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ISSUE 32

PERFORMANCE

art and
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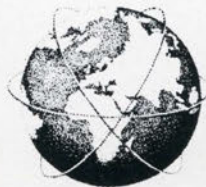
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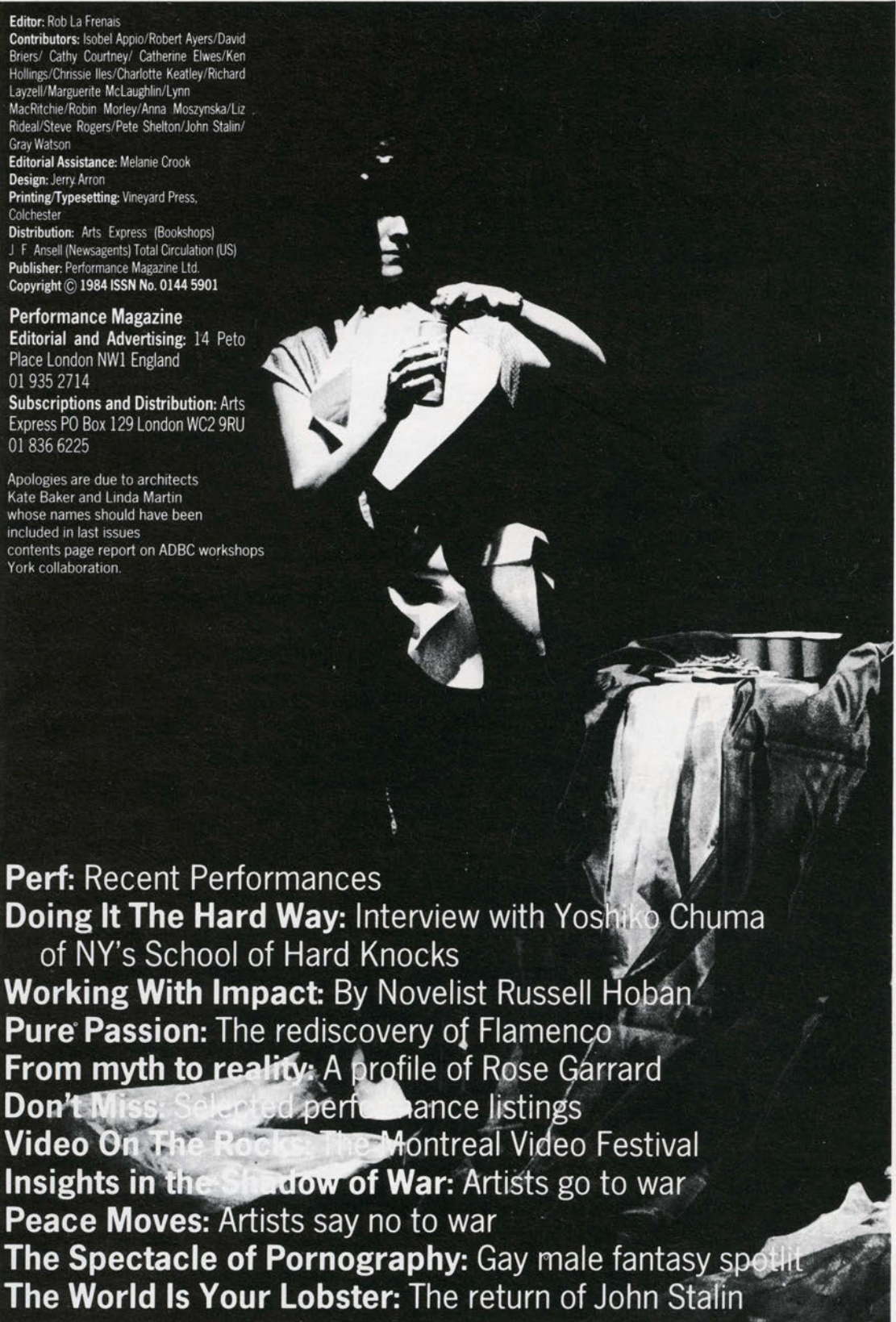
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Apologies are due to architects Kate Baker and Linda Martin whose names should have been included in last issues contents page report on ADBC workshops York collaboration.

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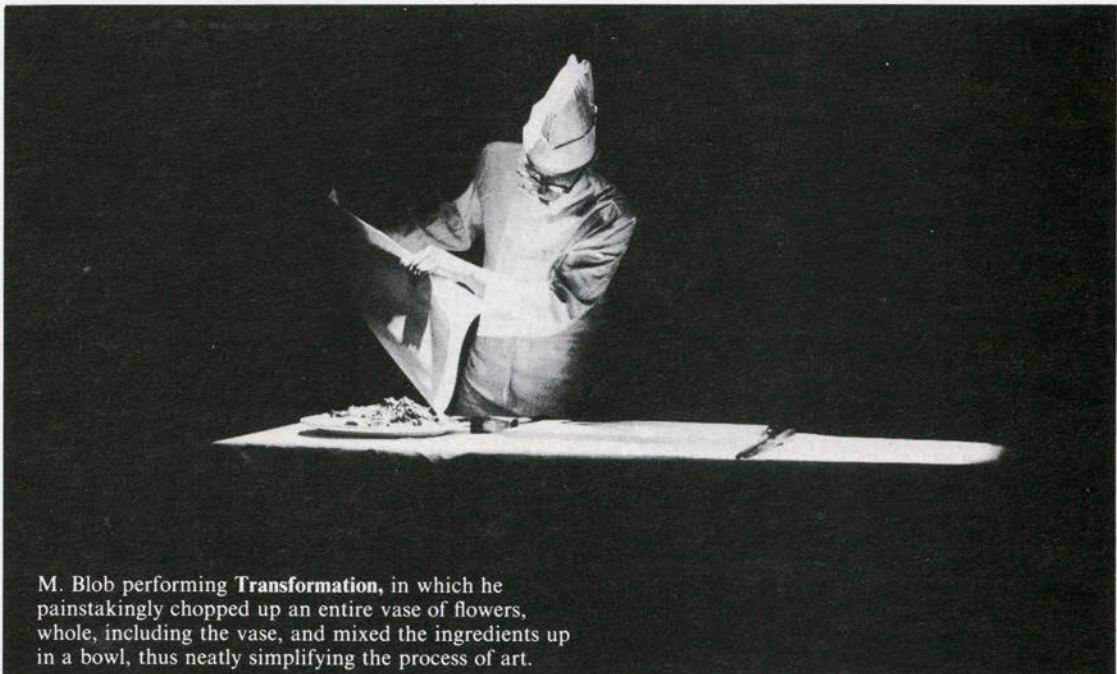
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Silvia Ziraneck offering Tizer to the masses in opening of Midland Group Performance Festival (See Notts Shots).

Sholeh Farnsworth

PERF

NOTTS SHOTS: *The artists pictured here were taking part in this year's highly successful 'Four Days of Performance Art' at Nottingham's Midland Group just as we went to press. A mixture of well-known performance artists and an open selection of new work provided a lively mix and high attendances. Included was a debate between Neil Butler of the Zap Club and Rob La Frenais of this magazine on 'Can Performance Be Popular?' in which it was concluded that it could.*



M. Blob performing **Transformation**, in which he painstakingly chopped up an entire vase of flowers, whole, including the vase, and mixed the ingredients up in a bowl, thus neatly simplifying the process of art.

Sholeh Farnsworth



Lola Pa Loo Za, by Patricia Bardi explored the combination of sound and movement, in a jerky, spasmodic portrayal of male and female stereotypes.

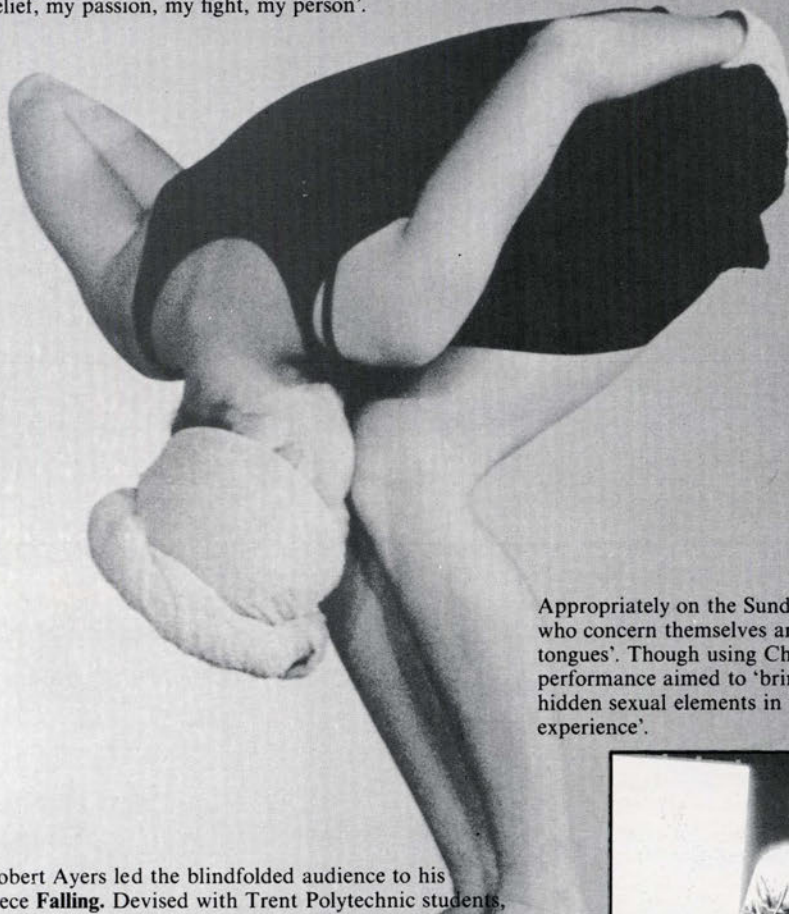
Robin Ridley

Sholeh Farnsworth



Mine or History? asks Sarah Jane Edge in a powerful documentation/performance on woman miners in the past, miner's wives in the present, and the impossibility of women or anyone for that matter mining coal in the future if McGregor gets his way. 'It's not their's to give away!' is the dramatic conclusion.

Anne Seagrave, in **Local Girl Makes Good**, making good. Originally from Nottingham, she seems set to become the Lucinda Childs of British Performance. She refers to herself thus 'I am a bare artist, I have bared myself and I give you what is left; my conviction, my belief, my passion, my fight, my person'.

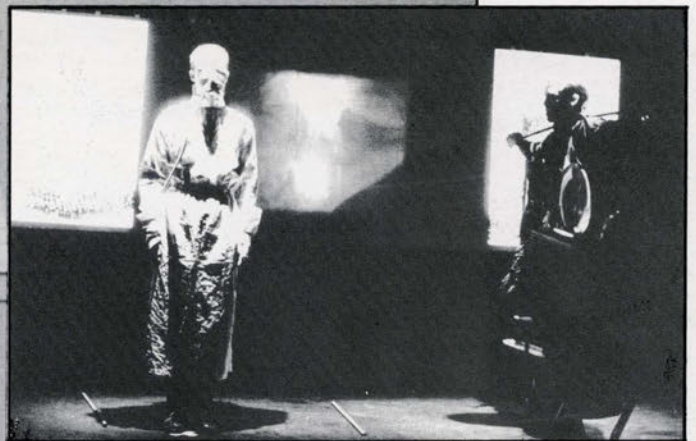


Robin Ridley

Appropriately on the Sunday, the Family Patrol Group, who concern themselves are seen here 'speaking in tongues'. Though using Christian imagery, the performance aimed to 'bring out the shamanic and hidden sexual elements in this fundamental religious experience'.

Robert Ayers led the blindfolded audience to his piece **Falling**. Devised with Trent Polytechnic students, **Falling** used Victorian images of childhood to create performances in confined spaces of staircases and cupboards. A performance that included just about everything, from a beserk dancing radio set to a nude firebreathing skydive from the Midland Group roof.

Also taking part in the festival were: Max Eastley, Rose English, Roberta M. Graham, Roy Hutchins, Omlette Broadcast Co. Kevin West, Crazy Legs Breakdancers and the Event Group. Selected new work included Winterbabies' **Last Dance at the Oasis**, Daniel Haut's **Looking in the Fridge for Feelings**, Stefan Szczelkun's **Peace of My Mind**, Catherine Seely (Untitled), Milena Dragic's **From Ethix to Athletix**, Tara Babel's **Give Him Plenty of Coffee**, Beneath The Skin's **Die Hose** and **Dirty Feet and Troubled Girls**, and Robert Cornwall's **The Mixer**. The festival was organised by Nikki Millican. ▲



Robin Ridley

PERF

CROSS CURRENTS: Cathy Courtney caught the first stages of the Royal College of Art mixed media show.

THE ALBERT MEMORIAL

Opposite the Royal College is a permanent installation, the work of an idiosyncratic imagination which, by means of a bizarre collage, explores themes including love, death, immortality, the church, imperialism and human endeavour. A cage of scaffolding surrounds the work, the poles are grey and pink, and at varying heights platforms are under construction made from wooden planks. Beside it are two rows of neatly stacked small white sacks, more poles, more planks and scaffolding corners. The public is not allowed onto the installation, but may take a ringside seat on a nearby bench and watch the action unfold.

Inside the Royal College many of the preoccupations of Gilbert Scott's *Albert Memorial* reappear in 'Cross Currents'. In the last issue of this magazine the legitimacy of 'the right to fail' was again taken up. It seems to me infinitely defensible if work is being explored to its limits, but 'the right to play safe' cannot claim the same exoneration. None of the work I saw could be said to fail, but it sometimes disappointed when it stopped short and was too easily self-satisfied. Simplicity and economy of thought are exhilarating when they encapsulate the fulfillment of an idea; even if that idea is intentionally an anti-climax. There were few challenges or sudden jolts of recognition in the show. This is not necessarily to quarrel with the 'morality' or messages of pieces, but in some instances there was a lack of keen thinking and vision. An unemotional statement may in itself be the intended impact, but sometimes it is a shield of style by which to avoid examination of areas of human experience. Imagination is self-censored. ▲

The action is accompanied by readings from Anais Nin's consummately (!) skilful erotic writings. We are doubly voyeurs. The first sexual encounter is one of mutual satisfaction, but the second is between a man and the body of a drowned woman. Water is the link in this performance. Sexual rhythms are evoked in the tempestuous soundtrack; effects are turned upside down as when Finn-Kelcey holds two conch shells to her ears and the sound snaps away. The sea sound is captured within the shells and it is we who are deprived. The heightening of remaining sensations as a result of the loss of another recurs during the narration of the second exploit with the inert body when Finn-Kelcey moves slowly along one of the waves which make up her set, led only by touch since she had blindfolded herself. The saturated body in the text exudes water as the man climaxes—we are over ninety percent liquid at the best of times! ▲

JOURNAL OF THE PLAGUE YEAR 1984

Death and sex co-mingle again in Stuart Marshall's *A Journal of the Plague Year*, and the plague in question is AIDS. The installation silently portrays the isolation of its victims. It is particularly poignant in the light of current purges by Customs and Excise on 'Gay's The Word' bookshop and recent statements by a local council that it did not consider homosexuals eligible for employment. This was followed by comments from parents expressing anxiety about their children coming into contact with gay people, as if homosexuality were

SUMPTUOUS LAMENT

None of these criticisms could be levelled at Holly Warburton's *The Reflected Portrait* which takes an assured imaginative leap and carries her audience with it, creating an atmosphere which cloakes us in a place we have never been before. It is a superbly executed multi-screen, installation. Even if the spectator fails to pick up on its many visual and musical references the richness of the experience is hypnotic. It is an aristocratic and sumptuous lament that has a strong, unified centre. In a dark, spacious room she has set a strip of black and white tiles leading up to a lighted candelabra—both of which reappear with other images on an array of screens which fade, cross and reflect one another. It is the macabre and mysterious tale of its central figure and narrates to us with visual and musical allusion but manages to comment on its own methods simultaneously. The screen as container is echoed in still shots within which the only movement is film captured within a golden picture frame. It resurrects conventions of past art and morality and binds them into a coherent comment on the present, employing ritual both secular and ecclesiastical. The form and content are perfectly orchestrated. ▲



SEX AND SEA

Rose Finn-Kelcey's *Hosts* is also a collage of recognisable elements—visual and aural—and is sensual in a very different way. It is a theatrical piece with a stylized set and movements, using three performers.

contagious like a disease. The Aids victims are thus twice persecuted, as rejects and second as lepers in a more literal sense. The solitary sleeping male torso which recurs in the video not only emphasises this loneliness but the Catch 22 circumstances of Aids which

make the instinct to draw together in time of fear exactly the most dangerous response. The attitude of the press which feeds the public is shown in its slick and sick headlines such as, 'Gay Bug Kills Gran' and 'Aids Crisis Causes Bad Blood in Europe'. The footage of the burning of books in Berlin in 1933 is all the more articulate for being prolonged; the destruction goes on and on and on. One of the books recently seized by Customs and Excise was 'The Nazi Extermination of Homosexuals'. ▲

BURNING WITCHES

Tina Keane's *A Bouquet* is another successful and hard-hitting piece. Using eleven screens and their wiring the installation provides the shape of its title. On the screens two different videos play together. It's as much a wreath as a bouquet. From a distance the patterns created by the repeating pairs of images is effective, but their content underlines that we haven't moved on very far from our most barbaric instincts. A memorial shows a stark monument of grey stones on which is painted, graffiti style, in white paint 'Maggie Wall was burnt here as a witch 1657'. The camera explores this desolation, drifting in between back and forth to flowers and a stream. This sequence is linked to the accompanying video on the remaining screens by what appears to be a flickering flame, the movement of which is replaced by two winding hands within which we see glimpses of newsreel. It is mainly footage of women protesters, presumably at Greenham, in combat with the police. Sometimes the hands echo the motion of the newsreel as when mounted police charge the women—the hands assume the position of those holding reins and move with the rhythm of a horse. Later the gaps between fingers echoes shots of ears and mouths. It is a sombre and angry consolidation. ▲

ON THE LINE

Liz Rhodes and Joanna Davis *On The Line* has less impact than a *A Bouquet* perhaps because it treats more issues, all of which are the result of misused power and violence—pornography, starvation, warfare. It is repeating what we already know, but unfortunately we need constant reminders about tragedies such as Hiroshima—reminders about what we are capable of executing. The work employs quotes from authors such as Hannah Arendt and is a call for women to look behind politician's words, to work together in non-violent ways to prevent further catastrophe. In a three-sided space painted black, a black T.V. is placed on a black table beside a black jar containing a dark leaved plant. Across the space are hung various cloths upon which the messages employed in the soundtrack are printed. The washing lines are barbed wire. The graphics on the screen reproduce the T.V. table and plant which are viewed by a caricature woman. Disasters such as Hiroshima are brought into the home; the use of cloths as message bearers unites the domestic and political and gives a double edge to the command 'strike while the iron is hot'. This message is to women 'Don't sit at home or sit alone filling your mind with fear, but open the door don't take any more'. It is a small voice in juxtaposition to the wrongs. ▲

LITTLE BITS OF HISTORY

But finally, most obviously linked with the Albert Memorial in its present state is Lynn Hewitt's *The Studies of Misrecognition*, a tape/slide installation which

looks at the life of construction workers in tones of epic heroism. By examining details such as muscles used in balancing it makes us re-think things we take for granted. Again there is a link made with classical sculptures,—the idealised male figure, muscles finely tuned, strong brave and noble is the image to which the competitors on this 'all male island' are compelled to aspire. We are given statistics about the numbers of construction workers who meet their deaths through accidents at work, the estimated value of their lives given by insurance companies and the number of them who are unemployed. Emotion and fear are failings which must be kept hidden and a tight hierarchy exists on site. The architect's drawing must be adhered to and the job is essentially one of translation from a safe drawing into a building via risks, monotony and bad pay. To an outsider wandering amongst the foundations the language of the structure may seem without logic, and to be as alien as that of a past civilisation. The building in this case is to be a museum where 'little bits of history' will be 're-arranged and consumed'. It is the dream of a man who knows but refuses to acknowledge that the foundations of all our edifices, however grand, rest on 'shit'. The attempt to attain immortality in stone is doomed. The piece neatly places man in the role of the blind, eternal builder but the case is rather overstated. In many cases images would have sufficed without the narrative as well. ▲

VIOLENT SILENCE/OF THEM THAT SLEPT

The literary and philosophical writings of Georges Bataille are crucial for an understanding of a major stream within contemporary art, a stream which remains seriously under-recognised. Not so much because they have been a direct influence on it as because they demonstrate, with exceptional clarity, just why the concerns of such art, normally dismissed as decadent self-indulgence, are actually of the greatest relevance to human society.

Thus the idea of holding a multi-media event in his honour was, in principle, excellent. But Paul Buck's and Roger Ely's recent *Violent Silence* festival was, in practice, a fiasco. Of *My Mother*, based on one of Bataille's own writings the less said the better. It was a shoddily amateur production, of which any average school dramatic society would have been ashamed. *Feast*, the second part, as one would imagine, was more varied. There were some good effects from *Last Few Days*: especially when, fascistically dressed, they blared in Latin through megaphones. There was an excellent performance in which Veronique Ros de la Grange danced while Graham Fox read a text by Pierre Guyotard in a North African gay patois. Another excellent performance was Cosey Fanni Tutti's *That's Life*. As part of the backdrop, she showed the old COUM Transmissions film *After Cease to Exist*, in which she had apparently castrated Chris Carter (in fact, she has since had a baby by him).

