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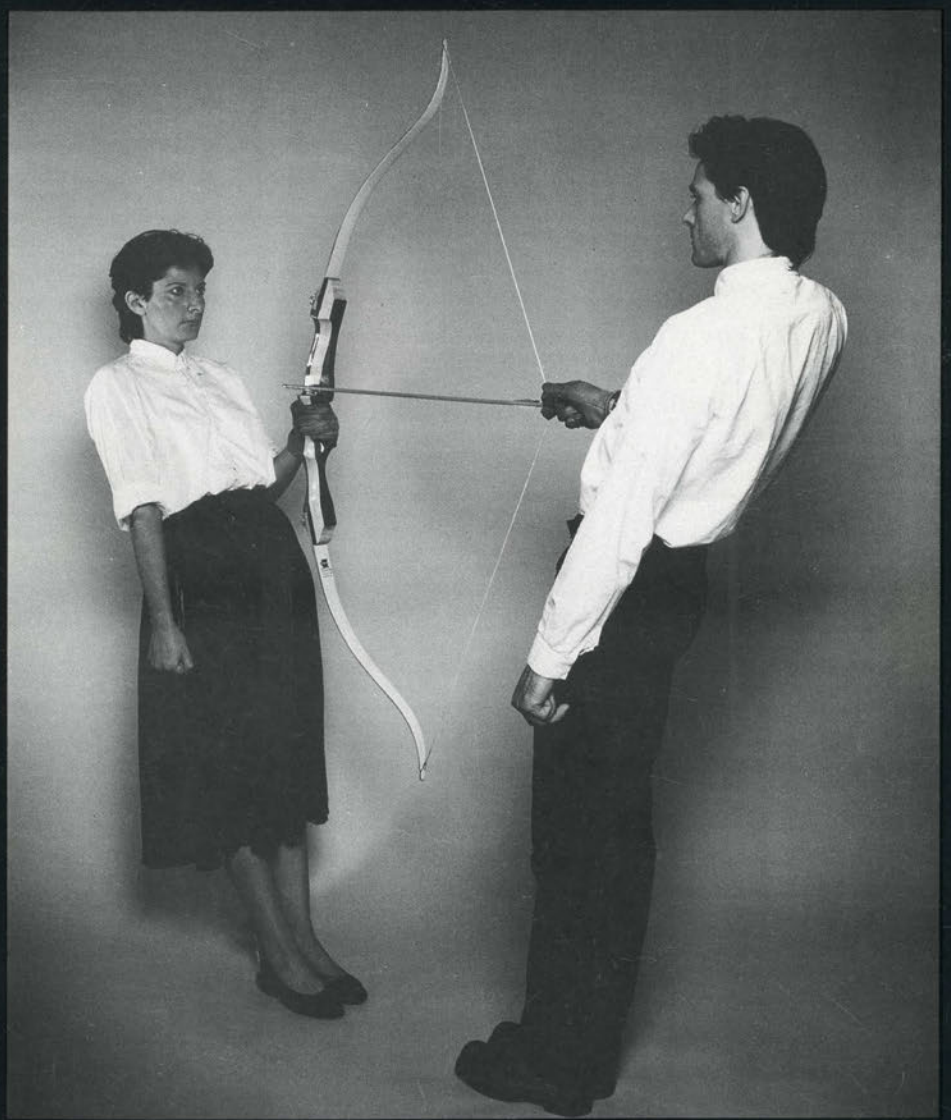

MARINA ABRAMOVIČ & ULAY

INTERVIEWED

TINA KEANE: PROFILE
PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION
PERFORMANCE & SCULPTURE
IMAGES OF MEN: 3 VIEWPOINTS
ART AT THE END OF THE WORLD

PERFORMANCE + ART / THEATRE / MUSIC / VIDEO / DANCE / SPECTACLE

PERFORMANCE MAGAZINE

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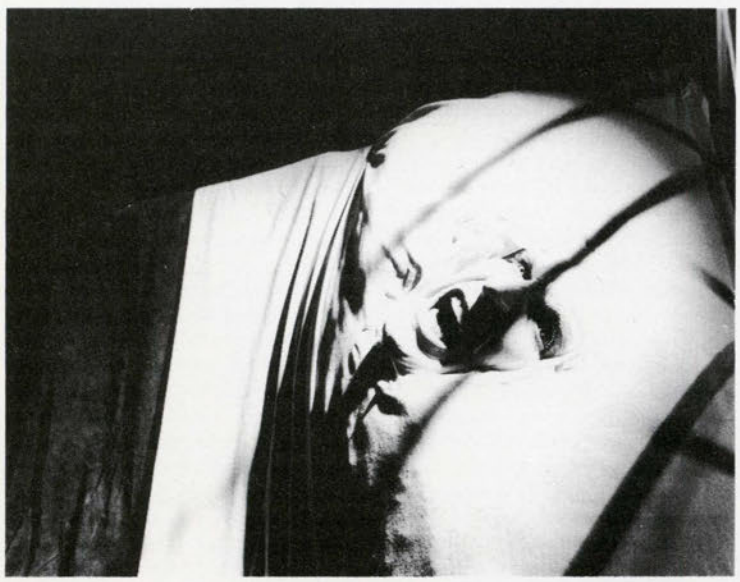

● **COVER PHOTOGRAPH** ● Marina Abramovič & Ulay, *Rest Energy* (Dublin 1983)

● **CONTENTS PAGE:** Stephen Taylor Woodrow, *Going Bye-Byes*

GUEST EDITOR
CHRISSIE ILES

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GUEST EDITOR + CHRISSIE ILES

Chrissie Iles will already be known to Performance readers, having been the first of our continuing series of Guest Editors (March/April 1987) and as a regular contributor for some years. She works as a freelance curator and writer.

In considering possible future Guest Editors I have always been very conscious of the need to create a balance between the various forms covered by Performance Magazine. We have an exceptionally wide brief including performance art, experimental theatre, video art, installation and multi-media exhibitions as well as occasional articles on music, dance, literature, film and social/public spectacles in whatever form they occur. The breadth of coverage is based on the belief that there is a commonality of processes and purposes shared by a large number of artists working in different media. Perhaps the fundamental of these shared practices is a commitment to formal experimentation which challenges the accepted boundaries between different media.

Performance is, if you like, concerned with any art which attempts to restore the vigour of art by defying or transgressing the frames of form and genre which have led to art's commodification and powerlessness.

Boundary breaking is not however a simple process. It is fraught with difficulties especially since art does not take place in a vacuum of pure thought and aesthetic creativity. There is, at the most banal level, the whole structure of arts funding and support to contend with which resists non genre-specific work. There is the problem of the British tradition of criticism, which is determinedly formalistic and craft oriented. It can result in internicene wars which serve only to reinforce formal barriers.

I was struck by two articles which have appeared recently both by artists who are gathered under the broad church of performance who perceive the breaking down of formal barriers as a problem. Roland Miller, writing in Variant No 4, includes in a catalogue of what is wrong with performance art in this country the complaint "Another general criticism from fine artists within the Arts Council was that performance art was too theatrical. The situation today under PAP (Performance Art Promotors Scheme) is more not less like this." Whilst Annie Griffin in an interview printed in City Limits (CL335) is quoted as saying "Establishment art will deny the resonance of anything which isn't to do with being highly educated and highly cultured and highly paid. Certainly it denies the complexity of popular form. . . . And the whole reason the world of performance art doesn't want me as a member of their club is that people get really scared if your art is accessible to people who didn't go to art school. I often wonder about continuing to call myself a 'performance artist' at all."

No-one would for a moment suggest that Roland Miller and Annie Griffin make the same kind of work, but surely they share more with each other than Miller does with watercolourists or Griffin does with repertory theatre productions of Shakespeare. The argument between performance art and theatre is an exciting and important one. Miller in his article goes on to describe a performance which he uses as an example of the kind of work whch is being proscribed by the performance system. *The Holy Ghost Train* by Sarah Morrell took place in a derelict factory in Sheffield in April 1987.

Miller writes "A white sheet was drawn back to reveal . . . the entry of the unicyclists marked the pantomimic section . . . as though in an anarchic Robert Wilson Opera . . . etc." sounds like theatre had a big hand in this. Annie Griffin likewise says such things as "All these connections I want the viewers to make for themselves. I don't try to pull it all together for them". Her work is described as "quick shifts of time and emotion". Griffin again: "there's nothing worse than people coming up to you after and saying 'Annie that was fabulous. Who wrote the script?'" Sounds to me like it could be performance art. The term performance theatre is not just another mystifying jargon label. It is intended to refer to work which, consciously or not, deals with the issues of both visual art and theatre. Living as we do in a totally dramatised culture which uses visual imagery and style as its basic language, it is this work which can potentially function most successfully in stepping outside of the 'art' framework to affect audiences. ●

Steve Rogers

PERFORMANCE NEWS

+ **Hilary Gresty**, Director of **Kettles Yard**, Cambridge says she wanted to get the "big issues" back into art and she has certainly done it with their collaborative exhibition with the **Cambridge Darkroom** simply called **Death**. The work was selected from an open submission and includes more than a token element of live work. **Anne Bean, Carlyle Reedy, Dogs in Honey, Paul Eachus, Richard Layzell** to name but few. In all the exhibition includes works by 67 artists. An ambitious and praiseworthy project which will undoubtedly elicit some memorable images. April 2-May 15. (See ADs) Details: 0223 352124/350725. ●

+ **MAN ACT**, Phillip Mackenzie and Simon Thorne, have a new show in preparation directed by **Steve Shill**. Phillip performed in Steve Shill's filmic *Face Down* last year which gives a hint of how the ex-Impact director's distinctive visual imagination will combine with the accomplished performance technique of the duo. ●

+ **Stephen Talor Woodrow's** final performance of the **Living Paintings** in New York recently was greeted with general enthusiasm from the public and media alike. The difference between here and there is that there enthusiasm is often supported by cash. He has been invited back with his new work which opens at **Leeds City Art Gallery**, April 26-May 1, and is rumoured to have taken up an invitation to attend some glitzy art fair at the fashionable Colorado resort of Aspen as the personal guest of some millionaire patron or other. ●

+ The **Zap Club, Brighton** are planning to **'Demystify' performance art** with a series of workshops and performances by **Denys Blacker, Richard Layzell, Dogs in Honey and Rose English**. If they succeed we will let you know what the solution is. April 28-May 1. Details: 0273 206900. ●

+ It was only a matter of time before a video company was set up with the specific aim of documenting live art works on a commercial basis. **Vantage Point** has the advantage of having as one of its partners Paul Hough who many artists will know as having been assistant to Nikki Milican at the Midland Group. Knowing as he must the financial status of most performance artists and groups chances are his prices will be realistic. Details: 0602 420881. ●

+ Proving once again that **Amsterdam** knows how to support experimental art. **N.L. Centrum** have produced a double album of sound work by some of the best, but not necessarily best known, noise artists. It includes works by **Laibach, Z'ev, S.P.K., Blurt, Test Department**, and **Marie Kawazu** (recently seen opening the Air Gallery, London recent performance season). It also includes excellent pieces by a long list of relative unknowns. This record actually succeeds in capturing some of the excitement of this uniquely live musical genre. Instead of the usual tedium of forty minutes of impenetrable noise this includes just short highlights which for the most part are quite accessible and even danceable. Available through Play It Again, Sam- or from N.L. Centrum, P.O. Box 3970, 1001 AT Amsterdam. ●

+ **The Magdalena Project** which brought together women theatre artists from around the world to Cardiff is now resolving itself into a major new performance work **Nominatae Filiiae**. It is directed by **Zofia Kalinska** who for many years worked with **Tadeusz Kantor** and includes artists from 8 countries. Currently in preparation at Odin Teatret's base in rural Denmark the project will be coming to Britain in May starting at the Brighton Festival. Details: 0273 676926. ●

+ The **Tate of the North** in **Liverpool's Albert Dock** is being officially opened by **Princess Diana** in May. This has to be the most important development for the arts outside London since the opening of the Burrell in Glasgow. Hopefully it is a signal that Liverpool will follow Glasgow's courageous and successful employment of the arts to lead the city's revitalisation. ●

+ **Andrew Bailey**, one of the longest surviving stalwarts of British experimental performance (formerly of Phantom Captain, IOU, etc) has a new installation/performance at London's **Submarine Gallery**. The advance information promises sound, puppetry, audience participation, mirrors and sculpture. Worth visiting if only to find out how they get all that into this tiny space. May 20-June 11. Details: 01 278 0230. ●

+ The **Society of Scottish Artists** are inviting proposals from artists based in Scotland for **Time Based works** to be included in their **1988 show**. The deadline is the end of May. Details: The Secretary, 3 Howe St, Edinburgh EH3 6TE 031 557 2343. ●

DOCUMENTA VIDEO

+ **Documenta** in association with 235 Media of Cologne have produced a three hour video of the live work presented at last year's Documenta in Kassel. The video includes edited sections from all of the official performances divided into three sections. **Expanded Performance, Art Performance** and **Theatrical Performance**. Sight unseen it is bound to be a useful resource for researchers and teachers. Details: 235 Media, Spichernstr 61, D-5000 Koln 1, West Germany. ●

PROJECTS NEWS

Projects UK, the Newcastle based performance and media organisers have two projects coming to fruition soon. The **Metro Billboard Project** which will take place commissioned works by **Graham Budgett, Willie Docherty, Mona Hatoum, Tam Joseph, John Kippin, Michael Peel, Mitra Tabrizian and Andy Golding** on billboards around Britain, Canada and Europe. Sound Moves. **Nine women; Michelle D. Baharier, Mari Gordon, Jan Kerr, Marysia Lewandowska, Sharon Morris, Alana O'Kelly, Anna O'Sullivan, Maggie Warwick** and **Caroline Wilkinson** have been commissioned to create **sound works** to be played over the **telephone** network. From May 1 call 091 246 8010 to hear the works. A cassette of the works is also available from Projects UK. Details of both projects: Projects UK, Newcastle Media Workshops, 67-75 Westgate Rd, Newcastle upon Tyne, 01 261 4527. ●

LEEDS CENTENARY

Leeds City Art Gallery celebrates its **centenary** this year with a whole series of special exhibitions and events. The first is **Depicting History: For Today** (April 14-May 29) an exhibition which examines the depiction of contemporary events alongside the representation of history. It includes works by **Tina Keane, Rose Finn-Kelcey, Keith Piper, Nigel Rolfe, Terry Atkinson, Lubaina Himid** and a performance by **Sarah Jane Edge. Claes Oldenburg** gets his first show in Britain for seventeen years. (April 27-June 26). It includes drawings, models and large sculptures. There is also the premiere of the new work by **Stephen Taylor Woodrow**, (previewed Performance 52) which has now found a title *Going Bye-Byes* (April 28-May 2). Details of all exhibitions and events: 0532 462495. ●

MULTIRACIAL UK

Artangel Trust the independently financed art in public places organisation have announced a new initiative to address the issue of the development of a **Multiracial culture**. They will be commissioning works over the next few months which specifically deal with multiracialism. Their first event is **Keith Piper's** *Chanting Heads* which is four huge heads mounted on a lorry each of which "speaks" with a different voice. The lorry will appear at locations throughout the north of England throughout **April**. Details: Artangel trust 01 434 2887. ●

GULBENKIAN RESEARCH AWARDS

+ **The Gulbenkian Foundation** have announced the projects selected for Research and Development Awards under their innovative **Large Scale Events** programme. They are **Artists Unlimited**, (Shoreham); **Neil Bartlett & Simon Mellor**, (London); **Bow Gamelan Ensemble**, (London); **Emergency Exit Arts**, (London); **Pip Greasley** (Leicester); **Mark Hopkins** (Bristol); **People Show & Jim Whiting** (London); **Marty St James & Anne Wilson** (Touring); **Alistair Snow**, (Glasgow); **Stefan Szczelcun**, (London); **Waterman's Art Centre**, (London); **Welfare State International**,

Model for *Chanting Heads* a travelling sculpture by Keith Piper

PERFORMANCE NEWS

(Barrow in Furness); **George Wyllie**, (Glasgow); **Zof Research**, (Lower Don Valley, Yorkshore). From these fourteen, three will be selected for major funding by the Foundation in June. ●

COMMON GROUND

+ **Common Ground**, the grassroots **cultural heritage** organisation, have launched a new programme which celebrates the love of place, its inhabitants, its history. This includes commissioning small sculptural works to be shown both in the environment and in a touring exhibition. There will also be a book and a conference to coincide with the exhibition which opens in the **Dorset County Museum**, Dorchester on July 16. Details: 0305 68092. ●

VIDEO NEWS Compiled by Nik Houghton

+ The **ICA**, London are following their highly successful sunday screenings of pop-promos and the recent video installations in the galleries with a new package focusing on four artists. **Ian Bourn, Patrick Keiller, Catherine Elwes and Mark Wilcox**. The artists will be present to discuss their work. Series starts Sunday April 3rd. Details: ICA, 01 629 9495. ●

+**Migrant Film and Video Collective** are a group of film/video artists from migrant and immigrant backgrounds. They are planning to establish a film/video workshop as well as holding a conference. Details: 01 226 2367. ●

+ The **French embassy** in London are offering **two bursaries** to British photographers/video makers whose work involves 'the body in motion.' The two award winners will attend a series of workshops at the **National Institute for Continuing Education** at **Marly-le-Roi**. Applicants MUST have a good knowledge of French. Details: Michelle Schueller, Bureau des Affaires Extra-Universitaires, Service Culturel, Ambassade de France, 22 Wilton Crescent, London SW1X. ●

+ **Films on Art 88**. The **Boyman Festival** in **Rotterdam** is looking for films on art to be included in their programme for distribiution and broadcast. Deadline April 30th. Details: Films On Art, Postbus 549, 3000 AM Rotterdam, Holland. ●

+ **Genlock**. A huge package of classic and newly commissioned video works organised by **Jez Welsh** and **Interim Art**, London starts touring soon. New works by **Isaac Julien and Jimmy Sommerville**, and **Kevin Atherton**. The exhibition is at Interim Art from June 5. Details: 01-318 0466. ●

+ **LVA News. London Video Arts** have been forced to change their name after legal threats from **John Cleese** who owns a production company of the same name. LVA are now officially **London Video Artists**. Big deal John. ●

+ **LVArtists** are currently looking for tapes by women and black artists to include in their distribution catalogues. They are interested in any work which is not documentary. Details: LVA 01-374 7410. ●

+ LVA have recently added new tapes by **Louise Foreshaw**, **Fran Hegarty**, **Isaac Julien** and **Jez Welsh** to their catalogue. ●

+ the **Lighthouse Film/Video** group in **Brighton** are looking for Video 8 tapes to include in the first **Video 8 Festival** coinciding with the Brighton Festival. (See ads for details). ●

+ One of **Michael Grade's** first confrontation with **Channel 4** was over the scheduling of the new *Ghosts in the Machine* series of experimental videos. It now looks set to begin broadcast in April. ●

+ **European Media Art Festival** (1-11 September) takes place in Osnabruck, W. Germany. The are looking for work which fits their subjects which this year are **computergraphics, holography, AV Networking and experimental film and video**. Details: Videolabyrinth, Oranienplatz 4, D-1000 West Berlin 36. Phone Berlin 657672. ●

Battersea Arts Centre's innovative **Sender** exhibition became a movie and now its on tour. Alongside Mineo Aayamaguchi's *Kaleidoscope* (see reviews), it will be at **Manchester City Art Gallery**, May 1-17. ●

STUDENT NEWS

In future we will run a regular section of news relating to student work. Festivals, meetings, courses, opportunities etc. This has come out of a meeting held recently at **Trent Polytechnic, Nottingham** which brought together a small number of colleges which run performance courses to discuss mutual problems and shared solutions. At this meeting tentative plans were laid to set up a **SWAP** scheme which would enable performance students to take their work to other colleges with similar interests. Future plans for a festival of student performance work were also discussed. Both of these ideas attempt to tackle the problems of giving students the confidence, encouragement and some relevant experience of the outside world to continue making performances after they leave college.

Performance Magazine has agreed to offer a regular bulletin board for information on these initiatives and other student realted projects. Colleges interested in finding out more about the SWAP proposal should in the first instance contact Barry Smith, Creative Arts, Trent Polytechnic, Clifton, Nottingham. ●

GUEST EDITORS

The next issue of Performance, No 54, is being edited in collaboration with **Projects UK**. Projects are well known as initiators and curators of a range of media works particularly in the north-east of England. The issue will focus on such issues as artists processes, site-specific work and mixed media works. ●

PHOTO / IAN SANDERSON

Palace Pier, Brighton

FROM RAG-BAG TO RICHES

The fortunes of the Brighton Festival are improving. It has more public money, more private money, greater visibility and popularity than ever before yet it still somehow fails to impress the arts establishment. STEVE ROGERS talks to the Festival director, Gavin Henderson, about the making of southern Britain's biggest festival.

GAVIN HENDERSON GOES for waistcoats, spotted cravats and an Oscar Wilde hair-do but it doesn't quite come off as it should. The aimed for dapperness is undermined by his natural, organic scruffiness. It's as if he would like to be an eccentric but can't really be bothered. This image fits closely with this view of Brighton itself. There has always been at least two views of the south coasts largest resort town. One is the elegant seaside retirement home, the other is the familiar Brighton Rock idea of a 'town built on misbehaviour'. There is faded grandeur and there is the 'wide boy' small-time wheeler-dealer but increasingly there is London overspill not just of business commuters but also of artists who are forced out of the capital by prices and excess competition. The Zap Club has played a key role in developing a new arts audience in Brighton. Its mix of rock and cabaret alongside performance art and new theatre is one of the few 'cross-over' experiments popular a few years ago that has actually worked. It has nurtured a whole new generation of alternative cabaret artists as well as a few performance artists. Brighton Polytechnic's once ailing expressive arts course has revived under Liz Aggis whose own Divas company and recent students Etheldreda are both featured in the festival. All of these ingredients go into Brighton and all go into the festival.

The festival's history is as atypical as the town itself. It was started in 1967 when Brighton was a centre of 60's alternatives. But very soon after that it was appropriated by the burgher elements and for seventeen years it was what Henderson calls a 'mail order' festival. Safe, traditional and irretrievably provincial. One of the problems he has to contend with in putting the festival back on the map, both locally, nationally and internationally, is the town's proximity to the capital. Brighton residents, many of whom already work in London, are quite used to going up to town for their entertainment. The festival also needs to attract audiences down from London. So there is little point putting on anything which can already be seen in London or which will tour to London after Brighton. Another problem of Brighton is its lack of good performing and visual arts venues. There are arts spaces but none of them is a good touring house, especially for middle to large scale international work.

