

The Legendary Silvia Ziranek Tells All

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PERFORMANCE
MAGAZINE
No. 27

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Dec/Jan

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PERFORMANCE

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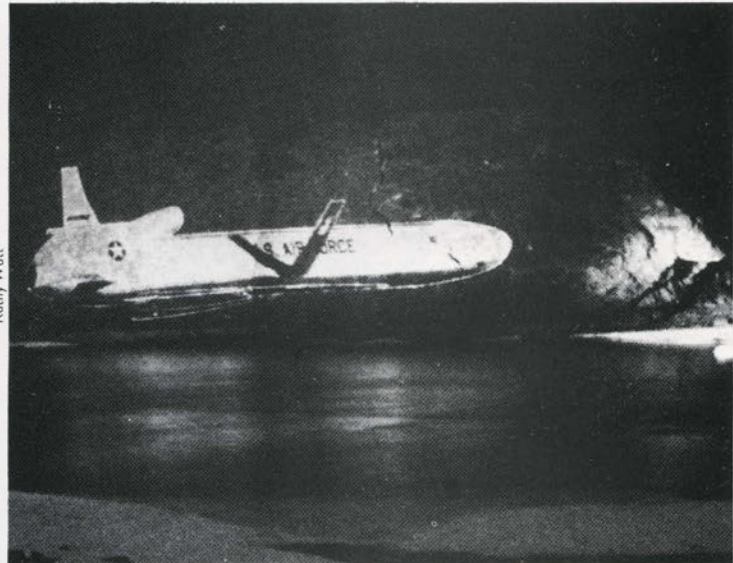
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As we go to press, people are being arrested daily, both outside Parliament and at Greenham Common, for last ditch protests against the now-sited US cruise missiles. Perhaps now, then, is the right time to consider the position of the art community of these islands in terms of political visibility. Most artists, while personally to the left, and opposing the NATO arms build-up in Europe, would still be filled with horror at the idea of political content in their work, apart from a well-concealed allusiveness. No-one likes the word propaganda, with all its deadly-serious undertones, and the very word generally spells the kiss of death for those who cherish some sort of fine art, painterly background to their careers. There is also the view that a political line is a challenge to the essential anarchism and individualism of the artistic life. This has been often borne out (no names!) by those who have gone down that road, but with so little humour and inventiveness, and without harnessing that particularly powerful British tool of irony.



Slide projection at Bow Falls, Alberta, Canada by Krystof Wodiczko. Alberta is the planned location for testing the cruise missile. (From Incite Magazine)

Recent events performed by non-artists have indeed equalled any avant-garde 'art action'. The dumping of radioactive mud from Cumbria on Downing Street by two men in plutonium protective suits and women's actions on the Greenham fence are as deeply inspired as any piece of live contextual art made in or out of the gallery by performance artists. But ironically, it is currently to the US and Canada we must look for the active and energetic involvement of live artists in the disarmament movement. Just one random example out of many, are the Sisters of Survival, featured on the latest edition of the LA quarterly High Performance, in multicoloured nuns habits, performing an artwork inspired by a sculptor, Marguerite Elliot, *Shovel Defence* (from a statement by Undersecretary of State T.K. Jones that all the US needed to survive nuclear war was enough shovels to go round-each person would dig a trench, get in it, cover up with dirt and emerge unscathed 2 weeks later.) The artists made huge installations of shovels all over California, while in them the nuns performed visually impressive cyclical movements. The nun image was, in their words to 'symbolise the sense of community needed to come to grips with the nuclear image' but if that spans of the heavy

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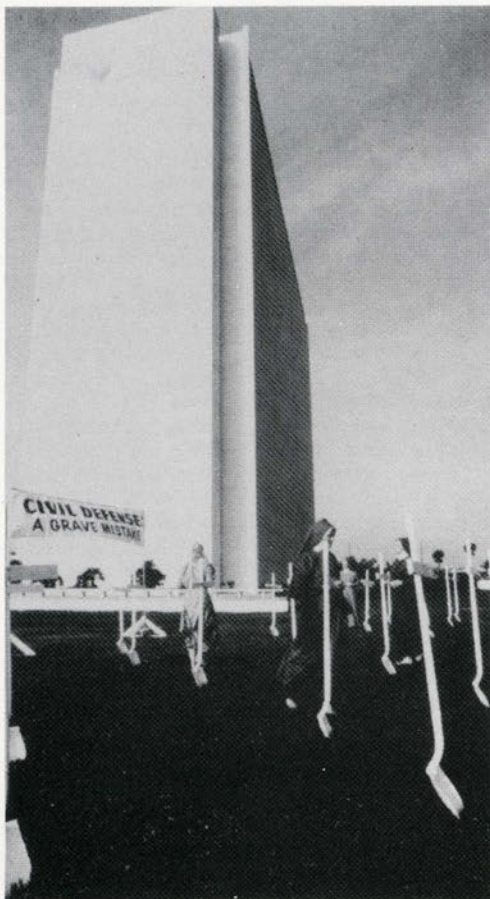
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 (I (H)ATE SOLITUDE)**

EIGHT RECIPES BY

SILVIA C ZIRANEK

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Sisters of Survival

handed humourlessness mentioned above, imagine when in 1982, (during a demonstration in New York by one million people) the sisters performing *Twist for Life Habit*, with hundreds of rainbow nuns were joined by bikini'd 'go-go nuns' periodically breaking up the march with energetic twisting to Chubby Checker.

On the same large-scale basis, Bread and Puppet theatre imported 500 American supporters who, (with a few, but not enough) members of London's art community, made a strong and lively visual spectacle with swirling banners, giant masks, and moving sculpture costumes on the recent CND rally. Yet despite this, and despite the presence of 'Yanks against Cruise,' there were many incidents of pure anti-Americanism on that day. Just as Ireland is always an uncomfortable topic for British artists abroad, people can never really escape the consequences of their own government's misguided actions. Reagan's adventurism could well have dire effects on US artists working in Europe, whatever their private views, (and 1985 will see a big US cultural festival in London).

Sisters of Survival hold the key when they declare their intention to 'create a dialogue between artists and activists in North America and Western Europe about the nuclear threat'. It is now time for *our* artists, stuck as they are right in the centre of the potential Theatre of War, to stifle their petty disputes and cultural differences between performer, sculptor, video and filmmaker, craftworker, designer and actor, and build up a phalanx of politically aware, visionary, creative, disrespectful, ironic and above all intrepidly risk-taking artists who are prepared to stop worrying about their work being seen as 'propaganda', to put a spoke in a few wheels and sabotage this nuclear madness for good.

Rob La Frenais.

LETTERS

More Critics, More Doormats

Dear Performance Magazine, Talk about hype! PM 25 announced in its editorial 'a change', promising that future issues would 'strike more attitudes, to rigorously provoke more debates'—to boldly go...etc etc. Now, much as I love Performance magazine, I did feel it needed this harder direction. So I rubbed my hands in anticipation, only to find issue 26 something of a disappointment. The same formula of reviews and interviews which on the whole question nothing and certainly don't talk that 'new language' of Live art that you proclaimed. There is of course room for interviews and reviews, but in recent issues I feel they have been given too much space at the expense of more questioning articles—articles that Performance Magazine is capable of coming up with and ones that seem to fit in with your proposed new ideas. Some examples? Well, early opinion pieces like Andrea Hill's *Critics and Doormats*, Jeff Nuttall's *Godless Ceremony*, Diana

Simmonds' review of the *Women Live* month and, in the latest issue, Phil Hyde's *Hyping the Avant-Garde*. Please, more. Straightforward who did what, where, when and how can be interesting but not always stimulating and has recently, I feel, been reflecting the rather cosy attitude of some performance work. So polite it might as well be ordinary theatre one is watching, when an important part of what performance is capable of is—to use Rob La Frenais' words—'a maverick, buccaneering shrug at the restrictions of the conventional art world'. I hope that Performance Magazine will do more to promote, reflect and discuss that kind of attitude which, I believe, means fulfilling the exciting promises made in issue 25. So, onwards to the glorious 50th issue, with socks pulled up—and good luck!

Regards,
Pit
26 Plympton Rd
London NW6

Dead Before It Hits the Boards

Dear Performance Magazine, A publication which reviews live art is a rarity—most performance art is dead before it hits the boards. The attitude expressed in Performance Magazine is an attitude I like and understand. Resolving my own identity crisis, I discovered that my views on dance, music and theatre place me well outside established groups of professional critics. You state in the August/September issue 'A new language has been written for live art and we are going to talk it'. I am sending you two unsolicited reviews to show you, Mr La Frenais, that I speak the same language.

Yours sincerely,
James Dillon
PO Box 195
Argyle, WI 53504
USA

Purloined

Dear Performance Magazine, I was dismayed to find in your review of my Serpentine Summer Show (Performance 25) that your reviewer, Chrissie Iles, purloined most of her comments from my catalogue without acknowledging their source. I know how easy it is, under the pressure of deadlines, to let the catalogue 'do the talking,' but in this case the review goes beyond the bounds of acceptability. Most of her comments are lifted verbatim. In future might I suggest a closer editorial reading of review and catalogue texts?

Yours faithfully,
John Roberts
163 Evering Rd
London N16

Chrissie Iles replies:
This is arrogance and pomposity. You have no monopoly on the use of certain words; they happened to be the best to describe the work in question. Why the fuss? You don't want us to support the artists selected?

PERF



IMPACT: 'There are only three things' muses Claire MacDonald into her tape recorder, wrestling with half-remembered phrases and events—a plane crash, a garden, a maple tree. 'Memory, desire and place and they are all played out in the house of the father.' And the high ceilinged drawing room of the deserted mansion in which the new show, *A Place In Europe* (Ralph Thoresby) is set, is indeed a patriarchal mausoleum where men are ghosts and imbeciles, their gender anxieties finding release in cross-dressing or suckling imaginary babes in compensation for their one-sided sexuality. The women suffer as ragdoll playthings or dispense maternal comfort within an atmosphere of fractious emotion. The drawing room transforms into a cage and we are on new ground within the Impact oeuvre. Within this asylum/prison, frustration and introverted mania are the keynotes in this unconstrained study of the modern psyche, overtaxed and riven with problems of identity and need. Lack of constraints are indeed the main problem with this long and demanding work. In setting out to build anew on the experimental house style and imagery that has won them recognition and acclaim over the last two years, Impact come perilously close to throwing out the baby with the bathwater—even if the baby is Richard Hawley's kneecap, transformed into a suckling babe in a brilliant moment of physical theatre. Making its transition from the Italian at this year's Polviergi festival, this work, like all genuine experiments, is still in progress. (PH) *A Place In Europe* runs at the ICA in December).

VIDAR EGG: For those who didn't manage to see this extraordinary one-to-one performance at Edinburgh, it is worth giving a description. I had circled the mysterious curtained entrance to the bridge arch, guarded by an Icelandic assistant in a black cassock for some days, unsure of whether to go through with it after seeing a girl rush out in tears. Eventually I took the plunge. Vidar Egg looks so gentle in his photograph. I entered the 'crypt' led by the 'priest' who guided me round in circles in the dark, sat me down and disappeared. In the barely perceivable distance the outline of a mouth appeared, moaning softly. First in English and then in Icelandic—'born into this world...a tiny little thing...no love...no love'. Most of the fifteen minute dialogue was in Icelandic, which alienated and frightened me even more. Entitled *Nor I but...* after Beckett's *Not I*, he has isolated me, and himself, and brought us together in a single experience in which no one will share or take part. 'The actor delivers his self, his experience, his intellect, his dreams, his desires. By presence alone the audience prompts a response from the actor, a response that belongs to no-one but him. Or has the audience begun living through the actor?' I am convinced that at any moment will come a horrid surprise. The plaintive, small voice becomes louder, crying, shouting, accusing—'it's you...you...you!'. In a flash a mirror appears in front of me, lit from behind. I am confronted by the image of myself, sitting bolt upright in the darkness, clutching the chair, wide-eyed. The mirror sways gently in the silence. The voice is nowhere to be seen. Disturbed by its power to see without being seen, I stumble out to the entrance, led by the priest, to read the comments book. In it someone has written 'it was like being inside a Francis Bacon painting'. (CI)



WE WON'T PLAY NATURE TO YOUR CULTURE: Instant recognisability is one of the trade-marks of originality and Barbara Kruger's photo-pieces (ICA) display this characteristic. At first glance reminiscent of Gilbert and George, but at closer inspection revealing what must be a feminist politic stance, the intensity of each black and white blown-up image vibrates to its own caption. A crumpled woman's face is half covered by her anguished hand, with a vague explosion indicated in the background bears the slogan *You substantiate our horrors*. These works blast and challenge, but their aggression is carefully concealed behind a veneer of humour, double-edged commentary and brilliantly chosen 50s imagery. *You thrive on mistaken identity*, the asexual speaker lurking behind frosted glass, hexagonal patterning bringing to mind the swarms of the beehive... *I am your slice of life* (no, not 'You are my slice of heaven'); three back-lit free-standing scalpel blades quiver-poised at the ready, casting dramatic shadows.

Kruger's professional background as designer for Conde Nast (New York) has equipped her with the ability to manipulate word and image, fusing the two to produce work whose power accumulates beyond the first glance. We are never quite sure who the 'you' is, although I am sure some men looking at this show will start to feel a little prickly round the ears...The work is clever, although the juxtapositioning of word and image is an old trick with its newspaper shock-horror eye-catching headline appeal, but Kruger has made her own impressive personal synthesis. Each piece has a standard blood-red painted frame that helps link the mood. *We are your circumstantial evidence* is almost a complete wall of a carefully arranged jumble of smashed glass fragments, each peice a clue to the continuing story. The woman's eyes stare out: foxy, guilty, innocent, hurt?...one pupil split across by the livid horizontal frame...top right a broken cymbal—crash, bang, musical/artistic reference. The work arrests us, demands our attention and focuses though on the anxiety of our culture, a good balance to the sure, austere and slick beauty of Robert Mapplethorpe downstairs.(LR)



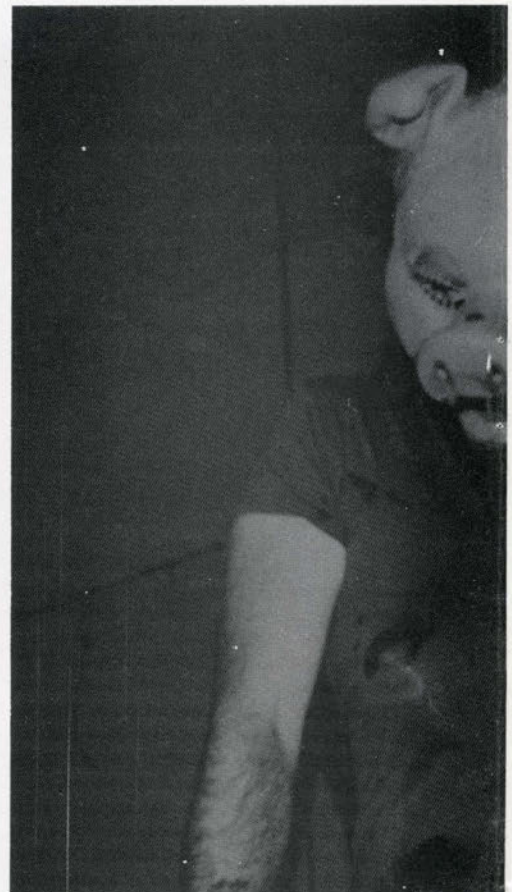
Perf this issue is by Robert Ayers, Chrissie Iles, Liz Rideal, Phil Hyde, Rob La Frenais.

Apologies to Lesley Butler, who should have been credited for photos of Bartok in Brixton in last issue's perf. .

DDART: Thursday Night at the Leadmill is the night for Sheffield youth to gather in their droves and deport themselves in finery. But tonight there is also performance. Into the middle of the dance floor staggers a man (Dennis De Groot) respectable in shirt and tie but with his body racked by tics and convulsions. The youth smile nervously or stonewall with unmoving stares as this disturbing figure lurches towards them. Suddenly a lithe figure (Ray Richards) bounds in pursuit. Possessing all the charm and elegance of Satan himself, this black leopard-like destroyer is best visualised as a cross between a Kendo swordsman and Boccioni's *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space*. The civil servant is hounded throughout the venue. Bar, dance floor, cafe—no one escapes from Ddart's particular brand of art-shock. The tribes recoil, embarrassed and upstaged by this outrage. The infiltration ends. The man is bestraddled by the demon and, St Christopher-like, is forced to bear him away. As the drinking and chat picks up again, people try to forget this alarming intrusion and its eloquent insistence that the veneer of civilisation only just manages to hold back the demons of mania and compulsion. This is performance at its very best—public, taut, energetic, challenging and with actions speaking very much louder than words.(PH)



Routine Art Corporation, with Stefan Szelczek and Ian Sherman, used each day's newspapers to make a performance which undermines the hypocrisies and absurdities of the media's treatment of current issues.