On the other hand, there were moments of fair boredom when Bernard Noël read his poems, and of sniggeringly adolescent cheapness when Paul Buck read his.

But the most absurd aspect of the festival, inappropriately sub-titled 'Acts of Transgression', was that the organisers—having already undemurringly

PERF

► accepted the theatre staff taking down 'offensive' drawings by André Stitt from the theatre lobby (without apologizing to the artist, or even expressing regret)—then went on to ban the scheduled second showing of what was undoubtedly the best and strongest work in the whole programme. Roberta Graham's and Ken Hollings' tape-slide piece *Of Them That Slept*.

Although censorship cannot be proven beyond all doubt, it appears probably: certainly, Buck's and Ely's excuses about running-time do not bear close examination.

What are absolutely beyond doubt are both the shabbiness of their behaviour towards the artists and their complete lack of aesthetic judgment.

Of Them That Slept was one of the few works created especially for the festival. In addition to being technically superb, for which much of the credit must go to the photographer Patrick Christopher, it succeeded in re-creating with extraordinary accuracy the *spirit* of Bataille's writings: that particular blend of eroticism, holy horror, elegance and intellectual daring.

Two key notions were those of the flesh—in all the rich ambiguity of that term—and of 'total outlay', or giving without counting the cost: sacrifice. Hence the many luxuriant images of food near the beginning and, towards the end, of that food having decayed. Hence too the images of Graham and Hollings themselves, engaging in a love in which nothing is withheld, a love which is a holy communion (the very first slides are of red wine, echoed later by the blood from a knife-wound in Hollings' arm), and whose logical consummation would be death, as shown by the final images of their bodies merging with earth and water, the elements of Nature.

The starting point of the piece was the final section of Bataille's novel *Blue of Noon*. As there, a connection was made explicit between the erotic-religious quest for the infinite and the unconscious popular craving for war (exemplified with particular drama by the Nazis): images of barbed wire cut into those of flesh and blood, as, on the sound-track, gun-fire cut into Albinoni's music and Hollings' poetry.

At the same time as being poignantly self-revealing and personal, *Of Them That Slept* succeeded in illuminating centrally important aspects of human experience, normally hidden from conscious scrutiny. It is gratifying that, since the debacle at the Bloomsbury, it has been shown again, to a capacity audience, as part of the Midland Group Performance Festival and enthusiastically received.

However ironic it may be in the light of the banning, we can at least be grateful that *Violent Silence* provided the incentive for a truly first-rate work to be created—one which will last and which, I suspect, will still have much to give, after many repeated viewings. ▲

GRAY WATSON

Of them that slept
Roberta Graham



HAX BAX FROX SHOX

'When are we going to see some clothes?' So moaned audibly the assorted fashion slags behind me at the ICA's *Performing Clothes*; their campy bitchery neatly matching in real life David Gale's scripted lines on the catwalk. I wasn't complaining. This was probably one of the best pieces of performance I had seen recently at the ICA. The fact of both the performance and the couture literally falling apart at the seams on the night, the fact that you could hardly hear what anyone was saying could have been immensely irritating, but was carried

away by the energy, the witty riposting and some really trashy but surrealistic 'themes'. The spectacle of a group of performers 'dressed for the street', loud jazz, and even a set of fake dual carriageways road lamps strung across the ceiling was hilariously undermined by the fact that they all were solemnly balancing copies of the London A-Z on their heads. Bathing scenes in a tackily illuminated paddling pool, 'things' falling from the ceiling, and other cheap effects which would have demanded solemn, meaningful attention in the 'other' ICA theatre, had me doubled up with amusement in this setting.

Careful on the hilarity, though. A few witty one liners from someone in the audience on, I think, Michelle Clapton's designs, led to a fist-fight between rival, well dressed male frockists, which erupted into the auditorium, adding to the unreality engendered by the clash of high and low art. Still the designers seemed to go along with devisers Michael Morris and Iwona Blazwick's schemes in good part. Scott Crolla's *Get Your Head Out of the Humus Pig Boy* seemed to be in the right spirit of things, and objet d'angler Judy Blame 'Breeze Blocks, Broken Records, Brillo pads . . . don't you wish *you* were wearing them?' managed to keep the whole proceedings, through continuing cameo performances, on a suitably tasteless level. David Gale's mordant wit continues to delight, the more so when coming out of the unmodulated, non-projected voices of non-actors. Sakiesque, the clever young men invite us—'Let us venture out into the poor areas'. The performers, campy, self assured, some spectacularly transformed (such as Brighton Wild Wiggler Liz Aggiss, who has been made-up into a lurid space-monster vamp) are not fashion models nor even, unlike last year,

exactly conventional dancers. They are having fun. But: 'Where *did* they get the *models*?' from behind jolts me back to the fact that the formula may not still be right for some people. But it's all part of the live quadrophonic dialogue. 'Just *look* at the *state* of his Y Fronts. They haven't *even* got a Y in them!' A lot has been said about the way these shows have aided the oily transmission of street culture into consumer culture, the 'chic lies and expensive materials of haute couture' (this magazine last year) and the question asked, particularly in reference to the ill-fitting floozy look of the cross-dressing-inspired designers like Leigh Bowery, 'could I really go out in this?'. Performing Clothes this year seemed to both satirize and celebrate the idea that, not withstanding the label, you probably do, already. Or if *you* don't, as is pointed out at the end, while Bowery's 'Mincing Queens' swan out at the end of a 'This Is Your Life' sequence to the strains of Barry Manilow's 'Copacabana', your whacko next-door neighbours *will*. ▲

ROB LA FRENAIS

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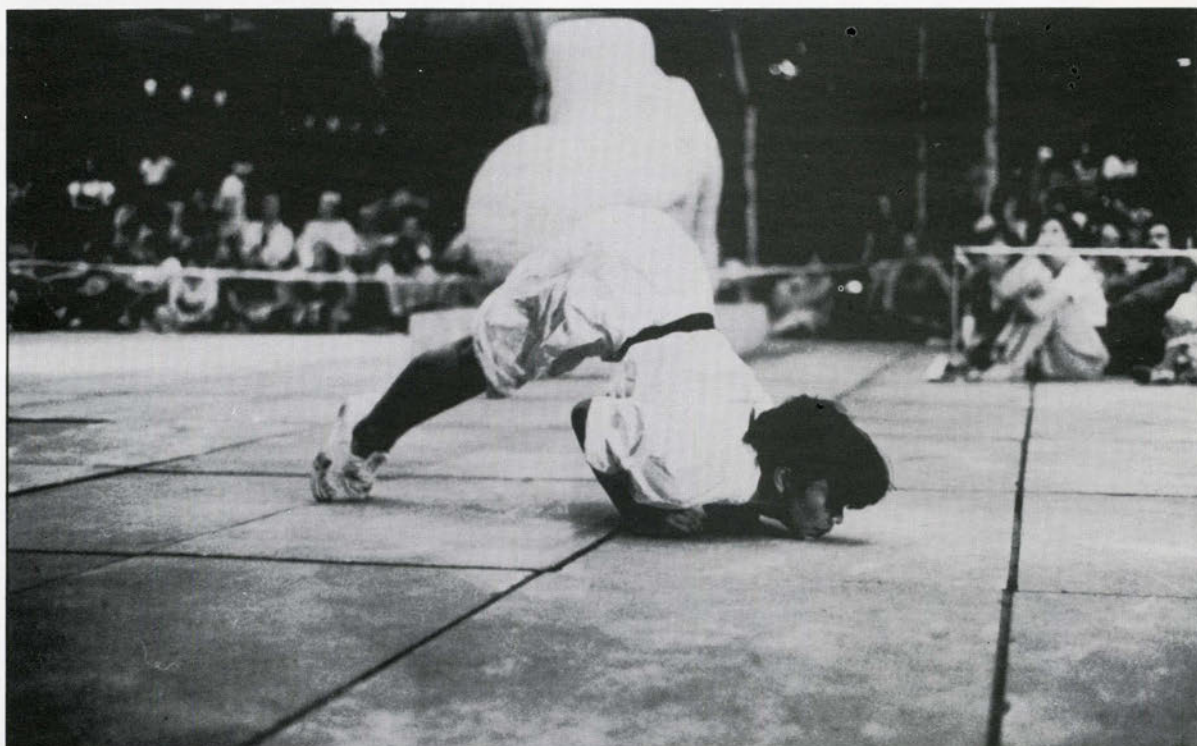
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Performing Clothes



Yoshiko Chuma's School of Hard Knocks makes it across the Atlantic this November to perform her *5 Car Pile Up* at Riverside Studios for Dance Umbrella. Rob La Frenais talked to her:

DOING IT THE HARD WAY



Make More Room
(1979)

Clearly part of a post-post-wave sweeping cross the East Village of New York, breaking and crashing down to the Hudson through the public space of PS 122, the seedy dives of No Se No and the Pyramid Club, Yoshiko Chuma is clearly fresh talent, and all credit to Dance Umbrella for sweeping her up under its canopy. But is this performer, whose frantic use of props, described once as the result of having raided a shabby hotel a dance, performance artist, filmmaker or what? Having never seen her work, but having read descriptions in the NY press that left me none the wiser, I decided to try and approach obliquely questions of theme and working method. It seemed clear, (and she made clear right from the start) there was no question of discussing content. Content for her seems to be a mixture of everything and nothing, the work being a welter of found objects, jerky spontaneous motions, loud screams and explosions, all at rapid fire pace. As she talked in an enthusiastic but slightly incoherent Japanese-American she illustrated many of her points by moving objects, coffee cups, chairs etc. around the room, and using my inadvertant movements to do the same. She'd be better off on video. One thing seems clear is that she sees the start of her artistic life as being her arrival in New York in 1977. She sees her life as a continuous performance since then, as she had to learn both to speak English and live in American culture. She prefers not to refer to influences before then. Our conversation is relaxed, but Yoshiko is always veering away from the specific. In many cases I have chosen to distill her answers down to basic statements, which I hope are accurate reflections of what she's saying . . .

Jacob Burckhardt

You seem to have been reviewed by critics from all areas in the arts. Does that denote a confusion about where your work fits?

The performances are any kind of thing which is connected with space and time. Opera is also performance.

Dance critics seemed to have difficulty.

I started in the dance area, and it's true I'm doing dance. I think I use lots of movement, the movement element is very big. So I move and all the dance people are coming. But why did I do lots of movement when I got to New York? Because I couldn't speak English! I took lots of workshops and I went to parties, dance parties! So I move a lot.

You were forced into the dance category because you couldn't speak?

Very simple! So now I talk, now I start to use lot more text.

Did you get the name 'School of Hard Knocks' direct from the expression about life being the school of hard knocks, and why did it appeal to you?

I came to New York from Japan and the way I make something is connected with, you know, culture shock. Well, American culture is very interesting for me. I have lots of performances connected with English quotations, you know, idioms? Like the School of Hard Knocks, The Girl Can't Help It, Splish Splash, Champing at the Bit, and the latest one was Eager Witness.

Did you learn English from reading newspapers?

Well, someone said at some time somebody said, Yoshiko, what do you think of the School of Hard Knocks? And I think it sounds somehow musical, though I don't know exactly what it means, but it sounded good—Oh, the School of Hard Knocks! And then I ask—what does it mean?

What is the main theme of your work?

The School of Hard Knocks is not a group name, it is more a phenomenon. So I do 5 Car Pile Up in the London Dance Umbrella with 100 local people involved. That's a phenomenon. Wherever I go, I can make the School of Hard Knocks.

But what is that phenomena?

Well, I think basically it is . . . when you see an ordinary thing, like when we have this cup of coffee, now you move like this (makes vigorous movement with cup) and I think I like to show what is daily life. I like to knock what is daily life for you. And it is connected with the dysfunction of the city. London has the same dysfunction in some way as New York has.

And that dysfunction has a fascination for you?

I don't think people make things out of fascination. You have a choice in your life—red or yellow. Lets say you pick yellow. That's maybe connected with a fascination for something. But I'm not really sure whether we need fascination in performance.

It seems to me that your answer to creative problems is to take this hyperactive approach. To take everything as it happens, very fast. To take each action and amplify that.

I moved from Japan to New York, right? And I thought I was 24 hours of performance a day. So that was a point. I felt I was doing a performance because I had never spoken English all my life. And when I knock each person, each person can do something. Each person walking, that is something for me.

So what do you mean by knock people?

▷



5 Car Pile Up (1983)

Toyo Tsuchiya



5 Car Pile Up (1983)

If I don't knock people, they are not conscious of what they are doing. They can try more, they can try more. So we're back to Japan, where the Zen monk goes around and hits the pupils on the head with a stick while they're meditating.

(Laughter) Well, I'm not Buddhist, and I don't know anything about meditation, and I don't know anything about oriental culture so . . .

But do you mean wake people up?

When I did a one-year project with the members of the School of Hard Knocks, we did not know how much we could do, how far we could go. So that I think we knock each other.

The audience too?

Yes, I think the audience are also knocked, I think so. And we did a street performance called The School of Hard Knocks hit Manhattan. We did a performance in Times Square, and in the Heliport. In two weekends we did ten different locations. I didn't get any permission from the Police Department—we just did ten fifteen minute performances. It was very interesting. We were just reading the New York Post, standing there for a long time. Then we would run, then stop. Twenty people would run, then stop. Then we all fall down. But in Manhattan, lots of violent things already take place.

In Manhattan, people don't care. We're a movie location, people don't care. With us, in the beginning they don't care, it's the same thing. But they know something's going on.

Why are you attracted to extremes in performance, like 24 hour pieces, or working with 100 people?

Because no one else tries to. Actually that's not true. A piece with 200 people was done by Rauschenberg in

the sixties. But that was more with improvised and accidental things. But I don't know why 24 hours, 100 people. I just did it.

And you make transatlantic calls during the 24 hour performance?

Yes, I called my mother, and we spoke in Japanese, and my mother didn't know we are on stage, and people could hear her voice . . . well that's what you call 24 hours, when your in the house you make calls.

A critic complained of your jumpiness, that you are too impatient to let things finish, to let them go on until they fulfil themselves. People follow each other in a line, jumping from one telephone directory to another, passing on ahead. You barely have time to take in the process before they've started something else. What do you think of this criticism?

I think I am putting in many images in a very short time. This goes back to when I made movies. I made sixteen, but never learned how to do any editing. Movies are very expensive, you see. So my movies are a kind of animation, a kind of pixillation.

Like intoxication?

Yes, so there are twenty-four frames per second, and I shot six to eight, so you see the image becomes very fast. So now I can see more the movement element. When you move from here to here (indicates) you took two seconds but I took . . . like this, to make it more compact.

So you compact movement, faster than it is in real life. And you are simulating that process, in real time, when you do the performance.

Yes. Movies can be made very short. Man is walking on the street, then man is going in the door, and his hand is going on the knob, and you do a close-up. In the

Toyo Tsuchiya



movie, it just looks as if he is going in the door, but in performance you are in real time. In movies you can put several images next to each other, so in my performances, many images are coming very fast. You can't catch it, you're getting very tired because there's so much information.

Would you say that in everyday life you are a very fast moving person?

I don't look at myself so much. I just look out. Because I see you more than you see you. So I don't know how I move.

So you get ideas for your work from looking out there at the things that are influencing you?

I live in New York. I came from a different place. So I wonder about what is the American mentality. Not critical. It's just that I look at it from outside. And then I find many interesting things, which even they don't know. Everybody is, you know, drinking coffee, but ordinarily, you even don't know what kind of a cup you are using. Like this. (picks up cup) Your cup is a very geometric design. I can pick up ordinary things, I can show you them. That's what I think I am doing.

So if your work reflects a culture, presumably the work you do here will also reflect that culture?

That's a good question. When you move a performance from somewhere to somewhere else, whether it changes the performance—I don't know. I mostly did the performance in New York. 5 Car Pile Up is interesting because I meet the local people (who make up the 100 participants). If I worked by myself I might not know the reality. Just to come here as a tourist, to do one night's performance, maybe I know the theatre, maybe I know the audience, but maybe there is something I don't know. When I start working on 5

Car Pile Up for three weeks with local people, maybe American culture doesn't matter.

How do you feel about being placed in the dance category here?

Myself, I don't have any category. I started performance in 1979 and it was movement. In 1980, it was movement. But at the same time, I was also interested in the visual element, which became more fine art. I didn't know anything about art before I went to New York. I went to New York and I looked at many things and got lots of influences. But I felt I would like to get a kind of . . . more emotion back. Since the sixties there was what we call 'stone face'. You know, no emotion. Sit on chair. For example, Robert Wilson. There was no emotion coming. So, when I used props, I bring back the emotion. But the emotion is not like *expressing* emotion. So when you go to grab a chair, you should *grab* a chair. (Grabs chair) Not going to chairs like *this* and like *this*. (Makes careful, mimetic motions.) So I start by dealing more with relationships with the props. Always my performances have props.

A lot of them!

Yeah. I start to have, like fifteen chairs. And then next I said, OK, bicycles. Ten bicycles. Twenty telephone books. Toothbrushes, suitcases. And then I said move them faster, tearing up the books, riding the bikes. And then I like to talk. Because then it's more clear. If you want to say something, just say it. At that time we didn't use text. But now I am more into using scripts. But I can't write!

Yoshiko Chuma is performing 5 Car Pile Up at Riverside Studios, London, in November. ■

It's not often that a best-selling novelist chooses to directly collaborate with a performance company that greatly relies on non-verbal imagery. *Russell Hoban*, author of post-holocaust novels *Riddley Walker* and *Pilgermann* was so taken aback by a chance viewing of Impact Theatre's *Useful Vices* that he embarked on an extraordinary collaboration, *The Carrier Frequency* which will tour Britain this winter. We asked him to describe the working process.

WORKING WITH IMPACT

The Carrier Frequency



John McKinnon

The first time I saw the Impact Theatre Co-operative perform was in *Useful Vices* at the ICA in January 1983. I'd never seen their work before and I was much impressed by their stagecraft. Their next production, in May 1983, was *No Weapons for Mourning*, about which I wrote in *Fiction Magazine*:

The distinction of *No Weapons for Mourning* has to do with a perceptual phenomenon of our time: never before has the human brain been compelled to take in so much at once and in so many different modes; our minds move in sweeps and scans of words, pictures, noise, emotions and sensations with a flickering speed foreign even to our childhoods let alone the mental life of those who saw the plays of Shakespeare or Molière or even Strindberg.

It is on this acceleration and multiplicity of perception that the Impact Theatre builds its approach: the cinematic archetypes are intensified and the performance, not realistic but hyper-real, has a syntax of image and sound, speech and movement that is not of the printed page but of the exploding mind. It draws its energy from the same speed and fragmentation, the same lighting circuitry that makes computer technology possible.

These young artists effectively demonstrate that the circuitry originates not with computers but with the human mind, and it is there for survival as well as for annihilation.

Soon after I saw *No Weapons for Mourning* Impact and I began to talk about collaborating. Director Pete Brooks and Claire MacDonald had been doing most of the writing for Impact but they wanted to go further with text than they'd done before and they thought that the group's obsessions and mine might work well together.

Although some of my novels have something like a story in them I'm not really a storyteller. What I do best is find places where various things can put themselves together. Here's an example from *The Carrier Frequency*, the piece that Impact and I are working on now. The following paragraph is from *Netsuke*, by Neil K. Davey:

987 A SUPERB FIGURE OF A FISHERGIRL WITH A GIANT SQUID, the girl reclining with a contented expression as she embraces the huge beast, whose skin is stippled, giving a mottled effect, its eyes inlaid in pearl with dark pupils, the group

forming a long flat composition, the details are finely carved and the slightly worn ivory has a remarkable colour and patina, early 19th century. Ex F. Meinertzhagen collection. This a smooth compact form, ideal for its use.

The catalogue description of the Netsuke is part of what we call the 'Carrier Frequency', a background transmission that is one of three planes of text within which the action takes place. The foreground plane is the Moanspeak Ritual and the middle one is the *Song of the Longdream Runner*, in which the fishergirl and the giant squid appear again:

**But always in the dream are the sea and the dream of the sea.
In the dream I am the fishergirl in the twining embrace of the giant squid. Its dark eyes are on me as it penetrates and inseminates me. The giant squid has been dreaming of me agelong, rising in the black night, rising in the moony ocean night and never never finding, never until now finding the mystery of me so long dreamt of, so long lusted after. Eurydice, whispers the long sea, Eurydice, Eurydice, and the giant squid is frightened by the beauty of me, it trembles as it holds me in its twined embrace.**

I quite like the way Eurydice comes into it. Orpheus and Eurydice as a binary entity have been haunting me for a long time. Orpheus has always been given top billing but Eurydice has been taking on more and more significance for me. Here's an extract from 'Eurydice 2' in a series labelled 'TRYTHIS' on one of my floppy disks. Most of this material won't be spoken on stage but it's helped us to get to a place to work from:

The sea is full of marvels but there are no answers in it. There are remote beaches where certain things are insisted upon. There are crabs whose bodies are like human faces, angry and disappointed faces with mouth parts gabbling silently, urgently. These angry and disappointed faces are carried on jointed legs; they hurry along the tidal edge drivenly surviving from one moment to the next. There is no time to lose if their line of angry and disappointed faces is to continue.

