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EDGE 88

PUBLISHED BY
PERFORMANCE

PERFORMANCE

WHAT NEXT FOR PERFORMANCE?

THE ARTS COUNCIL'S performance art officer Jeni Walwin recently attempted to instrument a new strategic policy for the development of performance art. She failed. The committee that monitors and advises on the expenditure of the performance art budget rejected her new policy. It did so on the grounds that the new proposal would divert cash away from the art itself towards other related activities. That failure represents a serious setback for the future of performance art and a victory for an understandable but nevertheless shortsighted dogma.

The essence of the new policy was to stop the promoters scheme and replace it with a range of strategic initiatives which focus on the need to create a far greater understanding and appreciation of performance art, its history, its role, and its meaning. The promoters scheme, initiated three years ago by Walwin, divides the bulk of the councils performance art allocation between a small number of promoters who then use the funds to commission and present new works. The thinking behind the scheme was that rather than the arts council attempting to devise some system to select individual projects to fund on a national basis the scheme would create centres of concentrated activity which could create more impact and therefore be of more benefit to the artists than would individual isolated one-off projects. It also meant that there would be three or four organisations selecting work by their own criteria and tastes rather than there being just one, the arts council and its advisors.

The promoters scheme had a lot of merits. It was a well conceived solution to problems that would have occurred if they had tried to spread an extremely meagre dollop of cream very, very thinly. It has made a major contribution to some memorable seasons of work. The New Work Newcastle seasons organised by Projects UK, many of the Midland Group commissioned works, including works from Bow Gamelan, Station House Opera, and others who are now becoming well established enough to succeed in raising support from other sources, as well as forthcoming programmes in the West Midlands and Hull have all been made possible in part by funds from the scheme.

However, the world changes very quickly, especially in the last few years. For a long time the Arts Council's tiny allocation to performance art via Jeni Walwin's department was more or less the only source of funding available. Today however there are various sources of funding. For example, the regional office of the Arts Council Art Department spends more on performance, indirectly through its clients, than

does the performance art department. Performance is one of the priority spending categories for the new funds made available to regional museums through the Glory of the Garden regional development strategy. Southampton City Art Gallery, Nottingham Castle Museum, the Laing in Newcastle, Stoke on Trent City Museum and Art Gallery, Wolverhampton Art Gallery, Cartwright Hall in Bradford, to name but some have, over the past couple of years, done more for the development of an audience for performance art than almost anything else. Several hundred people saw Alistair MacLennan's performance in the dungeons of the Castle Museum, Nottingham. Performances by the whole spectrum of albeit familiar names of British performance have had full houses in these museums and galleries in recent months. Performance art has been cropping up in many more independent galleries than ever before as well as becoming a familiar feature of festivals and special events. The special art projects department at the Arts Council has also given substantial sums to performance recently, particularly the Edge 88 festival. The drama department at the Arts Council now funds Station House Opera, Bow Gamelan, and has just given a project grant to Dogs in Honey for the first time. All this means that there is more money, and therefore more opportunities available to performance artists than ever before.

Now before we get all this out of perspective we are still not talking about very much money by any standards. Performance is still very much the poor relation of the arts but right at this moment it is enjoying a certain vogue. There is a mood within the arts, as just about everywhere else in British society of a growing conservatism which amounts to a kind of weary acceptance that Thatcher isn't going to go away and so we had better try working with it. Yet art institutions and the individuals within art institutions actually enjoy a far greater degree of freedom in spending public money than almost any other sector of the public economy. They are using performance art as both an effective marketing tool, its weird so it grabs the attention, and also in a kind of stoical attempt to assert that despite the market place mythology there is a need and a place for the revelatory and disconcerting possibilities of art.

The worry is that these are all short term and ephemeral measures. They make little contribution to the long term survival and development of the work. To believe that simply by making more performance available to a larger number of people you can ensure its future health is to be guilty of wilful naivety. The current growth in

interest in live art is partly the result of a pursuit of novelty on the part of the presenters. Gone are the days when it was considered artistically daring to even consider putting on live work (although some still insist that it is) when you can put on Stephen Taylor Woodrow or Bow Gamelan with the certain knowledge that they will attract more people to one performance than your permanent collection does in a month. That's not to suggest that the presenters interest is entirely cynical. You need to have some genuine interest in and sympathy with the medium in order to be able to present it successfully. The problem is that the novelty value of performance art wears thin as quickly as the value of any other novelty.

There are other important factors in the current growth of interest in performance art. One is that a certain body of individual administrators, writers, and indeed artists are just now achieving jobs and places on committees and panels where they can influence things. The generation of people professionally involved with performance art is for the most part in its thirties and younger. It is in their thirties that people in the arts start to get full-time or permanent teaching posts in arts schools, get invited to sit on selection panels and committees, and get programming, curatorial posts in galleries and theatres. We are taking our interests and preferences with us into these positions of responsibility and influencing the tastes of audiences and students, and the decisions of committees. This does actually hold out a genuine opportunity for a sustained effort over many years. The problem here though is that the jobs and committee seats that get offered to the kinds of people who support performance tend not to be the top ones. To move up the career ladder from being a junior officer in the Arts Council to being a real policy maker you would need to ameliorate your fondness for performance art. No-one with a background in performance is going to become Director of the Tate. Also, this whole arena of jobs and committees is entirely publicly funded. This of course is vulnerable to the current government's stated intentions. There is already a whole catalogue of instances where an institution has had its funding threatened or actually withdrawn by a local authority or even on occasions the Arts Council, for putting on art that was too risky. Performance art is still considered politically risky even though it lost its ability to genuinely shock, or threaten years ago.

There is also a sense in which the current expansion of performance is not an expansion at all but merely a misappropriation of a name. ▶

► In the race to capitalise on the explosion of so-called alternative culture it has definitely been of advantage to be able to claim to be weirder than thou. Wild, whacky and outlandish, even offensive, obscene and shocking are the kind of media labels hankered after by most of the alternative entertainers. What could better seduce an audience that what they are about to receive may be truly esoteric and off the wall than to be described as performance art. Performance art, as we know, has been the worst

label any artist could be saddled with if they wanted to work in Britain. 'Performance artist' however has launched many alternative cabarettes on the road to notoriety. There is a parallel within the artistically motivated performing arts. If you are a young dancer, or a young theatre group, or a young almost anything, and you honestly want to make art that isn't hide bound by the conventions and current practices of your chosen medium you will seek a description which says "I am a dancer, yes, but I'm not a

bit like the kind of dancer you usually get to see. Therefore I make performance/dance pieces or performance theatre pieces or just performance". The fact that the term 'performance art' or just 'performance' is used now with everyday familiarity is not an indication that there is more real performance art in the world.

Clearly, this is going to be shortlived. In the meantime we must take advantage of the relative voguishness of performance art. We must use this opportunity to lay some longer term foundations. If you like, we must build institutions so that when the tide turns, as it surely will, and performance is no longer attractive it will not sink back to the level it was at the beginning of the 1980s when you could have been forgiven for thinking it didn't exist anymore. Clearly too the institutions that can be built are not ones of bricks and mortar. There is not the money nor the desire. Part of performance art's attraction and problem is that it resists and defies the physical limitations imposed by being confined to fixed institutional buildings. (The best programmes of work are invariably the ones that find the right space for the work). The institutions that need to be built are the less visible, but no less permanent, ones of books, films and TV programmes, which offer the work a kind of immortality. What's needed is a history and a culture.

Performance already has a history but its largely an oral one. It has a culture too but its a very private one made up of a kind of folkloristic set of do's, don't, heroes and villains, attitudes and received wisdom. It has its own style and look and feel.

Performance art often gets accused, wrongly, of being elitist. It isn't at all. In fact it is motivated by a rejection of the elitism of painting and the fine arts. It is actually more profoundly populist than most art. It is not elitist but it is exclusive. It surrounds itself with what is actually a protective bearing of introspection, or private codes and signals, which is invariably interpreted by outsiders as arrogance. What performance art needs now more than any amount of cash to put the art on is half a dozen books aimed at half a dozen different kinds of readers which actually says what performance is and what it has been and what it can be in the future.

More than a new performance by Station House Opera, much as I admire their work, what's vital is a well researched, well documented teaching pack of slides to be used by art teachers in schools and colleges which actually gives a clear introduction to performance art. We need performance art academics writing learned papers, we need access to basic information about artists working with performance, we access to reproduction of artists work in the form of photographs and videos in the same way that access is available to reproductions of the paintings of Rembrandt. If we don't have these things we don't stand much chance. If we have these things we may not only maintain the current amount of money and attention being offered us we may actually be able to develop from these and achieve the kind of opportunity, recognition and resources that we believe, and the current levels of audience would demonstrate, we deserve. The failure to accept and support Jeni Walwin's new policy could prove to be a disaster. ● Steve Rogers

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GULBENKIAN AWARDS

+ After considering the results of the Research and Development grants awarded to fourteen shortlisted applicants for their large-scale events scheme, the Gulbenkian Foundation has made three awards of £15,000 each to **Marty St James & Anne Wilson**, **George Wyllie** and **Welfare State International**. The St James/Wilson project which also involves **Gerry Pilgrim**, is a large civic monument complete with live performers and a host of electric and hydraulic gadgetry, which will tour to civic centres and town squares. George Wyllie project is a follow up to his TSWA sculpture commission last year when he made a steam locomotive engine out of straw. This time it is a boat out of paper that will be made in the Clyde shipyards involving local people. Welfare States project in their local town of Barrow is to be a work from their ritual celebration approach of working with local organisations and individuals. This one will include mechanical submarines and a huge white whale. ●

DRAMA PANEL AWARDS

+ The recent meeting of the **Arts Council's Drama Projects** panel produced few surprises although their decision to give a modest grant to the Nottingham based **Dogs in Honey** is to be warmly welcomed. **Dogs in Honey** are one of the few new performance groups to have emerged and survived in the last five years. Their consistently uncompromising work, they have now produced three large works, has earned them a young but loyal following. They were recently told by the Drama Director of a Regional Arts Association that their work could not be assessed for funding because it was unsuitable for her, the artocrat's, children. No wonder that particular region has virtually no theatre to speak of. ●

OUTSIZE EVENTS

+ Three highly experienced producers, **Michael Morris** formerly ICA Theatre director, **Adrian Evans** formerly producer of Lumiere & Son and **Mik Flood** director of Watermans Arts Centre, London have together formed a new consultancy and production company for large scale events. The company, Outsize, say they have plans in the pipeline. (Big pipeline?) *Outsize, 2 Brydges Place, London WC2.* ●

INTERCITY 88

+ The collaborative celebration of visual arts between the cities of **Birmingham** and **Sheffield** this year includes performances in both cities. We are too late for the Birmingham dates but the Sheffield performances by **Shirley Cameron & Deborah Egan**, **Alan McLean**, **Tony White**, **Penny McCarthy**, **Rick Buckley** and **John Stanton** take place on September 3rd. *Details: P.A.D.S.Y. 111 Matilda St, Sheffield S1. 0742 761769.* ●



Tony White,
part of *Intercity 88*.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SCULPTURE

+ **Trinity College Dublin** is hosting a major international conference on **public sculpture** August 29-31. Conference topics are Public or Private Language, The Area for Collaboration, Recent Projects/New Developments & The Future of Public Sculpture. Speakers include curators, critics and artists from North America, Europe and Japan. The conference will be accompanied by workshops and an exhibition. *Details: Sculptors Society of Ireland, 23/25 Moss St, Dublin 2. Phone Dublin 718746.* ●

TENTH DANCE UMBRELLA

+ London based **Dance Umbrella** celebrates ten years of supporting innovative dance in Britain with a glamorous tenth festival programme which includes Canadian stars **La La La**, **Molissa Fenley**, **DV8**, **Yolande Snaith**, as well as a new work from **Bruce McLean** and **David Ward**. The festival runs from October 16. *Details: Dance Umbrella 01-741 4040.* ●

BARTLETT/GRIFFIN COLLABORATION

+ **Neil Bartlett** and **Annie Griffin** have joined forces with **Leah Housman** director of **Wissel Theatre** to produce a new theatre work based on a Victorian melodrama. This is not the first time they have worked together since both were members of the 1982 Theatre Company founded, not surprisingly, in 1982 which produced their first professional works. Their work clearly has many similarities not least of which being that they both seem to be developing a fascination with the nineteenth century. The work, as yet untitled, will be premiered at the Manchester Festival in September. ●

PERCY THROWER IN GLASGOW

+ **Alistair Snow**, **Mel Jones** and **Kim Craighton** are creating a series of installations and performances around the Glasgow Garden Festival's Edwin Budding pavilion all in honour of **Percy Thrower**. It includes the Red Barrows, the world's first wheelbarrow formation team. *Details: Third Eye Centre, 041 332 7521.* ●

Scottish Arts Council

NEW PROJECTS SCHEME — VISUAL ARTS

Applications are invited for projects geared to take place between April 1989 and March 1990. Non-gallery work is welcomed for projects such as time-based, site-specific or installation work, performance, artists-video and film.

