex industry, there are no common agreements as to what the product or service is, who the professional producers or workers are, or, who the client or the consumer is.

Though much has been made of the development of artist-run centres around emergent or developing forms and their related networks—video, performance art, feminist resources, domestic or foreign exchange residencies, and national or international curatorial projects—the most significant breakthrough for artists has been the development of capacities for collectively addressing the shifting social and professional responsibilities of and within the various spheres of art production. In each of these spheres of production—criticism, history, exhibition, and education—critical agendas and counter-practices were conceived and articulated in an effort to combat dysfunctions that had developed within the contemporary art system. However, the politics of autonomy as it affects more recently formed organizations which represent individual artists or artist collectives and co-operatives are often counteracted by the manoeuvrings of liberal institutions, and, perhaps more importantly, by the outdated imperatives of the founding philosophies of these institutions. This is a strange roadblock given that both artists and their institutional peers directly and indirectly acknowledge the inadequacy of Enlightenment liberalism in their embrace of the theories and practices of communitarianism, feminism, and postmodernism. What is made obvious in such contradictions is the way in which instability or changing definitions of expertise can and indeed do inspire conservative resistance as they inflame disputes over autonomy.

Relatedly, the fact that older colonizing curatorial patterns of discovery, interpretation, validation and dissemination continue to persist while at the same time local or immediate authority has, to some degree, been successfully dis-

persed, references the capacity of these alternative authorities to issue fur-

ther challenges and effect renewed transgressions of assumptions about cultural authority: in other words to generate political understandings and political struggles in relation to culture.

The AGO Finale

A Harsh Lesson In Power Politics

During a fifteen month period, what for some was only a routine struggle by a large art institution to secure additional funding was for others—both inside and outside of the art community—an ideological confrontation over who determines Ontario's cultural spending.

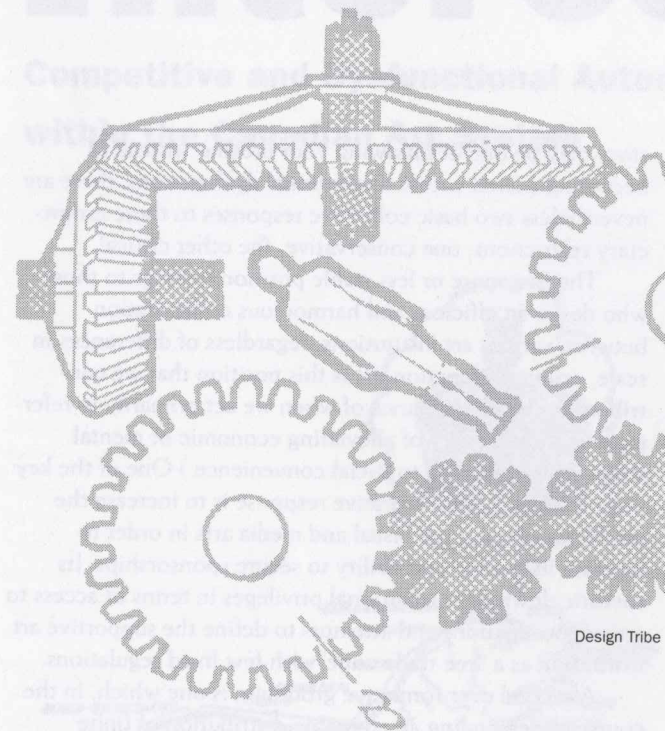
The art-located voices who were willing to publicly oppose the AGO's increased funding request of \$6 million and call for a public investigation of the AGO's mandate, programming, and allocation of resources, were few but strong.

Susan Crean, author, art critic and past president of the Writer's Union wrote about the AGO's long history of unaccountability and hostility towards the artist community and artists rights recalling that: "In the seventies, when the community decided to get a few artists and local people elected to the board of trustees, the AGO called in Pinkerton's and obdurately resisted the interest and talent of people like Raymond Moriyama, Joyce Zemans, Colin Vaughan and a long list of artists." (*The Globe and Mail*, May 28, 1992). Relatedly, in a "Noises Off" column and later in the letters column, Gary Conway, Executive Director of CARO (Canadian Artists Representation Ontario) stated that Ontario artists stood to gain little or no money, attention, or respect from this institution.

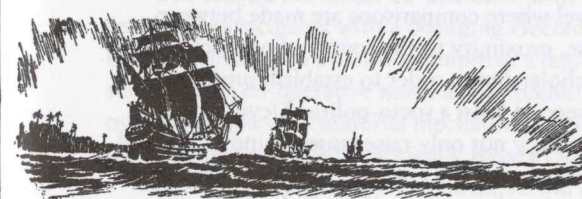
The senior editors of *The Globe and Mail* itself were obviously unhappy that a social democrat government and its supporters would be given any room to disturb the success symbolism of "the seventh largest art museum in North America" with messy policy re-directions that might involve re-allocations of funding.

When they weren't attacking CARO itself for being a cartel of "hack" artists, *The Globe and Mail* slipped the leash off their resident Edwardian watchdogs. Staffer Matthew Hart (whose column triggered Crean's response) wrote: "...what is indisputably real is the distress of a cherished institution, a patient teacher in an age of dangerous ignorance, an ornament we must not break." Anthropomorphisms later gave way to simple mammalian confusion when the paper's art critic referred to the temporary inaccessible artworks as "lost friends". (Jan 23 1993)

Thereafter followed a flurry of letters-to-the-editor many attacking Crean and Conway. *Canadian Art* editor Sarah Milroy wrote, "[Conway's statements] are further proof that the visual arts community has no enemies as pernicious as those inside its own domain." John McAvity, Executive Director of the Canadian Museums Association responded to Crean's column: "Ms. Crean is



Design Tribe





C-93:

The dissolution of The Canada Council and SSHRC; Tories launch a supertanker cultural agency over a case of beer

Despite the immense expense of the federal government bureaucracy and the oft-repeated complexities of the legislative process, some initiatives are both instantaneous and cheap. It is amazing what a few ministerial aides and a case of beer can produce. I'm referring to alleged meetings in February 1992 that took place in Federal Minister Don Mazankowski's office in the day or days prior to the budget. The topic was the streamlining and rationalization of government expenditures and the possibility of eliminating or amalgamating 46 agencies or commissions. These changes were duly announced in the budget, with the enabling legislation subsequently introduced as an omnibus bill: C-93.

One of these amalgamations was the collapsing of The Canada Council, The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and the cultural programs of the Department of External Affairs into a new superagency. Then Canada Council Director Joyce Zemans was reported in *The Globe and Mail* (Feb 26, 1992) as saying the amalgamation was, "a remarkable challenge." Subsequent verification reveals that neither The Canada Council nor SSHRC were informed of the decision prior to its announcement. And, officials from within the Department of Communications (DOC) and the Finance Department have privately revealed to arts lobbyists that future Tory leadership candidate and Communications' Minister Perrin Beatty was also not informed of the decision until the day before the budget. There were no fiscal or cultural studies done by either the DOC or Finance as to whether the shift would enhance federal cultural policy or save money. The boys and their beer simply had a magic number of agencies and commissions to play with.

While the arts and cultural communities are second-guessing how recent across the board federal government

A skeptic might observe that what resulted was merely a proliferation of institutions and alternative institutions without any move towards a social resolution. The alternatives on the other hand obviously have to maintain a belief that they are, indeed, closer to actual contemporary social conditions. What was undeniably achieved as a result of the elaboration of new artist formations, however, was the shifting of art into a broader cultural context which engenders both social and cultural difference. Although resisted at different stages by both artists and art institutions, this informal programme was, interestingly enough, ultimately more successful in forcing issues of historical representation and cultural identity into the vacant sign 'contemporary' than into the occupied sign 'art'.

Employment: tensions of occupation, authenticity and self-indexing

Although at times it becomes necessary, it is always dangerous to generalize about who we mean when we use the term contemporary art producer. While the lack of cohesive identity or commonality has serious impact on how successfully we can elaborate autonomies of the various spheres of occupation, putting the specifics of cultural identity aside and pretending that the art graduate recently engaged, the artist-curator, the museum curator, the artist-art historian professor, etcetera, are necessarily going to be affected by shared occupational circumstances or share a common historical perspective or future prognosis, is a little too simple. What in fact, over time, often binds us together are—and this is by no means insignificant—scarcity of employment, the myths of independence from economic and institutional determinisms, and the fantasy of an interconnectedness between high and low culture, imagined as the site for a democratisation of culture. But, not only are there no unified set of ideological commitments or mythologies, nor a commonality in terms of production relations or occupational factors, artists and artists formations are, by the very nature of their relation to the state system, put into a competitive relation with one another in their efforts to secure public funding.

Internal competition over public subsidy and claims to authority through which such funds are accessed, can be observed in the two overlapping categories. The first exists at a professional level where comparisons are made between training, expertise, proximity to the source of production, and degrees of scholarship in order to establish professional credibility. The second is on a socio-political level where questions of legitimacy not only raise issues of individual and community representation and cultural equity, but also issues challenges to the use-value and the past ideological baggage of existent institutions—whether their roots were appendages of statism, the capital investment, or urban communes of peace, love, and understanding.

Immediate structures of production and validation

We cannot go further into a discussion of competing autonomies without referring and focusing upon specific structural types of organization and curatorial positioning through which these autonomies have been elaborated.

The curator has moved from being the keeper or custodian of a museum or collection who interacted with a network of art dealers, to functioning as a literate impresario of intellectual entertainments. The sheer volume of curatorial activity which the artists formation network instigated as an on-going expectation in most cases prohibits the possibility for extensive research or contemplation, while the institution selectively ignores the expediences of production which are a necessary component of maintaining any artistic practice.

Because curating is one of the principle processes of artistic validation—through exhibition, commissioning, or purchase of work—it is naturally suspect in terms of abuses such as nepotism or discriminatory exclusion. Acknowledging factors such as the constraints of time and resources, and admitting that successful collaborative curatorial projects and writings come to light both within the institutional and artist formational systems, there is, nevertheless, little about the curatorial process that is meritorious.

While we could endlessly argue about the quality, expertise, and propriety of actual curatorial appointments and practices, the main split between artists formations and public galleries and museums is in unbalanced resource allocations and institutional appropriations of the social.

1. Artist-run centres

Historically, there are two basic modes—with any number of specialized variations—for the organization of what are commonly called artist-run centres.

The first is an incorporated collective (not to be confused with a commune) formed around a mix of generational, formal, philosophical or gender interests introducing to a specific geographic community a specific focus for artistic practice. The collective's self-electing participants are relatively stable, deliver curatorial and archival services, exploit local resources and in turn provide various training apprenticeships.

The second is a looser co-operative with transitory but returning participants with a changing elected executive, formed primarily to provide or improve a regional curatorial service. This co-operative may have a committee structure or other participatory curatorial mechanisms. Both the collective and the co-operative normally have a Director(s).

In terms of autonomy, the collective will often define itself in terms of a community of interest not necessarily bound by immediate geography whereas the co-operative will be more influenced and directed by the immediate artist community. The collective made up of producers as artists, independent critics and curators will make demands from a

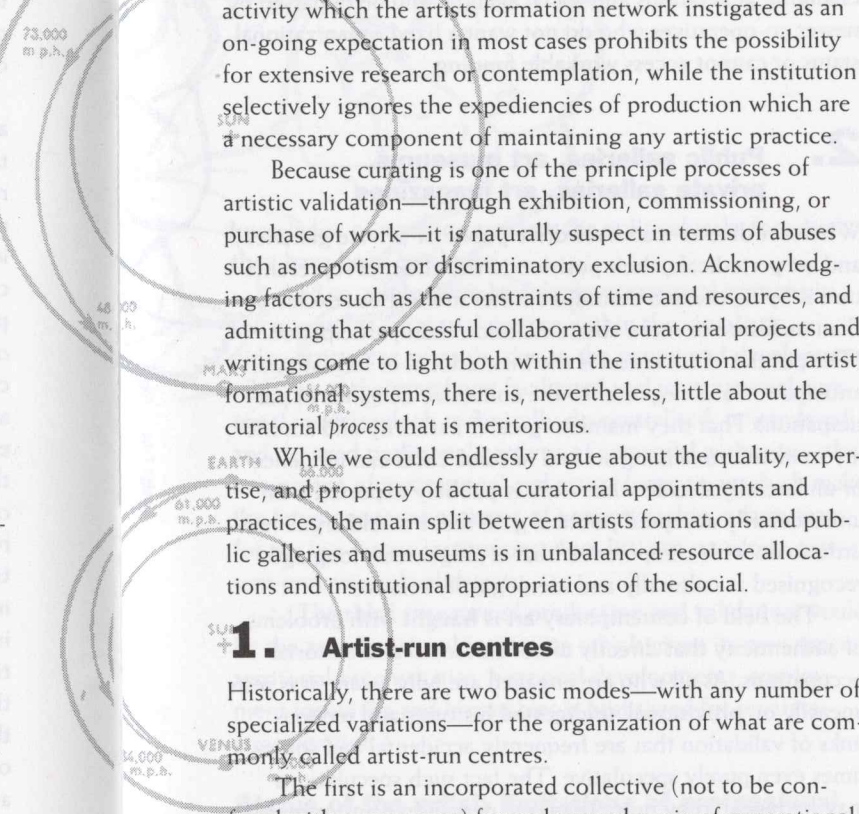


Figure 10. The Earth, Mars and Venus

one of the most outspoken and forceful advocates of the arts in Canada. She knows very well that all the arts are suffering now, and that this is a time for unity in the cultural family.... Shame on those who preach alliances and practice division." Barbara Taylor, Director of the McMichael Canadian Art Collection—the only other Ontario art gallery which has "Special Agency" status within the Ministry of Culture—accused Crean of being "...childish to accuse the AGO of bad financial planning" during a period of economic upheaval.

By far the clearest and most detailed outside account of the issues at hand came in an investigative piece by Glen Cooly in *Now*, Toronto's alternative weekly. It appeared after the government announced its decision to refuse the AGO's request for an additional \$6 million and instead to set up a fast Task Force Study led by art historian Terrence Heath and Toronto artist Colette Whiten.

The AGO responded by announcing it was closing its doors for a seven month period and laying off half of its 445 staff, even though its final operating grant from the provincial government of \$9.5 million was only \$2.6 million down from the previous year.

Cooly wrote, "numerous critics of the gallery, including a few insiders, believe there's more to the AGO's scaledown than just a collision between the opening of its new wings and a mangled economy. They contend that the extent of the lay-offs and the closure have as much to do with politics as finance, representing an attempt to embarrass more money out of the government." (July 16 1992).

Cooly also revealed an anti-NDP bias within the board of trustees who were appointed under previous Conservative and Liberal governments and executive committee members' links to Project Economic Growth, a coalition in part formed to defeat the NDP government's proposed changes to existing labour laws. Such interconnected political agendas, by no means new in the history of mega-art institutions, have now played themselves out in a quite uncharacteristically public fashion.

Globe and Mail art critic John Bentley Mays, reviewing the Task Force report, demonstrated difficulty conceiving of high art without attendant millionaires; although he was correct in suggesting that a quieter, scaled-down version of this museum would benefit its scholarship. In his own unique art audience value system, Mays aired nostalgia for the rising middle-class of the 50s and bile for their counterparts in the 80s. "The contempt for high art institutions of high culture held by Bob Rae's left-wing populists was a matter of public record even before they became too broke to properly finance the schemes for social uplift genuinely dear to their hearts. Their idea of 'culture' was and remains,

department operational cuts of 10% plus 3% cuts in administrative spending will affect the Canada Council, the federal government has tabled Bill C-93.

Bill C-93 is an omnibus bill which includes legislation to formally terminate the Economic Council of Canada and the Law Reform Commission as announced in the last federal budget. C-93 was tabled in early December and is expected to become law in early 1993.

Part III of the Bill merges the Canada Council and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) with certain functions and staff from the Department of External Affairs. The new superagency is to be called the Canada Council for the Arts and for Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities. (CCARSSH)

The amalgamation was intended to further rationalize spending and supposedly save money by collapsing three administrations while at the same time leaving the former Canada Council and SSHRC with partial autonomy. Government spindoctors are saying that without the amalgamation, The Canada Council and SSHRC would have been vulnerable to further cuts.

As it stands, because C-93 is an omnibus bill it will be reviewed by a special parliamentary committee and not by the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture. The rules under which the new Committee operates are part of a parliamentary reform package introduced by Harvey André, and are aimed at making Parliament more efficient. Under these new rules, those who wish to make representation before Standing Committees must address the text of the legislation and suggest amendments or argumentation based upon technical matters. Matters of principle or philosophy pertaining to the Canada Council Act (1957, 1985) as subjects of intervention are, in effect, deemed inadmissible. Thus the new procedures achieve efficiency at the cost of democratic process.

Dr. Paule Leduc current President of SSHRC was appointed Director of the Canada Council on July 1, 1992. Since October 1992, both Councils have been operating under a transitional structure; there has been no independent client watchdog committee set-up to monitor the transition, or review the substantial changes which have already taken place. And, it was not until late 1992 that Dr. Leduc met with arts representative organizations in meetings organized by the Canadian Conference on the Arts to discuss C-93.

The introduction of Part III of the tabled bill reads: "The purpose of this Part is to wind up the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and transfer its functions and staff to the Canada Council and to transfer certain functions and staff of the Department of External Affairs concerned with the promotion of Canadian culture abroad to the Canada Council. The Canada Council will be renamed the Canada Council for the Arts and for Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities to reflect

position of direct engagement and their proximity as primary producers. The co-operative, depending upon its nature, will also employ or at least imitate this strategy. Media production facilities are generally co-operatives, independent publishing activities generally result in collectives.

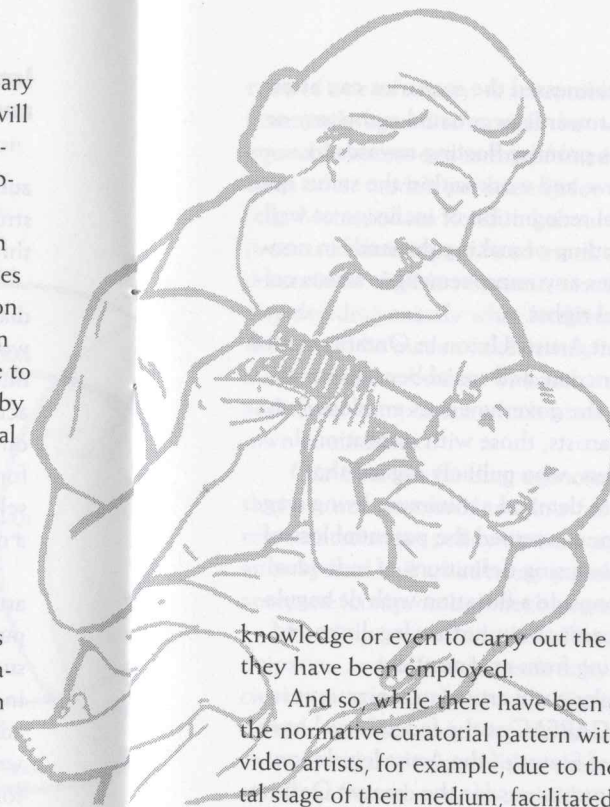
Artists formations are not immune to the axiom which states: any social organization which persists over time faces challenges with regard to bureaucratization and co-optation. The co-operative for instance may find itself challenged on its capacity to pass on its curatorial authority and expertise to changing generations and social agendas and be bypassed by newer co-operatives who do not want a fixed organizational status or cannot access workable funding.