In the spring tides the female crab releases her ten thousand eggs, each one a potential angry and disappointed face and most of them will be eaten by the creatures of the sea. The female stands

not like a face on legs, she stands hugely, she is heroic and technological, like a spacecraft poised on elaborately articulated legs; she stands like the most modern thing in the world and she expels into the sea these ten thousand ancient faces.

My eyes look out of a human face but the boundaries of my humanness are unfixed: I don't know where I end and other ideas begin; I know that I am whatever is the sea and whatever is in the sea, rising and sinking, undulating and looking out of an unlimited variety of body-faces that ripple, glide, contract and expand in a ceaseless asking for continuity.

When I rise from the green depths in my vast and ivory nakedness, when I rise under the island head of Orpheus I recognize myself as the long and rocking body of Eurydice. That is how I have been thought of, that is how I am remembered.

In this approach (only one of many) Eurydice, as she says above, has become the sea. She has become unlimited, undefined, endlessly potential while Orpheus has grown smaller and smaller in the mind's eye, even though in pages and pages of not-to-be-staged writing I've described his endlessly voyaging head as:

. . . enormous, a floating island over which seabirds wheel crying under the heartless blue of the sky. The great cavern of the mouth opens and shows its white teeth, its red tongue. 'Eurydice! Eurydice!' it bellows as the seabirds rise up screaming.

The world of *The Carrier Frequency* is one of wateriness, wetness, darkness, underness, echoes of the sea. The floor of Simon Vincenzi's set is a pool of water two feet deep, out of which rise the skeletal towers and broken slabs of a dead hegemony. At present I don't know what the action will be; we're finding out as we go.

Pete tells me that Impact used to begin by deciding what they wanted to say before they attempted a text. This time they're having a go with my method which is simply not to interfere with what's trying to happen: you make a space in which the thing can get going how it likes, then you can hear what *it's* saying. You run the risk of ending up with no product but not if you're tuned in right. In any case the process matters to me more than the product. What I go for is the action between the mind as receiver and the transmission it's receiving. We are inhabited by a consciousness that we inhabit and it requires us to be perceptive.

I like the way ideas and words and images arrange themselves in combinations that are apparently strange but never unfamiliar. Why is it that nothing is unfamiliar to us? No matter what happens, even when we say, 'I don't believe this' it's what we've always known, it's familiar.

Explication isn't art, more and more I'm learning ▷

that. The real juice of things comes with a kind of vital not-knowing, a giving of oneself to mysteries and confusions. That giving is the art. I was delighted to read in *Nature*, in an article by John Skilling on data analysis, *The maximum entropy method*: 'maximum entropy would be the same as maximum degeneracy, which could in turn be identified with maximum probability'. I hasten to say that I understand almost nothing of the article from which I've taken the quote but I think that the maximum entropy approach, which is used in image-enhancement techniques to give definition to blurred photographs, has some bearing on art as well: a state of apparent no-order has in it the greatest number of possibilities.

At this stage of getting *The Carrier Frequency* together Graeme Miller and Steve Shill are working mainly on the sound and music and radio clips for the background track, while I've been writing text inserts for that and full texts for the other two planes of speech. Pete Brooks, Claire MacDonald, Niki Johnson, Richard Hawley and Heather Ackroyd are concentrating on the vocabulary of the performance. Tyrone Huggins and Pete Higgs are finishing construction of the set. We've got twenty-five days until our opening in Leeds and everything feels good so far.

When we began talking about this project over a year ago I felt a little jumpy about working with a

group: opening my head to other people, showing them my undeveloped ideas and listening to theirs. At the time I was well into what I hoped would be my next novel, tentatively entitled *The Medusa Frequency*. As usual I had several unfinished versions of it and was plodding slowly ahead hoping for enlightenment. It seems, however, that I was lusting after a form in which I could work around the periphery of a theme without actually having to tell a story.

Whatever comes of it, this is time well spent. I like being with Impact and I'm learning from them: I'm learning more about art, learning more about what doesn't need to be spelled out brick by brick, learning more about inviting action by putting the right elements next to each other. Especially I'm learning more about where dry is better than wet and cool is better than hot. Hot process in a cool machine seems to work well.

The word 'process' keeps coming up because that's what it's all about. *The Carrier Frequency* will be there on a stage and then it won't be there any more. It isn't like a book where the original show happens every time you open it—the having of this sort of thing is only in the doing of it. Like life, you might say.

I haven't really made clear what *The Carrier Frequency* is about. If we're doing it right it isn't about something, it is something. ■

The Carrier
Frequency



John McKinnon

PERF

ARTISTS CHALLENGED

Artists are rarely asked to make work on specific themes but Richard Layzell recently chose to do this for three Arts Council-funded weekends at the Cafe Gallery in Southwark Park, challenging artists to consider 'Peace', 'Children' and 'Future' as themes of universal significance.

Carol Crowe's *Maze* was concerned with the performance as an exchange in which the audience was actively concerned with what they took away from the experience. In an uncontrolled space, outside the Gallery, it was possible for a chalk line drawn on the ground to acquire meaning for the adults and children who followed the maze. And, despite its dead-ends to finally puzzle out its route to the centre. While some people devoutly followed the maze without cheating, others obviously pushed buggies with children right over the lines. The authority and meaning of the maze relied on the participants involvement with the work and not on any external authority. The weekend coincided with Southwark Council's Community Arts Festival, thus people were drawn into the Gallery and the performances going on around it, without having any expectations about it being 'art'.

For the 'Peace' theme, Stefan Szczelkun's acting-out of his anger, which, by mimicking so closely the institutionalised violence he abhors, actually made people feel uncomfortable enough to leave. He seemed to cross an invisible limit between engaging his audience and threatening them. Gillian Allnut's piece with Sister Seven was like a reply. The recent memory of Stefan's piece became part of the tension and sensitivity of her reading. Evelyn Silver's *Cruise Tango* flirted elegantly with the notion of entertainment. It was implicit in her use of the forties dance music and posed 'smile' of the girl as she showed off her G.I. dancing partner. The power of such a heavily loaded symbol as the penis/missiles made the mood changes during the performance uncomfortably successful.

It was only Kathy Rogers, on the final weekend, who used the qualities of the Gallery as an intimate, enclosing space. She sensed a future unfolding and by her use of the images she gave a sense of 'Nowness', time passing, shared experience and trust. Most of her futures were warnings, anxious about conflicts. Most

Futures are other people's, scientist's, politician's, while Rose Finn-Kelcey's frozen moments look ironically at a past which seems to belong to someone else. Philip Hollweg's acutely portrayed anxiety was riveting entertainment with a money-back guarantee which was put to test. Nor did he honour the conventions of the love-story—they didn't live happily ever after. ▲
JESSICA WILKES

SHAPELESS DRIFTING

I only carp because I care, and there were enough good things in That's Not It's production *An Independent Woman* at Oval House to make me regret its seemingly shapeless drifting.

The stage, littered with shapes covered in white sheets, was at first slowly and intermittently peopled: two women played a desultory game of golf, a couple spent a long time moving from one side of the space to the other. Words were spoken, but it felt bleak and empty. As things speeded up, however, there was both visual and verbal poetry in the emerging theme of lingering, institutionalized death. No one really listens to you when you're dying; they try and make you comfortable over a series of long, comfortless days.

The play's creator, Natasha Morgan, and the other performers contrived some haunting images, such as the dummies in wheelchairs who were manipulated by hospital nurses, and talked to one another—each isolated in the fragments of her past. For another long and beautiful moment, three women sang as they knitted a coloured rug, quite disregarding a speech on the construction of the universe delivered by an astronomer who twirled an umbrella which flashed fairy-light stars and was hung with little balls of planets. Such visual excitement is strong and memorable poetry. As the evening ended, society lay dying too, in the shape of an inflated plastic map of Britain which was put in a chair, covered with a rug, and pronounced incurable. The vividness of such funny-sad images certainly make this a performance worth seeing, but I can't help feeling that *An Independent Woman* might have been a stronger piece if these fragments had been part of a more tightly-worked whole. ▲
CAS ROYDES



Natasha Morgan:
An Independent Woman

Donna Bernstein examines the origins of a much-degraded form of performance, and finds deep and powerful resonances from medieval Europe still thriving in corners of Andalusia. Describing how she contracted the Flamenco passion herself, she ponders the problems of bringing this spontaneous artform to audiences outside its natural setting.

PURE PASSION

The Re-discovery of Flamenco

People generally have wildly different ideas about what 'flamenco' actually is. Nobody whose experience of it is a folkloric ballet from Madrid, a tourist attraction with flounced skirts and castanets, can remotely imagine what it is to witness the raw power of flamenco *puro*. Gypsies, among the original exponents, don't use castanets anyway, and no flamenco artist would use them, their *pitás* (finger-clicking) being quite eloquent enough. And those whose contact with it is solely in nightclub tableaux, with their 'sexy' displays using a bit of arm and hip, and a few steps of flamenco, cannot imagine what power and sensuality the earthbound rawness flamenco *puro* has.

Because flamenco is a way of life, full of earthiness, truth, passion tenderness, love and suffering. It is the pain of a persecuted people rendered through complex and intricate music taken from half a dozen cultures. A life-experience more than a cultural artefact, this is what theatre was, in the beginning, when the bacchantes were taken over, for better and for worse, by the bacchic spirit, as in the remote tavernas in which much flamenco revelling still takes place under the influence of wine.

Although requiring great skill and precision, the greater half of flamenco lies in the *duende*—the trance-like precision which allows the artist to improvise and give something which is not merely formal. The closest thing to flamenco is jazz, not only in the similarity of some sequences and rhythmic patterns, but in the style and setting in which they take place. Jazz mostly developed in clubs where the spectators would respond and encourage the musicians, sometimes for hours before anything started happening. This happening is the *duende* of the flamencos. The spectators, in both cases, are participating and informed lovers of the art.

In fact flamenco is used as an adjective for anything with deep, raw qualities. It is not only those that sing, dance and play the guitar, but their whole setting, the people who assiduously frequent the fiestas, the neighbourhood in which they live, a person, of any origin that has that quality of feeling.

Flamenco is a passion which some people contract, and which becomes part of their life. The lovers of this art are literally *aficionados*. They are compulsive frequenters and connoisseurs of the art, and are known to cross half of Europe, or most of Spain, to hear a certain singer or guitarist. Most of them actually engage in the art in some fashion, dabbling in the guitar, trying a few steps, or singing some of their favourite songs. During a performance they will help the show along with encouraging sounds at the right time, or beat out *compas* (rhythmic hand-clapping).

The *aficionados* figure prominently in the history of flamenco. When flamenco went public, in 1850, and performances which had until then taken place only privately were taken into the *café cantantes* (singing cafes) and performed publicly and the artists were paid for the first time, the cafes filled with *aficionados* who demanded and got flamenco *puro*. When in the 50s flamenco degenerated into a sort of spectacle, with folk groups on the one side, and cheap nightclub entertainment on the other, it was the *aficionados*, most of them from abroad, who went to Spain in search of the authentic flamenco forms of which they had only heard. It was their search for real artists which brought the pure flamenco back into vogue.

The last to admit that flamenco has an artistic value are the Spanish themselves. Though practically all Spanish culture owes something to flamenco, it has a very bad reputation. It was for a long time associated with prostitution, crime, wine and gypsies. During the *café cantantes* period, the artists would gather in tavernas in between jobs, and these all had special rooms for *juergas* these being private parties of indeterminate length, often a whole night, and sometimes several days, where flamenco was performed and the wine flowed. These tavernas also had prostitutes for their clients, but the two businesses were in fact separate, even though it all happened under one roof.

Flamenco was originally the only means of expression of a persecuted people. It was born in the fugitive communities hiding from the Catholic persecution in the early 1500s. These were hiding in the mountain caves of Andalusia, and were mainly gypsies, Jews and Arabs, with a few rebel and dissident Christians. The gypsies had brought with them Egyptian, Indian and Byzantine influences which mingled with Arab and Jewish traditions to produce flamenco. The gypsies were masters of improvisation, and kept the tradition alive for centuries. Flamenco was performed in the cave dwellings and the goals, and there was no professional caste. People of varying degree of proficiency would improvise at private parties, or *juergas*. A *juerga* can last anything from 6 hours to three days, and they are typical gypsy parties with music and wine, and plenty of improvisation.

To this day flamenco is learned in the streets, from older people. It is transmitted by ear, and, given the complexities of the music and the rhythms, it is a wonder. Of all the conservatories in Andalusia, only one teaches flamenco, the one in Cordoba.

At the beginning of the century some enterprising café owners saw the commercial possibilities of flamenco, and installed flamenco *cuadros* (grouping of singers, guitarists and dancers) in their cafes. This

was the first time flamenco went 'public' and it caused a commotion. Now artists were for the first time paid for performing, and the performances were open to the public, albeit in the limited setting of the *cafe cantantes*. The cafes were brimming with aficionados whose standards were very high, and they got the best flamenco *puro*. This gave new impetus to the art and caused a flowering of talents the like of which was never to be repeated. It was called the golden age of flamenco.

The golden age did not last forever. Soon the fame of the cafes spread, and masses of coarse and uninformed public arrived to spoil the artistic standards. Cafe owners encouraged the *cuadros* to cater to these more popular and vulgar tastes, and while on the one hand flamenco was taken into large theatres, turned into a mixture of regional dance and flamenco, losing all but the name of flamenco, on the other hand the *cafe cantantes* died completely, and a cheap form of entertainment survived in the nightclubs only. Flamenco was practically dead as an art, and the older, authentic performers were disregarded and set aside.

It was only the persistence of the *aficionados* which dug them out in the 60s, and started a revival of the art which is continuing today. This complex and intricate musical form demands much both from performers and spectators. There is no doubt as to its artistic merit in terms of sheer technique and beauty, but, unlike other art forms in Europe which have become harmless, or purely formal, flamenco is still vibrant and refers to life, blood, love and death (the subject of most of its songs) in a very real, visceral sense. Flamenco falls into three main categories: *chicho*, which is entertaining and light, often comical; *medio*, of a more serious vein, and *jondo*, which is the more profound and difficult style. The great flamenco artist is endowed with *duende* that inspiration which illuminates his art and technique, and which, in a word, is the difference between fine mastery and a great art.

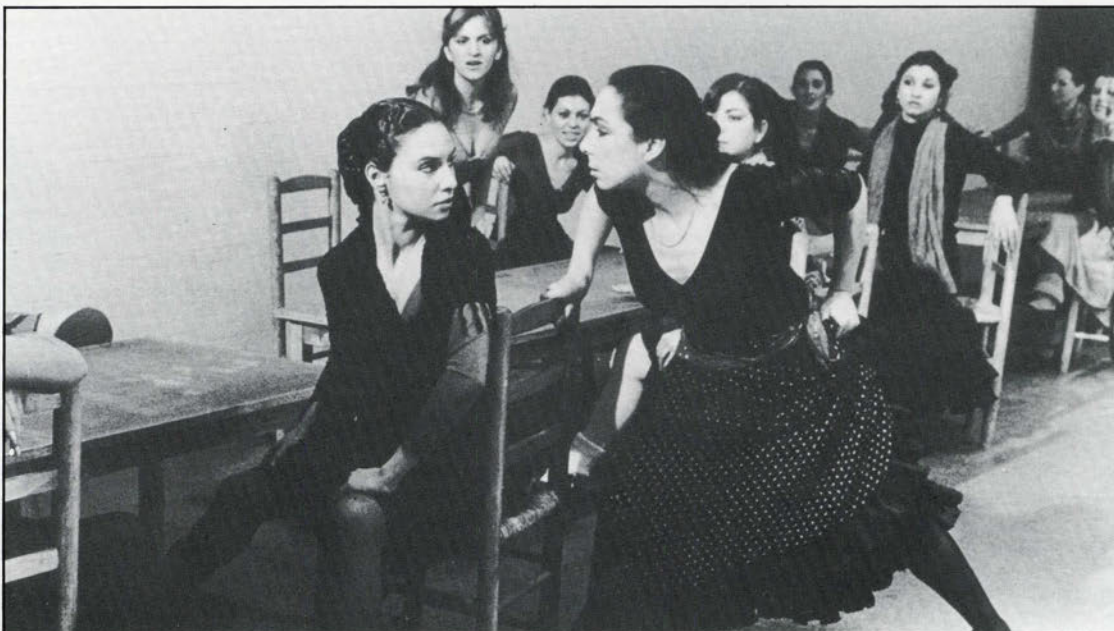
Every great artist leaves his mark on the traditional which has moulded him, and within the rigorous rhythmic construction there is great liberty to improvise. Besides the common factors with jazz, flamenco dancing can be compared to Hindu dance, in that they are the only two dances where instead of trying to escape gravity, the dancers stomp the earth, seem to delve deep into the ground, to beat it, caress it, to dialogue with it. In this way it is very different from any European dance form.

I first was struck by flamenco when I saw Mario Maya dance in Paris in 1980. Nothing I had ever seen in the theatre or dance world, had prepared me for *this*. The lighting was dismal, the theatrics shoddy, the group, as I later learned, had quarrelled just before going on stage, but the effect was electrifying. Nothing one could say could convey the surge of emotion at the end of the performance. A lot of people go backstage, and say 'thank you',—because what you received there was more than a theatre ticket could pay for; it was indeed a gift. The entire group was dressed in black and white, just to make the point that this wasn't any folklore group, and that what we were going to experience was not going to be 'pretty'. After that initiation I toured with the group for three years, as manager and agent.

Therefore, when I heard that there was going to be a biennial of flamenco I thought it was worth a look. The Biennial Festival of Flamenco was started in 1980 by the Cultural Council of the City of Sevilla, with the aim of enhancing the cultural qualities of flamenco and the intent of inscribing it among the more cultivated music festivals of the world.

I am not sure whether the world knows about it, but the Spaniards do, and if nothing else it will serve to give flamenco an official seal of approval that might make some of the more skeptical middle-class viewers look twice.

I asked Jose Luis Ortiz Nuevo, the director of the Festival how he could hope to make a full-scale international festival of so private an art form. Mr ▶



Carlos Saura's **Carmen**—A first taste of genuine Flamenco for film audiences



Mario Maya and Performers

Ortiz is an expert in flamenco, and currently writing a biography of the great dancer, 'El Cojo'. He spends his time combing Andalusia in the most unlikely corners, including the caves, looking for authentic 'jondo' talent. It is no easy job, but perhaps it is made bearable by his love for wine and tavernas. If you hang around long enough, something will happen. Something 'flamenco' in Andalusia.

He had to admit that many of the artists had to make a real effort to adapt to the changed conditions of performing on a platform to 500-2,000 people at a time, as opposed to the 20 or so present at a *juerga*. He says the 50 or so festivals which proliferate throughout the summer featured programmes lasting 6 to 8 hours, but the public couldn't take it, and half the audience left before the show was over. He sees this transition to the stage as the next step in the evolution of flamenco. I asked whether this wouldn't adulterate the art. He cited the example of flamenco going public in 1850, and appearing in the *café cantantes*. People then said it would be the death of flamenco, but far

Klaus Rabien

from languishing, the café era brought new vitality to the art, and flamenco adapted to the changed circumstances and flourished, entering its 'golden age'. Mr Ortiz feels sure that flamenco will adapt again, and evolve into a vigorous art form capable of surviving the twentieth century.

Some few artists of international repute have already attempted the transition, conscious of the wealth of their tradition, and of the demands of formal theatre. Their ambition is to make of flamenco an art form capable of competing alongside classical European forms of theatre. Among the most successful are Antonio Gades, with his fine sense of theatre, and with the aid of Saura's films *Blood Wedding* and *Carmen*, the most successful in popularising serious flamenco.

Mario Maya was the first to dispense with any folkloric trappings, in favour of its more austere attributes, and created powerful dance-dramas in flamenco style. He is an interpreter of the true *jondo* style, both as a dancer and choreographer. And Pepe Heredia from Granada, who worked with Mario on his first piece, and has lately put together a masterful 'wedding' between an Arab girl and a Spanish man, all told in Arabic and flamenco style. It was a stunning production with Arab musicians and flamenco artists, but the show collapsed for lack of funds.

The festival was opened by Mario Maya and his Flamenco Theatre. It took place in an expertly lit old medieval ruin, the cloisters of the monastery of San Jeronimo. The grounds themselves are covered in fine sand, and a buffet bar was set up in the garden. Most of the spectators arrived half an hour late, and took their time about going in. The first part was a dramatic version of Garcia Lorca's *Amargo*, told in dance and music. I was astonished to hear a running commentary from one of my neighbours, but I got the full impact of this phenomena the next day, for the more popular Habichuela family. *Amargo* is a tragic piece where the gypsy called 'bitterness' is taunted by love, death and childhood memories, in which death finally triumphs. Death is represented by a splendid horse-dancer. The colourful and virtuoso ensemble was impressive in coordination and timing. At one point the three male dancers dance together from a seated position, beating out the rhythmic patterns with their feet. The second part of the show is a straight flamenco sequence with performers appearing solo and in groups. The costumes are colourful but decorous, with none of the gaudy trappings of folkloric ensembles. Pilar Heredia treated us to an exceptionally fine solo, danced exclusively with her arms and waist, and Juana Amaya to a virtuoso *taranto*. She had already impressed us by her earthy, but impeccable style in the first half of the programme. Hers is the entirely natural sensuality of the older flamenco woman, even though she is still in her twenties. Among the men, Juan de los Reyes cuts a trim figure with a very individual style and polish, a worthy companion to Mario Maya's refined and nuanced footwork. It must have touched the public in a special way, because, inexplicably, they were all silent for once.