PAUL MCCARTHY is better known over here for the banning of his work in the USA than for its actual content. Certainly it is both psychologically unsettling and politically provocative. For this reason he has often been known to hand pick or choose his audiences carefully. Even the small gathering of initiated, liberal-minded, cognoscenti at the Midland Group, pre-warned by *High Performance* editor Linda Burnham, found it difficult to take; two thirds left and most who remained retreated behind coat collars and hands. McCarthy appeared in a grotesquely large animal face mask, worn back to front, and a short nylon dress. Pacing round a table laid out with bottles of tomato ketchup and mayonnaise, he muttered incoherently, repeating words of thanks over and over again. The audience first willingly responded to his request to move the chairs closer, then backed away as he unscrewed the ketchup bottles over himself, dribbling 'thank you, thank you ladies and gentlemen, thank you,' splattering it all over us and the floor, his voice horribly distorted by the mask. Picking up a long iron object, he placed it between his legs and shuffled around making sexual gestures. Grabbing a toy rabbit, he filled a yellow plastic potty with ketchup and dunked the rabbit into it, until it was completely soaked in red gunge. The smell of cheap sauce was overpowering, and his preoccupation with the rod increased, our reactions akin to adult embarrassment at a child obsessed by his own genitalia. This



ULTRAMUNDANE: Judging by appearances, Station House Opera go out of their way to make their work look the very antithesis of mundane. In a mixture of acrobatics and dare-devilry, they perform mostly in mid-air, more often than not upside down, and frequently hanging literally by their ankles over a set of suspended tables and chairs. Bizarre actions are carried out relating to the bare bones of a plot about a dead man's bequest of a garden and a wardrobe. Rather than using dialogue to convey the narration, the characters react with each other in a series of disjointed sentences, non-sequiturs and interruptions. There is seldom any logical continuity to a particular utterance and language devoid of the necessity to communicate is rendered disarmingly meaningless. What is left is a cadence of dissonant verbal sound. Fracture and dissonance have played a large part already in the history of twentieth century literature and the performing arts so it is not surprising to find strong echoes of Dada and Theatre of the Absurd in Ultramundane. What is more unexpected are the references that appear to the contemporary visual arts. The inversions suggest the upside-down portraits by Georg Baselitz while the costumes and dissociated groupings on the stage are reminiscent of Robert Longo's *People in the city* series. In crossing every art discipline, this type of melange has the potential for interesting results. Unfortunately I found it a bit too derivative and eclectic. (AM)

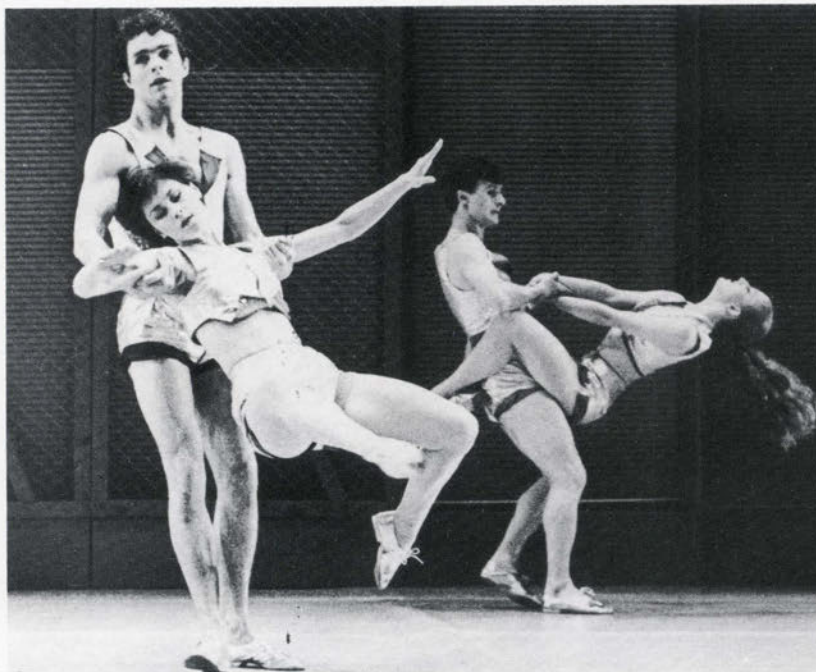


was made more acute when he slid a bottle of mayonnaise on to the end of the rod and squelched it in an out, crying 'mommy. daddy' with evident satisfaction. Through the slit in the mask he poured ketchup into his mouth, followed by a string of raw sausages, which he first pulled apart and stamped on before pushing them into his face. Raw sausage meat, ketchup and mayonnaise spilled down his dress and onto the floor as he walked into a corner of the room, having exposed himself to those of the audience who had not left already, who were staring impassively at his stained clothes and crotch with silent disdain. It was impossible to feel remotely sympathetic towards the grotesque alternately arrogant and pathetic figure slithering around, yet the intensity and total involvement of the performer was extremely compelling; neither did one feel it was grossness for its own sake. Both performer and audience seemed drained by the work, the like of which I have certainly never seen, and there seemed no question of any post-performance dialogue. Cathartic and truly disturbing, McCarthy's piece destroyed formal barriers to communicate on a deeper level. It is not easy or pleasant to witness something that peels away the veneer to expose what lies underneath, and this less reserved American work, with fewer inhibitions and taking more risks, might begin to open up a real dialogue about issues most English performance artists seem to politely leave to one side. (CI)



Pierre Alan Hubert, French pyrotechnician, at the Leadmill, Sheffield. In the tradition of the late, great, Steve Cripps, the Sheffield Fire Brigade were unsuspecting participants in his Nov. 5th indoor spectacular.

NEOISM: is this a student prank, or is R.U.Sevol (Performance Platform, Midland Group) part of a serious worldwide art network? A Neoist activity in a sandpit in Hungary was described in the recent issue of *High Performance* thus: 'Canstin and Art Lover arrived to the meeting place, a sand pit on a red tractor. Art Lover held the gold neoist flag. Canstin had his own gold bust in his arms. Other members arrived on their 'Trabants' (an East German car) decorated with red roses. A troop of mounted men followed them riding in full gallop. Canstin gave a short lecture about neoist activities and sang 'Blood and Gold' a Neoist propaganda song and anthem. A doctor drew blood from the neoists' arms while they were doing different actions (tearing money, driving horses, singing, holding slogans etc). They fell into a line and each poured out a tube of blood on to a burning loaf of bread. Then they drank champagne. A flying unit of a military parade buzzed above them.' R.U.Sevol was certainly tearing up a lot of things. Taking from a suitcase dozens of paper plates, each bearing the name of an 'ism'— Fauvism, Surrealism, Futurism etc., he ritually tore these up and spat on them. Finally, arriving at Neoism, (which was of course made of metal) he battered it with a hammer—to ludicrously conclude 'hmmn, must mean something.' Neoism seems therefore to involve an odd mixture of banal propaganda and symbolism. But I wish R.U.Sevol success. He was one of the few in at the platform that such showed such energetic spirit.(RL) (There will be an article in the next issue which considers new performance and the effects of the London New Contemporaries and the Midland Performance Platform on its development.)



LA LA LA Businessman in the Process of Becoming an Angel (Leicester, Riverside, Manchester, Bristol) Almost threatening to push dance over the edge into performance by sheer energy, Edouard Lock and his dancers presented this entertaining seventy-minute piece on their first visit to Europe. Underpinned by their own rock accompaniment—they all sang, and several of them played electronic keyboards or percussion instruments—their *Danse musicale poste-moderne* involved dance-making of remarkable breadth: hands, arms, head, feet, the whole works used in movements of sometimes breathtaking speed and complexity. And if 'becoming an angel' had something to do with romantic love, then this was carried quite nicely in dance of an almost sexual physicality. And there were contributions by Max the talking dog and a gradual invasion of the stage—and the piece—by a troupe of cartoon-style scotties. Fractured narrative, changes of pace, and some laughs—a very special evening.



The Wild Wigglers, from Brighton. A cross between tribal fetish and electropop, the Wigglers, led by Margaret Aggis, who wear dogs on their heads among other things, are this year's truly bizarre art entertainment.



Anne Seagrave in *Women Against Shopping Around*, at Battersea Arts Centre. Anne Seagrave was one of the more interesting artists to emerge from this year's New Contemporaries.



Liquid Sky. US cult movie at the ICA, has a peculiar vision of NY's lower East side performance artists and surrounding fashion/punk/art twilight zone. Made by Russian exiles, there is a dislocated, wrong end-of-the-stick feel to it, but nevertheless the combination of sci-fi turkey and downtown demimonde is unique.

ART YEAR ZERO

He had taken a small bottle of vegetable dye which he had been told was indelible into the gallery, asked the crowd to stand well back and then emptied the contents over the 'sculpture'. 'The people standing around all clapped and cheered me and patted me on the back.'

Daily Telegraph

The cuts in the canvas cross the shoulders and back of the figure. The first blow was at the neck, and as the woman had no time to change her position, the slashes are close together.

Times

He made three cuts on the picture with a sharp Stanley knife. Then he yanked the canvas out of its frame and ripped it from top to bottom.

Star



Marinetti and fellow Futurists

'Until the public cease to countenance human destruction, the stones cast against me for the destruction of this picture are each an evidence against them of artistic as well as moral and

political humbug and hypocrisy.' Mary Richardson, March 1914 'Art, in fact can be nothing but violence, cruelty and injustice.' F.T. Marinetti, February 1909.

The Destructive Element



Announcement in Le Figaro

THE WILFUL destruction of a work of art in the public domain is an act which has been denied a history. Each attack remains isolated not only from those which have preceded it but also from the factors which underly its occurrence, making it appear as a random, sporadic phenomenon requiring containment rather than study.

Art vandalism is, quite literally, an unspeakable act in which silence means protection in that it reduces the threat of damage to the level of fire and flood; an

aberration of human nature to be insured against, a caprice which cannot be predicted but from which artworks must be guarded constantly. Theft runs a poor second to malicious damage in the daytime security measures employed in our galleries and museums: who, for example, ever had their bag searched on the way out?

The searches, guards and closed-circuit cameras represent a real fear which has never been fully articulated, primarily because the object of that fear has never

been granted a transcendent meaning outside that supplied by public outrage. As a key response to acts of art vandalism, outrage itself has been denatured by the media to the point of becoming a mere reflex.

This disturbing development both deprives each acid attack, firebombing and slashed canvas from the continuity which outrage could supply and limits considerably an analysis of the trauma involved in each attack. The vandalising of an artwork must inevitably lay open the complex and covert power relationships and value systems which uphold that work of art and define its public worth. Each work of art on display represents a unity of values—financial, aesthetic, historical and political—which are held together by the very fact of an institution of public ownership. The threat of destruction permanently fixes those values in relation to each other by emphasising the work of art's uniqueness and irreplaceability. At the same time, the threat of destruction also implies the possibility of a deviation from this unified order of value, and the ensuing expressions of horror find their voice through the existence of such a disruption.

In two interesting ways, this deviancy is powered by a notion of value of the art object. First, to single out an artwork to vandalise is to give it a new and different significance. Whether it survives the attack or is restored, the political, social or emotional significance given it by the attacker stays, considerably altering the way people look at it.

Second, to destroy a work of art is to reduce it to its original base materials: a painting becomes slashed canvas or charred paint, a sculpture can become a pile of rubble or a smoking ruin. The creative process is violently reversed, and the results are uniformly brutal, ugly and horrifying. It is an ironic fact that the vandal has to select the implement (meat cleavers, Stanley knives, firebombs, hammers etc.) appropriate to the medium just as carefully as the artist did in originally creating the work.

All this forms a complex and intimate relationship with public response which originated in this century and which has developed alongside the rampant rise to prominence of the mass media. Art vandalism is a public assault which demands the widest possible audience, and its coverage has strong affinities with the way the media treatment of 'terrorism' has meshed to form an almost seamless whole. The stock response to art vandalism whereby reportage immediately silences any discussion of the phenomenon makes a direct contribution to its status.

However, the media by no means provides the only reason for this conspiracy of silence. Underlying it is a reluctance to face up to the desire to destroy, not merely for its own sake but to erase all that has stood before. Destruction is the cutting edge of modernism, and the avant-garde of the twentieth century has endured a painful and ambiguous

relationship with it from its very inception. From the Futurists onwards, it has haunted their thinking, a pathological urge which has become short-circuited by their own unwillingness to demolish something to which they have actively committed themselves and with which they are deeply involved.

Formulated either in the foundation of some artistic and social 'year zero' of total and radical change, or as simply the love of the violent, unthinking gesture, the destructive impulse maintained a strong presence in the thinking of the early avant-garde, but was conspicuously

absent from their practise.

However, the destruction of artworks did find a response in the political activists of the left and extreme right, with whom movements like the Futurists, Dadaists, Constructivists, and Surrealists formed strong connections. The destructive element in which they were immersed had powerful and disturbing consequences which have never been fully explored. The fact that we are still attempting to deal with the repercussions in an increasingly inflexible manner makes any historical survey of this hitherto taboo field doubly fascinating.

wish to destroy from those who wish to conserve, placing the separation in full public view and animating everything that divides the two factions. It also appeals to a nascent avant-garde's desire to erase the past, as well as a desire for action in the most violent extremes. By throwing this appeal directly in the face of the public, it gives the controversial issue a social impact which it could not maintain if it had been published in any other, less popular form.

The lack of action by the avant-garde on the destructive urges given a voice here, however, meant that the individual work of art still held too deep a significance for the artist. Destruction thus remains something to be confronted, an element in the process of artistic and social change. Nevertheless, Marinetti had discovered the publicity value of art vandalism. Furthermore he had formulated within that vandalism an expression of the desire to establish change and construct a radically altered culture upon it.

The propaganda value to be found in the actual destruction of a painting is first revealed in the example of Mary Richardson, who, in London on March 10 1914, attacked the *Rokeby Venus* with a meat cleaver in the National Gallery. Ms Richardson, a suffragette who had been released from Holloway Prison that morning to recover from a hunger strike, was seen to approach the painting as if to examine it more closely. Neither the guard nor the uniformed police officer on duty in the gallery paid any attention to her until they heard the sound of glass

Marinetti and Slasher Mary



Mary Richardson

The will to destroy was first publicly expressed in 1909 when, on February 20, *Le Figaro* printed on its front page Marinetti's desire to 'destroy the museums, libraries, and academies of every kind.' He further expanded this directive into a vision of orgiastic destruction—'So let them come, the gay incendiaries with charred fingers! Here they are! Come on! Set fire to the library shelves! Turn aside the canals to flood the museums!...Oh the joy of seeing glorious old canvases bobbing adrift on these waters, your axes and hammers wreck the venerable cities pitilessly!'

Despite such rhetoric the Futurists made no attempt whatsoever to pursue a programme of wholesale destruction of artworks. Subsequent manifestos, either by Marinetti or his followers, make no attempt to deal with this cardinal founding principle, preferring instead to concentrate on issues of form, content and structure, and no major acts of art vandalism by Futurists, individually or collectively have been recorded. A similar disparity between the nihilistic statement and a subsequent lack of action can be found in other European avant-garde movements.

As a publicity stunt, however, it was brilliantly conceived: Paris was the focal point of the European art world, and to

have had, for example, an Italian paper carrying the manifesto would have blunted its impact. While it was probably never intended that the Futurist movement should respond to this call to slash, burn and flood, at the time of writing there were no Futurists, and Marinetti was relying on its publication to galvanise young Italian artists into joining his movement. The manifesto's content was designed to be both shocking and divisive, offering a clearly defined concept of modernity. In this respect, the use of a widely distributed newspaper and the expressed determination to wipe out Europe's existing artworks are very closely linked. In fact the one cannot exist without the other. Deliberately setting out to promote public outrage, it separates around the issue of modernity, those who

The slashed *Rokeby Venus*





The Rokeby Venus

breaking. Before being eventually restrained she had slashed the painting with her cleaver in seven different places. The press as a result referred to her as 'Slasher Mary', and *The Times* account of the attack gives the impression that she had hacked at a real person, so graphic was its description of the damage done. The irony is that Mary Richardson intended to destroy the Velasquez painting as a reprisal for the campaign of vilification being

carried out by the press and politicians against Emily Pankhurst. At the time of arrest, she stated to onlookers in the gallery that they 'could get another picture, but you cannot get another life, as they are killing Mrs Pankhurst.' In a later statement at Vine Street Police Station, she stressed the injustice inherent in a society which 'gaped all day' at a painting of a woman and considered it beautiful, while attempting to destroy a real woman

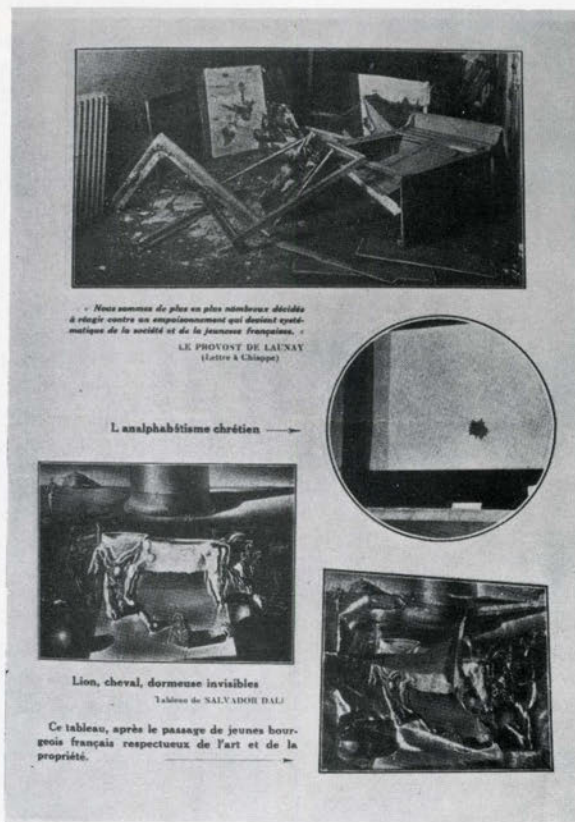
who was actively seeking justice and equality for all women. Beauty as a purely aesthetic principle was for her completely meaningless within a repressive society in which people were destroyed but paintings were carefully preserved and protected. *The Times* went on to prove her point for her by detailing the numbers of 'lovers of art of every class' who had donated money to buy the picture, and both the National Gallery and the Wallace Collection were closed for fear of further suffragette attacks.