2. Public galleries, art museums, private galleries, art magazines

Whatever diverse mandates drive public or private galleries and art periodicals, their position in the chain of representation is by nature and definition either more about exclusion than inclusion or more about inclusion than participation. (The politics of inclusion is the institutional or formational anticipation and response to the collective demands of participation) That they maintain greater authority and autonomy in institutionalizing art and in some cases can influence or unilaterally decide what work is publicly exported is an unnecessarily accepted political gain that I would argue has little to do with competence: that is judgements long ago recognised as culturally and ideologically relative.

The field of contemporary art is fraught with problems of authenticity that directly affect curatorial and editorial occupations. As all who are engaged are fully aware, it rests uneasily on provisional, undigested histories and tenuous links of validation that are frequently accidental and sometimes even purely speculative. The fact such speculations may be repeated by more than one person in print or in practice is cold comfort. Ironically, from different positions, private dealers and artists formations would both claim a curatorial authenticity based upon a prompted form of social demand and close interaction.

While both the public gallery or contemporary art museum curator and the independent project curator-director are hired for their professional expertise, their past successes at acquisition monies from funding agencies, their contacts or ability to network, as well as their past service, those working with or within artist-run centres are also valued for their community affiliations and commitments. When the later are recruited by public institutions they are expected to bring with them these affiliations, the lessons they have learnt about community politics, and their distinctive form of political prestige. To varying degrees they end up working for an institutional entity and ideology that limits and compromises their ability to effectively use their distinct forms of



Design Tribe

knowledge or even to carry out the political tasks for which they have been employed.

And so, while there have been occasional ruptures in the normative curatorial pattern within the visual arts,—video artists, for example, due to the nature and developmental stage of their medium, facilitated inclusive national curatorial models which technically de-centralised, re-gendered and de-aged traditional patterns of curatorial authority—the integration of institutional and artists formations which make the latter appear as an arena of apprenticeship, a farm-team for the big-league institutions, does little to transform existent processes of validation.

(The third structure of production and validation would be the art educational institution which given its own special territorial eccentricities, historical developments, employment inequities and hierarchies is best saved for separate consideration.)

Status of the artist: limitations of professional status, peer evaluation and subsidy

What we have and gratefully acknowledge in Canada is a surviving system of public cultural subsidy. However, in my estimate, such subsidies realistically can only be said to sustain maybe 5% of the practising artist population with, over an extended time, a further 10% on some sort of rotating, random job share income basis. So perhaps 90% of practising artists function, in the truest sense, as independent producers living and working from their personal wealth and lack of it. The most recent figures from StatsCan (1987) state that on average visual artists with seventeen years experience earn \$11,444 from their work. Comparable figures are: for teachers, \$43,030 (1989), for doctors \$110,000 (1990), for social workers \$37,224 (1999).

Whether or not artists will ever achieve a working autonomy, that is the autonomy to practice enjoyed by teachers, doctors, lawyers, accountants, politicians, the clergy, etc., despite the efforts of many, is still in considerable

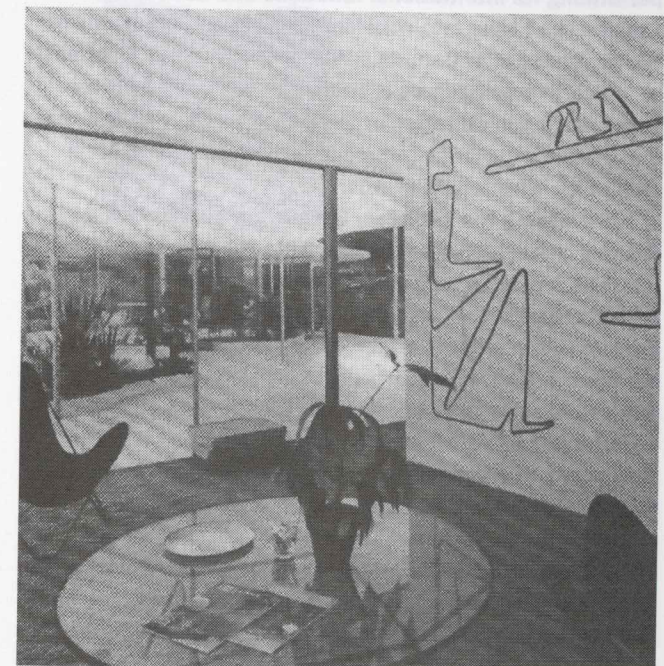
Easter-egg decorating contests, not deluxe objects with the quiet, enduring loveliness of an early Renaissance painting at the AGO." (Dec 5, 1992)

The AGO re-opened in January 1993 with a significant promotional budget that attracted 7,500 celebrants to its new expanded space. The Task Force study recommended that the government spend an additional \$2 million a year as an interim measure until the AGO could acquire further private or self-generated financing or, more likely, extra monies from a different government.

The NDP had its last Minister of Culture Karen Haslam (the fourth in an ever-changing series) hand over the supplemental cheque of \$2 million, at least part of which came directly from the Premier's office: the same Premier who has decided to back off on the promised Status of The Artist legislation. Battered on every new reform initiative, the NDP was unable to withstand the AGO's hard-ball tactics and, ironically, in an effort to avoid being labelled anti-culture, gave priority to the interests of the art gallery at the expense of the immediate interests of the artists themselves.

In hindsight it could be asked whether or not artists and their supporters would have acted differently if the predicted political choice had been between 'neutrality' on the AGO issue and losing the possibility for new legislation to protect artists social and economic rights and other more equitable subsidy initiatives?

The *Globe and Mail* celebrated the AGO's re-inauguration with three senior staff writers reviewing the new displays and architecture. The titles of this unlabelled advertising feature tell all. "The Art: The Familiar Made Artfully Fresh", "The Building: A Triumph of



its expanded functions." The implication of a transfer of functions to the Canada Council is completely contradicted by the new structure in transition. The Canada Council is in effect being swallowed as a minor partner in the new superagency. The academic community is also unhappy with this legislation. Ironically, having read the Bill they are assuming that the Canada Council is in fact about to swallow SSHRC, while many social scientists would have preferred SSHRC to amalgamate with the National Science and Engineering Research Council (NSERC)

With the suspension of the Canada Council Act and the passage of Bill C-93 the current board will resign. According to Dr. Leduc the new board will reflect the three sectors: arts, academic and external affairs programmes. While board members of the Canada Council have been government appointees they, like Board members of other federal agencies, have thereafter acted to protect the autonomy of the Council against the whims and desires of their appointers.

In the past, The Canada Council was managed by a Director, nominated by the Council's Board of Directors and approved by Cabinet and an Associate Director appointed by Cabinet. In the new agency, there will be a President and Vice-President appointed by the Governor in Council. In the tabled C-93 legislation Part III Section 5, (3) states: "The President is the chief executive officer of the Council and has supervision over and direction of the work and staff of the Council". The legislation does not however describe the function of the Chair of the new Council or how the Chair's position in any way limits the power of the President/CEO.

While Section 12 states that: "The Council is not an agent of Her Majesty..." under Section 8 (3) it states: "In performing its international functions and duties, the Council shall take into consideration the foreign policy of the government of Canada." Without further clarifications or legislative safeguards it could be suggested that the supervision and direction of the new Council is at the very least under stricter government control with an implied loss of its arms-length status.

Reviewing the changes, Greg Graham, CARFAC's Ottawa based lobbyist reports: "Like the legislation itself, much of Council's recent internal documents deal more with the administrative function than with policy or mandate.... In transitional organigrams the Canada Council as we know it becomes the "Arts Division", one of 5 administrative divisions answering to the President. Rather than create administrative efficiency, there is a concern that new levels of management necessitated by the merger will result in bureaucratic inertia.

He goes on to say: "The new act is silent on the Council's original endowment. In theory a new board could apply it to projects far from its original intention.... Between the administrative changes and the cutbacks it

doubt. As those that have witnessed the scenarios can attest, it is hard to predict moves towards negotiated autonomy or equity when art institutions promise fleeting rewards to artists who are willing to live and work within the status quo. Perennial hopes of personal recognition or inclusion as well as a resistance to understanding or making demands in non-individualistic terms quashes any improvement in artists collective economic and social rights.

When the Independent Artists Union in Ontario moved to negotiate a guaranteed income and social benefits for all the province's artists (with the government as employer), it was a minority of salaried artists, those with institutional tenure or commercial dealers, who publicly argued that artists had no moral right to demand a minimum living wage. Other legitimate objections concerned the potential loss of artistic autonomy, while confusing definitions of individual versus collective rights alongside a flirtation with de-regulatory ideology lead to concerns about further legalisms and possible restrictions resulting from unionization.

Treading a not dissimilar path, artists' organizations in Quebec and Ontario and CARFAC at the federal level have fought for the enactment of Status of the Artist legislation with economic and social provisions for the creator. Despite the shortcomings in such legislative bills, the rights to legally bargain instead of merely lobbying are, within the confines of existing politics, real potential gains. This simple difference between lobbying and negotiation has always empowered the funding agencies who can pick and chose who they feel constitute community representation. Status of the Artist legislation both federal and provincial would help provide the tools to reverse such relationships through democratic sectoral/disciplinary representation.

When artists lobbied to gain economic protection in federal copyright legislation it was associations of galleries, museums, and libraries that opposed artists control of their own work, arguing that the minuscule increases of fee payments would constitute an economic hardship for their institutions and that such rights would erode some freedoms of curatorial practice or scholarship.

Though artists do not get paid directly for the work they do, their scholarship is recognized through a borrowed extension of academic practice: namely, peer evaluation. The peer process of evaluation introduced by The Canada Council and later by provincial arts funding agencies was incorporated into the functioning of artist cooperatives and collectives without full recognition of the limits of peer evaluation as an administrative tool for providing equity. Limits which result from its being an administrative tool whose workability relies upon limited demand and an uncontested notion of membership or peers. (see "Fright The Power", Cameron Bailey, *Fuse* Vol.15, No.6 1992)

That an arts agency can award grants by peer decision in a success ratio of one in ten or that an artist-run centre can engage an artist exhibition or project based upon a success

ratio of one in twenty, is acceptable only if there are no other commonly agreed to models that would allow for a more equitable access or sharing of fixed resources. There have been other models particularly for organizational funding (e.g. Metropolitan London Labour Council, UK) where the process of dividing up fixed monies between community-determined eligible recipients resulted in the larger community deciding exactly what facilities were needed and how they could be made to cohesively function together to maximise the subsidies. This debated consensus is an additional component which often is missing within our own community.

Our own arts funding agencies themselves claim that they are not structured to allow for formal collective artist representation on policy matters arguing that the peer evaluation system and art advisory panels are the most universally accepted (compromise) mechanism.

Funding institutions that allow inclusion rather than participation and define themselves by principles instead of policies do so arguing that such a liberal strategy is the best defence against conservative attacks. This may be true in the short-term but principles that theoretically separate the excellent from the mediocre additionally prohibit any autonomous gains for individual artists or their collectives. Furthermore there are serious contradictions and conflicts of interest when such principles are administered by those who themselves are contractually protected as public employees or professional managers, as subsidized arts entrepreneurs or, in the case of journalists, by collective agreements negotiated by newspaper guilds, while recommending free market competitiveness for those whose production they depend on.

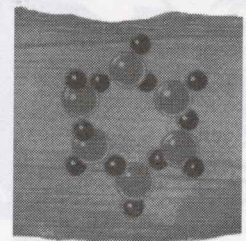
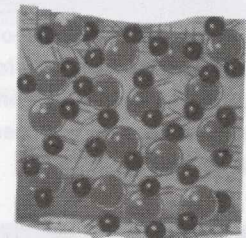
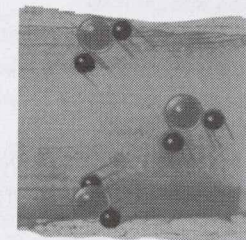
No artist wants to be told that she or he is engaged in a mediocre activity given that in public terms even the heroic corpus of art itself has increasingly been eclipsed by its industrial stand-ins: beer commercials that appropriate contemporary art galleries and their patrons as contemporary lifestyle, or beat poetry used as its *l' étranger* icon.

The real problem of autonomy for artists, their collectives, and their supporters is in hedging bets, in not taking self-determination seriously, and in failing to overcome internal resistance to corrective strategies of political participation. To achieve institutional reform and re-construction requires closing the gap between theoretical insights and revelations, social needs, and practical implementation. We all would like some security of employment but as a way of ensuring accessibility, opportunity, and cultural change it could be argued that no position of scholarly or artistic management in an art institution or artist formation should be held for longer than five years.

If we believe that art is an intellectual activity of sufficient importance to require both cultural resistance and activism then I suggest that artists and cultural producers cannot perennially support public institutions that marginalize, sanitize, or ignore their contributions. We cannot alter-

Knitting and Slicing", "The Architects: A Meeting-Place of Minds". What this sort of applause for re-surfacing means is that the AGO's management can now take comfort in furthering the museum's reputation as a soul-mate of the corporate world, having providing a \$500 million art collection backdrop for the campaign against the NDP, while slashing half of the workforce and still delivering a public service that wins high-profile public approval.

The AGO union local had little choice in the dispute but to side with management. The artists representative organizations have no broad mandate and lacked the resources for building coalitions to oppose such developments. For the artists, cultural employees, and contemporary art-seeking public across the province—from whom the AGO will continue to take more than its fair share of public subsidies—it was a harsh lesson in power politics. But of course by selecting a few token living Ontario artists to profile, the AGO will be able to keep the merry-go-round spinning.



seems certain that disciplinary advisory committees will have even less influence on policy directions. They will meet less often (attributable to cutbacks) and have a different bureaucracy to contend with."

Conclusions

Dr. Leduc is a noted academic, literary scholar and former Québec Deputy Minister of Culture who, during her three-year appointment will head a cumbersome entity. There are outstanding substantive reforms needed at The Canada Council as a result of changing demographics and the shrinking of the Council's real dollars. The following are but a few of the most common issues discussed at the client-community level:

1. Any policy reforms should come from the community base in negotiation and consultation with Council officers and Heads of disciplinary sections. The proprietary function of senior management is to deal with the political apparatus of government and other benefactors and in outstanding circumstances to mediate between clients and respective disciplinary or service sections.
2. Advisory committees (made up of practitioners) have to be given agenda time in order to properly act as advisers on community needs rather than being used exclusively to deal with internal Council agendas and politics.
3. The Arts Award Section needs a better delivery system of grants to individuals. The 'A', 'B', Short Term, Project, and Travel categories are outdated and no longer reflect current demographics and occupational realities.
4. The individual disciplinary sections have to recognize and assist innovative practices and changes of authorship within their field and stop using Interdisciplinary and Explorations as a dumping ground for 'marginal' or more recent practices.
5. The whole budgeting allocation and territorial responsibilities of each disciplinary section and auxiliary service programmes should be opened up for a wider intelligent debate between the Council and its clients as a process to discuss and decide upon revised priorities.



nate between describing institutions as functional when they support us and dysfunctional when they do not. The institutions that make up the art system need fixing or re-constructing and we as artists, art scholars, curators, and critics have the most to lose from their current state of anti-discourse and dysfunctional social autonomy.

Clive Robertson is a performance artist and activist. He is a member of the FUSE Board of Directors and a contributing editor for Montréal.

Acknowledgements

The original version of this essay was commissioned and published as part of "Points de force: Les centres d'artistes conference" Montréal, October 1992, organized by Le regroupement des centres d'artistes autogérés du Québec in collaboration with La Centrale. For the above version I wish to thank Kathleen Pirrie Adams for her substantive editing, re-working and clarifying advice.

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THESE DIFFERENCES, IT MUST BE NOTED, ARE GEOGRAPHICAL AND NOT RELIGIOUS.

A BENGALI MOSLEM IS FAR NEARER TO A BENGALI HINDU THAN HE IS TO A

PUNJABI MOSLEM; SO ALSO WITH OTHERS. IF A NUMBER OF HINDU AND MOSLEM BENGALIS

HAPPEN TO MEET ANYWHERE, ELSEWHERE, THEY

WILL IMMEDIATELY CONGREGATE TOGETHER AND

FEEL AT HOME WITH EACH

OTHER. PUNJABIS, WHETHER

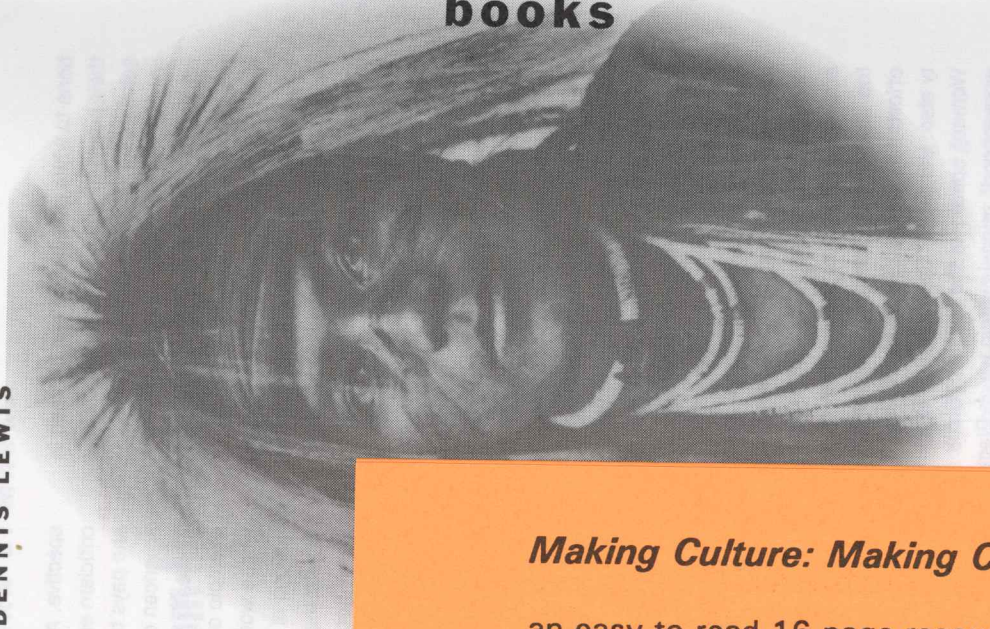
MOSLEM OR HINDU OR SIKH, WILL DO LIKEWISE. THE MOSLEMS OF THE BOMBAY

PRESIDENCY (KHOJAS, MEMONS, AND BOHRAS) HAVE MANY HINDU CUSTOMS; THE

KHOJAS (THEY ARE THE FOLLOWERS OF THE AGA KHAN) AND THE BOHRAS ARE NOT

LOOKED UPON AS ORTHODOX BY THE MOSLEMS OF THE NORTH.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU, *The Discovery of India*; 1946;



Black Looks: race and representation

by bell hooks

Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 1992

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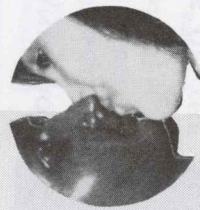
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ARTIST'S PROJECT by SHANI MOOTOO

who

Black Looks: race and representation

by bell hooks
Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 1992

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The Moment
Vol. 6 No. 2 1992



Making
Culture

Making
Change

This issue of *The Moment* is about arts and culture. The people who came together to shape it work in different artistic disciplines: theatre, music, video, film, photography, ceramics, writing and visual arts. We also spring from different cultural backgrounds, including First Nations, Métis, Southeast Asian-, African-, South Asian-, Jewish-, Anglo- and Caribbean-Canadian. We want our work to help change unequal structures around us and create a Canada that is based on equality and dignity for all people.