The criteria then for programming the festival are that it must reflect and satisfy the needs of the cities diverse population, it cannot overlap or compete with London, it has few ideal arts spaces, it must attract financial support from its leftish Labour council as well as corporate sponsorship from its biggest local employers, notably Trustcard, yet it must be high profile

enough to attract visitors from throughout the region as well as from across the channel. Given the variety of often conflicting demands made on the festival it is not difficult to understand why Brighton Festival seems to lack any really strong coherent artistic identity which is often the source of the arts establishment's criticism of the programming. But in trying to provide a bit of something for everyone Gavin Henderson sees advantages as well as disadvantages.

For a start, Henderson sees the lack of ideal modern facilities as having a good side. 'I think there is a danger that if we had a big major opera house, a big number one theatre, it would gobble up the resources we've got at the moment and we'd end up with an opera and dance and mainstream lyric theatre festival.' In future years he hopes to exploit even further the lack of venues by developing and commissioning site-specific works. They have in the past presented some such works, notably Carbone 14 in a warehouse and I.O.U. There are already tentative plans to use the West Pier as a stage, with the audience in boats. This is a project dreamed up with Industrial and Domestic Theatre Contractors who have already developed site-specific works in the town and have created an environmental work for this year's festival at the new Red Herring Gallery.

The proximity to London has forced him to take a different approach than is usual to his international programming. He has to seek out companies and artists who are not already well known in Britain. The well known ones, as well as being generally more expensive, are unlikely to come to Britain and not perform in London. Indeed London will inevitably take precedent over Brighton. Henderson sees this as being both an exciting challenge and a thankless task. Of course all arts programmers would like to think that they can help create a reputation for as yet unknown artists but inevitably once they do become famous, the leg up they received early on from someone brave enough to take the risk and put them on without the built in audience that goes hand-in-hand with fame, gets forgotten.

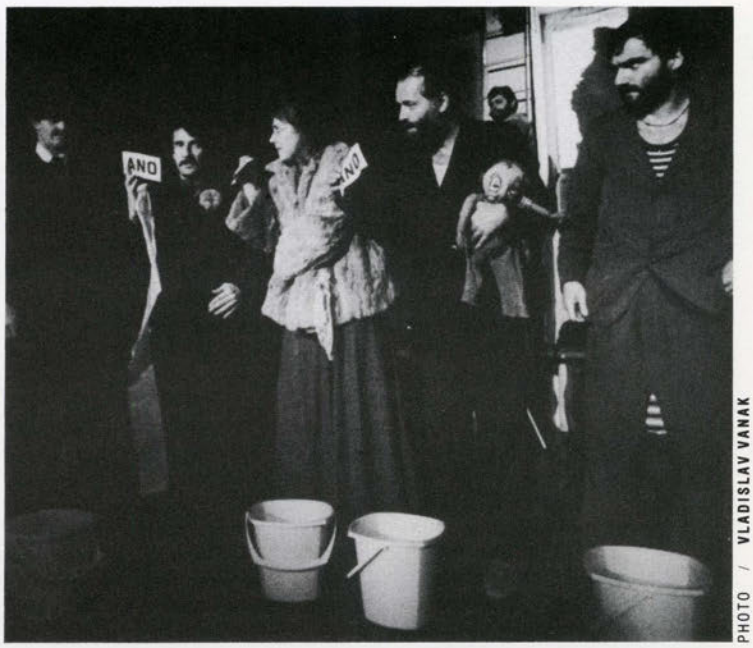
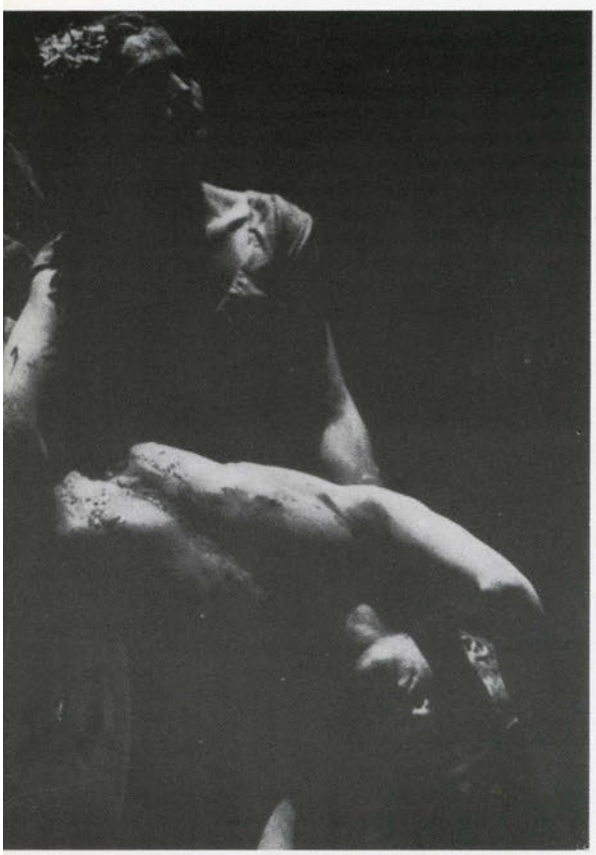


PHOTO / VLADISLAV VANAK

Theatre on a String
Ballet Macabre



Teatro Mascarà *In Attesta Dei Soccorsi (1986)*

One of the advantages of a festival programme that includes both symphony orchestras and performance artists is that you can use one to support the other. Performance art is difficult to fund. It is unpopular with both public and private funders. Symphony orchestras on the other hand are quite attractive to corporate sponsors. By a neat piece of footwork it is possible to make a bit of surplus on your sponsored symphony concerts and use it to put on the kind of arts that wouldn't in a million years get American Express to sponsor it. It is one of the well known tactics of festival programming. Gavin Henderson confessed to being quite proud of achieving this in the festival this year yet there is little sign of anything really contentious in the programme as a result. Given the profile of the festival and the nature of the Brighton audience it's a pity there isn't some really radical work in it. It's good to see Housewatch there, along with Forkbeard Fantasy, Ralf Ralf and Sylvia Ziranek a return visit from the Czech company Theatre on a String and Teatro Mascara from Florence. The performance highlight of the festival is likely to be the British premiere of the company formed out of the Magdalena Project held in Cardiff last year. Directed by the extraordinary Polish artist Zofia Kalinska the production includes women artists from around the world, including, surprisingly, New Zealand.

The festival has grown immeasurably in the last three years. Already the advance box office sales has surpassed the entire income of the 1983 festival. But everything isn't rosy in the garden. Brighton has been heavily rate-capped. This hasn't stopped the council increasing their grant to the festival this year. But rate-capping has at least three more years to go.

Looking at the festival brochure is at times a mind and patience stretching exercise. There is so much there and the kaleidoscopic layout is hard to focus on. It is I suppose, a bit like Brighton itself all the well known and clichéd images but lurking under these there are some real gems. Gavin Henderson is fond of coining quotable phrases. (Years of promoting art can have that effect.) One of his favourites is to compare Brighton in the 1980's with Liverpool in the 1960's. 'Every new fashion, cabaret artists and hair-do seems to start here.' I can only hope that Brighton in the 1990's won't be like Liverpool in the 1970's. ●

Brighton Festival runs from May 6-29. Full programme details are available from Brighton Arts Information Centre, 111 Church St, Brighton BN1 1UD. 0273 676926.

The articles commissioned for this issue concentrate on the relationship of performance to fine art. Nevertheless, the questions they raise inevitably belong inside a much wider context for performance, within which they are intended to be addressed to all areas of current development in 'experimental' work. Each article deals with an area of debate surrounding contemporary art practice. All follow the rationale that performance occupies a relational rather than isolationist position within contemporary art. This relational position is illustrated perfectly in the work of three major artists, two European and one British, profiled here. The performance work which Marina Abromovič and Ulay and Tina Keane began in the mid 70's has been developed consistently through a decade largely hostile to 'time based' art, to the point where it is recognised and understood as a major and important component of an activity which also embraces video, film, installation, photography and drawing, acknowledging the gallery whilst simultaneously moving far beyond it.

The questions surrounding the role of documentation as record or artwork, as 'truth' or distortion, as a separate unit of artistic value from the 'documented', and the associated problems of context and representation, are fundamental to all the artists' work discussed in this issue (including reviews). All also occupy a role of particular significance in Marina Abramovič and Ulay's Great Wall of China project and its associated material. In the relationship between performance and sculpture, the object itself can become the record of document of a presence, the physical residue, proof or catalystic container of action.

The centre pages are a collaboration with the artist Kate Smith. The piece forms part of a three-way debate on the problem of depicting male sexuality in art. As Kate Love points out, arguments concerning sexuality have until recently almost exclusively been centred around female sexuality. As the lessons of the 60's and 70's are slowly absorbed and new conventions established, a significant shift in emphasis and direction must now take place. ●

Chrissie Iles

TINA KEANE

MICHAEL O'PRAY profiles one of Britain's most important artists working in installation, video and performance.

THE MOST POWERFUL slogan of the 70s was 'the personal is the political' and for many women artists, this redefining of what was meant by 'politics' transformed personal experiences, domestic practices etc into the very foundations, the content and form of their work. Thus, it is no accident that time-based art and performance became central to the history of British women artists since 1970. Tina Keane is not only one of the most influential and important practitioners of mixed media work but also one of its founding figures in the women's art movement. She has described the role of women in performance particularly as being 'more important in the development of feminist art than in any other media or area because it really cuts through'. To such an extent, her work insistently merges art and politics, by bringing art practices like film, video, installation and performance to bear upon her own personal experiences, perceptions and context.

Keane began as a painter. But when she left art school in the late 60s she turned to light shows and light organs, very much part of the 60s' Arts-lab multi-media ('expanded') aesthetic with its impact on the traditional 'autonomous' arts of painting, sculpture and theatre. During these early years she worked with painting in light and sound, 'total environment' pieces, alongside Stuart Brisley and Marc Chiamowicz at the Sigi Kraus Gallery. Perhaps more importantly in the early 70s she became a member of the Artists' Union, formed in the aftermath of the 1971 Art Spectrum show at Alexandra Palace and set up to give artists more political clout. She was active as a convenor in the Women Artists' Group. Quite rapidly, by 1971, women artists of the Union had set up the Women's Workshop, whose energy and direction was both political and aesthetic, with an emphasis on collective work.

Keane showed at the first all-women exhibition in July 1974 at the Arts Meeting Place organised by the Women's Workshop. In 1975 she made her first video, *Hands*, a political piece. And in 1976, on the Edinburgh Arts' Journey (organised by Richard Demarco), and accompanied by her small daughter Emily, she made a Super 8 film (which later became *Shadow of a Journey*) and completed her break with painting. In interview, Keane has pinpointed her attractions of performance — its 'of-the-moment' quality, feedback properties and the fact that performance 'provided women with a significant tool for discovering the meanings of being a woman.' Importantly, in contrast to facile artistic representation of feminism, Keane felt that performance demanded 'putting oneself on the line.'

Her work from this period onwards involved mixed media, typically film, video tape, objects and performance. In the case of *Shadow Woman (1976)*, for example, she included her daugher in the performance. The role of her daughter in her work was to be developed and was responsible for strong and unique resonances. In *Shadow Woman*, her daughter playing hopscotch is set against the universality of a woman's life. Tam Giles has noted this 'strategy of juxtaposition of two separate elements, one a specific focus, the other a continuum.'

Towards the end of the 70's she became involved in the new women's distribution group Circles, together with a number of activists and film-makers. Originally Circles was to be mixed-media based, but developed into a women's film and video distribution organisation. In the early 1980s, Keane began teaching in the Film and Video section of St Martin's College of Art, then headed by Malcolm Le Grice. And for the past three years she has served on the Arts Council's influential Film and Video Artists' Subcommittee.

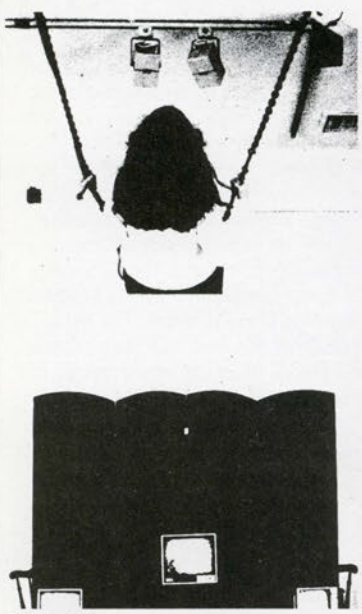
Keane claims that her work is primarily to do with 'identity and play.' For her, art is play and we learn to play. On this matter, she is at one with Freudian influenced ideas about the role of play in early childhood learning. It is perhaps no accident that, by and large, the most influential purveyors of this view in psycho-analysis have been women — Melanie Klein, Anna Freud (both working largely with children) and Marion Milner (the latter's memorable book *On Not Being Able to Paint* has been singularly influential on Keane's ideas). Thus, for Keane, play is never a trivial pursuit. It is a merging of pleasure, learning, ritual, history, fantasy and communality. Equally, in this century, the notion of understanding has been bound up with the Wittgensteinian idea of 'language-games', whereby knowledge is achieved through social practice and language and not through some abstract essentialism. In Tina Keane's works this idea is explored from an artistic viewpoint.

In many ways, Keane was typical of those women artists who incorporated the experience of having a child into their work, including Mary Kelly and Susan Hiller. This was a strategy pitched at a series of levels. It was both a critique of the male formalist art work endemic to the 70s; it was a subjective (although far from undisciplined or mystical) response to the art work itself and it was an opening out of the artistic process onto the ordinary experiences of women. In Keane's view, performance had an

'She'
Video/Performance
Hayward Gallery, 1978

extra benefit in its accessibility. Even more so, it required no equipment and very few resources — only sincerity and something to say. It was also an art form unburdened by an enormous history and in which its openness could be explored by women in a way impossible in traditional art forms. Furthermore, the experience of performance is intrinsically social and collective, immediate and complex. However, Keane has always refused any easy identification with a single form — performance, video art, avant-garde film, third-area. Keane's social-art background is grounded very much in this rich inter-textuality. Together with her choice of subject matter, it is the most important factor in the uniqueness of her work.

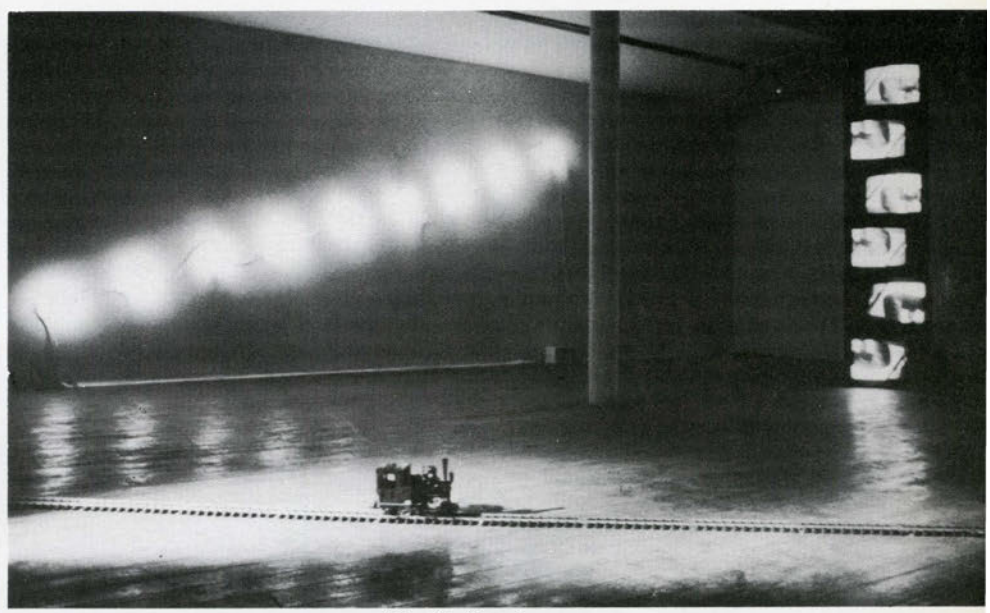
The notion of the 'game' is a hallmark of her work and has been used in both relatively simple and complex ways. For example, in *Clapping Songs* commissioned by Audio Arts in 1981 for the Riverside Studios,



'The Swing'
Serpentine Gallery, 1978

London, the approach is very direct and uncluttered. She used a slide-tape of two girls (her daughter and a friend) playing clapping games. The sound-tape is a series of clapping game songs which take us through the vicissitudes of life itself, including birth, childhood, courtship, marriage and death. Characteristically, the verses are larded with 'bad taste', sexuality and a morbid fascination with death (the body will 'rot, rot, rot!'). There is a strong sense (as in *Shadow Woman*) of the dialectic between concrete history (the ever-continuing generations of girls playing these games) and the universal rituals of play as learning.

In a different vein, in *Playpen (1979)*, Keane uses her performance to complicate the installation, which comprises two monitors and a playpen in which Keane sits with a camera manipulating one monitor's images. On the other monitor is a tape of females aged from 6 months to 80 years. The equivalence of play with art is here quite overt but there are more subtle points being made: namely, the idea of imprisonment in having an adult in the playpen caged by the determinism of infancy and by the barrier set up by adulthood against the experience of childhood. We are also imprisoned biologically — by the simple but traumatic ageing process itself. The piece is an attempt to both display these ideas and resolve them. But there is no easy solution here, for Keane, characteristically, expresses a more pessimistic statement in the image of the artist working the camera in the pen, separated off from the monitors embodied (literally) in *Playpen*, that of the alienation of the artist from the resources, power and even ability to represent through art. There is an ironic humour at work in this representation of the artist, an undercurrent of wit common to much of her work.

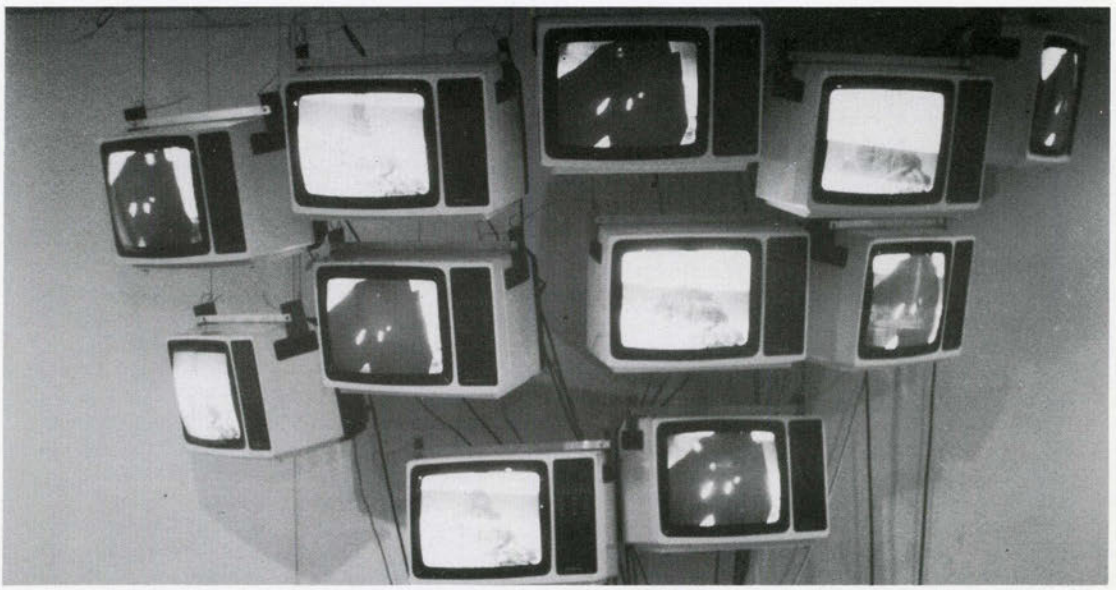


'Demolition/Escape'
Installation Air Gallery, 1983

In *Swings* made for the Serpentine Gallery, London in 1978, Keane uses a large child's swing set up before three monitors placed in front of a four-part dividing screen. The invitation to participation is strong, based on the perennial pleasures of swings surviving long past childhood itself. Keane encourages the spectator to use the swing, and through the device of the camera filming the participant she explores her ideas of 'play and identity', but in a way which is probably double-edged. For the adult, the experience has a disturbing aspect both in the transgressing of adult codes and 'becoming' a child, and in the memory of earlier childhood experiences triggered by the installation. However, for the child, where such memories are in the making, the self-reflective power of the camera is easily absorbed as a further element of 'swing-play' itself.

Keane has stated that communication is fundamentally important for her. To this end, philosophical ideas embedded in her pieces are always mediated through everyday 'unnoticed' objects which are then recontextualised. She says that her works are always 'attempts to escape cliche and preconceived ideas.' The art works are metaphorical at one level. For example, the swing is a metaphor for movement between worlds — childhood and adulthood, for ambiguity of feeling, and for an hypnotic state of pleasure not far away from that of sexual feeling. Ladders are similarly metaphorical for Keane, suggesting imprisonment, escape, pliability and anxiety (try climbing a rope ladder).

In her famous installation *Demolition/ Escape* which originated as a soundwork and exists also as a video tape, Keane is at her most subtle and imaginative. A large model steam railway engine moves back and forth across the floor. A yellow indicator lights up as it moves forward and a red one when it reverses. On the right of the track is a vertical column of six monitors placed alternatively upside-down so that the column resembes a



A Bouquet
Video Installation
Royal College of Art,
1984

steep staircase. The monitors show a sequence of the artist crawling with difficulty along the floor and then ascending the ladder. On the wall behind is a diagonally ascending from left to right, line of blue neon numbers. As Jean Fisher has suggested, the whole piece constitutes a 'three-dimensional triangle.' The first impression on being faced with the piece in a darkened gallery is of a disturbing, eerie atmosphere created by the animation of the train moving backwards and forwards, the sounds of the struggling woman on the monitors and the static glowing blue neon lights.

Demolition/Escape speaks of a childhood heavily infused with fantasy. The emotional struggle of the artist 'imprisoned in' the monitors (for art is always an aggressive drawing-in and fettering as well as some kind of liberation) is taunted by the cold rational mechanical 'stare' of the train in its pointless movement back and forth, and by the equally empty rise of the numbers — rationality to no purpose except as an illusion of knowledge, and to that end a prison of sorts. This is the darker side of childhood (at least for this viewer).The struggling woman on the monitors has all the quality of the common anxiety dream of escaping some dreadful fate only to find oneself transfixed, moving on the spot despite one's efforts to run. The installation is a formidable success.