Guidelines now available.
Closing date 3 February 1989

Details from:
The Art Department
Scottish Arts Council
19 Charlotte Square
Edinburgh EH2 4DF
Tel: 031-226 6051

KRZYSZTOF WODICZKO

+ In conjunction with the public art organisation Artangel Trust, the Canada based Polish artist **Krzysztof Wodiczko** will be touring to *Edinburgh, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool* throughout August. Wodiczko uses projected slides to intervene in and expose the true meanings of symbolic public buildings. During his last visit to London he projected a nazi swastika onto the portico of South Africa House in Trafalgar Square and a trident missile onto Nelson's column. *Details: Artangel Trust.* ●

HIV PROJECT

+ East London photography centre **Camera-work** and the **Photo Co-op** are looking for two photographers to work on an exhibition looking at **AIDS and HIV infection**. Documentary, photofiction and phototherapy are all being considered. Closing date: August 26th. *Details: S.A.E. to Camera-work, 121 Roman Rd, London E2 0QN.* ●

GYPSY SEASON

+ The ICA's new theatre director, Bob Wisdom, gets into his stride with a **season of Gypsy music and dance**. The Romany performers are drawn from **France, India, Algeria, Russia, Spain and Britain**. It's certainly a culture about which we know all too little and about which there are many myths and prejudices. The season should be enlightening. That the ICA should be curating a programme that would appear to be more in the line of the highly influential Arts Worldwide points to what might be an intriguing redefinition of its policy. Lets face it, any policy would be an improvement on the mish-mash they have served up in the last couple of years. *The Worlds of Gypsy Song: September 13-18. Details: 01 930 0493.* ●

SPETACOLOR

+ **Artangel Trust**, the public art organisation, are arranging for artists to get their hands on the famous animated display that dominates **Piccadilly Circus**. The project lasts until December and includes works by **Tina Keane, Jez Welsh, Thomas Lisle, Jenny Holzer, Anne Carlisle, Vera Neubauer** and **John Fekner**. *Details: Artangel Trust, 01 434 2887.* ●

SURVIVAL RESEARCH LABORATORIES

+ **S.R.L.**, the art bandits from San Francisco, will not now be coming to Britain as previously announced. They were planned to be part of the Edge 88 Festival. However, **Vogelsang**, the Berlin based art publishers have just produced a profile of the group. It includes, in English and German, a catalogue of their past work, descriptions of their 'machines' and interviews with Mark Pauline the founder of S.R.L. One interview is a reprint of the interview commissioned and published by us two years ago. *Available in Britain from: Nigel Greenwood, 41 Sloane Gardens, London SW1 01 730 8824.* ●

NEW CONTEMPORARIES

+ The revived **new contemporaries** exhibition has appointed **Paul Bradley** formerly of Babel Theatre and Dean Clough in Halifax as its new director. At least live work should get more of a look in after the disaster last time around when the ICA refused to show any of the live work on the grounds that it wasn't good enough. ●

ARTISTS FICTIONS

+ Neil Bartlett's book about Oscar Wilde, *Who Was That Man?* was published in June by Serpents Tail. The technique he has used is similar to that of *A Vision of Love Revealed in Sleep* his most recent performance. It edits together historical investigation with personal biography, fantasy and fact. Also publishing his first novel in August is David Gale, the writer director of Lumiere and Son theatre company. *A Diet of Holes*, published by Andre Deutsch, has in parts a tone and style very reminiscent of his best texts for Lumiere. The essential difference being that with a book, you don't have to miss much of the extremely dense language, you can always re-read. Deutsch selected it as one of their quota of three novels they are entering for this years Booker prize. ●

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF THE ARTS

+ **John Myerscough's** three year report for the Policy Studies Institute on the economic importance of art in Britain has just become available. The main findings are that the arts are expanding, with spending on arts accounting for **2.5% on all spending on goods and services**. **73 Million people visit museums** and galleries every year, and 49 million go to theatres and concerts. The report also includes three regional studies on Merseyside, Glasgow and Ipswich. Such arguments are unfortunately all too necessary these days, I wonder what kind of art Mr Myerscough likes? *Price £19.95, each regional study available separately at £5.95. Available from Policy Studies Institute, 100 Park Village East, London NW1.* ●

ICA

'Without the ICA and its willingness to take risks, the arts in London would grow notably dimmer, greyer and meaner. While recognising the need to put bums on seats, the ICA knows that there is no argument between genres or media, only a search for quality in and perhaps even between them. I've sat in on some of its naffest mistakes in this search, as well as successes that I'll remember for decades. The day it closes will be the day I get on a plane for the Mediterranean and don't come back.'

John Gill, Senior Editor, Time Out

'By turns frustrating, invigorating, pretentious, irritating, and occasionally brilliant, but consistently interesting and unpredictable—a fair reflection of the Institute of Contemporary Arts.'

Marek Kohn, The Independent

Institute of Contemporary Arts
The Mall London SW1
Box office: 01 930 3647

ARTS COUNCIL INCENTIVE SCHEME

The arts council have at last announced details of their long promised incentive and progress funding schemes whereby arts organisations can earn extra money for good behaviour. Despite going through the motions of listening to the funded organisations before developing the plans they clearly haven't heard the message from the small organisations, Performance Magazine amongst them, that the scheme has to be kept within our reach. It isn't. Although they have lowered the minimum target improvement in earned income before you become eligible for matching funds the actual application procedure and qualifications are obviously geared towards organisations with staff time to make sense of the 24 page multi-level application form. According to the accompanying information the keynote of the scheme is flexibility. Early on in the application there is a kind of self-test to determine whether or not yours is the kind of organisation which might have a 'reasonable chance of success in the scheme'. The questions include such things as do you have a full-time administrator/ do you ever have to overdraw at the bank, do you have regular meetings to update the budget/ if you answer No to any of these, forget it. Looks like a re-run of the last budget which drives a wedge between rich who get richer and the poor who don't. Details: 01 629 9495. ●

A TAPESTRY OF CELEBRATION

+ **Welfare State** have announced an extraordinarily adventurous **three year plan** of arts and celebratory events in the Cumbrian town of **Barrow in Furness**. The plan includes large scale spectacles as well as more mundane wizardry such as their musical dustcart which will clean the streets with a song on its lips. Welfare State make a point of the fact that this is all taking place far away from any of the northern areas prioritised in the Arts Council's development strategy, "The Glory of the Garden." Details: *Welfare State* 0229 57146. ●

ZAP ON

+ The Brighton based **Zap Club** takes over the **Purcell Room**, part of London's **South Bank** complex, for a week featuring Zap regulars **Peter Sinclair, Liz Aggiss, Ian Smith, Kathy Acker, Roger Ely, Billy Cowie** and **Holly Warburton**. The mixed-media evenings are inspired Edgar Allan Poe's *The Tell Tale Heart*. September 9-16. Details: *South Bank*.

The Zap is also organising a week of events in Glasgow which includes street works by **Roland Miller** as well as a bevy of wacky cabaret acts around Glasgow pubs. ●



PERFORMANCE
NEWS

Pete Sinclair & his Orchestra, part of *The Telltale Heart*.

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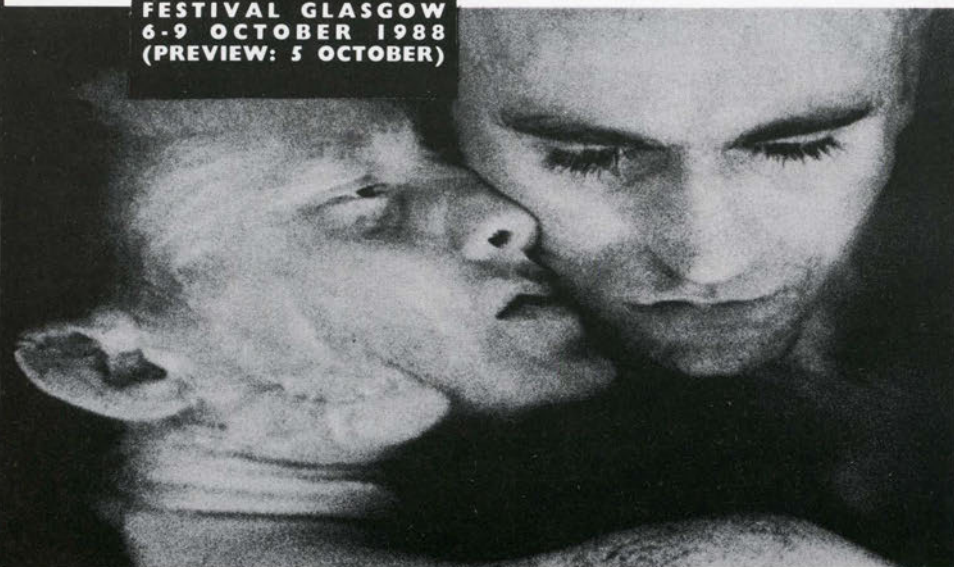
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6-9 OCTOBER 1988
(PREVIEW: 5 OCTOBER)**

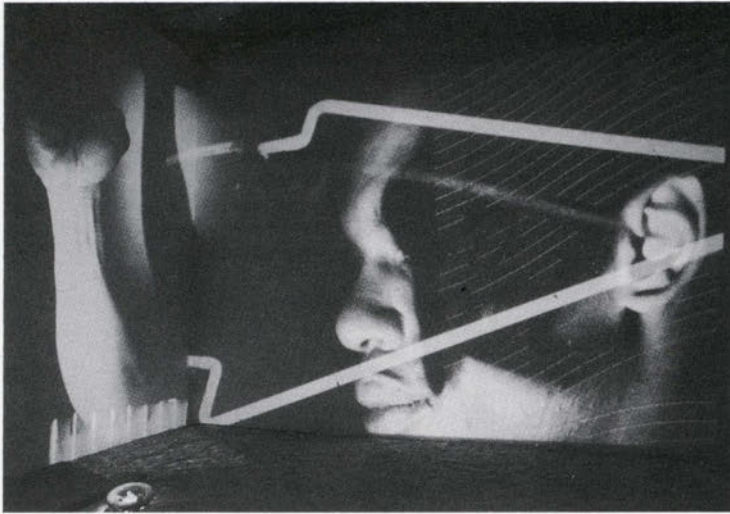
Euan Lousdal 1988

**THIRD EYE CENTRE 350 SAUCHIEHALL STREET GLASGOW
BOX OFFICE/INFORMATION/CATALOGUE: 041-332 7521****Third Eye Centre**
Performance Commissions
from:
Geraldine Pilgrim
DV8 Physical Theatre+
Invited Artists include:
Shaun Catone, Von Magnet,
Entr'Acte (Australia),
Bobby Baker,
Boris Ukhhanov (USSR),
Stephen Taylor Woodrow+
'A Year On' — 1987
Discoveries including John
Jordan, Euan Sutherland and
The Puberty Institution+
1988 Platform:
'The next generation'+
Video Installations
Screenings, discussions and
lectures from invited
speakers**The
nAtIONAl
R'eVIEw of
LIVE
ART****BEUYS IN BRISTOL**+ The **Arnolfini Gallery** in Bristol is showing **Joseph Beuys, Bits and Pieces** until October 16. The exhibition consists of a miniature archive of Beuys' working processes and his attitudes to art and life. The myth continues. *Details: 0272 299191.* ●**THEATRE &
ANTHROPOLOGY
CONFERENCE**+ Cardiff based **Centre for Performance Research** are planning a series of conferences on issues relating to the theory and practice of experimental theatre. The first, which will be at **Leicester Polytechnic** September 30, October 1-2, is called *Theatre, Anthropology and Theatre Anthropolgy* will include presentations by **Richard Schechner, Eugenio Barba, Franco Ruffino, Nicola Saverese, and Nando Tavianni.** Schechner founded the Performance Group in New York which later became the Wooster Group. He now edits the Drama Review and is author of several highly influential works of performance and theatre theory. Eugenio Barba is the founder and director of Odin Teatret in Denmark and is also a highly influential theorist. The other Italian speakers are all theorists and academics. CPR are planning future conferences on **Theatre and Nature, Theatre and Architecture, Theatre and Criticism, and Theatre and Politics.** There has long been a lack of focus for theoretical andcritical debate about experimental work in Britain and these conferences are therefore most welcome. Don't be put off by the theatre base of the conferences, they will be of direct relevance to issues facing all experimental live work. *Details: Centre for Performance Research, Market Rd, Canton, Cardiff. 0222 345174.* ●**NATIONAL REVIEW OF
LIVE ART '88**+ It's that time of year already. This year the National Review of Live Art has moved with its organiser Nikki Millican to the **Third Eye Centre in Glasgow.** The culture boom that has been used by the city to spearhead its revival should provide the Review with a sympathetic and supportive environment. It also offers performance goers with a perfect excuse to spend a few days in one of the most fun cities in Europe. This year the festival has been kept more modest in scale. Millican felt that last years was too big and not enough focus was placed on the platform. So the platform of untried artists returns to stage centre, alongside which are new commissioned works by **Geraldine Pilgrim and DV8.** **Invited artists** include **Bobby Baker, Saun Caton, Von Magnet, Stephen Taylor Woodrow, Entr'acte from Canada, and Boris Ukhhanov,** a video and performance artist from **Moscow.**Artists invited to return from last year's platform are **John Jordan, Puperty Institution and Euan Sutherland,** both formerly of tradition: debilitation.*The Review runs October 6-9: Details: 041 332 7521.* ●**NEW PERFORMANCE
INITIATIVE**+ Some time ago, as a result of the **Against Compromise** conference held at the Midland Group in Nottingham, a group of artists and supporters decided to continue to meet to try to set up a London based venue for the regular representation of new performance work. The effort seems to have paid off. The **Rosemary Branch,** situated on the slightly less fashionable Hoxton borders of Islington, has been announced as that venue. Called, dully, **London New Performance Initiative,** it offers a "friendly venue . . . cheapest venue rental in London . . . an agency to help sell your work . . . weekly new performance evenings for try-outs at no cost to performers . . . a meeting place for workers in the field . . . a newsletter to increase communication . . .".

The Rosemary Branch is not a bad venue as pub theatres go. The space is like a tunnel, but quite adequate. The pub also has a 12 midnight licence which certainly adds to its appeal as a meeting place. Enterprising.

Details: Charlotte Long, 01 354 2400. ●**TRANSMISSION
GALLERY**

+ Glasgow's artist run performance and gallery



space continue their commitment to presenting difficult work with **Euan Sutherland's** two 30 hour performances, *Cut Out 2*, August 23-30 and *Restricted Movement*, August 30-September 3. *Details: Transmission, 13 Chisholm St, Glasgow G15.* ●

WEST MIDLANDS COMMISSIONS

+ The **West Midlands Consortium** which this year is part of the performance art promoters scheme have announced the names of the three artists selected to make new works for the three member organisations. Out of a very respectable forty odd submissions, including some from abroad, the artists chosen are **Tara Babel** for **City Museum and Art Gallery in Stoke on Trent**, **Richard Layzell** for the **Ikona Gallery, Birmingham** and **Jeremy Welsh** for **Wolverhampton Art Gallery**. *Dates and details not yet finalised.* ●

VIDEO NEWS Compiled by Nik Houghton

NAM JUNE PAIK

+ One of the great innovators of video art, **Nam June Paik**, is having his first major gallery showing in Britain with two large installations at the **Hayward Gallery**, London. *Heroic Stage*, a pyramid of 60 monitors, and *Family of Robot*, a robot constructed out of monitors, will be at the Gallery September 29-December 11. *Details: Hayward Gallery.* ●

DIRECTIONS

+ The August to November issue of the thrice yearly guide to short courses in film and video is now available price £1.50 + 30p p&p from BFI, 21 Stephen St, London W1. ●

VIOLA for RIVERSIDE

+ *Reasons for Knocking At Empty Houses* the new video installation by Canadian, **Bill Viola** is to be shown at Riverside Studios, London September 6-October 9. *Details: 01 748 3354.* ●

THE ELECTRIC SHOW

+ *The Electric Show*, by **Max Couper** is described as a 'computerized audio/visual sculpture'. It involves a giant space invaders and a host of gadgetry which transforms the amusement arcade into a place of terror as well as pleasure. It's at Camerawork, London from August 12-September 3. *Details: 01 980 6256.* ●

VIDEO ON THE TUBE

+ Video artists are invited to submit works lasting between 30 and 60 seconds to be shown on the new advertising based London Transport Television System installed at Leicester Square underground station. Works, enclosing the cost of return postage, should be sent to L.V.A., 23 Frith St, London W1, by not later than September 16. *Details: Kate Meynell on 01 359 6985 or Chris Meigh-Andrews, 01 733 2123.* ●

NEW DIRECTORS AWARDS

+ The British Film Institute's recently announced new Directors Awards offers a lineup of the well-established and relative unknowns a budget of £20,000 each. These are: **Anna Thew**, **David Larcher**, **Patrick Keiller**, **Martin Jones** with **Graham Young**, **Gurinder Chade**, **Phil Handy**, **Tim Burke** and **Bernard Rudder**. ●

MANDELA BIRTHDAY VIDEO

+ The ICA has produced a compilation of short pieces from a wide range of artists as a birthday tribute to Nelson Mandela. It includes contributions from **Keith Piper**, **Duvet Brothers**, **Nigel Rolfe**, **Keith Collins & Paul Bettel**, **Bruce McLean** and **Michael Peel**. *Details: Iwona Blaswick, ICA, 01 930 0493.* ●

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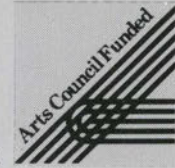
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This collaboration with *Edge* is a one-off only. The next issue of *Performance*, No56, due at the end of October, will contain our usual mix of features, interviews, news and reviews. Since there are no reviews in this issue the review section of Issue 56 will be larger than usual and will carry reviews of some events which will have taken place throughout the summer.