The next night was a different story. The public didn't stop coming and going during both halves of the programme. It was a constant movement, and it made it impossible to hear the finer moments of the excellent guitars. Entire families held court, shouting ▷

'ole' distractedly from time to time. Some would go out and return with a beer, others would come in, and others still would spot some friend across the auditorium, and try to make their way towards them, disturbing rows and rows of settled viewers.

In all fairness they were still for 'Tia Marina' which elicited a burst of applause and an encore. She cut an imposing and bizarre figure of undefinable age (over 80) from whose rotund depths issued the passionate, deep-felt, tremulous tones of the great flamenco singer. She was accompanied by Carlos Habichuela, of all the Habichuelas the most refined musician. Jos>e Menese's beautifully smooth voice created a pleasant contrast, and one suspects he could do rather well in an opera house. The noteworthy footwork of Ricardo El Veneno could not sustain the lack of style of this, the only dancer of the evening. The performance ended with a very enjoyable Bulerias played out by the entire company, when many of the musicians had a go at dancing.

It remains to be seen whether flamenco, so little understood in northern Europe, will survive the transition to touring. For the moment it seems to be a bit of an embarrassment for most of these artists to perform outside their setting. The best flamenco is still found at private fiestas, in bars and caves of Andalusia, and especially in Jerez, Granada and Sevilla. And flamenco is still 'happening' in the small, poor, villages of Andalusia where it is still the principal form of entertainment, despite the great proliferation

of TV antennas. Wherever a group of people come together, there is a bottle of wine, and soon the hands start clapping, and somebody begins to sing, another becomes inspired to dance, and one after another they catch fire.

But touring demands a discipline and a group spirit which is unheard of in flamenco circles. Its very strength might prove to be its most fatal weakness.

There is nothing more difficult than organising a professional group of performers out of inspired anarchists. The mention rehearsals, tax payments, contracts, obligations, is like speaking a different tongue. I have seen many groups come together and fall apart, some splendid dancers go to seed, young talents come to nothing. Flamencos are paid by the evening, and live by the evening. They have no concept of monthly contracts or group discipline. If they work with an inspired and disciplined choreographer, they find the public at their feet, and begin to think that if they are so well received they must be worth a lot of money. They have no concept of a long-term career and the haggling over money and pride in reflected glory are their undoing. Sad to say, the most cultured members are also the ones with less *duende*, and this peculiar inspired art is at its best consumed locally.

Tia Marina, like many of the artists in the festival who are working people for the rest of the time, has probably gone back to selling lottery tickets in some square in Granada. ■

Mario Maya and Performers



An extraordinarily prolific multi-media and performance artist, Rose Garrard has become one of the few of this type to get a measure of establishment support. From the screening of her *Pandora's Box* video on TV South West to being purchased by the Tate and a recent major show at the ICA, Garrard is apparently at the peak of her powers, overflowing with energy, images and ideas. While acknowledging a link with the 'Old Mistresses' of antiquity she rejects automatic categorisation as a 'feminist artist'. Yet her views are uncompromising and fast and furious. *Liz Rideal* appraises a diverse stream of ideas.

FROM MYTH TO REALITY

A Profile of Rose Garrard

'I want to re-work, re-claim, re-discover, re-appropriate . . . to find new ways of using and creating images of men and women that come from the values of women, and the fantasies of women—and one day to know that the expression of a female sensibility is not only understood, but regarded to be of equal value'.

This statement encapsulates Garrard's attitude towards the production of multi-media artworks recently shown at the ICA. In a conversation held at her studio a couple of weeks after the opening, she spoke about the significance of the press release and how each had changed slightly with each venue of the touring show. The work being shown in the ICA exhibition had resulted mainly from her stay as artist in residence at Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery, and having been produced within that type of situation, it was work that she was obliged to talk about with the general public as it evolved.

'It had to be consciously "verbalisable" and, as the tour has progressed, so the information on the press statements has changed. My private situation on taking the residency was vulnerable. There is a whole side to the work that I am resisting talking about (this time). It's of tremendous personal value of course; I know about the depth of emotion that exists in the work, but felt that this time it was unnecessary to go into this publicly, and yet what has intrigued me over the last few months is that the press has almost turned full circle, becoming critical of my resistance to divulge the personal side of the work. And

consequently it has had more difficulty in relating to it. The lack of statements has stopped them seeing the work. I think literalness exists in the work, that's in the nature of where it was born from, on a practical level; the other half of where it was born from is very far from being described in words, and certainly the tilted tables and the double beds have a direct relation to my private life. I hoped that people would take in this first set of very obvious clues, with their obvious references, which are from the Birmingham City Art Gallery Collection, and then dig away and find all sorts of other levels. I do fervently believe in that work, and for me it was a great leap forward, in questioning and coming to terms with all sorts of difficulties. For me the whole of that show is about the need of man for woman and woman for man, despite all the questioning that has gone on and has to go on and the changes that have to take place. Essentially, and in agreement with what you were saying at the start of our conversation, feminism has shifted, has acknowledged a broadening from the very real original angered response and polarisation of women's feelings; it now encompasses a vast number of women who have relationships with men, or who want to have these relationships and are finding that increasingly difficult. That's what intrigues me at the moment, the need for compassion and love, the things that women value, exactly the things that are not valued within a professional career, those are still the things one shouldn't talk about. Not to mention babies.

The show is really to do with the acknowledgement of the separation of man and woman. Each table has one figure, male or female likewise with the bed, there is thus a question-mark about whether there is the possibility, if one moves beyond those sorts of mythologies, of those sorts of stereotypes of actually having a genuine sort of reconciliation in a real relationship that allows both partners to have a very open choice of fulfilment. I don't know whether it's possible, it's an immensely difficult task for both sides. I think that women out of necessity have taken that task on, but we are unrewarded for the position that we've ended up in; men are still being rewarded for maintaining their position. We need a shift on the other side. There will be no shift in male conditioning without a motive, and a need. There is therefore a sadness in the work. There is within the bedspread piece a summarisation of a number of female role models which are created by a male history. Woman is eternally condemned for the fall of man, and yet really this is what he created, wants her to be; the eternal temptress, the eternally condemned, the eternal reason that he doesn't take on responsibility for his own action. There is always someone else to blame, and that seems to me to be such a deception, and I think that women have seen this and how it inhibits their role and now can delight in countering that condition by enjoying being or not being the temptress. Men haven't yet actually been able to come to terms with this. I constantly hear from women who are their own 'mistresses', that is,



women who have taken hold of their lives, who are doing what they want to do, that they are constantly attracted to men who are afraid of having a relationship because the woman is in so much control of herself. This seems to me to be an immensely sad situation to have occurred—that male conditioning is making men afraid of the active female'.

This extended quotation has the effect of proving Rose Garrard to be in control of her 'verbalisation'. It is a necessity, indeed a prerequisite for any type of public recognition of art forms; this capacity is in addition to inherent talent and being in 'the right place at the right time'. The syndrome of having somehow to define a performance artist becomes beautifully irrelevant with regard to Rose Garrard. She is an artist; one that performs, makes videos, takes photographs, makes sculpture, paints pictures and writes scripts in addition to working in a more poetic vein. Happily barriers between subject areas are beginning to fall, and Garrard's work in the area of 'anti-labelling' has surely influenced some attitudes.

The ICA catalogue talks about the creation of an 'enigmatic and provocative environment',

making the artist's work seem a little like a fine art circus ground, but Garrard is no John Maybury, her concerns are deadly serious and refer us (as she has stated) back to the knotty old problem of *that apple* and women's generosity as opposed to man's innate greediness. At the ICA we encounter fine art in the form of reworked paintings, and the transmutation of traditional 'fine art' subject matter transposed into coloured plaster; Trad meets Art meets Bible meets Video and a video installation inducts us prior to our entrance into the main showing arena. The show was divided into three areas; firstly the aforementioned videos: *A Private View*, *Between the Lines*, *'Between Ourselves'*; these summed up Garrard's earlier work, then the main space containing the more 'formal' artworks, and finally an installation in a darkened room. This last section of the show was the most exciting and provocative in terms of statement: here we had a fusion of ideas within environment and a consolidation of these with the media used (lots of plaster Madonnas, some *trompe l'oeil* and another video piece). The main space before the darkened 'finale' was more

suggestive of a backdrop, the stage set for a performance but the artist was missing, only her form in the shape of a blank white silhouette visible. The plaster figure who spanned the Adam and Eve painted bedpiece, connecting them to the knowledge of the opened books, via the pierced golden frame—this sleeping man had all the feel of a lumpy George Segal work, in particular *Legend of Lot* (1966. Col. Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld) doubtless because of the Old Testament reference, but also because of the dramatic tension embodied in this life-sized coarsely constructed plaster figure. This 'Bedspread' is a mixture of the personal and political, the self constructed myth and the inherited myth (for are memories true?).

Garrard disavows the title 'feminist artist' (please note, Tate Gallery) and the idea that she is fighting a cause. Her work is concerned with the business of questioning labels and categorisations. Feminism for her is 'a method of enquiry'. 'It's identical to creative enquiry in other areas.' She is aware of the double edge of a feminist stance in the '80s and confesses her fear that feminism has created the fixed image/notion of the feminist; the one who wears flat shoes and sports a brisk haircut. This 'no-nonsense' image of the feminist is refuted by Garrard, her red nail varnish being one method of provoking attention (the irony of the 'hands that do dishes' plastercasts . . .) and throws into question the whole range of preconceptions that people can possess about the nature of her work, reinforcing her point about labelling.

'If something is meaningful, maybe it's more meaningful said ten times' (Eva Hesse with reference to her serial work *Addendum* 1967). Garrard's almost fanatical useage of repeat formula in varying but linked media recalls this statement, her work naturally is very different, but the comparison with Hesse is relevant when one considers how many twentieth-century women artists make serial work. The reclaiming of 'lost' works by female artists is essential in terms of a feminist art-historical ▷

**Window:Reclaim.
Model by Woman
Artist**

standpoint, it is generally acknowledged that until quite recently, most critics and art historians have been male, and thus automatically unaware of their prejudices vis-à-vis recognising female artists.

Garrard's work is therefore a positive step forward in the recognition of a few, it also ensures her position as artist in the 'family' of artists. A major work reclaimed is Artemisa Gentileschi's allegorical self-portrait *La Pittura* (painted 1630 Coll. Hampton Court). Gentileschi wears a gold chain symbolising for Garrard the links between generations of artists. She becomes the female painters' role model: paint brush in her right hand palette in her left, handing down the tradition of painting; the golden chain with mask suspended being an attribute of the muse of painting. The very choice of this particular work is significant, not only is it now one of the most popularly quoted seventeenth century female self-portraits, it is the artist painting herself (i.e. the model) as the allegory of *La Pittura*. Thus artist is technician and conceptualiser: controller of both disciplines, creative and practical. Furthermore, this work first attained twentieth century recognition between the elegant

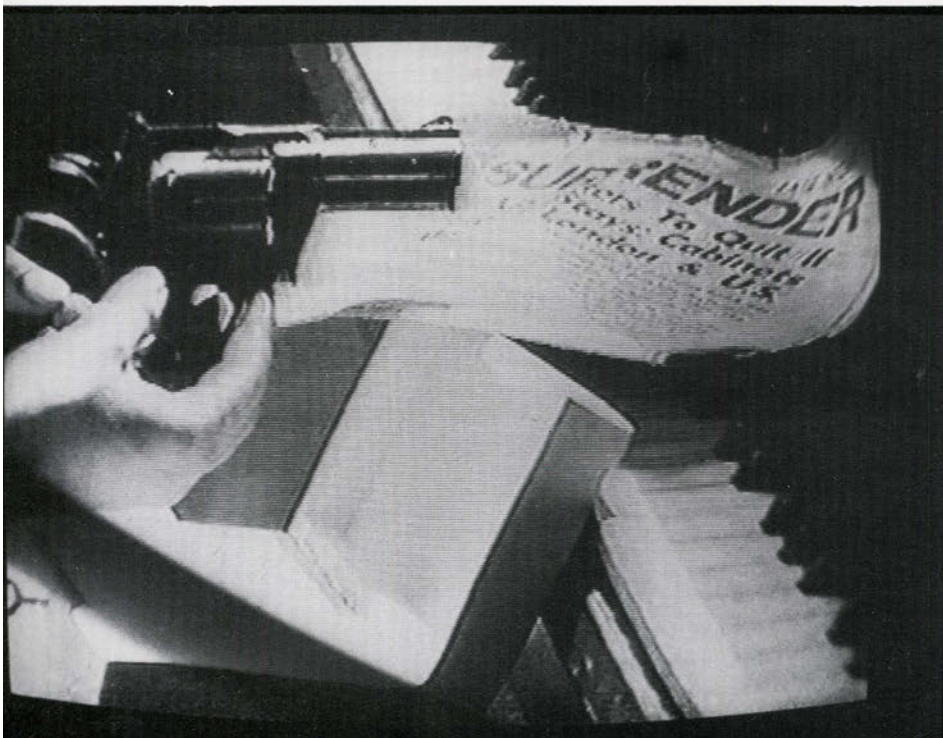
covers of the *Burlington Magazine*. Michael Levey (Director of the National Gallery) writes 'Perhaps the picture's real intention would have been earlier recognised had it been painted by a man', a reference to the fact that it had not been noticed that this work was by a competent artist who happened to be juggling with the artist/model/allegory sandwich. Certainly a painting work reclaiming.

One of the satisfying aspects of Rose Garrard's work is that she is dealing with the myths that are the reality of our twentieth-century living, the legacy of the story of Pandora, is one that women in the 80s are still trying to work through. She speaks of the luxury that women of the future will enjoy; one of working in the neutrality of space that male artists currently occupy—that is, of not having to constantly recontextualise imagery but being free to work in totally open territory. Garrard's own subject matter is diversifying somewhat, but is still concerned with the nature of the role of women in our changing society, and how their continued emancipation has affected their own expectations of life and those of their male counterparts. She is refreshingly aware of the

importance of 'female infiltration' into traditional male domains, in particular with regard to the female artist, the importance of a continuing stream of women in definitive positions who are capable of making exhibitions that give women fair representation. She says that she is the first to admit to her own unconscious prejudice against women artists, giving the example that if one should ask her to name the ten best women 'sculptors' working in England today, she would have immense difficulty, but not so naming the ten best male sculptors. Thus she draws attention to the unconscious bias that exists within us all, and the necessity for re-education right across the board, not only of male values but of both male and female.

Garrard's bird of hope hovers in and out of her work: what she is proclaiming is not a return to war and a separatist existence, but rather a coming together, a re-definition of values and an attempt at a new pathway between the sexes that will not be a dilution of attitude, nor a denial but a mutual reinterpretation and respect. This will take years, she says, generations (drawing swiftly on examples of when female artists have had success and promptly been forgotten). There has to be a motive for male attitudes to change, a carrot. Garrard states that she feels attitudes are evolving, slowly but surely. Her certainty with regard to male change is unusual and encouraging for those of little faith, but what is important and worth noting is this: the acceptance by the establishment proves the point that she is making. The showing of her work is a formalisation of her statements and the production of a catalogue a seal of approval and safety in the art historical archive. The purchase of a piece of work by the Tate, the residency at Birmingham, the consequent tour from Ikon around the country, with time spent at the ICA, not to mention the Venice Biennale. All this constitutes a summing up of accumulative and varied competition winning that puts her firmly on the list of the top ten female sculptors working and showing in England today. ■

Still from *Between the Lines*



DON'T MISS



*The **BRITISH ART SHOW** starts its peregrination across Britain in Birmingham in November/December. (Note it will not come to London) Performance events include, November 2-3 at Ikon Steven Taylor Woodrow's **TRIPTYCH BALLET** (also at City Art Gallery, Alastair Maclennan, **BURIED ALIVE**, a 24 hour non-stop performance/installation, and also at Ikon on December 15, Rose Finn-Kelcey's **ELEVATION**. At the City Art Gallery on November 3, Station House Opera's **SEX AND DEATH**, on November 10, Bruce McLean giving a demonstration/lecture and on December 1, Anthony Howell's **TABLE MOVES 1 AND 11**. Info on 021 643 0808 (Ikon) or 021 235 2839 (Museum)*

NEWS— Alastair Snow, former performance organiser at South Hill part, and a performance artist himself, has moved to Swindon to breathe life into the studio activities of the Wyvern Theatre. Kicking off with an Evening of Performance Artworks on November 9, Korean performance artist Da Wu Tang is followed by the spectacular Bow Gamelan

Ensemble performing in the city centre precinct, with a finale performance by Snow himself in 'Bubbles' Wine Bar. Swindon will never be the same again. INFO 0793 26161.

MORE NEWS— London Video Arts have opened a new space in Soho (23 Frith St) where, as well as video screenings and installations, live work will take place. Their first season is devoted to narratives and performances on video, and includes work by Rose Garrard (**BETWEEN THE LINES**), Zoe Redman (**THE STORY OF JUNE**), Lydia Schouten (**ROMEO IS BLEEDING**), Rose Finn-Kelcey (**GLORY**), Peter Anderson and Steve Littman, (*Bloodgroup's* **DIRT**), and Mineo Ayamaguchi's (**INNER COLOUR.**) Programmes throughout November, phone for details and full list of showings, **LVA ON 01 734 7410**

BEST OF THE REST: Don't miss TNT's **CABARET FAUST** (November 8-10), and Suzy Gilmour Co.'s **THE OBSERVATION TOWER** (November 30) at the Midland Group Nottingham, (**0602 582636**) Denis Masi/Michael Sandle/Deanna Petheridge installation and sculpture **GEOMETRY OF RAGE**, (until November 18) and Lumiere and Son's **BRIGHTSIDE** (See ICA, December 4-8) at Arnolfini, Bristol (**0272 299191**), IOU's Christmas residency (December 3-22) at Chapter, Cardiff (**0222 396061**) and a performance collaboration between Graham Dean and Darshan Buller, **NO GO ZONE**, (December 18-21) at The Place, London (01 387 0161).

Announcements: The Pan Project is running a two-week workshop project at the Commonwealth Institute aiming to introduce to performers 'some of the major non-European "total theatre" and dance-theatre styles.' (December 7-23, Info on **01 836 1477**)

K 18 is a former factory Hall in Kassel, home of Documenta, and is to be the host to two exploratory exhibitions in 1985 and 1986 examining the virtues of 'collaboration'. Paying particular attention to work uniting more than one discipline, it invites submissions from artists from any medium, including performance. Further info from H. el Attar, Hans Leistikowstr. 18, 35 Kassel. W. Germany

Roberta Graham's
L'Ange Dechu
(Fallen Angel)

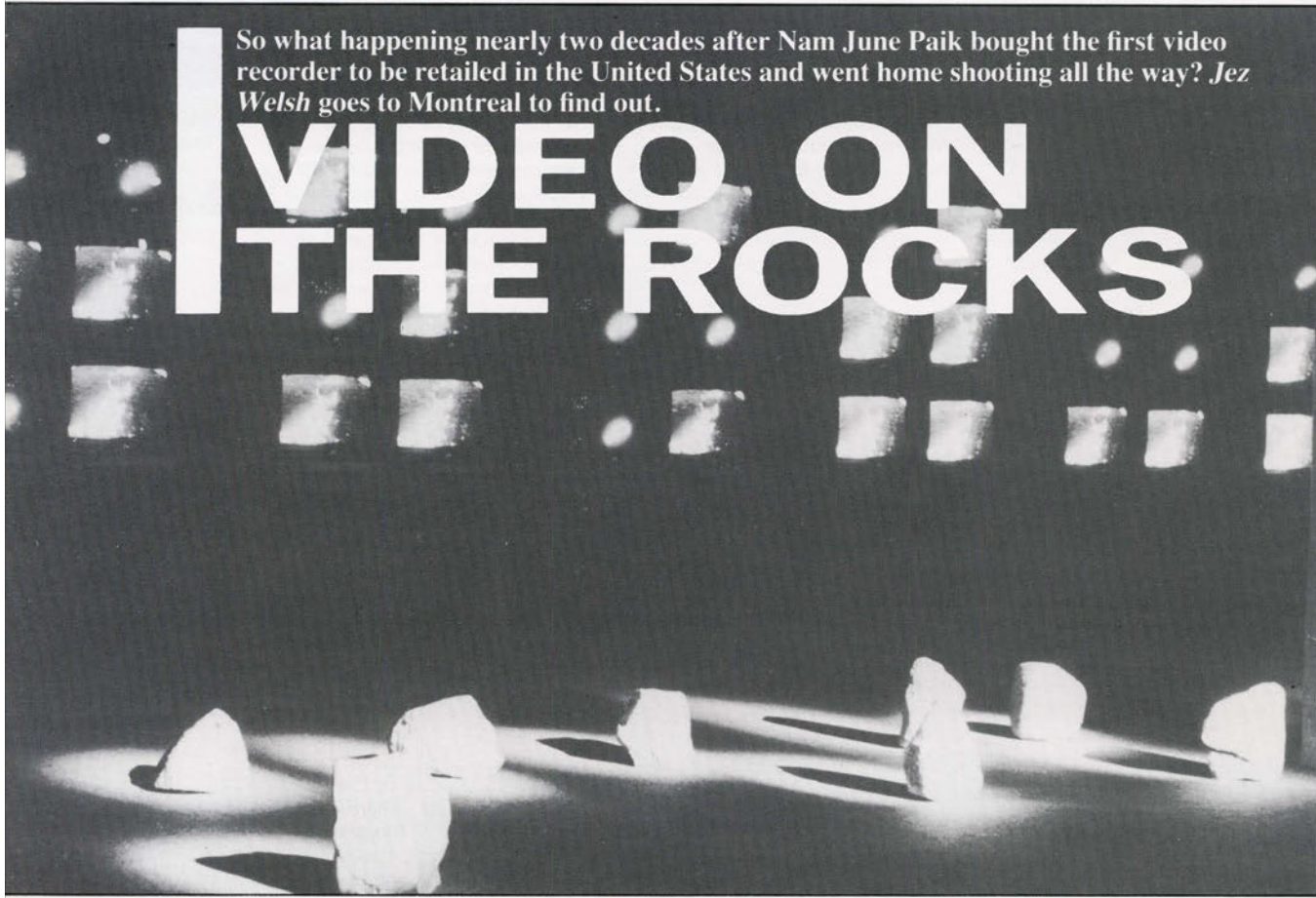
Rose English—
Coming to the Zap

More Listings on page 44

Sholeh Farnsworth

So what happened nearly two decades after Nam June Paik bought the first video recorder to be retailed in the United States and went home shooting all the way? *Jez Welsh* goes to Montreal to find out.