In the 1980s, Tina Keane has been prolific by installation standards. This is partly due, she believes, to a renewed interest in her work by younger gallery curators, which has meant commissions and funding for new work, so that she has been less reliant on state funding as such. In 1984 she produced *Bouquet* for the Royal College of Art *Cross Currents Show*. A group of monitors act as 'flowers', their leads brought together to imitate stems. Some of the footage was shot at Greenham, other sections (in Super 8) were of landscape and particular objects. The Greenham Common demonstration was a natural subject-matter for Keane. The use of 'primitive' elements like songs, rituals and sounds from the buried history of women was very much in tune with

Faded Wallpaper
Video Installation/
Performance
Tate Gallery, 1987

Keane's own ideas. However, in this installation she relates the footage of women at the camp to images of a stark stone monument to Maggie Wall, a 'witch' burnt in the late 17th century.

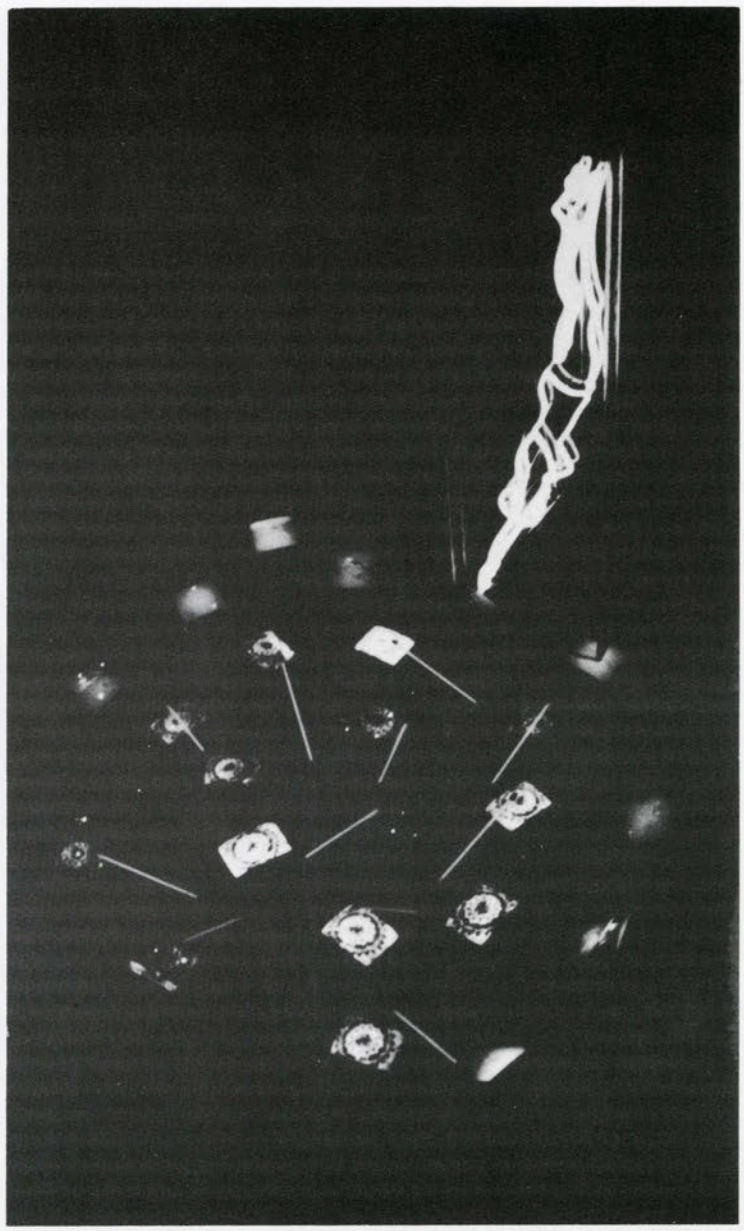
In her related installation (which also exists as a video) *In Our Hands Greenham*, hands are used to represent a web through which silhouette we see images of Greenham, thus portraying notions of entrapment, of silent menace, of subterfuge and of victory (the spider's web is the most fundamental image of how to beat an enemy). Typically, this image is ambiguous between women being trapped and themselves trapping. Also characteristic is her use in *Bouquet* of the folk-lore of witchcraft and folk songs (adapted like children's to topical events). The monitors brought together like a bouquet of flowers is the installation's 'structural' celebration of the Greenham movement as *In Our Hands Greenham* is tribute to it.

In recent years, the installations have become more ambitious. *Media Snake*, for example, shown first at the ICA, comprised monitors on plinths of varying heights curving in the space in imitation of a snake. The images were of a snake itself, slowly and sensuously moving, set against found images from TV, e.g. Joan Collins from *Dynasty*, Nancy and Ronald Reagan, synchronised underwater dancers and so forth. The artist has spoken of the ancient dual symbolism of the snake — an object of fear, love and reverence which merges both good and evil. The problems of female identity are posed by the images of Joan Collins as object of emulation, desire and dissatisfaction. Implicit also is a critique of American cultural imperialism.

In her slide-tape/video/performance piece at the Tate Gallery, *Faded Wallpaper (1988)* which developed from an installation made for the Serpentine Gallery in 1986, and was premiered in Canada (like the *In Our Hands Greenham* installation), she creates an electrifying atmosphere of hysteria and madness undercut with an irony. She has spoken of the control over self-identity in relation to this piece. Keane's own performance stresses women's fear which brings about a rigidity and passivity. Audience involvement is strong through this spare but powerful performance and its ironic use of music. In a review, Reg Skene wrote that we 'had been taken into a real and terrifying area of our own inner space' and the work was a 'vindication of performance art . . . capable of powerful psychological impact.'

There is no doubt that in *Faded Wallpaper*, as in her recent installation *The Diver* and her forthcoming installation *Escalator* for the Riverside Studios, London (opening 23rd March), the emotional range is broader, engaging with aspects of popular culture (*Media Snake* was perhaps her first piece to explore fully these broader icons of Western culture), and conveying a strong feeling for collective experiences (swimming pools, houses, London Underground), all evocative of a communal landscape saturated in the social and the political, and more distant from the domestic. Once again the universality of the emotion is lodged in a particularity, a unique time and place.

It is true to say that Keane's work has been very much in step with her maturation as a mother. With her daughter's growth (she is now in her mid teens), Keane has traced a journey in which her relationship to her child and its attendant feelings, experiences and perceptions have developed and found expression in her art, until she now finds herself confronting more global concerns. However, the motifs remain — of steps and a journey in *Escalator*; of exclusion and play in *Faded Wallpaper* and so forth. Finally, it is easy to overlook a prominent aspect of her work, as we have become so familiar with its presence, that is, its beauty and aesthetic pleasure. But this beauty is never vacuous or decorative or purely formal, always being inflected through a wit, an ironic playfulness and an imagination that renders her work accessible and radical — the fulfilment of her early desires for her art. ●



The Diver
Installation
Stoke-on-Trent City Museum & Art Gallery, Nov 1987-Jan 1988

TAKING A LINE FOR A WALK

Marina Abramovič and Ulay have described themselves as "the grandmother and grandfather of performance art". For twelve years they have used their personal relationship as a vehicle for exploring human and trans-cultural relations. On March 30th they begin their most arduous and ambitious project to date — a walk across the Great Wall of China, each beginning at either end of the Wall. The walk will take approximately five months. It is the first time they will work separately since their meeting twelve years ago. The following interview is extracted from a conversation between Chrissie Iles and the artists in Amsterdam on February 6th 1988, four weeks before their departure for China.

PHOTO / SILVIO WOLF

AAA-AAA
February 1978
R.T.B., Liége

Chrissie Iles: Your engagement with ancient cultures led you to China. How did the Great Wall project come about?

Marina Abramovič: In 1980 we were in Australia in the desert and one of us started talking about three different positions of the human body which we include in our performance — standing, sitting and lying. We had done performances with sitting and lying and were talking about standing, in the way of expanse standing, and of making a very long walk where we could do that. We were also interested in the comment from astronauts that from the moon the Wall of China is the only visible construction made by human hands. We researched the whole story and found a little poetry made in the second century called *The Confession of the Great Wall*. It was written "The earth is small and blue. I am a little crack in it." That was precisely the information the astronauts gave twenty centuries later as a description of the wall. This ancient vision of outer space and actual vision of the astronauts made a very interesting combination. Doing the walk was the solution of that thinking.

Ulay: For me it was walking. The last five years from 1981-5 we have been sitting, doing nothing, and I think we need some movement. Also to measure landscape with your own body. I have not much more to say about it. We have been researching this project for five years and it has become thoroughly political and extremely difficult, and now finally we have a deadline for March 30th to start. Talking now about the wall is talking about the concept, and I would be much happier to talk about it after I have had the experience, because it will have a tremendous effect on us walking for five or six months on our own. She crosses all the eastern mountains and I cross the southern periphery of the Gobi Desert. The effect on you not talking for a long time is profound. It relates to all the work we have done before, which has always had a self therapeutic implication. Some people don't like it when I say this but I think it is important. And so has the walk of course. It is maybe the most ambitious project we have ever done, but at the same time one of the simplest in execution.

Marina: Researching the history of the Wall we found a lot of interesting points which contributed to our idea and generated more energy to make the decision to walk. Everybody knows the Wall of China was built for defence reasons to keep the northern tribes from the country. Building began 2-300 years before Christ and took twenty centuries. Each dynasty had a different relationship and approach to the wall. Some of them built more of it and some of them destroyed it — an endless process of construction, destruction. In Mao Tse Tung's time they would take the pieces of the wall and build houses and factories. Now they are preserving the wall as a policy. When they started to build the wall, the idea was that it was completely complementary to the landscape and looked like a dragon from far away.

Ulay: Like a ribbon which was allowed to fall and contain the position

of the land — totally at odds with manpower costs, time, and the usual straight defence patterns.

CI: So you are tracing it with your bodies, like a finger on a map.

Marina: Yes. They say that to follow this line is to follow a path built on the same principle of energy grids as Stonehenge, Celtic monuments and Greek orthodox churches. They talk about the dragon and of the beginning of the wall as the dragon head, which lies in the Yellow Sea, where I will start my part. To make this dragon be inside the sea they sank five or six ships. I want to start swimming from here so that I come up at the dragon head, which corresponds to the dragon head in the stars of our Milky Way. At the beginning of the wall is one very old engraving which says 'The first path on earth.' When you come to the end of the wall, which relates to the tail of the dragon, again a star, there is another inscription which says 'The heroic path to the sky'. It's like a wall marriage between earth and sky. It looks like a mirror image of the Milky Way. All these elements are very exciting. They also relate to the idea of male and female energy which is part of our work. The work starts for Ulay in the Gobi Desert, to do with fire, and I start in the water, as a female. This walk will bring about some physical and mental changes, and condition us to make work apart. We don't see the walk itself as a work. I see it more as a conditioning of my body and mind from bad condition to making work. If you follow that energy line all the way something happens to you.

CI: Thomas McEvilley describes your relationship with other cultures as "an allegorical activity of lovers (of each other and) of the surrounding world", a development of your relational work with each other into a "global and transcultural embrace". What does this relationship give to your work?

Ulay: We are city people. When we spend a lot of our time travelling round the world, trying to meet however we can with ancient cultures, we assimilate and generate something, as far as we can with our mind, emotions and understanding, and bring it back and somehow transcribe it into an art form. But lately I am a bit sad about the fact that I cannot function in what I am doing within those ethnic groups, there is no place for this, maybe no undestanding for it.

CI: Why not?

Ulay: Because we are what we are. We are European contemporary artists and these people are very traditional.

Marina: Art has a very strong function there, but is not art in a European sense. Art is part of the culture and there are very strict rules, it is to explain religion or spiritual ways, and everything outside it is not necessary. It is purely functional.

CI: Your work is classical in the purest sense of functioning outside time. It also deals with consciousness, as other cultures do. But time has a very different meaning for ancient cultures; so does the activity of performance.

Ulay: There are difficulties with the work we have been carrying out for the last five years. In particular this whole series of *Night Sea Crossing* performances.[1] Here you communicate even in silence; but silence is no longer really understood as a means for possible communication. We are talking heads. There are other misunderstandings. In other societies, Tibetan or Aboriginal for example, we can sit anywhere in silence and people would place us right away, they would understand.

CI: How would they place you?

Ulay: They would respect what you were doing as meditation. If my intention would be of a more demonstrative kind, to do a performance in such a society, they wouldn't bother to understand the different concept behind it. They would take it in the same way. Except some people would understand that of course I am European.

CI: Your work relies on this special communication which involves complete trust, a kind of symbiosis. Does that ever break down?

Ulay: What seems to be the trust and the understanding and these kinds of qualities is of course partly due to the fact that this is not just a working relationship. We have also lived 24 hours a day together for twelve years. This has recently changed.

Marina: Apart from the idea that we are born on the same day,[2] and that our work starts from these synchronised feelings.

Ulay: At the beginning we had a fantastic idea that was about unity, the possibility of becoming one, which now I consider a fantastic idea which is possible at certain moments but in general not possible.

CI: The process of attaining new levels of consciousness through discipline and endurance involves the experience of pain as a central component. How do you use it?

Ulay: Pain is different for everybody. Pain is involved in our existence and therefore it is important to deal with it, in a different way to taking an aspirin. We have learnt that there are ways of dealing with it. If you integrate and demonstrate pain using the body as a material, then you can do something painful. But you have to make something from it. The moment you succeed, by sheer concentration, then you go over pain. It becomes a sculpture. Eventually it goes. I never experienced pain in the early work, which was very aggressive, because although you experience really painful things, you are in such a special state that you don't feel it. The early work was really a discharging exercise. Later it became a charging and recharging exercise.

PHOTO / MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ/ULAY

Modus Vivendi
Polaroids 1983

In *Night Sea Crossing*, because of the motionlessness of sitting, pain is involved automatically; you have to sit through it, and unless you know how to deal with it you can't be motionless. You become tense and when you are tense you are in trouble. In this particular work, sitting for seven hours a day sometimes for sixteen days fasting and in silence, you are awake, very alert, and permanently have your body and mind in control. If that slips away you are in trouble. If you want to paint you need a lot of techniques. With them you express yourself — they become your particular handwriting, your touch, which is visible. Here the techniques are totally invisible. Even the results with having handled a particular technique do not express or describe the techniques.

CI: How were the results different for both of you at the end of each piece?

Ulay: Simple reasons. It is easier for a woman to sit because of anatomy. I still have two big scars on my bum from sitting through on my two bones. Marina's metabolism is much slower than mine. I could never fast as long as Marina. My maximum would be 21 days, Marina 40. You must know these kinds of things because if you overdo it, it can be fatal. Marina sat like Buddha. I sat more out of a discipline. She went through terrific pain, mainly in the upper region, round the neck, shoulders and back. Mine came from my back upwards. Also she deals very differently with pain and feels it differently.

CI: How do you feel when you end each piece?

Ulay: We don't talk first of all. If I keep silent for more than six or seven days I have no words any more. My voice is gone. I have to breathe differently again, to re-articulate. I always wanted to use this, because it sounds strange but interesting. In China I will walk mostly without talking. Not that I will keep silence as part of the concept, but I will be walking round the periphery of the Gobi desert where there is no population at all. I will lose my voice and most likely if I keep this up for five or six months I will have to learn talking again. Maybe I'll manage this time without an accent!

CI: Technology has accelerated our concept of time. You engage with ancient cultures and yet are using high technology (video, satellite) for the project. It seems a very postmodern concept.

Ulay: I am an enemy of Post-modernism. Modernism still had an appreciation for tradition. Postmodernism cut itself totally off from tradition. It is ungrateful to whatever happened. The work, whatever you see in it, is only a tiny portion of what it really should become. It can find its richness and fullness if it involves the whole life, if you choreograph your whole existence. The work will restructure itself through how we live.

CI: A kind of distillation and purity of life.

Ulay: I always try to subtract from things, to make it more open for people to communicate, rather than add and narrow it and make it like 'this is mine, you must understand what it means'. When the *Night Sea Crossing* piece was over after 90 days it was a problem because — what else can you do? It is so simple. This is no longer a performance; it is almost two-dimensional. You are both in profile, there is no motion, you are objects, there is a man and a woman sitting. Always we work en-face, never facing the audience, always from the side, very two-dimensional; there is no motion.

CI: Doesn't the male/female principle which informs all your work oversimplify the distinctions?

Marina: Not really, Ulay is a male but he has a very strong other part that is very fragile, which sometimes comes out in performances.

Ulay: And I have a very strong woman inside me.

Marina: And I also have a very strong male part, a real male force. It all combines. When they mix we create something which is 'it', a third quality, which has an independent life. That is why the form of working man and woman together is harder, because the work of art is hermaphroditic. All these elements in one can make really a very strong impact.

Ulay I have been a transvestite. I did work for two years; not just making photographs at home, but in society. I was sticking round with transvestites and transexuals, because I wanted to explore my femaleness.

Marina: When I met him, half his face was shaved with a moustache and short hair and the other part had long hair and make-up.

CI: In the catalogue *Modus Vivendi*[3] the Dalai Lama is asked: "When emptiness first appears in the mind, what is it like?" I ask you the same question.

Marina: In our performances of *Night Sea Crossing*, where we sit for long periods of time, up to seven hours a day, there are some points where we enter into that state. When the flow of thinking stops, it is like a curtain opening. You have a complete awareness of here and now, no past and no future. Mostly we live in the past or the future. In the *Night Sea Crossing* performances it was very important coming to that state because we could communicate with the public the most at that moment of time when we felt what they saw — two people sitting at the table here and now. They are sitting with the body and the mind.

CI: The audience often chooses to remain with you for long periods.

Ulay: Some of them for seven hours.

CI What sense of communication do you feel with them then?

Marina: It is very strong. If they come to the room and see people sitting at the table, they can stay one minute and go away, because there is no performance structure which means you have to sit and look. We are just one object like any object in a museum, except that we are alive. But just the fact that we sit for such a long time in that state means the space has differently charged air.

Ulay: First of all your whole perception changes, because you are not looking for visual information and orientation; you go by smell and sound first. Your vision becomes larger. If you have a good day, it becomes 360 degrees. But a different vision.

Marina: You don't see with your eyes, you see with your body.

Ulay: I recognise people coming in by their smell as clear as seeing them with my eyes. When we were sitting in New York, John Cage came in, sat for 3½ hours and I knew it. I recognised his soap, because he buys in a Greek shop this natural olive soap. Cage has always dealt with particular audiences. He went out and said the audience was aweful, as in the way people behave in a church, with a kind of a respect. They walked on their toes, trying not to make a sound.

CI: How are you affected by the audience?

Ulay: The piece is only good when you succeed first in dropping your ego and personality. If you don't succeed and you sit there as 'I', you get a heart attack because of people's comments. You must never grasp any comments because they are very heavy, personally directed as something negative and aggressive. You are extremely vulnerable.

CI: How will the absence of an audience affect your work?

Ulay: If you talk with Hamish Fulton or Richard Long, the most important part of their work is their walk which nobody witnesses. What they deliver has nothing to do with that process. Particularly not if you take a photograph during the walk. The act of taking the photograph would be the most authentic moment. To go home and make a print from it has nothing to do with it. That's why I

stopped making conventional photographs and films, only polaroid and video, so that there is no delay of remoteness between the actual moment and the result. The immediate communication of perfomance and video is that what we shoot is what we show, we don't edit. With Polaroid the moment you do it, it exists. Polaroid is not instant. Video is instant; there is no other medium that is so instant. That is why we work with these three.

Because there will be no audience witnessing that we are doing, that means the doing will be different, because if you are exposed to an audience, there are qualities which are consciously chosen and executed because you want to immediately communicate, you want to take care of your audience. In this project we don't care about the audience but we will be exposed all the time to the elements. The last time I talked to Hamish (Fulton) he said — 'We perceive the world through glass; we live in isolation; we are no longer exposed to the elements.' We will live in a tent and stay outdoors. Nature can be very threatening. We will make a lot of mistakes at the beginning and the effect will be of a kind that the work afterwards will show. It is not a conceptual change, but a change of what we are at the time. And that's how we generate the work.

CI: How is the film going to be made?

Ulay: We are not filming during the actual walk except maybe at the beginning and end, because when I walk I walk, when I work for film I work for film. Working on film is better if you are 100 per cent with it. So we will make it afterwards. Also the walk itself is an important part of writing the script. We will meet situations and locations which are important to determine beforehand. The Chinese need to know beforehand exactly where you need to go and for how long.

CI: Are you going to meet in the middle?

Ulay: You cannot predict the meeting point. You can make estimates about the number of kilometres you progress every day, but it is not a wise thing to do. This is too concerned with concept. The whole concept is linear.

CI: Your complete passivity to audience and space/place has exposed you to very real personal danager. How far would you allow a situation to go?

Marina: In my own work I did once let it go very far. It was in Napoli. I did a performance in March 1973 called *Rhythm Zero*. We decided to be objects for six hours without moving, just dressed in the middle of the space. I had placed on the table about 75 different objects for pain and pleasure. All kinds of objects, like flowers, paint, needles, a hammer, including a pistol with one bullet in it. I wrote like a menu card 'I am an object, everybody can use anything on the table on me and I take full responsibility for six hours.' I really felt for the first time in my life that the audience can kill. But I went through it. They tried all the objects.

At first in the beginning it was a pleasant experience. They put the rose on me and painted my face. Later it became more and more aggressive, to the point where someone cut me and drank my blood, and put the needles and the rose in my stomach. Another person took the pistol and put it to my head and wanted me to push the trigger slowly. He though that I would resist, but I was so crazy I would not, I couldn't, it was part of the performance. Then somebody else took the pistol and threw it away. You could have done anything and I would have stayed in that position. I didn't offer any resistance.

CI: What happened to you afterwards?

Marina: After six hours it finished. The moment I could move the public were out of the door as soon as possible. No-one could face me. The next day they started phoning, and didn't know what had really happened and why they did it. I knew that was the furthest I could go. In the days of body art you could cut yourself or all kinds of aggressive acts and they were always criticised as masochistic, but you could control how far you could go because it was you who was doing it. In this case it was a complete surrender to the audience. There is no limit; you absolutely don't know. It was the most dangerous work I've ever done. Ulay exposed himself to another danger in the performance called *There Is A Criminal Touch In Art.*

Ulay: It wasn't really a performance; more an event in public spaces.