To make this issue, we spent many hours talking together about why our artistic work is so important in struggles to better our world. As you will see, we brought many different perspectives and opinions to the discussions. Instead of trying to hide our differences and present only one opinion, we decided to use this publication as a place to talk about our differences.

We discovered we even name ourselves differently. Some of us
continued on page 2

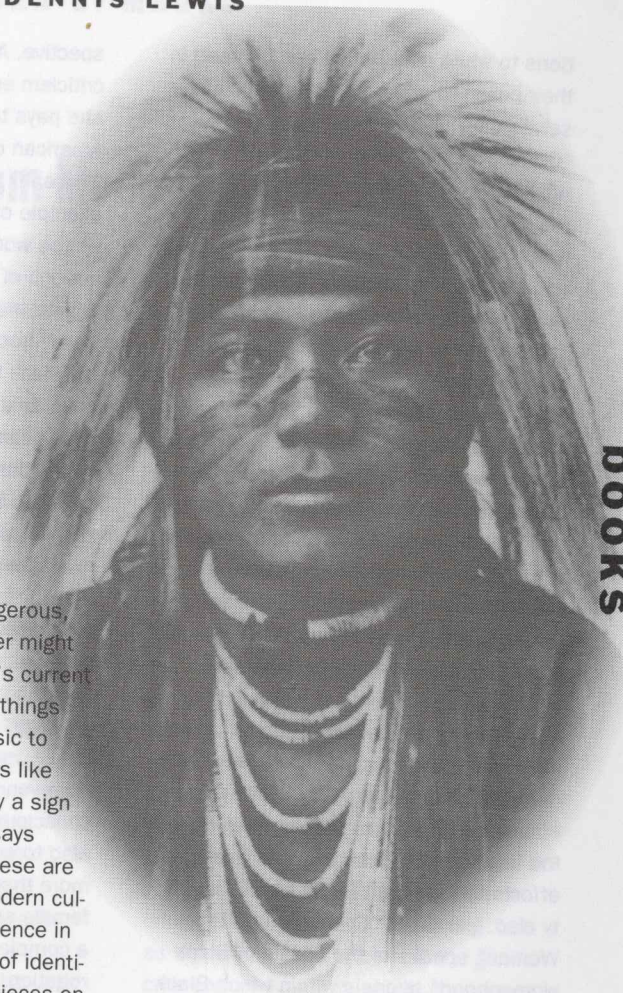
inside

- 3 community forum
- 6 art: the lungs of change
- 10 art and bread
- 12 art in action
- 14 resources
- 15 user's guide

Black Looks: race and representation

by bell hooks

Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 1992



books

sexual psychotics—sullen, dangerous, and violent. And while the reader might protest that mainstream media's current and increasing fascination with things Black (ranging from hip-hop music to Naomi Campbell ads and movies like *White Men Can't Jump*) is surely a sign of changes in attitude, not so, says hooks. In fact, she contends, these are more reflective of white post-modern culture's need and desire for difference in order to alleviate its own crises of identity and values. hooks' scathing pieces on Madonna and on Jenny Livingston's film *Paris is Burning* investigate two notable examples of this current white fascination for Blackness. Madonna is known for her desire for and envy of Black culture while Livingston's film turns a white anthropological gaze on Black gay drag balls. In hooks' analysis, Madonna and Livingston emerge as the quintessential white plunderers, temporarily positioning themselves as insiders to the Black experience and gay subcultures that they will subsequently exploit. In their return to the outsider position, hooks states, they are then able to "colonize" and profit from Black experience while masking their acts of racist aggression as affirmation.

hooks constantly underlines the connection between the maintenance of white control of the means of image production and the misrepresentation of Black experience and culture. The serviceability of these racist representa-

Angry, bloody-minded, and acute *Black Looks* is a 'shit disturber' of a book. Just a cursory glance at the titles of the book's twelve essays tells us that hooks is in a provoking kind of mood. "Eating the Other", "Selling Hot Pussy", and "Madonna: Plantation Mistress or Soul Sister?" are a few outstanding examples. In the introduction she warns us, "The essays in *Black Looks* are meant to challenge and unsettle, to disrupt and subvert." And she delivers on her promise as she investigates the various issues surrounding the (mis)representation of African American women and men in the mass media: literature, music, and film. Images, she forcefully argues (especially filmic ones) are deeply ideological in nature, determining not only how others see Black people but also how Black people see themselves. Priority, she therefore insists, must in the current struggle for liberation be given to efforts aimed at radically transforming these images.

In hooks' reckoning the representation of Blacks in the mass media still relies on overwhelmingly vicious and degrading stereotypes. Her chapter "Selling Hot Pussy" shows that the images of Black women have not advanced much beyond the deranged white fantasies of the 19th century: Black women as sexual savages or eternally self-effacing victims, alternately threatening or disposable. Black men, meanwhile, are packaged as animalistic

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who

tions to white domination can be seen in their power to make us experience ourselves as whites see us—as the “Other”. hooks’ sharp analysis of movies by Spike Lee and other Black male filmmakers shows the extent to which some Black males have embraced and are eager to circulate a very narrow range of images of Blackness. Of course, this is just one side of hooks’ double-edged thrust at the limitations found in representations of Black male identity. In her essay “Reconstructing Black Masculinity” she details the failure of many Black men to critique white patriarchal culture’s norms of masculinity and shows how the construction of Black masculinity by many Black male thinkers, writers, and filmmakers is limited by their phallogocentrism and misogyny.

While hooks is stinging in her exco-riation of those Black men who seek to redefine Black masculinity without embracing feminism, she remains none too impressed by many Black women’s efforts to represent Black female identity also. Her piece “Revolutionary Black Women” speaks of the “crisis of Black womanhood”, a crisis within which Black women are faced with the challenge of constructing their identity and subjectivity in the context of gender domination as well as racial and class domination. hooks points to the efforts within contemporary fiction by Black women to address the issues of Black male sexism, Black women’s labour, and the struggle for creativity, but for her, these efforts mostly fail to imagine new and radical models of Black female identity which allow Black women to assert agency in the world.

Despite her trenchant criticisms, hooks nevertheless appreciates the complexities Black women and men face in constructing new resistant versions of Black identity. She documents and affirms the struggles of women like Shirley Chisholm, Angela Davis, and Michele Wallace all of whom, while working for Black liberation, have had to challenge sexism. She pauses to lambaste Anita Hill for her lack of feminist per-

spective. And, in a brilliant piece of film criticism entitled “Micheaux’s Films”, she pays tribute to the late African American cinema auteur, Oscar Micheaux who she identifies as an example of a Black male filmmaker whose work challenges white patriarchal notions of masculinity.

In the essay “The Oppositional Gaze” hooks articulates a theory of critical Black female film spectatorship that enables its audience to resist dominant ways of seeing and knowing. Critical opposition, hooks maintains, is a given for most Black female viewers of Hollywood film. Inured by long years of racist and phallogocentric negation of Black femininity in mainstream cinema, most Black women have an oppositional perspective almost as their birthright. This unique view, *this* Black look, only becomes fully politicized and imbued with a capacity to change existing reality however, when Black women make the conscious decision not only to resist but also to create alternative texts that are more than just reactions. The Black female spectatorship hooks proposes is a complex amalgam of resistance, interrogation, and self-invention. It implies the creation of spaces for the construction of radical Black female subjectivity. She cites the films of Julie Dash, Camille Bishops, Kathleen Collins, and Ayoka Chenzira as examples of films informed by this notion of Black female spectatorship. For their films do more than offer counter-images to Hollywood distortions, they present new visions and potentialities for the expression of Black female identity.

In “Loving Blackness as Political Resistance”, hooks turns the white liberal platitude that says (à la Michael Jackson) “it doesn’t matter if you’re Black or white” on its head, insisting, on the contrary, that in the context of mainstream white media’s assault upon and negation of Black humanity, it does matter. And, further to this, that the love of Blackness must be at the core of the anti-racist struggle. What does it mean to love “Blackness?” For hooks it amounts to one of the most transgres-

sive actions Black people can take because it entails discarding the lenses which white domination has foisted on us and learning to see Blackness as a positive sign. In this society where whiteness continues to be identified with all that is normative and good while Blackness is identified with terror, what is needed to really undermine racism, hooks asserts, is a deconstruction of the category “whiteness” (and she offers one in her brilliant penultimate chapter). Whites would also benefit from such a deconstruction for it would help them to learn not to overvalue “whiteness”, and to break away from the puerile universalism which denies the fact of white domination by denying racial difference. In recognizing a non-white perspective on “whiteness” as a sign of terror and oppression, white people would shift perspectival locations and truly begin to see the world differently.

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LAURA U. MARKS

Sign Crimes/Road Kill: From Mediascape to Landscape

by Joyce Nelson
Toronto: Between the Lines, 1992

Joyce Nelson is that rare breed of writer, the non-academic cultural critic. *Sign Crimes/Road Kill* demonstrates the value, even national-treasure status, of a person whose métier it is to translate cultural theory into readable practice. This book collects essays from the past decade-plus that manage to refine a complex politics, a number of theoretical approaches, and a slew of slippery facts into rich, funny, and jargon-free essays. The movement from “sign crimes” to “road kill” in her title indicates a shift in Nelson’s critique from the instrumentalization of the media to the instrumentalization of the landscape. Nelson boldly claims a term of recent coinage, ecofeminist, to describe her current concerns. But the changed focus in these essays reflects less a shift of interests than an increase in the complexity of her politics.

Nelson makes acute connections among pieces of information that, if they brush against our consciousness at all, most often remain hermetically resistant to analysis in the mainstream media. Nelson spins from a delicate, almost negligible item, a line in the newspaper or an advertising slogan, a vast analytical web. In “Metaphorically Speaking:

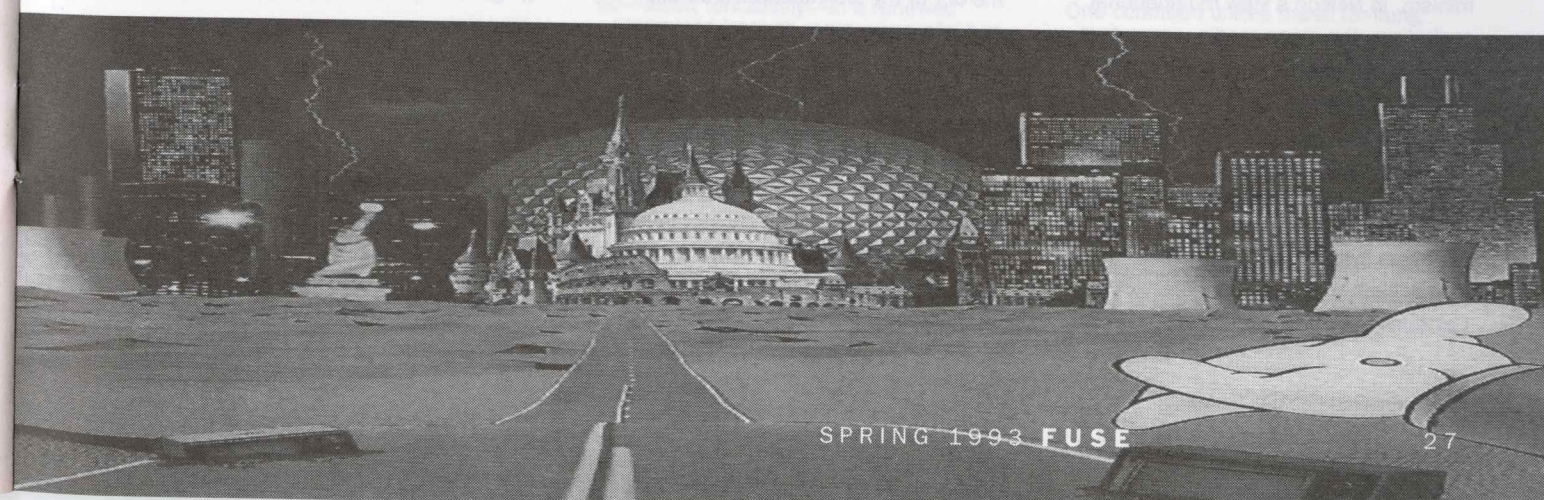
The Great White Screen” she riffs on this astounding image for the demise of Canadian culture, which CRTC chair and later president of the CBC, Pierre Juno initially employed ironically but later worked to deliver in all sincerity. She points out that the blankness and utter receptivity implied by the screen also describes the cultural situation of nations, such as Canada, that invest in hardware before they have the capacity to develop their own software. They are vulnerable, as Canada was with the installation of cable TV delivery systems, to the projections of the more powerful cultural other: the U.S. media industry.

If I had to generalize about the object of Nelson’s critique—which is risky, because the power of each of her essays is its particular focus—I would call it monoculture. This refers to the practice of massive cultivation of a single cash crop for export, a practice which displaces farmers’ local practices of planting various crops. Not only does this process, which Nelson autopsies in the 1990 “Culture and Agriculture: The Ultimate Simulacrum”, wipe out small farming and replace it with agribusiness, it also creates a relationship to the

earth that is increasingly virtual. Mass planting of hybrid seeds, bred to conform to the requirements of mechanical harvesters, dosed with chemical fertilizers, herbicides, and fungicides, yield acre upon acre of identical plantings with tasteless fruit. Artificial shit, Nelson suggests, is the “ultimate simulacrum of our time.” Indeed artificial shit, or the nitrogen fertilizers that replaced manure (following a surplus of petrochemical production after World War II), seems in Nelson’s view to describe the products of mass culture in general. Children’s heads, emptied of imagination by hours of TV viewing, bob as blandly as cobs of corn at the genetically ensured uniform height convenient for the mechanical picker.

In her attack on the levelling forces of institutionalization, Nelson is willing to take on board some allies that are unpopular or unfashionable among the cultural critique crowd. In particular, there is a thread of interest in spirituality throughout her writing here. On *Jesus of Montreal*, for example, Nelson gleans a spiritual value from Christianity, of all things, despite the forces of institutionalization within the Christian church. She praises Denys Arcand’s film for making

books



explicit the split between the church as institution and the Gnostic communities that managed to survive for the first three centuries of the Christian era. The latter, she writes, "appear to have been fully non-sexist as well as diverse in their beliefs and practices [and] purposely devoid of dogma" (92). With this change of focus Nelson is able to read Marx's oft-misquoted argument as a condemnation not of spirituality but of organized religion: "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed people, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of the spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people."

Of course, I use "the cultural critique crowd" above as a royal we for myself. I find the spiritual aspects of Nelson's thinking intriguing and disturbing. They are intriguing because they have the potential to connect and revalue parts of life that critical theory, fearful of accusations of idealism and essentialism, has steered around. Disturbing, because it's an easy slide from understanding how a community's spirituality informed its historical and political context, as Nelson does with the Gnostics (who recur at several points in *Sign Crimes/Road Kill*) to the ahistorical individualism that informs new age spirituality. For even when you mobilize Jungians, Starhawk, and Robert Bly with acute awareness, their shiftiness as bourgeois signifiers threatens to destabilize the political meanings you've carefully built up.

The other quality of Nelson's writing that pulls me both ways is a degree of paranoia that, while the vast proportion of the time seems utterly healthy, occasionally falls over into mournful determinism. In Nelson's view multinational capitalism, the mass media, computers, the aforementioned agribusiness, and a number of other monoliths are absolutely insurmountable. Psychographic pollsters "package the populace" and deliver it bound and gagged to corporations and politicians. Governments cynically negotiate international toxic waste shipping without a word to their electorates. Cartoons inform whole first-grade class-

es who can produce 30 identical drawings of TV superheroes but don't have enough imagination to listen to a story without pictures. All true! But... Not only does this view foreclose upon certain facts, it inhibits agency. The communities created by this differential processing may not be geographic, but they do exist.

Part of my objection here is technofetishist, as a tonic to the technophobia that creeps into Nelson's arguments at times. Television and home computers themselves are not bad; it's how they are used, and the uses are changing. The lowest-common-denominator, mass audience reached by broadcasting has been transforming, at an accelerating rate since the first of her essays in *Sign Crimes/Road Kill* appeared, to a diffuse, fragmented audience reached by narrowcasting—cable television, electronic bulletin boards, etc. The question is, which came first: did technologies create the new splintering communities, or are they deployed to follow them? It's necessary to distinguish between technologies themselves and how they are used. Nelson is usually right on in her assessment of corporate and government motivations in the deployment of technology. If she did focus more on these decentralizing technologies, I am sure she would diagnose that these institutions use them to better survey their audiences and constituents. And of course, they are only available to a privileged few. Thus there is rightful suspicion of the use of technology.

Still, suspicion aside, we need to consider that sometimes the community may come into being before the corresponding technology does. This leads me out of my technofetishist defense and into some more general comments. In a 1985 critique of media-induced conformism, "Capitalism, Despair, and the Media Machine," Nelson calls for the creation of "new 'ritual containers' that reaffirm humanity and reclaim powers that are meant to reside in real community interaction" (47). In order to sustain such communities and create such rituals, we need to be able to believe that

people are a bit resilient. We must believe that we all process the products of the media machine differently, and in so doing generate micropolitics. Here and there Nelson seems to have a romantic notion of what a person is, or could be at his or her best, exemplified by the intuitive, tradition-steeped family farmer of "Culture and Agriculture: The Ultimate Simulacrum." This person has an essential core of humanity that can't mix with war movies or electronic bulletin boards without being corrupted.

I would argue instead that people have the ability to transform the technologies, messages, and material conditions that work upon us. In the process, we may be transformed; our humanity may not be an essential core but an ever-shifting responsiveness. Hence my pleasure at Nelson's essay "Framing Reality: Thoughts on Soaps," where she argues provocatively that the despised (in North America) genre of soap opera is subversive in its very structure. Soap operas radically lack closure, she argues: they spin out plots for years and years, substitute nuanced dialogue for hit'n'run action, and maintain a profound sense of their own history in comparison to the "amnesia" of sitcoms and even, I would add, TV news. Nelson writes that "daytime soaps provide us with some useful tools" (112) for building political awareness. I'd argue that the people who find utopian tools in soap operas are the same people who will create new rituals. The communities, and the humanity they represent, may look a little different, but the people have been here all along.

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Forbidden Love

THE UNASHAMED STORIES OF LESBIAN LIVES



SOCIETY HAS AN UGLY WORD FOR THESE WOMEN: DIFFERENT!

Review of *Radical Reels*
The National Film Board's John Spotton Cinema, Toronto
October 1-11, 1992

ing relatively safe occasions for specific publics to encounter work to which they would otherwise have little or no access. Such occasions, importantly, have helped create new publics for independent media and have extended the dialogue about film and video beyond the producers themselves. In this way, artists are situated within a dynamic which can, and often does, provoke new aesthetic responses, responses grounded—albeit tentatively—in a renewed experience of the social. This type of programming is a much welcomed and refreshing intervention in the aesthetic vocabularies of traditional (but not dead yet) curatorial forms.