Their rough contemporaneity provokes a number of comparisons between her and Marinetti, especially in the light of the contempt for feminists expressed in the First Manifesto of Futurism (by another irony, in the very sentence which called for the destruction of the museums and galleries). The contrast in the role the press played and how the dynamics of the movement each represented in these two examples was conditioned by different political thinking, is ultimately focused on the gap between thought and action. Such contrasts expose discontinuities which to this day exist between political action and artistic practise. To destroy a work of art for political or social reasons represented a conceptual leap which the avant-garde was incapable of taking at that time. As a result, events were to overtake them in a rapid and disastrous way.

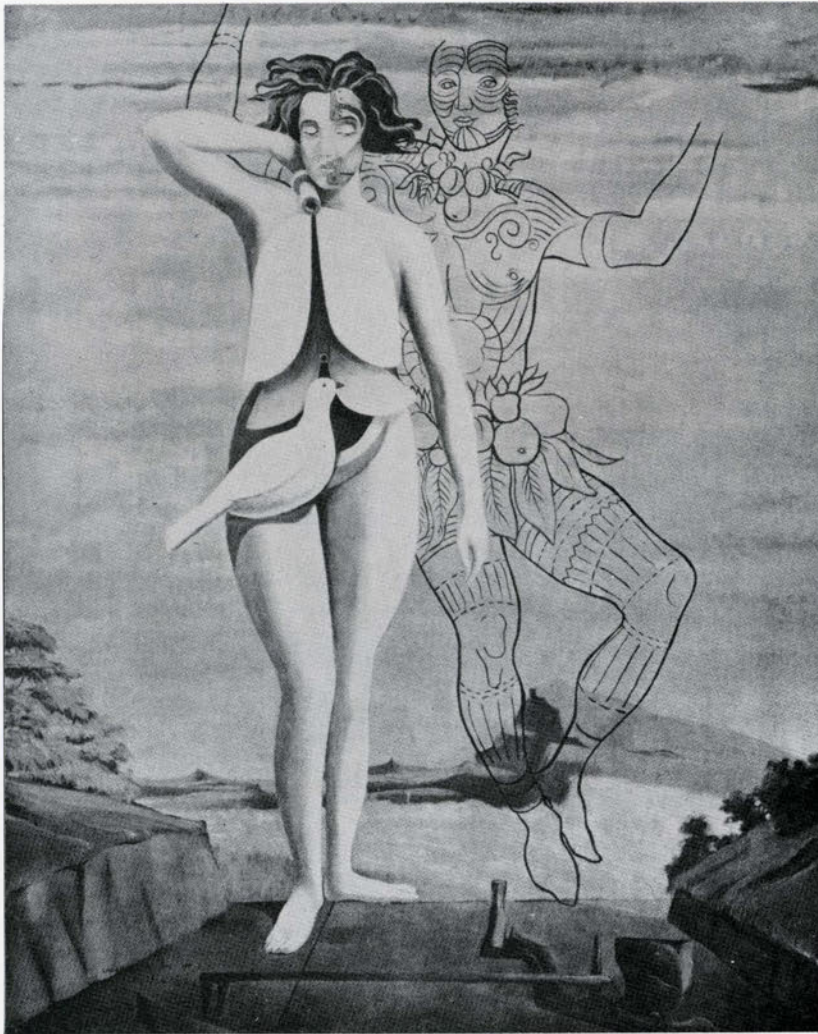
Fascists and Degenerates

On December 3rd 1930, a screening in Paris of the Bunuel-Dali film *L'Age D'or* was disrupted by representatives of the League of Patriots and members of the Anti-Jewish League. They started their action by hurling violet ink at the screen whilst shouting such slogans as 'Now we'll see if there are any Christians left in France' and 'Death to the Jews'. Smoke bombs were thrown into the audience who were also savagely beaten by league members. The cinema's telephone lines were cut and the attackers then went on a rampage through an exhibition of Surrealist books and paintings, destroying canvases by Dali, Ernst, Miro, Man Ray and Tanguy. They also and irreparably damaged all of Russolo's *intonarumori*, Futurist noise-making devices used in Futurist concerts. Police response to the incident was minimal, the attack coming as it did at the end of a long and vituperative press and political campaign against the film, its makers and supporters. It was also claimed that the Paris police were actually in collusion with the fascist groups responsible. This event marks the beginning of a period of socially-sanctioned art vandalism of which the avant-garde was the principal victim.

The mutual hostility between the avant-garde and society as a whole is a common condition and something which was actively sought after by both factions.



Scenes of carnage after *L'Age D'Or* riot



The Fair Gardener by Max Ernst 'Insult to German Womanhood'

Public resistance to experimental art still constitutes a licence to destroy. Not having a firmly established place in the public domain and avoiding acceptance is to stay on the firing line created by social and artistic divisions.

In 1916, for example, a mural by Dadaists Hans Arp and Otto Van Rees, painted—at the principal's request—on the outer walls of a Zurich girls school, had to be painted over. This was the result of complaints from the girls' outraged parents who feared for their children's well-being if constantly exposed to the dubious influence of abstract art: probably not an incident which the school's owners would today care to recall.

This incident is mild compared with the fascist riot of 1930; however neither were adequate preparation for the systematic eradication of avant-garde art initiated by the Nazis in an attempt to purge their culture of 'degenerate' elements. The Nazi concept of an official, socially and politically 'uplifting' art which emphasised racial purity and national ideals had a specific target; what German historian Hermann Glaser has called the *Speisser* mentality, prevalent among the German lower middle classes. The *Speisser* view—

detailed in Glaser's seminal *The Cultural Roots of National Socialism*—was that, just as the woman's place was in the kitchen, so art belonged over the fireplace, making the front room look nice.

Classical nudity and physical perfection in human representation were cultivated by the Nazis for the 'Speisser' market, as were idealised German landscapes and glorious scenes from German history. Intellectualism and experimentation were suspect. Foreign influences like French Cubism and Russian Constructivism were condemned as 'Jewish' and 'Bolshevik', and anything which deviated from realist representation was an abomination. Surrealists, Futurists, Dadaists—all 'degenerate', and, like the banned writers whose work was publicly burned on May 10th 1933, held up and ridiculed as valueless artists whose work was better off on the bonfire. Once a work is devalued in this manner its destruction will not arouse much criticism. A perfect example of this method was the exhibition of 'degenerate art' (*Entarte Kunst*) which was first staged in Munich by the Nazis before becoming a touring show. Examples of avant-garde art were deliberately hung crooked, badly spaced, and in some cases

placed so high up the gallery walls that they could not be seen adequately. The exhibition was accompanied by a sneering official catalogue which would make interesting reading today.

One of the paintings on show in this exhibition, Max Ernst's *The Fair Gardener*, was hung beneath a sign which read, 'Insult to German Womanhood'. After the exhibition, it disappeared without trace, presumed to have been destroyed by the Nazis. A dispirited Ernst said 'That the Nazis destroyed *The Fair Gardener* continued to infuriate me to such a pitch that I could finally no longer resist the temptation to make a new version.' The resignation expressed by Ernst represented a capitulation in the face of a holocaust of destruction of people and cities of which the Surrealists could never have conceived. These same artists who had revelled in the idea of destruction, who had praised and publically supported famous murderers, and who claimed that the most perfect Surrealist act was to 'fire a revolver at random in a crowd' were now on the run, to take up silent exile in New York.

Containment

Public calls for destruction went out of fashion in the post-war epoch. Art vandalism became an absurdity amidst the bombed-out cities and ruined galleries of Europe. Meanwhile, in America, the new centre of the art world, the degree of involvement in destruction in the late fifties and early sixties was ultimately too cute to be threatening. It was more a flirtation than a direct embrace in which the destructive element was contained within the creative process. Issues like mechanical reproduction, the individual work of art, the individual act within a mass society were ones that integrated rather than divided factions.

In 1958, John Cage in an essay on Erik Satie calls on readers to destroy every gramophone record of Satie's work 'as an act of charity'. In 1953 Robert Rauschenberg spent several months and a large quantity of erasers carefully rubbing out a De Kooning drawing. Rauschenberg defended his action on aesthetic grounds, refusing to agree that it was a gesture against the previous generation of abstract expressionists. Although admitting that the word 'destruction' played a part in discussion of the project, the time and care taken with the erasure tend to support his statement: it is contained vandalism, conceptually kept in check and borne out by the painstaking labour. De Kooning himself responded to the project in these terms, as Rauschenberg's account of their meeting reveals:

'He pulled out one drawing, looked at it and said "No, I'm not going to make it easy for you. It has to be something that I'd miss." Then he took out another portfolio and looked through that, and finally gave me a drawing and I took it

home. It wasn't easy by any means. The drawing was done with hard line and it was greasy too, so I had to work very hard on it, using every sort of eraser. But in the end it really worked. I liked the result. I felt as if it was a legitimate work of art.'

There is here the vague beginning of a conceptual inflection where the artist threatens his own traditions and his own work. It represents an increasing sense of disgust with the art market and the constrictions it imposes. This frustration was expressed through a large number of gestures, strategies and conceptual arguments, many of which attempted to devalue the art object.

In the case of John Baldessari it took the form of a proposal to cremate all his previous paintings and then have the ashes interred in the wall of the Jewish Museum in New York. The burnt paintings are, in this case contained within a complex series of aesthetic questions, some inherent in the gesture itself and some posed by the artist directly to his audience. By so doing Baldessari severely limits the range of influence of this self-inflicted damage: its impact is blunted, and discussion of the act is similarly confined. Whilst it is not as disturbing in our society for an artist to destroy his or her own work as it is for a stranger to do it, it is interesting to compare John Baldessari's project to the genuinely shocking incident in which Anger destroyed all his own early films.

The *Village Voice* for October 26, 1967 carried a full page black notice on which was written in white letters, 'In Memoriam Kenneth Anger 1947-1967'. A few days later at the New York Film-Makers Co-op, Anger broke open the cans containing his early and unreleased films and began to unroll yards of footage for burning. Jonas Mekas, who was present with a few other onlookers tried to persuade Anger to at least allow him to make copies from Anger's original films before they were totally destroyed. Anger refused and kept on unrolling the films, until eventually Mekas left, unable to endure the sight of so much destruction.

Both examples share a number of similarities—the announcements, the funereal trappings—however Anger's gesture ended in his decision to change his name and stop making films altogether whereas Baldessari incorporated the burning of his paintings into a continuing aesthetic process through questions raised by and possible definitions of his proposed act. Baldessari's question, 'Is this the end of my life?' is in fact more appropriate to a man like Anger who is so prepared to see the act through to the end that he doesn't even stop to ask his public such a question. The issue of containment is one which again concerns the determination to take an extreme and total act through to its irreversible conclusion. Containment is playing with fire. Meanwhile, in New York an unknown vandal burnt down a sculpture by Alan Kaprow which was made entirely of automobile tyres when no-one was watching.

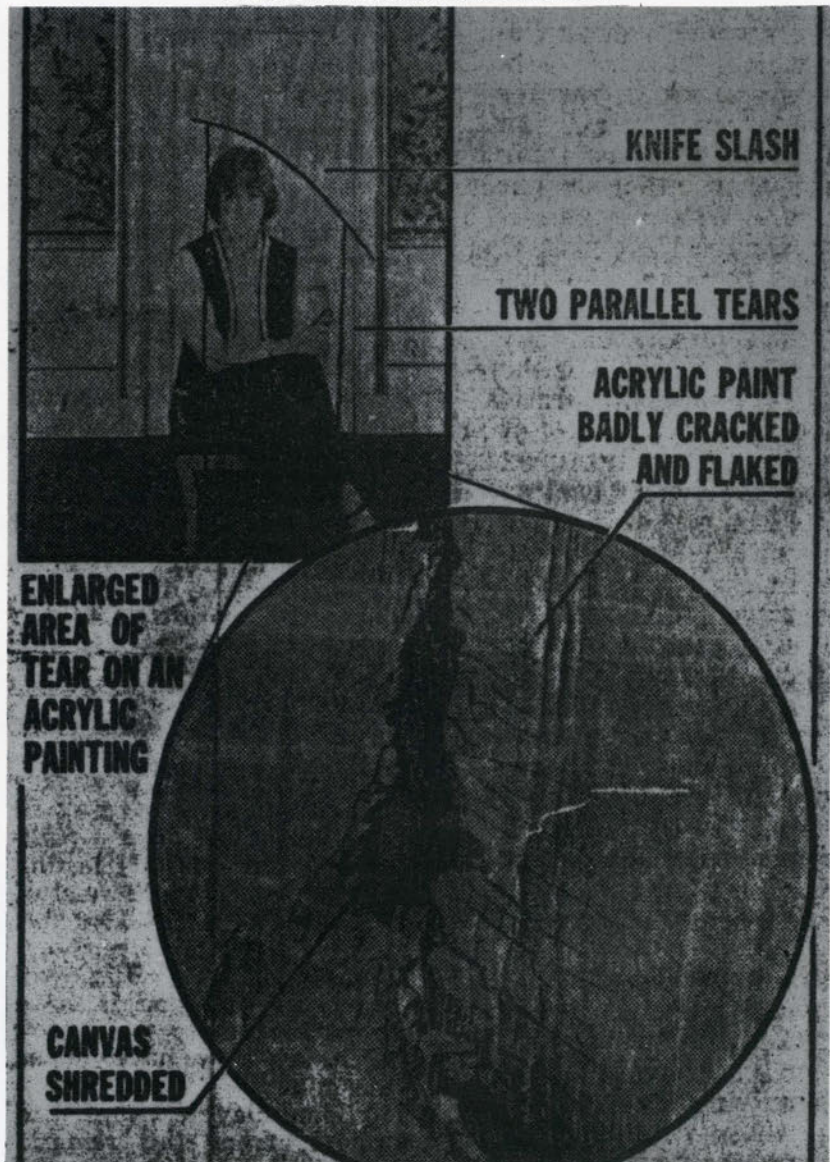
The Hit List

From the late sixties onwards, there has been a slow acceleration in the frequency with which artworks have been attacked. The media, now quite adept at producing a predictable response to each event offered a greater platform upon which the vandal could address society. In October 1968 a theological student called Aleister Wise went berserk and detonated a 2 gallon petrol bomb at the base of the Crouchbank Tomb in Westminster Abbey. The Abbey filled with black smoke and the tomb was hidden by a sheet of flame; some of the scorch marks and the melted remains of the plastic container used for the bomb can still be seen along the base of the tomb. It was conceived by Wise as a gesture against the Church spending money on restoring its property rather than giving it to the poor. He even attempted to spray-can a suitably biblical message on the



A licence to destroy?

The slashed Bryan Organ painting of Princess Diana



North West wall of the Abbey but managed to get all the words in the wrong order rendering his statement virtually incoherent. His protest against Church spending was reduced to an absurdity when the bills for repairing the damage caused started to come in. Wise's action is representative of a number of such incidents in which the motive, damage done and the significance of the artwork singled out become separated from each other in a pointless media exercise.

Front-page coverage was given in 1971 to Lazlo Toth who declared himself the Second Coming of Christ and proved it by taking a sledge hammer to the *Pieta* in Rome. Predictably Mr. Toth disappeared into the obscurity of an Italian mental hospital, and the *Pieta* is now encased in perspex. On a much smaller scale, Spanish fascists occasionally prove their continued existence by sporadically flinging acid at a Picasso. This behaviour might suggest that it was probably not such a good idea to return Picasso's *Guernica* depicting as it does a Civil War atrocity perpetrated by the German Luftwaffe in collusion with Franco's troops. Then again, it may be now safer in Spain than it was in New York where future art dealer Tony Shafrazi defaced the painting with a spray-can whilst future art curator Diego Cortez, who was then a guard at MOMA, didn't quite carry out his duties as assiduously as he might have.

However the best way to avoid punishment for vandalising art in this country is to ensure that you have the press on your side before you make a move. Experience shows that this is no cynical joke but corresponds with a pattern which has been repeated over and over again until the outcome can be predicted from its very inception. Two very recent cases bear this out. In February 1976 the press-inspired scandal surrounding the Tate's acquisition of Carl Andre's sculpture of 120 firebricks came to a head when Peter Stowell-Phillips threw dye over the the sculpture while it was on display. Stowell-Phillips claimed that he was an amateur painter who was outraged at Andre's work both on artistic grounds and because he (Stowell-Phillips) was a tax-payer. The public, both in the gallery and at their breakfast tables, apparently applauded the action of this 'artist and tax-payer' as the *Daily Telegraph* called him. The press who had originally helped fuel the controversy over Andre's work by doubting whether Andre actually was an artist (or, by the *Daily Telegraph*'s innuendo, even a taxpayer) were equally biased in their response to this final incident. Whilst not exactly asking for a knighthood on behalf of Mr. Stowell-Phillips, they also didn't go very far out of their way to censure him either. The Tate Gallery removed the sculpture from public display to clean the dye off, and because as gallery director Sir Norman Reid put it, 'If people are going to behave like this it would be better to give it a slight rest.' The Tate did not press charges against Stowell-Phillips but they

did ban him from the gallery. Mr. Stowell-Phillips may not have had any regrets over the affair, but Sir Norman Reid did: 'I was hoping people would begin to understand a little what it was about, but it will take longer than a few days'.

It didn't take more than a few days to find Paul Salmon, a twenty-year old student, guilty of slashing Brian Organ's portrait of Lady Diana Spencer in November 1981. The charge was criminal damage, and Salmon was sentenced to six months in prison and was ordered to pay £1,000 compensation. Bow Street Magistrate Quintin Campbell called Salmon 'an immature young vandal', adding that, 'Your motive was just to show off. I don't think for one minute that your reasons were ideological.' Whatever Salmon's real motive was, his statement that he had attacked 'a symbol of everything British' to draw attention to social deprivation in Northern Ireland was not given any prominence either at the trial or the press coverage of the incident.