Marina: In this example he left the protective field of being an artist and became art in real life. It was in the Berlin National Gallery. He stole a very important German painting.

Ulay: It was *'The Poor Poet'*, a German Romantic painting by a German painter called Carl Spitzweg, Hitler's favourite. He made a series of paintings in which he criticised the bourgeoisie. After his death the image was turned into an opposite image of the artist's existence in poverty. I was educated with this painting and the idea that the artist has to suffer under those circumstances to be creative. I made a large photo reproduction of this piece and hung it over the main entrance to the Academy of Fine Art, blocking it. Then I went to the National Gallery and took the original painting from the wall. I ran into a car and drove to an area in Berlin which is now mainly inhabited by Turkish foreign workers. It also contains the

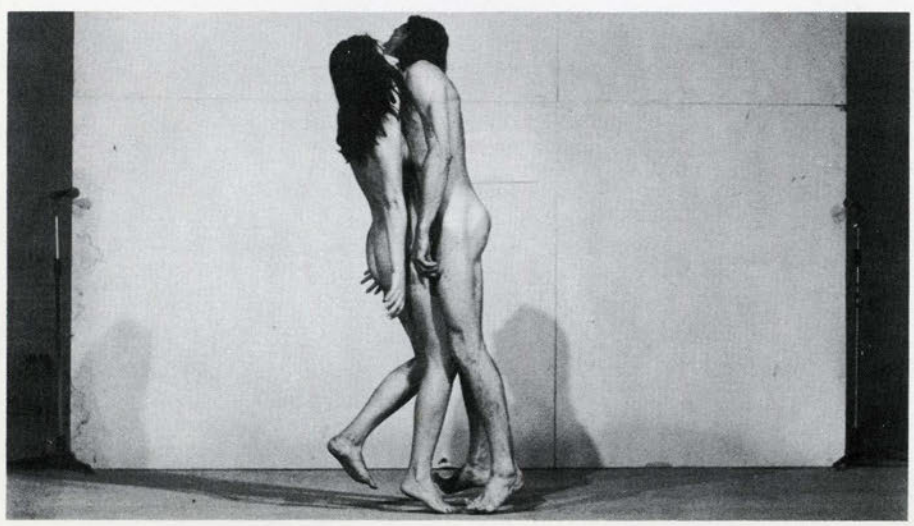


PHOTO / JAAP DE GROOT

Relation in Space July 1976, Venice Biennale

D.A.A.D. studios. I put the colour poster of the same image on the D.A.A.D. door and walked straight in front of the building into a house of a Turkish family and hung the painting on the wall.

On the same night on TV a quartet playing chamber music in the set of this painting was interrupted by a news flash reporting the theft. I am German, born in 1943 in a German steel city, in a bomb shelter. I find Berlin one of the most perverse war monuments in the Western world. And you have the D.A.A.D., which invites foreign artists. The whole concept was taken from this. I made one activity which made the whole thing collapse. I called the Museum Director and explained what had been intended. I invited him to have a look at the painting at the house of the Turkish family, and he came, with the anti-terror brigade and police. They arrested me and I went to prison for 24 hours. The next day the papers were full of the story, and I made a statement that it was an event related to the art world. 12.12.1976.

CI: How does the concept of making yourselves the artwork relate to the work of other artists who have explored similar ideas?

Marina: If you look at the effect there may appear to be some similarity, but every artist has a different context for their work, and ours is very very different.

Ulay: It is a superficial similarity. Art is mainly achieved, valued and treated as aesthetic. If you say 'my life is art' then the ethical reasons have to dominate. And there is a great shortage of people who deal with ethics in art dealing with life. Art can also be aesthetic of course, but aesthetics without ethics becomes cosmetic.

CI: Performance blossomed in the 60's and was adopted by many artists in the 70's who have now returned to making objects. How do you see your position within this development?

Ulay: Good for us, because we have a lot of work to do!

Marina: In the 70's there were so many bad performances; everybody who could do performances did them. Then all the bad performances turned into bad painting. The big change started when we came to the end of the very heavy kind of work with the body, hurting and running. It was just at the time that painting was in the air, but for us, especially me as I was a painter for 15 years, we could not imagine going back. Every time our work comes to the natural ending of our ideas we look for a new form, and we always find it in exposure to nature.

So in these 80's we decided to go to the desert, because somebody once said 'Mohammed, Moses and Jesus all went to the desert as a nobody and came back as a somebody.'! We stayed in Australia for about a year. The form of expression for this motionless work, *Night Sea Crossing*, came right from the desert experience. Artists exhaust themselves with the activity of performance but they don't see that there are incredible possibilities in non-movement. There was a whole mental state we didn't explore, because we were hitting the walls, running, cutting ourselves. When we came back from the desert, everybody said — where are the paintings? And we said, paintings? We have *Night Sea Crossing*! So we started doing it. It finished last year, in Lyon. We did 90 days all over the world in total. The next project is this walk, another condition, another exposure to nature. It always follows a pattern of five years.

Ulay: I think it was mainly an economic situation from the artists' and the dealers' sides. In the 60's Fluxus happened, in the 70's performance. One, maybe two generations of artists didn't deal with the market. It was the creation of some collectors and critics to pick on painting. The galleries made it possible and pushed particular people. Doing performance will always be a big economic problem; the galleries cannot recoup the money they invest. You are absolutely dependent on institutions, and all their policies

Gold Founded By Artists
Polaroid, Amsterdam 1980

PHOTO / MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ/ULAY

have changed.

CI: Is people's attitude towards your work now very different?

Marina: Very different. In the 70's we were part of a whole movement; now there is almost nobody left. People look to us as individuals, which I like much more, because if you are part of a movement, when it dies you are dead too. It is important that an artist develops an integrity above the movement itself.

Marina Abramovič will start the walk across the Great Wall of China in Liaoning Province and proceed westwards along coastal areas, flatlands and highlands. Ulay will proceed eastwards through the Western periphery of the Gobi desert and the Helan Shan mountains in Ningxai province. Both will walk directly on the wall or its remains throughout the entire journey.

A Chinese support team will provide both with food and water during the journey, at two week intervals. Drawing materials will also be brought. Both will make paper rubbings along the wall which will periodically be collected and returned to the project office via Peking and Hong Kong. French satellite will relay the walk to earth every 18 days from both east and west. The satellite transmissions and the rubbings will be black and white. These and other material and documentation will form part of a major exhibition at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam in May 1989. A major retrospective exhibition of Marina Abramovič and Ulay's work will also open at the Pompidou Centre, Paris in 1989, containing some of the Great Wall of China walk material.

A film of the walk directed by the German film maker Urlike Ottinger (90 mins, colour, 35mm) will be made during and after the walk, for distribution in 1989, as part of the Stedelijk Museum exhibition and its European and American tour. It will also be on limited general release.

The performance will conclude at the meeting of Marina and Ulay. Arrangements will be made beforehand to enable all persons interested to participate in this meeting. For information on the project, its progress and conclusion, contact: *the Amphis Foundation, Museum Fodor, Keizersgracht 609, 1017 DS Amsterdam. Telephone: Amsterdam 249 919.* ●

1. *The performance series* NightSea Crossing *took place from 1981-1987. The artists sat motionless, facing each other across a table specially designed using numerologically formulated proportions, for seven hour periods over a total of 90 days in galleries throughout Europe, American and Australia. The performance did not come to Britain. The artists dressed in a particular colour at each sitting, believing in the importance of colour in relation to the day and its effect on the mental state. Objects were sometimes introduced onto the table (a live snake, a pair of scissors). In 1983 in Amsterdam a Tibetan llama and an Australian Aborigine were invited to take part in a special performance.*
2. *Marina Abramovič and Ulay (F. Uwe Laysiepen) met in Amsterdam on November 30th, their respective birthdays. Each November 30th they make a special performance to mark the significance of this day, one of many areas of mutal synchronicity. The interviewer was also born on November 30th.*
3. *Marina Abramovič/Ulay* — Modus Vivendi *Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Amsterdam 1985. The* Modus Vivendi *project involved a number of performances in galleries throughout Europe and America, a series of large polaroids and a videotape (1985, 25 mins, colour, sound).*

From *The Qinhuangdao Ribao*, 1986

户喊赔钱的形势下，张雨田养鸡却能取得较好的经济效益，原因何在？关键在于他念活了养鸡这本“经”。他善于精打细算，因陋就简，用空房做鸡舍，自己制作鸡笼、食槽等用具；利用当地原料配制了十来种不同阶段的鸡饲料；用粘土充当微量元素添加剂，降低养鸡成本。

他订了七种有关的科技和信息报刊，把握养鸡业发展、蛋品销售等各方面的动态。他虽坐家里，信息却十分灵通。

张雨田的养鸡“经”值得好好念一念。（赵永胜）

民共育方法 用人才

山海关农机监理站的人五月十日开始举办定地两用人才。培训。目前已进入实际

（马中骥）

责任校对 徐 稳

扎扎实实地做好本职工作，增强了政治责任感，与开展这项活动前相比，破

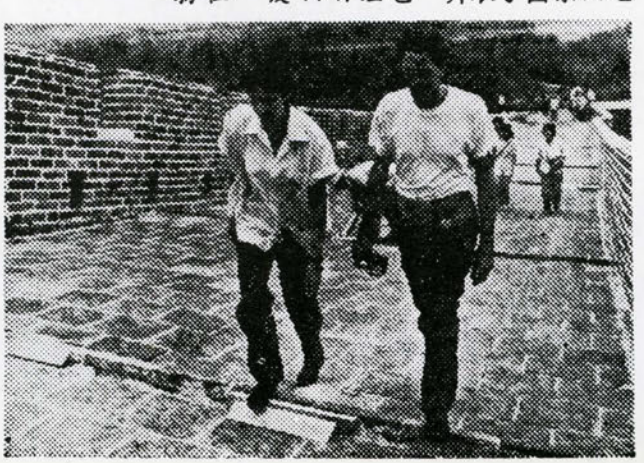
发行工作会议上介绍经验

本报讯 河北省农村电影发行工作会议七月二十二日下午在昌黎县结束。这次会议主要解决当前农村看电影难的问题。

在这次会议上，来自各地、市的八十名电影发行工作者，参观了昌黎县靖安、安山、果乡、大蒲河电影管理站，听取了昌黎县电影公司和靖安电影管理站的经验介绍。昌黎县各级领导十分重视农村电影放映工作，他们把电影作为进行爱国主义、共产主义宣传教育和传播科技文化知识的有力工具，发挥电影在农村精神文明建设中的作用。他们采取群众集资的办法，使农村电影放映工作得到发展。（涛 平）

荷兰阿姆斯特丹表演艺术家乌莱和玛丽娜夫妇，经我国文化部安排，于二十日到达我市山海关区，为他俩分别从山海关和嘉峪关出发步行万里长城做行前考察。昨天上午，乌莱和玛丽娜在有关人员陪同下，兴致勃勃地登上角山长城。

罗大伟 摄

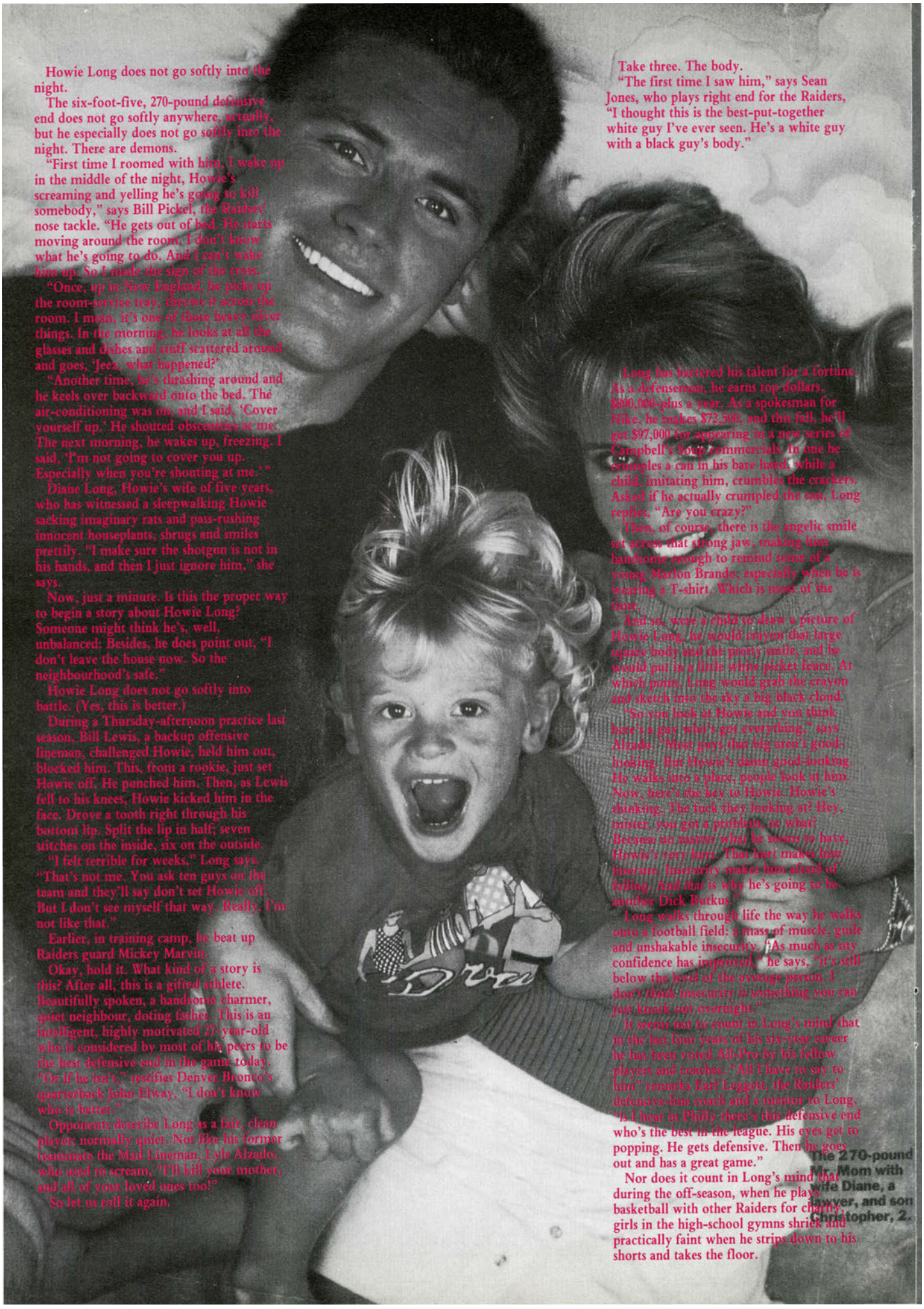


牛心山乡蚕茧丰收

本报讯 青龙县牛心山乡春蚕茧喜获丰收，张产达三十五公斤，总产达一万零七百公斤，纯收入四万二千多元。

今年，这个乡把发展养蚕业做为开拓致富门路的一项重要内容来抓，他们更新了蚕种，开展了技术培训，发放了扶持资金，培养先进典型，推动全乡养蚕业的发展。

（周俊锋 张玉华）



Howie Long does not go softly into the night.

The six-foot-five, 270-pound defensive end does not go softly anywhere, actually, but he especially does not go softly into the night. There are demons.

"First time I roomed with him, I wake up in the middle of the night, Howie's screaming and yelling he's going to kill somebody," says Bill Pickel, the Raiders' nose tackle. "He gets out of bed. He starts moving around the room. I don't know what he's going to do. And I can't wake him up. So I made the sign of the cross.

"Once, up in New England, he picks up the room-service tray, throws it across the room. I mean, it's one of those heavy silver things. In the morning, he looks at all the glasses and dishes and stuff scattered around and goes, 'Jeez, what happened?'

"Another time, he's thrashing around and he keels over backward onto the bed. The air-conditioning was on, and I said, 'Cover yourself up.' He shouted obscenities at me. The next morning, he wakes up, freezing. I said, 'I'm not going to cover you up. Especially when you're shouting at me.'"

Diane Long, Howie's wife of five years, who has witnessed a sleepwalking Howie sacking imaginary rats and pass-rushing innocent houseplants, shrugs and smiles prettily. "I make sure the shotgun is not in his hands, and then I just ignore him," she says.

Now, just a minute. Is this the proper way to begin a story about Howie Long? Someone might think he's, well, unbalanced. Besides, he does point out, "I don't leave the house now. So the neighbourhood's safe."

Howie Long does not go softly into battle. (Yes, this is better.)

During a Thursday-afternoon practice last season, Bill Lewis, a backup offensive lineman, challenged Howie, held him out, blocked him. This, from a rookie, just set Howie off. He punched him. Then, as Lewis fell to his knees, Howie kicked him in the face. Drove a tooth right through his bottom lip. Split the lip in half; seven stitches on the inside, six on the outside.

"I felt terrible for weeks," Long says. "That's not me. You ask ten guys on the team and they'll say don't set Howie off. But I don't see myself that way. Really, I'm not like that."

Earlier, in training camp, he beat up Raiders guard Mickey Marvin.

Okay, hold it. What kind of a story is this? After all, this is a gifted athlete. Beautifully spoken, a handsome charmer, quiet neighbour, doting father. This is an intelligent, highly motivated 27-year-old who is considered by most of his peers to be the best defensive end in the game today. "Or if he isn't," testifies Denver Bronco's quarterback John Elway, "I don't know who is better."

Opponents describe Long as a fair, clean player, normally quiet. Not like his former teammate the Mad Lineman, Lyle Alzado, who used to scream, "I'll kill your mother, and all of your loved ones too!"

So let us roll it again.

Take three. The body.

"The first time I saw him," says Sean Jones, who plays right end for the Raiders, "I thought this is the best-put-together white guy I've ever seen. He's a white guy with a black guy's body."

Long has bartered his talent for a fortune. As a defenseman, he earns top dollars, $800,000-plus a year. As a spokesman for Nike, he makes $72,500, and this fall, he'll get $97,000 for appearing in a new series of Campbell's Soup commercials. In one he crumples a can in his bare hand, while a child, imitating him, crumbles the crackers. Asked if he actually crumpled the can, Long replies, "Are you crazy?"

Then, of course, there is the angelic smile set across that strong jaw, making him handsome enough to remind some of a young Marlon Brando, especially when he is wearing a T-shirt. Which is most of the time.

And so, were a child to draw a picture of Howie Long, he would crayon that large square body and the pretty smile, and he would put in a little white picket fence. At which point, Long would grab the crayon and sketch into the sky a big black cloud.

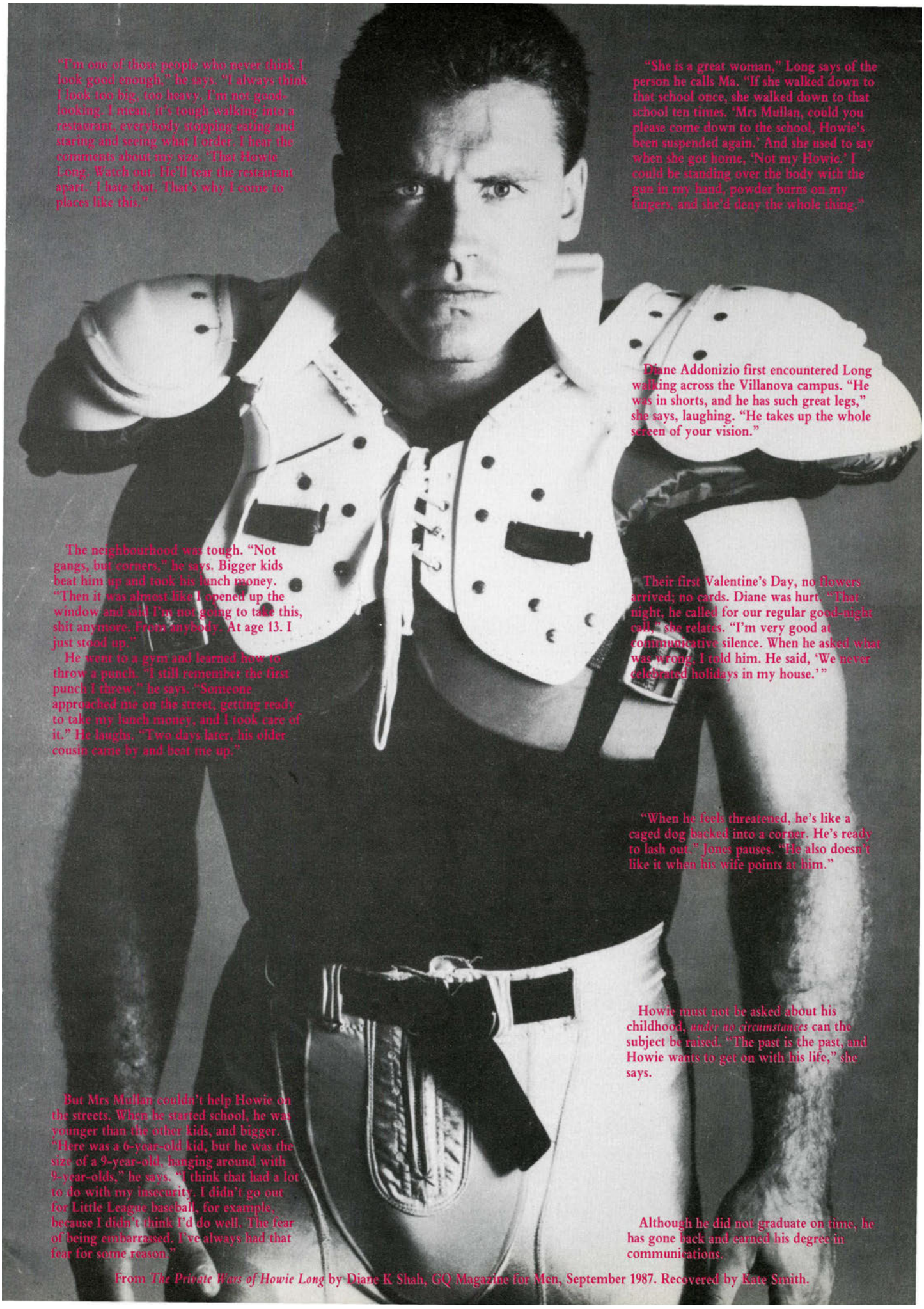
"So you look at Howie and you think here's a guy who's got everything," says Alzado. "Most guys that big aren't good-looking. But Howie's damn good-looking. He walks into a place, people look at him. Now, here's the key to Howie. Howie's thinking, The fuck they looking at? Hey, mister, you got a problem, or what? Because no matter what he seems to have, Howie's very hurt. That hurt makes him insecure. Insecurity makes him afraid of failing. And that is why he's going to be another Dick Butkus."