VIDEO ON THE ROCKS



Medusa by Gerald Minkoff

1984 has been the year of the video festival, and Canada has been the host country of several of these international jamborees, including the British/Canadian Video Exchange whose most reported moment was the seizure of several British tapes from A-Space gallery, Toronto, by officials of the Ontario censor board.

Video 84 was one of the most ambitious projects to date, featuring installations by seventeen artists in seven galleries, a week of screenings with national selections from eleven countries, and a three day symposium on the theme 'Problems of description in Video Art', with guest speakers from each participating country. It would be impossible to attempt to cover the whole event, so I have chosen to look specifically at the installations and to consider a few works, and some of the issues raised.

I will just mention in passing that the Japanese tapes were a delight and a revelation, the conference was at turns challenging and frustrating, and

that Nam June Paik can never be extricated from mythology.

EDWARD MUYBRIDGE GOES TO THE OLYMPICS

So commented a friend upon Italian critic Vittorio Faggione's description of an installation in the basement of a palace in Venice, in which a swimmer passes around the room, from one TV set to another, perfectly synchronised. One could not fail to be impressed by the technical sophistication, or effected by the sheer beauty of the piece, but can such a work be any more than a technical exercise. (This was a festival of one-liners, usually provoked by installations, of anecdotes and mythologies.)

As I stood in the gallery at the *Universite de Quebec a Montreal*, confronting (or confronted by) an intimidating array of monitors—thirty-six in blocks of six along a wall—a friend commented 'The only difference between this and a TV showroom is the rocks'. The work, by Swiss artist Gerald Minkoff, indeed included rocks, sixteen of them, lit by sixteen

white spotlights, picked up by camera and relayed to sixteen TV monitors, the other thirty showing other images. To discern precisely the relationship between the elements it was necessary to read an accompanying text though this in itself made oblique, semi-mystical and rather baffling assertions. Later, in a bar, someone told me that the artist had described the piece to her, which made it much easier to understand. However, the personal explanation is not on offer to the casual viewer, so we must look at the work from that viewpoint, and two problems are immediately raised, which recur throughout the exhibition. Firstly, why use so many TV monitors? Is their use necessary to an understanding of the work? Is such material indulgence justifiable? And secondly, does the work make itself apparent, does it deliver—or even possess—a message, a discernible point? The first question I shall return to later, the second is a starting point from which to look at a few of the installations more closely. Impossible to consider them all,

J. Welsh

but let's isolate a few that seemed to 'work' and find out why.

The immediate delivery of its essence to the casual viewer is essential to the installation. If the work seems obscure, diffuse, directionless, then the chances of the non-specialist taking time to find out what's happening are remote. The successful video installation does two vital things; it unfolds upon first encounter, it draws the viewer in, then it carries him/her along as it elaborates upon its point(s). This second attribute is, for me, a qualification of the first: there are those installations that have an immediate impact, that arouse or amuse, but which simply repeat, variegate without developing textually. The result leaves a hollow, unsatisfied feeling, as in the case of Michel Jaffrenou's *Video Circus*, an example of stunning technique, a well managed illusion, but somehow facile, its effect in the end no more and possibly less, than what it represents.

In sharp contrast, the technical simplicity and sculptural elegance of Barbara Steinman's work spoke volumes. *Chambres a louer* (rooms for rent) gave us a world we could recognise instantly. The cheap room, the window on the world. In a large, darkened space, we are confronted by two life size tableaux, and beyond, two miniature 'maquettes' of the same. In each tableaux a white-draped chair is positioned before a window, and beneath each window, a large iron radiator. The window is partially obscured by a venetian blind, but through the slits of the lower part, we see a view, a video recording of a landscape, while shafts of coloured light penetrate the room from the upper section of the window. We choose between the two rooms, the two views offered, sit in the chair and begin to watch. It is, of course, much like looking through any window, we do not exert any control over what happens, things come and go before our eyes. Every two minutes the view changes, the framing changes from close-up to wide shot, evoking a hundred variations on the theme of the familiar view, awakening memories of being in rooms like this, staring through the window at a brick wall, a tree, a bus stop.

The scenes we observe are almost entirely unpopulated—or depopulated—the effect an echo of alienation, not so much painful as numbing. The longer we spend looking 'through' these windows, the greater the power of the work to subvert our perceptual faculties. Observed at the opening of the show: A woman sat looking at the window for several minutes, then walked up to it and peered sideways through the glass to observe that part of the view obscured by the edge of the window frame.

The re-presentation of the familiar and a gentle manipulation of our perception of it characterised a number of works. Dalibor Martinis' *HMS GOODBYEHALLOO* is a voyage. The installation is boat-shaped, at each side ten monitors show us the sea rushing by. In front and back—stern and bow, but I don't know the difference—we see views, one approaching, the other receding into the distance; where we are going and where we have been. In this instance, both are the same, and instantly recognisable, Manhattan seen from the water. The journey is a literal record of a ride on the Staten Island ferry, but it is also a gently ironic musing on the whole idea of the journey, our obsession with travel, our constant striving for 'the other'. In this story we are always leaving or arriving, never 'being there'. The structure is transparent, the nature of the piece immediately apparent, but it carries us along delivering small surprises, variations.

Sudden shifts of viewpoint reverse the continuity of process; coming is going and going is coming; Texts are used to evoke exchanges that might take place between fellow travellers, and these fragments of dialogue refer back to the central theme of the piece. As a trumpet is indistinctly heard among the noises of engines and rushing water, we read; 'Why are you playing a trumpet?—Because I'm arriving in New York.—But we just left New York.—Then, my friend we are not in the same boat'.

GROWING RICE IN THE SAME PADDY FIELD FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS IS TECHNOLOGY

was the title of Fujiko Nakaya's paper on Japanese video. She presented us with the image of a unified culture whose essence was transmitted from old to new, she refuted the conflict between nature and technology that exists in the west. Japan never had an industrial revolution; the Japanese are not afraid of technology; technology is a way of getting along better with nature; the Japanese perception of time is non-linear, non sequential; the law of perspective was invented in Renaissance Europe; Multiple viewpoint is the Japanese norm. Through her delivery she sought both to describe or explain the cultural context of the Japanese video works, and also to dissociate it from the precepts of Western culture.

In Keigo Yamamoto's installation we are asked to



The Mythology of Paik

Journal of the Plague Year
by Stuart Marshall

participate, not only in the event itself, but also metaphorically in the culture it represents. We are faced with two monitors, each showing a blank red screen. One set is placed on top of the other, and before this construction stands a red wooden platform, upon it a pair of wooden Japanese sandals. Upon pressing a remote control button, the tape starts running and on one screen, a pair of feet appears, wearing the sandals. We put on the footwear offered, step onto the platform and try to follow the movements on screen, seeing our own movements on the second screen, watching and responding, trying to match step for step, sound for sound, trying not to fall over in the unfamiliar shoes. The walk lasts a short while then ends, at no particular point, but it is a different coming and going, not the same as the one experienced in Dalibor Martinis' installation.

Elsewhere in her talk, Fujiko Nakaya described TV: 'TV is the Bonsai of reality', everything is reproduced in miniature.

In Stuart Marshall's piece *A Journal of The Plague Year 1984* we find a different view of television, of the ways in which the media function. Marshall's concern is the media reportage of AIDS, the effect of this upon the gay community's perception of itself, the use of disease, or fear of disease, as social control. On five small screens, each presented as a hole in the wall, in five separate alcoves, we are presented with five views, five strands, a mixture of media 'fact' and subjective fiction/recollection. In each alcove, around the aperture that reveals the TV screen, texts have been drawn on the wall in pencil, a graphic extension of the electronic message, a concretisation and a series of clues to the reading of the information we are presented with. This is a complex and serious work that deserves a far deeper analysis than can be given here. It is also a radical video installation, not only in terms of its explicitly political content, but also in its formal construction. It does not rely on seductive perceptual trickery, it does not purport to be sculpture, either by reference or extension, it does

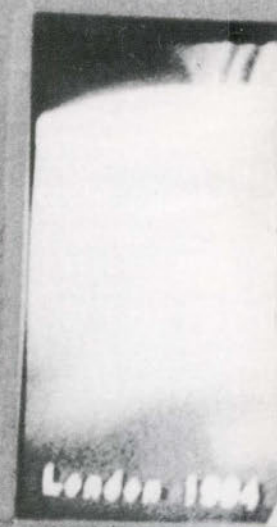
not rely on simple multiplication for impact, but it offers several particular viewpoints that we must consider for ourselves in order to make a coherent reading of the text. In his writings on video, Stuart Marshall has spoken of a quality of 'intertextuality'; here he adopts it as a structural principle of the work.

A CAPITALIST ART

As mentioned earlier, one of the questions immediately raised by many installations is that of numbers; Why so much, so many? and; What does this cost? Over a period of eight days, attending numerous openings, I lost count of the number of TV monitors scattered around Montreal's art galleries. After a morning at the conference in which speakers had consistently appraised video works in purely aesthetic terms, in which installation had been posited as the means by which video art could exist within the museum context, the point was made by a dissenting voice in the audience: these works are extremely expensive to make; to be shown they require considerable technical resources—multiple monitors, multiple vcr's computer control systems, advanced video editing, etc. Thus, these works can only exist within a culture of surplus value, they are inherently an expression of capitalist ideology, regardless of their particular content. The argument was quickly suppressed—it happened conveniently to be lunch time—but was taken up enthusiastically outside the conference hall, in cafes and bars. It was becoming apparent that far from being an oppositional practise (though its distance from TV is not in question) video installation was in fact being used as a tool of appropriation by wealthy museums. The installation, whatever its ephemeral qualities, whatever its 'content' in terms of information, is reducible to object-status. Regardless of whether the piece 'works' in self referential terms, or whether it possesses qualities of beauty (which many do) we can not dissociate it from a context within which the real issues are politically defined, who controls

J. Welsh

KIL



access to the tools of production and distribution? Who controls the means by which work reaches a public or a potential public? The museum curators, of course, have museums to fill, constraints to work within, and they operate in an art world once again dominated by the trade in objects. Take a walk around the Lower East Side, visit all those galleries that have sprouted in the past year, and watch the money change hands.

Video exists in a complex web of relations between the art world, television, popular culture and society. We, the video community (international) are not immune to the pressure exerted by these various forces. We exist in a state of contradiction.

THE MYTHOLOGY OF NAM JUNE PAIK

Throughout the conference, Paik's status as Godfather/Patron Saint/Inventor of video art was

being constantly challenged and reinstated. While some sought to deconstruct the Paikian myth, others simply put more layers on the onion. On the last night of the festival, a show of Paik opened at a private gallery. (All of the other exhibits were in public museums or artist-run spaces.) Everyone went to the opening. The proprietors threw a wobbler. Who are all these people? What is Video 84? Tempers were lost. Insults were exchanged. Glasses were broken. The entire festival contingent—aside from those refused admission in the first place—was ejected from the premises. The wealthy Anglo-Canadians of Montreal were left undisturbed in contemplation of Paik's paintings of TV colour bars. Later, at a mass farewell dinner, stories began circulating; Paik had been so incensed at the treatment of the video crowd that he broke glasses against the walls; he called the gallery owner a cultural imperialist; he stormed

out of the building and refused to go back.

Video 84 was a big, exciting, ambitious project. The organiser, André Duchaine, can be satisfied that it achieved its express intention; to facilitate a meeting of diverse opinions, uses of and priorities for the medium. I thoroughly enjoyed the talking, the spectacle and the broad range of work, the rumours, the one liners and the anecdotes. True stories: At an installation opening, the work has been completed literally seconds before the public arrives. Everything is held together with gaffer tape. There's tape everywhere, but the installation is running. Someone goes up to the artist and says 'I really like your tape'. Then there's the famous sculptor who uses neon in minimalist constructions. At the private view, one guest remarks to another 'Y'know, I like everything about this work except the lights.' ■



The recent residency by installation artist Denis Masi at the Imperial War Museum, and attempts by many other artists to get to grips with the issues of violence, power, and the links with sexual desire led *Gray Watson* to investigate and analyse their work.

INSIGHTS IN THE SHADOW OF WAR

WE ARE THE PROBLEM

I should like to begin with a very basic proposition: so far as we know, the only serious threat to the human species or to the Earth as a whole comes from the human species itself. It is we, as we are at present constituted, who are the problem.

More specifically, we are the problem in respect of two factors whose intersection could prove fatal: on the one hand, the sophistication of our technology; on the other, the childishness of many of our inherited structures of thought, values and feeling.

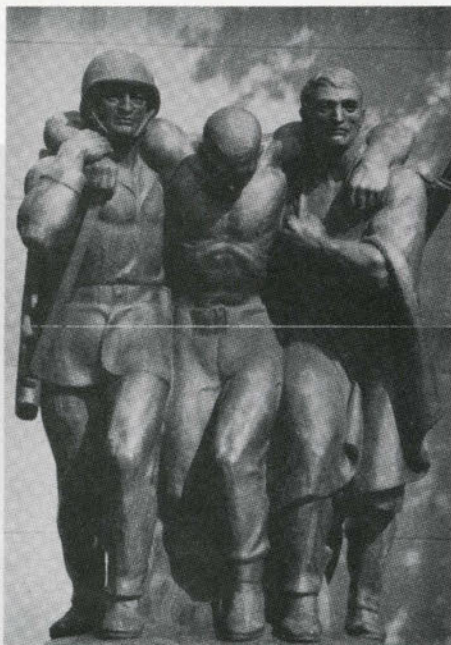
At the first level, this is a question of ends and means. To what uses shall technology be put? Modern technical expertise is sufficient, for the first time in history, either to destroy most living things on the

planet or, given appropriate planning of population and resources, to free all mankind not only from starvation and physical deprivation but also from irksome and unfulfilling work. (It is an appalling indictment that, of these two extreme options, it is probably the latter which seems more far-fetched to most people today.)

At this level, then, there is nothing wrong with technology as such; rather, what needs to be interrogated is human motivation. To some, the key is simple: greed and material self-interest. But, while the conflict of material interests—between individuals, nations and classes—is undoubtedly real, it is not the whole story. It does not explain, for example, the type of willing adherence accorded by majorities to value systems which benefit only minorities or the widespread adherence by people in all sorts of circumstances to value systems which, materially, benefit nobody at all.

Only an understanding of what can loosely be called the *irrational or unconscious* side of politics—i.e. the irrational or unconscious side of human nature, as it has been constituted in nature—is of any use here. And in this respect conventional political thinking,

Jean Marc Prouveur's
*Dolce Et Decorum Est
Pro Patria Mori*



DULCE ET DECORUM EST PRO PATRIA MORI



stemming as it does from Enlightenment assumptions, remains hopelessly inadequate. A far more subtle and complex picture of human nature is required. But the complexity does not stop there.

At the next level, it is the distinction between ends and means (or motivations and uses) which must itself be called into question. To speak of technology as neutral is ultimately an abstraction, since it too has its origins in human history. Heidegger has convincingly argued that the roots of technology in the modern sense lie in ancient Greek thought; and that, embedded within the modern technological enterprise itself, is a certain fundamental way of orientating ourselves towards the world which we have inherited from the Greeks and which is so deeply ingrained in our culture that it is invisible to us. And yet this fundamental orientation towards the world, which technology presupposes and which we automatically take for granted, is one which could if Heidegger is right, constitute the greatest danger of all.

THE PART OF ART

To face up to the realities of the present predicament requires, therefore, going far beyond commonsense and conventional thinking, and gaining some truly radical insights *both* into human motivation (as it operates in the public-historical-political sphere, as well as in the personal) *and* into the true significance of the technological adventure of which we are a part.

How are such insights to be gained?

One way is undoubtedly through theoretical disciplines such as anthropology, psychoanalysis, linguistics, etc., and, above all, through inter-disciplinary cross-fertilisations.

The other, and closely related, way is through art. No human activity, it seems to me, is better placed than art to investigate both human irrationality and the nuances of meaning which evade normal rationalising consciousness. In that it is not called upon to *explain*, it can allow the phenomena to appear in all their ambiguity. It can provide hints and clues and thereby stimulate the creative imagination of the spectator.

Contemporary Western art is, furthermore, in a position of unique freedom. In this it is the heir of the Romantic movement and of the successive avant-gardes of modern art; which in turn were responding to the severe crisis of faith in both spiritual and temporal authority which began at the end of the eighteenth century (symbolised by the French Revolution) and which has deepened ever since. No longer tied to a specific world-view, art has been able to explore previously forbidden territories and wrest insights which would previously have been inconceivable.

Of course, this is only true in principle. In practice, the freedom which art has gained from Romanticism onwards has been accompanied by an ever-widening breach with its potential public. Art has become increasingly alienated not only from the majority of people but also from the most powerful and influential sections of society. This is why the word 'elitist' is misleading. Art does not cater for a genuine elite; if it did, it might be undemocratic but at least it might have some effect. As it is, it is reduced to a harmless

hobby for a few enthusiasts, one (leisure) specialisation amongst others.

The vastly valuable hints and clues which avant-garde art has provided, and continues to provide, are not taken up and *used* to help develop and refine new and more appropriate ways of understanding our contemporary predicament. The existing, dominant, commonsense world-view is protected from any fundamental challenge by art, by the fact that the aesthetic realm is regarded as totally distinct both from the scientific-cognitive and from the practical-political. Art, in short, has been marginalised.

THE CONTEXT OF WAR

Everything said so far applies to 'art' in the broadest sense, including literature, the performing arts and, in fact, 'the arts' in general. Restricting ourselves now, however, to painting, sculpture and those forms which have derived from them (photo-collages, tape-slide work, installations, etc.), we may say that the marginalisation of 'art' in this sense is enshrined in the institution of the art gallery or museum devoted especially to art. Looking at a given artwork exhibited at the Tate, for instance, it is not unnatural to see it essentially in relation to other artworks, i.e. in terms of an art history abstracted from general history and from life.

This is why it is especially gratifying that some of the best contemporary art on display in London this year was, of all unlikely-seeming places, at the Imperial War Museum—in the exhibition of their recent art acquisitions. With a few exceptions, the work on display was purchased for the museum by the present head of their Art Department, Angela Waite. It is evidence of an extremely bold and imaginative policy, and definitively disproves the idea that the IWM's treatment of war is merely a mixture of straightforward documentation and implicit glorification.

Of course, one should not *exaggerate* the difference that the context in which an artwork is exhibited makes to how it is perceived. But it is bound to make *some* difference. And war is far from being just any old non-art context. If ever there were an issue which should focus the contemporary mind—provided it doesn't drive it into fruitless panic—this is surely it.

War is not something which can be understood *apart* from the rest of the human condition. (That is the mistake which certain critics have made in complaining that some of the IWM's recent art acquisitions are not sufficiently directly about war.) War and related forms of aggression have always been an integral part of human history; while nuclear military technology must also, as we have seen, be recognised as part of a much wider process. At the same time, the possibility of a full-scale nuclear war possesses an exemplary and dramatic quality quite unlike anything else. It is *the* dramatic possibility, which *forces us to re-evaluate everything*.

Of the recently acquired artworks at the IWM, the most popular with the public was Colin Self's *Beach Girl—Nuclear Victim*, made back in 1966. It is a grisly hyper-realist sculpture of a girl, lying down, horrifically charred. It is entirely black, made from fibre-glass and hair, and exhibited inside a glass display-case. It is not surprising that it should have been the most

popular, since it is the most immediately accessible. It is also, I believe, very good that it should have been so popular; since it serves to remind one at gut level, with a violent directness, of just what physically is at stake.