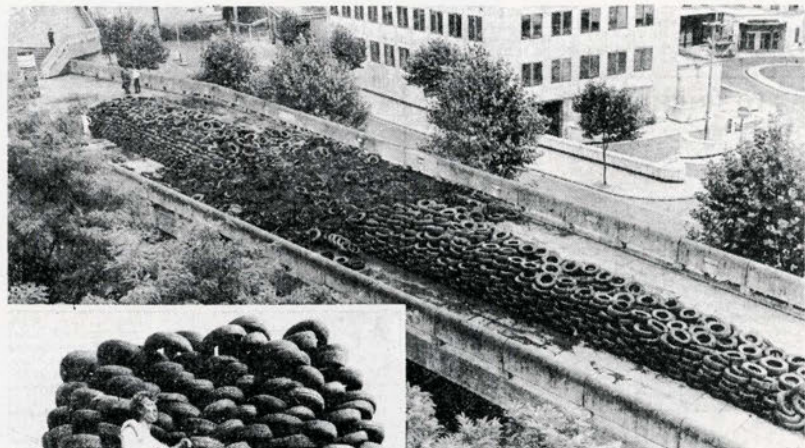
Another thing is certain, he had hit the British public in a very sensitive spot at a very sensitive time. The National Portrait Gallery had all their royal portraits removed and covered with protective glass and the press turned their attention to a

nude portrait of Lady Diana painted by a Southampton shopkeeper who, after offering it to the Gallery as a replacement for the damaged painting, put it on display in his shop window where some citizens threw bricks at it one night.

The only break in the pattern which has emerged in the consideration of these various incidents is the case of David Gore-Graham (dealt with in PERFORMANCE 26) who was found running in flames from David Mach's submarine sculpture made entirely out of automobile tyres which was irreparably damaged in the fire. Next morning, police found petrol cans amidst the ashes but closed their enquiry when Gore-Graham died in hospital of 90% burns without ever recovering consciousness. The press, who had been highly critical of the submarine sculpture, also dropped the case after the report of his death. Without motive, an eye-witness account or even an accurate estimation of how the sculpture was torched, it is impossible to say definitely that Gore-Graham was responsible for the fire. The silence is deafening, but at least it offers everybody the chance to think about why the various factions and interested parties persist in this dangerous game.

Ken Hollings

A dangerous game? (After the razing, before the death)



The burnt-out sculpture and (left) Mr Mach on his work (Photographs: John Manning (top) and Brian Harris).

Burnt sculpture may be replaced, gallery says

Mr David Mach, sculptor of the submarine that was set alight early yesterday outside the Royal Festival Hall in London, said after inspecting the damage that he hoped the model would be rebuilt (Kenneth Gosling writes).

A spokesman for the Hayward Gallery, which mounted the Sculpture Show in association with the Serpentine Gallery with Arts Council and Greater London Council finance, said it was likely that a decision about rebuilding would be taken today.

Mr Mach said he had been shocked to hear of the 170ft-long Polaris submarine model's being vandalized,

"especially since during the building of the sculpture I had considerable public support".

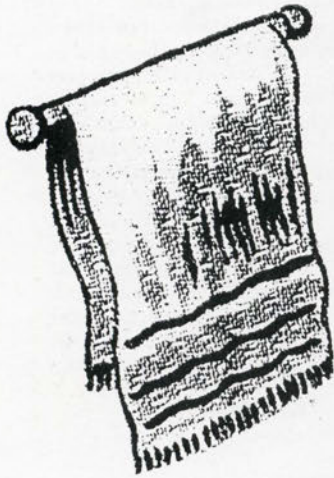
The condition of a man who suffered severe burns in the fire was said last night to have "deteriorated slightly".

Mr James Gore-Graham, aged 37, a designer, of Collet Gardens, Hammersmith, London, was taken to St Thomas's Hospital and transferred to the burns unit of Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton. He was said to be in a critical condition, suffering 90 per cent burns.

Forensic scientists have been studying the remains of the submarine. Petrol cans are understood to have been found among the 6,000 tyres

HOW LIFE DIFFERS FROM DETERGENT

The Politics of the Kitchen

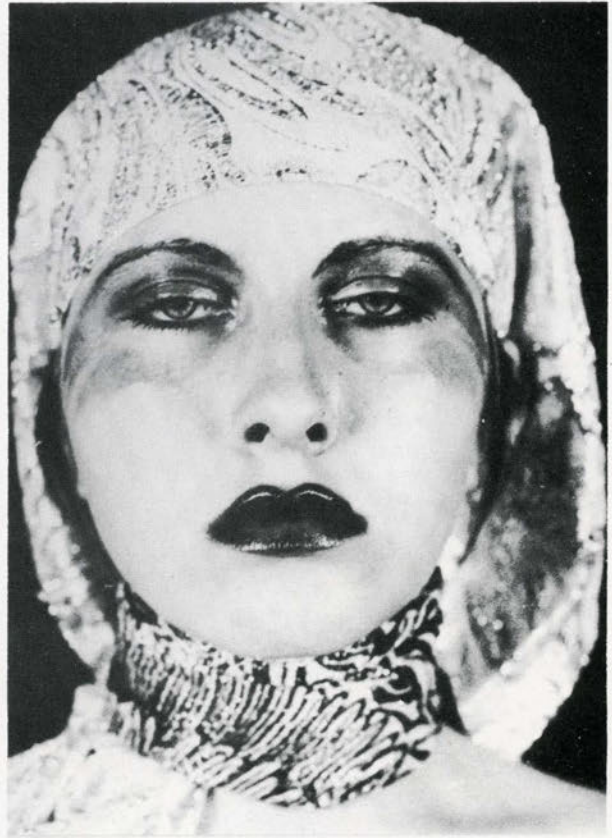


Le Shack, 1983



Appearing apparently out of nowhere at the notorious 1980 Hayward Annual, Silvia Ziraneck is fast becoming one of Britain's most distinctive performance artists. First working with Bruce Maclean in the seventies, her unashamedly exotic style developed along with her complex and often bewildering use of the spoken word. She has

recently appeared on Radio One and in such diverse publications as *Honey* and the tape magazine, *Audio Arts*, but few attempts have been successful in breaking through the linguistic facade concealing her background and working methods. Phil Hyde managed to penetrate *Le Shack* and quiz her on the intimate details of her life and art.



I Thundered Hungry As A Mood 1973

Phil Hyde: *Perhaps we could talk a bit about your early years?*

Silvia Ziraneck: My formative years as a babe! Oh yes, great! Well, my brother and I used to share a bedroom. I had a yellow mug and he had a green mug and we used to have scobie-doo straws. Do you remember them? Anyway, we used to have orange juice and we used to go to bed and he used to turn on an imaginary radio and I would come up with a story. He was older than I was but I was a little story teller. I was a bossy, pugnacious, demanding, elephantine, tense, insecure, etc. etc. little miss. (laughs) But I loved making up stories, I loved dressing myself up. We used to go round in a gang and I was the only girl there. We used to play a lot of hopscotch and dig tunnels outside on the common and once the boys succumbed and they dressed me up in daisies and I was Queen of the May. It was absolutely wonderful.

Whereabouts were you brought up?

South London, Barnes, but that was before it was inhabited by the paparazzi as I believe they're called. It was full of grey-coated old ladies and rollup-smoking old men. Drabsville! But it was okay. Good enough place to live—kids, youth clubs, dances, parties, school. Lots of school! Very good at Latin, very studious.

I noticed in that recent article on you in Honey magazine you say you wanted to be an artist after seeing Les Enfants du Paradis. Is that true?

Ah, no. I'd never wanted to be an artist. I'm thrilled now to be called an artist but I'd never wanted to be an artist because that is something one has in one's soul. (laughs) I was always very busy making things, writing things, being people, being myself. I was considered quite precocious because I was doing then what I am now. And so I could have quite easily done then in a different version, a younger version what I do now.

So is that a misquote in Honey? It says 'but after seeing the film Les Enfants du Paradis I had to be an artist although my mother said that artists were ten a penny.'

That's a slight change around. Before I left school I had to decide what I was going to do. I wanted to do Polish at

Cambridge because I considered that I had some form of brain. I wanted to do Polish because my father was Polish and I think they probably assumed that it was much better for me to go to a modern university where there were millions of people and where I wouldn't have to sit special exams. So I went off to Leeds and did Russian—didn't want to do Polish, small country, unimportant. Russian—similar language, just next door, much better, just next door, more future in it—very sensible, very stupid! And so off I went to Leeds. But before this, I was making fish mobiles and frocks and pretty flowers on my toes and being a very creative schoolgirl. Lots of weaving! But I didn't know what to do with it, I was still young. I didn't know how to channel it into myself as whatever it was—just lots and lots of pastimes.

'Apparently, though, there are these people who are frightened of me'

So you have very natural ideas for things to do and situations to make for their own sake.

I am always the situation. Apparently, though, there are these people who are frightened of me. I have this fiendish atmosphere and I give black looks and people are actually petrified. In its more positive humorous, beneficial qualities, I think that the atmosphere can be used as a spiritual uplift. But I don't want people frightened of me.

But this creativity has been functioning very naturally and you haven't categorised it or yourself. Presumably at some point you ended up doing this thing called art and being an artist.

Well, yes, I went off to university where I learnt Russian. I'm very good at languages. I love speaking in different accents and in different languages—in different languages of the tongue and of the heart and of the body. Anyhow, having learnt Russian, I



then went on to much more critical aspects of Russian history, Russian sociology, Russian politics, which are highly interesting and intellectually edible but were not what I wanted to deal with. I didn't want to analyse and criticise. I wanted to make, I wanted to be and I wasn't able to do it. I was very frustrated and I wasn't making anything—apart from a gruesome little leather keyring. So one holiday, I quit. I thought okay, I am, let's say, an artist or whatever I am and I can't fiddle about with other things because I have to produce the work myself.

'I went on to photographing old ladies diving into swimming pools and measuring clumps of grass with Bruce McClean'

So what did you go on to do?

Well, I went on to photographing old ladies diving into swimming pools and measuring clumps of grass with Bruce McClean and discovering that it was to do with myself whatever I was doing in front of other people, whatever I was producing, whatever I was showing. Then Bruce asked me to be a hostess to *Hoover Mover, Fridge Freezer* at the Hanover Grand which was about 1972 or 73 when I was at Croydon where I was already designing costumes and being very talkative—quite a character I suppose. I realised that the work was more and more to do with myself being whatever I was. Then I went off to Goldsmith's School of Art to do feet and I went off to the interview and Tim Head asked me 'you saw *Come Dancing*, of course?' and of course he had understood the whole thing which was great so I was in. Then for the next three years I had absolutely no help whatsoever, no encouragement—just tolerance.

How did you find working with Bruce McClean?
Terrific.

It's good fun?

He's great. I'm wild about him.

Is he totally non-serious?

No. I suppose he appears droll, witty, humorous, but I don't think he instigates any work without references, comments, allusions and I think one of the reasons why my work is sometimes getting a little more shouting or a little more stern is because partly people say 'Oh yes, glamour, glamour, glamour, little housewife, little frou frou,' but also because he said get dangerous. 'Names will be named,' he says!

Dangerous in what way?

Everything isn't so funny. I don't always comment on something nowadays by being funny about it, by being a little kind of disdainful.

And this is something you have learnt from Bruce?

I don't think I would have learnt it without him.

Your pieces are very carefully prepared. How do you prepare them?

What do you mean by that?

Your recent show at London Video Arts was produced for the reopening of the gallery. Do you always work like that or are there other ways?

I see. Yes, I did prepare a piece for that. But then I did a show for the opening of an exhibition of photography by five women. I'd just done a Valentine's show called *Teeth and Other Emotions* because I have funny little teeth which intimates have been known to love. (laughs) I then had five and a half days to produce this second show, which I called *Photos and Other Females*. I wrote it very much with the idea of looking at women, of the attitudes of women—woman as person, woman as houseperson, woman as pretty little thing, woman as thinker, woman as worker. So that was written for there. I can either produce a piece because I get a title, or I might see something and I want to incorporate that. I used to have a blinding vision of whatever I would do and then I would think of what I would say and then I would think of what I should do for that. In the *Chez Z* piece, it's very rare that I sink back into the lapping confines of my chaise-longue and just talk, talk, talk, talk but I can do it. I have done it...in bars and baths! (laughs)

Soviet Sensation 1974



Did you have a good time in New York at the Britain Salutes New York festival?

I had a fantastic time, although I did get tired for half an hour in six weeks because it was a question of waking, coffee, phone, shower, dress, friends, back, coffee, phone, change, phone, friends, bed...Coffee, shower, phone...(laughs) I was only there for six weeks, as opposed to my first 6 month trip in 1980, so I wasn't able to watch as much TV as possible.

You were there for much longer before?

Yes, I did my piece at the Franklin Furnace this year. I wrote it specially for America, because disdainful as I am for the American's grasp of the English language, I realised there are times when people just don't understand verbal tautologies and witticisms. You see, I deal with an art audience which is a little strange because my work is highly literary. So when I go to New York, I write in monosyllables. I got a phrase just before I

'It's very rare that I sink back into the lapping confines of my chaise-longue and just talk talk talk but I can do it. I have done it ... In bars and baths!'

went—'His eyes were cold as jelly, her lips were hot as chips' and this was the first thing that I wrote. And then I wrote my *Killer Thriller—A Deliberate Case of Particulars* which becomes *The Intemperate Heart* which becomes *I Ate Art* because you can get 'I Ate Art' out of both the other titles. Only jelly is bi-syllabic. But when I was there before for six months, I was able to watch a lot of TV, but this time I spent more time in supermarkets jotting down brand names which are fiendish, really hilarious.

'I was very reluctant to say that I was a performance artists because it was often misconstrued as being a stripper ... so rather than kick someone, I would say something completely different'

So this was a whole new area of fascination for you?

How people can spend time thinking of brand names, I don't know, but they're really funny. I won't quote any of them because I'll do them wrong. But American consumerism is gross. There you can't buy anything small or compact. I mean a diamond, of course! But it's best to get a million—you know, so cheap! Everything is in vast quantities. True emotion is the most expensive and elusive quantity in New York. I would like to spend more time in New York. It's very hard on emotion. Because it's such a glossy, glamorous, joyful, desperate place. I'm on edge the whole time. It's great for this, the extravagance and the ebullience.

Do they see you in those terms?

Yes, in England when I started doing this live stuff, I was very reluctant to say that I was a performance artist because it was often misconstrued as being a stripper which made me feel really ill, so rather than kick someone, I would say something completely different.

You mean at parties or when you were chatting to someone?

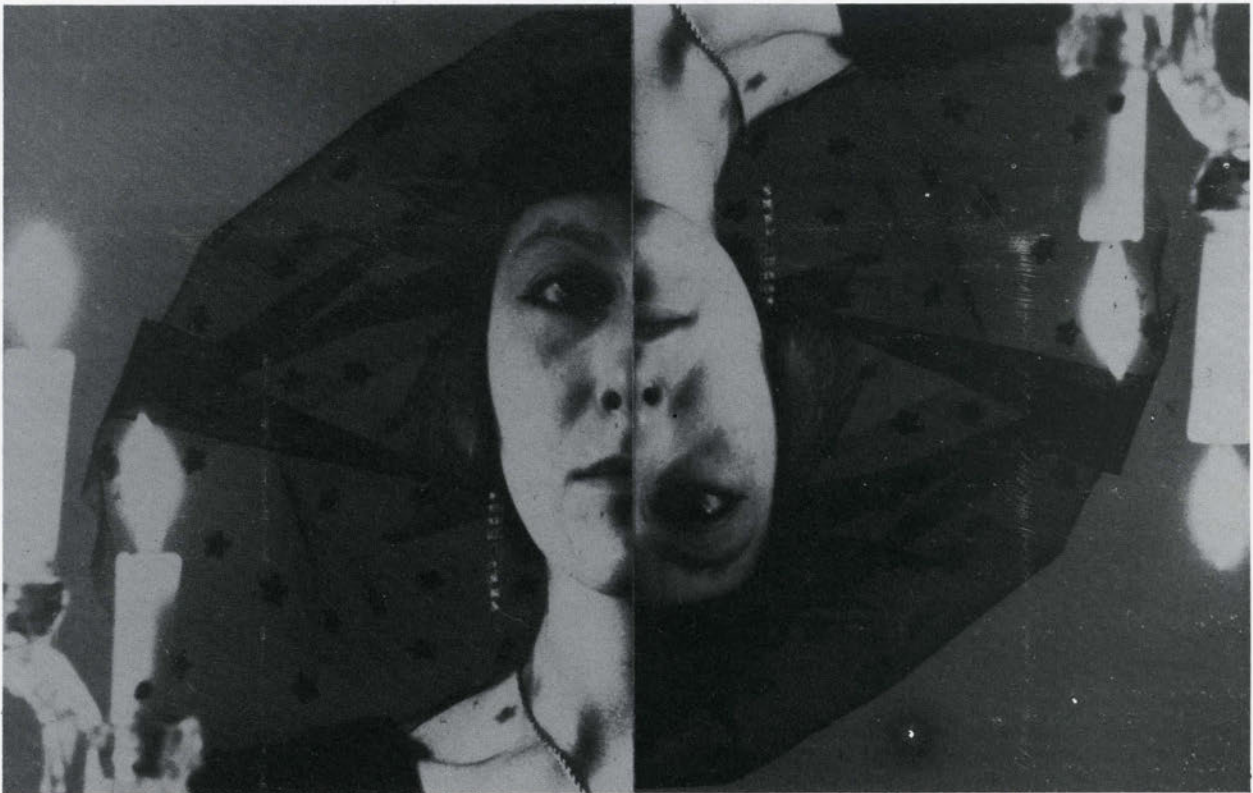
Yes, maybe casually in some bar. But in New York, when I say



Chilli Con Cardboard 1979

Rubbergloverama Drama 1980





Rarely Talk/Used Air 1981

I'm a performance artist, everyone understands because they're all performers. Nobody stops at home, everyone's out on the front step or in some bar.