Long walks through life the way he walks onto a football field: a mass of muscle, guile and unshakable insecurity. "As much as my confidence has improved," he says, "it's still below the level of the average person. I don't think insecurity is something you can just knock out overnight."

It seems not to count in Long's mind that in the last four years of his six-year career he has been voted All-Pro by his fellow players and coaches. "All I have to say to him" remarks Earl Leggett, the Raiders' defensive-line coach and a mentor to Long, "is I hear in Philly there's this defensive end who's the best in the league. His eyes get to popping. He gets defensive. Then he goes out and has a great game."

Nor does it count in Long's mind that during the off-season, when he plays basketball with other Raiders for charity, girls in the high-school gymns shriek and practically faint when he strips down to his shorts and takes the floor.

The 270-pound Mr. Mom with wife Diane, a lawyer, and son Christopher, 2.



"I'm one of those people who never think I look good enough," he says. "I always think I look too big, too heavy. I'm not good-looking. I mean, it's tough walking into a restaurant, everybody stopping eating and staring and seeing what I order. I hear the comments about my size. 'That Howie Long. Watch out. He'll tear the restaurant apart.' I hate that. That's why I come to places like this."

"She is a great woman," Long says of the person he calls Ma. "If she walked down to that school once, she walked down to that school ten times. 'Mrs Mullan, could you please come down to the school, Howie's been suspended again.' And she used to say when she got home, 'Not my Howie.' I could be standing over the body with the gun in my hand, powder burns on my fingers, and she'd deny the whole thing."

Diane Addonizio first encountered Long walking across the Villanova campus. "He was in shorts, and he has such great legs," she says, laughing. "He takes up the whole screen of your vision."

The neighbourhood was tough. "Not gangs, but corners," he says. Bigger kids beat him up and took his lunch money. "Then it was almost like I opened up the window and said I'm not going to take this, shit anymore. From anybody. At age 13. I just stood up."

He went to a gym and learned how to throw a punch. "I still remember the first punch I threw," he says. "Someone approached me on the street, getting ready to take my lunch money, and I took care of it." He laughs. "Two days later, his older cousin came by and beat me up."

Their first Valentine's Day, no flowers arrived; no cards. Diane was hurt. "That night, he called for our regular good-night call," she relates. "I'm very good at communicative silence. When he asked what was wrong, I told him. He said, 'We never celebrated holidays in my house.'"

"When he feels threatened, he's like a caged dog backed into a corner. He's ready to lash out." Jones pauses. "He also doesn't like it when his wife points at him."

Howie must not be asked about his childhood, *under no circumstances* can the subject be raised. "The past is the past, and Howie wants to get on with his life," she says.

But Mrs Mullan couldn't help Howie on the streets. When he started school, he was younger than the other kids, and bigger. "Here was a 6-year-old kid, but he was the size of a 9-year-old, hanging around with 9-year-olds," he says. "I think that had a lot to do with my insecurity. I didn't go out for Little League baseball, for example, because I didn't think I'd do well. The fear of being embarrassed. I've always had that fear for some reason."

Although he did not graduate on time, he has gone back and earned his degree in communications.

From *The Private Wars of Howie Long* by Diane K Shah, GQ Magazine for Men, September 1987. Recovered by Kate Smith.

SPEAKING WITHOUT RUSES

By JOHN ROBERTS

THE ABSENCE OF men working on their own sexuality and masculinity is glaringly apparent within the visual arts. There are of course a number of male artists who have taken on the issue of women-as-image, but this has been at a considerable distance from any questioning of male self-representation. It is very much as women as the receivers of the male gaze that Victor Burgin and John Hilliard, for example, address the question of men's power (though Burgin has given us an image of himself reflected in the mirror of a women's toilet). To point this out though is not to moralise, but rather to acknowledge how relatively easy it is for men to exhibit their commitment to feminism. Working on women in the name of men-in-feminism is in no direct sense a risk to male power; in fact it might be construed as yet another way of men modernising their dominance, of making feminism speak *for* men.

Now this is not to advocate some confessional discourse for men, that men should only speak of what they experience directly; but that if men are to seriously take on board their own implication in the power relations between themselves and women, then they need to see how a commitment to working on their relation to women's sexual identity, rather than their own sexual identity, might in fact prevent self-transformation. This absence of a self-critical bodily awareness is of course not to be laid at the feet of artists per se. Masculinity is such an ideological mine field in our culture, the site of much confusion for men, that it is not surprising that those artists who have acknowledged the problem of sexual identity in their work have chosen to work on women; the alternative is much more painful.

Perhaps then the period of men learning their feminism through working on women is over. Men now need to place *themselves* in view of feminism. Which does not mean that all those problems of men in feminism are thereby removed; but that the issue of men working on women without any emotional investment in their own transformation, is made more difficult.

Gay artists have of course been tackling such questions for a number of years; however, the space allowed for a generalised discussion of such questions within the culture as a whole, has continually been down-played, shunted off into the margins, ironically, of men's issues. Clearly though gay men have the space, no matter how attenuated, to speak of their bodies, desires, emotional life. Heterosexual men, artists, on the other hand are not so privileged. Framed by the critiques of feminism on one side, and the powerful, negating effects of masculinity on the other, the sexuality of heterosexual men *is* the problem. For heterosexual men to 'come out' emotionally, to speak out against the tyrannies of masculinity has then seemed almost utopian; an affront to the actuality of women's sexual oppression.

The call for a new critical relationship on the part of men to their own bodies and emotional life, however, is not about curatorialising a new set of expressive categories for art, as if men representing their own sexual uncertainty, fear of unattractiveness or capacity for violence, was virtuous in itself or separable from aesthetic performance and the tricky question of causality. (By what means can such work be *trusted?*). The issue rather is the broader one of *permissibility*, of allowing space to men to work on their sexuality and masculinity critically and openly (for undoubtably men's sexuality is *expressed* in our culture on a massive scale). It is in the production of such spaces, spaces where men might declare their vulnerability, that men will develop the emotional resources to deal with, and learn from, feminism amongst themselves. The idea of women being the site where knowledge of the emotions (of nurturing) is learnt and taken, is still a powerful influence on men, even socialist men. Thus it is quite feasible to read Burgin and Hilliard's work as a variant on this theme of fetishism; feminism for men becomes yet another form of admiration for women, another way of abrogating men's responsibility *within* the sexual relation.

Do women want men to work on themselves though? The answer of course is double-edged. Yes, women want men to work on themselves, to experience their masculinity as a problem, but they don't want men in the process to become more sophisticated, more cannily veiled Lovers of Women. These are old ruses in new forms. Thus Kate Love and Kate Smith's show 'The Invisible Man' will have achieved nothing if the men exhibit their vulnerability, failure to achieve masculinity, in order to love Women even more. Similarly it would confirm all those pessimistic radical feminist accounts of men using feminist theory in order to have the *final say*. These are risks Kate Love and Kate Smith know well. Nevertheless this is a show selected by women. It is women who are in control, who set the agendas, who are in a position to steer the talk, so to speak, away from the self-congratulations of men. This inversion of power could be seen as phallicised in the same old way, of women unconsciously doing the work of men once again. But this is too cynical and leads to those forms of self-censorship and self-doubt that allow no space of exchange between men and women. 'The Invisible Man' then is not about giving more space to men to talk, when they have enough space already. On the contrary, it is about giving the space to men to confront, and have a dialogue with, what women know all too well already: the fictional status of the sexual divide. Which in turn, of course, mean's men refusing the image of women as Other, as the *home* of men's emancipation. ●

THE INVISIBLE MAN

Notes on the Representation of Male Sexuality. KATE LOVE.

IT'S UNUSUAL TO begin an article by saying that you are not quite sure 'what' you are writing about but, in this instance it feels quite the appropriate thing to do. The representation of male sexuality is everywhere, yet at the same time it is almost nowhere to be seen. It depends entirely of course on how one articulates the sexuality of men. In closing down the definition of male sexuality in order to write about it there is a danger of loosing the slippage, the leakage across the boundaries female/male, which is so critical in attempting to re-negotiate an opened-out definition of male sexuality. Talking about male sexuality is like talking about something held in suspension. It isn't properly visible yet it is obviously fully present in terms of patriarchy and of women's oppression. Accepting any definition of male sexuality for long enough to re-work it becomes then a question of simultaneous construction and deconstruction. Any starting point is held precariously in place by the moment of beginning.

Some time last month I put together a proposal for an exhibition of representations of male sexuality for the Gallery at Goldsmith's College, London. The criteria for the show were focused in two directions. Firstly, although there have been some tentative explorations into work which deals reflexively with the construction of an implicity homo or heterosexual male identity, the range and discussion around this work could be widened. Traditionally, men have found lots to occupy themselves with the re-working of female sexuality but this has become a problem, in so much as work on female sexuality has become synonymous with work on sexuality. Secondly, if we accept the premise that the importance of visual representations is that they do not passively imitate some prior reality but, rather, help to actively construct our knowledge of what we understand to be our reality at a given point, then in any exploration into a possible re-definition of male sexuality, one which works alongside and not against women's representation there can obviously be a crucial strategy for change.

But, there are problems. Can we speak of an *implicit* male sexuality and also refer to the *construction* of male sexuality? They would appear to be contradictory. Also, if we accept that male sexuality is constructed by language and representation and is not linked naturally to gender, can we then mark off boundaries with any notion of surety? Maybe work on female sexuality does constitute work on sexuality; female running into male and vice versa. More importantly, perhaps, if we are to say that there are no grounds for arguing for a real difference between women and men, does this mask an actual experienced difference, particularly one of female oppression? The problem seems to be staged around the tension between essentialised and constructed difference. At best one can possibly acknowledge that there are physiological differences between women and men but are these physiological differences enough to determine essentialised sexual identities for women and men?

Nowadays one tends to think that feminism is synonymous with anti-essentialism, but it's worth remembering that in the first instance feminism was also concerned with emphasising women's difference from men, and that in certain cases this led to a sort of essentialised separatism. This sort of separatism was inevitable and desirable. Feminists have maintained that women have to organise and articulate *their* position if any struggle for equal recognition is to be staged. Recent feminist theory has however redirected the argument from the differences *between* women and men to the differences within the category, or construction, of 'women' itself. This involves deconstructing the 'essential woman' and opening out the debate to include a more pluralistic interpretation of the construction 'woman'; and, by default, 'man'. Femininity is no longer felt to be definable for all time. Rather, it is contingent upon social and cultural definitions which can be changed. If men have felt the imperative to include themselves in these arguments, they have often done so, I would argue, from an avowedly difficult but nevertheless relatively stable position from which to 'look out' on sexuality and the construction of identity. There are still very few men for whom the problem is the rigid and restrictive 'nature' of their *own* sexuality.

The problem is still, as Toril Moi writes, that "Male sexuality comfortably co-exists with the man's experience of himself as the subject of his own actions."[1] This belief in a self which is rational and centred profoundly distorts the attitude towards emotion which is still felt to be the opposite of rationality. Men are often paralysed by the *meaning* of emotion, to the extent that they are fearful of showing emotion even when they obviously feel it. Concomitant problems of this centering are that men find that the control of women by 'the look' is something which is almost impossible to relinquish and that men find it hard to recognise and/or accept, that being uncertain is a valid position to adopt in some circumstances. Even a more 'legitimised' postmodern uncertainty is constantly rearranged so that, ultimately, images and texts can be threaded back, in the last instance, to a stable referent. The only possible uncertainty often allowed to men is the metaphysical kind, but then this only becomes acceptable because it is a questioning of the human position. The cultural and historical specifics of the 'man' in 'human' are largely ignored. If, then, men have focused on the debate surrounding female sexuality, they have not really focused on their own sexuality. But therein, of course, lies the problem. There is, possibly, no such thing as their *own* sexuality. Just as some contemporary feminist poststructuralists are finding that the search for the 'essential' female is a largely redundant argument, and that in its place we have the concept of 'difference'. Sexuality as specifically female or male has been deconstructed, dispersed and fragmented, often as much by consumer capitalism as by writings on difference.

If we accept the terms of poststructuralism we should examine the many meanings of difference. The postmodern gesture towards difference could be characterised as a *plurality* of differences; everything being equal to everything else; the relinquishing of Grand Narratives or tall stories enabling a gradual decline of hierarchical difference. However, the political hegemony, the dominant paradigms of consumer capitalism and patriarchy have perhaps responded in another way to pluralistic difference, seeing it as yet another example of consumer jouissance. Stylistic variations are 'allowed', but finally recouped in terms of exchange as opposed to use value. Dispersion of difference equals powerlessness if patriarchy and consumer capitalism are still strong enough to define the marginal *as* marginal. Pluralism may be one thing but the binary oppositions Male/Female, Heterosexual/Homosexual, White/Black are still hierarchically maintained by what is strong enough to resist deconstruction, notably capitalism and patriarchy.

Perhaps another meaning of difference, characterised by the work of Jacques Derrida as positional difference, could be more effective. Positional difference, unlike pluralism, would seek to deconstruct any lingering binary opposition by focusing upon the dominant structure which was keeping those oppositions so comfortably in place. Positional difference works by examining the relative position of a word or image in terms of its relationship to other words or images and how they affect and are affected by the structure that contains them. The claim to truth of any word or image seen in this way cannot be so easily threaded through to an essence, transcendentally free of language and discourse, because the discourse is itself doing the work of giving the words and images their monetary meaning. The discourse is itself flavoured by the social and cultural paradigm within which it is located. The meaning of words or images are never transparent reflections of 'natural' or fixed meanings, outside of any cultural specificity, but opaque in so much as they always have to recognise the conventions of a particular discourse *and* more importantly perhaps, which power is privileging which discourse.

This has radical implications for the representation of sexuality. Accepting the premise that representation actually constructs our reality, then how we view representations of sexuality literally determines sexuality itself. That there is an implied struggle for the meaning of any image should not be interpreted as artistic elitism, rather, parallels, almost mimetically, the struggle for a more opened-out definition of female and male sexuality. The struggle for an appropriate sexual identity *is* the struggle for an appropriate meaning.

As Jeffrey Weeks notes, in his book 'Sexuality',[2] "Our destinies are shaped not so much by the differences themselves but by their meaning, which is socially given and psychically elaborated".

As I have argued, in looking at any image in terms of positional difference, one cannot fail to be aware that the image is located within a discourse which is structured by the dominant hegemony. In this context we can never just step outside of the dominant paradigm of patriarchy. This is why images which show men in 'traditional female roles', as if to bring about validation for men in those roles, only serve to make men appear 'feminine' in a traditional sense, which by default makes the 'traditional female role' even more secure for women. But if we accept the mechanics of meaning in terms of positional difference which acknowledges the dominant structure reflexively, by careful contextualisation of both the simultaneous acceptance of the constraints of, and resistances to, patriarchy, we should begin to see images whose claims to the truth are not grounded in any reflection of fixed sexual identities, but more appropriately appear to flaunt the contingency and uncertainty of sexual identities as produced by actual needs in actual contexts. ●

1. *Toril Moi — Existentialism and Feminism: The Rhetoric of Biology in the Second Sex. An essay in a book of papers collected papers from the Conference on Sexual Difference — Southampton, 1985. Oxford Literary Review, 1986.*
2. *Jeffrey Weeks — Sexuality. Ellis Horwood Ltd., 1986.*

UNDER GOD

Scenes from the End of the World and the Pursuit of Human Happiness in the Years of Our Lord. KEN HOLLINGS.

'We have made a covenant with death, and with Hell are we at agreement, when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.' Isaiah 28:15

ANOTHER STRANGE GOD

1954.
Halfway into the final century of the 2nd millenium, the Congress of the United States of America voted heavily in favour of including the words 'under God' in the oath of allegiance. At around the same time the immortal phrase 'In God we trust' began to appear on dollar bills. The High School God, the corporate Lord of the military/industrial machine, was now moving across the face of the earth. The great evangelical crusade began to roll out across the nations: material progress, the blessing of the Lord and the possibility of enjoying both in the comfort of your own home were all realities. It was the end of the World.

Being a prophet, Isaiah got the message early.

'And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with Hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then shall ye be trodden by it.' Prophecy is just a repeat in another form, so the people of America had to wait until the message came on television before they found out what was going on. There was a sound being broadcast throughout the land; a steady incessant beat without meaning. 'This sound,' the announcer stated with absolute certainty, 'will become as familiar to you as the sound of your washing machine or vacuum cleaner.' With his grey, lined face and his dark suit, the announcer looked concerned. The Nation was concerned. Sputnik had not just entered their air space, it had entered their living rooms too.

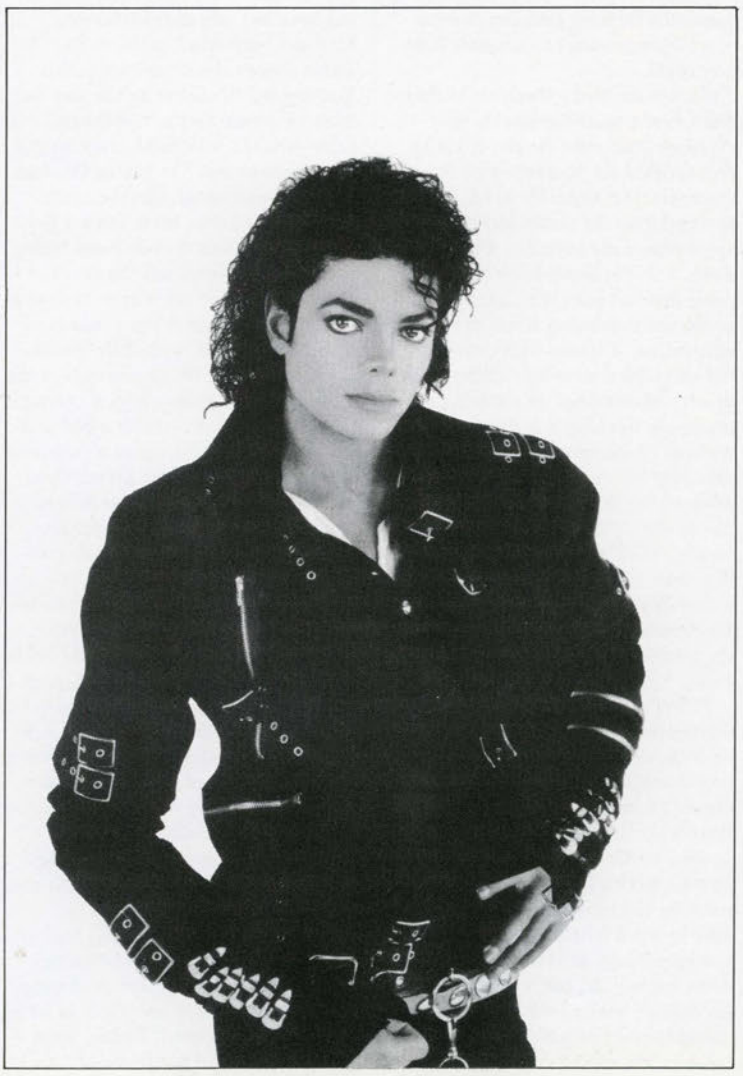
Everything is now live and unprepared: a studio scientist starts to plot the satellite's path around the earth, when his wax pencil breaks. The message transmitted from his shaking fingers is clear: In God we trust — we need Him. Back in Congress, it is announced that it is now a red sky that has unfolded above America. Around Times Square, anxious huddled groups of people are interviewed in the open air. The night sky hangs above them, flat black and ominous. An aggressive drunk squares off in front of the camera: 'I say we should've been *the first*.'

Another man looks ill at ease in his white open-neck shirt: 'When I was in the Army, and something like this happened, we would say someone was asleep at his post. Someone here has been asleep at his post.'

UNDER GOD

A woman in a print dress hugs her child to her breast: 'We don't know quite what's up there or what they are doing. We fear this.' A black and white sci-fi movie fades out on a news reporter shrieking into a chrome-plated microphone: 'Keep watching the skies! Keep watching the skies!'

So while Martians burrow under the foundations of its houses and a giant black tarantula tears the roof of a hospital, one Nation under God waits for the end. The rest you can follow on late-night TV. What is at issue here is not an 87-pound lump of superior Soviet technology perpetually orbiting the earth, but a major and irreversible shift in meaning. The sky over Times Square was still the sky over Times Square, except now a feverish and intense amount of media activity was trying to convince us all that it



Michael Jackson, 1987

mattered. Sputnik ruled off the sky like the last page of an account, and now the sky seemed to be falling. Under God, the gap between what was happening and what was *seen* to be happening was barely discernible but it was widening. Such a gap does not threaten a mass culture founded upon moral certitude (as might be expected), but rather enhances it. The increasingly widespread dissemination of religious fundamentalism through the satellite networks is particularly strong evidence of this. The certainty with which such fundamentalist doctrines describe the realities of salvation and destruction commands a great deal of attention in a mass culture where we know little and understand less, no matter how much actual information is beamed at us. The gap between perceived and literal meaning has become an abyss: the spectacle of Oral Roberts in the process of starving himself to death in his prayer tower, at the Lord's command, in a successful attempt to raise millions of dollars (each of them with God's name on it, remember) reveals more about post-modernist thinking than any number of art documentaries on Channel Four ever could.

It is not surprising therefore to find that where post-modernist thought expresses itself most clearly, it has appropriated the vocabulary of the fundamentalist right. However, in appropriating the vocabulary it has not appropriated the attitudes. Where Oral Roberts simply wanted the money and made that fact perfectly clear, the post-modernist vocabulary is one of shifting affirmation. It speaks with conviction, but also with a seemingly endless overlay of meanings. In essence, post-modernist thinking is fundamentalism without a basis: perceived and literal meanings have begun to replace each other and to shift and move. Words like 'history', 'desire', 'identity', 'death', 'faith' and 'work' all have a directness and a perceived complexity: if they have any clarity for us at all at the moment, it is because they are in the process of vanishing before our eyes.

This process is being greatly accelerated by a psychology of ending: since the fifties our entire culture has been counting off the years. However, instead of anticipating how many years there were to go before the first satellite or the first space flight, it is now a question of how many years until the end of the millenium. We have invested tremendous importance in a psychology of individual and collective suicide, and we express that psychology with all the grandeur and sordid urgency of which we are capable. The end of the last century was just a rehearsal: the crowds celebrating it in the cites of Europe would soon be killing each other.