WAR AND DESIRE

Also effective, though ostensibly dealing with the past, are Gilbert and George's two 'postcard sculptures', *Battle* and *Victory March* (both 1980). In each, a border composed of monochrome (sepia) cards surrounds a core of cards coloured in the unnaturalistic hues of the days before colour photography.

In *Battle*, the monochrome cards are all of World War I battle scenes, mostly grim. The inset coloured cards, presumably contemporary, are romantically depicted English scenes—townscapes, country cottages, gardens—the idyllic vision of home for which the soldiers may be supposed to be fighting. But the juxtaposition of images is not merely ironic; the inset images, especially three which contain the moon, hint at something pathological already in the idyll, an impression heightened by the cards' excessively kitsch style.

In *Victory March*, the blending between border and inset is more straightforwardly seamless. The border depicts the victory parades of 1918, the inset shows elegant lakes and parks. Everything is suffused with a feeling of Edwardian imperialist idealism, recalling Elgar's music and Aston Webb's architecture (the Admiralty Arch, etc.).

Gilbert and George have managed, with incredible economy, both to conjure up a certain aesthetic and to force it to reveal its unconscious substratum. In so doing, they have uncovered a connection between war and desire, anchored admittedly in a specific historic moment. Yet how alive the emotions behind that moment still are has been made all too evident by the popularity of the Falklands campaign.

The Falklands episode may also have prompted Jean-Marc Prouveur to refer back to World War I in his *War Memorial* photographic pieces, recently shown at the Edward Totah Gallery. Several of them contain text: quotations from Wilfred Owen. They are concerned less, however, with the experience of war than with how war is remembered and commemorated. Among the issues which they explore, within those terms, is the connection between war and specifically sexual desire. Prouveur juxtaposes photographs of official war memorial sculpture with more or less flagrantly pornographic imagery. The ease with which the two blend shows how short a way below the surface sexuality is to be found.

The connection between war and sexual desire is dealt with in an unusually powerful way in the tape-slide piece *Of Them That Slept* (1984), made by Roberta Graham and Ken Hollings for the *Violent Silence* festival, celebrating George Bataille (see review, p5). This succeeds in being both intensely personal and intimate, and yet of considerable public relevance. Like Bataille, Graham and Hollings have grasped the centrally important truth that perverted or immoral longings are not merely to be dismissed as individual aberrations, but may reveal in concentrated form important underlying structures affecting the behaviour of whole societies.

That people should find war *desirable* offends all normal notions of decency. But it is worth considering

what William James said in his 'Remarks at the Peace Banquet':

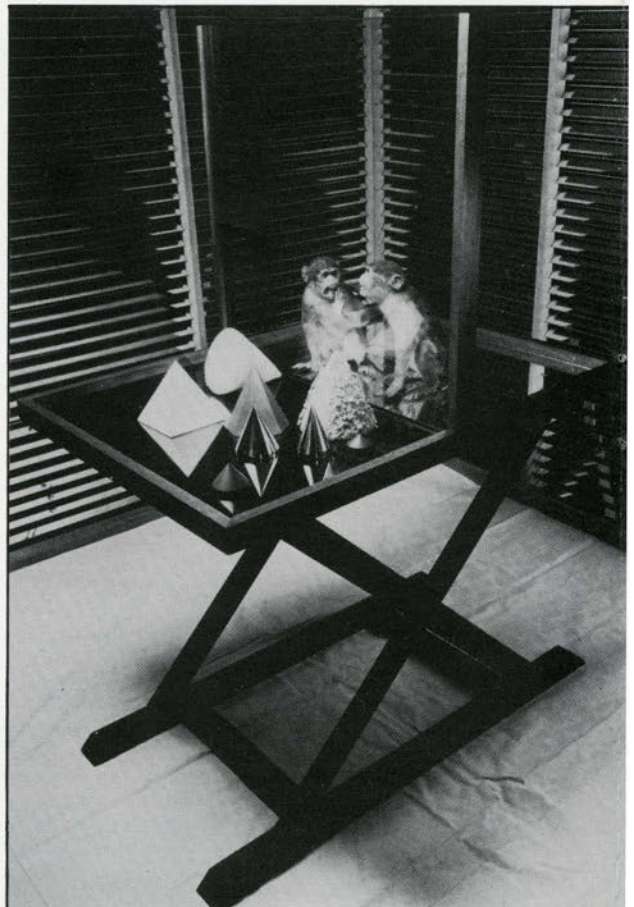
The plain truth is that people want war. They want it anyhow: for itself, and apart from each and every possible consequence. It is the final bouquet of life's fireworks. The born soldier wants it hot and actual. The non-combatant wants it in the background and always as an open possibility to feed his imagination. War is human nature at its uttermost. We are here to do our uttermost.

DENIS MASI

This year for the first time the Imperial War Museum has taken on an artist-in-residence, in the person of Denis Masi. His installation or construction *Barrier* (1977-80) was also the largest exhibit, and in a sense the star turn, of their recent acquisitions exhibition.

It consists mainly of a table, whose surface is bisected by a vertical glass barrier. On one side there are two Rhesus monkeys, whose expressions suggest anxiety, incomprehension and perhaps hostility, and who are pressing against the glass. On the other are several perfectly shaped geometrical solids (cones, pyramids, etc.), mostly very smooth. Around two sides

Denis Masi's *Barrier*



of the installation is a screen of Venetian blinds, lit with green and blue lights. Apart from the monkeys, everything looks sleekly antiseptic. The proper accompanying soundtrack (sometimes a simpler one is substituted) includes, among other sounds, the whispered instruction 'Identify the barrier; push the barrier'. Ideally, the whole area should be permeated with the smell of gas.

Among the ideas which this work is liable to provoke, one is inevitably the split between animality and human mathematical logic. The notion of the 'invisible barrier' has of course a number of possible applications, each of which opens onto different avenues. Then there is the suggestion—though it is no more than that—that the animals might be the victims of some form of experiment.

Since some early pieces in which he used his own body, Masi's work, much of which has been in the form of theatrical-seeming installations, has nearly always contained stuffed animals. His purpose is not so much to demonstrate the fact of human domination over other creatures (though this implication is present) but to be able to say, via animals, things about human beings with a degree of generality which would be impossible were actual human beings to be included. For these would inevitably have certain attributes (of age, sex, class, etc.) whose specificity would interfere with the more basic issues with which Masi is concerned.

Given the theatrical quality of his installations, it is no surprise that Masi should currently be working on a piece, to be called *Parasite Structures*, in conjunction with the excellent *Rational Theatre* offshoot *Hidden Grin* (to be reviewed in the next issue of *Performance Magazine*). There is also a cinematic feeling to much of his work; and he believes that much of the best art of this century has been created within the cinema. He especially admires Syberberg's films.

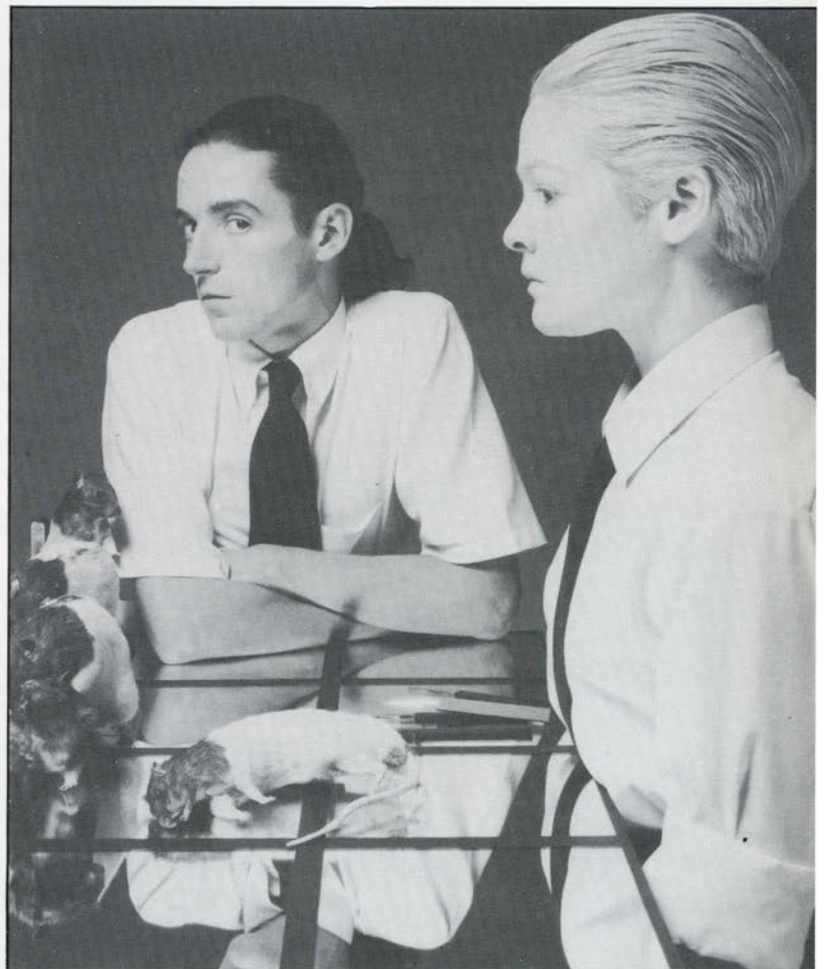
Like Syberberg, Masi investigates the irrational underside of history. In particular, he is interested in unconscious structures of power and control: 'The power that worries me most is the more personal or subjective kind, where neither the perpetrator nor the victim is aware that it is being exercised'.

In this and in all his investigations, Masi addresses his audience both at the level of intellectual understanding and of aesthetic feeling, in a way which provokes a productive interchange between the two. His imagery is at the same time very specific, yet very open to many different interpretations.

Masi's art, like that of the other artists discussed here, is precisely the sort most likely to engender truly valuable insights into our present predicament. That there is no question of it having any real effect on the public conduct of affairs, at least in the short run, is the natural consequence of art's marginalised status, which is not going to be overcome in a hurry. But for institutions like the Imperial War Museum to show avant-garde art, and to have an artist of Masi's quality as artist in residence, even if a modest step in the great scheme of things, is a step in the right direction.

Good art can keep a while—provided the world situation does. And the ways in which currents of thought and feeling can change are slow and subtle, but none the less effective for that. Cause for optimism may not be vast: but it exists. ■

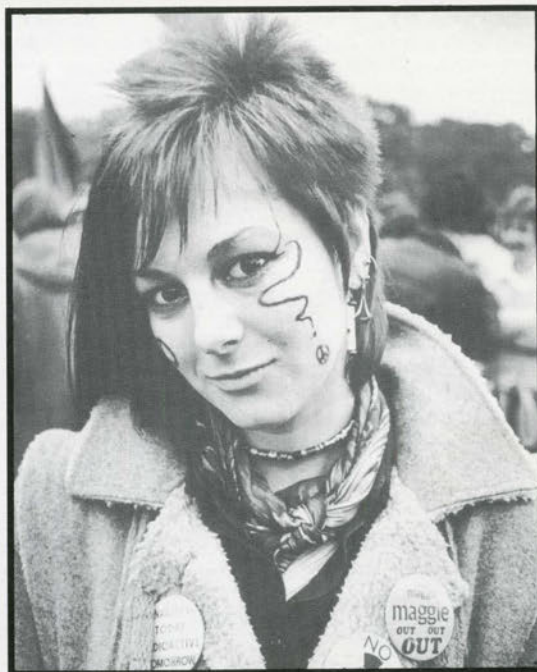
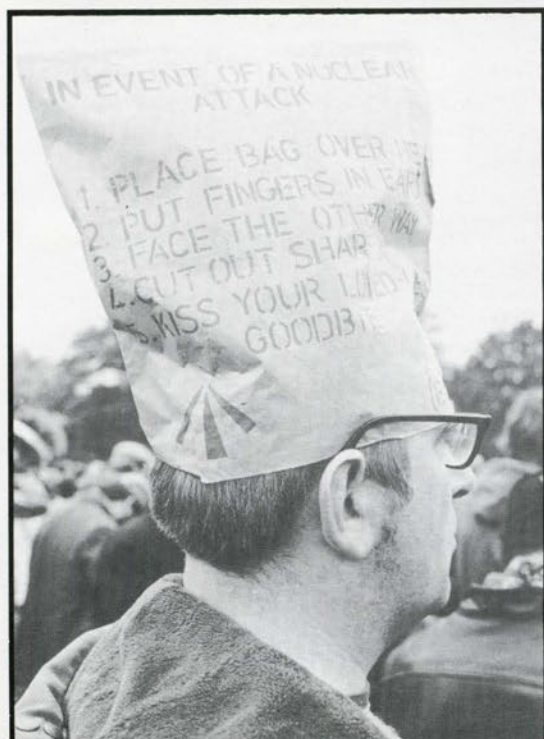
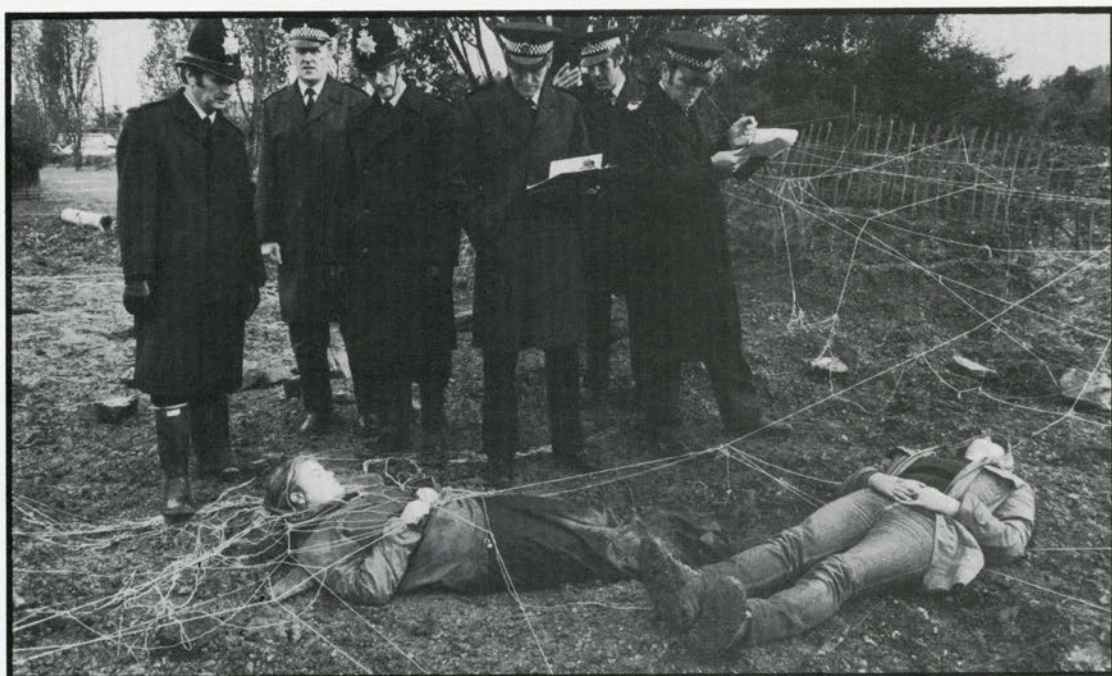
Denis Masi in
collaboration with
Rational Theatre
(Hidden Grin) in
Parasite Structures



Images from recent peace protests make performance art look redundant, argues *Richard Layzell*. Why are many artists *still* shy of incorporating politics in their work? An occasional series.

PEACE MOVES

Photographs from Ed Barber's recent Book *Peace Moves*



These photographs are of ordinary people on CND marches; not artists, not performers. On any peace march you'll see masks, painted faces, banners, costumes, giant puppets. This is grass-roots performance, personal and deeply-felt. But is it something separate from ART? Bread and Puppet Theatre don't think so, but I imagine most artists see it as a million miles from what they're involved with. Is there some snobbery going on here? 'Well, it's not art. I mean you have to be trained. And look at the way those costumes are made—so crude—and anyway face-paints and masks are kitsch'. So what's stopping the artists from showing the way, from being out there displaying their skills and invention in colour, costume and spectacle?

A recent exhibition at the Café Gallery in Southwark Park consisted entirely of masks made by artists, some 120 of them. The same artists were invited to make banners for Peace Banner Day and only one responded . . . This leads me to try and draw some conclusions. Clearly, the attraction of a gallery show had something to do with it. But was it more to do with the content? Any mask was OK, but not any banner, it had to be a peace banner and this was interfering with the 'divine right' of artists to choose what their work is to be about. Then, perhaps, there is the fear of making a public political statement, the fear of being stereotyped a 'political' artist and the British disease of 'playing safe'. I think it also has to do with elitist notions of what art is and what isn't art. The label *Artist* is a desperately self-protective one and could often be substituted for 'I am special'. If ordinary people can make art where does that leave the artist? I often think we'd be better off without the word in our vocabulary. Thankfully this isn't called Performance ART Magazine and is thereby open to a broader view of performance.

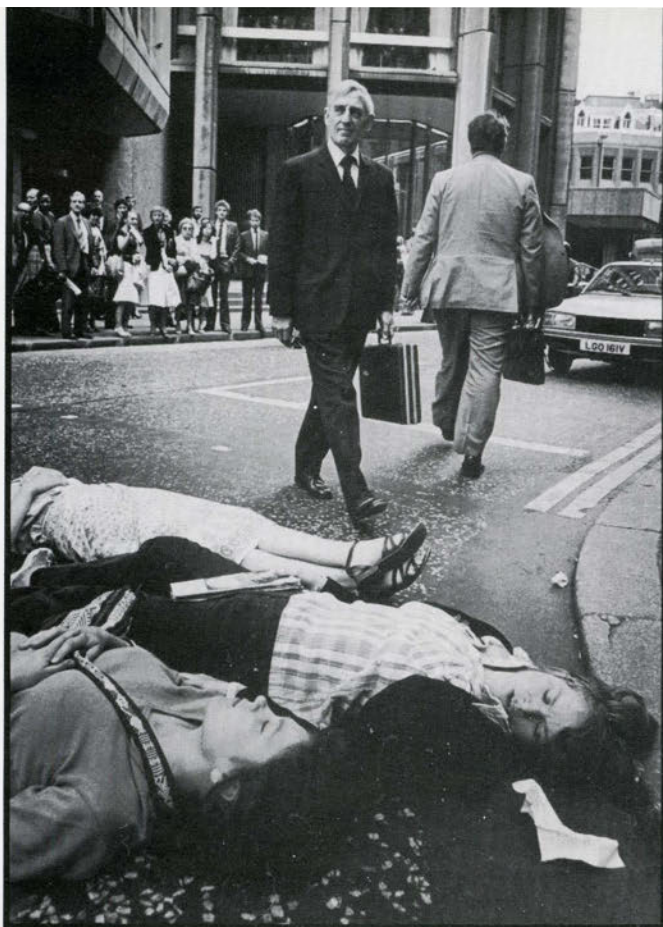
I'd like to look further at the relationship between peace protest and art, from my own experience. For a period of six months, my communal home became the London office of the Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp. This was at a time when the camp became the focus of international attention. I was the only man living in the house. There would often be meetings held in the living-room and the phone rang constantly. Reporters and foreign TV crews would call at the house for interviews. I was on the outside, a supportive man, an observer. Some days, for instance when a *Daily Mail* reporter was interviewing a woman at one end of the table and I was trying to feed my son breakfast at the other, I would get angry, especially when the inevitable smear story appeared about 'lost people and one-parent families'. But much more important was the privilege of being a witness to the inventiveness of the women and how they seemed to cut through conventional ways of planning protest. One of many examples was the weaving of woollen webs around the base and themselves, giving police the undignified and un-macho job of untying the wool. The image of the web has become very powerful and often used at Greenham:

A web with few links is weak and can be broken, but the more threads it is composed of, the greater its strength. It makes a very good analogy for the way in which women have rejuvenated the peace movement . . . Police, for example, are trained to deal with force and aggression, not to extricate themselves from woollen webs . . . Images of gates shut with wool rather than iron bolts, and women being lifted out of webs are also graphic illustrations of polarised philosophies: those planning nuclear destruction, and those determined to preserve life.

(*Greenham Women Everywhere*, by Alice Cook and Gwyn Kirk, Pluto Press, 1982)

There is also the 'art' side of such an event. It's hard to think of a more effective performance piece. Similarly with what happened at the Houses of Parliament on January 18th 1982:

This was the day that the politicians came back from the Christmas recess. We wanted to say right at the very beginning of the parliamentary year, 'It's enough. We've had enough'. Keening is something done traditionally by women and is now confined to mourning. It's a means of expression without words, without having to get tied up in various arguments, facts and figures, whys and wherefores. You can just show how you feel . . . We felt that this was a non-violent way of expressing our feelings to our representatives in parliament, who should take account of the people they represent. Had we just gone there and stood outside with a banner we could easily have been ignored, but by using sound we could actually penetrate the building. We didn't want to just shout slogans, politicians are hardened to this sort of thing. They've had it said to them so many times by so many people that it doesn't touch them anymore . . . Nuclear weapons now exist and they seem to reflect the state that society is in—our expectations, our values, our priorities are



just so wrong. It's difficult to think how to change things, but to show your feelings is a very good way of beginning.