'Just because I put rollers in my hair doesn't mean that I'm doing that as the first stage to combing them out as Miss Glamour'

Coming back to your performance at Riverside Studios, I noticed Roland Penrose in the audience. Do you think you're in a tradition of provocative English surrealism?

(laughter) I was talking to Milena from Riverside Studios just yesterday about this. A tradition of English surrealism. First of all I know nothing of anyone else. This sounds wonderfully arrogant but it happens to be 95% true. I gave up university and school because I didn't like its limitations and I am now trying to unlearn the barriers. But at least I have some enjoyment of myself which one is taught not to have, to do, to be. One isn't emotional, one isn't colourful. I know nothing of the tradition. It's one I may well be strongly linked with but about which I know nothing.

Wouldn't it be true to say that you have your own tradition of events and instances that go back to your childhood and which really come forward to make you what you are?

Yes, but one can never tell how much one knows without having been told it day after day after day. The world started before I was born and so it's impossible to say what has really

influenced me. People have said—very surrealistic, very allegorical, but it's actually something I have done—an actual experience or an expression of my experience.

But leaving aside something as remote as English surrealists, did you ever take particular note of artists closer to this decade who have explored ideas of themselves as art?

No

Not at all?

No.

So people like Gilbert and George...

Fanny Craddock, Katie Boyle, Cliff Richard, Jess Conrad, Listen With Mother, Worker's Playtime, Bunty—really!

They're closer to your art?

Closer to my heart, yes!

Do you dislike being labelled as flamboyant?

No, I don't dislike being labelled flamboyant but if I'm called a flamboyant housewife, I find that disgustingly rude, stupid, limited, untrue. Just because I put rollers in my hair, it doesn't mean that I'm doing that as the first stage to combing them out as Miss Glamour. I was wearing hair rollers when I was pedalling around Manhattan. They were enormous, they were pink, they were wonderful, and that was my latest hairstyle—the rollers *in situ*. Because I discuss the house, because I discuss basic survival—love, emotion, money, cleanliness. These aren't topics confined to housewifery.

That's interesting. The point I was going to discuss with you was that you wouldn't deny that you're very stylish.

Never. Absolutely, yes.

Do you enjoy style?

Absolutely

Why do you think that there is so much interest in style today? For example, there are magazines devoted to it, exploring it, generating it.

I don't think that it's any more now than it has been before.

Do you think you're extreme in your pursuit of style?

With a castle and a million diamonds behind me, wearing my tiara on my ankles, I could pursue it even more wildly, but you see when I'm on my motorbike, I can't pursue style—at least I can't at 30mph when I'm sober. But I'm also very practical which is absolutely wretched—especially on the bike when you



A Deliberate Case of Particulars/The Intemperate Heart/I Ate Art 1983

have to be very careful about things. One can wear pink quilted waterproof jodhpurs, but in a lot of things, I have to be really quite sensible.

Where does your enthusiasm for it come from?

Oh gosh. It's because I need love and attention. (laughs)

Is it also great fun?

It's also terrific fun. There's nothing quite like making someone smile to their knees.

Do you ever think of yourself as entertaining people?

Oh, yes, it's great when I can entertain, but that again goes back to the housewife thing. To be really amusing or whatever, it's not just a question of telling a few jokes.

Is it part of the problem that people's perception of these roles is really so narrow that they see 'housewife' as being very limited, that they see 'entertainer' as being some sort of standup comic and that they can't see that these exist in many other sorts of fields?

I think people have all sorts of problems and people have problems before they know me. (laughs) I don't know. I don't talk to people very much about their problems. I have quite a few problems myself.

I meant conceptual problems.

Well, I can remember in Battersea when I was going off for my tap dancing lessons some years ago and this gang had just got their Sunday afternoon ice-creams and the gang leader fell back on his henchmen and went 'Eh, fuck me, what does she fucking think she fucking is?' I was merely wearing a multi-layered frilly pink skirt, my bows in my hair and little roses at my elbows. I was just being an impish sugar plum fairy. It wasn't a problem or a challenge or a *cri-de-coeur* or anything like that. People are given barriers, they're given categories. I do try to break a few of these, but even I can get shy.

It's very difficult to ask anyone to explain their work because it's

almost like cheating and in a way it doesn't solve anything. But I'd be interested to have a close look at one of your pieces, for example, Chosen Moments. 'How life differs from detergent'—how do you come to write a line like that?

That's a ridiculous question.

Do you think it's inscrutable?

It seems to me so obvious it's a superfluous question.

Would you object if I asked some more superfluous questions?

No, ask another question. Superflow on!

'One needs a clean sock from time to time'

How does a line occur such as 'I was nine when I discovered that you didn't have to be in love to visit the laundrette.'?

When I was a pre-pubert, I used to go to the laundrette with my mother, and one time, I took cardboard money along and the man who ran the laundrette took my cardboard money and I thought that was wonderful. Not that I was in love with the man or the laundrette or the money but the whole thing just seemed to tie in together—that you can do someone else's laundry and you don't have to be in love with the laundrette or life or the person that you're taking the laundry for, to have to do that particular task.

So it's worth doing for its own sake

Well, one needs a clean sock from time to time.

Looking at your use of words, at times it seems a rather depressing view of the world where words are almost like parlour games or veiled metaphors.

Yes, it is metaphorical. Sometimes there's a ready-made phrase and if you change the words around you get a completely different meaning. I find that very interesting. I don't think that it's depressing. I don't write because I'm an insightful sociologist or a radical feminist but I think some of these things are true. 'How life differs from detergent'—I think that's quite obvious. 'Peanut scented washing powder, some things are never meant to be'—I think that's obvious. You see, at times I'm completely baffled as to how to explain these things because they seem so obvious to me. I'm not actually playing around with words any more than anyone else. It's just that it's written down and made something of.

Do you think that you get misunderstood then?

Yes, desperately.

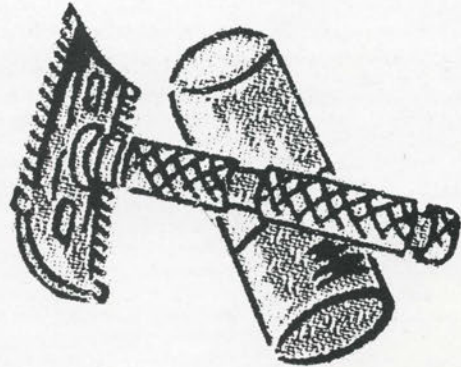
Because at heart, you would say you're being quite straightforward and natural.

Yes, I would do the same in everyday life, well not exactly, as I do in every day onstage work. The subjects of the work are as diverse as my existence. I have been challenged on a few occasions for the lack of politics, the lack of world politics, but I can't deal with the problems of the world. If I wanted to go into politics, I might deal with that a bit more in my own work, but I deal with the politics of my life and my acquaintances and my

pursuits. I bring politics into my kitchen, even.

That presumably is a big enough world?

I would have thought so.



From A Considerable Amount of Height 1983



Lisa Morgan

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE LISTINGS

Brighton

Zap Club

Info: (0273) 506471
December 9: Wild Wigglers & Birds with Ears.
December 16: Christmas Dinner event. Ian Smith & Final Academy video screening. In February ZAP comes to London with various events.

Bristol

Arnolfini

Info: (0272) 299191
December 3-January 15: Francois Baschet—Sound sculptures.

Berkshire

South Hill Park

Info: (0344) 27272
Sending in for series of performance weekend events January-May 1984, call Alastair Snow at above no.

Cardiff

Chapter Arts

Info: (0222) 396061
No details at present, phone above no.

Hull

Spring Street Theatre

Info: (0482) 224800
No details at present, call above no.

Leicester

Robert Ayers is currently selecting work for a week of performance art in Leicester in May. As broad a range as possible to be included, and work by young artists given first priority. Artists and groups should send details to Robert Ayers, 110 Hartopp Rd, Clarendon Park Leicester LE2 1WF

London

Air Gallery (London Video Arts)

Info: (01) 734 7410
December 8: Gary Hill from NY—videotapes include *Videograms* 'a series of playful stabs at the image/language dragon that insists on chasing its tail and *Electronic Linguistic* 'a kind of syntax for discovering text/image constructs—reorganisations of the dragon's tell-tale.' Plus: open screenings on the last wednesday every month (except December)

Art Place Trust

Info: (01) 734 7410
No details at present, phone above no.

Eccentric Enterprises

Info: (01) 969 7019
No details at present, phone above no.

Diorama

Info (01) 278 3799 (these events only)
December 2: Holly Warburton

The Reflected Portrait—Petrification of Transcience (Installation opens), Jonathan Davis, Catherine Seely
Softcorehardshell (performance), Peter Davis
Symptoms of the miraculous (performance) plus video by Akiko Hada, Chris Rushton and Neil Armstrong.
December 9: Grahame Gussin, Ken Henwood
In Order of Appearance (performance), Andre Hinton
Mechanical Engineer (performance), Jonathan Davis, Catherine Seely (performance), Video by Caroline Stone, Simon Robertshaw, Dean Whitbread
New Comfort for the Heart—the Indestructible Object (Installation opens)
December 16: Graham Tunnadine (installation opens), Jez Welsh
Do What You're Told, Club Boring and the Kreuzer Quintet (performance), video and film by Linda Schouten and Jenni Russell.

ICA

Info (01) 930 0493
ICA Gallery: Until December 11: *We won't play nature to your culture* by Barara Kruger (See review this issue)
Until January 1: Robert Mapplethorpe retrospective.
January 11 onwards: Mulheimer Freiheit, new wave of German sculpture and murals.
December 16-January 22: Viewpoints on Video in the Eighties—international video work.
ICA Theatre: November 29 onwards: Impact Theatre Cooperative in *A Place In Europe*, 'an oratorio-music

piece that takes us on a haunting and elegaic journey through post-war Europe. (See review this issue.)

December 20-23: *Beauty and the Beast*: Seasonal spectacle by Lumiere and Son with students from E15.

January 10-22: London Mime Festival.

London Musicians Collective

Info: (01) 722 0456
Regular performances of improvised and experimental music, dance, performance, film, and wild activity. Club-Club night most Thursdays, concerts organised by members most Fridays and Saturdays. Phone our ansaphone for details.

Matts Gallery

Info: (01) 249 3799
No details at present, phone above no.

Oval House

Info: (01) 735 2786
Until December 18: *Patience and Sarah* 'an imaginative account of the life of Mary Ann Willson, the American Primitive painter and a Miss Brundidge' which 'questions our expectations of roles and gender.'

Riverside Studios

Info: (01) 741 2251
Until December 11: Theatre of the Crumbs from Italy in *Call of the Wild* by Jack London.

Manchester

The Green Room

Info: (061) 224 0020
No details at present, call above.

Newcastle

Basement Group

Info: (0632) 582636
No details at present, call above no.

Spectro

Info: (0632) 616463
No details at present, call above no.

Northampton

Northampton Arts Centre

Info: (0604) 403322
December 2: Leda Theatre
Going Away For Good
December 16: *Sexual Politics—An Evening of Insulting Behaviour*, Christine Ellerbeck, Simon Fanshawe, Jenny Lecoat.
January 12: Stuart Marshall (video)
January 21: Video Performance day event with Gavin Hodges
January 28: Trickster Theatre
Mantu

Nottingham

Midland Group

Info: (0632) 582636
Until December 3: IOU Theatre in a New Production.
January 11 Sherborne and Lockett
January 12-14 Next Theatre Co.
January 18 Potter/Whiting
Electronic/vocal theatre.

Sheffield

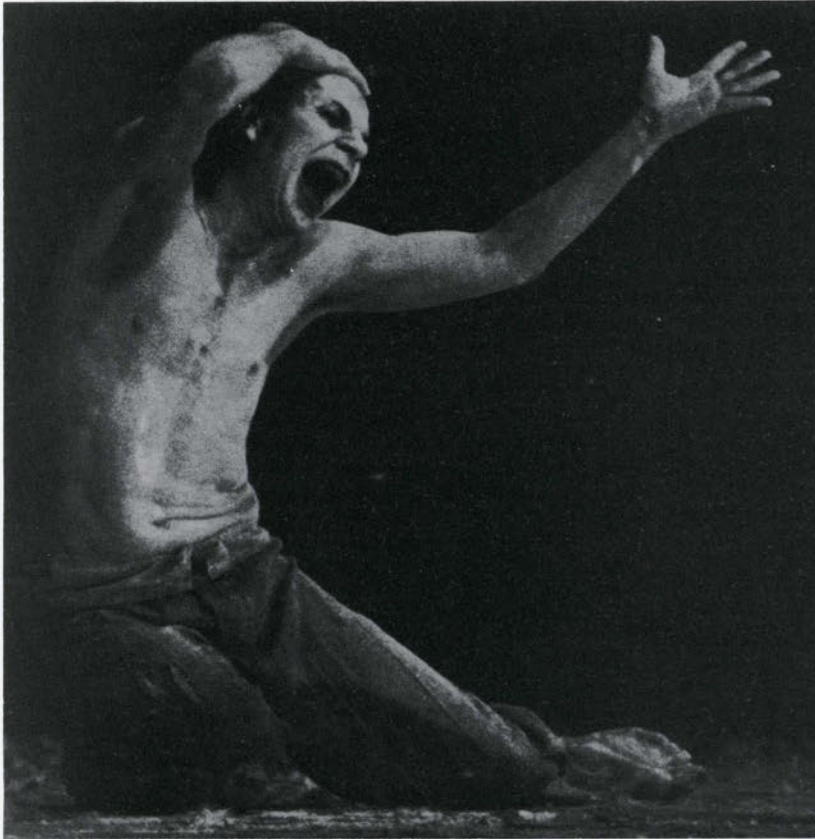
Leadmill

Info: (0742) 754500
Every Thursday: *Uncle Fester's Closet* Performance/multi media club.
December 5: Trickster Theatre
Mantu

Softcorehardshell by Catherine Seely, Jonathan Davis, at the Diorama



Posturing Boldly



Kemp as Nijinsky



Nijinsky as Sheherazade

IT HAS BEEN located in the police files of New York City as KAMP (Known As Male Prostitute), as the name of homosexual brothels in the Australian outback of the nineteenth century, as a slang word used by dandies to describe their assignations with soldiers spending the summer under canvas in London's Hyde Park and found in either the Italian 'Campeggiare', meaning 'to stand out from a background' or the French 'se camper', meaning 'to posture boldly', both of which suggest association with pose and theatricality. Recent performances by Lindsay Kemp on these shores suggest a new look at the concept of Camp, which has always had a marginal but strong influence on the performing arts.

There is no general consent about the term's origins and etymology. Such exotic explanations as appear above are from Mark Booth's recent book entitled simply *Camp*. As regards the precise meaning of Camp: first of all, there is Susan Sontag's well-known and rather authoritative essay *Notes on Camp*—from 1962, in which she comprehends Camp as a certain 'taste' or 'sensibility' for the marginal, eccentric, extravagant, exaggerated, theatrical and unnatural. Camp is enthused by caprice, artifice, playfulness, and it sustains a sophisticated sense of humour. *Démode* objects—already out of fashion but not yet fashionable as antiquities—are Camp, as

well as any extreme specimen of Kitsch, which is in sufficient bad taste to provoke the classic response 'it's so bad it's good'. Camp taste—according to Sontag—is a sort of private code, developed among certain 20th century urban cliques (with roots in 18th century Gothic style), which she summarises as 'the Dandies of Mass Culture', and who are by tradition homosexual. Camp art tends to emphasise style, pose, elegance and shockingly watchable effects at the expense of content, moral and significance. Mark Booth's *Camp* establishes a rather vigorous attack on Sontag's *Notes*... In an aggressive, (perhaps personal) manner Booth ends up with 'Camp is primarily a matter of self-presentation rather than of sensibility'. His systematic, thoroughly researched, attempt to set things in the right order calls for a formalistic distinction between proper Camp, which is, basically, a life style, Camp Fads and Fancies, which are the qualities and sensibilities likely to enchant and be adopted by camp people, and Camp Art which is 'art that sympathetically, stylishly and attractively represents camp behaviour, or represents a non-camp subject in a camp way.' However, despite all this, Booth admits that it is still difficult to pin down a subject that 'is so much a matter of a raised eyebrow, a secret smile.'

Discerning the recent Camp perfor-

mances in London—Lindsay Kemp's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Facade* and *Nijinsky the Fool*, as well as Bloodlips' *Odds and Sods*—it is intriguing to notice how Camp evades the formal aesthetic debate and defines its terms of discussion and field of references by its own actions.

Firstly, it is striking to realise what a 'closed-shop', an exclusive club Camp is, maintaining its own iconography, and cliquish repertoire to draw from, time and again. Particularly attractive subject-matter for Camp Art is the portrayal of figures from the past—artists and historical figures who have gained a reputation for being Camp themselves. What is yet more fascinating is that quality of stratification woven into the creative process of Camp. The most apparent illustration of this layering is the ever-inspiring figure of Nijinsky. Vaslav Nijinsky's glamour, beauty, extraordinary dance skills, sexual ambiguity, madness and love-hate friendship with Diaghilev—have always appealed to Camp people. What we recently saw was not a straightforward homage to the great dancer. For one thing there were Bloodlips doing Lindsay Kemp doing Nijinsky doing Scheherazade doing ... This, of course, implies that by now Lindsay Kemp has unmistakably 'passed' as a Camp icon or hero and legitimate subject matter for a new generation of Camp creativity. The next layer might disclose a



Edith Sitwell as a Gothic Tomb Carving

new Camp personality doing Bloodlips doing Lindsay Kemp doing...