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PERFORMANCE

NEWS

The Heavyweight
by Max Couper

Shaun Caton, one of the invited artists at the 1988 National Review of Live Art.





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wednesday 26 october (20.45 hrs)
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Setting up Britain's first 'Biennale of Experimental Art' was taking a shot in the dark in many respects. From lifting the word 'experiment' as a banner — a sixties word much open to criticism — to bringing a large number of international artists into a country that has one of the world's worst records for supporting its own; EDGE 88 came into life with the distinct feeling of having chanced its arm. Yet it has been surprising how many general expressions of support have come from all quarters of an often divided art world — from artists who haven't been selected this time, to other organisations who might have regarded us as intruders in the field. We've had to fight for funding — but for once the sliding-door of subsidy has been held open just long enough for us to slip through. The Arts Council (our Ministry of Culture) have broken with an established precedent of not directly funding international work, to give EDGE 88 significant support. Thanks to them, and all the other funders, for starting the ball rolling. Most importantly thanks to all the artists, individuals and organisations who have given EDGE 88 so much support.

Rob La Frenais, Director **EDGE 88**

AN INTRODUCTION

Chrissie ILES

Experimental art cannot be assessed either simply in terms of aesthetics or by its relationship to the institutionalised art gallery, since it has rejected them both. The use of live action, technology and the media is not only a threat to orthodoxy but represents a new heterodoxy of the way in which art is made and experienced. The laboratorial, 'work in progress' approach of experimental art demands opportunities and spaces to make and present work far beyond the gallery. In Britain these demands have remained largely unmet whilst in the rest of the west there has been a visible move towards large-scale/site specific/durational projects. This divergence from the general trend should not be seen as a strong and determined independence but rather as a narrow, inward-looking isolationism.

If there are special conditions determining this detachment in the visual arts they apply much less to other areas of cultural development. British film and video enjoys a considerable exposure and reputation abroad, Britain itself is increasingly playing host to visiting theatre and dance and is expanding its own horizons beyond a traditional classification of what kinds of theatre might serve as a cultural ambassador. At a time when the mood is of a growing internationalism as represented by, say, Documenta, the Venice Biennale or the forthcoming 'Magicians of the Earth' which promises to bring to Paris contemporary work from every corner of the globe, and when in almost all the other arts Britain too is opening its borders; in the visual arts new introspective, conservatism reigns.

Documenta and Venice are in truth as much multi-national as they are international in their approach influenced as they are by the interests of a circle of vigorous, internationally minded dealers. Whatever the motivation, however, these monumental exhibitions have opened up many new opportunities for the exchange of art and ideas over the past years which have been largely ignored by British institutions. This is particularly true of experimental art. If international exchange and collaborations are difficult and expensive to organise, then ones involving experimental art are doubly so. They are often technically complex, they involve the active participation of the artist, and are not obvious tools of cultural diplomacy.

It is against this background of broad-spectrum internationalisation of the arts but increasing isolationism and conservatism in Britain that EDGE 88, subtitled 'international experiment in art', takes place. The sub-title is important. This fortnight of activity is not a festival of 'performance art.' There is performance in it but regarded here as part of a larger experimental genre rather than a separate, discrete activity. It is also not just a collection of experimental works. Many of the works in EDGE 88 are being made in and for a specific site all within the small, geographically defined limits of the Clerkenwell area of inner London, one of the city's so called 'hidden villages', with an emphasis on process rather than product.

It is here that the real importance of EDGE 88 lies: in relation to the British models of international exchange, the London International Festival of Theatre, for example, and in relation to the proliferation of large scale site-specific projects which have recently characterised events like Documenta or the Munster Sculpture Project. Its importance lies in not so much whether the art is truly radical or experimental but rather in the conditions and context offered to the artists in which to produce and present their work. The use of a 'laboratorial' rather than genre definition, it places the emphasis on the amount of freedom and responsibility given to each artist. The measure of this responsibility, allied to the special conditions of flexibility to sensitivity and intuition upon which it depends, will form the core of meaning of EDGE 88 and a vital step towards a new approach.

The Tyranny of the Avant-garde

Dan CAMERON

Every few years or so, the art world eagerly participates in the observance of a local ritual which might be referred to as the 'passing of the avant-garde.' Heeding public appeals for reform, the entire tribe gathers sombrely at the edge of the Pit of Discourse. Younger artists begin to rail at their elders for recent crimes of excess or neglect, and much speaking in tongues takes place.

Those who have not heeded the winds of change are cast outside the protective circle by those who have most recently and enthusiastically converted to the new beliefs. Selected canons are read aloud to the throng, capable high-priests are selected, and all of the different clans return to their outposts bearing glad tidings of the new regime. Following an extended period of celebration and recovery, during which new boundaries are drawn and mapped out, the rumblings of change begin to be heard anew . . .

This all-purpose rite of passage has spawned a technique for marketing contemporary art that wilfully distorts the original intentions of the early avant-garde pioneers from the Modern Period (or even the early days of the New York School). The most excruciatingly avant-garde approach will invariably be rewarded today with a shower of glory and gold. The resultant confusion between cultural and monetary value which confronts committed avant-gardists (spectators as much as creators) today need not be interpreted to mean that our collective mission of extending the boundaries of artistic investigation has simply run aground upon the shores of usury. All it means is that the artist who best flaunts his/her contempt for a decayed or out-going style becomes the timeliest investment, the surest hedge against hard times ahead.

However, observing the types of pressures which are brought to bear on the contemporary artist, it can sometimes be wondered whether or not the process of experimentation — as opposed to avant-gardization — has largely vanished from the repertoire of the ambitious yet creative mind. Artists today seem much less involved in making actual breakthroughs than in painstakingly reconstructing the cultural signposts of a memorable avant-garde career. Even when these signposts indicate that one must overturn the example of one's predecessors, the revolt is presented as a single stage in a finite process whose pre-determined goal is the ascendancy of one more creative individual to the rank of demi-god. If you choose not to smash the patriarch's image, then somebody else will jump in ahead and steal your rage (and your place in line).

Ultimately, the 'romance' of Picasso and the 'analyticity' of Duchamp survive today not as aspects of their works *per se*, but as abstractions of style brought in to assume the opposite sides of an unwinnable debate about style in which neither artists is permitted the luxury of self-contradiction. The rhetorical position one is expected to take relative to this art-as-encoded-history entails both a deep reverence for one's stylistic forebears and a symbolic revulsion towards their opponents. And since there is no way to overthrow an historical figure who is already dead and buried, the ambitious artist must turn his or her attention to aesthetic problems created by those already in power — i.e. the ones who claim to be recontextualizing the identical debate in more current terms. This point from which one presents one's work is thus fully relativized in terms of work made by other artists to which it can be most readily contrasted as a corrective measure (hence, the Post Impressionists in relation to the

Impressionists, the Abstract Expressionists in relation to the American Abstract Artists, Warhol in relation to de Kooning, Schnabel in relation to pattern-painting, Halley in relation to Schnabel).

Because of a collective discomfort with the rampant mythologizing which had attached itself to neo-expressionist painting in its New York manifestation, much of the art which is now most visible there was first accepted as an antidote to, or fringe parody of, that particular climate. The first encounter between a dominant art form and that which will replace it is always an edgy moment, but in this case there was a mutual sizing up of both sides which seemed to indicate that everything to follow was preordained. And as expected, the loudest cries of protest did not come from those whose livelihoods had been most thoroughly entwined with the trans-avant-garde's interests, but rather from those who were just getting their careers off the ground. The surprise is that after insisting that the ritual scenario had finally worn out its welcome, the neo-conceptualists have simply replaced the strewn fragments of fallen idols with a mirrored (if contrasting) pantheon of graven images. Another result is a rigidification of potential meanings which ultimately excludes many more styles and artists than it embraces. Not only is the underlying exclusionist principle of connoisseurship a deadly tool when welded with a vendetta, but once more, the push to open up meaning has led to an overall collapse of signification which no single quarter is responsible for, but in which each participant is singularly complicit. However, because so much of the current art makes an analysis of aesthetic content central to its meaning, it would have seemed somehow to be less prone to censoring somebody else's tastes for the sake of 'progress.'

On the surface, there seems to be something fishy about our degree of participation in a mythologizing process which is regarded half-jokingly by the majority of its participants. The most common rationale offered for the art world's continuing historico-fictive mode of operation is that it must be serving a purpose to have lasted this long. The problem with this reasoning is that the machinery of belief in the avant-garde was not significantly realigned during the transition from modernism to post-modernism, so we've been left with little more than an endlessly repeated cycle of pendulum swings — from hot to cool, from heroic to ironic, from post- to neo- and back again. It would be a vain effort to attempt to re-direct the movement of this pendulum without first getting at the mechanism itself, or at least asking a few uncomfortable questions. Why, for example, is it so crucial to the emergence of new ideas that they cancel out or correct the stylistic preoccupations of the immediate past (and the impending future)? Couldn't the endless parade of model movements be replaced instead by an equally artificial system of limited style possibilities that are updated periodically, but outside of which the object cannot attain meaning or value? Would art's strategy then be to fight against this strait-jacket in turn, conspiring to plunge the artwork into a replay of the modernist/post-modernist historical scenario? And if this were to happen, would it leave us stranded on the far side of populism, dully welcoming each dutiful celebrant with open arms despite our most selfish misgivings as to the quality (ahem) of their ideas.

These are questions that have no easy answers, but which are important to revive each time the carousel slows down just long enough to let on a few more would-be subversives. It is now possible to imagine that the age of the avant-garde's tyranny

over artistic production (not to mention distribution) will begin drawing to a close, but it is much harder to predict that its replacement will take the form of, say, Chinese landscape painting after several centuries of stylistic evolution, whereby the freshly trained novitiate chose from several distinct traditions, each one maintaining its own historical code of meanings and values. A more nostalgic version of the same concept would allow for technical hybrids within each grouping, permitting a single artist to work as a photo-conceptualist, expressionist, realist, wood carver, industrial designer, craftsperson and abstract painter at one and the same time.

Imagine the art world of the future. Children are playing, birds are singing: the Style Wars are over at last. Contradictory impulses co-exist as peacefully as if each is the freshest new trend in the marketplace (which it by definition must be and yet cannot be). Students trundle off to the National Academy of Reductivist Tendencies, waving goodbye to their peers who have chosen the curriculum at the School of Expressionist Painting & Sculpture. All is harmonious and upbeat, and barely anybody remembers the period of separation of styles, except as a hundred-year transitional phase that left behind a lot of good art but also a disproportionate amount of doctrine. Somewhere in the background lurks a restless, disgruntled soul who cannot accept the present situation and fantasises about the past as a time of excitement and anxiety, a time when one could barely turn around without glimpsing something radically, bracingly new barely discernible on the distant horizon . . .

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The Reflective Edge: A Female Concept of Self-Representation

Silvia EIBLMAYR

In one of her last poems, entitled *Edge*, Sylvia Plath speaks of a woman's perfected image. She evokes the picture of an ideal of art history, but this ideal is connected to death:

The woman is perfected
Her dead

Body wears the smile of accomplishment
The illusion of a Greek necessity

Flows in the scrolls of her toga, . . .⁽¹⁾

Sylvia Plath was a perfectionist. Being photographed made her cry. She was afraid of the gaze of others and wanted to hide something about her that she called in one of her poems 'destruction by harmony'.⁽²⁾ The happy photographs that show Sylvia Plath herself as smiling mother, sister, daughter are juxtaposed by other pictures that she had cut from magazines and hung over her writing desk: pictures of perverse murders, deformed bones, spilt blood and rotten organs.⁽³⁾ The evil behind the harmonious picture is unveiled.

Within the past twenty five years women artists have challenged this same reflective edge, questioning the powers of representation that have imposed their rigidity and destructiveness specifically on women. Supported by a feminist discourse the aim has been to liberate women from the symbolic determinism to which they are subject. Yet for the woman this challenge is continually endangered by the very function of her position in relation to the representational system itself. This system cannot be abolished, as some feminist theories have claimed, simply by returning to an 'authentic' language and a 'recuperation' of the female body. My argument focuses on the problem of representational structure and the entanglement of the female body within representation. What is at issue is the notion of picture itself and the dialectic by which the female body is linked to it and wherein the woman finds herself positioned in the 'status of a picture', a status that unconsciously or not is being reflected in her self-representation.

The overturning of traditional formal strategies and categories in the late fifties and early sixties marks a break in the history of painting: an implicit challenge to the category of the picture. This break was accompanied by symbolically significant attacks against the canvas and, as a final consequence, the programmatic negation of the picture.⁽⁴⁾ Yet this destructive act was also a deconstructive one. The live body appeared on the stage of painting in an ambiguous active/passive function that called into question the traditional dominance of the subject's position in relation to the picture. However the actual destruction of the picture as a symbolic form had already been anticipated in the projects of modern art;⁽⁵⁾ most conspicuously in Surrealism. The key-figure in the Surrealist *cadavre-exquis* dialectic, which alternates between destruction and fetishistic preservation of the picture, is the woman. Her erotic image serves as an indispensable avant-garde device for the Surrealists to challenge conventional forms of perception and representation. It is used, as well, in a double function: the woman figures as a destructive force, as a seemingly aesthetic risk of the art-work, and simultaneously, as the material body upon which the effect of the aesthetic risk is visited. What Jacqueline Rose has described concerning the female image's relation to the filmic structure⁽⁶⁾ can also be applied to the Surrealist



i)

aesthetic: the destructiveness that endangers the integrity of the picture appears as an effect of the female body which is structurally related to the representational system itself, that is, to the demands and technique of the form-producing apparatus/medium. André Masson, for instance uses the biomorphic form of a female figure to blur the geometric structure of Cubism that he seeks to overcome. Yet this struggle of two formal principles is marked by violence that is directed against the female body whose blood is running and whose inner organs become visible.⁽⁷⁾ In Luis Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) the aggressive force of the camera and the editing process is literally transformed into a cut directly into the woman's (castrating) eye. In a similar way Raoul Ubac's *La nébuleuse* (1939) shows the deformation of a female body that is caused by the burning (brûlage) of the photograph's negative (Freud's 'first stage of photography'), but this deformation appears as the effect of the woman's ecstatic destructiveness.⁽⁸⁾ As Rose points out, in reference to Lacan, 'the scenario of sexual fantasy' is to be recognised behind this symptomatic double representational function in which the woman finds herself symbolically placed: 'Set up as a guarantee of the system she comes to represent two things — what the man is not, that is difference and what he has to give up, that is excess.'⁽⁹⁾

As a reaction to this negative and instrumental status that the woman found ascribed to herself, feminist concepts have attempted to recover the female body as a place of origin and power, as a stronghold of an uncompromised pre-discursive reality. Women's Body Art was seen as a 'rebirth' after a history of patriarchal repression. The body of the woman becomes directly linked with the woman's self which could be retrieved by the recuperation of that body. A means for this recuperation was artistic practice, as Lucy Lippard infers: 'When women use their bodies they use their selves; a significant psychological factor converts these bodies or faces from objects to subjects.'⁽¹⁰⁾ Yet this essentialist definition of the woman's body has not been absolute. It has, in fact, been criticised from other feminist points of view.⁽¹¹⁾ Mary Kelly, by referring to the work of Gina Pane and Ulrike Rosenbach, has pointed to the contradictions that arise from a feminist self-interpretation, which claims the artist's experience 'as a woman'. By doing so a woman screens off her double position in relation to the art-work, first as object of the look (the feminine position) and, also as subject of the look (the masculine position): 'The former she describes as the socially prescribed position of woman, one to be questioned, exorcised or overthrown (note Rosenbach), while the implications of the latter (there can be only one position with regard to active looking and that is masculine) cannot be acknowledged and is construed instead as a kind of psychic truth — a natural, instinctual, preexistent, and essential femininity.'⁽¹²⁾ It is, exactly this 'crisis of positionality' (Kelly) that gives force to the self-representations of women under discussion here.