While some vision of, or hope for a broad coalition of struggles against oppression is at work in the conception and promotion of identity-based festivals or series, it is rarely manifested in the

SUSAN LORD

Up Against the Law

Much alternative film and video programming presented in Toronto over the last few years has shown a considered response to the emergence and concretization of identity politics. In gathering together time-based media produced by and/or representing peoples who share experiences of racism, sexism, and homophobia, programmers are provid-

programming itself. Of course, such events can hardly be called upon to invent or dictate what such a coalition may be, nor can one hold up the naive assumption that art, in whatever form, will have any widespread social impact in an era such as ours. Nonetheless, any attempt to envision the interlacing of specific publics deserves attention. *Radical Reels* represents just such an attempt.

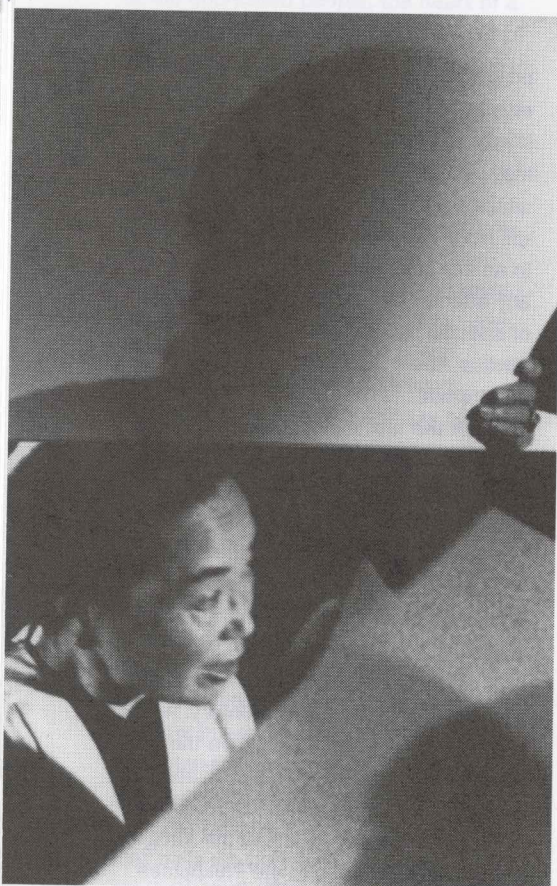
For the first eleven days of October 1992 the John Spotton Cinema saw its largest regular crowds. The timing was superb; by opening ten days after the *Festival of Festivals* closed, the series gave filmgoers a respite from all that scopophilia while banking on the recent acclaim given *Forbidden Love*, *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media* and *Legal Memory*. And, significantly, *Radical Reels* gave the work a fresh context that was at once more intimate and more straightforwardly political. The series linked the struggle of revolutionaries in the Philippines with that of sex workers in Toronto, AIDS activists with textile workers, lesbian history with the invasion of Panama. One condition unites these far-flung issues: the experience of being up against the law. Whether manifested in a brutal, deadly force or in a more ubiquitous and symbolic—but equally felt—form, the law is suffered and resisted by all those represented in *Radical Reels*. These two embodiments of the law are, of course, bound to each other; the police or the military have specific functions in the censoring of information, in

previous page

still from *Forbidden Love*, Lynne Fernie, Aeryl Weissman, colour film 1992. Courtesy the National Film Board of Canada.

below

still from *Shoot for the Contents*, Trinh T. Minh-ha, colour film. Courtesy Idera Films, Vancouver.



the obstruction of justice, in the reproduction and fuelling of intolerance.

It is fitting, then, that Lynne Fernie and Aeryl Weissman's *Forbidden Love: Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives* opened the series. Not only did it break some seriously calcified ground within the NFB itself (it being a Film Board production), *Forbidden Love* dug into Canada's not-so-pretty post-World War II era to expose the moral and legal climate suffered by lesbians. By interlacing archival images, oral histories and dramatized pulp fiction, the directors strike a smart and steamy balance between an exposé of oppression and a celebratory tribute to the many great babes who resisted that oppression with the strength of their desire. Filmmaking in Canada last year took an unprecedented turn to "history." *Legal Memory*, by Lisa Steele and Kim Tomczak, moves between 1958 and the present, tracing the mute archive and the tenuous memory for some truth behind or within the layers of representation which give us Leo Mantha, the last man legally hanged in British Columbia. The laws of the state meet those of the military and of the family on two grounds: homosexuality and homicide.

Repressive regimes of a different order are investigated and passionately and intelligently critiqued by Denys Arcand in *On est au coton*. Although there is a "return to history" here, or more accurately, a return of history, it has nothing to do with the filmmaker's intention. The censoring intervention of the NFB when the film was made in 1970 meant that Anglophones were only last year given access to one of the most important political documentaries made in Canada. Clearly situated on the side of Quebec textile workers and unwaveringly committed to a revolutionary vision, Arcand & Co. present us with an analysis of the brutal exploitation of the workers by "foreign" interests. Given the present greased slide into NAFTA, better timing couldn't be had for the re-emergence of this film. American "interests" certainly have their place as well in Nettie Wild's *A Rustling of Leaves*:

Inside the Philippine Revolution. Wild's relationship with the underground left of the New People's Army (NPA) of the Philippines took her, a very small crew and thousands of feet of film through a labyrinth of political power, deception and cruelty upon which stood the "Yellow Ribbon" campaign of Cory Aquino's government. The many manifestations of the reactionary right-wing, from the military to the wack-a-doo but extremely dangerous radio announcers hungry for dead NPA members and supporters, are given terrifying latitude as the official political parties dance around the profitable and long-standing American interests in this lush and poverty-ridden country.

Noam Chomsky's relentless analysis of American foreign and domestic policy, as well as of oppressive political regimes like East Timor, is inextricably bound to his commitment to the free dissemination of information. He is the icon of "bad" news. He writes big, fat books; and video and audio tapes of his too-numerous-to-count public talks enjoy a more sustained audience than Kevin Costner could even imagine. He has, in a sense, become a talking-head, or pen, *par excellence*. But Mark Achbar and Peter Wintonick animate the man and his message—making all 165 minutes of *Manufacturing Consent* an engrossing and "viewer-friendly" experience. This is accomplished by Wintonick's extraordinary skill and imagination as an editor (he is responsible for the stunning editing of Wild's *Rustling of Leaves*) and by both directors' engagement with the political crises of which Chomsky writes. A Chomsky-esque media activism certainly informs Barbara Trent's *The Panama Deception*. American foreign policy and the bourgeois media are both dealt serious indictments by the Empowerment Project's footage and analysis of the U.S. military massacre of thousands of Panamanian citizens. The media's ideological support of this "effort" is so pervasive that when the film was screened at a recent documentary festival *Deception* was deemed to be "hysterical filmmaking"—an age-old

response to passionate critique, eh girls?

When putting *Radical Reels* together, programmers Hans Burgschmidt and Marc Glassman responded to the integrity and profound dedication to social change exemplified in the films and tapes by occasionally inviting artists and activists to present or perform the work. By animating the series in this way, both the apparatus of the state and the possibilities for resistance became more tangible and more complex. For, in North America where the practice of democracy has become a privilege for those with access to the law, our energies are necessarily displaced between the legal mechanisms (making us "better" juridical subjects and, therefore, more proficient bureaucrats) and the work of making art or articulating critiques of capitalism or participating in grassroots activism—all the while, trying to pay the rent and have some fun! The combination of all of this was most clearly performed by Gwendolyn on October 8 in her multi-media presentation, *Working the Party*. Her years of activism and advocacy for the decriminalization of prostitution, safe sex and safety for sex workers, combined with her work as a stripper/performance artist/whore/filmmaker has put her in the immediate reach of the law in most of its forms. Having come up against cops on the street, legal aid, the health department, border guards, stereotypes and ignorance, Gwendolyn's refusal of liberal solutions delivers challenges to any number of counter-cultural groups from gay activists and feminists to human rights and health care workers. In so doing, she provokes a recognition of the need for a broader coalition of struggles. A "live" format was also given to both Max Allen for "Sex Dreams" and to Colman Jones for "AIDS Now: Rethinking HIV, STD and AIDS." For "Sex Dreams", Allen combined a presentation of various forms of pornography with a discussion of representations of sex, codes of censorship and the Supreme Court's 1992 *Butler* ruling. Censorship is always an especially pernicious arm of the

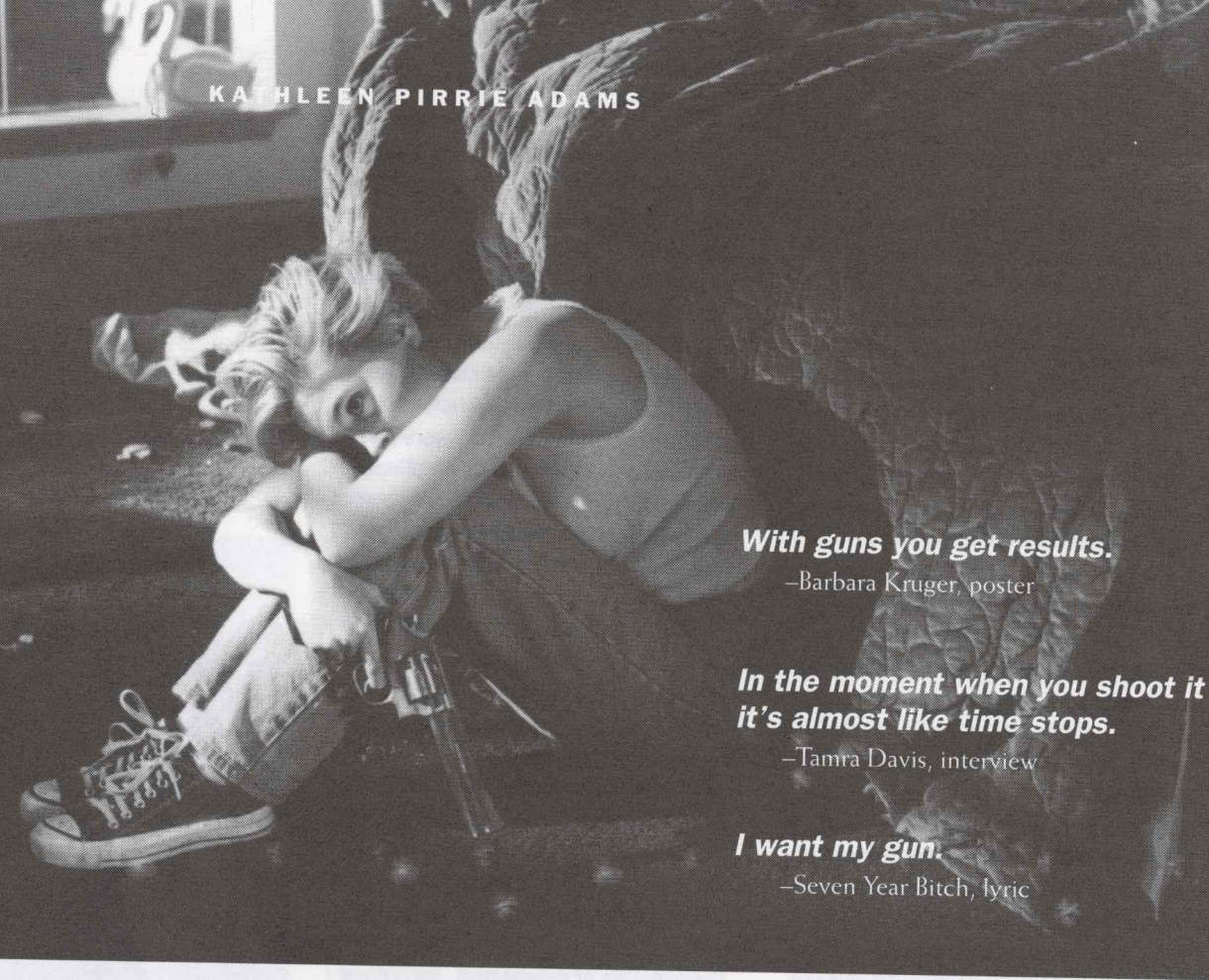
state, particularly in this age of family values when the devolution of funding for education and health care propels us ever further from any ethically informed political and social vision. All of this has a marked fatal impact on people with HIV. Colman Jones' presentation of excerpts from the 1992 International AIDS/STD Conference in Amsterdam and from his series on AIDS were contextualized within a discussion of new scientific information and a critique of the pervasive HIV=AIDS=Death model which has had a detrimental hold on funding, research and public opinion.

In the midst of clearly situated activist presentations and formally traditional social documentaries (with a couple of challenges to the genre, most notably *Legal Memory*) sat Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Shoot for the Contents*. While there is a certain logic in this selection—it's a response to the brutal quelling of the Tiananmen Square uprising—it is a surprising choice for a number of reasons, primarily due to its experimentation with the question of perspective. Trinh does not clearly situate herself and the expectation of a "stand" is continually displaced through the unfolding of stories and allegories within a Chinese guessing game called "shoot for the contents." It is a response to Tiananmen, but one which winds itself through the history of China and the memories of its women, and through the process of making such an open document.

In framing *Radical Reels* around "the current global crisis", Burgschmidt and Glassman have set themselves up for some problems. Is "globalism" another "universalism" in which the specificities of the struggles are transcended or subsumed? While many interesting and important linkages are made through such a programme, there are inevitable blind-spots that reflect the situated perspective of the programmers—the most apparent and unfortunate absence here, particularly given the politics of our own backyard, is work about racism. But, as we have seen, one frame often displaces another.

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KATHLEEN PIRRIE ADAMS



With guns you get results.

—Barbara Kruger, poster

In the moment when you shoot it it's almost like time stops.

—Tamra Davis, interview

I want my gun.

—Seven Year Bitch, lyric

Films at the Toronto Festival of Festivals
September 10 – 20, 1992

Of the many weapons of feminism, culture is surely one of the most efficacious. While politicized culture can at times become an exercise in ideological regulation, just as often it realizes itself in bold transgressions, eccentric and idiosyncratic inventions, or restorative and inspirational speculations. And, although at times certain theories and certain political practices have sought to assign feminism a specific culture, a particular genre, mode or method, or a singular and unified identity with an unmixed or uncompromised genealogy, feminist cultural practice has routinely and resolutely frustrated this impulse. And so, despite its own periodic failures of imagination, women's war on patriarchy has often found in culture production an almost perfect weapon—one that can, simultaneously, be aimed in many directions.

Any invention or advancement of new political subjects—feminists, women of colour, women artists, les-

bians, or even female citizens—entails both intervention and involvement in the production of knowledge. Central to this type of political project are: the expansion of the archive and the reconstruction of conceptual paradigms (the frameworks of knowledge). Of the inherited institutions, icons, and social identities assigned to women—or, more accurately assigned to that ephemeral and regulatory universal: Woman—most have been shook up, turned over, thrown out, or pulled to pieces. And while the acts of resistance and revolt have often been dramatic and even violent, questions of women's relations to violence and crisis seldom get asked in ways which do not immediately see them subsumed by discussion of women's victimization.

In terms of these concerns specifically, this year's *Festival of Festivals* offered a number of films by women which took up issues of sexual violence and abuse, vengeance, defiance, and malevolence in ways which provide a

real study of contrasting strategies for bringing violence and rupture into feminist consciousness in ways which explore and uncover their potential productivity.

German filmmaker Helke Sander's *Liberators Take Liberties* is a 3 hour documentary analysis of what can be described as a program of sexual violence (and murder) carried out in occupied Berlin during the spring of 1945. Numerous interviews with women who survived this unofficial campaign of terror, as well soldiers who were witness or party to such crimes, show that the 'outbreak' of rapes was widely accepted as part of the logic of war, and ironically enough, as part of the cost of 'liberation'.

In the first part Sander combines these interviews with historical footage of the Russian, American and French military presence in Berlin, as well as footage of a civilian population struggling to stay alive in the aftermath of

war-time devastation. Questioning survivors, witnesses, officials, and participants, Sander builds a sort of 'case for the prosecution', revealing a quite accurate assumption that the burden of proof will fall upon those hidden from history.

It is interesting that the ideological framework as well as the litigious approach used in the film parallel recent efforts of various women's groups to have war-time rape recognized as, not just a simple civilian matter, but an official war crime; that is, a practice of an occupying army which exceeds the 'proper' realms of officially declared war.

The second half, which deals with the offspring of these forced unions and the long-term social and psychological effects of these events, raises a number of additional question about various forms of—contemporary and historical—sexual warfare. Struggles for power which Sander's documentary argument shows can involve 'one's own men' as well as that of the enemy in ways which bear a direct relation to the erasures and memory lapses that are part of the process of constructing official history.

Tamra Davis' *Guncrazy*, a low-budget fictional feature, couldn't be further removed from Sander's film in terms of structure, style or sensibility. Where *Liberators* deals with history, *Guncrazy* deals in myth; where Sander's work is characterized by a kind of sobriety and scholarlyness, Davis' film is part of an anti-heroic independent tradition often characterized by its ambivalent fascination with middle America's culture of banality, violence, and sentimentality.

An earlier *Gun Crazy*, directed by Joseph H. Lewis in 1949, focuses on the power of the gun-wielding woman—the ultimate female as fetish—and, a male desire to direct that power. It's a story of an awe-inspired identification which draws together a fairground sharpshooter and her talentless and unambitious admirer. The hell's-attraction-light type figure of feminine evil functions in the not-so-good old-fashion *noir* manner, rendering it, in the end, a morality tale about stealing fire and putting things

back in order. (Of course the pleasure of the spectacle of power is never entirely absorbed by its conservative recuperation in the final damnation; but, perhaps such resistant readings are one of the luxuries of historical distance and ideological change.)

The new *Guncrazy* (Tamra Davis, 1992), a low-budget fictional feature tells the story of Anita (Drew Barrymore), a young woman who lives in a run-down trailer with her mother's ex-boyfriend (played by Joe Dallesandro of Warhol Factory fame), who, in much the same manner as a number of the local boys, assumes her sexual availability as a kind of routine privilege. A privilege confirmed by the combination of Anita's powerlessness and pathetic desire to please. The tables turn however when Anita learns to shoot a gun; and in her first act of revolt and self-determination she blows away her abusive step-father.

The gun (or more generally the crime) seen as a technology of self-invention or self-discovery, is a prominent trope in what is often termed the New American independent cinema. *Mystery Train*, *Repo Man*, *Boyz 'n the Hood*, *Swoon*, *Thelma and Louise* and *Blue Steel* all share a fascination with this characteristically American preoccupation. Interestingly, the feminist take on this theme has almost instantly become a genre: 'girls and guns'.

If "payback" violence is becoming a specifically feminist version of the trope, Davis contains its effects somewhat by feeding it back into the more familiar American myth of the killer-couple, with its requisite tragic bloodbath ending. While questions about degrees of complicity with conservative narrative structures are never entirely irrelevant for popular feminisms, in this instance it is interesting that Bonnie leaves a dead Clyde behind, walking away from the scene of carnage unpunished—living, even after love dies.

The aura of female crime always exceeds the 'general' mythologies of crime. Gangster, terrorist, gunslinger, or cop: all have a surplus significance when gendered female. This is, in part,

because these relations to the Law are so easily distinguished from the crimes traditionally associated with femininity: prostitution, kleptomania, infanticide, or crimes of passion.