Camp poet Edith Sitwell's *Facade* is only another natural choice, bubbling with pre-Sitwell Camp personalities (like Captain Fracasse, Lord Tennyson and various nymphs and satyrs) as well as sites (Pompeii, Babylon). Camp's obsessive nursing of its limited sources of inspiration is a symptom of its preference of style to content. *Facade* is, actually, a very apt description of performances which delight in deliberate posturing and parody—elegantly, stylistically and theatrically—with no commitment to one moral or conceptual stand (except, perhaps, hedonism or immorality—just for the hell of it!).

Emphasising style, both Kemp and Bloodlips recruit every stage element, device, trick and effect they can think of, summing up with stunning visual performances, hilariously funny in the latter. Compatible with the rough, anarchic manner of their all-male revue, Bloodlips' sets and costumes are carefully compiled trivial, trashy props and bad-taste garments (lots of fake jewelry, artificiality, and parody of glamour. If the difference between Kitsch and Camp is like that between a plastic reproduction of a flower pretending to look real and, say, the incomplete illusion of a cloth or paper flower—then Bloodlips are on the Camp side of Kitsch, with their piles of real bananas thrown into the audience during

Kemp as Salome



their 'a la Hollywood' number *Bananas*.

Lindsay Kemp, on the other hand, is not into 'rough trade' anymore. Pleased with his present status as a national institution in Spain and Italy, the once rejected performing arts pioneer has mellowed considerably. The place of angry and anarchic images in the spirit of Antonin Artaud's 'Theatre of Cruelty'—such as the mass male masturbation in *Flowers* (1966) or the orgiastic rape in *Salome* (1974) is taken in today's repertoire by hardly obscene scenes, the most daring of which are Nijinsky's electric-shock treatment at the sanatorium or the highly stylised scene of Titania and Bottom fornicating.

Kemp challenges the highest state of stylisation. There is nothing tacky or cheap about his images and their realisation on stage, but instead a good deal of creativity, humour, self-awareness, grace and professional skills. Using a technique of collage, he juxtaposes the elaborate and heavy face and body make-up and detailed costumes with the appropriate period hints (Elizabethan in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, late Victorian in *Facade*) With a big range of bright colours, enchanting music and an amazing collection of stage machines, effects and operatic artifices (smoke machines, pulsing lights, mobile sets, performers flying through the air etc), he ends up in an eccentric fantasy-world: a sensual, besotting, kaleidoscope.

Committed to the marginal in society,

Camp is obsessively preoccupied with the narcissist and exhibitionist aspects of sexuality, often (but certainly not always) homosexuality. Or, to put it the other way round, Camp's aesthetics—high stylization, self-parody, posturing—provide the marginal with a strong channel of self-expression, cross-dressing in glamorous drag, adopting exaggerated copies of gestures and mannerisms of the opposite sex, stylised effeminacy (including Bloodlips members—divinely nicknamed as 'Lavinia Co-op', 'Dotty Spot', 'Diva Dan' and 'Babs Yer Uncle', addressing each other as 'girls' and 'darlings') and other parodies of female stereotypes. Camp transvestism always depends on the fact that the male performer behind the stylised female impersonation is slightly overt. This is illustrated in Bloodlips direct approach, simply by turning their naked backs at one point to the audience or, in a subtler manner, in Kemp's *Midsummer Night's Dream* by the Incredible Orlando as breastless Hippolita-Titania and Francois Tetroy as the Changeling, with a young male's body, falsetto voice and feminine face with the reddest lips one can imagine. Kemp takes this duality yet further, to explore the caprices of sexuality, demonstrating gay and lesbian encounters, male dressed as a female with a donkey etc.—all with a dose of self-parody.

So, while Camp performances neither attempt original plots nor introduce unknown characters, they are yet greatly

dependent on their audiences' catchment-area of associations. The old clichés and ever-used source-materials are put into a new context or a new pose ('It's not what you do, it's the way that you do it...')—as Bloodlips put it) and the effect is lost or impaired if the audience is unaware of certain references. Lindsay Kemp's *Facade* is entertaining and beautiful to watch in its own right, but it helps if one is familiar with Sitwell's poetry and with the local colours of the British Seaside of the late Victorian period; 'Nijinsky the Fool' is enriched by previous encounters of the audience with the plot Stravinsky/Benois/Fokin's 'Petrouchka' and Nijinsky's diaries.

Finally, it is useful to note (see the article on fashion *Sub Couture*) that much of this genre is made clearer by recent performance *Dressing Up*, which is a literary compilation of the last 300 years, by and about gay men which has used cross-dressing and effeminacy as an appropriate and illustrative method. Camp, as an aesthetic attack by a marginal on a dominant culture, is difficult to isolate, but can no longer be taken for granted.

Meira Eliash

References: Susan Sontag *Notes on Camp in Against Interpretation* Delta Books, Dell Publishing Co. NY 1966.

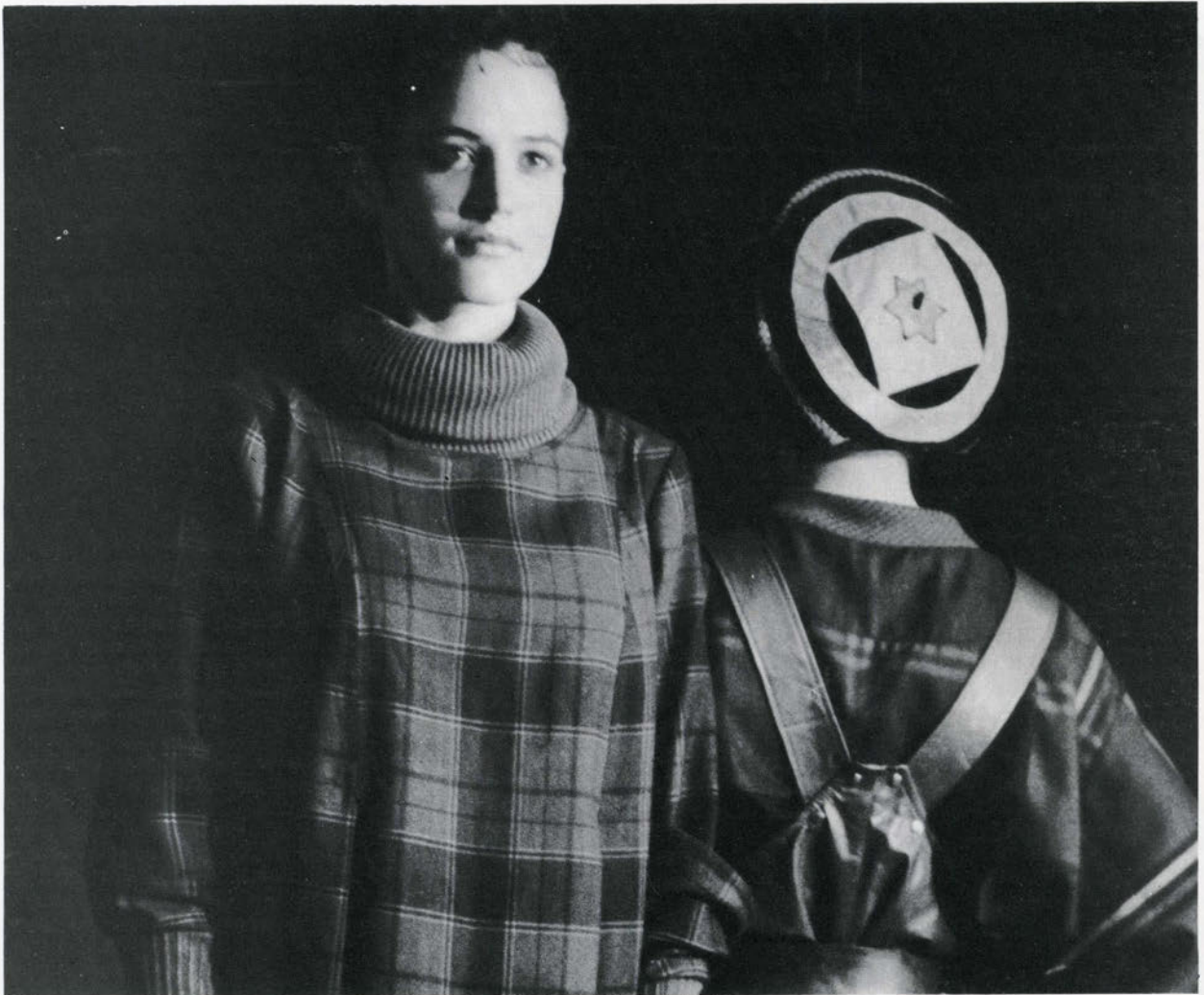
Mark Booth *Camp Quartet* Books, London 1983.

Bloodlips



David Thompson

Subculture



Performing Clothes, ICA

CLOTHING IS A SUBJECT loaded with potent energies, symbolic depths and cultural politics. It is a subject dear to the hearts of psychologists, anthropologists, civil libertarians and industrialists. Clothing rates with food and shelter as a basic need for survival. Clothes are the metaphoric expression of guilt after a fall from innocence and therefore of human consciousness. They are the wilful expression of social and economic status and the outward realisation of that self image over which we have the most complete control. Clothes are big business, and therefore, not surprisingly, clothes are rarely front page news.

Fashion editors and fashion house PRs must therefore now be in paroxysms of self-congratulatory joy over the coup they engineered in getting the recent London Fashion Week primetime TV news and front page photo-story coverage, and in such exalted terms you might think a palace revolution had taken place.

It will come as no surprise to learn that the truth behind the news was no such

rebellion. Many of the designs I saw were inspired by the culturally anarchic imagery of the street tribes of Britain's unemployed teenagers. I saw the subcultures of alienation and aggression translated into the chic lies and expensive materials of haute couture. But where outrage and frustration are expressed with justification in violent imagery, that same imagery on the backs of Kensington's fashion models looked sinister and proto-fascist.

What was a revelation was the way the clothes were presented in an obvious and self-conscious attempt to artify the event and the designs, particularly at the 'alternative' shows. The traditions of wafer-thin mannequins and their highly stylised gait has given way to an altogether more dramatic enactment of the designs, drawing on the visual shockery of performance work and rock video. The relationship between 'fine art' and 'fashion', debatable but uncontroversial, clearly revealed its roots in the art schools where fashion often shares a curriculum billing with painting.

Yet the relationship is ultimately spurious. While some fashion designers undeniably deserve the spurious accolade 'artist', fashion and the fashion industry more closely resembles the pop industry than the fine art industry. The techniques of mass marketing, the stimulation of as fast a turn-over of styles as the market will stand, and above all, the cult of the individual designer identify fashion with pop. The cultivation of cult status has proved so successful as a marketing strategy in the USA that Calvin Klein can have the indisputably homosexual image of a nubile young man erotically posed in nothing more than a pair of Klein Y Fronts painted on the biggest billboard on Times Square and sell millions of pairs, and not to NY's gay community who wouldn't be seen dead in underwear.

Despite the 'artification', the crediting of choreographers and lighting designs, the trappings of art, there is no doubt in anyone's mind that these fashion shows, albeit 'alternative', were designed to sell the clothes. The ICA's venture into the

fashion world, *Performing Clothes*, left me with many, many doubts. The programme proclaimed it a breakthrough: choreographers Micha Bergese, Stuart Avon Arnold and Claud Paul Henry were asked to 'animate the collections of eight young clothes designers...to consider the source material and influences that led to the designs, to devise work which flows from the line, fall and shape of the garments; and to develop the way in which the clothes make the body move through looseness or construction.'

Another limitation on the choreographers not mentioned in the programme was that they still had to sell the clothes. The celebrity style opening party, the less than discreet sponsorship by *Chelsea Girl*, were the outward signs of a marketing strategy. The wide range of designs reflected nicely, if predictably, the fact of our post-modern polyculturalism, but it failed to make any comment on it. A virtual monotony of disco-funk music, only momentary passages of interesting choreography, failed to make the event anything more than a hyped-up fashion show...it was like watching TV commercials; choreographic jingles for the fashion flavours of the moment, and in between the ads there were no programmes, only silence. What they failed to understand was that the subject of art and clothes is complex, and PR is of necessity simple.

I found the absence of any serious comment even more regrettable, given the exploitative nature of the fashion industry towards producer and consumer alike. Since Margaret Thatcher reduced trade tariffs the traditionally low paid garment workers have been put in direct competition with low paid third world labour. The predominantly female and ethnic minority labour force competes with the third world as to who can work the cheapest. In 1979 a machinist in Hackney would earn 35p for a blouse, in 1982 this had fallen to 15p. (Figures quoted from *Inside the Inner City*— Paul Harrison).

The fashion industry, particularly the end of it on stage in *Performing Clothes*, aims to capture the disposable incomes of the young, who are pressured to turn over their clothes quickly. This stretches visibly the gulf between rich and poor. Not owning the latest records or a VCR is a lack hidden away at home, but not owning new clothes is an indescribable public display of economic inability. *Performing Clothes*, which was intended to promote fashion could not of course approach such questions, and perhaps I am being unfair in judging it by its stated criteria, but I am of the opinion that art, which this claimed to be, should be about something. Maybe this breakthrough will succeed in introducing a new audience to dance, and certainly will provide choreographers with a new source of income.

Riverside Studios' French New Wave programme, which also placed fashion in the context of art, also failed, but not through any confusion of objectives. Sponsored by *Actual* magazine, the pur-



pose of the programme was 'to celebrate' through a multi-disciplinary collage, 'the current explosion in French creativity'. I'm told the evening I saw was not the best, which is some relief, otherwise I would be forced to conclude that the French believe creativity to consist of bohemian dress and an 'anarchic' disregard for 'no-smoking' signs. The fashion by 'Desiree and Lola' revived 50s lines in knitted dresses, but I have no recollection of visible knicker elastic lines and the peculiar locomotion necessitated by wearing court shoes several sizes too big as having particularly fashionable at any time, but maybe I translated wrong.

No sponsor and no hype went with *Dressing Up*, a 1982 theatre company production for the September in the Pink festival of gay and lesbian arts. *Dressing Up* was directly concerned with the role of clothes in the creation of self-image and subcultural identification. Depicting London gay male history at three prominent phases, early 18th century, early 19th century, and 1983, it used a cut-up technique, with visual imagery that packed real punches. The transvestite 'Mollies' of the 1770s, screeching and flapping in a grotesque burlesque of fashionable women displayed a heroic humour in the face of persecution; their sisterliness was memorable. Next, the Wildean dandies obsessed with images of sex and death—on the one hand their doomed courtship of flamboyant transvestites, on the other their exploitation of the urban poor, highlighting the rigid moral strictures and hypocrisies of their society. Then came 1983, with its banal cult of a phallic masculinity, forcing gay men into images of American working class and pioneering heroes.

Dressing Up made it uncomfortably clear that 1983's butch, lumberjack clones are every bit as 'dressed up' as the 'Mollies' in their frills and skirts; and made it clear too that this common acceptance of sartorial codes is a necessary self-defence and a rich vein of social parody and satire. The excellent company took full advantage of the spectacle values of their clothes, and created a sensitive performance of rare power and passion with a value and appeal for wider than a purely gay audience.

Dressing Up demonstrated then, that clothes are a rich subject and context for investigation in performance. Even the veteran transvestite company Bloodlips, with its tacky vaudeville and trash, has more to say about fashion than *Performing Clothes* or any of the other 'alternative' fashion shows. But no doubt the fashion industry will not be slow in seeing the marketing potential of confusing style with art, and we shall no doubt see many more of its kind. After all, if it's an art performance you can charge people to see it, I'd be happier if they sold tickets for the old-style fashion shows. They are just as entertaining and far less obfuscating.

Steve Rogers

Direct Line to the Cortex

PHIL GLASS IS MANAGING to have it both ways. The press release for his recent London concerts informs us he is 'New York's Hottest New Wave Star' while his record company CBS are promoting him as their first 'serious composer' on their Masterworks series since Aaron Copeland and Stravinsky. If he plays Los Angeles he alternates between the glossy concert hall the Pavilion and punk club The Roxy, and whereas last year he played Sadlers Wells in London, this year it was the Dominion. 'The change of venue is important' he comments 'I'm not simply a classical musician or a popular one. The role that I function in is an ambiguous one, and I like that ambiguity'. He's relaxing after a talk given at the Riverside Studios, swigging a cognac and wearing a (fairly classical) suit with (new wave) leather boots.

Of all the post-Cage composers—La Monte Young, Reich, Terry Riley—Glass has the highest profile and popularity. This year has seen his music/theatre work *The Photographer* opening at the Brooklyn Academy, having premiered in Holland, *Koyaanisqatsi*, with his score, came to London this autumn, his production of Ray Manzarek's version of *Carmine Burana* has just come out and Virgin have re-released his 1974 lps *North Star* and *Music in 12 Parts* while CBS are planning to recycle the entire Glass back catalogue starting with *Einstein on the Beach* early next year. He even appeared in a Cutty Sark whisky ad—about as likely a few years ago as Stuart Brisley endorsing Man at C & A.

The Dominion concerts weren't sold out, so he's perhaps not exactly 'the most commercial sound around' (a Bowie quote that has helped him as much as any plaudits of the critics) but his first release for CBS *Glassworks* has sold well. 'I started out playing for 120 people—15 years later I can attract 2,000—that's way beyond what anyone would consider a 'New Music' concert capable of.'