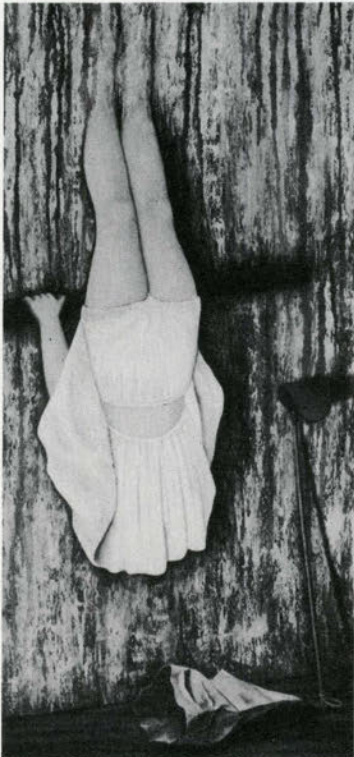
Both Carolee Schneemann's *Eye Body* (1963) and Dorothea Tanning's *Jeux d'enfants* (1942) are characterised by a theatrical moment. The picture appears as a narrow stage where the female body is erotically displayed. Yet the staging only refers back to the picture, more precisely to the woman as a material part of, or metaphor for the picture. Schneemann included herself in a ready-made strategy as a live nude in her own art-work; a large spatial construction, a 'combine-painting'. In the framed cutting of the black and white photograph for which *Eye Body* had been staged, she appears next to other objects, such as fabrics, photographs of fragmented female bodies, lights and motorized umbrellas, all of which, including herself



ii)



iii)



iv)



v)

have been partly overpainted. The insertion of her live body into the picture harmonizes somewhat ironically with its visual organisation.

Dorothea Tanning's girls are directed by a more violent dramaturgy. They rage in an ecstatic riot against the walls that enclose the narrow space. They tear off shreds of wallpaper that only repeat the form of the girls' flame-like hair and the fabric of their dresses. In a further analogy these fabrics and shreds refer to the canvas itself that is illusionistically going to pieces. The staged attempt to leave the picture, to tear it into pieces, seems useless: for under the wallpaper-canvas appears only another body, again erotically disclosed. The picture as metaphor for the body and the body as metaphor for the picture are both shown as a place of enclosure, as a prison, but also as a mysterious, even dangerous secret that the girls are trying to resolve. The bird protruding from the floor, which once more refers to the canvas, seems to belong to this dangerous secret.

Both *Eye Body* and *Jeux d'enfants* show a seemingly erotic pleasure in the affirmation of the female status as a picture, but also, by displaying the dialectic of their active/passive position *within* the picture, they reflect an ambiguous status that subverts the traditional male positioning of the female figure.

Two other works illustrate an analogous moment in women's self-representation, again anticipated in a work of a Surrealist woman artist and radicalised in Body Art. The topic of both works is pain, psychic and physical, that is expressed by direct confrontation of the female body with the constraints of the representational structure of the picture. Here the effect signifies a paralysis and dissolution of the body.

Gina Pane's *Escalade non anesthésiée* (1971) was intended as a manifestation of her engagement with the suffering of others, specifically with the repressed fate of the Vietnamese.⁽¹³⁾ Pane climbed a large, metallic grid that was fixed to the wall of her studio. In the course of the action she moved within this grid whose horizontal rungs were equipped with sharp spikes that wounded her bare hands and feet. This grid, however, can be conceived as the structure of a picture (a paradigmatic figure of Modernist painting). Thus the female body again becomes part of the picture, which implies being painfully bound within and being even more painfully punished for every attempt to move. It seems important to me that Gina Pane's self-mutilations signify more than a mere aesthetics of pain, since they have always been structurally related to the representational system itself, to the picture, the mirror, to seeing and being seen, the suppressive impact of which she transfers to her own body.

Relâche (1943) by Toyen was painted during the War and recalls a famous theatrical avant-garde event. But here, *relâche* (no performance) is only evoking a situation of punishment and fear. The erotically exposed body of the girl is placed in a seemingly paradoxical space since the wall that constitutes the background at the bottom appears at the top as the surface of the picture. However the most disturbing phenomenon is the beginning of the dissolution of the girl's body whose feet are merging into the painted surface. Toyen is here juxtaposing two painterly forms: the closed surface of the body and of the other objects, against the open, soft, even dripping, structure of the wall that in parts has lost any reference to a recognisable objective form. The girl exposed to the look of the others but unable to see herself, has already partly disappeared into the picture by transforming herself into another

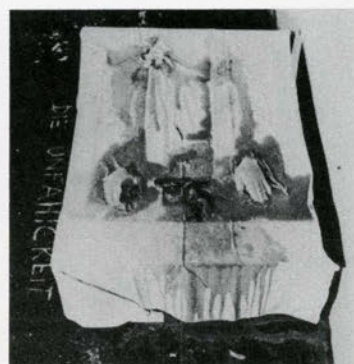
painterly state. In so doing, Toyen makes a revealing statement on the 'crisis of positionality'.

This play of presence and absence, the staging of the body as part of the picture and, at the same time, its conceptual disappearance into or out of the picture is a characteristic trait of women's self-representations. This can also be seen in *Asemie* (1973), a body-action by Valie Export, which deals with 'the incapacity of expressing oneself through mimic gesture' (the full title of the work). In this action the artist was crouching on a square podium that was wrapped into a cloth (the canvas). By declaring her body as artistic material she assumed an ambiguous state between sculpture and picture. In the course of the action she poured liquid wax over a bird, then over her feet and hands thereby fixing herself into the picture. In a further stage she took a knife between her teeth and carefully cut loose her hands under the layer of wax to sever herself. The final picture shows the remains and traces of this struggle, the dead bird, the knife and the hollow wax forms that had been inhabited by the artist's hands. Although the human figure has disappeared the pictorial fragment nevertheless suggests its presence.

The self-referential reflection of the artist to her 'status as a picture' also implies a narcissistic fascination that is countered by an artistic strategy which breaks this fantasy of completeness. Ulrike Rosenbach in her action *Zehntausend Jahre habe ich geschlafen* (*Ten Thousand Years I Have Been Sleeping*) (1976) presented herself in a somewhat paradoxical way within a perfect pictorial arrangement. With an inherent reference to the figure of Diana, she placed herself as the arrow of her bow, exactly in the centre of a target-like form while being continually recorded by a video-camera. However, her claim to have woken up 'as a woman', after a ten-thousand years' sleep, implies a moment of disavowal: the half-pretence that her pictorial status has come to an end due to her feminist consciousness; as if by a simple act of symbolic awakening she could escape her predicament. Aside from this the work shows clearly how the woman is caught in the structure of representation.

The work of Rose Garrard and Helen Chadwick also use the crossover of different media to create new strategies for the representation of the female image. *Flaccid Guns* (one part of *Models Triptych*) (1982-84) by Rose Garrard shows the painter Artemisia Gentileschi in an ambivalent *mise-en-scène*. The painter in action appears half inside, half outside the picture thereby breaking the white plaster frame that is adorned by the reliefs of guns that transform themselves into full plasticity, signifying phallic aggression. But the act of painting simultaneously binds that woman back into her own picture. Helen Chadwick's combination of three-dimensional objects and photography in *Ego Geometria Sum* (1983-84) turns the body into an object, submitting it to the abstraction of symbolic bodies and orders. Chadwick reflects the projective and objectivising power of photography precisely by making use of the specific potential of this medium, such as reduction, enlargement, cutting montage and the technique of photoemulsion. Whereby she deconstructs the history of her body, retracing 'the pressures of re-called external forces' (Chadwick), the fantasies of fetishistic totality and the luring fascination of the mirror-image.

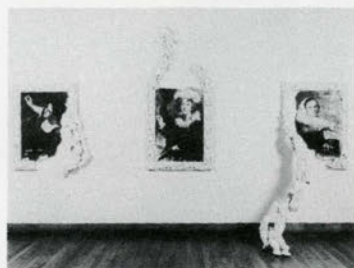
All these works demonstrate the ambiguity of the woman's position in relation to her art-work. They show that the negative relation of the woman to the symbolic order is not resolved at the moment of her working as an artist even though she then



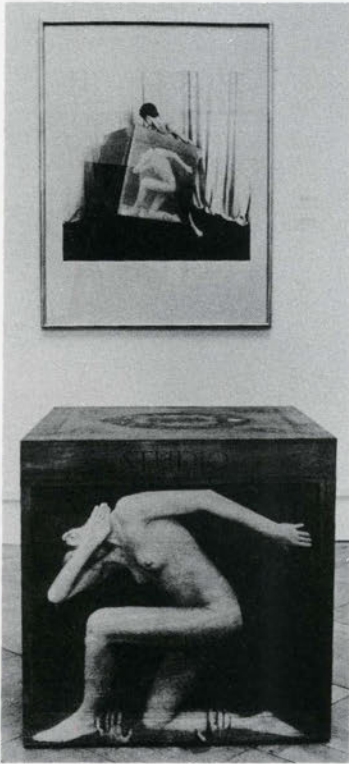
vi)



vii)



viii)



ix)

assumes a masculine position. They show furthermore that the concept of the bisexuality of human drives cannot be applied to men and women in a reciprocal way. The woman artist (any woman) cannot abolish the dialectic that relates her to the picture. Yet the effect that her 'representational condition' produces in works here referred to, does contain a subversive moment of reflection, a reflective edge that undermines the position by which she submits to the male order. It is crucial to note in these works that the female body appears also in a symptomatic function, in a seemingly affirmative acceptance, or, identification with her 'status as a picture'. Such an acceptance is a necessary condition for problematizing her position within that traditional status. This explains why the woman artist does not attack or destroy the picture in the way of the male avant-garde artist, although both wish to subvert the order of representation. Had she taken an analogous strategy she would only have perpetuated her hidden function within this symbolic process. This does not mean, though, that there is no violence in her works.

There is no doubt that the concepts of Surrealism and, in a more radical sense, the strategies of Happening, Actionism and Fluxus provided the field for those new forms of creative expression. These processes of dissolution, destruction and expansion of the traditional 'pure' categories of art implied new spatial and temporal experiences that link the visual arts to the 'theatrical' and provided a new medium within which women could work. In the late seventies Douglas Crimp remarked that the theatrical moment had been 'reinvested in the pictorial image': 'Performance becomes just one of a number of ways of "staging" the picture.'⁽¹⁴⁾ This 'staging of a picture', in live performance or not, seems to be an underlying principle of women's self-representations, although this need not necessarily have been the artist's intention.

What is at stake in this dialectic of affirmation, submission, protest — and sometimes irony — is the question of how female subjectivity is constructed. How has difference been inscribed in the examples given, that is, in this structural entanglement of the woman's body within the picture? What these artists have found, is a creative expression for woman's double positionality that in the case of Dora, Freud's hysterical patient, only became manifest in the symptom, behind which was revealed a fantasy of masculine and female identification. Dora's case shows the impact of pictures on woman, not surprisingly the picture of the madonna and the nymph, the two icons of male classification of woman.

Yet in these pictures Dora desires herself as a man while at the same time she is confronted with the mystery of her own body, a condition which suggests the same problematic that the women artists discussed here have dealt with in their works. As for the mystery of the positioning of that body, the point is one of a reflective edge, by which woman can distinguish objectivity from subjectivity and which joins in fact the two together in a single composition. Thus fusing the borders that have been traditionally kept separate while defining a female concept of self-representation.

Footnotes and Illustrations

- 1 Sylvia Plath, *Ariel*, Harper Colophon Books, New York 1966, p. 84.
- 2 Lorelai, Gisela von Wysocki, *Die Fröste der Freiheit. Aufbruchphantasien*, Syndikat, Frankfurt/Main 1980, p. 59.
- 3 Ibid., p. 65.
- 4 The aphoristic notion of the picture in Yves Klein's artistic conception oscillates between the 'Void' (no picture) and 'cosmic expansion' that virtually transforms the whole of France or the cosmos into a picture.
- 5 Thierry de Duve, 'The Readymade and the Tube of Paint'; in: *Artforum International*, May 1986, p. 112; de Duve points to the inherent concept of painting in modern art to abandon established painterly forms until it became questionable whether the art-work could still be called a painting in its own right: 'Through all these changes the controversial issue has been: How dare you call this a painting?'
- 6 Jacqueline Rose, 'Woman as Symptom' (1979); in: J. Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*, Verso, London 1986, p. 220 (first published in: *Cinema in the Eighties: Proceedings of the Meeting*, Venice: Edizione 'La Biennale di Venezia' 1980, pp. 23-25).
- 7 William S. Rubin, *Dada and Surrealist Art*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1968, p. 174-175; André Masson, *Woman* (1925).
- 8 Edouard Jaguer, *Les Mystères de la chambre noire: le surréalisme et la photographie*, Flammarion, Paris, p. 118; Raoul Ubac, *La nébuleuse* (1939).
- 9 J. Rose, 'Woman as Symptom', op. cit., p. 219.
- 10 Lucy Lippard, 'The Pains and Pleasures of Rebirth: European and American Women's Body Art'; in: L. Lippard, *From the Center, Feminist Essays on Women's Art*, E.P. Dutton, New York, 1976, p. 124.
- 11 cf. Mary Kelly, 'Re-viewing Modernist Criticism'; in: *Screen 22*, no. 3, August 1981, pp. 41-61; Juliet Mitchell, Jacqueline Rose, *Feminine Sexuality, Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*, W.W. Norton & Company, London-New York, 1985.
- 12 M. Kelly, op.cit., p. 55.
- 13 Gina Pane, *Partitions: Opere multimedia 1984-85*; exhibition catalogue, Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea, Milano, 1985/86, Mazotta, Milano, 1985, p. 58.
- 14 Douglas Crimp, 'Pictures', *October*, no. 8, spring 1979, p. 76; 'theatricality' was an epithet ascribed by Michael Fried to Minimalism.