Popular culture constructions of the space of female violence have a long history. While the current one is clearly a media phenomenon, an earlier 19th century version was similarly the effect of the rise of the popular press and the penny novel. At another level it is a part of a re-articulation of pre-existent ideology; one which, in vacillating between concepts of women as either constitutionally incapable of violence or inherently predisposed to it, denied the possibilities of agency or intention.

While for some feminism and violence will remain wholly irreconcilable, for others, cinematic depictions of the reckless and often partial responses to systems of oppression which figured in films such as *Guncrazy* offer their spectators the satisfactions of seeing a wrongful order transgressed as well as the spectacle of women's assumption of



Ebony Jerido and Ariyam Johnson in still from *Just Another Girl on the I.R.T.*, Leslie Harris (dir.), film 1992

phallic power.

The power of such fantasies as attested to by the popularity of *Thelma and Louise*, the immediate and far-reaching impact of Re:search's *Angry Women* anthology (as well some part of Paglia success), and the importance of the Riot Grrrls' musical revolution, indicate the need for feminism to include space for working itself out in ways which risk stirring up ambivalent impulses and misshapen desires.

While *Guncrazy's* Anita "does it" decisively and masterfully, with justification, the protagonists of three other films screened at this year's Festival deal with more confused and awkward responses to the weirdness and quiet horror of family life and violence.

In the other "girls and guns" movie suburban tranquillity is upended, first within the family and then throughout the neighbourhood, when Debbie Bender (Diane Lane) is given a gun by her husband partly as a sign of concern for her (his?) well-being, partly as a symbolic show of (his) status. *My New Gun* (director Stacy Cochran's first feature), uses the gun's destructive potential to highlight underlying hostilities and obsession and the terror that such hostilities and obsession may spin out of control.

Alison Maclean's *Crush* is another film that explores the psychic violence under the surface of a complex web of relationships. In it a first crush gone bad leads from character assassination to murder, as the 15-year-old protagonist,

Angela, turns her aggressions toward the figure of female emancipation—a dynamic but irresponsible, sexually provocative bisexual stranger who seduces the girl's father. It's difficult to tell whether this perverse family romance where lesbian desire and feminine competitiveness collide is likely to be read as a commentary on the potentially tragic consequences of internalized homophobia and adolescent inability to come of age sexually (or come to grips with sexual, non-nurturing adult women), or, whether it will in the end be read as a horror show which repeats an age-old moralistic (and misogynist) laying of blame.

In contrast *Just Another Girl on the IRT*, director Leslie Harris' first feature, 'solves' the problems of coming of age sexually in an unambiguously positive and progressive fashion—with the crisis of teenage pregnancy resolved, motherhood integrated with college education, and autonomy unsacrificed. Depicted as alternately sullen and sassy, the film's 17-year-old protagonist periodically speaks directly to the camera in a manner which engages the audience's sense of complicity with her rebelliousness, while simultaneously suggesting a position as one whose concerns and caution—like those of a parent—will go unheeded. This combination of characterization and technique plays off and undermines the patterns of identification which suggest for the spectator of the 'social problem' film an attitude of paternalism or impartial observation, and saves the African American protagonist from being read as a case-history or victim of circumstance.

The twin violences of silenced agency and historical absence are also taken up by experimental filmmaker Barbara Hammer, whose *Nitrate Kisses* is the first feature length film of her 50 film career. A central figure in feminist and lesbian counter-cinemas, Hammer presented a new film in which the themes of aging, sexual marginalization and historical erasure are examined through a poetic compilation of archival and enacted images of gay and lesbian

sexuality, voice-over testimonies, and textual interjections.

Lynne Fernie and Aerlyn Weissman's feature *Forbidden Love* served as a kind of thematic complement to Hammer's film by offering a 50s pulp novel-style story of lesbian desire intercut with documentary reminiscences of those years. (see Susan Lord's "Up Against the Law" in this issue.) While Brenda Longfellow's *Gerda* revisions the Gerda Munsinger scandal of 1966 from an ironic but decidedly feminist perspective. (see Richard Fung's "Historical Revisions" in *Fuse* Vol. 16 No. 2.)

For at least a decade the *Festival of Festivals* has served as a showcase for emerging talents—both within the mainstream movie world and from within the ranks of the 'independents'. As such the *Festival*—and more specifically the programming done by filmmaker and University of Toronto professor Kay Armatage—has proven especially important for women film-goers and filmmakers. Unfortunately, however, the *Festival* often also proves to be the only venue in which we can trace the careers of those who have already emerged. The high profile of women directors in the *Festival* catalogue is not played out elsewhere—in the deal-making, publicity campaigns, or commercial releases. Consequently, it is often only the Canadian or experimental films which are re-screened. And, while the national success of *Forbidden Love* and *Gerda* is both heartening and historically critical, the other films mentioned—with the exception of Hammer's *Nitrate Kisses* which will be part of this year's Inside Out Lesbian and Gay Film and Video Festival program—for the most part go unseen.

Kathleen Pirrie Adams is a writer and film programmer.

BARBARA LATTANZI



Video Witnesses: Networking in the 90s
Video Festival at Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center
Buffalo, New York, U.S.A.
October 9 - 25, 1992
Festival Coordinator: Laura McGough
Programming and Production Consultant: Chris Hill

MANIFEST DIVERSITY

Toward a Video Literature of Community Activism

still from *Western Shoshone Land is Not For Sale!*, Jesse Drew and the Western Shoshone Defense Project, U.S.A. video 1992

A rugged Western landscape. An isolated area of a vast range surrounded by mountains and presented in consumer video hues of mottled greens, browns, and grey-blues. The wind that speeds through this open space is palpably present in the plastic rumbling it makes across the camcorder microphone as the video operator adjusts to the wind gusts, carefully reframing a drama that shatters the brittle remoteness of this Western Shoshone landscape, a region most often referred to as Nevada.

In the videotape *Western Shoshone Land is Not For Sale!* we see sheriff deputies and a Western Shoshone woman, Carrie Dann, in verbal and physical confrontation. She and her sister have for years used unoccupied, "undeveloped" Western Shoshone land for cattle ranging but sheriff deputies are there to confiscate the cattle on which their livelihood depends, because the government claims that they are not permitted to use what it calls federal land. Carrie Dann yells, "I want you to show me the land title. If the government has a title to the land, I want you to show me. Put the title in my hands now." Her

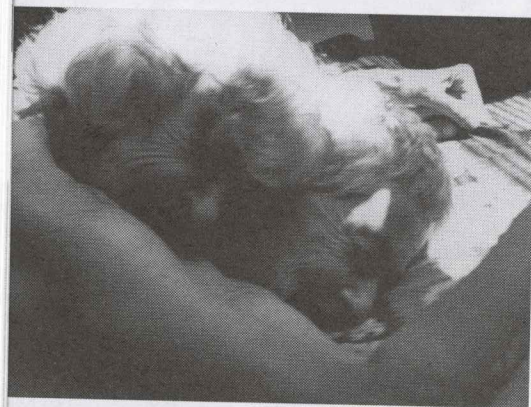
insistence on the *presence* of a greater injustice continues as the video witness (Jesse Drew) records Dann and an unidentified officer. Their interaction transforms a historical narrative of "manifest destiny" into vivid details of the present moment: actions of complicity on the one hand and resistance on the other. "All you people want to do today is to come in here and steal my cows and you're stealing my land to get it. You didn't take it in 1872. You're taking it now. And that's the basic truth of it. You're doing it now!"

The demand for recognition of the legal, rational, and moral contradictions within systems of institutionalized power, articulated not as historical abstractions but as *present*, specific, localized situations involving ordinary people is both Carrie Dann's challenge and one of the challenges of the video witness. During the 1992 *Video Witnesses Festival* audiences had the opportunity to view and discuss the proliferation of local approaches to cultural and political activism, as well as local approaches to social and historical analysis, that have been stimulated

or extended by the video camcorder revolution.

This festival, the third in as many years, featured screenings of over 50 videotapes from North America and Europe at Hallwalls, with many more screened at other locations in Buffalo, on the public access TV channel (Buffalo Cable Access Media), and on a pilot educational access TV channel (Buffalo Learning Television). There were presentations by video artists and members of video collectives, teleconferencing with the collective LAVA (Los Angeles Video Activists), panel discussions ranging from histories of community video production to current uses of video in AIDS activism, a workshop on low-power TV broadcasting conducted by Toronto artist Jeff Mann, a media art residency project involving local students facilitated by Tom Poole from the collective Black Planet Productions (producers of the Bronx public access series *Not Channel Zero*), and an interactive video installation, *Buffalo Under Surveillance*, by Julia Scher.

The *Video Witnesses Festival* exists as an on-going research project. This



still from *Nitrate Kisses*,
Barbara Hammer (dir.), film 1992

year it showcased a range of video strategies which are being used for the development of critical consciousness in communities networking and mobilizing for social change. The festival videos engaged an array of issues which were further articulated or counterpointed by their juxtaposition. Diverse audiences were addressed by thematic groupings such as "Native American Landrights", "Rural and Urban Environmental Issues", "Housing, Taxes, and Unemployment", "Gay Rights and Activism", "The Body: Representation and Violence", etc.

One of the issues which the festival addressed is the question of motivation. What can motivate people to pick up a camera and make their own messages within a public arena? One practice that speaks to this issue is reflected in festival tapes which foreground resistance to the cultural authoritarianism of mainstream media. Such resistance constitutes a basis for inter-community identification. The works present to their viewers specific models for looking "against the grain" or (borrowing from the cultural theorist, bell hooks) "talking back" to the dominant media and/or its official versions of events. A specific example is *Dukkke: A Video Chainletter* by the video collective Uncommon Sense (1991) which collides video documentation of ex-Klu Klux Klan leader and Louisiana gubernatorial candidate David Duke (footage of him leading a KKK cross-burning and early interviews where he spells out his loud-and-clear racist agenda) with mainstream media highlights of Duke's moderate "new public persona". *Dukkke: A Video Chainletter* is also an example of what festival producer, Laura McGough, describes as one of the most interesting issues to come out of the festival—"how work is being put out and distributed"—*Dukkke* bypassed conventional means of distribution in that it was mailed person-to-person in the manner of a chainletter to potential voters in Louisiana. The original audience for *Dukkke* was challenged to enter into the production/distribution process to the extent that the recipient was intended to

copy the tape, screen it for others, and mail these copies to other potential viewers/voters.

Another example of a cultivation of an oppositional, critical spectatorship that can unite communities sharing an agenda for change is *Hands on the Verdict* (1992) by LAVA (Los Angeles Video Activists). Produced for the public access satellite TV network, Deep Dish, *Hands on the Verdict* skilfully compiles the work of various community access TV producers who were mobilized by the Rodney King verdict and the Los Angeles uprising that followed. In a long-distance phone teleconference with the festival audience, LAVA's coordinating producers Liz Canner and Julia Metzger described their desire to present a historical context that would help convey the complexity of the situation and include different perspectives of the many groups involved. Although critical of mainstream media representations of the Los Angeles unrest, *Hands on the Verdict* does not so much analyse those representations, as present a multi-textual counteranalysis of the official verdict, as well as the responses of diverse communities to the verdict's implications and effects.

While LAVA proposes a strategy for countering the manipulations of mainstream media, *TV Boris & Video Misha* (1992) by Friz Productions creates for Hungarian television an elaborate analysis of the mechanisms at work in such representations. By foregrounding what it describes as the Western circus of media spectacle, from an Hungarian vantage point, it recognizes the paradoxical potential of the media to free Eastern Europe from an ethos of alienation. In the tape, we are presented camcorder footage from the 1991 attempted coup—towards the end of Mikhail Gorbachev's rule in the U.S.S.R.—footage of soldiers and tanks, Boris Yeltsin and thousands of people on the streets in Moscow. The two commentators, who are sitting at a table, keyed in directly over those images (their words interacting in freely associative counterpoint to the images project-

ed behind them), reflect: "The people have learned how to act as if the cameras were on them...performing specific acts [of resistance] in the knowledge of how television works." We also watch a deconstruction of the home video which Gorbachev made with his son-in-law while in captivity in his Crimean home during the failed coup. Gorbachev's camcorder performance for the Western media was a tactic for enhancing his credibility and as a weapon for extending his diminishing power in a war of images.

TV Boris & Video Misha's apocalyptic deconstruction of global scale media wars fought through spectacles of pure aesthetic sensation, images ultimately emptied of political or ethical content, or history, seems to be significantly countered by the decentralized micropolitics of many of the other festival tapes. Those which seem to be concerned with deepening responses to the real include such works as Alan Jamieson's *Seneca response to tax decision* (1992), *Overkill* (1991) by Brian Smith, *Parkdale Prostitutes* (1992) by Chix Unlimited, *Spring of Lies* (1992) by the Media Coalition for Reproductive Rights, *We Are Not a Force To Be Taken Lightly* (1992) by Scarlot Harlot, *Breathless* (1992) by Cathy Scott and Susan Levine for Paper Tiger TV, *Allegany County* (1992) by Kevin O'Shaughnessey, *Cullyhanna: Report of the Public Inquiry* (1992) by Ray McCathy and Freda Grealy for the Cullyhanna Justice Group, *Absolute Quiet: A Dialogue* (1991) by David Kluff, and many others.

The need to nurture effective video expression, to create a video literature of the people, and to develop local approaches to both a politics of identity and a politics of transformation, which network across cultural and geographic borders was powerfully evoked in videotapes presented by Marta Maktar and Marie-Hélène Cousineau from the Woman's Video Workshop of the Tariagsuk Video Center in Igloolik, Northwest Territories. These videotapes produced by and for Inuit people of Igloolik about Inuit culture, included the

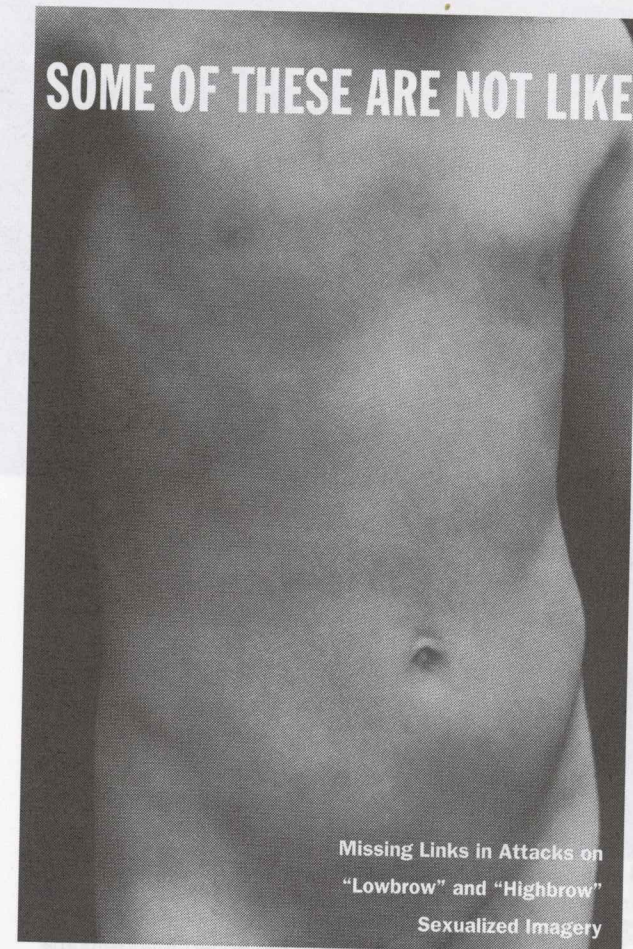
Igloolik Isuma production *Qaggiq* (1989) by Zacharias Kunuk, and productions from the Women's Video Workshop such as *Attaguttaalug Starvation* and *Qulliq*. In *Qaggiq*, produced and acted in the Inuktitut language by members of the Igloolik community, the scenario stages four families building a qaggiq—a large communal igloo—in a late-winter Inuit camp in the 1930s. There, they celebrate the coming of spring with games, singing and drum dancing. In *Qulliq* (1992), the women of the workshop reenact a traditional women's activity: the use of the qulliq, the seal fat lamp and stove of the old days, the only source of light and warmth. They tell the story in words and song as they build a qulliq inside their igloo. The reenactments of early twentieth century daily life performed by community members are not seamless, imparting a distinctive tension to the experience of viewing: a slippage of frames of reference, the past overlapped incompletely onto the videated particulars of the present, transforming both into a vibrant realm of ritual and play.

One might speculate that the only very recent exposure of remote areas of the Northwest Territories to mainstream satellite television has contributed to a condition in which the people of Igloolik are less likely to mistake that brand of television for what they can do with the technology themselves. The affirmative uses of video by Igloolik community producers exist in a sustained tension with urgent issues of cultural survival. This is part of the power of their work. Like these cultural producers, video witnesses are creating models for opposing the "manifest destiny" of global communications hegemonies with the manifest diversity of their own insistent voices.

Barbara Lattanzi is a media artist who produced the first Video Witnesses Festival in 1990 and continues to live and work in Buffalo, New York.

PAULA GIGNAC

SOME OF THESE ARE NOT LIKE THE OTHERS



Missing Links in Attacks on "Lowbrow" and "Highbrow" Sexualized Imagery

Review of Kodak Chair Lecture Series on Film and Photography
Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, Toronto
September 24, 1992 – April 12, 1993

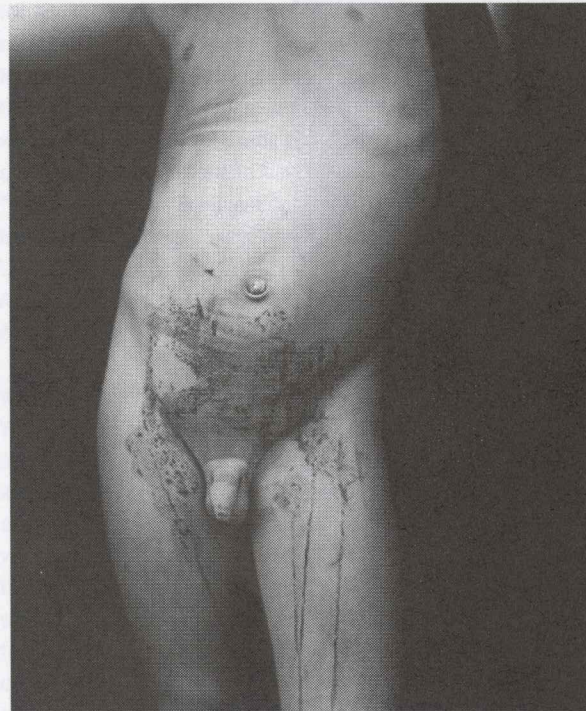
If, during what has already come to be known as the post-Butler era, Canadian artists have begun to anticipate with revulsion what the full effects of censorship's chill might be; we owe at least some of our ability to dissect the anatomy of the freezer burn to an education received at the almost fatal expense of the arts community in the United States.

In light of current events in this country, and in preparation for a wider censorial assault, the appearances of Americans Sally Mann and Douglas Crimp as part of the Kodak Chair Lecture Series on Film and Photography, would indeed seem fortuitous: in providing an opportunity to revisit aspects of a parallel universe of censorship south of the border which might not otherwise be illuminated in debates surrounding the Canadian experience.