It took Glass 8 years from starting out in 1968 to actually make any money from his work—up until five years ago, he was a New York taxi driver. But the significance of the success is not just in pacifying his bank manager, he also saw it as his mission to break down the almost catatonic state that modernism in music found itself in the late sixties. As he told the New York Times 'Modern music had become truly decadent, stagnant and uncommunicative. Composers were writing for each other and the public didn't seem to care. People want to like new music, but how can they when it's so ugly and intimidating, emotionally and intellectually?'

There are of course those who are suspicious of Glass's relative success (the *Daily Telegraph* concluded in its review of the Sadlers Wells set 'Glass seems to have abandoned any desire to have his music



Philip Glass

considered on its musical merits; popularity is what matters now'.—Glass is happy to return the flak 'What kind of comment is that?'—his cool momentarily gone 'Isn't that just saying that people are stupid? It's a kind of contempt for the large audience, but after all we share the same basic things. Our minds, the structures of our brain, are the same—we're the same kind of animals. If I play something on the piano that moves me why shouldn't it move you?'. Glass's arguments, like his bass lines, are often simple, but nevertheless attractive.

Glass is no stranger to adverse criticism—at his early concerts some of the audience used to throw eggs and rotten tomatoes 'It was a political act' says Glass. 'People don't just happen to have eggs with them at concerts, do they?' Then there was the time in Amsterdam when one of the audience climbed on stage and tried to stop him playing—Glass carried on with one hand and fought the intruder off with the other.

His music has changed to such a extent that he doesn't think that old labels apply. 'Before *Einstein on the Beach* you can call my music minimal, why not? But if you told someone you were taking them to a minimalist or systems music concert it wouldn't prepare them for the richness of,

say, *Koyaanisqatsi*, would it?'. These days the brickbats tend to come from those who find his recent work too melodic. 'Young people can stand some nostalgia' he comments ruefully. Just as Cage brought the notion into question by adding chance elements into a piece, so Glass perhaps is ignoring the instance on 'originality' above all else as well as 'shock value'—the cherished tenets of the avant-garde. Sure, every now and then a piece of 'shocking' art will get a few paragraphs of outrage in *The Sun*, but the golden years of *epater le bourgeois* are surely over.

Rock music's parallel taboo—that the music should be the voice of youth rebellion, preferably in a code impregnable to the over 30's, is another commandment broken by Glass.

A more pertinent criticism of Glass's music came from Elliot Carter, one of Glass's mentors in the days when Glass was composing serial music, who said that he was like a dictator repeating a slogan continuously into the brains of the resolutely pulp-brained multitudes. Glass is interested in the physical effects of sound and music (an area which paranoia fans will be interested to know that the Pentagon is currently researching) and is aware of Gurdjieff's theories of 'objective' music. It is fairly well documented that Gurdjieff was able to make people, say, faint by playing certain chords in a particular way. I put it to him that perhaps when microchips can directly plug into the pleasure centres of the brain the effect will not be unlike listening to his music: 'My music does have a very direct, almost physiological appeal. I'm trying to get some sort of direct cerebral cortex contact—volume and repetition are one thing, but it's also harmonic and melodic elements. There's that passage in *Einstein on the Beach*, the Spaceship section which is a cadence repeated over and over for seven or eight minutes. It's supposed to lift you out of your seat.' Whereas most rock music goes for the hips, is he aiming for the brain? 'I don't mean brainy music, the cerebral cortex is your nervous system. I mean *unavoidable*—a direct emotional line. I would play down the body/mind distinction anyway'.

Glass developed his earlier style of 'being dumb on purpose' in the late sixties. He had the good fortune to have a job notating an improvised film score by Ravi Shankar (this was just prior, in 1965, to the hippy interest in all things Indian) and he was also impressed by North African rhythms and the repetition inherent in Islamic art. 'We no longer think of music in terms of a hierarchy. It was really through the Beatles discovering the Maharishi in 67 that a lot of consciousness of Eastern music came about. The real recognition of Third World cultures, to put it crudely, that coloured people can

have culture, we see now. The idea that they can't is a simple extension of colonial economics and politics. It's shocking that only as recently as a generation ago this has changed'.

Glass describes himself as a 'reluctant activist...my tendencies in that direction are unleashed on the operatic stage. Obviously you can't write an opera on Ghandi (*Satyagraha*) that ignores social issues. I tried to duck the political content originally. But Einstein and Akhenaton also were individualistic rebels who changed the world non-violently - we need a bit more of that. I see the three characters as kindred spirits. Perhaps the kind of person who can occupy our interest for an evening-long opera is a person who makes a compelling social statement'.

In case your Egyptology is a little rusty, Akhenaton's rebellion was to do with establishing monotheism, which clashed against the prevailing religious structure.

Koyaanisqatsi was a sort of 'green' propaganda film about the dangers of technology. How sympathetic was he to the message, which was criticised for being too simplistic, a '2001 for the brown rice brigade'? 'I tended to push for a more

abstract presentation. But I tried to put over my feelings for the city in the film. I love New York and I hate it. Had I just wanted to make the city images bad or unpleasant, I would have written a different kind of music. We were using technology to expose it. But there are ironies and contradictions you can enjoy, you know. Some of it was almost a homage to the freeway.'

Glass thinks most composers' working life lasts about 30 years, which puts him at about the halfway point. He thinks his best work is before him and as he said last year 'If all the masterpieces have already been written, then we're in real trouble'. He reckons his new Opera *Akhenaton*, opening in Stuttgart next March, is terrific'. He is also working on a huge work with Robert Wilson called *Civil Wars* with David Byrne of Talking Heads and Laurie Anderson, the latter two of which are providing lyrics for a song album which Glass is working on. If the pressures to write 'commercial product' for CBS don't get the better of him 'We're in for interesting times ahead. Is that modest enough?' he says. And we shouldn't see too many lapses into the kitsch of *A Gentleman's Honour*.

Philip Glass

At the least Glass is writing superior Music for Pleasure, which sometimes rises into a kind of sacred music for an audience of unbelievers. He has remained one jump ahead in popular music terms, feeding the Kraftwerk kraut-rock school of the 70's, the minimalism of the likes of Talking Heads, while directly influencing groups like Lost Jockey and Regular Music, and there are some straws in the wind suggesting that one of the directions for popular music for 1984 will be a more textured, orchestral sound (Sakamoto of Yellow Magic Orchestra is working with a real orchestra, Simon Jeffes of the under-rated Penguin Cafe is working on 'deconstructions' of Vivaldi, and Brian Eno is supposed to be working with more 'natural' instruments are three examples that spring to mind). And simply everyone's writing an opera darling. Hopefully we won't see a return to the blandiose pomp of the mid-seventies.

Philip Glass is one of the very few musicians for whom I retain the fan mentality of rushing round to the record store to hear his latest work on its day of release, and he's here to stay. He wasn't a very good taxi driver anyway.

Peter Culshaw



Holidays in Harness



The Brochure

WE ARE LIVING SCULPTURES, 'Somos esclturas vivientes,' the phrase in Spanish memorised for DDART's recent package holiday to Salou, Spain. But this was to be no ordinary holiday retirement from the cold art climate of Britain, by DDART members Dennis de Groot and Ray Richards. It was to be a performance running continuously during the seven day Blue Sky holiday package at the resort.

DDART planned to use the week-long rest from ten years of performance and media outrage as a continuous performance. Once outside their hotel room, the hotel lobby lift, dining-room, poolside, beach and resort town would be the locations for their living sculpture. For this they prepared a holiday outfit. Two leather harnesses constructed to be worn over summer styled safari suits. The harnesses ran down the legs and arms, straps were fitted with hooks onto which a variety of lengths of dowel poles could be fitted. With one end connected to one body part, the other end of the pole was tied onto the other performer. Richards and de Groot began to look like personalised Brunel engineering feats.

The movements by the artists were therefore determined by the construction

and as they were 'on holiday', the construction had to be altered to suit the routines of the day. Eating and walking to the beach became major feats of design mechanics, with the performers needing to move in unison: no small achievement at the hotel bar, dining-room or sea's edge. They unfortunately were unable to take part in the Donkey Safari, due to circumstances beyond their control.

What were DDART's intentions and reasons for choosing the package holiday as a situation in which to work? De Groot describes how they hoped to be able to spend the week in the company of the same group of people taking the package trip. The tourists would witness performances throughout the entire seven days, a resonance would build up of what they saw. However this was not to happen as DDART wished, as of course the people disembarking from the plane all went to different hotels. So the only option was to base their efforts at their own hotel, the Oasis Park. A 800-bed hotel or 'tourist factory' as de Groot called it. The 400 seater dining-room, with its two shift meal system feeding the EEC sunseekers, became a high point for the performances. DDART would enter, one behind the other, an elaborate series of poles connect-

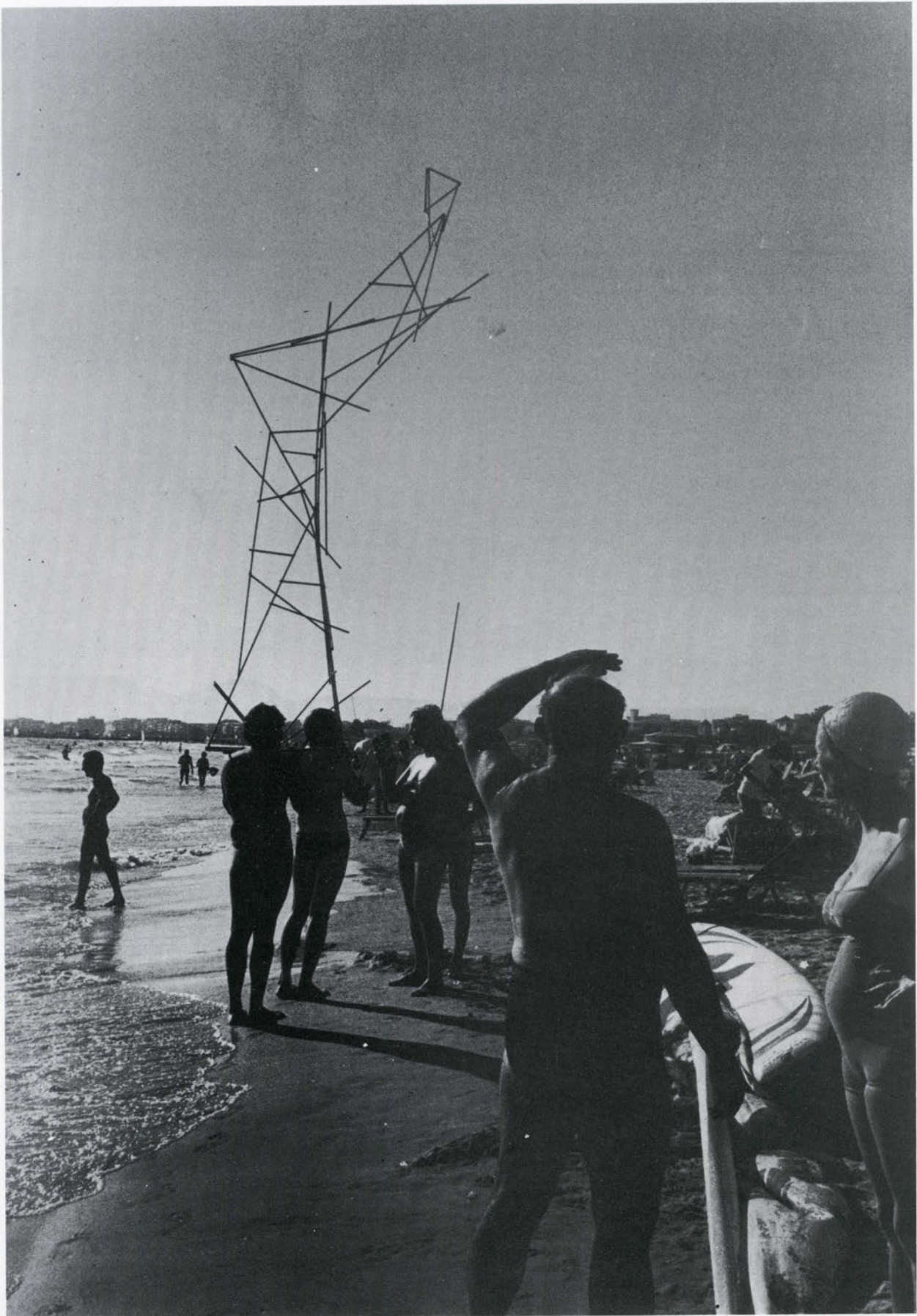
ing various parts of their bodies. The management at first accommodated them by moving their table places around the room at each meal.

On the third day things changed. DDART had spent the morning down at the beach; coming back for lunch they went to go back to their room to change the pole structure to take on the next task of eating. They arrived five minutes late at the dining-room, performing as they entered, the 400 diners broke into applause and a minor cheer broke out. Anticipation had built up with their late arrival. The management advanced and informed them that they would have to stop if they were to be served a meal. DDART said they wished to continue performing. A compromise was struck; they would meet with the hotel manager the following morning. At this meeting a long discussion took place about what they were doing and art's place in the everyday world. DDART asked if there had been any complaints. The manager said there had been none, in fact people seemed to enjoy what they saw. But he pointed out that it is not possible to have art all the time explaining this with a phrase 'if you like porridge, you don't eat it all the time', something every hotelier understands.



Michael Bennett

Out for a Walk



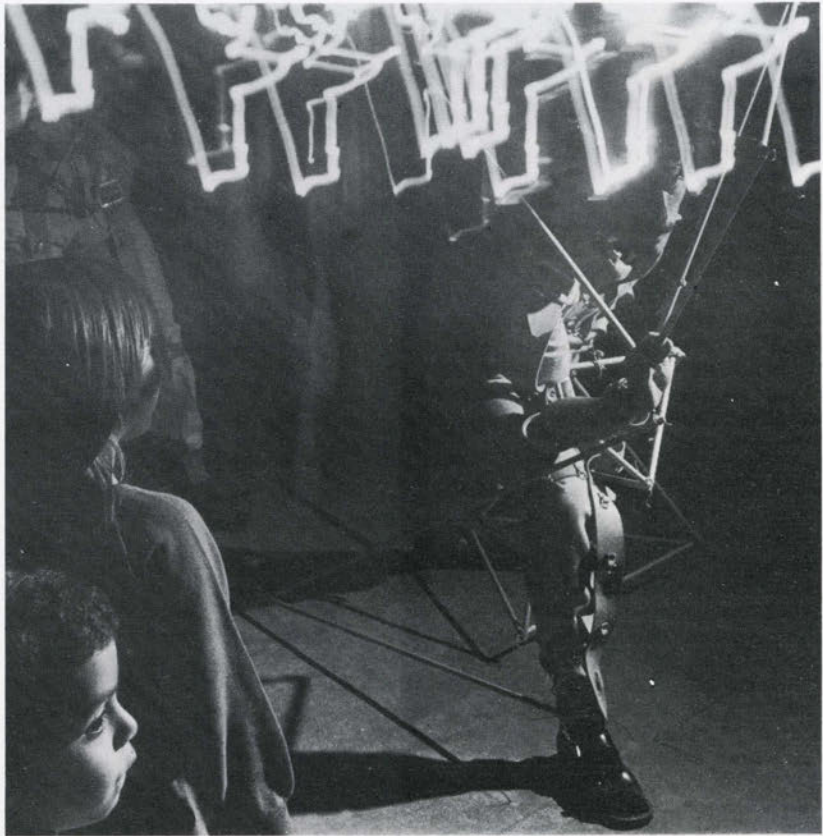
Michael Bennett

On the Beach

DDART argued that what they were doing was not upsetting anyone and they wished to continue. The manager said that although he had no objections to the actual performance, if they didn't stop, the local police would be called. DDART were offered an apartment nearby as a compromise, so reluctantly they took this offer.

Following the move, which had been a big disappointment to their aims, de Groot and Richards started to perform in the town and others near to Salou. In Reus, away from the coastal fringe of tourism they worked in the hot town square during siesta. Mad dogs and...Reactions from local onlookers were continuous, with two images recurring. DDART were either building a flying machine or were involved in some form of penitence. De Groot commented how the Spanish reacted differently to a performer coming up close and, as he puts it, entering into the 'personal space.' On one occasion a man stood perfectly still as he came right up to his face. The impression is that the Spanish would let the performer take over the open space while the onlookers stood quite still. At Barcelona and in Salou, performance walks were held along the promenade seafont; attempts by the police to move them on met with crowd resistance.

On the last day De Groot and Richards stripped to their beach wear and built a tall tower out of their poles, with which they



At the Disco



In the Town

waded out to sea. The entire beach watched as they progressed. Were they going to bury the tower at sea? No; eventually they returned to be met at the water's edge by a local who insisted on buying them a drink at the beach bar.

Their holiday over, DDART returned to the airport to fly home. In the departure lounge, a large display of photographs greeted them. Local enterprising photographers had taken pictures of everyone disembarking from the plane seven days earlier. The holiday snaps were being hawked as a perfect memento to the holiday. DDART bought theirs and flew home.

DDART Takes a Break was seen by the artists as a success, in spite of the problems encountered. The surprised holiday makers had responded with comments such as 'Well, if nothing else, it looks good'. Discussions had been held in the hotel bar about performance and its place in life. People had come up with suggestions of where else they could perform. And of course the two performers and their linking construction of poles now featured in scores of holiday snaps throughout Europe, as DDART were asked to pose with holiday groups while performing.