- i) **Carolee Schneemann** *Eye Body* (1963) black/white photograph, photo: Erró
- ii) **Dorothea Tanning** b. 1912 *Jeux d'enfants* (1942), oil on canvas, 32 x 14 cm, private collection
- iii) **Gina Pane** *Escalade non anesthésiée* (1971), action, Paris; material: metallic grid equipped with spikes
- iv) **Marie Čermínová Toyen** 1902-1980 *Relâche* (1943), oil on canvas, 109 x 52.50 cm, Alsova Gallery, Southern Bohemia, Czechoslovakia
- v-vi) **Valie Export** *Asemie — die Unfähigkeit sich durch Mienenspiel ausdrücken zu Können* (*Asemie — the incapacity of expressing oneself through mimick gesture*), (1973), body action, Vienna; material: small podium, nails, bird, knife, liquid hot wax, human body (a dead bird was used for the action)
- vii) **Ulrike Rosenbach** *Zehntausend Jahre habe ich geschlafen* (*Ten Thousand Years I Have Been Sleeping*) (1976), action, Aachen; material: salt, moss, video-camera, monitor
- viii) **Rose Garrard** *Flaccid Guns* (detail of *Models Triptych*) (1982-84) material: acrylic on plaster on wood; 116.8 x 101.6 Tate Gallery
- ix) **Helen Chadwick** *Ego Geometria Sum: IX, High School. Age 13*, plywood and photographic emulsion; 70 x 70 x 70 cm, *Ego Geometria Sum: The Labour IX* 1984, Photograph from the series of 10; 94 x 125 cm, Helen Chadwick, photography by Sean Hudson

Three Points in a Circle: Three Decades of Experiment in the US and Canada

Steven DURLAND

New York artist Carolee Schneemann did her first performance in 1960. Vancouver artist Paul Wong did his first performance in 1973. San Franciscans Mark Pauline and Matt Heckert began their work as Survival Research Laboratories in 1980. (They were joined a short time later by Eric Werner.) Taken together, Schneemann, Wong and SRL span almost 30 years of performance activity, with roughly a decade separating their respective entries into the art arena.

Inevitably, each of these artists is representative of the decade in which she, he, and they began producing work. And yet each is producing work in 1988. So they must also be seen as representative of the art that is being produced today. What do they have in common? All come from visual arts backgrounds. Schneemann was, and still is, a painter. Wong's career developed hand-in-hand with his work in video and photography. Pauline, Heckert and Werner all attended art schools. This in itself is unusual when one considers that performance today in the US is dominated by artists with backgrounds in theatre, dance or music. All three manifest a political sensibility, but in radically different ways, and perhaps even radically different politics. The politics of their times. How do they differ? In many ways, but one significant difference is that Schneemann began her career before there was a support structure (alternative spaces, grants, etc.) for experimental work. Paul Wong's career is strongly associated with this support structure and he was instrumental in its beginnings in Vancouver where he was a co-founder of Video Inn. SRL came into being at a time when the support structure had become institutionalized, and, as a group, they've generally avoided it.

I've chosen to discuss the three artists individually in the order they began doing work. While it would be overreaching to claim that any of them are paradigms of their respective decades, it is possible to get some idea of the artistic sensibility that has developed over the past 30 years in performance in the US and Canada.

In the light of Schneemann's *Edge 88* performance *Cat Scan* it is interesting to note that her very first performance event in 1960 was also inspired by a cat. The process of creating that performance *Labyrinths*, is described in Schneemann's book *More Than Meat Joy*:

'The edge of a tornado ripped through Sydney, Illinois, in the summer of 1960. The tornado toppled our favorite Tree of Heaven, which crashed down on the insubstantial back roof. Its wide limbs blocked the wooden steps and pathway into the field. My attachment to particular trees is animistic and I was desolate over this destruction. Our cat Kitch, then four, quickly discovered that she could walk directly out her open kitchen window onto the tangle of branches and make a new and efficient journey down towards the stream. It is all ridiculously simple, but that is how and why I decided to use the fallen tree and flooded-out rock walls, the mud and broken branches, as an "environment" — labyrinth — for a group of friends to proceed through one Sunday afternoon. I made a drawing of a possible course, the elements to encounter, and instructions based on what Kitch was doing: make a self-determined set of pathways around and through the obstacles, evolving the sorts of motions and actions which the obstacles propose; make contact with mud, water, high grass, the stream, the fallen trees; proceed from east to north to west and meet at the rock pile for a cook-out.'⁽¹⁾

Here can be seen a number of elements that would crop up in Schneemann's later work. The animism in her attraction to the tree hints at what would become a deep involvement with ancient beliefs, myths and rituals, especially as they touched on issues of feminism. Schneemann was one of the first feminist artists to explore these concerns, which were soon to become a major part of the iconography of the feminist art movement. Her personal and symbolic interest in cats leads in similar directions. The cat as feminine. The cat as sacred animal to the Egyptian fertility goddess Isis. The cat as mythically associated with the moon, implying dark visions and dreams.⁽²⁾ Much as the cat 'dictated' the actions of *Labyrinth*, 'instructions' taken from dreams would later become a significant element of Schneemann's work.

The structure of movement in *Labyrinth*, where the participants were given a set of 'possible' directions yet still had to devise suitable paths of their own, created a situation of nonintentionality on the part of the artist. The viewer/participant must deal with the elements the artist has presented in a way that may only be significant to the individual's own attempt to reach the conclusion of the performance. This structure, physically realized in *Labyrinth*, is typical of the mental journey Schneemann's performances now require of the viewer. And finally, the requested attention to the motions and actions necessary to navigate the course presage Schneemann's later involvement with the Judson Dance group where pedestrian movement, often dictated by the manipulation of props and the traversing of environments, developed an entirely new vocabulary of postmodern dance. Schneemann was the first visual artist to work with the Judson Dance group in the early '60s. She was actively involved in the happenings and body art of the time out of which she developed her own form, Kinetic Theatre.⁽³⁾ It is possible that from these concerns with the body Schneemann developed the most significant addition to these early elements of her work, a strong feminist, political consciousness.

In her 1975 performance *Interior Scroll*, Schneemann appeared nude and read a long, narrow text as she extracted it from her vagina. The text described a male film maker acquaintance who rejected her film work because of its 'personal clutter, the persistence of feelings, the diaristic indulgence, (and) the primitive techniques.'⁽⁴⁾ Schneemann had 'internalised' this sexist rejection of a feminine aesthetic and then exposed it for what it was. *Interior Scroll* was 'one of the many such salvos delivered by women artists during the 1970s against the established sexist creeds of the art world.'⁽⁵⁾ Schneemann even examined the sexism in her dreams. In *Fresh Blood — A Dream Morphology* (1981) she asked the question: 'Are we dreaming ourselves, or dreaming the dreams of the men dreaming us?' She posited that 'the body is a generating source of the unconscious mind' and suggested that even in dreams women see themselves as men see them; she proposed to return 'a language of dream symbol back to the body.'⁽⁴⁾

As we can see from the work of Schneemann and others, Paul Wong's work developed in an art world that was already becoming politicised. Major advances in technology in the early '70s saw many artists such as Wong begin exploring the suddenly accessible world of video as well as working in photography. And along with the development of video art came the inevitable need to examine its oppressive parents: television and the media. The primary focus of Wong's work had been his fascination with the images of culture as they exist in the media. His work first came to

attention in 1977 with *Murder Research*, an exhibition of photographs and text that detail an actual event in which Wong and collaborator Kenneth Fletcher found a blood-stained and half-naked body in the snow just across from Wong's apartment. They photographically documented the examination and removal of the body by the authorities and then followed the process through the morgue, the coroner's office and eventually to the suicide of the accused murderer in a jail cell. Of *Murder Research* one critic commented: 'The fascination of *Murder Research* derives, in part, from its stunningly graphic re-presentation of what turns out to be neither a mysterious nor exotic process, but one which is almost a mundane and banal part of daily existence.'⁽⁷⁾ Obviously murder is seldom a mysterious or exotic process unless we see it on television or in movies, which constitutes the major part of any person's experience with it. Death seldom has meaning unless we know the deceased. Thus we are much more apt to be emotionally involved in the pseudo-death of a character we've 'known' on the screen, than we are in the real death of a stranger.

It seems a cruel irony that Wong's next major work, a video performance called *In-ten-sity* (1978) was Wong's response to the death of his close friend, Ken Fletcher. Unlike the majority of his works, there was no detachment on the part of the artist here, only, as the title indicates, intensity. The audience, on the other hand, was again allowed only a voyeuristic view of a private experience. Wong entered an 8' x 8' x 8' padded cube with video cameras on all four sides and above from the top. The audience could see the cube and the feeds from the five video cameras. Wong began slowly to confront the inside space. His actions became increasingly frenzied as he threw himself at the walls until it reached such 'intensity' that friends entered the cube and ended the performance.⁽⁸⁾

It is in Wong's 1981 videotape *Prime Cuts* (20:17 min.) that his work becomes solidly entrenched in deconstructing the images of pop culture. It presents a 'day in the life' of a group of young adults. This group is a television creation. They're beautiful and happy without a care in the world as they go swimming and camping and dine by the ocean and lay out in the sun and just have fun. No problems, no jobs, no pimples, just surfaces in a vacuous existence. Life in a television commercial. You drink without getting drunk, you smoke without getting lung cancer, you wear the right deodorant to get the right lover. Wong keeps his distance in the tape. No matter how much you'd wish it there's no storyline, not a hint of commentary. At the end you're left to examine your own response to images in the tape. You may want to assume that Wong's approach was ironic, but it's an assumption that he's failed to validate.

It is these mass media icons of our culture that predominate in Wong's later work. In *Body Fluid* (1986) Wong's performance takes on the proportions of spectacle. The stage is a truck turntable in a parking garage below a shopping centre in Vancouver. The set features live and pre-recorded video, large-screen projections, lighting effects, mechanical devices and smoke machines. Into this setting are introduced performers representative of various media icons. First a biker rides down the garage ramp to the staging area. He dismounts and proceeds to play some bluesy saxophone in the dreamy world of smoke and lights. The turntable revolves and the biker disappears to be replaced by a baton twirler. She's followed by a glamour girl, then a woman dressed in a Chinese Communist army uniform with a gun, and last, two shirtless males, the kind you might see in a jeans commercial. One poses while the

other lifts weights. The spectacle builds as the performers become increasingly narcissistic. The glamour girl supports a globe over her head and the Chinese woman re-enters with a ghetto blaster. Is she the focus in this performance? Will our own consumerism soon be exported to China? Here again the message is ambiguous. Of *Body Fluid* one critic wrote: 'Through his pageantry of impressions, all Wong seems to be doing is objectifying the issue, presenting familiar images in a new context. There is no narrative, emotion, or overt content. We are left with a wealth of images, yet with nowhere to direct their significance . . . For Wong, it was a way of both exercising this fascination with popular culture and exposing its emptiness. Like TV, one was seduced and mesmerized by the technological magic, but the glossy surface, once peeled away, had nothing underneath.'⁽⁹⁾

Is Wong presenting a critique or a celebration in these works? He is not telling. Surely he is aware that we are aware of the banality of this imagery. Perhaps his intent is less to expose these icons than it is to test the audience's pain threshold towards them.

For Survival Research Laboratories technology and spectacle have been prime components from the very beginning. But where Paul Wong is presenting his audience with images of banality, SRL is confronting us with dangerous realities. While their performances vary and have different titles, their basic methods are similar. Pauline, Heckert and Werner construct fearsome larger-than-life robotic creatures that breathe fire, or swing giant ball-and-chains, or possess any one of a number of destructive capabilities and then set these machines loose to engage and destroy each other.

These are not just boys creating backyard, scrap metal toys. The machines possess much of the same sophisticated technology you might expect to find only in a military research lab. In fact, they've developed a close relationship with many of the military and scientific researchers who work in the labs around the San Francisco Bay Area. There is a flamethrower that produces 100-foot flames and a computer-controlled Shock Wave Cannon that can blow out windows. There are machines that walk, and machines that crawl and machines that roll along on giant spikes. There are machines that animate dead animal carcasses, and others that tear them to shreds.

As one writer commented about SRL's work: 'Machinery run amok is a common theme in America, but when the mechanical catastrophes recounted daily in the media are brought to life before our eyes, the experience is transformed. It is not so easily digested. In SRL's work we see the men behind the controls, we see the effigies and targets squashed or burned. The flames reflect in our irises, the smells linger in our nostrils, the adrenalin pulses through us at the perception of spattered blood and the closeness of danger. We are transformed from spectators to conspirators in the chaos.'⁽¹⁰⁾

SRL's performances have titles such as *A Cruel and Relentless Plot to Pervert the Flesh of Beasts to Unholy Uses*, or *Extremely Cruel Practices: A Series of Events Designed To Instruct Those Interested in Policies That Correct or Punish, or Misfortunes of Desire: Acted Out at an Imaginary Location Symbolizing Everything Worth Having*. The members of SRL have referred to their work as 'socio-political satire' but you're often left to wonder just exactly what their politics are. The group proffers a nihilistic attitude where 'everything is reduced to primal forces: power, fear, survival, death and destruction.'⁽¹¹⁾

Pauline says 'It's the vaccine for the virus of total destruction.'⁽¹²⁾ Vaccines often consist of low grade equivalents of the viruses they're designed to cure. If we see the world as a biological mechanism, then perhaps these demonstrations in raw power could at least make the people who control the real destructive forces in our world think twice about the ramifications of those forces. Or perhaps these shows might prepare us, the audience, for other, even more dangerous situations.

It's an oddly '80s sense of politics, Reaganesque in its 'might makes right' and 'peace through power' sorts of stances. It is possible to decry the macho element and many find other aspects disgusting and unnecessary. But the members of SRL appear quite unconcerned. Their politics are their own and they have little good to say about any existing political philosophy, the art world or the general public. To enjoy this work you must respond to primal feelings that lie deeper than simply being 'politically correct.' It is quintessentially '80s that SRL has attracted the attention of the pop and mainstream media, such as *People* magazine. Ultimately a reflection on the media and its audience, not on SRL.

If I were to choose to draw conclusions about the art of the '80s in the US and Canada through the works of Schneemann, Wong and SRL, one thing I would note is that there has been a move in the direction of increased scale in the work and inarticulateness in the artists. Lest this seem like a condemnation it should be pointed out that the same description might apply to a number of eras in the history of art, most recently to the artworld of the '50s, when the abstract expressionists likewise expanded their canvases to gigantic proportions and were characterized as being inarticulate and even macho. Perhaps in these three artists we have represented less a linear progression than three points on a circle. And perhaps this is why the term 'avant-garde' is no longer useful today. Avant-garde implies being at the front of a line. But the edge is really a continuous border to be found in all directions. If we look in the right direction we might find any of these three on the edge, but it is doubtful we would find them in the same place.