In an appearance prefaced by Toronto's summer of great discontent following the first selective applications of the Butler decision, photographer Sally Mann's described what she believed to be her own imminent foray into the censorship arena set in motion by the production of her most recent work, *Immediate Family*. Despite the fact

previous page

Neil Nude © Edward Weston, 1925 © Arizona Board of Regents, Center for Creative Photography, 1981. Reproduced with permission from *The Day Books of Edward Weston: Two Volumes In One*, Aperture, New York, 1990



that Mann and her work have so far managed to escape formal prosecution under obscenity and child pornography laws, it is an anomaly that seems to sit uneasily with her, and one that hasn't kept her from being embroiled in the censorship debate—given what is uniquely at stake for her.

In preparation for the book's release, and for a travelling exhibition of the work scheduled to open at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, Mann has had to prepare herself for legal battles which might accompany publication and exhibition of the photographs, especially given the experiences of close friend and photographer Jock Sturges, and fellow Virginian artist Alice Sims. In the Sturges case, negatives, photographs, camera equipment, business records, a computer and even personal diaries were confiscated as part of a raid on Sturges' home in connection with child pornography charges levied by the FBI. In the Sims' case—which pre-dates Sturges', and the



times naked children in relation to conservative interpretations of obscenity and child pornography laws, and romanticized notions of family life.

Indeed, despite Mann's lack of intent, photographs such as *Popsicle Drips* (Mann's homage to photographer Edward Weston) are also about the subtle deconstruction of museum practice that occurs when women such as Mann surmount traditional gender and role restrictions and elevate to Art, a subject matter and a form of praxis that to more than fundamentalist's advantage, has historically been counted on to altogether bar or at least obstruct women's entry into the realm of "serious" ART. And while fundamentalist-driven prosecution is wholeheartedly meant to act as a defunding and demoralizing mechanism—in reality, Mann's photographs tacitly challenge that this tactic merely augments the systemic sexist censure techniques that many women already face in academia and Art.

Although the lesbian and gay community has long been the target of biased harassment in these matters, if one seriously entertains the premise that persecution of certain types of sexualized imagery at both street and institutional levels is just so much snake oil sold to divert public attention from the epistemology of systemic violence against women, the abuse and exploitation of children, and a necessary critique of sexism within pornography; then it's possible to see in these moralizing

now infamous trial surrounding seizure of materials in the Robert Mapplethorpe retrospective at the Contemporary Art Center in Cincinnati—in addition to an investigation of Sims for alleged production of child pornography, police executed a seizure of a different type, the removal of Sims' children under "protective custody".

By her own admission, Sally Mann began photographing her children in response to the toll motherhood might otherwise take on her photographic career. But by integrating her particular version of motherhood as a form of praxis in her work, Mann's photographs represent a challenge to more than just the obvious agenda of the right.

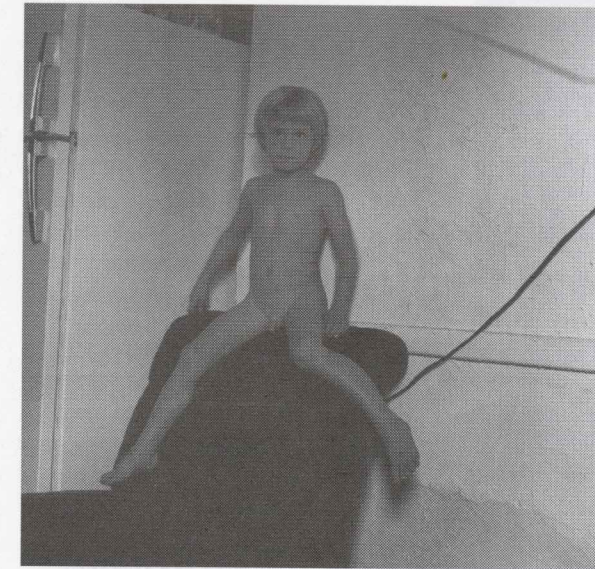
While photographs from *Immediate Family* such as *Winter Squash* and *Kiss Goodnight* are indicative of Mann's own ambivalent relation to the territory that sensuality and sexuality occupy in the shifting sands of childhood, others embody more than just the controversy surrounding the depiction of her some-

assaults an attempt to repress a host of challenges issuing from various branches of feminism, in addition to those issuing from the lesbian and gay liberation movements.

Considering the fact that Edward Weston's invocations of classical style helped (de)form the basis of contemporary photographic curatorial practices and museumship, it is hardly surprising that Mann's relation to Weston's photographs should become one of many links to yet another photographer more obviously determined to use reinterpretations of Weston's work to reveal exclusionary traditions of a different type. Compared to Mann's understated reworking, however, Robert Mapplethorpe's homage to Weston's "Pepper" series,—*Helmut and Brooks* (a formally contrived rendition of fist-fucking)—is pure hubris.

It is Mapplethorpe's particular brand of hubris, and also the legacy of his work, that Douglas Crimp spoke to, in an appearance at Ryerson following Sally Mann's. Complementing Mann's illuminations, and reading from the introduction of *On the Ruins of the Museum* (a soon to be released compendium of his writings), Crimp mused on Mapplethorpe's exposure of the art world's absence of a coherent philosophy in its ability to discern differences between sexual exploitation and sexual expression as mediated by sexualized imagery, compounded by its refusal to acknowledge its indebtedness to an aesthetic derived from homoerotic roots but steeped in homophobic practice.

With respect to this contradiction, Edward Weston's attitude toward the twin perversions of being both obvious and homosexual, is an exemplary case in point. Known for numerous voicings establishing his personal distaste for homosexual acts, Weston was not, however, adverse to frequenting sailor swish-bars, or dressing himself or his 13 year old son in drag, to distance himself from middlebrow, bourgeois sensibilities in favour of one more bohemian. If one considers Weston's understanding and "tolerance"—an allegory of historical and curatorial practices of the muse-



l to r from page 38

Popsicle Drips, © Sally Mann, 1985. Reproduced with permission from *Immediate Family*, Aperture, New York, 1992

Nicholas et Christophe, silver print, 1989, © Jock Sturges. Courtesy: Jane Corkin Gallery, Toronto, Canada

Jesse McBride, 1976. Copyright © 1976 The Estate of Robert Mapplethorpe

um—Mapplethorpe's provocative version of homage was successfully pragmatic.

As pointed out by Crimp, more than anything else, Mapplethorpe's legacy is rooted in his continual execution of coups de grace flawless in their post-modernist technique. Through his use of appropriated homoerotic images and denial of the zoning of pornography which sought to criminalize the representation of legal sexual practices, Mapplethorpe issued a challenge to right-wing conservatives and fundamentalists which eventually forced the art world to confront both the "ART" of the homosexual content of his work, as well as its iconoclastic relation to art practices.

While no one has yet argued that the images portrayed in seized copies of *Bad Attitude* constitute art; they need not be in order to disrupt a hegemony comparable to that tackled by Mapplethorpe. For as Mapplethorpe's images were transported from the realms of pornography in order to legitimize a homosexualized artistic identity, so lesbians have mounted a like claim to self-invention and empowerment by shamelessly thieving and reinscribing images traditionally stored in other, secret museums.

And, if at street level, the lesbian and gay community has, by necessity, been mobilized by the new fervour and flavour of Canada Customs' and Project P's perennial attacks on homoerotic

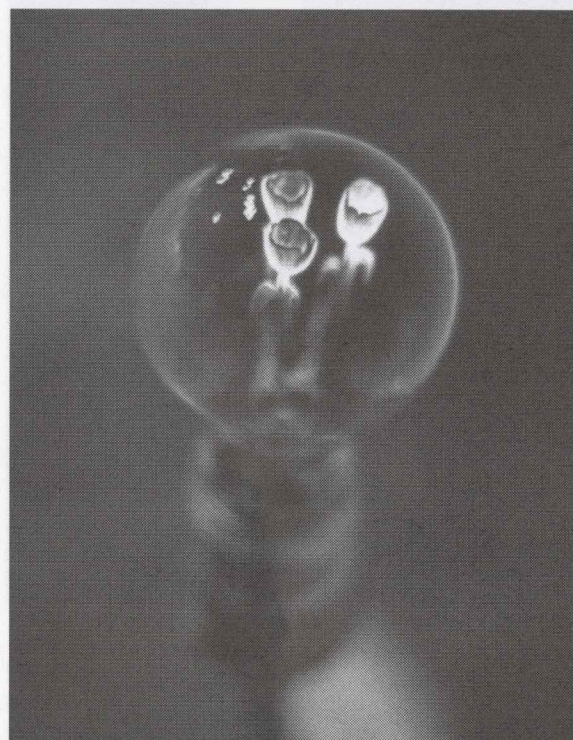
imagery; if Sally Mann's and Douglas Crimp's experience indicates anything, it is that the arts community in Canada will soon be called upon to mobilize in preparation for a similar escalation of attacks—especially in the wake of further changes to obscenity and child pornography laws which could be recommended by the Standing Committee on Justice sometime in March.

Like its American counterpart, the Canadian arts community must also make the links between attacks on "low-brow" and "highbrow" sexualized imagery, and progress beyond the symptomatic myopia of its own sexist and homophobic traditions to construct a coherent and effective anti-censorship discourse able to discern between sexual exploitation, sexual representation, and still other forms of expression simply mediated by sexualized imagery.

Paula M. Gignac is an artist and environmentalist currently living in Toronto.

The Kodak Chair Lecture Series on Film and Photography at Ryerson continues to April 12, 1993. For information regarding speakers, dates and times contact the Film and Photography Dept., or Coordinator Steven Manford at 979-5000 Ext.6843. Note: The author would like to acknowledge the gracious edit of this article by Kathleen Pirrie Adams

Gathering: The Memorial Project



Curated by Clamorous Intentions
A Space, Toronto
November 7 – December 19, 1992

Gathering, the visual art component of *The Memorial Project* promised to merge the notions of mourning and activism, an AIDS era perspective most convincingly argued by Douglas Crimp in "Mourning and Militancy" (*October* 51). The curatorial statement also expressed a desire to counter the critiques of the ideological functioning of the public memorial, made by such artists as Krzysztof Wodiczko and Barbara Steinman, by contextualizing the memorial or monument in the politicized social arena of AIDS. The former critiques focus on the way public monumentality in memorials serve ideological purposes, through a *forgetting* of their original content thereby depoliticizing the representative value of memory. Memory in the

social arena of AIDS would seem already politicized because often mourners' fear of themselves contracting a virus exists amidst highly politicized constellations of language and power. Likewise, Crimp emphasizes the truism: "context makes every difference" in transitions from mourning to normal recovery, when what is recovered is from the outset far from "normal".

In order to counter anti-monumentalizing critiques, the project needed to recover a monumentality. It was seen, by the curators as something that could be comprised of many different modes and practices so that, as a whole it could become, once more, a monument. The curators did so by drawing together some highly incongruous work, which

was loosely linked through a broadly conceived memorializing status and a presupposed activism.

Some of the objects in *Gathering* function as memorials in that they render public their subjective, mnemonic function, while often establishing more oblique relationships to activism. A number of pieces in the show are actually modelled after the most publicly ritualistic of memorials, the altar. Wall pieces like those of David Goodman, Amelia Jimenez, James McSwain and Elaine Carol all take the form of an altar, a place of spiritual renewal. But, if any succeed in linking memory, mourning and activism, it would have to be the bright red, ten foot high altar/staircase of Karen Augustine entitled *Two Steps*. This piece functions as both memorial to artist and activist Michael Smith, and as information bearer. For what cannot be seen from the floor level (one must first ascend the staircase in order to discover them), are panels of text concerning the growing problem of AIDS among women of colour, and a scrapbook of poetry and press clippings relating to both Smith and Wendi Modeste.

A piece which similarly renders explicit a connection between mourning and activism is video artist Michael Balser's installation, *Silence*, which serves as a grim reminder of the figure Silence=Death, the prime slogan of ACT-UP. Whereas this slogan/logo has been used in the past to mobilize activists to vocalize, Balser metonymically condenses death into silence by displaying on the monitor the silent, still, white text of the latter word on a black ground. A moment of silence in memory of...

The Spirit Rages by Rebecca Baird, on the other hand, relies on both the sensuousness of its materials and the associations that those materials possess. A translucent relief of a wolf's pawprint poured in glass and set in a thick base of graphite serves as both a trace of something past, and a visually seductive object. Whereas glass reflects and transmits light, the graphite absorbs it suggesting a contrast between life and death. Graphite, in this form, is also a

carcinogenic substance, thus reinforcing the latter term in the opposition. This memorial is then conceived as a meditation on the monument as "trace".

Other pieces examine the structure of memory itself—the piece chosen to represent the *oeuvre* of Regan Morris for example, or the photographic cabinet of Kim Fullerton. The latter piece, *Untitled (Barry Cole)*, simultaneously memorializes a friend through the photographic capture of familiar moments (photo-booth snapshots), and makes use of both the conventions of Victorian reliquary statues, and the paradoxical absence at the heart of photographic representation itself.

Like Fullerton's piece, many of the others memorialize specific individuals, and in doing so, they carry the mourning and memory theme one step closer to the actual process of mourning. Objects, belonging to, or associated with the lost loved-one undergo, in mourning, a transformation. Desire for the return of the loved-one is cathected onto the objects remaining. Any of the given objects may, then, aid in the recovery of the person. It is interesting that so many artists represented chose to construct their art pieces out of objects like these, Joe Lewis, Carol Martyn and Kenny Baird, for instance, as well as Nathalie Olanick, who mounted on the wall an old medical light-box, with applied vinyl graphics—one in the style of the late Toronto artist Tim Jocelyn, and the other reminiscent of friend Bruce Cumber. On the floor rested a children's light fixture. The light bulb from the 1940s contained electrified filaments in the form of tulips. The fragility and uniqueness (Olanick was able to find only one bulb) mirrored the lives which had been extinguished.

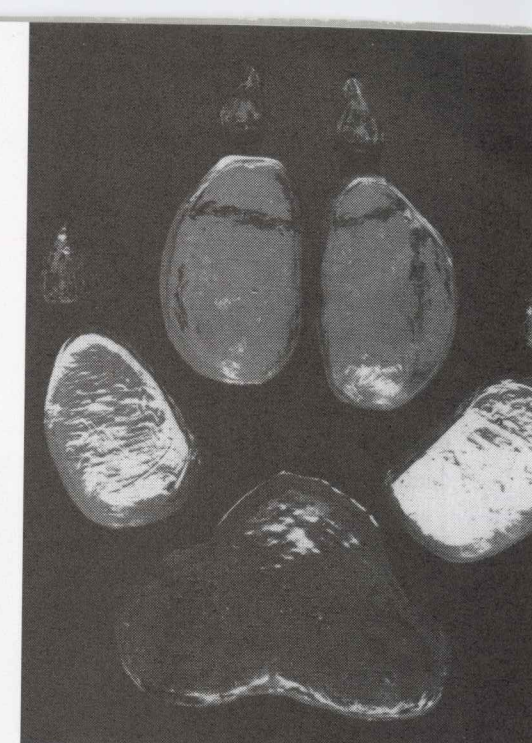
Other pieces seemed to come out of an entirely different set of practices. The single pieces selected from the bodies of work related to AIDS, created primarily in the last decade, of Stephen Andrews, Andy Fabo, Robert Flack, Regan Morris and David Rasmus, among others, have as an underlying principle the need to be viewed in the context of

the rest of their work. Intended for forms of viewing relatively specific to the gallery setting, these single pieces become unhinged when drawn as sole representatives of the artists' work, and when combined with the more idiosyncratic ones.

In some ways, it was the work which did not represent only some of the production of art in the last decade that were the most provocative examples of what is at stake in such an exhibit, posing the question: what makes a memorial? What were referred to as "intimate" pieces, though admittedly the ones that least resembled "Art" seemed to function more precisely as memorials, in the sense of objects which aid in the process of recovery, and possibly of activism—the pin-pricks of memory.

Not so of Andrew McPhail's piece. Smartly rendered, in graphite on draughtsman's mylar, it represents a war memorial without the monument. That is to say, all of the statuary had been rendered leaving the geometric stone base, usually inscribed with text—absent. The textual nature of the memorial thus highlighted, leaves the grandiose public one functioning ideologically while not also functioning mnemonically—a move which brings this work too close to the anti-memorials of Wodiczko.

Whereas this piece does highlight the style of the artwork of the recent past, it is linked to one of the more "intimate" ones through its emphasis on language. It is a piece by Janis Cole that seems to function most effectively as a mnemonic object. Both object-based and linguistic in nature, *Four Panels* resembled an undoubtedly ancient form of memorial—a stash of old correspondence. Postcards addressed to Cole from her brother sewn into position between sheets of clear plastic, not so expertly hung, traced a history of communication which did not end at the grave. For last in the sequence of correspondence came Barry's notes for his own memorial service and party to be held at Beaver Hall, intended for Janis but directed to the viewer nonetheless.



above Rebecca Baird, *The Spirit Rages*, glass and graphite, 1992

opposite Nathalie Olanick, *Memorial Project*, (detail), mixed media, 1992
photos Gilberto Prioste

Nothing in the entire exhibition seemed as immediate.

Drawing together work from various perspectives, *Gathering*, as a whole, was to take on the function of memorializing, but without very clearly mapping its territory. The resulting largely divergent set of practices tended to diffuse the effect, leaving unresolved the ways that memorials could be effectively conceived, constructed, and grouped to appropriate ideological effect. It also assumed a relatively smooth transition between private and public realms, which in the gallery setting is far from an accurate presupposition. One of the questions left unanswered, which the statement initially implied, was what kind of memorial could both interact with and counter established art world critiques of the memorial i.e., be in an art exhibit, and also cross into that territory which is meant to contextualize it, that of activism?

Christopher Eamon is a member of both the editorial collective of FUSE Magazine, and the Inside Out Film and Video Collective.