THE NEW CREATURES

It's the late sixties. A marine sergeant pisses into the open, decomposing mouth of a dead Vietnamese peasant; a young wounded officer turns his face to the hospital wall.

'I hate this movie.'

The Living Dead storm the lonely and abandoned houses of the late-night American heart land. George Romero let it all happen in grainy black and white because the budget was so low. Most of the special effects originated in the local abattoirs, and most of the Living Dead themselves were just local people. It seems entirely appropriate that the actual invasion of America by the Living Dead happened off-screen and on televison instead, for since then the Living Dead have established themselves as an emergent social grouping of some significance. The Living Dead look like your parents or your friends. They have been to school and have had jobs in the city: they have also been asked questions in Times Square about Soviet satellites. You can tell all of that by the way they dress. However they are no longer other-directed responsible members of their community. The Living Dead are not work-orientated, like the zombie slaves of Haiti who never knew a day's unemployment in the black and white films of the 'thirties and 'forties. The Living Dead have never even been near a plantation, unless it was a feature of some winter break with their friends.

No one directs the movements of the Living Dead, and they have no creator. They are creatures without a god and without a father. No visionary scientist attended their birth: the Living Dead just rose up out of their graves in a gruesome parody of Judgement Day. They don't work, they don't sing. They just eat.

This single fundamental drive makes them terrifying in a way that their work-ethic ancestors never could be. It also makes them funnier. The Living Dead are really lovable: once you get over the idea of them tearing the flesh off your still-screaming face and eating it, the Living Dead are fun. They are just plain folks and they like wandering about shopping malls.

The phenomenon has proliferated: their corrupted flesh, dead and unclean, has come to eat you alive. It's unspeakable fun. It's horrible. And the films just keep coming and coming. The media that brings you the Living Dead also structures your flesh in terms of a human dust bowl. Today, when you are instructed not to die of ignorance, you no longer look at the sky. You look at yourself instead.

But ignorance of what exactly? Perhaps all the things that no one wanted you to know about in the first place. That creeping other flesh of death and desire.

It is perhaps no longer appropriate to talk of our flesh being handed down to us from history, as if it has been produced, controlled and encoded by some impassive and amoral factory of the senses. There is perhaps no 'history' of the body at all, but a multiplicity of transformations instead.

However, what becomes transformed is also unfamiliar and strange: violence, death, sex and disease all appear to deprive us of the flesh which the history machine has produced for us. The result of this deprivation in public terms is a panic on the streets, or more specifically across the hoardings and newspapers. In private terms, deprivation means a fear of possession running through the body.

Think of the number of horror movies in circulation today that take such a possession of the body as their starting point. These are no longer the days of sputnik where possession meant social control. It is no longer families, villages or towns that are being taken over and changed. It is the flesh itself which is becoming possessed, that is to say, transformed. It is the end of the world.

It begins as a panic, but the will to domesticate soon begins to have an effect. What alarms us is soon made a part of the home. Children play with humanoid dolls that turn into pieces of industrial machinery: the bodies of Transformers have no fixed form or centre of gravity. The Living Dead lurch and stagger through a dance routine on MTV. Parts of their bodies fall off and they keep losing their balance, but Michael Jackson really likes them *a lot*.

Despite their religious differences, Michael Jackson and the Living Dead have a great deal in common. He domesticates bodily change to an almost impossible degree. As a creature without a god he has managed to create *himself* in his own image, thanks to costly and seemingly endless bouts of plastic surgery.

Michael Jackson is the human Transformer. He is the changing face of change. Looking at his world tour poster, it is clear that the image he is presenting to the planet has nothing to do with male/female, black/white differences being reconciled. The question of *what* it is he is changing into is nowhere near as interesting as the actual change itself.

This controlled transformation suggests an intense amount of activity

concentrated in one place. It has a dynamics that are totally internal, and yet which produce nothing at all. It's like kissing the feet of a corpse.

Some people call it progress.

STORMING HEAVEN

Art History is stupid: it has an implicit faith in progress. However it is no longer possible to believe in progress; that sequential over-lapping of production and consumption. There is no progression to any specific point any more, there is simply a dispersal: a multiplicity of markets, interests and realities. What is the effect of such a multiplicity? Not only does it appear that time is now running out, but we seem to be running out of space as well.

President Kennedy lifts up his head and fixes his eyes on some distant spot at the back of a half-lit hall: 'Space is open to us now, and our eagerness to share its meaning is not governed by the efforts of others. We go into space because whatever mankind must undertake, free men must fully share.'

The gap that was opening under sputnik is now an abyss, and the abyss is staring back. Kennedy drops a medal for bravery he was about to pin on the uniformed chest of an American astronaut. The president makes some quip about the medal travelling 'from the ground up' to cover his clumsiness. Challenger explodes into a ball of hot white gas.

If Joe Dante's latest film, *Innerspace*, could be described as a film of the moment, it would be moment of the major malfunction. The image of Challenger literally exploded across the planet. Its dispersal reached the limits of our information technology. Acceptance of the image was total (you could even *dance* to it if you wanted to), but nobody trusted their responses to it. *Innerspace* is the fall out from that explosion.

Space is no longer the place: the *Top Gun/Right Stuff* hero is to be miniaturized so that he can be injected inside a rabbit. By accident he ends up inside the body of an assistant manager of a Safeway supermarket: 'Oh no,' our hero groans. 'I'm inside the body of a man who likes game shows.' So come on down.

It is in fact *safer* inside the body than it is in a shopping mall where people are getting killed. The Living Dead love shopping malls. So forget space.

'Space? Space was a failure. It's just a floating junk yard up there.' Kevin Macarthy, a trader in illicit technology, explains what it's all about to the audience. He is sitting in the back of a frozen meat truck wearing a white fur coat. He smiles and he looks like a cartoonist's impression of Challenger exploding. *Space was a failure:* the scientists in *Innerspace* are all either inept or corrupt. None of them even has the moral vision to be insane.

And what about Nature? Nature was a mistake. It was never there in the first place. Our perceptions of it and the structures we have imposed upon it are all wrong. The opened body is not a thing of violence or of desire. It's a fun house: another panic has become domesticated. The miniature astronaut takes us through our bodies and we are thrilled. The red sky that opens up above us is now American blood. Significantly, the hero's body never bleeds.

The last American astronaut drinks Southern Comfort and listens to recycled Sam Cooke tapes on his Japanese Walkman. Progress isn't what it used to be. The World is ending, and Kennedy's rhetoric is just so much space junk orbiting the planet.

History and its image have begun to replace each other. In January President Mitterand called together 75 Nobel Prize Laureates for a conference in Paris. *Time* Magazine called it 'an opportunity for some of the world's finest minds to ponder the dangers and promises facing humanity on the eve of the 21st century.' The result was a series of excruciating banalities, but this was only to be expected. The Laureates have a sense of history informed by the 'fifties. Their response to the invitation was conditioned by the final scene in *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, a film which contains a very early example of millenial thinking — even if only in its title. It's an old film with a very old concept: God turns off the power on Earth in an attempt to get the 'world's finest minds' together to guarantee the future safety of the world. The Danish Laureate, Christian B Anfinsen, entered into the spirit of the film by announcing to his fellow conferants that, 'I sometimes think that mankind will cease its bickering and will stand shoulder to shoulder only when Martians are about to land on earth.'

Even scientists must watch old films on late-night TV.

However, the real issue here is whether it is possible for us, both individually and collectively, to live *without* history. When history and its image begin to replace each other, the abyss is staring right back at us. Any notion of individual power disappears and history ends; but we have not divested ourselves of it.

History is dead, but we are haunted by its ghost. Under God, we believe in progress, but secretly we are all waiting for the end. Sometimes it is very hard for us to learn to live without ghosts. ●

The Night of the Living Dead, 1968

THE SHADOW APPARATUS

"It is proverbial that lookers-on see most of the game, and this image is particularly exemplified in the case of Mr D. He arrived at the sitting at the last moment, and all the seats at the table being taken, he occupied the armchair in the corner of the room. But not for long. As soon as the shadow apparatus was set going, he lay upon the floor and looked between the sitter's legs. He was well rewarded for his somewhat unorthodox and lowly position, and saw the best materialisation of the whole series of sittings."[1]

. . . . . .

A FIERCE GLEE seems to possess performance artists when they talk about the obtaining, construction and operation of the physical structures in their work. The meaning and function of these objects is very far removed from the docile 'props' of the theatre. The often equal status and emphasis they own comes from both circumstance and language.

Sculpture and performance share a sturdy and original arena, where ideas and emotions are physically constructed, where process is operated to illuminate and acquire invention and transformation. As the centre of sculptural language shifts from static form to an associative analysis of substance and the psychological mechanics of atmosphere and presence there is a fusion of object and subject. This is where the host sculpture hovers above the inert materials, waiting for the hands to receive it. This is where the 'prop' inspires and generates the performance. It is a unique territory only open to those who by choice or necessity re-construct the imagined world physically.

The struggle and sometimes the delight in this paradoxical surgery of matter and concept can become the image of the work. In the early works of Nigel Rolfe, the process of construction was amplified by a muscular integrity that warded and distorted the given site with its insistent velocity. The object — 3½ tons of hand sawn timber jammed between ceiling and floor — became the container of the subject: the act itself. This and the public (press) reaction turned the physical material into an ambient resonator that Rolfe later develops to its sublime romantic conclusion.[2]

To what extent the responsive valve between a thing's meaning and its corporeal glamour is opened and controlled is a matter of complexity of intent and manipulative strength. The rich drama and high 'wow' factor of phenomena in a group like Bow Gamelan can hold its operators at ransom to a locked velocity feedback. This is a crisis point of repertory that is constant in creative volume from Houdini to Pollock.

There is a strong denial by many artists that there is any separation at all between performance and sculpture. The overpowering presence of Phyllida Barlow's sculpture[3] instantly removes the spectator from that role and places then unnamed at the core of a vortex that is both embarrassingly human and possessed with the proud indifference of nature itself. Both the artist and those engulfed are performed by the event. The swallowing of sound and the exchange of temperatures heighten the subtle loss of voice and our naked, lemming attraction to its fearful momentum.

This is a work where all motives fuse, cause and effect spun with passion and cunning distance.

The other pole of hidden gravity is equally forceful, its kinship being exploration and confinement. Rolfe's positive assertion that the making of art should be viewed as a crime; the violent and deep centred act producing remnants that are numerous shards, static moments of it, then open to speculation and analysis is the re-sharpened axe that Beuys held before it became pathology. The locked glass of a museum aesthetic reduces the psychic osmosis between artist, object and spectator. The 'kunsthammer' also places the event in permanent stasis, artist becomes curator of its needs. Others have tried to use this mid-point of viewing as a fulcrum in the works chronology and identity. Stephen Dilworth[4] folds ritualistic events tightly into a constructed nut, a chain of process and wound to silence. A bird is caught, killed and hooded in lead, wrapped in limewood, ash. Storm water (as precious as Lourdes') is locked in a heart made of whalebone and oak: images and substance removed from their potent environment loaded to tools. These objects are made to be thrown, fetish grenades, culled from circumstance. Weapons that accumulate their own mythic inversion; to dream of use while they pause on a cultural shelf.

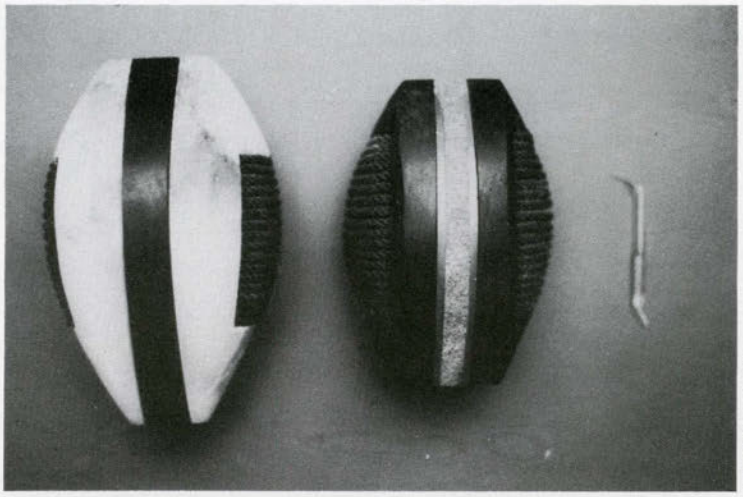
The fluidity between action, object and place is very much the natural voice of a younger generation. Although strikingly different artists, Leah Andrews and Mark Fuller share similar tendencies of invention. Their work is not formally predictable, moving with inventive ease between one territory and another. This strength of originality and purpose is both in the constructed event and its reflective image. With confidence they explore and develop the historically secure frameworks of art, making the permeable spaces in the language more exciting.

Beuys' staff still looms, its enigmatic displacement defying the non-financial catalogue, sculpture or prop, object or subject. His myth unites the disembodied remnants, but only while locked in its own formality. Again he beomes the martyr: giving new keys whilst having the case locked on himself.

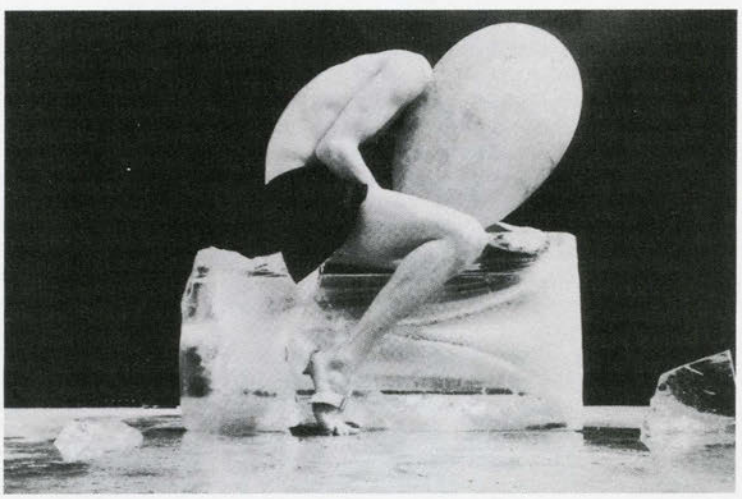
But the act of making is the shadow that becomes the signature of invisibility inside a corporeal desire. The contradiction that must be forged through divination. Like Mr D, we can re-focus through any given field of vision when human acting is extended, when the apparatus is set in motion ●

1. *Harry Price* — 'Stella C' *London, 1925.*
2. 'Red Wedge' *by Nigel Rolfe, Acme Gallery, 1978.*
3. *Phyllida Barlow* 'Expanse' *Camberwell, 1987.*
4. *Stephen Dilworth lives and works on the Isle of Harris, Scotland.*

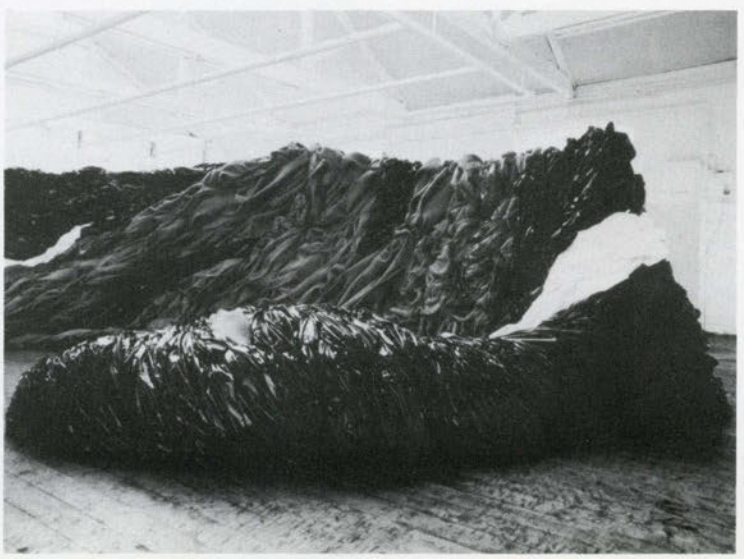
BRIAN CATLING



Stephen Dilworth *Storm Water* 1987-88, Alabaster, Bog Oak, Great Lime. Each contains a sealed glass phial of water taken from the height of the storm



Mark Fuller *When The Ice Melts, The Heat Vapours* 1987, Performance — Royal College of Art



Phyllida Barlow *Expanse* 1987, Installation — Unit 7 Gallery foam, polythene, felt

DOCUMENTING PERFORMANCE ART

At a time when the documentation of Performance is becoming increasingly important NICK KAYE sets out the essential issues involved

THE ATTEMPT TO record any live performance presents special problems. Even before beginning the process of documentation important questions of definition are raised. To what extent, for example, can a simple description of a performer's actions be considered an adequate account of a live event? How important to this event are those experiential qualities unique to live performance and so difficult to document, such as the sense of the presence of the performer, of risk during improvisation or the experience of developing an interaction between performer and audience?

A first response to such questions must be that any performance consists not simply of a series of actions executed by a performer but of a relationship and interaction that arises between performer and audience. It is a relationship defined by the performer's activity in the context of the social and aesthetic conventions of a particular place and space, and which shapes the spectator's experiences and his understanding of that which he is presented with. It follows that to divorce what occurs on a stage from the context in which it is met by an audience is to look at only part of the picture.

Of course in documenting established and familiar forms of theatre production for a contemporary audience many of the difficulties that flow from these assumptions are eased. In the case of experimental work, however, and performance art in particular, the problems can be quite marked. Performance art, drawing as it does on a variety of traditions, has tended to offer audiences a more than usually confusing variety of departures, often straggling the languages of both experimental art and theatre. In doing so it has frequently come to stress those aspects and qualities of live work that are the most difficult to record and that are especially dependent on the circumstances and terms of presentation.

Naturally enough the basic attractions for artists of live performance have tended to be those possibilities it has to offer that are not directly available through the presentation of objects. Much performance art since the late 1950's has been concerned with the experiences and processes of performing itself and particularly with the relationship and exchange between performer and audience.

Work by the American artist Vito Acconci, for example, exemplifies this kind of focus, exploring the relationship between performer and viewer through the formal circumstances in which they meet. In *Seedbed (1972)*, he hid himself beneath the floor of an empty gallery room, fantasising in response to footsteps on the floor above him and allowing this trail of thought to be broadcast into the room. In doing so he established a space in which the viewer was allowed no single focal point for the piece and in which he as performer could approach his audience without presenting any direct physical challenge or threat. Thus the viewer would enter an empty space to find himself surrounded by the presence of the artist who offers an intimate dialogue, an assault on the conventional separation of performer and spectator.

Importantly, though, Acconci's meeting with the viewer in *Seedbed* is qualified not only by his particular definition of space but by the conventions of the gallery itself. A gallery room is an area more often than not walked through by an individual, a place where a viewer gives his time to work that is static and then moves on. This is quite different from the nature of a theatre space with

PHOTO / HARRY SHUNK

Yves Klein *Saut Dans Le Vide*, Paris, 1960

a stage and fixed seating where convention would have the viewer held for a specific duration amid a community of viewers. In *Seedbed* the viewer is invited to negotiate his own engagement within the piece, to take up or turn down a contact with Acconci.

As a performance *Seedbed* might be discussed in terms of a particular use of place and space, in terms of the implications of the circumstances within which Acconci acts, rather than simply through a literal record of his actions. At the same time, it is apparent that what Acconci actually offers is not in any case a fixed "performance" but rather the ground for a contact and interaction that might occur between performer and spectator. The centre of the piece, then, is to be found in the viewer's interaction with Acconci, his experiences in the face of the performer's intimate approach and physical proximity.

In his work Acconci adapts and utilises conventions of place and space to his own particular ends, producing work of a very singular character. The problems that it reveals for documentation, however, are common to any live work that seeks to admit an open interaction with an audience or that examines the conventions by which that interaction is shaped. Performances ranging from the *Happenings* by Allan Kaprow to the Fluxus concerts of the early 1960s to work by Chris Burden, Stuart Brisley, Joseph Beuys and Marina Abramovic and Ulay to name but a few have explicitly taken up this kind of focus, exploring the nature of the exchange between performer and spectator.

How, then, might such work be recorded? By still-imagery, video-tape, written description? A written or verbal description of *Seedbed* may in fact be more appropriate than any other form, as it may be most able to take account of the performer or the spectator's "experience". Yet this raises the possibility of a "documentation" which actually lays out what should have happened rather than what did happen. Indeed, writing retrospectively about subjective and elusive experiences can be a difficult task with often limited results and may serve to mystify rather than clarify the nature of such work.

Yet there is a broader question that arises here, for the very form in which documentation is presented raises implications too. The presentation of a video-tape, a still image or a written description gives rise to expectations and understandings among an audience which may themselves distance the "documentation" from the original performance.

Once recorded and fixed on video-tape an open, improvisational or interactional approach to an audience becomes a fixed and repeatable performance. As a result it acquires new qualities which may be quite at odds with the original presentation. That which was spontaneous or accidental is now set into a given pattern. In performance a "work" may have clearly consisted of the realisation of certain objectives by any route, yet once documented it may become identified with a particular set of actions. Such a recording may also isolate and distance the performer, imposing on the viewer of a video-tape a position of safety and separation that may have been specifically challenged during the live performance.

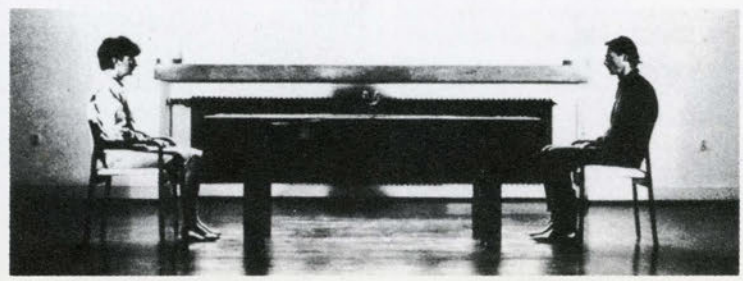
The use of still images, too, gives rise to particular problems. Such images are often effective precisely because they have found an independent life beyond the performance that was their source. Harry Shunk's startling picture of Yves Klein's *Leap into the Void (1960)* illustrates this point. Here the image of Klein's leap is fixed within a balanced composition that we can accept as self-contained. In this frozen form, removed from the violent and shocking nature of the act itself, the image of Klein's leap can be more readily seen as of symbolic value, a resonant image of false flight, the implications of which are plainly extended by the title.