Footnotes

1. Carolee Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, Documentext, 1979, p. 7.
2. J.E. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, Vail-Ballou Press, 1971, pp. 39, 217.
3. Moira Roth, *The Amazing Decade: Women and Performance 1970-1980*, Astro Artz, 1983, p. 130.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
6. Margot Mifflin, 'The Sleep of Reason: Artists and Their Dreams,' in *High Performance*, Los Angeles, No. 38, 1987, p. 52.
7. Peter Wohlhelm, 'Murder Research', *Vanguard*, Vancouver, Vol. 9 #1, 1980.
8. Christopher Hume, 'Paul Wong at the Vancouver Art Gallery,' *art magazine*, Vancouver, May-June, 1979.
9. Keith Wallace, 'Body Fluid', *Video Guide*, Vancouver, No. 37, 1987, p. 6.
10. Peter Belsito, *Notes from the Pop Underground*, Last Gasp, 1985, p. 7.
11. Alfred Jan, 'Survival Research Laboratories', *High Performance*, Los Angeles, No. 30, 1985, p. 34.
12. Peter Belsito, *Op. Cit.*, p. 18.

N.B. At the time of writing, Mark Pauline and Survival Research Laboratories were intending to participate in EDGE 88. Their appearance this year unfortunately had to be cancelled. The EDGE organisers hope to include them in EDGE 90.

A Matter of Content

Gray WATSON

The unpopularity of performance art and of art making unconventional and imaginative use of new media has little to do with any distaste for formal innovation — on the contrary, that is something after which our society is constantly hankering. It is true that almost everyone at the same time craves some haven of continuity and stability and many may look to art in particular to provide this; and for that purpose, painting and sculpture, in the conventional sense, do have obvious symbolic advantages. Such formal considerations alone, however, do not even begin to account for the wide-spread sense of relief when, towards the end of the 1970s, the claim that more experimental forms of art were passé — a claim made ever since they first appeared — acquired a semblance of objective validity.

Nor are economic factors sufficient to account for the joy with which this change of fashion was greeted both by the majority of the art establishment and by the majority of the general public. While it is easy to see why the revival in the fortunes of market capitalism should favour saleable goods, it would certainly not have been beyond the wit of the odd entrepreneur to find ways of generating financial returns out of most forms of experimental art. Indeed there are reasons for supposing that the formal and economic arguments have been used, by supporters and detractors of experimental art alike, as an alibi for facing up to far more problematic underlying issues.

The real reasons for the rejection of experimental art are concerned with its content; and with the ways in which it is presented — only insofar as they are interwoven with content. Very often, of course, this is undeniably trite; most self-consciously radical art which is dismissed as worthless by all but the faithful probably deserves its fate. In the case of the best work, however, a genuine challenge is issued to our most fundamental presuppositions about the world and in particular about human nature. What needs to be interrogated, in a spirit not of superiority but of open-minded sensitivity, is why this is so widely sensed, even among more intelligent sections of the community, as a threat, rather than being welcomed as an invaluable assistance to undertaking what is arguably the most important task at present confronting our species. It is admittedly quite easy to see, especially with the benefit of hindsight, why most people should have found material in much of the pioneer performance art of the 1960s threatening.

This was pre-eminently the case with the Viennese Actionists, whose potentially enlightening explorations of violence, above all when these touched on sexuality, were far too direct to be perceived in other than sensational terms and therefore never received the serious attention they would have repaid. If, however, it is sad but entirely unsurprising that this opportunity for enlightenment was wasted, it is sadder still that the more celebratory explorations of sexuality carried out by Carolee Schneemann were also largely perceived in terms of shock and sensationalism. Not only has Schneemann never been accorded the crucial role in terms of the history of art which she deserves — partly at least, one cannot help suspecting, for the absurd reason of her being a woman — but even within a specifically feminist context, her work has tended to be seriously under-estimated for essentially the same reasons of defensiveness and respectability. In the case of Britain, it is easy enough to see why the pioneering performance work of Stuart Brisley met with a certain amount of disgust; though interestingly less than it might have done, had it not been for the relative absence of the sexual element. As for the more recent explorations of violence undertaken by Mona Hatoum and Alistair MacLennan, it is noteworthy how

often they are referred back to the specific historical situations which are their starting-points, almost as a way of avoiding the grimmer implications concerning the whole of humanity which constitute their principal long-term value.

Perhaps the most serious lack has been of a coherent theoretical framework in terms of which the more disturbing issues raised by experimental art can be fruitfully discussed.⁽¹⁾ This has not been helped by a certain type of anarchic ethos within which a lot of the work has been created and exhibited, where any attempt at rational explanation has been distrusted on principle; however understandable this may have been in some respects, it has also been unnecessarily parochial and defensive. The best experimental art, particularly insofar as it provides the occasion for intuitive insights into extreme and problematical areas of human experience, has far more to offer to the mainstream of society — from ordinary individuals to those invested in various ways with the power of planning our collective future — than most of the artists themselves who are making it, or of its small circle of admirers, are aware. But for this potential to be realised a new intellectual framework — one which does full justice to the doubts of the majority, even as it allays them — is essential. Only then will it be appreciated by a significant number of people that the dangers involved in re-examining our most fundamental suppositions — in the ways in which this art challenges us — are outweighed by the dangers of not doing so.

Central to such a framework would be a recognition of the inter-relatedness of the public and private domains, an extension of the feminist dictum that the personal is the political. It would need to focus on the significance of the irrational dimension in human affairs, not in any way glorifying irrationality but also not neutralizing its impact, as Lacanians often do, through the use of excessively abstract formulations. In particular, it would need to bring as much light to bear as possible on the part played by unconscious emotional forces as *determinants* of social, cultural and political behaviour — this direction of causation being not only more controversial but also more far-reaching in its implications than the more familiar one of public and social factors affecting the private and individual, which would, however, also need to be explored as fully as possible.

It could be claimed that all art operates at the point where the private and public domains intersect; but this is certainly true in a very distinct way in the case of most of the type of experimental art which is included in the present festival. In that sense, the spirit of Joseph Beuys may be seen as particularly relevant to *Edge 88*; yet further evidence — however annoying certain elements of his cult inevitably are — of the extraordinary wealth still to be mined from his legacy. The most direct link is through the work of Ulrike Rosenbach, who at one time studied with Beuys: tapping deep levels of individual creativity, it simultaneously demonstrates a political and ecological awareness at the widest level. Through bringing these extremes together, Rosenbach is able to offer an art which is genuinely healing rather than merely cathartic.

A number of artists focus on the body, and body-language, as the principal link between the individual and society: if this could be said, for example, in different ways of Stuart Brisley, Rose Garrard and Zbigniew Warpechowski, it is pre-eminently true in the case of Valie Export. Although potentially an instrument of liberation, much of what the study of the body and body-language reveals in the present situation is

the reality and extent of repression. Repression is also central to Denis Masi's work: while he chooses to avoid the direct use of the human body for fear that the associations which it might arouse would be too specific, he succeeds, with his animal imagery, his disquieting slickness of surface and his creation of oppressive spatial structures, in pinpointing with particular directness certain unconscious aspects of the workings of political power and dominance.

This is, of course, the territory which mass psychology⁽²⁾ and psychohistory have begun to explore; but the small amount of headway, certainly in terms of academic acceptability, which these disciplines have so far achieved is in itself instructive. Here too, it is impossible to escape the suspicion that the nature of the subject-matter — striking as it does, far more radically than psychoanalysis when confined to the individual, at the very roots of the repressions on which most of our world-views are founded — is so repugnant that it is immediately dismissed as trivial, frivolous and idiosyncratic. There is in addition a methodological reason why psychohistory is taken seriously by only very few traditional historians, in that it requires of those practising in that they make use, not just peripherally but as a central part of their research, of their own emotional feelings. As Lloyd de Mause has written:

'Psychohistory, like psychoanalysis, is a science in which the researcher's *feelings* are as much or even more a part of his research equipment than his eyes or his hands. Like eyes, feelings are not infallible; they often introduce distortions, and so on, but since psychohistory concerns human motivation and since the discovery and weighing of complex motives can *only* be accomplished by identification with human actors, the usual suppression of all feeling preached and followed by most "science" simply cripples a psychohistorian as badly as it would cripple a biologist to be forbidden the use of a microscope. The *emotional* development of a psychohistorian is therefore as much a topic for discussion as his or her intellectual development.'⁽³⁾

If, however, detachment has traditionally been valued as an ideal in science and to a considerable extent in most academic work, including history, it has not been expected from creative artists — nor entirely from critics or historians of the arts. On the contrary, that the use of feelings is central to all artistic work is by no means an exclusively Romantic doctrine. A strong case could be made out, therefore, for suggesting that just as much of the more daring and content-rich experimental art could benefit from the intellectual rigour offered by psychohistory and related disciplines, these in turn could benefit from the greater methodological freedom and breadth which the context of the arts allows.

Undoubtedly it is a problem that directly related to this freedom and breadth, the arts have been credited with very little cognitive, or practical, value. Elevated to an elegant never-never land, their potential to deepen our understanding of the real world, and thus to help us act in it in ways more in accord with our deeper ethical aspirations, is all but completely ignored. As Alistair MacLennan has said, 'worlds of ethics and aesthetics don't even meet.' This may have had the advantage of making possible the popularity of certain forms of art — Surrealism is an obvious example — which, had their ideological implications been taken seriously, would have been rejected wholesale; but, by depriving art of its true transformative potential, it poses the very real threat of rendering it redundant altogether. MacLennan is therefore entirely right when he asserts that 'art needs to find new, more tangible ways of demonstrating its

sure but elusive worth . . . it must be seen and experienced as worthwhile, or die the death.⁽⁴⁾

Fortunately, though obviously difficult, this is not impossible; and encouragement may be drawn from the fact that although seldom articulated, there is a definite latent demand within some sections of the public for an art which is able to play a more crucial cultural role. The greatest paradox is that it is the very type of experimental art which up until now has tended to arouse most hostility, and hence has been confined to the margins, which in the long run is amongst the best placed to meet this demand. But before it can do so, it will not only have to improve its grasp of public relations, tact and diplomacy; it will also have to learn how it can best work in conjunction with other disciplines to understand and to resolve those fears and prejudices which at present block its ability to communicate. It is not only for its own, or for art's sake in general, that it must do this — there are reasons for supposing that these same fears and prejudices may also be responsible for bringing about a partial paralysis in several more evidently consequential fields of human endeavour.

Footnotes

1 One of the most significant contributions is Thomas McEvilley's 'Art in the Dark', *Art Forum*, summer 1983.

2 I take the classic statements to be Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (*Massepsychologie und Ich-Analyse*), 1921 and Serge Moscovici *The Age of the Crowd; an historical treatise on mass psychology* (*L'age de Foules*) 1981. Perhaps better known is Elias Canetti's less systematic *Crowds and Power* (*Masse und Macht*) 1960.

3 Lloyd de Mause, 'The independence of psychohistory', *PsychoHistory*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1987.

4 Alistair MacLennan, 'Into the Future', *Circa 21*.

Marjorie Allthorpe-Guyton, editor of this catalogue is a curator and critic living in London. She is the UK editor of *Flash Art*.

Chrissie Iles is Assistant Curator at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford.

Dan Cameron is a critic, curator and musician living in New York.

Silvia Eiblmayr is a curator and critic living in Vienna. She organised the major show of women's art '*Kunst Mit Eigen Sinn*', at the Museum of Modern Art and the Museum of the Twentieth Century, Vienna, in 1985.

Steven Durland is Editor of *High Performance*, published in Los Angeles, California.

Gray Watson is a critic living in London.

Jerzy BERÉS (Poland)

Jerzy Berés has an affinity with materials which comes from his close relationship to his homeland, the area of Nowy Sącz, near the Tatras in Poland, where wood, stone, straw and leather formed the basic tools of a farming community. In a machine culture he has maintained contact with an earlier age where work was ritual and tools symbolic. Where material was combined and adapted, respecting and enhancing its inherent qualities and powers, Berés' strange combinations, his wood, stone, rope and leather figures, *Bogeys* as he prefers to call them, stand incongruously in a city environment, a warning in the face of a contemporary world and the death of spiritual values. Berés, then, is the artist as shaman, as magician.

'Berés has a rare quality of tranquil lyricism . . . also a distinguished sculptor, he tends to organise his work around themes of procession and ritual . . . he will transform an art gallery into the venue for a sacramental meal — not of wine and bread but of vodka — "because vodka makes you glad" — and cake "because people expect something special at a party". Before he breaks the cake and pours the drink, he will paint himself with flowers; haven't they come to see painting? . . . his work . . . involves an exposition of the inherent beauty, dignity and infinite fragility of the human body. The naive element in his work relates it to certain Slavonic traditions of the holiness of innocence yet his underlying themes concern the nature of art itself.'

Angela Carter, 'Performance from Poland', *Performance Magazine*, number 3, 1979

Born in Nowy Sącz, Poland 1930
Lives in Cracow

Selected References

- 1973 Paul Hefting, *Museums Journal*, volume 18, number 6, December
- 1978 Siegfried Salzman, *Bestand Katalog 1*, Wilhelm Lehbruck Museum, Der Stat Duisberg, Duisberg
- 1979 Angela Carter, 'Performance from Poland', *Performance Magazine*, number 3
- 1980 Jorg Zutter, *Kunstbulletin 6*, Des Schweizerischen Kunstverein



Face Altar Contemporary Polish Art, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford 1986

Ian BREAKWELL (UK)

From 1963 to 1973 Ian Breakwell did performances prior to working with film, video and audio tape. *The Institution*, a six day performance with Kevin Coyne, at the ICA, London 1973 was a series of improvised dialogues, of indeterminate length, concerned with institutions and madness. It was followed in 1978 by a film made with Kevin Coyne which Breakwell saw as a response to orthodox documentaries and dramas about loneliness and insanity.

'Breakwell's total output, writing, films, events and other art work, have a single, significant motor to them. He is a rare phenomenon in the London art world, an art worker who is consistent and imaginative, and genuinely on the side of the people.'

Peter Fuller, *The Connoisseur*, July 1972

Breakwell's drawings, paintings and photographic work have been exhibited internationally since 1970 and regularly at the Anthony Reynold's Gallery, London. Of *Circus*, an installation of screen prints on fabric with taped sound composed in collaboration with Ian McQueen, Third Eye Centre, Glasgow 1978, the artist wrote: 'My work *Circus* is a little homage to that spirit of Magic, and a spit in the eye of that normal, repressive world in which everything has its proper place; the rabbit in its burrow and the top hat on the businessman's head.'

Breakwell's diaries were published by Pluto Press, London 1986 and his collected illustrated fiction by Serpent's Tail Press, London 1988. The television series, *Ian Breakwell's Diary* (twenty one programmes) and *Ian Breakwell's Christmas Diary* (eight programmes), were both produced by Annalogue Productions and broadcast by Channel 4 in 1984. Ian Breakwell has just completed a new series, *Public Face*, *Private Eye*, also produced by Annalogue for Channel 4.