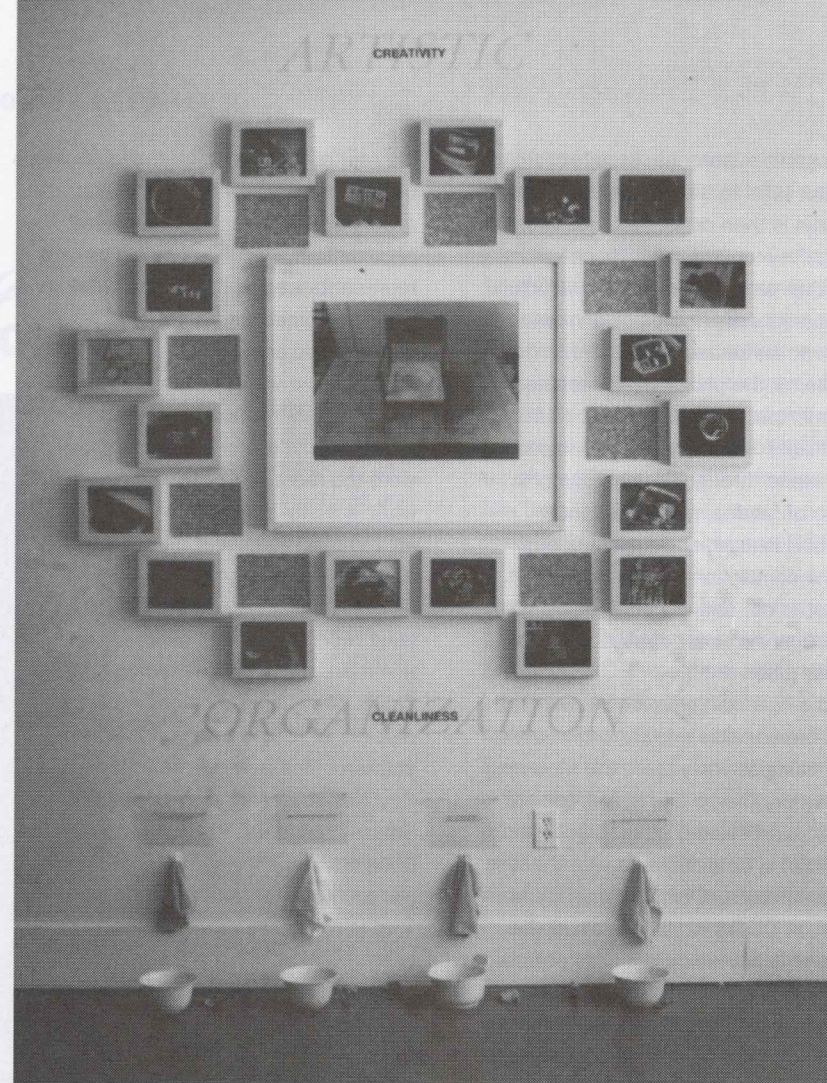
ANDREA WARD

Maternal Instincts

Mount Saint Vincent
University Art Gallery, Halifax
October 2–25, 1992

The *Maternal Instincts* exhibition, curated by Heather Smith and Jessica Kerrin, attempted to explore some complicated ideas, however most of these did not have much to do with the concept of maternal instincts as the title would suggest. Heather Smith acknowledges in her accompanying catalogue essay, however, that the title is "problematic". Jessica Kerrin, in her essay describing the work excluded from the exhibition, does not mention maternal instincts at all, referring instead to the "institution of motherhood." The inclusion of men in the exhibition further problematizes the concept of maternal instincts, and raises questions about male expressions surrounding issues of childcare. This inclusion is never addressed.

The exhibition catalogue did, however, develop the perspective of maternal instincts as they are associated with oppressive ideological constructs. Smith asks us to see in the work "a concern for how the notion of maternal instincts has been appropriated as a principal force by a dominant ideology which seeks to control the construction of women's lives." In her essay, Kerrin organizes the work excluded from the exhibition into categories: "The Working Mother", "The Role of Obstetrics" and "Mother as Goddess". One wonders what the category is for the work that was selected for *Maternal Instincts*. The closest I came up with is "The Politics of Parenting". Yet, the catalogue failed to attempt a more difficult feminist reading of the relationship between creativity and spirituality and the concept of maternal instincts. The reluctance to let maternal instincts exist outside the framework of oppression was disappointing since aspects of creativity and



Susan McEachern, mixed media installation, 1992

spirituality are present in all of the work in the exhibition.

At one end of the gallery space Susan McEachern, Wilma Needham and Jessica Kerrin created mixed media installations. At the other end, Bob Bean and Stuart Mueller, also using mixed media, were presented along with the video contributions of Dawna Gallagher and Anne Verrall.

Dawna Gallagher's video focuses on her experience of pregnancy and birth. It explores their biological and creative aspects in an intense and psychological way. She speaks of being pregnant spiritually, of having a perfect relationship with the being inside her. Gallagher's video work expresses how painful and traumatic experiences remain within women's physical bodies. Birth becomes a part of the stories held within women's skins. The imagery of the video is hypnotic. The camera pans the breathing center of the artist's body.

It is simple and direct. The spoken text is poetic.

Anne Verrall's video makes inescapably clear the reality of women's sexual and social domination. Verrall's video images are drawn from her dreams. A gothic horror aesthetic is alive in her images of a woman giving birth to a large insect. Spurting blood, bright medical lights, clips of writhing bodies from the film *Aliens* convey the artist's horror and revulsion at giving birth. Quotations from Dr. Marion Sims' *The Father of Gynecology* expose the torture and murder he committed on pregnant women in the name of science.

Verrall's use of dolls swinging from nooses erases their attractiveness as innocent and appropriate play toys. Her presentation of dolls, caged and hung, exposes them as programming instruments, propaganda used to turn little girls into mothers. The lyrics of nursery rhymes further intensify this frightful

atmosphere. This is the only work which clearly critiques the concept of maternal instincts as 'instinct'.

Jessica Kerrin's work, as well, partly critiques the notion of instinct, but from a different position. Her work deals with the politics of breast-feeding on both a personal and global level. Kerrin's work is a triptych, the center image being lipstick prints of her breasts on the bottom of milk cartons arranged playfully in a pyramid, like children's blocks. This imagery is underlined by statements about how many ounces of milk mothers make. The right panel is a mixed media print about the devastation caused by formula-feeding, mainly in the Third World. To the left is another series of breast-prints and the time schedule by which the artist fed her child. Beneath this is a list of the ingredients. The work highlights the labour involved in breast-feeding and it connects the idea of breast-feeding to the mechanical production of milk.

Wilma Needham's work, composed of three parts, addresses the adoption of her child from Peru. At its base is a delicate semi-circle of garlic, a spiritual gesture of protection and good fortune. Above this is a weaving of soft pastel ribbons. The weaving technique is loosely based on traditional Peruvian plain basket weave. Typed on the ribbon are disconcerting questions from Social Services, in both Spanish and English, which inquire about the artist's mental health and other personal information. The questions are painful and harsh, a vivid contrast to the satin ribbon on which they are inscribed. Above this weaving are panoramic colour photographs of bougainvillea vines wound around the black spikes of a substantial iron gate. The photographs were taken in Lima; the gate stands in front of a consulate or upper class home. Bougainvillea is a symbol of fertility and the artist takes this image from outside a 'fertile' property.

There is some dialogue in terms of colour and conceptual positioning between Needham's work and that of Susan McEachern. McEachern's work

speaks of the reality of toilet-training her child. The work is a colourful, circular arrangement of texts and frames. It consists of fragments of her child's speech, the interior of her washroom and a series of potties on the floor with wash cloths. The work stresses cleanliness and organization throughout its arrangement. Its rigorous form speaks of the parent's labour and the stress of doing this activity correctly. McEachern links this training to the acquisition of language through the use of her daughter's descriptions of excrement. Her photographs, which focus on the tiles of the bathroom floor in a bird's-eye view, invite viewers to recollect their own experiences with training in this regard.

Robert Bean's work included the participation of his daughter. The installation consists of a series of shelves laden with plaster casts taken from chocolate molds. Inscribed on these are short texts, watercolour applications and images articulated in photo-emulsion. Most of the plaster casts convey images from 1950s popular culture—girls in bobby socks and poodle skirts, boys playing soccer, kittens, hearts. These sculptures refer to traditional kitchen or domestic crafts of the artist's upbringing. The casts are fragile, whimsical, but eerie because of the traditional values they evoke. The objects are placed on shelves set at a three-year-old's height. One cast is embossed with the word "DAD". Bean smoothed an image of himself over this word and wrote: "I watch myself through my father's eyes".

While Bean's work is about re-experiencing the acquisition of language through his daughter Una's entrance into visual and verbal language, Una's entrance into these symbolic structures can be seen in the photographs she has taken, and in her watercolour applications to the casts. The work includes an audio-tape of domestic sounds and the text: "you are holding me in my shadow."

Stuart Mueller's work is composed of three elements, the central of which features his son's chubby hand out-

stretched towards a tower of blocks. The text embossed on the image reads: "We play games, it's as much as I have ever done". The photograph is hand-tinted, eliciting the type of sentimental feelings associated with historic family photographs. Two framed texts act as parentheses around this image. Drawn from popular cultural sources, the texts state that a father only participates in parenting when his spouse is absent or when he is unemployed. Mueller, however, suggests that fathering is a challenging process. He is not giving something up; it is the most he has ever done. With the comparison of this personal statement and the didactic pop sociological quotations, Mueller is exposing their insubstantial definition of fathering.

The title of this exhibition and the concept of maternal instincts are indeed problematic. The ideas presented in the catalogue need to be expanded; the curators need to listen to the work, and to address, with tolerance, the questions that the title *Maternal Instincts* provokes. Unfortunately the organization of the exhibition lacked a sensitivity to difference within communities—on both a local and national level. The curators, who made a cross-Canada call for submissions, selected only people from Nova Scotia. Moreover, there is little presence of different kinds of mothers, those who are single, lesbian, disabled or women of colour. When dealing with such a dense, charged and complicated subject, it is essential to consider different visions. Perhaps the organizational process of this exhibition will not halt, but will continue and grow from the original selection of work, encouraging more voices from different positions in relation to the maternal or to parenting.

Andrea Ward is a visual artist living in Halifax, and is also the FUSE contributing editor for that region.

Acknowledgements: Frances Ellen Star Isaacs, Julie Vandervoort, Noreen Battaglia

CALISTHENICS

Barbrafish, Lissa Brunet, Bill Crane,
Martha Judge, Dennis Lago, Lee L'Clerc,
Kika Thorne, Ana Rewakowicz,
Cornell Van Der Spek, Robert Windrum

curated by Léo Beaulieu
Metro-Central YMCA, Toronto
November 1 - 22, 1992

While it has become common enough for artists and curators to circumvent established structures and venues in favour of more novel settings for exhibitions, how often do these initiatives rely on the nostalgia of a given place? At first glance, it seems perverse to select a new (1984) downtown gym for an exhibition, where work will not only have to struggle with the existing architecture, furnishings and equipment but also with the milling lycra masses. On the other hand, when one ponders the gym's sociality as "institution", ritually frequented by hundreds of people happy to don strange outfits, follow military-drill style instruction to outdated pop songs or to simulate outdoor activities on high-tech machines—*culture physique* as the French call it, takes on whole new meaning.

In terms of ideological underpinnings, the YMCA has a more complicated pedigree than most museums and a certain inescapable aura, evidenced at Toronto's Metro-Central by their omnipresent "CLEAN, SAFE, FRIENDLY" signs. Immortalized by the Village People in the 70s, the Young Men's Christian Association is an international charitable institution dedicated to providing opportunities for "personal growth and service to others". The Metro-Central in Toronto is the largest Y in North America, and its slick design and facilities might seem to exemplify the "personal growth" ideal gone askew. Nonetheless, by virtue of its proximity to the gay ghetto and willingness to provide

"regardless of economic circumstances", the straight, white middle-class which once formed the core of its membership is slowly being eroded.

Calisthenics featured nine emerging artists undertaking a variety of approaches and investigations of the site. Although the entire four storey facility was made available, interestingly enough, the gymnasium, the largest and most trafficked area of the building was left untouched as were the squash courts, free-weights room, dance studio and the main workout room. Instead, there seemed to be clusters of works in certain areas. The pieces that were the most successful moved beyond considering the Y as some gallery hybrid, to acknowledging its history, ideology and publics and their interaction in those spheres.

The painting in particular seemed unable to escape the formal aspects and pitfalls of its two-dimensionality. Cornell Van der Spek's three large oils of cropped male body builders, neoclassical posters in the Joe Weider genre, suited the Y clientele who undoubtedly don't see themselves in the same realm as Gold's gym beefcake. However, given their placement in the padded, mirrored, stretching room they became decorative and conceivably might have retained more of their homoerotic charge had they been placed in the high testosterone areas—the workout or free-weights room, the latter almost exclusively the purview of men. Similarly, Lee L'Clerc's paintings, hung in a conventional horizontal line around the running track, seemed tentative. Despite vertical lines and motifs suggestive of movement, their placement and monochrome hues gave them a static quality at odds with the pace and perspective of its audience.

By the swimming pool, Ana Rewakowicz's *In Between* fared better. A series of blue body prints on cloth, they

were hung like cafe curtains over the windows and billowed from the air vents beneath which gave the installation a fluid opalescence that paralleled the pool and swimmers. Water was also a reference point for Kika Thorne and Barbrafish, who both had works in the open showers of the women's locker room featuring images of the body. Alloting a small, digitized colour photograph on acetate for each individual shower, Barbrafish created an installation that played effectively on the area's public and private aspects. The rubbery beads of silicone that inadvertently seeped out around the edges of the crude metal frames gave them an organic quality that seemed to elude Kika Thorne's collages of text and enlarged film stills which appeared inert and repressed in their wood and plexiglass frames.

Over in the women's health club, Martha Judge's *The Mirror Cracks*, a series of photo-text panels examining issues of representation and identity hung adjacent the vertical mirrors in the club's exercise room. The black and white photographs present a *mise en scène* of the artist, while the accompanying narrative, whose reversed writing became legible in the mirror, relates incidents of breaking mirrors. Juxtaposing her "mirror phases" with Lacan's notion of the construction and sexing of subjects which later informed feminist theories of spectatorship (Mulvey, De Lauretis), Judge sets up a personal/theoretical axis. In an accompanying statement, the artist asserts "Woman can also be the viewer, the consumer and the theoretician of her own image." Given that the binary (male gaze active—woman passive) that Mulvey articulated back in 1975 has since been expanded upon at some length, Judge's statement is facile if not didactic. Far more interesting is her query, "what happens when the gaze is [in my case] lesbian?"; calling into question the presumed heterosexuality of most spectatorship theories.

Myopic Replay, a subtle, witty and engaging series of photographs by Bill

Crane also employed a visual metaphor to investigate gender and identity. Located in the spiral stairways that traverse both public and private areas of the Y, Crane covered each of the cement bore holes with tiny round photographs, constructing an obsessive maze of peepholes that stretched out of view. The photographs, re-photographs of YMCA archive material, document the history of this young men's institution. Crane's manipulations—selective cropping and repetition of images, construction of red and black targets (the Y's colours) and tinted photos of aspiring Christian jocks—gave them an altogether different meaning. It was a piece that never seemed to exhaust itself though I, in the process of checking in and out during the exhibition, probably passed through the stairwell close to thirty times.

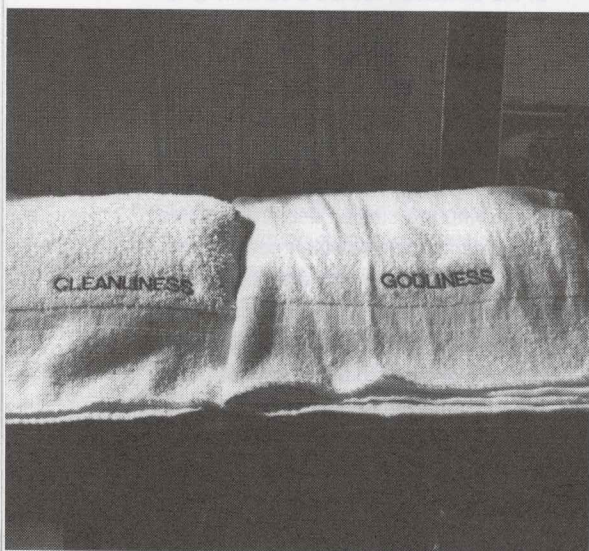
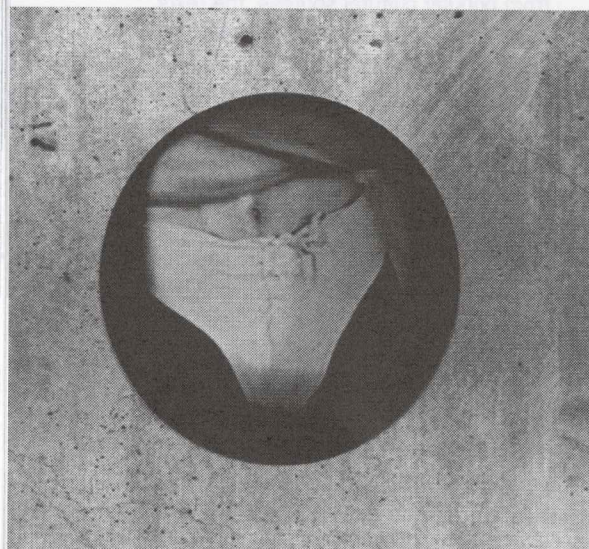
Robert Windrum linked the Christian history of the Y with his own as the son of a minister. In a vitrine at the member's entrance, which usually displays athletic wear and accessories for purchase (the words "oops I forgot" are emblazoned across the glass), Windrum has created a shrine of personal mementoes: karate trophies and basketball team photos. Amongst these are sets of the Y's generic white towels embroidered with the words CLEANLINESS and GODLINESS. The piece wasn't confined to a display testimonial: 100 sets of the monogrammed towels were put into circulation so that Y members might personally "receive" the message during the exhibition. The added caveat was the moral dilemma induced by getting a *special* towel. Since the Y opened, 9,000 towels have disappeared...Would people be content, as after an edifying sermon to simply keep the message in their hearts, or their gym bags?

The cleanliness theme continued on an adjacent wall with another interactive work, Lissa Brunet's *The Virtues of Soap*: an open display of 100 bars of soap in metal dishes each with a tiny name plate. Nearby, a typed sheet asks members to select a soap, sign their name above it and return it to its dish after each use. Handmade and white the

soaps were reminiscent of Beuys who believed that what had solidified, like congealed fat or wax, had only to be softened by artistic warmth to be given a more human form. Each of these malleable blocks already had a word carved into its surface, e.g. FEAR, GOVERNMENT, RAPE, DESIRE, MANIPULATE, Brunet's personal survey of what the word "control" suggested to people. While I wasn't quite convinced that the medium (soap) suited the message (control) and was equally perturbed by the incongruent set of make-up lamps and pink wall (vanity?) that made up the installation, the transformative ability of the piece became apparent over the weeks that followed. As if responding to Beuys' adage that everyone can be an artist, members wholeheartedly responded to the piece. Some soaps were appropriated at the outset and never returned, effectively baring some words like HATE from display or circulation. Others felt compelled to personalize their soaps. RAGE for instance, became the ground for a field of tiny spikes made from broken toothpicks, FEAR was soon joined by a pink plastic razor, the constitutional aftermath perhaps inspired the user of MANIPULATE, who inserted a Canadian flag on a coffee stirrer flagpole into his bar, while ADULTS, restrained with two rubber bands, arguably became the fetish bar.

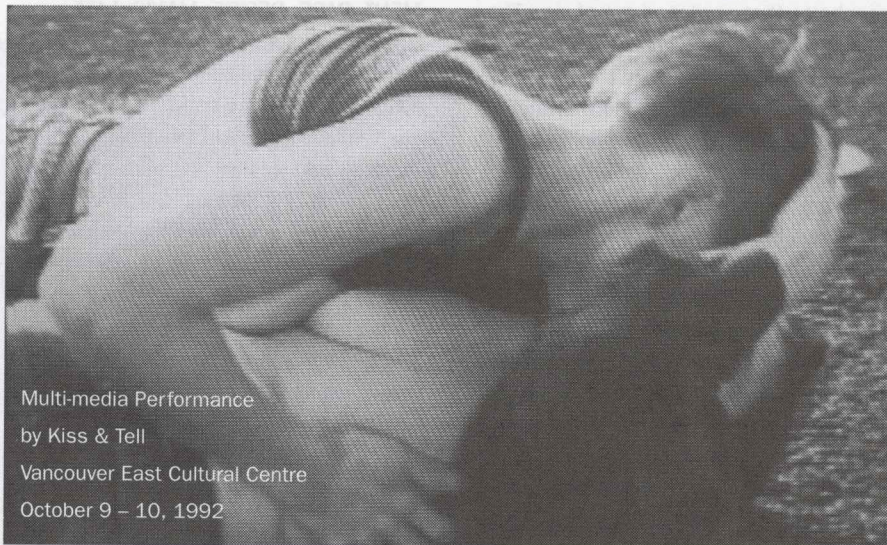
One outdoor installation *Five Vicinities* by Dennis Lago only survived opening day. A metal and fiberglass construction outside the main doors that purported "to examine the spatial laminate that surrounds and constitutes the limits of emplacement"; it fell victim to harsh weather. Although a photographic representation and obtuse statement (never alluding to the piece's disappearance) showed up in the entrance the final week of the exhibition, this only served to underline its fundamental incongruity with the rest of this interesting exhibition.