Even performances which are ostensibly comprised of an image or series of images can prove difficult to record in this way, simply because the terms by which we read a fixed image are different from those by which we understand a performance. In *Night Sea Crossing (1981-1987)*, Marina Abramovič and Ulay deliberately and carefully set many of their "tableaux vivant" in gallery-spaces. Sitting silent and motionless for prolonged periods amid various symbolic objects, in institutions presenting paintings and sculptures, they struck up a dialogue between their live mediative stillness and the absolutely static quality of the objects around them.

Through its very stillness this performance would seem to lend itself to photogaphic documentation. Yet such a record is destructive of the very centre of the piece for rather than making clear the tension that arises between the act and the surrounding objects, photographs transform the artists themselves into fixed objects. From such documentation it would appear that the aim of the act is to become object-like when the centre of the performance lies in an assertion of the qualities and effect of live presence.

Yet despite these problems, performance artists in particular, through their very sensitivity to the contrasting qualities and implications of different media, should be well equipped to deal with the question of documentation. Clearly, there are responses to be made to these difficulties, for an awareness of the limitation of any means of documenting a live performance raises the possibility of revealing those limitations in the documentation itself. So in using video to document work before an audience the voyueristic nature of the recording can be revealed. Even more usefully different forms of documentation might be set one against the other. Here, rather than attempting to create a single and clear "record" of an event, a variety of documentations — description, analysis, photography — might be allowed to challenge one another.

There are two consequences of such an approach. In the first place, focused on the same event and placed next to one another, different forms of documentation may begin to reveal each others weaknesses as well as offering a fuller description of the event. Secondly, and finally, while providing evidence, such an exercise may leave conclusions about what the performance was and how it worked open to debate. In doing this, perhaps one of the dangers of documentation might be avoided, namely that of allowing any single and limited record of an event to entirely supplant the event itself, so restricting our consideration of the performance we believe we are coming to understand. ●



Marina Abramovič & Ulay *Nightsea Crossing* (1981-1987) Kunstakademie, Dusseldorf, March 1982

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

HANS HAACKE

Victoria Miro Gallery, London. Reviewed by CHRISSIE ILES.

CURRENT OPINION ON Hans Haacke's work is strongly divided. Its contentiousness lies not so much in his subject matter — the critical scrutiny and public presentation of the ideologically unsound practice of corporate figures and organisations which rule our lives and cultural climate — as in its placement and effectiveness. Haacke's work is context and audience-specific. The subject of his analytical gaze at Britain is one of the few commercial figures whose activities are publicly linked with culture (unlike in America and Europe) — Charles Saatchi. Haacke's installation 'The Saatchi Collection (Simulations)' at Victoria Miro exposes an obligingly rich vein of cultural empire-building sustained by deeply entrenched business interests in South Africa through the Saatchi's KMP Compton agency.

The most-discussed aspect of this three-part installation is the shelf/altar/mantlepiece in three sections in the colours of the South African flag. Supporting three simulated cereal packets bearing KMP Compton's advertising campaigns encouraging investment and travel to South Africa ('Let yourself be pleasantly surprised by the difference between the South Africa on your evening news and the real South Africa'). A bucket with roller, containing sheets from the same agency's government campaign supporting the pro-apartheid referendum, drive home the point. A chrome head of Lenin stuffed with red roses and small British flags establish the British, political connection, and refers to Lenin's statement in the framed photograph of Saatchi hanging above, requoted by Haacke as irony in a simulation of advertising slogan — 'As Lenin said, everything is connected to everything else' (originally used in Saatchi's 1985 annual report). The implications for the British art world are outlined in the accompanying catalogue, which traces Charles Saatchi's involvement with the Tate and Whitechapel galleries, which access to enabled cultural insider dealing. (Charles Saatchi has recently been appointed a trustee of the Victoria and Albert Museum, whose advertising account the Saatchi's have held for a number of years).

The argument that Haacke's work does not contain sufficient humanism and 'aesthetic' content has been cited by museum curators who have successfully prevented his work from being shown in galleries across America and Europe for the last twenty years. Despite his recent appearance in Cork Street and his exhibition at the Tate Gallery in 1985 (one of the very few international museums to show his work), Haacke can truly be described as a 'marginal' artist, in the sense of being rejected by the art world status quo. Others, including Haacke himself, argue that the 'communicative action' of his functionally based approach, through which important social issues are brought to attention, is in itself a strong humanistic statement.

His target is the same as that of the corporate sponsor — the middle class, liberal art audience — because he aims to introduce the possibility of a challenge by the latter to the former which might lead to a serious undermining of the system itself. In Britain's case, it is a well known fact that links with South Africa permeate every aspect of British business, and artists have long been aware of the problems of conscience which offers of sponsorship by companies have presented. If Haacke's attack on the cultural hegemony which censors and excludes such work has an impact, it is in his representation as the more 'acceptable' end of a much wider body of art practice currently excluded or marginalised from the current establishment art world, particularly in America, where Haacke has been based for over twenty years and where reliance on commercial sponsorship greatly limits the art world's perameters of validation. The placing of Haacke's installation in Cork Street, to purists a guarantee of ineffectiveness, is better understood in the light of the American private gallery context, in which private galleries have become an important testing ground for radical, experimental art, observed by cautious and corporate-bound public museum staff at a distance. It would seem that England is the place where Haacke's statements have met with the least resistance. That says more about our position in the commercial sponsorship stakes than about our liberalism. Haacke is the salver of the liberal conscience which allows it to carry on regardless. To quote the artist himself, 'ideology, as is well known, is most effective when there is no awareness of its pervasive presence'. The more confident, sophisticated and powerful the system, the more able it is to withstand criticism from within. Whilst Haacke's message remains crucial, to adopt the formal techniques and structures of the system under attack is to run the great risk of the message disappearing inside a mass acceptance of the dominant language. ●

The Saatchi Collection (Simulations) Hans Haacke, 1987, courtesy Victoria Miro Gallery, London

GLENN BRANCA

Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, January 30 Reviewed by OLIVER BENNETT

SOOTHING INDIAN POP greeted the audience as the regimental Queen Elizabeth Hall staff helped us to our seats. Armed with ear plugs, the genteel personnel obviously foresaw the evening's events with some trepidation — after all, the advance publicity had promisingly threatened us that 'extremely high volume' would be used in the second and long awaited appearance of the Glenn Branca Ensemble — the brand leaders of symphonic electric guitar music. A feeling of anticipation reigned — maybe we would leave with cells mutated or genes rejuggled. Therefore, it was slightly disappointing to see only nine guitars take the stage, rather than the seventeen that were billed. Augmented by a browbeating drummer, a keyboard, and a medieval-looking string instrument — one of Branca's repertoire of home-made items — the ensemble looked rather academic, reading off music stands and dressed informally. No attitude dancing here — though there was quite a lot of noise, even though some were still disappointed with the lack of volume. Five years ago, Branca played the Riverside Studios with much acoustic work, to critical acclaim. This time around the public had been warned, and many of the leathery punters would normally have been seen at Swans, Sonic Youth of Psychic TV concerts. Branca's *Devil Choirs at the Gates of Heaven — Symphony No. 6 for seventeen guitars, keyboards and percussion* (a suitably portentous title for the new age crowd) is essentially five movements — each building up to a climactic intensity by way of a snowballing process of layering sound upon sound until a crescendo is reached beyond which the music cannot proceed much further. Within this basic pattern, there are textural and harmonic nuances — the guitars seemed strangely tuned — but for much of this concert they remained submerged and difficult to perceive through the density and (occasionally uncomfortable) physiological experience of the music. But such considerations seem unimportant when considering the effect of Branca's music, which is a purifying, even ecstatic sound. The build-up of a dense wall of mainly electric sound also had an erotic dynamism to it; though this was helped by closing your eyes to the stage and serpentinely receiving the hypnotic pulse without distracting visual data. When you did open your eyes, however, you saw Branca as mad maestro, looking like a refugee from a Robert Longo painting (he is, in fact, producing the music for Robert Longo's film *Empire*), involved in a tarantismic twitching dance, the back of his new wave haircut flopping from side to side, and occasionally, incon-

PHOTO / PAULA COURT

Glenn Branca in performance, 1982

gruously, counting to four on his fingers.

But it was the ego-dissolving crescendos of the music which provided the most extreme and pleasurable aspects of a remarkable concert. Branca has the ability to create an aural force field, which could probably stun a chicken with its intensity. The sound could be the Western avant-garde equivalent of the ecstatic music of the world, as delirious in its own way as the cascading music of sufism or the hindu raga, as disorientating and consciousness-shifting as the finest psychedelia.

There were elements in it that recalled the frenzy and claustrophobia of certain Velvet Underground tracks, or the massing instrumentation of Phil Spector — maybe it comes in the New York water supply.

But Branca relies very little on popular form. Though the music at times recalls rock, one is always reminded of the greater formality of its parts, and the gravity of its intentions: the volume is never gratuitous or indiscriminate, though it is sensational in the truest sense of the word. Consequently, it settles in the niche uncomfortably called new music or new age music. Though, like other musical phenomena addressing power in various forms, it is castigated for being fascistic or macho, its priorities are far from the Ted Nugent I-Could-kill-you-all-with-volume school of bombasticism. Instead, it uses an ultra-sonic form where volume is a necessity, not an indulgence; music for deep pleasure seekers, rather than a frisson for demilitarised youth. They should have hired Branca to play the soundtrack to the harmonic convergence. Then something might really have happened. ●

GRAHAM YOUNG

ICA Gallery, London, March. Reviewed by NIK HOUGHTON

A FEW WEEKS ago I was getting ready to go to work when the phone rang. At this point the milk I was boiling erupted over the hotplate and the postman knocked at the door. A dull, everyday disaster maybe yet one which we've all experienced as the domestic backup to existence goes awry and familiar home territories become a place of possible danger and frustration.

It's this territory which Graham Young has explored for 5 years now with a series of short, concise tapes with the overall title of *Accidents In The Home* and which are here on show in the ICA's Concourse Gallery. Presented in a simple installation format, whats been selected here are six tapes on show on six monitors are accompanied by simple sculptural compositions of cassette tapes, angle-poise lamps, pencils and an electric pencil sharpener which occasionally whirrs into life.

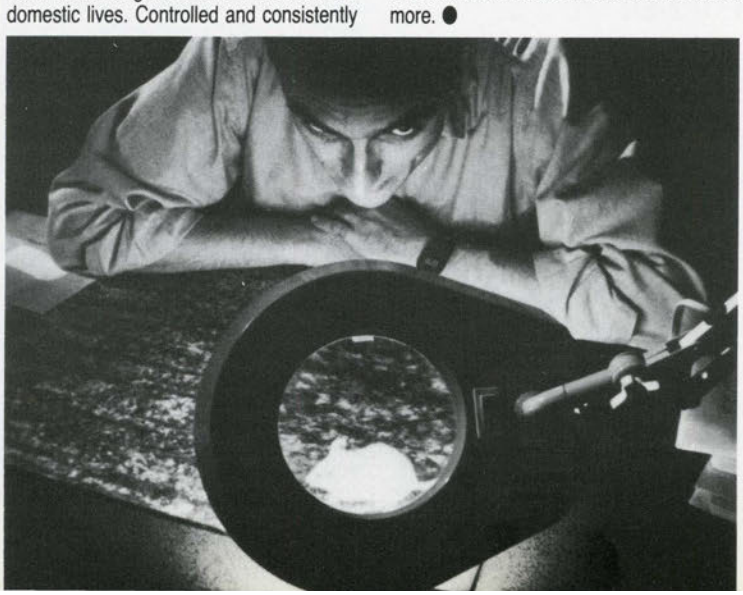
'Will inanimate objects do as they are told?', asks Young in the accompanying leaflet and this is a central motif to works like *Putter* (Commissioned by Channel 4) where the simple scenario of a man at a desk evolves into a wordless mini-drama of drooping angle-poise lamps, bored play with stationery and a home putting set. In an earlier piece, *Domestiques* (1987), Young constructs a strange, dreamlike series of images around a frontroom and a bicyclist while *Indoor Games* (1986) sees an oblique narrative develop with just a few objects and a tentative hand on screen.

Focusing on home territories and what John Wyver calls 'the stubborn intractabilty of things' Young's skill is in drawing both humour and an understated sense of drama out of the small gestures and reveries of our domestic lives. Controlled and consistently engaging, the 'Accidents' series are, on the one hand, minimal — the frazzle of effects are here refused for careful lighting, strangely angled cameras and attention to detail — and on the other, startlingly rich and atmospheric.

Something similar is intended in Mineo Aayamaguchi's 25 monitor installation in the larger space of the Lower Gallery where a bank of screens presents a constantly changing series of interconnected images which are reflected in chunks of mirror surfaced metal scattered in front of the installation. A highly complex set of patterns, shapes and forms evolving across the monitors suggest a style of formal, neo-sculptural video enlivened by the vividness of the images. Amongst this constant stream of synthetic colour and sound, a field of flowers burns with an artificially induced richness of tone, water ripples and a privet hedge gets electronically transformed into psychedelia. Although the press release calls this 'like some vast electronic colour field painting' *Kaleidoscope* seems faintly old hat as it swoops and surges along its image-amplified way and, while at times there are moments of spectacle, its a work which often seems so concerned to impress that the possibility of a more measured exploration of urban and rural landscape is left behind in its frenetic pace.

Aayamaguchi has worked consistently in this manner for some time now and although he is to be applauded for continuing the difficult struggle to produce installation work one sometimes wonders quite where it's leading.

By the same token one could ask the same of Young's tapes. The difference is that while the Japanese artist seeks to use the world as his material his British counterpart uses only a small part of that world — the domestic environment — to focus our attention and shift our perceptions. In this instance more means less and less means more. ●



Accidents in the Home
Graham Young, ICA
1988

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

OSCAR MCLENNAN

Waiting for the Kiss of the Chicken King & Helicopter Man, Leadmill, Sheffield, February 10 1988. Reviewed by TIM ETCHELLS

BEFORE THIS EVENING I'd never seen Oscar McLennan perform. All I had to go on was a third-hand account of a drunken, naked monologue he'd done in The Garage, Nottingham. And a press release which promised "comedy as a threat." And a vague memory of a hunched figure fishing cans from a bag at a Midland Group Performance conference, a man with an accent saying; "I don't see why I should have to justify or theorise about what I do, I mean the work's the work, they can like it or lump it . . . Is the bar open now, Nikki?"

The city ought to look rational; everything here has been made with meaning in mind. But in the street a thousand codes, both public and private, assert themselves and contend. They turn the landscape into gibberish.

Waiting For the Kiss of the Chicken King is a monologue about modern city life. Oscar is dressed in a nasty quilted dressing gown and stood beside a small table on an otherwise empty stage. At the heart of the piece there's a stand-up style confessional; everyday squalor stories about a bedsit and a phone that won't ring; a diet of baked beans and breakfast cereals. The voice here is casual, off the cuff. Around this are wound nightmares and fantasies, the sort of personal myths and stories that rise from the gibberish of the city. The style here is more self-conscious and poetic. The relationship between these two worlds and styles is central to the piece and, on the whole, it works very well.

The narrator talks about lying in bed as a corner of the curtain obstinately un-drawingpins itself again. Light floods in and with it a tide of remembered images from the streets. He speaks of the Hokey Cokey man; a tramp on Kentish Town Road who begs everyone he meets to 'Do the hokey cokey . . .'

Before long such figures take on surreal proportions. The Hokey Cokey Man becomes terrifying; dragging the whole world into some idiotic ritual of his own. Later he is almost a saviour; the narrator longs to dance beside him as he leads half a tube train of Londoners, pied-piper like, full of glee, down through the carriages.

In *Chicken King* Oscar Mclennan holds up a character who can take anything from the world and mythologize it endlessly. This seems to cut right to the heart of the way we live in cities; the random observation could be the important one, the unlikely and worthless mass-produced item could be the key to something human and sincere. In its final scene the monologue describes the narrator on his bedsit, masturbating; it's only when he mops the sperm from his belly with the smiling face of Colonel Saunders on a Kentucky Fried serviette that he realises he isn't alone in the world. He has the Chicken King, after all, "thoughtfully provided" and "finger licking good."

I liked the blackness of the humour; he pauses at one point to confide; "I've got cancer. I have. I can feel it gnawing away at my insides. I'm a Capricorn with cancer. We're supposed to get on quite well." I liked the idiosyncracy of the imagery; "Kids all happy and smiling like in the Blitz". At times I found the text a little cloying; too realist or sincere; you have to edge round a subject like loneliness with care, with irony and bitterness.

My other criticisms were technical which is inevitable given that both these pieces are quite new. The more casual, everyday material should have been done straight to the audience in a relaxed way but it felt laboured and stiff at times. The pace was slow too; little variation and a habit of overplaying looks and pauses made things harder work than they might have been.

The second piece *Helicopter Man* began with Oscar in his own clothes curled foetal on the table. His narrator/persona Arthur rambles about a man called the Captain who "likes screwing arseholes . . . even if they're blown to pieces, you know, even if there's just an arsehole left he'll still have it, he's not fussy." As Arthur talks a story almost becomes visible; the second coming of Christ, this time with guns and vengance under the name of The Helicopter Man.

Here, instead of being fed surreal visions wrapped up with our own world we are thrown straight into a grotesque country un-named and unwarned. The language is apocalyptic, mixing Old Testament with combat zones, buggery and nightmares. Here there are no familiar landmarks like bedsits and streetnames.

I had mixed feelings about this second monologue. It was funny in a more twisted way and I liked getting the surreal world direct, without mediation. At times though it was pretty close to being impenetrable. It seemed to need the stability that the familiar world provides, or perhaps more interestingly, the surreal world needed to find a clarity and coherence all of its own. ●

STEVE PURCELL & CO.

Green Room, Manchester Reviewed by PIPPA CORNER

A MARVEL WE HAD ALWAYS LONGED FOR is the Bash St kids meet Mary & Martha and the consequence is nasty, pernicious male art, with a relaxed '50's gloss. Opening the show, two perfectly attractive young women dressed in unflattering frocks, to indicate that they are mothers, trace a precarious path of china stepping-stones towards a china-laden table where are seated three young men beneath an airer heavy with outmoded underwear. The boys, attempting to throw the girls off balance, bombard them with those little tins that mummy makes the madeleines in. This marvellous image is pursued, somewhat recklessly to my way of thinking, for a further forty-five minutes, at which juncture the lads tumble gracefully to the floor, their energies spent, and the lasses get the last word, viz: they place by each weary head a baby vest and a pair of baby pants. At best this is junior theatre; performance for the under-fives; political thought courtesy of ITA. At worst it is pompous and chauvinist. What a paradoxical old world it is that when the New Men turn their philanthropic attentions to the wrongs of women the resulting work is patronising, impertinent and oppressive. The performances were conscientious enough, but the thinking disgracefully lax. The defence may argue that my grinding misery at watching three men devote an hour to aggression, needling and 'petty' sexual assault is the exact intention, the nub of the matter. My response is that I do not need to go to the theatre to marvel at a self-important analysis of the status quo — unless of course I want to see it dressed up in '50s kitsch. It is high time the juvenile lead learns that he will not absolve himself by neatly enumerating the ways in which men abuse women. To be redeemed it is not enough to stand before an audience and say 'we are evil'. It is certainly not enough to say 'Ooh, aren't we naughty.' The women in the piece acted as icons of female servility, long suffering and demonstrably meek. Their self-expression was afforded 15 secs max of 'cries in the wilderness' standing on the table with cornflakes in their knickers, the soundtrack drowning their words. The act of rebellion peaked when they showed us their upper thigh. The only attempts to score points resulted in misappropriation and macho attention seeking. The efforts at harmony were risible, deafened by the cacophony of smashing plates. At the heart of the piece is the Irving Berlin song "You Can Have Him" in which the singer lets go of her man "I could never make him happy . . . all I ever wanted to do was . . (long list of devotional pursuits)." The song is about love. It is passionate and moving, and this I think was misunderstood. As I watched I got the distinct impression that Steve Purcell heard it, believed it to be about the self-oppression of women, and decided it would make a good show. Certainly the message was if women are stupid enough to put up with, nay invite, this chronic misbehaviour from such uninspiring men then they deserve everything they get and in any case men can't do anything about it if they all just happen to be little boys at heart. Unfortunately not all women are at liberty to resist, and this rosy cheeked romance of the scallywag does not impress. Adult responsibilities begin at 18. It is unsophisticated and offensive to portray sexual politics as a coconut shy. Aunt Sally left the fairground years ago. What is more it makes boring, bad theatre. ●

MINEO AAYAMAGUCHI

ICA Gallery, London. March 1988. Reviewed by JEREMY WELSH.

MINEO AAYAMAGUCHI'S NEW installation *Kaleidoscope*, is the culmination of several years' work in installation, video and performance, during which time he has evolved a strong personal style that is characterised most strongly by his use of light and colour. Having a background in sculpture and performance, his approach to the use of video in installations is quite different from that of many 'media artists' whose primary motivation is an engagement with the power and the iconography of mass media.

Kaleidoscope is in many ways an extension of *Beyond Colour*, shown at the AIR Gallery, London, in 1986. The earlier installation was on a smaller scale, using a grid of nine monitors within a formal setting that also included a grid of small polished glass plates on the floor, within which the reflected video screens assumed an inverse extension of the image. The new work centres on a stepped bank of twenty four screens facing a large triangular arrangement of polished brass pieces on the wall opposite. Midway between these two forms, on the floor, is a circle of brass plates, cut and beaten into organic shapes that refer back to the landscape images seen on the video screens.

The installation offers the viewer several ways of looking at it, each one different. Like a zen garden, it is impossible from any one viewpoint to see the whole, but each part contributes to a harmonious completeness. Viewing the work head on, it is impossible to resist the lure of the video screens with their pulsating electronic colours and constantly resolving geometric forms; but moving around the space and peering into the curved brass shapes, we are offered other versions of the video image, softer, less strident than the television screens themselves.

Aayamaguchi has confidently tackled a much larger space than he has used in the past, and his ability as a sculptor has overcome the problem of 'filling' a large gallery with a video work. My only reservation about the piece is with the sound used; an echoing interweaving of electronic sounds that sometimes jar against the delicacy of the image. Perhaps it is simply that the sound levels were too high when I saw the piece; perhaps the use of sound is an overstatement that the work does not need.