The Public Face is an acting mask/the Private Eye is behind the mask

Auditorium

One wall of a black room is filled with the blurred faces of a theatre audience framed by curtains which have opened as if prior to the start of a performance. Theatre footlights face out towards rows of seats in which sit visitors to the installation, who view the audience which gazes attentively back at them. From hidden audio speakers come the recorded sounds of audience foot shuffling, clothing adjustment, throat clearing and programme folding — electronically orchestrated into a musical overture. Ripples, stutters, gusts and waves of breaths, murmurs, coughs, whispers, chuckles and rustles swirl up in anticipation of show-start, then slowly fade away.

Born Derby, England 1943
Lives in London

Awards, Residencies

- 1980-81 Fellowship at Kings College and Kettle's Yard, Cambridge
- 1982-83 John Brinkley Fellowship, Norwich School of Art
- 1985 Artist in residence with Tyne Tees Television

Selected References

- 1972 Peter Fuller, review, *The Connoisseur*, vol.180, no.725, July
- 1983 Jose Marin-Medina, 'Imagen y letrismo en la pintura de Breakwell', *Informaciones*, 5 May
- 1986 Ian Breakwell: recorded live (in conversation with Chris Garratt and Mick Kidd), *Journal of Art and Art Education*, no.10
- 1986 Adrian Henri, 'Portrait of the Artist a Head of the herd', *Daily Post*, 22 January



ian BREAKWELL *Study for Auditorium*. Pastel on paper, 1988. 120 x 106 cms

Stuart BRISLEY (UK)

Since the performance/installation *Leaching out at and from the Intersection* ICA 1981, which was the first work of the 'developing institution' Brisley named the *Georgiana Collection*, Brisley shifted from performance to sculpture, installation, sound, tape-slide and photographic works. But as Michael Archer points out there is an even 'greater sense of vulnerability and imminent collapse. There is a dread of an inability to secure being and space. Brisley remains present, but as an absence'. As part of his residency at the Imperial War Museum, London, Brisley began, in collaboration with Maya Balcioglu, *The Cenotaph Project* — ten 1/5 scale representations of the Lutyens Cenotaph installed throughout the UK 1987-90 (Imperial War Museum, London, Gateshead, Cambridge, Halifax, Portsmouth, Glasgow, Derry, Cardiff). This most recent work is a further remove from the time-based and body performances of Brisley's practice in the late sixties and seventies. The inquiry, though, remains unchanged; aesthetic as much as political and physiological, it is concerned with maintaining vigilance, with facing conditions *now*, without sentiment, without nostalgia.

'*The One and the Other in the Attic of Poverty* (Montreal 1980) saw him as the artist 'other', acting in the present in an attempt to overcome the past, and as the curatorial 'one', in control of both his own history and that of the 'other' . . . Here we have the conjunction of artist and economic producer, the poles of a dialectic which is generative of a genuinely critical art . . . The adoption in the *Georgiana Collection*, as in these earlier performances, of punitive identities is not merely a formal device which allows work to be made in the face of lack of institutional concern, but rather a strategic necessity in acknowledgement of a desire to see art as an engagement, at both economic and superstructural levels, with political and social realities . . . By insisting on retention of a stake in the production of power, Brisley enlarges the otherwise barren horizons of a landscape which contains just 'me' and 'them' to include a possible more fruitful 'us'.'

Michael Archer 'neither one thing nor the other', *Georgiana Collection, Stuart Brisley* 1986

Bourgeois Manners. Brute force and bloody ignorance, 2.

Born Grayswood, Surrey, England 1933
Lives in London

Awards, Residences

- 1973 DAAD Scholarship, West Berlin
- 1976 Artist in Residence, Peterlee New Town, Co Durham
- 1987 Artist in Residence, Imperial War Museum, London

Selected References

- 1981 *Stuart Brisley: a Retrospective*, ICA, London; texts by John Roberts, Paul Overy and Stuart Hood
Stuart Brisley, Conversations, *Audio Arts*, double issue, nine hours of recordings made in four sessions in 1981, coincided with the ICA Retrospective
- 1986 *Georgiana Collection Stuart Brisley*, essay by Michael Archer: 'neither one thing nor the other', Third Eye Centre, Glasgow; Orchard Gallery, Derry
- 1987 Gray Watson, Stuart Brisley — Biographical note for *British Art in the 20th Century*, Royal Academy, London

In response to a request for a selected biography, a photograph of the artist, up to 100 words written on or by the artist, and an image of a work; by the artist; an experimental work.

This might be a description of my head looked at by you. When I look at my image in a mirror, I can see into my two eyes, one at a time. To the left and right of each I see what I have been told are ears. In between the two eyes and below is what is called a nose, just below that a mouth, the lips which form the entrance to the mouth often move. Most recently sounds emanating from the mouth and transmitted back into the brain through the ears tell me my mouth says that I have never made experimental art in my life until this moment, which moment? This moment that is.

Stuart Brisley

Helen CHADWICK (UK)

In each of her major works: *Ego Geometria Sum* 1983, *One Flesh* 1985, *Of Mutability* 1986, *Allegory of Misrule*, *The Capricci*, *Lofos Nymphon*, 1987, Helen Chadwick uses recent technology — the photocopy, slide projection, electronic montaging — to create self portraiture which interrogates the projection of the feminine, in Art History and contemporary culture, while sustaining remarkable directness and emotional power.

'In our time the nature of the human subject, the self, is again under question and art is at the forefront of this interrogation. During the sixties and seventies a number of works of art were made which contrived to induce a critical self-consciousness in the viewer . . . Chadwick has concerned herself with the refashioning of traditional genres. She has done this not so much as a reassertion of tradition in any nostalgic sense, but in order to give the modern problematic of the subject historical depth. Her use of the photocopy as a mechanically reproduced trace of the body, the absence of presence, indicates the contemporary nature of her concerns.'

Michael Newman, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 1986

'In her notebooks, Helen Chadwick quotes Frida Kahlo's "the vegetable miracle of my body's landscape", and like that artist, she uses her own body as the site of identity and its puzzles. "Progress has to be made through self-understanding, self-awareness, but one of the taboos has been an exploration of one's own body. To understand the capacity for transcendence through the flesh, one has to move in the face of theory into areas that cannot be comprehended by theory. I want the body to be as much a site of victory as the brain" . . . The artist does not hymn the cycles of women's bodies in an essentialist manner, or lament specificities of female suffering . . . her love of artifice in the processes of production casts a mood of deliberation and control over her work . . .'

Marina Warner, 'In the Garden of Delights: Helen Chadwick's "Of Mutability"', *Of Mutability*, ICA, London 1986

'The world of appearances is not just the alienating trap, as the iconoclasts would have it, but the condition for the representation of emotion, including grief and joy. In the modern Controversy, Chadwick joins the iconophiles.'

Michael Newman, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 1986

'She draws on autobiography, feminist theory, issues of identity and gender, art and art history, aesthetic and social relations . . . in the end her work is memorable . . . for its passion and directness of effect; the sense of an art that is both discursive — open to speculation and hallucinatory — beyond words.'

Matthew Collings 'Helen Chadwick, Dreams of the Real World', *Cameos: Helen Chadwick*, 1988

Born Croydon, Surrey, England 1953
Lives in London

Awards, Residences

- 1981 Artist in Industry, John Smith's Brewery and Yorkshire Arts
- 1983 Artist in Schools, Newcastle City Council and Spectro Arts Workshop
- 1986 Artist in Residence, Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery
- 1987 Nominated for the Turner Prize, Tate Gallery, London
- 1988 Artist in National Parks, Department of the Environment (Pembrokeshire National Park), Victoria & Albert Museum, London

Selected References

- 1983 John Roberts, introduction, *Summer Show I*, Serpentine Gallery, London
- 1984 Micky Donnelly, 'Helen Chadwick', *Circa*, January-February
- 1986 Marina Warner, 'In the Garden of Delights: Helen Chadwick's *Of Mutability*'; Richard Cork, 'Contesting Alienation', *Of Mutability, Helen Chadwick*, ICA, London 1986 and tour 1987
Michael Newman, *The Mirror and the Lamp*, The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh
- 1987 Michael Newman, *Helen Chadwick*, The Turner Prize, Tate Gallery, London
Helen Chadwick, *Lofos Nymphon*, Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield
Marjorie Allthorpe-Guyton, review 'The Body Politic', *Flash Art*, November-December
- 1988 Mathilde Roskam, 'Helen Chadwick, Allegories Reelles'; Matthew Collings, 'Helen Chadwick, Dreams of the Real World', *Cameos: Helen Chadwick*, Torch Gallery, Amsterdam, Onrust, Köln

“BLOOD HYPHEN”

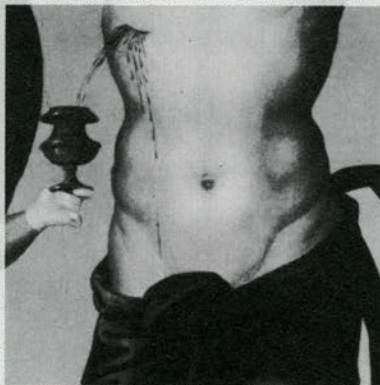
An installation for Clerkenwell & Islington Medical Mission

And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, Came behind *Him*, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd. *St Luke*, VIII 43-44.

Linking beginning and end, the knife's cut to the gash of the lance, we trace a passage on the body of Christ from man to God . . . Christ's redemptive Passion, which culminates on the cross in the blood of the sacred heart, begins in the blood of the penis . . . The coupling of Christ's last and first wounds becomes topical in 15th & 16th-century Passion pictures that guide the trickle of gore from the breast back to the groin: a *blood hyphen* between commencement and consummation.

Leo Steinberg "The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion" October No. 25, MIT Press, 1983.

I wish to call attention to artistic depictions that suggest that Christ's flesh was sometimes seen as female, as lactating and giving birth. Over



and over again in the 14th & 15th-centuries we find representations of Christ as the one who feeds and bleeds. Squirting blood from wounds often placed high in the side, Christ fills cups for his followers just as Mary feeds her baby . . . Blood is what is emphasised — blood as covenant, in part, but primarily blood as suffering. Thus

blood is redemptive because Christ's pain gives salvific significance to what we all share with him; and what we share is not a penis. It is the fact that we can be hurt. We suffer.

Caroline Walker Bynum "The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg" *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol XXXIX No. 3, 1986

By pressing the control pedal, the doctor can shoot the laser either as a short burst or a continuous beam. The direction of the beam is along an ordinary visible light beam — often red or purple — which shows up on the cervix where the laser is targeted. When the beam hits the cervix it completely vapourizes a tiny area . . .

Graham H. Barker FRCS, MRCOG "Your Smear Test" Adamson Books 1987

RAPHAEL *The Crucified Christ with the Virgin Mary, Saints and Angels*
National Gallery, London (3943)
Reproduced by kind permission of the National Gallery, London.

Rose GARRARD (UK)

In her performance, sound, video, painting and sculpture, Rose Garrard has consistently addressed and recast historical projections of the feminine from the perspective of the Procrustean complexity of her own childhood and her adult experience as a woman. She has attempted to fracture the empire of male-structured divisions between subject and object and disclosed with a persistent energy and passionate commitment the face of power and identity. The psychological content of earlier work such as *Circle* 1970-71, became in *Incident in a Garden* 1977, extended to an inquiry into male authority and patriarchy. In the more recent works, such as the paintings *Models Triptych* 1982-83 (Tate Gallery) Rose Garrard reclaims and re-interprets images of women by women artists. She was represented at the Venice and Sydney Biennales in 1984 and 1985 respectively.

The mould and the model

'... they're dependent on each other, the mould and the model. When you cast-up and get a replica of what is live, it's more the *difference* between the two, the live and the static that interests me ...'

It's to do with the notion of duplicating, and derives in part from my experience of working with live models, taking casts from them, and in part from my fascination with the shell, with surface and mask. All the way through, my work has been about the hard lines that people draw round things. So when the soft model is wrapped by soft plaster and then the plaster becomes hard, it becomes a shell, a protection, a container and a restriction ...'

'Virtually everything I've done, since about 1974, has been concerned with *how* categories of various kinds have been arrived at — whether history, art or "femininity" and with how notions of "good" and "bad" have been arrived at, on a moral as well as a cultural level.'

Rose Garrard in conversation with Sue Arrowsmith, *Rose Garrard, Between Ourselves* 1984

'As Terry Eagleton has said, the problems now for a deconstructionist aesthetics is how are we to think totality and specificity together, steadfastly avoiding a self-indulgent sport of the fragment even as we undo tyrannical unities? Rose Garrard's work is concerned to meet this demand.'

John Roberts, *Rose Garrard, Between Ourselves* 1984

'For more than a decade, Rose Garrard has been involved in the artistic quest for authenticity. She has consistently explored the oscillating cycle of meeting and separation in the ideas of image and replica, in the subject and object, in reality and the myth, between the artist and the model, through self-possession and fragmentation, in silence and in speech ... She alerts us to future possibilities with rare intelligence and sympathy, as well as unique imaginative power.'

Marina Warner, *Redressing the Balance* 1987

Out of Line

Garrard's installation with four days live work 'Out of Line' explores the relationships between mind and body, inner and outer, male and female, during the process of physical healing. Since the artist's recent stay in the fractures ward of St Bartholomews Hospital following a road accident, Garrard has spent several months observing and recording in a variety of media the roles and behaviour of male and female patients and staff. From this work the threads will emerge to form this new installation and determine the artist's live activity within it.

Born in Bewdley, Worcestershire, England

1946

Lives in London

Awards, Residences

1969 'Multiples International' prizewinner

1970 French Government scholarship to the Ecole De Beaux Arts, Paris

1971 Prix D'Honneur, Paris, for sculpture

1979 Arts Council purchase award for performance, *Surveillance*

1981 Greater London Arts Association major award

1982 Artist-in-Schools Residency, Central Foundation Girls School, Bow, London

1983 Artist in Residence, Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery

Selected References

1984 John Roberts, 'Rose Garrard: old tales/new stories', *Rose Garrard, between ourselves*, exhibition catalogue, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham

1985 Sarah Kent & Jacqueline Morreau, *Women's Images of Men*, Writers and Readers

Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson

1987 Hilary Robertson, *Visibly Female*, Camden Press

Marina Warner, *Rose Garrard, Redressing the Balance*, catalogue essay, Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, Berlin 1987



Rose GARRARD *Out of Line*, 1988.