Susan Kealey pumps iron at the Y and is a member of the FUSE Board of Directors.



above Bill Crane, *Myopic Replay*, (detail), 1992
below Robert Windrum, *Association*, 1992

True Inversions



Multi-media Performance
by Kiss & Tell
Vancouver East Cultural Centre
October 9 - 10, 1992

still from *True Inversions*, Lorna Boschman, video 1992. Courtesy V Tape.

performance

True Inversions was a multi-media performance piece by Vancouver's lesbian art collective Kiss & Tell at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre. The presentation coincided with the *OutRights Conference* and was part of Basic Inquiry Studio's series on representations of the human body entitled *The Body Project*.

Kiss & Tell came together in the mid-'80s to discuss and produce art work which dealt with sexual imagery from a non-theoretical point of view. The impetus for the formation of the group was to broaden the discourse of sexuality to incorporate a lesbian perspective about questions of subjectivity, pleasure, desire and the creation of sexual imagery by and for lesbians.

Drawing the Line, the first show presented by the collective, was an interactive photo-based exhibition which looked at the debate going on in the feminist community around censorship, pornography and erotica. After viewing the photographs, viewers were invited to write their comments on a wall and through this process came an awareness that the line between porn and

erotica was not an easily discernible one. According to Persimmon Blackbridge of the collective "the writing(s) on the wall showed the contradictory ways in which people view the imagery. The words porn and erotica have a very long history to them and are associated with class. Erotica is sexual images made for rich men and porn for not so rich men. It also carries that class baggage into the feminist movement. Because images are fragmented, they are read in terms of a dismembering of the body, rather than an intimate view of the beloved's body."

True Inversions which used live performance, video, slides, and music set out to incorporate and play with the many contradictions that came out of *Drawing the Line* and to address the complexities around creating and presenting lesbian sexual imagery. The opening act was a layered narrative which dealt with pleasure and sexual desire. The narrative departed from the male centred approach of stressing the visual aspects of sex as pleasure, and lesbian sexual representation itself became part of the titillation. Susan

Stewart, also of the collective, noted "Pleasure is definitely something we want to get across. Among all the issues and analysis, we want to provide a pleasurable experience. The porn stories are there to provide a hot and pleasurable experience."

The women presented porn scripts in a conversational, matter of fact way which dealt with butch/femme interactions, their lusts for women, their fantasies. They projected a certain amount of ease and humour which disarmed stereotypes of SM and lesbian sex. Slides of straight porn projected in the background were meant to address in some way the complications of the decision making process with regard to allowing men to participate as audience members. The inclusion of straight porn in this context brought into play the question of how men—straight and/or gay—engage in viewing nude images of women. As well, the juxtaposition of those images made by women for women with those produced by the straight porn industry ruptured readings of eroticization and sex as a deviant activity between women.

Lorna Boschman's videotape, revealing, parody-filled, and deliberately low-tech, addressed issues around censorship. Sexually explicit scenes were concealed with the use of text from legal clauses or bills which defined the acts being shown as pornographic and hence unfit for audience consumption. On another front, at several points in the tape which showed women engaging in various forms of lesbian sexual activities, the directorial voice/image would intrude. Portions of scenes would have the director's image superimposed on the scene and questions would be asked of the performers. Questions like "is it real or acted sex? does the relationship of the individuals on screen—friends in real life, lovers in real life mean that the sex is in some way 'authentic'?" The imposition of the directorial voice along with the inclusion of shots of the crew during production, a style that decentred traditional

videography and raised issues of subjective constructions.

In the closing act, the women read letters to their mothers in which they talked about issues around lesbianism and their mother/daughter relationships. In an interview with the group they each said that the "Mother Letters" had very different meanings for each of them. Lizard Jones, the third member of the collective, stated "I'm trying to tell my mother that she is not the centre of my world even though that is what she believes." Susan Stewart's approach to the letters was "as one way to connect with the diversity of women in the audience—straight, bisexual, lesbian—as we all have issues with our mothers which we are unable to speak to with total honesty." Blackbridge, taking an anti-psychotherapy stance, noted "for my part the Mother Letter section is in no way coming out of any kind of neo-Freudian theorizing. Many people do separate them. They say that Lacanian theories on the acquisition of language do not include people like myself who were forced into language modification methods. But to say we are the branch that ignores you, not the branch that punishes you, does not impress me. If Lacan is not talking to me, I'm not interested in talking to him."

The Kiss & Tell collective is engaging in a form of crossover activism. They are inserting critical theory and arguments grounded in both the feminist movement as well as the mainstream arena in their pieces to make them viable subjects of art. They have stated that part of the purpose of their work is "to move away from rigid theories of women's sexuality, e.g. women respond aurally, or looking equals voyeurism equals bad. What we have seen so far is that women like a lot of different stuff. It is important that theories of women's sexual subjectivity not marginalize or demonize women who do not fit the theory, and not be used to close down further theorizing."

Andrea Fatona is a contributing editor of FUSE Magazine for Vancouver.

Profile: Desh Pardesh

Desh Pardesh — Festival of South Asian Arts and Culture in the Diaspora is a unique manifestation of the vibrant communities of South Asians in Canada and elsewhere in the western and northern countries. It is a celebration of our lives, our struggles, our sorrows and our joys expressed in writing, poetry, performing arts, plastic arts, video, film, photography and dancing. A very tangible expression of lives in another home. Organizers originate from all over the world, including Britain, India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Uganda. All have ended up in this place called Canada, many since childhood.

Desh Pardesh, meaning a home away from home, is a spin off from the 1988 celebration, *Salaam Toronto*. It was inspired and sponsored by Khush, an organization of South Asian gays in Toronto, some of whom are also members of the *Desh Pardesh* organizing committee. According to Karim Ladack, the motivating force behind *Salaam Toronto* was the desire "...to celebrate being gay and being South Asian, by all—the gay community, the South Asian community and the world out there." That *Desh Pardesh* is launching its third festival highlights the success of the objectives of *Salaam Toronto*.

Underlining *Desh Pardesh* is the politics of identity, race, sexuality, gender, class and ethnicity in a homogenizing culture. An identity which is defined by the racism and patriarchy of dominant culture and our struggle to define it on our own terms and in our lives here in Canada and as South Asians that also form and define Canada. For Nelson Carvalho, the term diaspora signifies "...creating a new home whether in the mind or as a physical location. Where others recognize your presence and accept it." In some ways, the artists and participants of *Desh Pardesh* sym-

bolize this continuing struggle for identity and validation, yet at the same time, the festival also signals the consolidation of that identity.

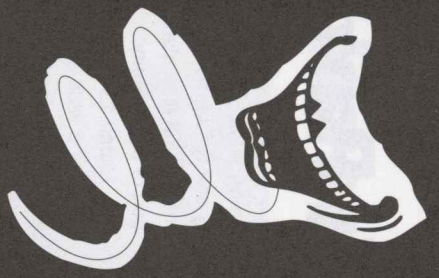
March 1993 promises to bring together a wide array of South Asian artists and activists from the diaspora. Along with numerous writers, poets, visual and performing artists, *Desh Pardesh* hopes to create an opportunity for interest in specific workshops on popular theatre, funding for artistic and cultural projects, creative writing, and new South Asian music. Panels hope to encompass almost every issue imaginable and caucuses will include concerns such as living with AIDS, anti-racist organizing, the experience of exile, South Asian lesbians and gays and more.

Additionally, festival organizers hope that they will be able to create a space for the expression of working class politics and culture (a criticism of the last event due to its lack), as well as give greater recognition and voice to the complex issues of religious fundamentalism, communalism, and sectarianism that are pulling apart India and Sri Lanka and what that means to the communities here. They hope to bring into focus the relationship of the diaspora and its other, whether that other be home or a mythical, religious, emotional, political, or little known entity.

Khush is also planning a two day conference on South Asian gays to coincide with the five days of *Desh Pardesh*. For more information about the Khush conference, March 22nd and 23rd, contact Karim Ladack at (416) 599-2005. For more information on *Desh Pardesh*, March 24th to the 28th contact Steve Pereira or Punam Khosla at 416-601-9932.

Prabha Khosla is interested in political and social commentary.

profile



Rita McKeough

EXCAVATION

JANUARY 30 - APRIL 4, 1993
 A NEW MULTIDISCIPLINARY INSTALLATION AND PERFORMANCE. A SURVEY OF PREVIOUS WORKS, AND A DOCUMENTARY PUBLICATION IN PRINT AND VIDEO

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On view March 5 through April 18, 1993

Ann Hamilton

David Buchan

Eidon Garnet: "When?"

On view May 7 through September 6, 1993

Public Openings

Friday, March 5, 7 to 9 p.m.
 Friday, May 7, 7 to 9 p.m.

Gallery Talk

Sunday, March 7, 2 p.m.
 Curator Louise Dompliere and New York art critic Joshua Decker discuss General Idea's Fin de Siècle.

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Friday March 26

10am - Noon

☛ **Caucus for HIV+ South Asians**
 Location: TBA

Noon - 2pm

☛ **Lesbian Caucus/Gay Men's Caucus**
 Location: Art Metropole

2:15 - 4:15

☛ **Women's Caucus**
 Location: Art Metropole

5:30pm Re:Viewing Desh

Toronto video-makers Mark Haslam and Gita Saxena re-locate their identities and relationships to history and "Home".

7:30pm The Bangle Rebellion

Exploring expressions by and about South Asian women. Featuring N.Y. writer Meena Alexander, U.S. feminist classical dancer Ratna Roy and the Canadian premiere of *Voices of the Mourning* with L.A. filmmaker Meena Nanji in attendance.

9:30pm Nach Music

Location: TBA
 Desh Pardesh Dance! Dance! Dance! with bhangra music featuring CKLN Masala Mix DJ's Amita & Vinita, special guest DJ Ritu from London, England, Sanxe—live from San Francisco and more...

Admission: \$10 sliding scale. Festival Pass not applicable.

Saturday March 27

Noon - 1:45pm

PANEL
 Living in Exile:
 Double the Trouble, Half the Sun

2 - 3:45pm

PANEL
 Running from the Family

4 - 5:45pm

PANEL
 Fundamentalism & Communalism

7:00pm Tracing the Race

Works exploring the impact of racism, communalism, and fundamentalism on South Asians living in the West. Featuring popular theatre by Montréal Serai, readings by Indo-Caribbean writers Sam Selvon, Cyril Daberdien, plus...

9:00pm This Pink Triangle has a Brown Lining

A unique program featuring South Asian Lesbian and Gay artists, activists and performers with US activist Urvashi Vaid, Vancouver video-maker Shani Mootoo with a world premiere of *Wild Women in the Woods*, San Francisco performer Sanxe, etc...

Sunday March 28

11am - 1pm Workshop

Sharing Strategies to Fight AIDS in South Asian Communities
 Location: Art Metropole

11am - 1pm

PANEL
 ☛ **Labour Caucus**
 Location: TBA

1:30pm

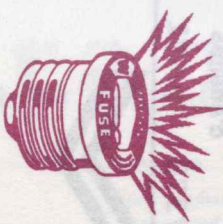
PANEL
 Brick by Brick - Building Coalitions

3:30pm Are We Family?

Desh Pardesh Conference Plenary
 Participants discuss the future of Desh Pardesh as a permanent organization.

7:30pm Exit Page Left

Desh Pardesh wraps up with a lively closing program featuring established and emerging writers in cabaret on the theme - *The South Asian Family in Exile/Exile in the South Asian Family*. Live music and theatre with Sheila James, Sonia Dhillon, and many more...



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Asian women's visual arts exhibit.

Location: Art Metropole,
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dent, feminist, film-activist Deepa Dhanraj. A startling portrayal of India's population control program and its impact on women's bodies.

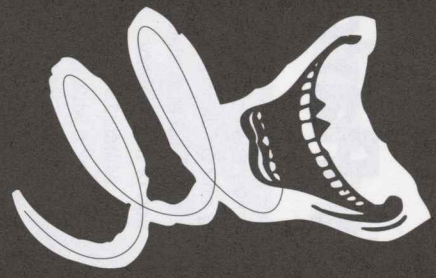
-Toronto Premiere

Desh Pardesh

Conference/Festival of South Asian Culture in the West.
 NOTE: all events take place at the Euclid Theatre, 394 Euclid Avenue, unless otherwise indicated.

Festival Pass \$40, Single evening event admission \$6 (sliding scale), Double evening program \$9, Panel Admission \$2, Advance Passes available at Desh Pardesh Office
 For Info Phone: 416-601-9932, or Fax: 416-601-9973

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Rita McKeough

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Eldon Garnet: "When?"

On view May 7 through September 6, 1993

Public Openings

Friday, March 5, 7 to 9 p.m.
Friday, May 7, 7 to 9 p.m.

Gallery Talk

Sunday, March 7, 2 p.m.
Curator Louise Domperre and
New York art critic Joshua
Decker discuss General Idea's
Fin de Siècle.

Winter Hours

Through April 1993
Noon to 6 p.m.
Wednesdays, noon to 8 p.m.
Closed Mondays

Programme Preview

Wednesday March 24

Thursday March 25

Friday March 26

Saturday March 27

Sunday March 28

10am-3pm Workshops

Four simultaneous workshops.
Deepen and share your artistic skills:
Acting Up - Community Theatre
Off the Record - D.J. Workshop
Frame by Frame - Film & Video
Makers Meet
Pickle Jam - Live Music Session
Location: Art Metropole

3:30pm First Steps

A bhangra, dandya-ras, garba dance
lesson - warm up for Friday night!
Location: Art Metropole

10am-Noon

☛ **Caucus for HIV+ South Asians**
Location: TBA

Noon-2pm

☛ **Lesbian Caucus/Gay Men's Caucus**
Location: Art Metropole

2:15-4:15

☛ **Women's Caucus**
Location: Art Metropole

Noon-1:45pm **PANEL**

Living in Exile:
Double the Trouble, Half the Sun

2-3:45pm **PANEL**

Running from the Family

4-5:45pm **PANEL**

Fundamentalism & Communalism

11am-1pm Workshop

Sharing Strategies to Fight AIDS in
South Asian Communities
Location: Art Metropole

11am-1pm **PANEL**

☛ **Labour Caucus**
Location: TBA

1:30pm **PANEL**

Brick by Brick - Building Coalitions

3:30pm Are We Family?

Desh Pardesh Conference Plenary
Participants discuss the future of Desh
Pardesh as a permanent organization.

7:30pm Enter Stage Left

Desh Pardesh Opening Night.
Featuring award winning Canadian/Sri
Lankan author Michael Ondaatje,
Toronto poet Ian Rashid,
poetry/dance/performance by Indo-
Caribbean writer Ramabai Espinet,
dancer Sudarshan and others.

**10pm South Asian Women
In-Sight**

Desh Pardesh opening night reception
and launch of the first Canadian South
Asian women's visual arts exhibit.
Location: Art Metropole,
788 King St. West, 2nd floor

7pm A Class Act—Zindabad!

Bringing working class images, issues
and strategies to the fore. Theatre,
writing, video and politics by South
Asian labour activists and artists.
Featuring CLC executive member
Hassan Yusef, writer Sadhu Binning,
"Taxi/vala Auto/biography" a film-in-
progress by New Yorker Vivek Bald
and more...

9pm Beyond Bollywood

Something Like a War by Indian independ-
ent, feminist, film-activist Deepa
Dhanraj. A startling portrayal of India's
population control program and its
impact on women's bodies.
—Toronto Premiere

5:30pm Re:Viewing Desh

Toronto video-makers Mark Haslam
and Gita Saxena re-locate their
identities and relationships to history
and "Home".

7:30pm The Bangle Rebellion

Exploring expressions by and about
South Asian women. Featuring N.Y.
writer Meena Alexander, U.S. feminist
classical dancer Ratna Roy and the
Canadian premier of *Voices of the
Mourning* with L.A. filmmaker Meena
Nanji in attendance.

9:30pm Nach Music

Location: TBA
Desh Pardesh Dance! Dance! Dance!
with bhangra music featuring CKLN
Masala Mix DJ's Amita & Vinita, special
guest DJ Ritu from London, England,
Sanxe—live from San Francisco and
more...
Admission: \$10 sliding scale. Festival
Pass not applicable.

7:00pm Tracing the Race

Works exploring the impact of racism,
communalism, and fundamentalism on
South Asians living in the West.
Featuring popular theatre by Montréal
Serai, readings by Indo-Caribbean
writers Sam Selvon, Cyril Daberdien,
plus...

**9:00pm This Pink Triangle has a
Brown Lining**

A unique program featuring South
Asian Lesbian and Gay artists, activists
and performers with US activist
Urvashi Vaid, Vancouver video-maker
Shani Mootoo with a world premiere
of *Wild Women in the Woods*, San
Francisco performer Sanxe, etc...

7:30pm Exit Page Left

Desh Pardesh wraps up with a lively
closing program featuring established
and emerging writers in cabaret on the
theme - *The South Asian Family in
Exile/Exile in the South Asian Family*. Live
music and theatre with Sheila James,
Sonia Dhillon, and many more...

Desh Pardesh

Conference/Festival of South Asian Culture in the West.
OTE: all events take place at the Euclid Theatre, 394 Euclid Avenue,
unless otherwise indicated.

Festival Pass \$40, Single evening event admission \$6 (sliding
scale), Double evening program \$9, Panel Admission \$2,
Advance Passes available at Desh Pardesh Office
For Info Phone: 416-601-9932, or Fax: 416-601-9973

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March 24 - 28, 1993

Euclid Theatre, 394 Euclid Ave., Toronto

Co-presented with CKLN 88.1 FM
For more information:
phone (416) 601-9932 or fax (416) 601-9973
Sponsored by Fuse Magazine
Image from Shani Mootoo's *Wild Women in the Woods*
Design Christopher Eamon

Desh Pardesh

Third Intra-national Conference & Festival
Exploring the Politics of South Asian Cultures in the West

Featuring New and Recent

Film, Video, Poetry, Fiction, Critical Writing,
Theatre & Performance Art, Speakers,
Workshops & Panel Discussions
by South Asian Women, Lesbians, Gay Men,
Working People and Independent Artists
Living in England, the United States & Canada

Special Guests:

Urvashi Vaid, Former Executive Director
National Lesbian & Gay Task Force (US)
Sanxe, Gay Bhangra Rapper/Singer & Performance Artist (US)
Left Popular Theatre with Montreal Serai
Feminist-Classical Dance Interpretations with Ratna Roy (US)
English Bhangra DJ Ritu in a Return Engagement

3