Full marks to the ICA galleries for their programming of this ambitious work, and the complementary programmes of video by Graham Young and film by Fischli & Weiss. For too long Britain has lagged behind Europe and North America in its support for work of this kind; I fervently hope that others will take a lead from this example. ●

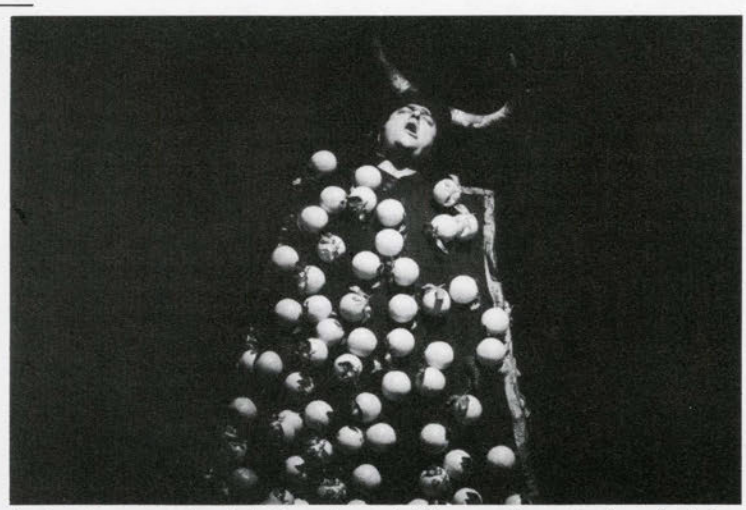
CARLES SANTOS

The Akademie der Künst, West Berlin, 12 February 1988. Reviewed by KEN GILL

CATALAN CARLES SANTOS, who is best known for his solo concerts with piano and voice, made an extraordinary leap into grand theatre with a very accomplished 1½ hour work of great warmth and simplicity *A small Spanish Opera*. The piece fell into seven apparently unrelated scenes each of which, in varying degrees of abstraction, alluded to Spain and its culture, with a strong undertow throughout of sexual dynamism. Each part was essentially a single image developed and resolved. The empathy and wit of this process was infectious, and coupled with an uncomplicated, yet grand, presentation, this turned out to be a fascinating insight into Santos' artistic concerns.

The main weapon in his armoury is an idiosyncratic use of voice. No recognisable word was spoken throughout the opera, yet Santos has devised a whole vocabulary, a language even, of vocal sound which is undoubtedly Mediterranean in origin, but is internationally comprehensible. The real surprise of this piece, however, was how very competently voice and visual choreography were successfully blended to achieve his aims.

Predictably, perhaps, Santos picked on iconographic representations to build this picture of Spanishness. What made the work interesting was that each icon was taken and manipulated in order to produce a layering of meaning and a certain poignant ambiguity. So rather than a catalogue of images of Flamenco, Bullfighting, Sun, Sea, etc., a series of mixed metaphors were created, where, for example, that most noble of creatures, the fighting bull, was corrupted by the artists derogatory portrayal of the Spanish male — a comically pathetic figure, full of bravado, wearing an absurd horned helmet — a sham. By contrast, women were shown as multi-faceted beings. Explosively sensual in a distilled rendering of the Paso D'oble: a pair of ankles that rat-a-tat'ed anonymously over the stage, whilst the male counterpart was reduced to a head at her feet that echoed her percussive mating calls; a delicious picture of female aloofness and male fatuousness. The three performers, Madalena Bernades, Montse Calomé and Ampero Roselló, evoked a world where the elements of the sea and the sun are still dominant forces, where birds and wild animals, the silence of barren countryside and the chaos of urban Spanish life exists together in a rich kaleidoscope of impressions from a land where antiquity and modernity clash and fuse in constant nervous energy. All very foreign to Northern European sobriety.



A Small Spanish Opera
Carles Santos
Akademie der Künst, West Berlin, 1988

The finale was a bathetic, and oddly familiar scene (if one has witnessed the marching bands of small towns in Italy or Spain). A tuxedoed group of five male drummers with the familar viking-style helmets were conducted by Santos in a crazed Bolero-like dirge which built to an absurd climax only to peter out very slowly and comically. Perched above them like a town square statue, was a beautiful angelic woman, her skirts lifted, who urinated continuously for fifteen minutes on the group below. A succinct expression of derision at pomp, and a neat example of Santos' utter lack of pretension. One may accuse him of being an Entertainer, but it is difficult to nail him for insincerity, or a lack of passion in what he is doing. ●

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

MAKING SPACE

ICA Theatre, London, February 20th, 1988. A report by SIMON HERBERT.

THE CONFERENCE *Making Space* was sub-titled *Art Projects Beyond the Gallery* — not a new topic, certainly, but one which over the last few years has gradually been drawn back into the cultural spotlight. The interest in addressing various modes of interaction with the public outside of the institutional space was plain judging from the high attendance (no doubt partially swelled by those with a keen desire for information on high-profile public events, what with incentive funding looming on the horizon . . .).

Another title, obviously, could have been *You can't please all of the people all of the time.* The ethical and aesthetic issues surrounding public art are complex enough on a personal level, let alone when fine-art based visual artists gather alongside community artists, so it came as no surprise when the polemical cannon shots for 'the right' equation for the presentation of public works echoed around the ICA theatre.

What was more interesting, amidst the rhetoric, was the particular array of power bases from which public art arises, represented in a distinguished panel chaired by Sandy Nairne which included James Lingwood, curator at the ICA, Jan Hoet, director of the Museum van Heedensagse Kunst in Ghent (organiser of the Chambres d'Amis project in 1986, in which fifty international artists made works for particular rooms in the city), Kasper Konig (co-organiser of the Munster Skulptur Projekt '77 and '87), Saskia Bos, director of the De Appel Foundation, Amsterdam (organiser of Sonsbeek '86 in Arnhem) and Jean de Loisy (whose brief at the French Ministry of Culture is to develop commissions for public and historic buildings).

What rapidly became clear from the proceedings was that in terms of historical muscle, the mainland Europeans are in a different league overall to the British. Whilst we were blithely proclaiming the death of Duchamp and a return to figuration, they were still building on the interventionist art practices of the sixties. Consequently, an avant-garde (though admittedly soft) element has been fostered within the high-profile international public art fairs which abound throughout Europe, attracting major kudos in their wake as well as massive sponsorship quite aside from state subsidy. They have a certain amount of experience; Saskia Bos, in resurrecting the Sonsbeek festival 15 years on, was quick to point out that repetition would have been useless, and that contexts change. Meanwhile, Britain sadly appears to still be in the dressing room, hastily devising revisionist game plans on the black-board.

One person who has attempted to rectify this situation is James Lingwood in his role as co-organiser of TSWA 3D, but it was a shame that in opting for a mechanical reading of notes couched in a critical review style he failed to convey the scale and ambition of the scheme. TSWA 3D artist Antony Gormley was similarly lack-lustre, as, when criticised (rather unfairly) for the inclusion of his sculptures on the Derry site, he paid lip-service to 'connecting not dividing', presumably hoping for the unfortunately absent Declan Mcgonagle to arrive and take a more considered stance in his defence. Sutapa Biswas fared rather more badly in her presentation of the Multi-Racial UK project she is currently developing. With all respect to her abilities as an artist, she does not (yet) have the experience to make such a panel presentation, and sold her efforts short with an embarrassingly inadequate description of the projects aims. Biswas, though, did raise an important question as to the criteria used by Hoet and Konig for their selection of artists. As it was, they decided to spare our tender sensibilities, but there is a simple and brutal equation operating here that perhaps we don't want to hear: in order to garner the necessary prestige (money) to float festivals on this scale, you have to put tried and tested names like Richard Serra on the corporate table. Isn't this, then, merely a transference of a gallery mentality to a larger arena, and doesn't this bode ill for the inclusion of works by younger, less well-established, or 'difficult', issue-based artists? Perhaps, but as Konig pointed out, such links are formed over a period of time and, like art-works, are part of an ongoing process. The choice at the ICA, therefore, seemed rather simple in the end: we can actively take on board these implications and — like Konig et al — create a climate which, though no doubt imperfect, establishes a profile for the arts which cannot help but reflect favourably on other activities. Or, as suggested by one audience member, we can continue to define our 'spiritual role' whilst our artists produce Garden Festival art-works on such rivetting themes as 'magic', 'the garden' or 'maritime history'. ●

AUDIO ARTS

ACCENT FOR A START Riverside Studios, London. Reviewed by CHRISSIE ILES.

A SENSITIVITY TO ambience and the evocation of place through sound to articulate space form the core of Audio Arts' sound works/installations. *Accent for A Start*, commissioned by Projects UK, Newcastle, comprised a live performance structured round a 12 track LP of local people's responses to questions about Newcastle. The specifity of place common to all Audio Arts' installations has been replaced here by a strong desire to involve collaboration of another kind, involving local students and musicians to interpret the tape slide sequence of the material collected. Local recordings become a soundtrack for twelve tableaux of movement in which speech is interpreted largely choreographically as rhythm.

Each track deals with issues raised by local people: the north/south divide; the accent, and colloquial meanings of adjectives — 'canny', 'friendly', 'mint'. The dual slide projection of maps of Audio Arts' base in Brixton and Gateshead suggests an attempt to transcendend north/south barriers and an equality of artistic input. Yet the democratic gathering of local material is, by the very process of editing and re-presentation, transformed into a vehicle for the expression of Audio Arts ideas. The students' somewhat traditional (though well delivered), formal interpretation only served to distance the material further from its origins.

The movement did address itself directly to the subject matter in parts. Zombied marching in *Everything You Could Possibly Want* suggested the mesmerising effect of shopping, contrasting with the otherwise positive recorded comments on the new shopping mall.

The dancers, whose interpretation received minimal interference from Audio Arts, applied the minimum of scrutiny to subjects rich in imagery. The live input to *In Relation to What?*, a series of comments by local people on the north/south divide, was to move a series of black placards showing the letters 'N' and 'S' in quasi-semaphor against Audio Arts' familiar projection of maps.

Dance sits uneasily within the conceptual base of Audio Arts slidetape work, and confused the issue. The translation of slide-tape into backdrop for the performers did indeed activate the space, but the articulation of the powerful ambience of the space of St James's Church, Piccadilly, which this piece sought to further extend, could not occur in a more directly theatrical piece in the neutral 'black box' space of the Riverside Studios. The juxtaposition of local material and installation 'language' with the self-conscious formality of dance techniques is an awkward one. It would certainly be exciting to see Audio Arts' installations engage further with live elements. Dance does not seem the most challenging of media with which to do so. ●

ANNIE GRIFFIN & LAURA FORD

The Deadly Grove, Battersea Arts Centre, London. Reviewed by STEVE ROGERS.

THE REAL DANGER of devising a new performance work against the deadline of an opening night is that the publicity machinery has to go into gear long before the show is ready, often even before rehearsals have actually started. This is a problem which habitual and sympathetic performance watchers are prepared for. There is often much to be enjoyed and learned from seeing an unresolved work which will clearly grow and improve from having a real audience to contend with. Ideally a new performance work, especially one by artists who have already proved their worth, should be seen both early and late on in its existence. Even after making these allowances I cannot convince myself that *The Deadly Grove* can come right without a drastic and fundamental rethink.

The basic problem with *The Deadly Grove* is that it doesn't know what kind of show it wants to be. Is it Performance Theatre or is it a workshop production of a youth theatre? At times it is both but the two do not complement each other, rather they stand in simple, unharmonious, destructive opposition, like chalk and cheese. *The Deadly Grove* derives its narrative and mythological content from the ballet *Giselle* which is used, along with some of the conventions of ballet, as a vehicle for an exploration of a woman's sexual desires and fears. The action takes place in a forest of petrified trees in the shape of huge bears, like a magic circle of enormous erections. The forest is inhabited by the Wilis, wood spirits that lure men into the forest at night to dance with them until they drop down dead of exhaustion. At the centre is a woman, Annie Griffin, who seems to have dreamed up both the forest with its forbidding but erotic form and the Wilis who are her accomplices. Her performance and the sculptural environment created by Laura Ford come quite firmly from the territory of performance theatre. This, in essence, consists of a deliberately constructed confrontation between reality and theatrical artifice. Laura Ford, although part of the performance, does not perform. She reacts quite naturally and spontaneously to the action, whilst Annie Griffin teases, often to comic effect, the theatrical conventions of the tragic lovelorn heroine that takes in both Giselle, Ophelia and the Lady of Shallot. All this is very well and results in the shows most powerful moments. Annie Griffin is an extraordinarily charismatic performer and when she delivers her central solo narrative the glint in her eye is so bright it seems to illuminate her whole face.

However, around and into this is forced the company of young performers who, the programme informs us, devised the performance along with Griffin and Ford. The problem with a virtuoso performing with an amateur orchestra is that the real artist's performance makes the amateurs sound all the worse. Which is a great pity since all the members of the company exhibited energy and talent and would have looked good if they weren't being forced to compete with someone as accomplished as Annie Griffin. In the event what were presented with by the company was what looked like an inexpert and at times embarrassing attempt at comedy. Why was the man who strays into the wood such a comic-strip amorous Frenchman? Why do they bother to make the joke of some of the Wilis being men; are men in frocks funny any more except in unimaginative TV sitcoms? I found myself at a complete loss to understand what was going on. There seemed to be almost no relationship between the show Annie Griffin was in and that of the company. If this was meant as a deliberate formal experiment, then it failed. If the course acting, am-dram performances by the company were meant as another perspective on the stereotyped heroines of ballet and panto, then they succeeded only in saying that such heroines are stereotypes, and there is little merit in that.

Annie Griffin's collaboration with Laura Ford remains then an exciting possibility; (as does a show devised by this capable group of young performers). There were hints of what might come of such a collaboration in *The Deadly Grove*; small, frustrating moments which made me long to see what might have arisen if Ford and Griffin hadn't taken the brave and difficult, but probably mistaken, decision to devise the performance in an open working relationship with a group of inexperienced, inexpert young performers. ●

ROSE FINN-KELCEY

Bureau de Change. Matt's Gallery, London. February 1988. Reviewed by MARJORIE ALTHORPE-GUYTON.

WHEN THIS WORK was shown at the Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield it attracted 12,000 visitors. Not surprising given that the stagepiece was the spectacular sale of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*. But Rose Finn-Kelcey achieves something even more extraordinary: the displacement of aura from the original to a copy of a copy. What Baudrillard called the haemorrhage of reality: 'subtle way of murdering the original but also singular seduction.' In *Bureau de Change* the theatricalisation of Modernism — in Minimalism — is given, literally, a flesh and blood immediacy where (Baudrillard again!) 'the simulation is maximal — exacerbated and parodied simulation at one and the same time — as interminable as psychoanalysis and for the same reasons'. The viewer is inexorably implicated in the work. How is this? Both the viewer and the space are dispossessed. The floor — gone under a spanking new one, wood, incomplete, though, at the edges as if simply lifted from an 'original' site. This 'slice of life' comes complete with security man; no need to prod, he is real enough. There is £1,000 of the coin of the realm at his feet, arranged with consumate craft in an eight by four feet image of an image of the *Sunflowers*. From a specially made viewing platform, the gaze consumes gleaming sworls of coins replicating every spiral and sweep of Van Gogh's brush. Their rogue variegation, from golden pound pieces, like sovereigns, to dirty one pence, matchlessly follow the tonal richness of the 'original'. Finn-Kelcey's masterpiece, skilfully spotlit, is itself represented by video, from a camera and monitor slung from above. On screen it looks indistinguishable from the postcard from which it was copied. You suspect that the Mappin visitor probably enjoyed the Finn-Kelcey more than they would the Van Gogh (not that they will get the chance). How many at Matt's even tried to guess the value of money on the floor, or marvelled at the pain of its making? But £1,000 of art for grabs means more in Hackney than the millions of yen exchanged by an affluent Japan. The hyperreality of the work collided with the reality of the site, where the security man had to be on duty twenty four hours a day. *Bureau de Change* not only raised perceptions of material and site, but critical issues of value: authenticity, authorship and capital. Perhaps we cannot forget Baudrillard; the *Sunflowers*, like the *Mona Lisa* 'has been satellised around the planet, as absolute model of earthly art, no longer a work of art but a planetary simulacrum where everyone comes to witness himself (really his own death) in the gaze of the future.' ●

PERFORMANCE REVIEW

ILLUMINATIONS/GHOSTS IN THE MACHINE

National Film Theatre, London. Reviewed by NIK HOUGHTON.

IN APRIL 1987 the Arts Council and Channel Four advertised for proposals for eleven minute television programmes. Ten artists were given £4,500 with which to make pilots from which four would be commissioned for inclusion in the new 'Ghosts' series.

A programme of ten new works all between 8 and 13 minutes long, will be offered as a touring programme while four of the pieces are to be broadcast on Channel 4.

'Hidden Wisdom' (Diaz/McIntosh) is a b&w film which describes itself as "a visual poem about the unseen dimensions, 'wisdoms' of black women". Set to a flutey junglenoise soundtrack the film offers a mythic world of sea, beaches and forests where a black woman seems to occupy a position of isolated Goddess-like power. As the film progresses, these scenes are edited with footage of older black women working as cleaners and talking of dreams. Underlying this weaving of the mythic and the everyday are references to a sub-conscious history, the 'hidden wisdom' of the title.

It's a quiet and strong work yet it's only in where the connections between a 'now' of grimy corridors and a 'then' of freedom and empty lands are articulated that a real spark of interest develops.

Sandra Lahires *Uranium Hex*. A jumpy scattershot of a film, focuses on an Ontario uranium mining community. Jumpcut at an unnerving pace and set to an overloaded soundtrack of voices, industrial noise and snippets of interviews, the images of bodies, industrial activity and drilling have a giddy speed to them, yet this full-frontal-assault style is finally numbing rather than engaging.

By contrast Jean Matthee's *'Descent of The Seductress'* is a slow and entrancing work where a few fragments of footage of the face of Marilyn Monroe are worked into a strangely disturbing sequence of flickering, glowing images — which might signal either fear or pleasure, heaven or hell. In George Snow's *Man Of The Crowd*, the maker sets Edgar Allen Poe's short story in the context of an 80's London with a voiceover all mid-Atlantic growl and gravel and a style somewhere between the pop promo and the video arcade. Overstated and overloaded with video effects, it's a tape which looks ragged in its range of mixes, techniques and imagery. In similar style is *Chemistry Set*, another video from Hawley/Steyger wherein *Trout Descending A Staircase*, previously a tape in its own right, is spliced to new footage of the computer age, travel and domestic activity. *Chemistry Set* comes on like a TV-ad on acid and seems little more than an unstructured dash through state-of-the-art technology.

But if *Chemistry Set* isn't my taste then *Canvas* Sara Furneaux most certainly is. Here the maker takes a minimalist approach to video, presenting a series of highly composed 'video paintings' of women where subtlety and the tremor of movement is everything. Sensual, slow and powerful.

In *Behind Closed Doors*, Anna Thew a more complex imagery is offered as angels swing, corpses are dragged from the sea and themes of dream and nightmare unwind. A rich work which makes *Valtos*, Patrick Keiller look all the bleaker as a b&w vision of the British landscape offers itself up with a, familiar voiceover. Understatement is the key word here and this is, similarly, the case with Paul Graham's *Troubled Land* where a few images of the Irish countryside are overlaid with the ominous noise of distant helicopters.

In the end what's most intriguing about this programme is the range of styles, concerns and approaches taken by the 10 makers. Signalling a healthy eclecticism, *Art For Television* underlines the importance of initiatives which offer film/video artists the possibility of reasonable budgets and new audiences. ●

PERFORMANCE LETTERS

Dear Performance

If there is any loophole in the 'performance community's liberalism', perhaps it is the toleration of criticism as narrow and contemptuous as Pippa Corner's review of the Leeds performance of Theatre Nova in *Let Me Speak* (No. 52).

It is not difficult to identify the assumptions in the sub-text of this review. It implies that design should be a dominant signifying system and verbal language a minor one. It also implies that performance should be non-narrative. Even a 'happy ending' is implicitly proscribed. *Let Me Speak*'s final images are far from merely 'happy' after the suffering of the woman protagonist. More importantly, the reunion of Domitila de Chungara with her children, whom she thought dead, is historical fact. Ms Corner fails to realise this or to recognise its symbolic resonance in the context of Latin American political struggle and Catholic culture.

Performance can include many possible sources or channels of communication. A particular performance will foreground some and minimise or exclude others. Truly experimental work will attempt to be free from the prescription of fashion or mainstream tradition to explore the channels its selects and arrange these in a new syntax. In *Let Me Speak* we chose to explore the tension between movement and language. Two contrasting narratives of a union leader and a miner's wife in Bolivia — one a simultaneous juxtaposition or montage of events, the other a linear progression — were intercut with poetic sequences. Both movement and language were developed from the performers' psychophysical and vocal resources and formed the dominant signifying system. The verbal text was re-composed at three stages in response to the performers' development of these two channels — *not* vice-versa — in order to achieve a rhythmic, phonic and semantic integration of verbal and performance texts.

Ms Corner has mistaken a carefully-conceived simplicity of design for 'no design'. The setting (roses on a monumentally triangular white cloth, variably lit, fronted by a stone circle), sense-objects (rose petals, earth, grapes, incense, etc.) and masks (either Inca or European-grotesque in reference) were intended to contextualise the movement further as a ritual pattern informing each narrative. The Scotsman, City Limits (review & 'Encore') and Leeds Student recognised and praised this performance strategy. We had hoped for a more penetrating analysis from Performance.

But there is a more important issue at stake: the basis of performance criticism itself. If a company is to receive 'reasonable attention', it is reasonable to suggest that a clear methodology and more precise language than 'perfectly horrid' are needed. The attempt to identify (a) the resources invested by theatre artists, (b) the choices made with those recourses and (c) the syntax of performance is an essential basis of responsible criticism. On this basis a reviewer can analyse the degree to which a performance has met or fallen short of (a) its own aims and (b) the expectations of the audience and reviewer. To do less than this is to risk promoting the hidden agendas and prescriptions of an individual or clique under the guise of liberalism.

We would have welcomed and respected qualified, constructive criticism of an experimental performance that took nearly a year to develop. Indeed we need it. If there has been any lack of 'analytical approach', it has been Ms Corner's failure to analyse and acknowledge her own assumptions about the nature of performance. The result has been serious misrepresentation of our work. ●

Nigel Stewart & Don McGovern, Artistic Directors of Theatre Nova

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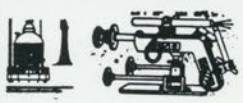

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