(Greenham Women Everywhere, Jayne Burton, March 1982)

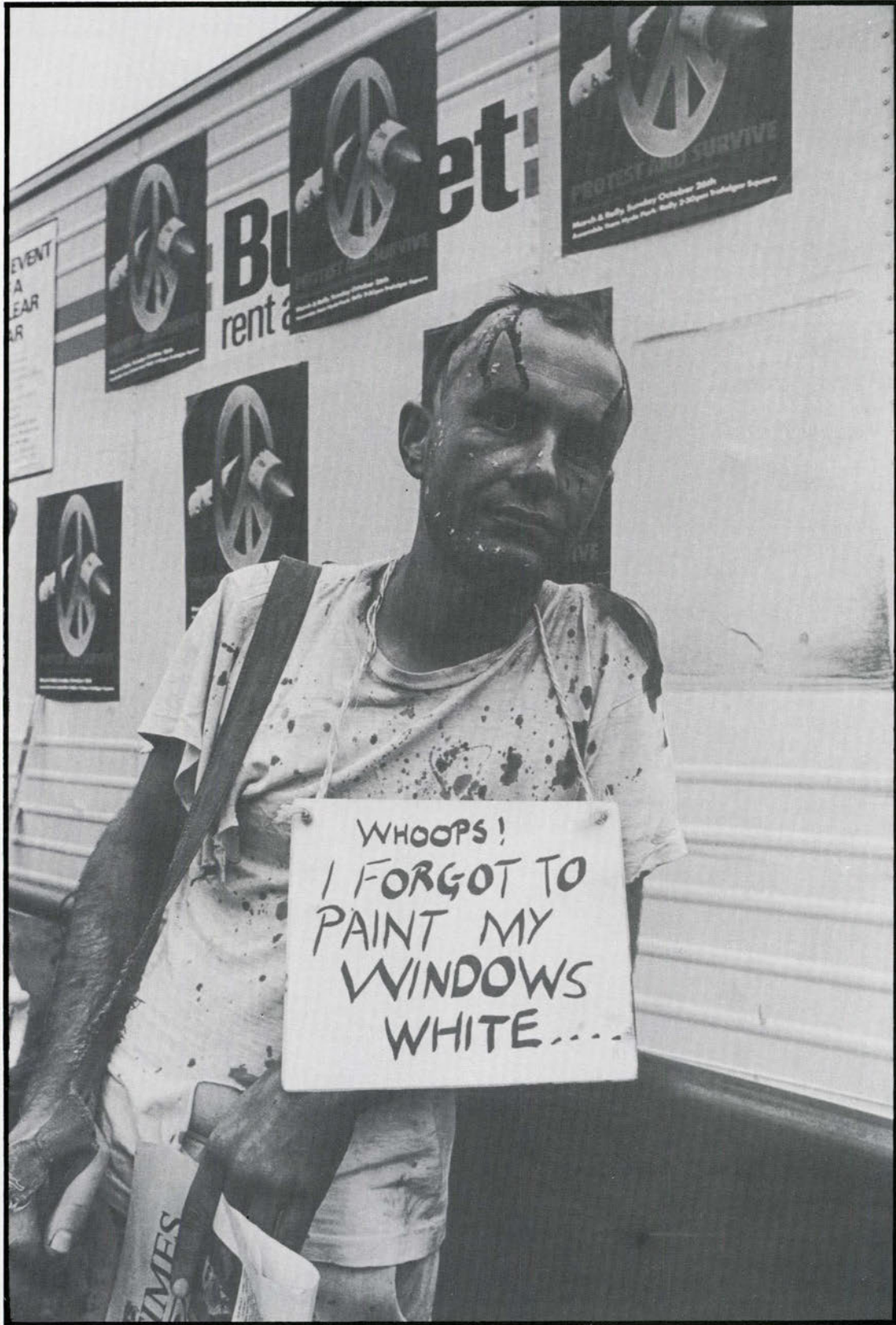
The last statement speaks so clearly of the depth of involvement. There's no question of whether this is art or not, it doesn't matter, it's too important, too heart-felt. At Greenham, the link between life and art is inseparable, the women have been living it out and creativity has evolved from necessity and great courage.

It wasn't until several months after the Greenham Office had moved from the house into commercial premises, that the influence of that period filtered through to me completely. I decided to try to work for peace through art. There had to be a way of avoiding cliché and stereotype, but make a positive contribution. And to take up opportunities of working with others, on different levels, making a videotape for Hackney CND or whatever. I believe that every contribution is worthwhile. The more the issues are raised the better, in as many ways as possible. Like pebbles dropped in the pool, the ripples keep moving; the more pebbles, the more ripples.

Peace Banner Day, in September 1984, was an ideal opportunity. It was organised by Deborah Lowenburg and Cath Tate, to coincide with the first day of NATO's Operation Lionheart and in advance of '10 Million Women for 10 Days' at Greenham Common in September. Artists and peace groups were invited to make banners or bring already-made ones to the Piazza in Covent Garden, where they were displayed outside St Paul's Church. Later in the day, there was a procession of the banners through Covent Garden and across Waterloo Bridge, round Waterloo roundabout and back again. As we approached the roundabout, various police stopped the traffic simultaneously in all directions. Unintentionally, they were giving us maximum dramatic impact. This was a magical moment and the potential for performing, as we moved slowly round the deserted silent circle, was immense. There was the audience, in their cars, on the pavement and in trains approaching Waterloo. It felt like a lost opportunity because so few artists were involved. Most of the banners, some stunning, were from CND groups, but imagine a procession of performance artists and their 'banners' . . .

Effective symbols of peace are in short supply. The CND symbol is often used by the media as a stereotype to undermine and make fun of the movement. It also goes back to hippy days, which gives the opportunity for another stereotype to be raised, 'Peace and love man, ho, ho'. If a right-wing cartoonist wants to categorise a 'trendy lefty', they stick a CND badge on the lapel. Why did Ian Dury have the symbol shaved onto his head in a recent ad? Was he really doing it for peace, or to sell records? What we need are the talents of artists to invent new symbols and revitalise the old ones.

I've found, as several other artists have, that trying to incorporate a political message into an artwork is neither restricting nor stereotyping but, on the contrary, liberating, because the focus is so clear. And it's OK and probably necessary to be totally trivial at other times. No need to be the stereotype. ■



Whoops! Unknown performance artist

A recent performance at the ICA examined the language of gay male fantasy, and the issues raised by it. *Steve Rogers* gives a personal response.

THE SPECTACLE OF PORNOGRAPHY



Camilla Broadbent

'It's hot, the music's loud, men dancing together, some kissing, looking for sex. A guy in black leather jacket, white T shirt, torn, faded blue jeans, boots—he's horny, he rubs his cock, he looks right at me and looks just like me. The same clothes, the same hair and the same expression. He walks up to me and stands right in front of me. He reaches out, and right there with people all around us he starts rubbing my cock. I reach out with both hands and find his nipples and dig my nails into them hard. 'I'm going to ram my big, fat dick right up your arse—and you are going to love it you little bastard'. We walk to the flat in silence. We fuck. A long, hard, sweat soaked, painful, satisfying fuck. I leave immediately, and I don't even know his name?'

This is gay fantasy. A typical gay fantasy complete with stereotypes, self-oppression, neo-fascist imagery and dehumanising clichés. Yet despite being ideologically unacceptable this is a language, the argot of a repressed minority, spoken fluently by gay men in western countries. This meta-language is learnt from gay magazines and books, gay videos and films, graffiti and disco lyrics and above all from sexual partners who use it freely to increase their excitement and to define roles. It is a simple, brutal and theatrical language. *Pornography—A Spectacle Created by Gay Men* is the first play written entirely in this language and is also about this language how it developed and where, when and why it is used.

The morning after Nicholas De Jongh's review appeared in the *Guardian* I asked Neil Bartlett, director of the show, how he felt about it. 'The thing that gets me most about it is that he doesn't once mention that it's a gay show. When people say that good art doesn't need such labels as "gay", or whatever, I just want to sit in a corner and cry'. *Pornography* was devised through a period of research and workshops during which time Neil and the three performers immersed themselves in the language and texture of gay pornography. They looked at gay porn magazines and videos, then went to live gay strip shows, and they discussed their reactions. Also, more importantly, they revealed to each other their own sexual fantasies and behaviour, their own pornographies if you like, and discussed those too.

From the resulting performance it would seem that they found a direct relationship between the 'ideals' perpetuated by pornography and their own fantasies, and that neither the fantasies nor the pornography bore much resemblance to their own experiences of the realities of gay sexual behaviour. They all believe in the sexual stereotypes, and they are holding on to those beliefs even though the evidence of the real world clearly contradicts them. Often the dividing line between the real and the fantasised isn't that clear to performer or audience. In *Pornography*, the show, as in pornography-the-book, or pornography-the-video, the fantasy is enacted up there on a stage, a tiny postage-stamp stage that exists in every sleazy club and bar from Berlin to Waikiki.

It is a play within a play. Up on the stage the performers in tacky drag and high heels are nothing but objects, sex machines, fantasy figures. But they come down off the stage and there, out of the limelight, right up close to the audience, with their rouge visibly running in the heat, they are real people and they tell us about the realities of gay sex and gay life. We are all porno stars, and we are all ordinary. You see, although life is never like our dreams, and although the dreams we may have are tawdry and dirty and stupid, they are the only ones we gay men, a despised minority, have available to us. It's no wonder that we may at times seem overly narcissistic, or self-pitying.

In fact, so much better off than many straight people. Cast out the filthy queer into the wilderness and what better revenge can we have than to love it out there and to prosper? This was *Pornography* and it spoke to its audience of mostly gay men in our own language, about things we all understand and often think about when we are alone, but we very rarely share in this way, and it felt good. ICA Theatre Director, John Ashford, said to Neil after the first night, 'It was very moving, and for me very nostalgic. It reminds me of the first Gay Sweatshop show *Mister X* ten years ago, right here in this theatre, it was about the same thing. But you're too young to have seen that'. 'Yes' says Neil 'which means we have had to go out and rediscover it all again'. 'But this is different. It's ten years later. Things have changed'.

The very few press reviews agreed on one thing, that the performances were outstanding. I totally agree and for what it's worth I want to add my unreserved congratulations to Ivan, Duncan and Andy for their amazing courage, commitment and sheer talent. The three of them have quite distinct and strong personalities. The working method of research and workshop concentrated on their personalities and projected them rather than disguising them. Their own innate desires to perform, to act, and to be up on stage, both in the theatre and in their fantasies, and in their real sexual experiences was given a carefully disciplined freedom of expression. Sex involves a great deal of performance and we are all more or less adept at this and this skill was exploited. The performances as a result were extraordinarily fresh, direct and honest, almost to the point of naivety, but not quite. It takes a great deal of courage, honesty, faith and sheer, who-gives-a-shit, bravura to kneel almost naked in front of two hundred total strangers and simulate being fucked like a dog, and do in such a way that the audience believe you, and know that you enjoy it like that.

That requires great trust or great naivety, but there's absolutely nothing naive about sexually aware gay men. This kind of working method requires dedication, basically talented performers, and above all a very caring and charismatic director. Pina Bausch can do it, so can Charles Ludlum, Peter Brook, Joanne Akalaites, Mike Leigh, Jan Fabre and, if it isn't absurd to suggest an addition, so can Neil Bartlett. He did it here and he did it in his last show *Dressing Up*. What all these people share is a concern for real people. The great British play is almost exclusively concerned with situations. But what Neil is concerned with is real people, the way they live and think and feel and fuck, the way they behave. Neil Bartlett and his three collaborators have together dug very deep into their own lives to discover something about what it really means to be gay, and then to communicate that discovery to other gay men in a way that they understand, in their own language. Neil and I were having a late lunch in Covent Garden. 'If I see another play about a marriage breaking up,' he shouted 'my cock will fall off'. He couldn't care less who might hear him, in fact he wants them all to hear him.

In case you are thinking that all this commitment and discipline is a bit too heavy and serious, I just want you to know that this *Pornography* is also very funny. The art of the 'actor' is to convince the audience that he really is the person he is portraying. The 'actor' must persuade us to suspend our disbelief. On the other hand, the art of the 'female impersonator', the 'drag queen', has nothing at all to do with suspension of disbelief. If the audience were to seriously be taken in by the 'drag queen' and believe him to be a real woman there would be no humour and no point. The more grotesquely bad the impersonation is, the more unbelievable it is, the better the audience like it. The 'drag queen' is both sacred cow and pantomime cow and can mock the follies of the world and can make himself a figure of fun. He is our 'fool'. The 'actor' tries to close the gap between the portrayor and the portrayed. The 'drag queen' tries to make the gap between the impersonator and the impersonated as wide as possible. So what are the performers in *Pornography*, are they actors or drag queens? They are both pornographies and pornographers. On the stage they are pornographies, off the stage they are pornographers, the creators of the pornography.

At times they want to believe they are actors and they convince themselves that the fantasies, the pornographies, are real, but we know and ultimately they know that these fantasies are not real, that we are impersonators, and that in our blind, obsessive pursuit of unattainable, non-existent ideals, we are absurd and funny. However much we might want to believe in the pornography we know that it isn't real and we don't imagine that anyone else is taken in by it, except for one fleeting moment, it could be real, couldn't it? *Pornography*, the language as spoken by most gay men, may be full of stereotypes, self oppression, fascist imagery and dehumanising clichés but we do know that, and we are the first ones to laugh at ourselves. Our self-deprecating humour is not just more self-oppression: it is our humanity and sanity. What's more it is shows like this that give the lie to those very earnest people who would have us believe that the famous, camp, self-deprecating gay humour is self-oppression. *Pornography* demonstrated and asserted the strength of this humour, its use as a navigational aid, as a defense and as an offensive weapon when needed. The show's assertiveness through humour and the vulnerability of the performers gave the show an extraordinary optimism. I was immensely struck by the way in which these three young gay men, two of whom had never performed before—despite their own experiences of fear, guilt, ignorance, prejudice, brutalisation, exploitation and disappointed expectations—remain so very warm, sane, humane, un-neurotic, alive, and I suspect, frequently happy. I told Neil that I loved the boys' walk-down frocks. 'Oh thank god you understood—so many people have asked me what was the significance of the costume change right at the end. It was just that we had to have walk-down frocks'. God, yes, you have to have walk-down frocks.

So how did it go down with the boys? 'I was so bored. I've heard all that doomed queen stuff so often', said one friend. 'I thought it was very well done, it was pretty funny at times, and I fancied the one with the deep voice' said another. Chris said, 'There was nothing new, and it is all fairly depressing, but it was good, very good'. 'Every fag in London should be made to see it'. Anthony said very seriously. Alan, was best, he said 'The Donna Summer bit went on a bit, and I don't believe that Duncan has ever been near a prison, but I loved Ivan's sequined top, fab,—it was so camp, very tacky, and a bit sad really, but it sort of made me feel glad to be gay—hey, remember her—"Glad to be Gay" and he tries to hum the tune but it keeps coming out as "God Save The Queen"'. ■

WHY CELEBRATE BATAILLE?

Dear Performance Magazine, The current interest in Georges Bataille (Slaughterhouse of Love, Performance 31) has a worrying aspect. Sado-masochism, as the underlying psychology/sexuality/emotional dramatisation, call it what you will, of an authoritarian society, certainly requires understanding. And yet a fascination with the subject and its trappings, which celebrates rather than clarifies, provides nothing but a culture on which the worst of fascism can flourish and gain sustenance. Let me illustrate with a historical comparison; the following quotes come from an Imperial War Museum pamphlet on the Freikorps* and from the programme notes of the recent celebration of Georges Bataille at the Bloomsbury Theatre;

'... The task required of him was not only to build up a new spirit—more than that. It required that all other values be ruthlessly cast aside. Ecstasy and death, heroism and excess, arson and murder—a mixture of every passion and demoniacal fury formed the fighters who dominated the postwar period.'

Ernst Von Salamon, ed. Ernst Jünger. War and Warriors Berlin 1930.

'Stemming from his research into incest and excess...' Bataille's My Mother explores a world in which joy is found in terror, repulsion in compulsion, pain in pleasure. At once vital and passionate, this work pushes towards extremes that always have only one outcome... death.'

Programme notes: Violent Silence, Acts of Transgression, 1984.

'A new type of man. A man who has achieved the highest intensification of all human qualities and blended them so harmoniously and yet so violently that one can only describe him with one word;... "Fighter".

Franz Schauwecker, Revenge for Death, Halle, 1919.

Bataille's FEAST a time of celebration when laws are suspended. A time when the exploration of limits and excess is open to play. A communion, a gathering together of people to dice for those peaks of ecstasy: the height of orgasm, the throes of death. The striving for the

ineffable, the moment when words fail us, when we are driven to a trail of dots... moments of silence.'

Programme notes: (as above)

'The Western bourgeois had triumphed. We (the students of 1918) must become nihilists in order to crush this rottenness underfoot.'

Curt Hotzel ed. The German Insurrection Stuttgart 1934.

I'm not suggesting that the people involved in this event are fascists.

I'm not questioning their integrity in accurately expressing how they feel. But the public show of these feelings as a vaunted culturally significant festival does not lead to their resolution. Whereas it does function as an approbation of societies most oppressive tendencies.

Resolution of such destructive feelings can be achieved through the courageous engagement with the root causes of our powerlessness within our own life stories. The release of tension indicated by tears, trembling, laughter, yawns, storming or alive talking is a physiological reality. (And also often a social taboo!)

Let us turn our attention to the abundant hope that exists in the world in our search for imagery, style and excitement rather than 'celebrating' our pain and bondage in a desperate last ditch attempt to feel alive before the banality of modern life gets you in its stranglehold and you become one of the undead. The sexuality of coercion is an easy option but a dead end street. Let us instead be courageous and look for the sexuality of liberation. Rather than perpetuating the sickness of adults let us rediscover the sensuality of children.

Yours Stefan Szczelkun
Routine Art Co.
c/o Brixton Art Gallery
London

*Footnote: The Freikorps came out of the Storm Troop system of the WWI. It was a volunteer corps formed to crush the German Revolution of Nov 1918 and later workers uprising (including the murder of Rosa Luxemburg). Dissolved after 1923 the members retreated into thinly disguised anti-Republican murder squads, later forming the basis of Hitlers S.A.

LETTERS

(Sturmabteilung) the cornerstone of National Socialism. Salamon quoted above was the Freikorps movement's most articulate spokesman.

ZAP ZAPPED

Dear Performance Magazine, In response to the Zap Formula (Performance 31) Neil Butler may be right in pinpointing a crisis in experimental art, but what comes through in The Zap Formula is the problem. Performances are by their very nature mysterious, inaccessible, and unentertaining; they are also interesting, spontaneous and challenging. In performance the audience must be destroyed with hostile creativity; what remains cannot be pinpointed by the fashion-conscious in-crowd discussing you act to death in an anodyne atmosphere. This is not snobbish or elitist but it leads to an individualising process and thus a direction of more value than comic cuts at the seaside. It's interesting to note that 'Zap' has the ring of pap American comix about it. I daresay Neil feels like a media Messiah but we remain iconoclastic.

Yours
Bill Millis
The Clinic
c/o Pentameters
Upstairs, The Three
Horseshoes
Heath St, London NW3

PS The Clinic will be ready to treat you on January 17, 24, and 31 1985

(Ed. note. For dissenters from the above view, see our listings for Zap's grand opening this winter.)

Expense accountant *John Stalin* proposes a number of economical ways to pass the time this winter.

THE WORLD IS YOUR LOBSTER



All you will need are a few odds and ends . . .

Do you remember last summer? Those were the days. Of course, endless nuclear winter now seems inevitable, thank God—no more wondering whether to go out and what to wear if you do. Endless cosy winter evenings barricaded under the stairs with Daphne du Maurier or whatever is left on the shelves after panic borrowing from your local library. Endless emotional discussions with your loved ones about what it was like Outside. Irradiated grandparents blaze merrily in improvised oil drum braziers and you gaze into the garish orange combustion nostalgically attempting definitions of the colour green: what it was like. Trees and flowers and meadows. Honeysuckle. Blackberries. The Observers Book of British Ferns. Soft focus foliage, a mountain stream, and a goodlooking man in a well-ironed open-necked shirt is leaning over the parapet of a bridge made of logs, talking about his youth to a dolly London temp in a flowerprint minidress. His bedroom eyes as he lights her menthol cigarette. Her unspoken conviction that *Oh Gordon this is too beautiful to last . . .* Too damn right, baby-lamb. Incidentally, since the most valuable units of post-Armageddon currency will be low tar cigarettes—guaranteed to probably not give you cancer—get in a few crates of Silk Cut now. Not Consulate (bad for morale, see above).

So how was your summer? How many of you younger readers were undemocratically compelled to holiday with your excruciating parents? I do hope you had time to buy your *Performance* magazine.

Perhaps you had to tunnel yourself out of some gruesome campsite to read it in peace. A

morsel of liberty snatched from the endless leaden hours of monotony and resentment . . . You crouch in a ghastly briny sea-lashed promenade toilet; or get 'lost' in another boring bloody castle; or dive into a handy thicket of gorse; there to savour a crafty cig, and a crisp croissant-fresh edition of good old *Performance*.