DDART see themselves as sculptors manipulating objects and shapes in space, but their work is carried on outside the art space and the demands of the art market. This must be one of the main reasons why they have not achieved any recognition; along with the notoreity constructed for them by the press. This is interesting,



At the Cafe

compared with Gilbert and George's recognition on the international art circuit. Talking to De Groot and Richards, it is apparent that they would like to come in from the cold, in particular with the funding of their work. One arts association which did fund a performance project only made the grant available on condition that no adverse publicity would be attracted.

It could be read into DDART's holiday performance and recent visit to Australia that they would wish to leave Britain for a warmer climate, which is not surprising. But is their work really so outrageous and difficult, or is it just that they don't perform in the accepted venues? Is their work no more difficult to understand than Richard Long's landscape works or Christo's wrappings? Is it because they shun the art publicity machine or is it because they have had more than their fair share of exposés?

Whatever the reason it seems in no doubt that their work is exciting and remains experimental, because they stay outside. Both literally by performing in public places but also because they are true art outlaws.

Robin Morley

Taken from interviews with Dennis de Groot and Ray Richards. Also *Relationships between Sculpture and Performance Art*: a report and interview with DDART by Thomas McCullough, published by the Education Department of Victoria, Australia

Michael Bennett



Michael Bennett

Flirting with Meaning



And Me

I don't really enjoy the act of sex, I think it's...well, I think personally it's an aggressive and violent act and...

**Do you enjoy being licked?
Do you enjoy being licked?**

**Do you enjoy being sucked?
Do you enjoy being sucked?**

I've always been so afraid of the water...she said.

Um...yeah...yeah, I am afraid of the water.

WHAT is meaning in performance? It's got something to do with how it connects with the real world, hasn't it? Something to do with suggesting, with resembling something else, outside the performance. Something about the performer's lives, I suppose, is the most obvious thing. Particularly when they use one of the performer's names in the title of a piece, or when they accompany the performances with a printed programme that 'explains' them in terms of biographical fragments.

Mary Longford did two pieces in Nottingham, one straight after the other. But they were so closely related that a lot of people thought they'd only seen one, that it was all the same piece. This had something to do with how the Midland Group had billed them, I suppose, but it was as much to do with the strong similarities between *Dancing With Deniz* and *And Me*. They were similar in scale, similar in technique, and most important really, similar in meaning.

To an extent, then meaning can be something very powerful, but something rather tricky at the same time. Because the truth is that even the most sophisticated

A square enclosure, a garden fence maybe. Pink and baby boy blue. And the sections held together, it's odd this, with matching ribbons.

Deniz stands by the back of the enclosure. He flexes the muscles of one arm, points to his bicep with his other hand and grins absurdly. Flexes his other arm, points, grins. Then the first arm. Then the other. Then the other. Then the other. Faster and faster. Flex, point, grin. Faster and faster and faster.



And Me

I never learnt to swim, when I was a child, and I used to go off to the swimming pool with my cousins and I used to spend most of the time being, you know, chucked into the pool, and...um...so it was a case of drowning rather than swimming...And I really got fed up with that.

...but...I was brought up on a farm and there was this very very large pond and...one day we went down there and I fell in and I just went deeper and deeper and deeper into this pond and...finally I remember these two arms and hands sort of reaching out, reaching down and getting hold of me and pulling me up...

audience are almost always—almost despite themselves—on the lookout for meaning. It's almost a thing the human intelligence does without us wanting it to. Like seeing faces in a fire or—perhaps a newer parallel—like seeing a Mondrian; a painting that's meant to be entirely abstract, as a picture of scaffolding, or a windowframe. And it's a problem because, like the scaffolding, once you've seen it, you can't see anything else. Once an audience think they know what the performance means, they'll often shut themselves off to other possibilities. In a way it can short-circuit the piece.

Of course, a performer can actually work with this—or, as in the case of these two Mary Longford pieces, flirt with it—this tendency in an audience to seek meanings for images, and to build narratives out of those meanings. By having a number of things going on at the same time, perhaps. And having some of them be a lot more suggestive than others. Or throwing in fragments of suggestion that are really a

Deniz seems to be following a little dog around the garden fence. Bends down towards it. Puckers. Reaches his hand out, rubs his fingers together like he might have something for the dog...here, doggy...

Deniz lies down, quite still. Mary parcels him up in a length of fabric. A shroud, maybe. Then surely, unhurried, she unfastens some of the ribbons in the garden fence, and moves the sections around. Constructs a little house around Deniz. Lights candles. A shrine, maybe. Hangs little death's heads from wooden spars. Flowers. A tomb.

'A fiddle tucked under her chin, Mary makes silly little steps around the space. 'Last week,' she announces, 'I went into a sex shop for the first time in my life.' As she moves, she accompanies herself with little squeaky scratchy sounds on the fiddle.

...his suitcase was found on the ferry with all his belongings...um...and his ticket...um...was in the suitcase...and, you know, one of the possibilities is...I mean, they just can't prove he got off the boat in Ireland, and they can't prove that he came back...um...so one of the things is that he could...could have jumped off the boat...

...and we got down to Fishguard and we met the local sergeant who's in charge of the case... and the first thing he did was to get his suitcase and up to then I'd been feeling quite removed, quite detached and quite together, quite in control of things...when they opened the suitcase...that just made me cry...because there were all his belongings, all his...his shirts, you know...neatly packed, and his trousers and his suit and his diary and pair of glasses and there was a tie that I'd bought him for his birthday which was really lovely and I saw that and it just made me cry and I got very upset about that.



long way from what the piece is about. Or letting meaning accumulate gradually, slowly, bit by bit. Assembling it. Or actually slipping into the patchwork of meaning contradictions, having things that seem opposed going on side by side. And to this extent, you might say that this makes the performance more like life itself, revealing its meanings slowly, cumulatively. Not simply, or all at once.

The trouble is though, that I sometimes felt that these contradictions were happening unintentionally: that there were different ways of carrying meaning—different levels of meaning, almost—being used at the same time, but that they actually managed to get in the way of one another. So that, for example, the kind of meaning that was being carried by apparently abstract dance steps—because of course there's a whole range of allusive meaning that they can have, even if it does take some amount of contemplation, concentration even, to appreciate it—these meanings were lost when other more obvious meanings were being provided by a taped soundtrack of someone discussing their sexual preferences.

But what gradually filtered through these pieces was that they had something to do with death. I think that this was first introduced at the conclusion of *Dancing with Deniz*, a sort of coda in which Mary Longford dismantled the garden fence that Deniz Bulli had been dancing around and constructed instead a little tomb around his supine body. But really this section was deprived of any morbidity, and gravity even, by the jaunty Spanish dance tune, slightly absurd, that accompanied it.

Throughout *And Me* though, death kept getting mentioned again. Death by drowning, more specifically. As a sort of soundtrack to Mary Longford's movements, a woman's voice—perhaps her own—recounted childhood terrors, swimming pools and farmyard ponds. And a day's punting at Cambridge: blind fear at first and then gradually relaxing. And then the same voice talked about someone, a man, her husband maybe, disappearing on a ferry crossing to Ireland. Did he jump off the boat? It seems possible.

So, these were the meanings that the piece gradually gave up. And, as it turned out, it was meaning—rather than how those meanings were carried—that was crucial to these works of Mary Longford's. Because for me the meanings were altered completely when I discovered—the day after I'd watched—and enjoyed *Dancing with Deniz* and *And Me*, that those connections with the artist's life that an audience might guess at, were in this case, altogether appropriate. Only weeks before the performance Mary Longford's estranged husband did take the ferry to Ireland, did disappear, did possibly drown himself. This knowledge changed a piece that I'd taken to be oblique and poetic into one that seems tragic.

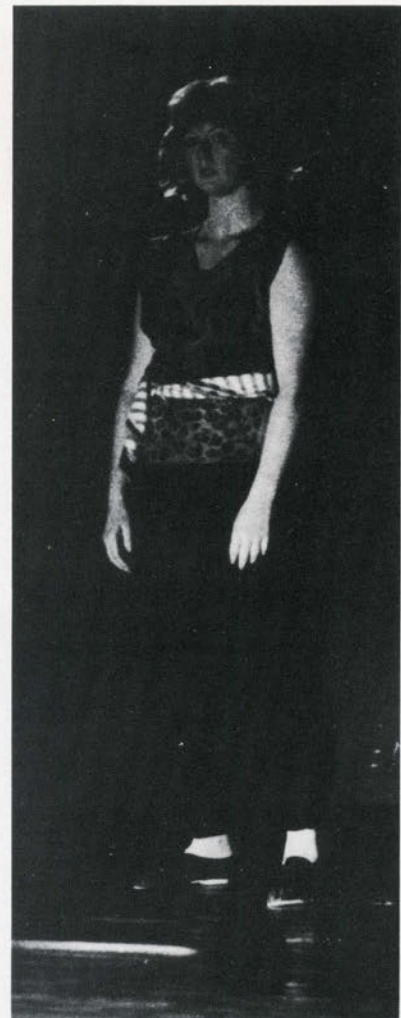
Robert Ayers

Mary starts to put on a man's pin-striped suit. She's determined. 'I think I'll go to work.' But then she changes her mind. Takes off the pin-striped trousers, pulls on some green cords. 'I think I'll stay at home and have a bath.' She changes her mind again. 'I think I'll go to work.'

The sound of church bells. A wedding somewhere.

Deniz runs. Deniz disco-dances. Deniz does his exercises.

Mary and Deniz dance together for a while. Then Mary takes her leave. A big smile for Deniz, a kiss and a hug.



What We Can Learn From Our European Friends

An informal seminar on the arts is conducted regularly in the heart of London. John Stalin was there with his battered Grundig.

SCENE: a seedy flat overlooking a war memorial frequented by junkies.

FX Big Ben, omnibuses, cries of Cockneys, beggars, and prostitutes.

CHARACTERS: Mr Dixon, Heidi, Olaf, Angelo.

Mr Dixon is sewing a leather patch onto the elbow of his sportsjacket. ENTER three attractive Europeans garbed in dramatically casual outfits.

MR DIXON Good morning. We will have a general discussion today with all of you taking part. What things in life do you dislike? Come on, I want to hear your ideas. Heidi, will you begin, please?

HEIDI Well I don't quite know what to say, but to begin with, I don't like London. I am sad without my mother and father, and I miss my girlfriends Trudi and Mitzi who help me with the milking. There are no cows and sheep and hens in London. I am tired of London.

ANGELO I remember, sir, a sentence of Dr Johnson's, 'When a man is tired of London he is tired of life.' This Dr Johnson he certainly liked London.

OLAF Oh, London's alright, but there are too many people, too many taxis, too much noise. So many tourists. Ponks. And demonstrations. You know, Bang the Bomb.

MR DIXON It's Ban the Bomb, Olaf, quite a different matter, heh heh. London is a noisy, bustling city, but on the other hand there are good libraries and museums and concert halls and theatres and in one or other of the theatres there is always a Shakespeare play.

OLAF Yes, I like those plays by Shakespeare, but when I have time, I like this awayday from London for to walking in the country.

HEIDI I like London for some things, like police horses and processions, but after a while I get tired of it. My home is a quiet little village in Switzerland among the mountains, and when I am in London I always want to be among the mountains. And in summer when London is hot and burning...

ANGELO I say, sir, I know a song, 'London's Burning'. Can I sing it? It begins, 'London's...'

MR DIXON Wait a minute, Angelo. You can sing your song at the end of the discussion, but I want to hear you speak now. Do you like these quiet places, Angelo?

ANGELO I certainly do not. I feel half



dead in them. All around you is the mountains is the lakes, but can you buy batteries for going in the radio-cassette? The answer is No, my friend. Are you buying the Italian shoes? Not bloody likely, cock. And where are the cardigans? *Not up a bloody mountain* is what I think. I went to a mountain once. Never again for me. I like to dance and smoke gear and listen to the progressive music. I am not a shy fellow, I like to chat up, I am good for pulling the birds.

MR DIXON *At pulling the birds.* Well, Angelo, we certainly know what you don't like. Is there any aspect of English culture you do find attractive?

ANGELO Oh yes sir indeed. I like gay times and life and fun. I want to meet people, young and merry and interesting people. I like good hotels, with good food and good wine. I like theatres with bright music and terrific dancing. I like flying, and motoring, if the car is a fast one. It is good to travel and see your famous England, the cottages which are so small and dirty, the castles, alas so old and broken, also many grand and important department stores: I like shopping for the casual clothes and perhaps I might buy some LP records. There is no places in Italy like the Oxford Street. Let me tell you sir, best of all things is the many discotheques for us to spend our money and do our special sexy dancing that your English girls are so hot for; perhaps even better, it is your super English dolly-girls, you know they are so poor and believing, so easy in the conquering. See in my pocket it is many ladies wristwatches (they are cheap in Italy), is all I need for making many disco girls pregnant—I tell you, I am tireless, I go on and on, I am like

a horse, I beg you to believe this. I am said to be Angelo the Indefatigable.

MR DIXON What do you say, Olaf?

OLAF I don't dance—and I don't want to dance. I enjoy going to the theatre when there is a good play there, a play by Shakespeare or Shaw or Galsworthy. I don't like 'bright, musical' rubbish. I like people, people with ideas, people with character. But I don't like a lot of people all together. I think a good deal, I am a deep thinker, and noise makes me very angry in my head so the thoughts go away before they are being written in my notebook. I have my best thoughts on the mountains. Heidi and I walked in Scotland last year and climbed the mountain there. I luff you, Heidi.

HEIDI I luff you too Olaf. Yes, we enjoyed that holiday very much, we are going again next year, just the two of us; but not in a car, and above all, not in a fast car. I want to see the countryside, the squirrels hiding their nuts, the deers in their burrows; you can't do that in a fast car. You can only do that if you walk.

OLAF I hate cars with their noise and dust and smell.

MR DIXON And Angelo, what do you say?

ANGELO It is very interesting to hear these different speakers and different ideas. I like the brooding mountains and the magnificent scenes for a time, for a minute or two perhaps, but after that I feel that I want to see girls and cars and shops, not just mountains and lakes and trees, and so I come back to Rome or Madrid or Geneva, to Paris or Monte Carlo. There I find what I want, the really enjoyable things of life, pretty cathedrals, pretty fountains, pretty restaurants, pretty boutiques, and pretty girls with hats. It's a great life, you bet. Wristwatches. Cardigans. Shoes of distinction. Smart jeans. Those are what I like.

HEIDI Don't you like coming to London?

ANGELO Certainly this is so. I always stop in London if I am flying somewhere. The airports are very modern and interesting. I also enjoy to spend time in your travel agents. Your English travel agents are very helpful. They have ideas for many foreign places to visit. There is a phrase, 'Faraway places with strange sounding names'. That is the life for me: I never get tired of shopping. Except in London, where the cardigans are not the most expensive. Oh yes, I like coming here, and I like going away from here. What I don't like is being here. Can I sing my song now, sir?

MR DIXON Very well, Angelo.

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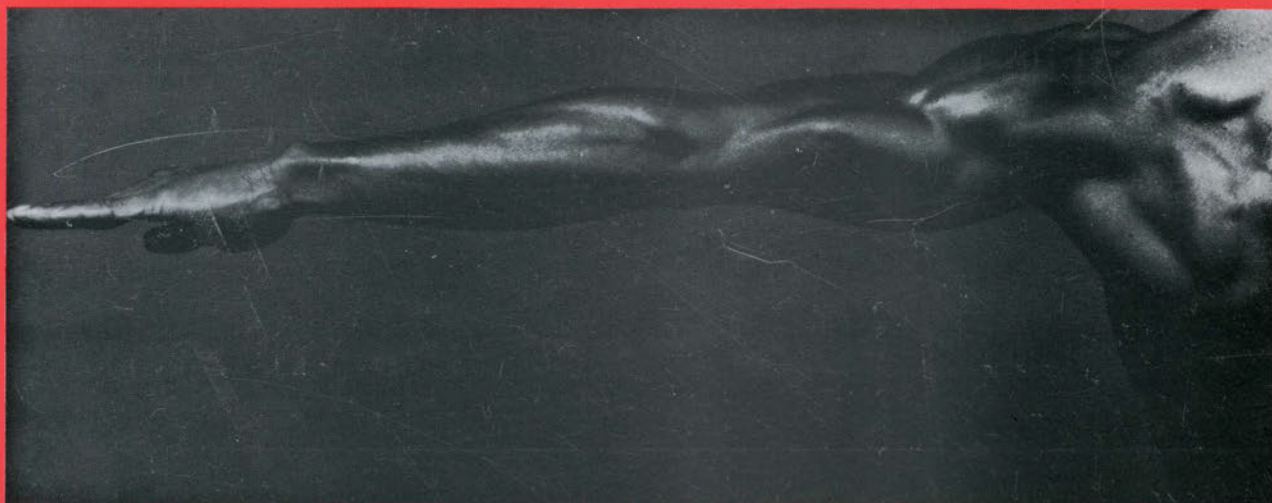
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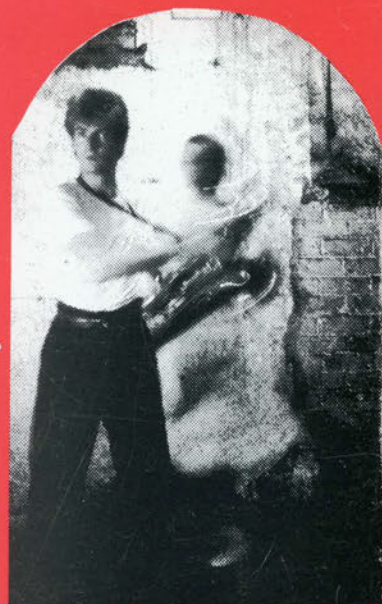
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