But! It won't always be like this, damp cold and miserable ones. Soon you will achieve this thing called puberty, and your body will start crawling with involuntary transformations. Depending on whether you were picked for the Blue Team (what luck!) or the Pink Team (yah, sissy) a number of embarrassing and dirty and hard-to-explain problems will make your life: a misery. If you are a boy your voice will become deeper and more like Father's. You will grow a magnificent beard and long trousers. If you are a girl your figure will become rounder, more feminine, and more like Father's secretary. You will possess bosoms and childbearing hips and 'unsuitable' high heels (one pair of each). This weird eerie fiendish uncanny abnormal process is perfectly natural and you have nothing whatsoever to worry about. Most of you will often be unable to emerge from your bedrooms for weeks at a time, and you'll most likely develop a fear of light, darkness, food, water and air. Again this is completely normal. Top boffins have some pretty fancy names for this sort of behaviour—important-sounding words like melancholia, paranoia, hysteria, dementia, fantasia and hydrophobia. You know, we've all been through this, and the endless beastly torture of *growing up* is just something you'll have to get used to, something you'll be able to laugh about eventually—say in the Twenty-first century.

Have you thought what you're going to do with your new-found beard and bosoms and long trousers and high heels? There's no need to be like Father and Mother and throw away all your bright prospects on further education and a secure, well-paid, interesting and prestigious job. When you're sixteen—no lying about your age now!—you will be able to leave school AND GET A

BLOODY JOB! WON'T YOU? You will have: spending power. Advertisements will tell you of products manufactured specially *for you*. You and the economy are about to become *involved*. She'll give you a little something every Friday, and you'll give her everything you've got Mon–Fri 9.00–5.30 and pretty soon you'll be . . . going steady! You'll become . . . *inseparable!*

I'm having an affair with the economy myself. I know I know it's just infatuation. And like the course of true love it never runs smooth. Those little hiccups! I knew I was home when one of the bank clerks at Luton Airport ceremoniously bisected my flexible friend with the special scissors issued to them. Credit O Barclaycard 1. You are in England. Welcome back to the British way of life. (Well jetlagged on duty-free I could do nothing but gasp and stammer. What the—You can't do that! WHAT DID YOU GO AND DO THAT FOR?) Come on you £££. You're always unfaithful to me . . . but I can't help loving you . . .

Just returned from holiday (actually). Two weeks spearfishing in a Bacardi environment just below the C in C A R I B B E A N. Sunkissed tropical paradise, not bad. How d'you get to afford that, I hear you grizzling. The fact is *Performance* pays fabulous sums for the valuable words of its contributors. Nothing is too good for them. Take my last visit to the jovial ruddy-faced Editor, courageous captain of our little vessel. It was upon a matter of some delicacy. I had spent the previous week's wages on a half share in a mean-looking racehorse called Amphetamine—the stud fees alone will pay off my debts at Aspinalls. But I couldn't hang around until this horse met someone special; I needed half a dozen vols of travellers cheques by—yesterday! Could I touch the big E for a brace of ingots without aunt finding out?

The vast bronze doors depicting scenes of toil in the performance art industry swung ponderously open. 'I am here my editor' I murmured, bowing my head humbly, a warm glow of devotion spreading through my viscera like salmonella bacilli. He was

perched elegantly on that classic artefact of modernism, a De Stijl armchair, one made for *Picasso himself* by the celebrated Dutch designer Gerrit Rietveld. It had cost the Arts Council a fortune. Standing up, he revealed himself to be shorter than when sitting down. His modest stature might have made of another a figure of fun, but not he. His authority over bonuses and expenses gave him an undeniable presence, an air of dignity, tolerance and generosity. Plus he looked a whole lot like Tom Wolfe but *butcher*. His white YSL suit was positively opalescent with white crystals, and an assortment of little gold spoons chimed agreeably at his throat. A Burt Reynolds torso tantalizingly revealed by a ruffled satin shirt buttoned *a la Guccione* completed the picture. 'I suppose you've come for another handout, damm you,' he chuckled, flipping open a florid Credit Suisse chequebook. 'Okay, okay, I know when I'm licked. You've got me over a barrel, you know that? You old descendant of a gun. Have a diamond. I'm right out of plover's eggs'. 'Good old editor' I cried, glancing at my cheque. 'The staff are right behind you, another zero here, here and here, if you please'.

Good old editor, I thought as I tossed back my first glass of inflight entertainment. 'Another Skyjacker, sir?' suggested a pleasantly smiling voice over the nnnnnnnn of the engines. 'Please, and easy on the vermouthe, stewardess. Tell me, what do your friends call you, heh heh?' I held my breath. 'I'm Tricia, fly me' she breathed in my ear. I breathed in her ear, we tried some simultaneous breathing together, and then she did an oxygen mask demonstration. 'I obscenity on your emergency drill' growled a voice from my left. 'Bring me bourbon and a blues guitar. All this talk of asphyxiation makes a man thirsty'. The authoritative tones of my colleague inspired total confidence. 'We are now at 30,000 feet and *still sober*'. He glared at the distant drinks trolley, then handed me his Walkman and a pair of feebly squeaking headphones. 'Take over the controls, Skip. I'm going aft to check out the provisions. Don't worry about all these knobs and buttons—fly by the seat of

your pants if you have to. Fast forward, my man'. And so saying he got up and rabbit punched his way to the head of the queue. A typically cool and resourceful approach to a potentially dangerous fuel stoppage, I reflected. No doubt all in a day's work to R, my co-holidaymaker for a gruelling 14-day journey from affluence to overdraft. Already a legendary frock critic, he had established his reputation at *Jackie*, where he had been too young to cover Dien Bien Phu, the Tet offensive and the fall of Saigon. He would be a useful man to discuss boyfriend problems with.

Moments after our arrival we found ourselves in the shade of a beach umbrella, sipping *paparazzis* with Telly and Roman and Bianca and Natasha and the gang, so refreshing. 'Why don't you stick around, dudes' drawled Jack, grinning his good old evil grin. And so we did. □ This one's us sporting with the celebrities. □ And this one. □ More celebrities, I'm afraid. □ This is me with a swordfish, 400 lbs. Nasty looking customer, eh. □ That's R trying to land the seaplane (clot). □ Oops! Totalled another Suzuki, arf arf. □ This is us looking rather bronzed, I must say . . . And at the end of the first week this pair of Ambre hombres were two tired teddy bears: plum tuckered out, entirely exhausted from an exhausting routine of water-skiing! Scuba diving! Glass-bottomed boating! Catamaranning! Turtle fishing! Harpoon gunning! Clay pigeon shooting! Paragliding! Hot-air ballooning! Hovercrafting! Suzuki-jeeping! Scramble-biking! Drag racing! Go-carting! Sno-catting! Beach bugging! Bar-B-Qing! Bottle popping! Lobster chomping! This sort of lipsmacking thirstquenching recreation does not come cheap. Far from it. Round these parts even nude bathing costs. However, we'd taken full advantage of those three vital characteristics of the post-recession holidaymaker: Accession, Vision and American Expression.

The Pepsiest beach of all was called Super Paradise, and no wonder. It's a strange sort of depression that sets in after a day on Super Paradise. Money wasn't

the problem. It was the endless parade of goddesses and beach heroes. Ray-Ban Romeos, Jeep people, the boutique clique. These were people who'd worked hard at their appearance and had consequently achieved that brand of insolent nonchalance that goes with utter confidence about one's looks. It was like being on Mars in the early Sixties, in the middle of some potty idealistic Ray Bradbury short story where everyone is tall and lean and brown and they all drift around spectacular irrigated deserts wearing little unisex tunics and holding hands. It's a planet where all the gorgeous life forms revel in an ultra-violet climate—they just never get tired of those special rays.

As writers we deplored this vulgar display of health and scratched around for the seediest most authentic old waterfront dive we could find. There we sat all day drinking *paraquatos*, the local poison, and watching some gaily painted fishing boats which were famous for bobbing up and down in the harbour. It wasn't long before we were talking about what we would do if we ever got back to Blighty. How long had we been here? Could we ever escape? What were our names, our ranks and serial numbers? The heady fumes of *determined intoxication* billowed through the calcium arches of our longsuffering skulls—we were getting *ter-wisted*. To my alarm the entire scene started shimmering, losing focus. Oh, gasp! Are we *in a film* or what? Mister film critic what is happening! We were shedding years like calendar leaves and soon found ourselves (to our surprise) singing carols in a cosy Ovaltinian parlour filled with children, steaming mugs, sheepdogs and friendly coal fires. For this was childhood-land, last refuge of the world-weary, a happy happy place far far away where life is *Cider with Rosie* all the time.

I'd give anything to be bowling my trusty old iron hoop along the cobbles of Bugger's Passage, confessed R, blinking hard and wiping away a gecko or two. 'Oh God yes hoops yes, too *too* perfect,' I declared enthusiastically, unbearably moved, my cheeks wet with blood and insect venom. Visions

advanced and receded through a madly dancing typography of forgotten brand names: Nanny beating me around the temples with a brutally heavy Hornby-Dublo locomotive. Racing the terrapins on my Scalextric or walling them up in Lego torture chambers. Making a boy smaller than I eat a Keilkraft balsa wood glider. Firing my Webley at point blank range in the coldblooded execution of my sister's Bunty Cut-Out Wardrobe that she'd cut out. But now the orderly, essentially Victorian world of freshfaced boy engineers building Meccano cranes and bridges has been invaded by special FX from a Tron dimension. Whatever has happened to all the proper toys? We rumbled disapprovingly to each other, like Methodists visiting Soho. All the sports shops are filled with glamorous pleasure aids, shameless beach equipment for the uninhibited. The frontiers of leisure management are being rolled back. New techniques of boredom control. New concepts in the mechanisation of play. New ways to spend money . . . *Relax* on your Walkman on your BMX. *Relax* with *Pacman* on your ZX. *Special FX!* Century XX . . . SXE Polaroids with your SX-70: folds flat for convenience, slips into your pocket . . . And out of your wallet flips your FLXable friend. *Expresso Americano?* XLNT, *signor!*

Is there no end to the digital watchification of a world where once we sat and whittled, content to watch the bubbles in our scrumpy? Why can't we have some sensible healthy games for boys and girls? No one needs all this 'high tech' tackle. Did you ever see that splendid television programme *Blue Peter*? Or read *Swallows and Amazons?* *Swiss Family Robinson*? I'd say they had the right idea. So. You've spent all your money on holiday. You've broken all your toys or run out of Duracells. Perhaps you're a dear little poor person. Urban deprivation is nothing to be ashamed of, and if you happen to be one of these quaint pinched little creatures quartered down in the murky infernos of Level Thirteen, well darling this is for you as well. I wish the world was your lobster too, but frankly there isn't enough to go round.

PRACTICAL FUN FOR BOYS AND GIRLS It's always amusing to involve your parents in a new game. The secret is not to explain the rules to them.

- **Teenage daughter:** break the news to Mother that you've broken up with Geoff. Dreamily describe to her the special friendship you share with your new lover, an exotic lesbian saxophone player called Mascara. Urge her to leave Father. Offer to introduce her to some interesting divorcées . . .

- **Little brothers:** allow Father to catch you all dolled up in your mother's wedding dress, admiring yourself in the mirror. Confess to him that you wish you'd been born a girl. Beg him not to tell Mother.

- **Everything is a symbolic penis.** You giggle all the time. Point this out to your sisters so you can exchange knowing looks at mealtimes.

- Another excellent way to irritate your parents is to have an invisible friend. Keep a straight face right from the start and gradually escalate your friendship. Go in for sudden changes of personality, bitterly criticise yourself in the third person, and generally exhibit all the symptoms of the divided self.

- **Invite some pals round.** Dress up as helicopters and raid Grandad. First, place headphones over his ears, and at the given signal let him have 120 dB of *Ride of the Valkyries*. The objective is to 'take him out'.

Here are some more boisterous games you can play with your friends if Father and Mother are out.

- **Sunday Morning.** You each make a nest out of rival colour supplements. Use it as a base from which to vigorously discourage invaders of your 'territory'. The aim is to read the magazines of the other contestants without them getting a look at yours. Marmalade and boiled egg yolk can be deployed to great effect.

- **Chivalry.** The two contestants each don an inverted dustbin. The rules of engagement allow you to bash blindly away at each other, yelling quaint but bloodthirsty threats. All the conventions of chivalry must be strictly observed. Props: sisters with

ripped bodices may be tied to trees. If the family dog is on the large side, you could staple lettuce leaves all over it. This will give you a most convincing dragon.

- **Patton: Lust for Glory.** Find some large cardboard boxes. Cut yourself arm- and leg-holes; no eyeholes allowed. Paint them in camouflage colours and stick an upside-down saucepan on the top. Get inside and rush around the room in formation trying to outflank each other. Pincer movements are fun.

- **Gotcha!** You will need a large blue carpet. This is the South Atlantic. One contestant is the *Belgrano* and cruises along the carpet in a cardboard box painted grey with four saucepans for turrets and toilet roll tubes for funnels. His opponent gets to be *HMS Conqueror*, hooray, and he has to crawl around underneath the carpet trying to locate the Argentinian threat.

- **Elks.** The contestants are mighty bull elks, their horns locked in primeval conflict, no doubt over some gorgeous pouting Bambi. For horns you could try tying uprooted saplings to your head.

- **Magnetism.** With a thick black felt tip have N or S written at random on every contestant's forehead. No one is aware of their own polarity, but all concerned are determined to behave authentically as magnets, obeying the rules of attraction and repulsion with tremendous energy. No snogging or fighting.

- **Herbert von Karajan.** Those of you who have never heard of the eminent conductor takes it in turns pretending to be him. You have to sit in an armchair and reminisce about his life. The rest of you bawl *No, No, No* almost continuously.

- **Drains.** You all take it in turns to laugh like a drain. Perhaps all this sounds a little noisy to you. So for all you miserable whining teacher's pet spastic little swots how about a nice game of

- **Mathematics.** You can use the very same techniques you've learned at school. One to play on your own, maybe. So who's got no friends then?

Finally the best game I know. It's called

- **Bad Sardines.** A willing fool is appointed 'it' in the usual way and is left on his own, counting to a hundred. Instead of concealing themselves about the house, the other contestants steal silently out of the back door and go off to the pub. The gallant 'it' becomes the subject of many loyal toasts, and may even have a chorus composed in his honour.

I try to be helpful. But do people appreciate it? Answer came there none. Perhaps these suggestions are not quite your cup of. Well fuck off to the next article then. With any luck you'll be told the interesting views of yet another demented performance artist with something vital to say about *la condition humaine*. You poor devils. ■



DON'T MISS

The new Station House Opera production, **JUMPIN' JERICHO** is presented as a double bill at the Bloomsbury Theatre, London along with **SEX AND DEATH**, 'a madmans bedroom farce, which involves the furniture as well as the performers' is already well known to those who follow performance. But **JUMPIN' JERICHO** (see picture) looks like being something of a departure. Thematically based on the biblical wallless city of Jericho, 'Station House Opera present two worlds

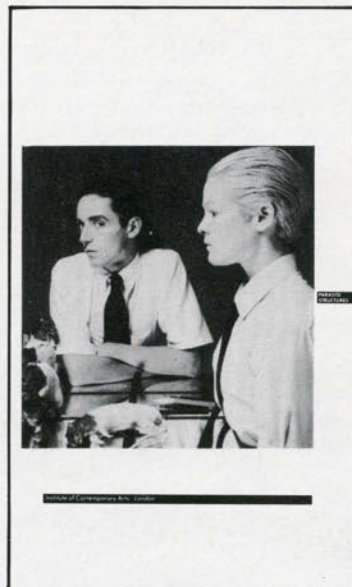
colliding, one with the burden of an ancient and outdated civilisation, and one with evangelistic and expansionist zeal of the Chosen People, in search of the promised land. The citizens of Jericho are seen as rather horizontal. The Israelites arrive vertically, supported by the spirit of Yahweh (God). Strangely enough, while the people of Jericho speak in short, curt, to-the-point phrases, the Israelites speak the language of Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole'. November 22-24. **INFO 01 388 333**



A new mood for Station House Opera?

Don't miss Hidden Grin's **PARASITE STRUCTURES**, just finishing at the ICA. (Until November 10) Collaborating with sculptor Denis Masi (see Images in the Shadow of War, this issue) this Rational Theatre based company, 'traces the shifting power structures inherent in everyday activity, and isolates the sources of manipulation and control governing our lives. In a stark laboratory, part gymnasium, part interrogation room, six characters conduct an experiment into their ability to withstand stresses both physical and emotional.' Also coming up at the ICA: Lumiere and Son's Brightside, based on a poem by David Gale and produced by Hilary Westlake, it concerns themes of 'baseless optimism, the dawn of cynicism, and treachery. (November 13—December 1) Finally Russell Hoban with Impact Theatre in **THE CARRIER FREQUENCY** (see Working with Impact, by Russell Hoban, this issue.) Features 1000 gallons of water and several tons of reinforced concrete. In the gallery,

Denis Masi continues with an installation, **FROM GAME TO PARASITE STRUCTURES**, based on his collaboration with Hidden Grin (see above) until December 9. **INFO 01 930 0493**



LISTINGS

At the Film Co-op, London a programme of slide-tape works has been included in the London Film festival. This medium has made great advances in the last few years, and with dissolve systems and live of computerised cutting and fading, can have the immediacy of a live performance together with the richness and detail of 35mm film. A particular recent example has been Roberta Graham and Ken Hollings piece, **OF THEM THAT SLEPT** (See Perf for review), and another work by Graham has been included in this varied programme, which also has work by Nigel Rolfe, Patrick Keiller, Cordelia Swann and Nicky Hamlyn. The event is on November 21 (there is also a Film Festival Super 8 showing, another breakthrough for the Co-op, on November 28). Info from Cordelia Swann on **01 586 4806**. Surf's up for the Zap Club from November 2, the first ever all-week performance nightspot, (in the South of England, anyway). Grand opening by Silvia Ziranek, followed by Performance Surfing and a bewildering mixture of performance artists, cabaret entertainment, music and video follows. We can't list all the dates, but artists appearing up to Xmas eve include Theatre of the Bleeding Obelisk, Anne Seagrave, Tim Batt, Omelette Broadcasting Corporation, Wild Wigglers, Compass Theatre, Paul Burwell, Laurie Booth, Gabbi Agis, Phil Jeck Cliffhanger, John Hegley, Rose English, Dave Stevens, Sensible Footwear, Talesin Theatre, Andre Stitt, and an Xmas Banquet by Roger Ely. Tuesday nights are **ABUSE NIGHTS**, anyone can perform (and get in free for it) compered by Ian Smith. Congratulations to Neil Butler (See interview last issue) for getting it off the ground. The Club is under the Brighton Arches, phone 0273 775987 for details. **(STOP PRESS! On December 1, Zap Club in conjunction with this magazine plan (weather conditions permitting) ZAP DOWN TO BRIGHTON! A cycle ride starting Speaker's corner, London and finishing at Zap, where bike storage, refreshments and half-price admission to Zap will be provided. Hopefully also performance en route. Phone Performance on 01 935 2714 for details and confirmation.**

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NOV

CONSPIRACY, TREACHERY, CYNICISM, ADVENTURE, ALL SINGING AND DANCING!

Lumiere & Son present **BRIGHTSIDE**

13 Nov – 1 Dec Tues – Sun 8.00.

Discussion 25 Nov 4.00.

FROM GAME TO PARASITE STRUCTURES

An exhibition of Denis Masi's work, including his collaboration with Hidden Grin, a Rational Theatre company. To 9 Dec.

THE FUTURE OF THE HAYWARD

A discussion, Mon 12 Nov 7.30

'DENSE, INTENSE, ICONIC, MYTHICAL, MYSTICAL AND ABSOLUTELY COMPELLING'

Heavy Metal

Robert Ashley's **PERFECT LIVES**

ICA Cinematheque 30 Oct – 25 Nov Tues -Sun 6.30

DEC

'THERE IS PROBABLY NOTHING REMOTELY LIKE IMPACT ON THE STAGE, THEIR WORK IS BRAVE AND FREQUENTLY BRILLIANT'

The Guardian

Impact Theatre Co - operative present

THE CARRIER FREQUENCY, a collaboration with Russell Hoban. 4 – 22 Dec Tues – Sun 8.00.

Discussion 16 Dec 4.00

JAN

'THE BALLISTA IS A WONDERFUL PIECE.. IT BEAUTIFULLY CAPTURES THE ARISTOTELIAN NOTION THAT THE PURPOSE OF DRAMA IS TO ACT AS CATHARSIS'

Performance

Pip Simmons Theatre Group and the Mickery Theatre, Amsterdam, present **IN THE PENAL COLONY** based on Franz Kafks's story and featuring Alex Mavro's sculpture *The Ballista*. 8 – 26 Jan 85 Tues – Sun 8.00

JARMAN, JOST, GODARD AND GREENAWAY, ARTISTS' VIDEO, PERFORMANCE AND ROCK

There is something for you amongst the 600 tapes in the ICA Videotheque, the ICA's unique video reference library. Choose and view for just 50p per half hour. Open Tues – Sun 12.00 – 5.30

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