Photo credit: Rose Garrard

Vera FRENKEL (Canada)

Multidisciplinary artist and one of Canada's most seminal video producers, Vera Frenkel began making videotapes in 1974. *String Games: Improvisations for Inter-City Video* was made with ten collaborators and used Bell Canada Teleconferencing facilities between Montréal and Toronto, and \$100,000.00 of equipment borrowed from Sony Corporation. Since then Frenkel's sound and video installations and tapes have been widely programmed in Canada, the U.S.A., and Europe. Her most recent performance work, *Trust Me, It's Bliss! The Hugh Hefner/Richard Wagner Connection*, (1987) was designed specifically for the ballroom of the former Playboy Mansion in Chicago. Her writings have been published by magazines including *Fuse*, *Art Monthly*, *Vanguard* and *Impressions*. Vera Frenkel's work addresses the question of human memory, as it confounds fact and fiction. She has sometimes called her many-layered 'narratives', which trace the relation between truth and lies, *romances* — a word heavy with both historic and poetic association which she chooses to subvert. Her work examines the nature of meaning, the power of received ideas, language and the critical role of the artist and bears witness to contemporary conditions ranging from the pornography of mega-tourism to censorship.

'One ruling fiction that lives on, a stone, a keystone, inside us, is the concept *Empire* — a fiction we have made and re-invented and made real and acted on and as we see it erupting in one pop-culture fantasy after another, are still ruled by. The question regarding *Empire* . . . is whether the notion is embedded so deeply in all of us that what we remain susceptible to at root, and long for, is a certain kind of governing, whatever its face or language. *Empire* lives, until it ceases to live inside us as a secret vicarious hunger for unilateral power, for harmony at the cost of justice . . .'

Vera Frenkel, 'Ruling Fictions', *Vestiges of Empire*, Camden Arts Centre 1984

'The Truth:

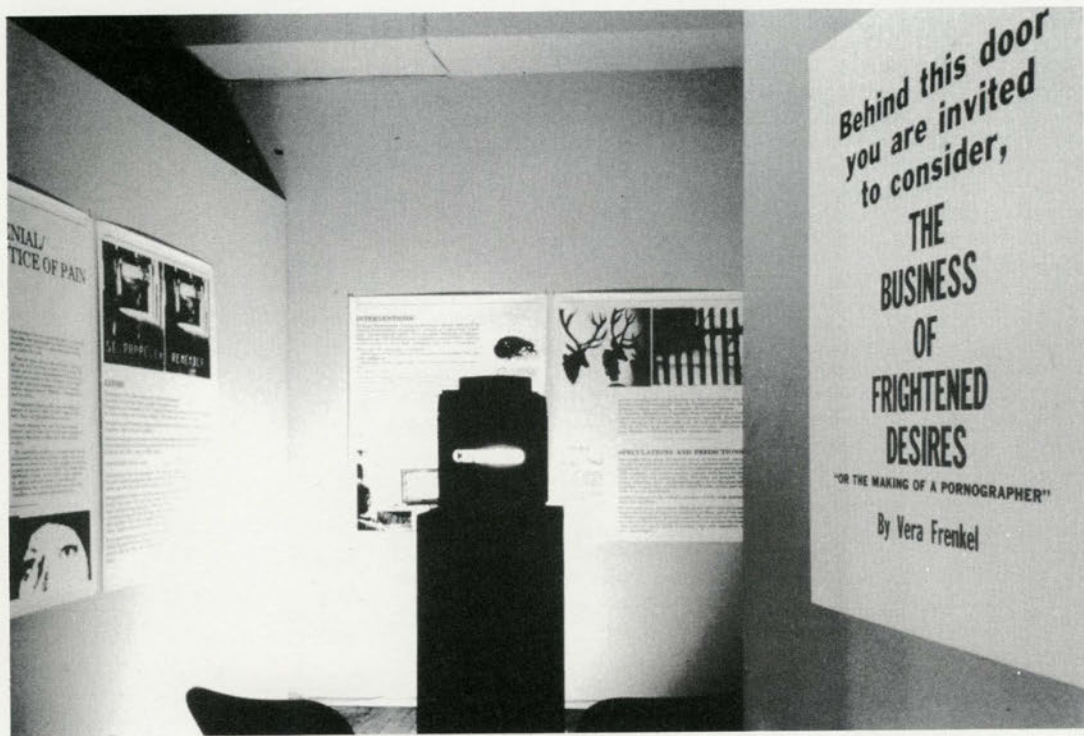
Have we not understood, my darlings, that the truth cannot be told? That it must shift quickly for its own survival? That, invisible as it is, it is one of many clever inventions? That the truth can be either useful or not, but never true? That the truth is shaped, cosseted, abridged, revised, negotiated, denied, remembered, mis-remembered, approximated, and attributed to one falsehood after another? That in our longing for truth, we embrace those falsehoods? And, that we prefer it so?'

Vera Frenkel 'And Now, the Truth' (*A Parenthesis*), videotape 1980

Born in Czechoslovakia
Lived in England as a child
1950 Moved to Canada
Lives in Toronto

Selected References

- 1978** Michael Gary Dault, *Vera Frenkel's Lies and Truths: A Gloss*, Vancouver
- 1979** John Noel Chandler, 'Vera Frenkel: A Room with a View', *Arts Canada XXXVI* No. 2 August/September
- 1984** Sheena Gourlay, 'Electronic Valentine, A Story about a Storyteller Telling a Story', *Fuse*, Fall
- Vera Frenkel, 'Ruling Fictions', statement, *Vestiges of Empire*, ten artists from Ontario, Canada, Camden Arts Centre, London.
- 1985** Lisa Steele, 'Committing Memory'; Bruce Grenville, 'Is it Happening?'; *Vera Frenkel: The Videotapes*, organised by Robert McFadden for the National Gallery of Canada



Vera FRENKEL *The Business of Frightened Desires* (or *The Making of a Pornographer*), 1985. First installed at A Space, Toronto in '*Issues of Censorship*'. The work commemorated the 1st anniversary of a raid on the gallery by members of the Ontario Board of Censors.

Photo credit: Helena Wilson

Mona HATOUM (UK)

Mona Hatoum's videos, performances and installations address oppression and repression — and the vulnerability and the strength of those who resist; not only in conditions of war, as in Lebanon, but also in the relatively 'ordered' West. She challenges the inertia and the paralysis of peoples in the West where an anaesthetized approach to violence is fed by media and government distortion, concealment and bias. Hatoum uses her body with economy and intensity, eliciting the viewers response to underscore contradictions and divisions in which the personal and the private are imbricated . . . "As 'Black' and 'Third World' people we find ourselves pushed out into the margins, ignored, debased, defined as peripheral and irrelevant. I want to create work that points out the myopia and prejudice contained in Western culture."

'Mona tells me that as a child in Lebanon, she would delight in spying on people through binoculars from the safety of her balcony. So, in the work, she has allowed herself . . . "to deal with the private and the personal in a private situation". This is linked with . . . "childhood fantasies of a scopophilic nature . . . I imagined that my pair of binoculars were "magic" and enabled me to see through layers of clothes, skin, flesh etc. It is the curiosity of a child waiting to see behind the surface and finding through fantasy, a way out of social restraints".'

Catherine Elwes, *Undercut*, London, March/April 1981

'It is as if in Hatoum's work, a certain literalness, compelled by experiences of war from childhood onwards, was arguing with an expansive and life-affirming sensibility'.

Guy Brett on *Hidden From Prying Eyes*, 'At the Edge', AIR Gallery, London, *Performance Magazine*, May/June 1987

Born Beirut, Lebanon 1952

Lives in London

1970-72 University College, Beirut

1975-79 Byam Shaw School of Art, London

1979-81 Slade School of Art, London

Awards

1982 Grant, Greater London Arts Association

1985 Video Bursary, Arts Council of Great Britain

Residencies

1984, 1988 Western Front Art Centre, Vancouver

1986 9,11 Contemporary Arts and Resource Centre, Seattle

1986-87 Chisenhale Dance Space, London

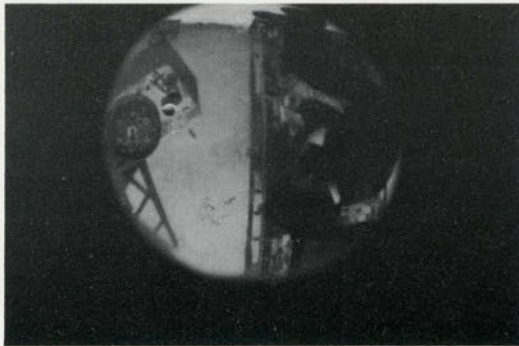
Selected References

1981 Catherine Elwes, 'Notes from a video performance by Mona Hatoum, Film Co-op 11 July 1980' *Undercut*, London, March/April

1983 Evelyn Erskine, review, *The Citizen*, Ottawa, 24 November

1985 Roger Lee, review, *Parallelogramme*, Toronto, April/May
P.D. Burwell, 'Hostile Realities', *High Performance*, issue 30, vol.8, no.2

1987 Guy Brett, review of 'At the Edge', AIR Gallery, *Performance Magazine* May/June



Matters of Gravity Commissioned for National Review of Live Art, Riverside Studios, London 1987
Photos: Taken at Kettles Yard, Cambridge, Ryan Rogers

Tina KEANE (UK)

Tina Keane began as a painter but soon became involved in sixties Arts-Lab expanded media, working with artists Stuart Brisley and Marc Chaimowitz. She became influential in performance and mixed media work and in the women's art movement. The distinction of Tina Keane's work is its double-edged incisiveness, its economic use of material, which unites the personal (female experience, especially of the female child, and its play) and the political (the social function of stereotypes and the relationship of male formalist art with repression and civil violence). A major work is *Demolition/Escape*, for which the soundtrack was first made for Audio Arts' *Life to Air* at the Tate Gallery, London in 1982.

'Like the image of the python in *Media Snake*, 1985, the swimmer has a body perfectly tuned and in control of its medium; sleek, sensuous and self-assured, it constantly escapes the confines of the frame that seeks to entrap it. The self-possessed body reappears momentarily as the woman "working out" amid the steam of hallucinatory images of *Faded Wallpaper*, 1987. Celebrating the achievement of an identity beyond the conventions assigned to it, it is a figure in stark contrast to the earlier clumsy and vulnerable body of *Demolition Escape*.'

Jean Fisher, 'Beyond the grey horizon', Catalogue, *Escalator*, Riverside Studios 1988

'But Tina Keane's attitude to video has always been to brush aside inertia and awe in favour of liberty and play . . . she has seen childhood on a different and intriguing philosophical light, as the collectivity of children, forming an unbroken chain with the past, as the inheritors of millenia of lore . . . Tina Keane has therefore rephrased some ancient, universal metaphors within the terms of modern media, to give critical edge to our perceptions.'

Guy Brett, 'Snakes Ladders', *Performance Magazine*, profile, number 42, 1985

The Diver

'The Diver, physically and mentally agile, playfully shifts our perception to question the pool, a surreal setting with images of Esther Williams' synchronised swimming routine intercut with the Clerkenwell Swimmers — challenging stereotypes of female beauty. The performance looks back to the forties, an age of innocence viewed with pleasure and nostalgia through the 'prison' of the New Morality. The footage of Esther Williams and Busby Berkeley will be to represent a different view of women from the one of the eighties, the type of eroticism offered by these films of the forties will be poignantly appropriate to the world today in which physical contact is once more an area for "fear" and "guilt".'

Tina Keane 1988

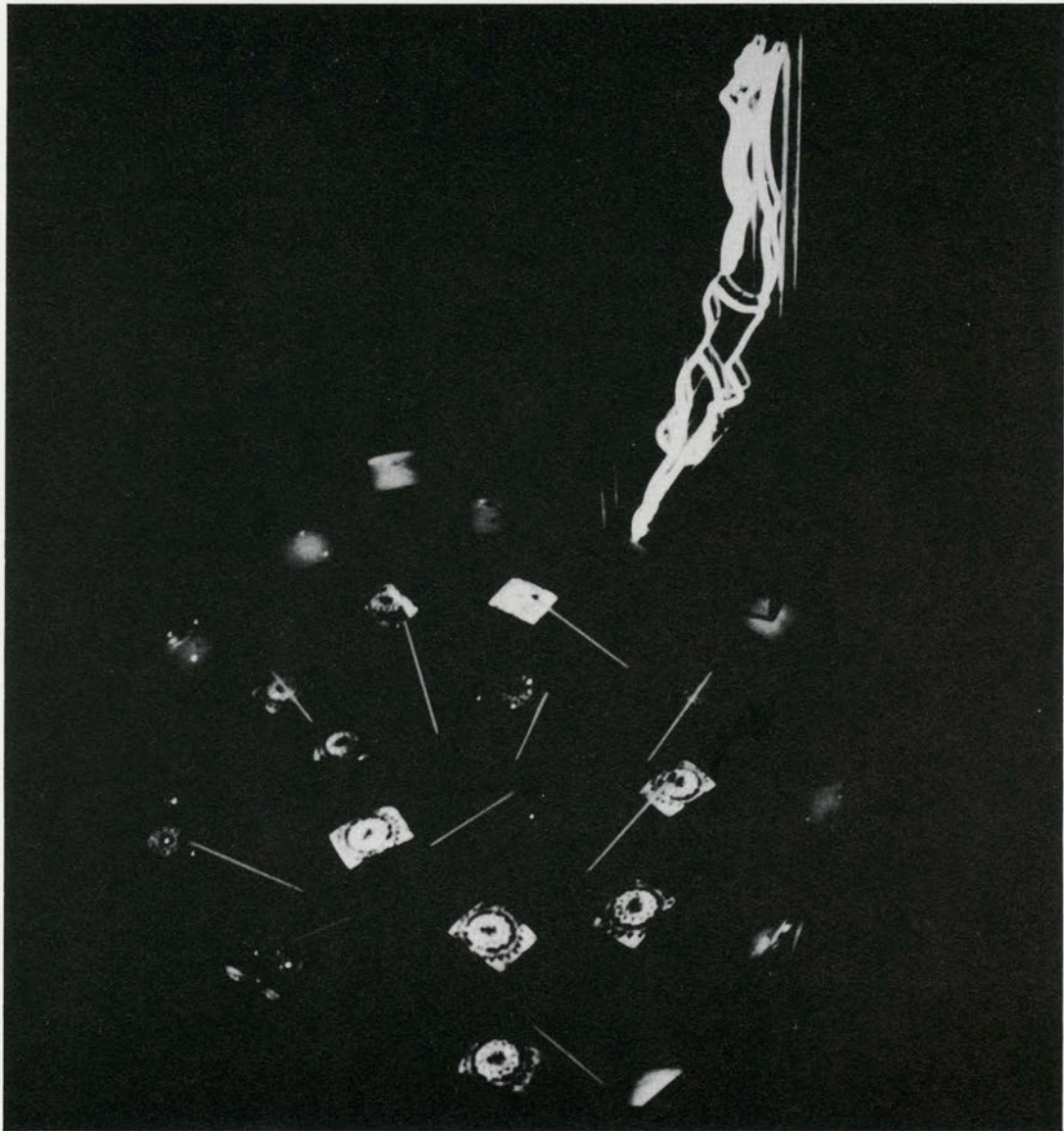
Lives in London

Awards, Residences

1987 Artist in Residence, Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Centre, Canada
Several Arts Council and British Council Awards

Selected References

- 1983 Jean Fisher, *Art Forum*, May
Sandy Nairne, *Second Link: Viewpoints on Video in the Eighties*, exhibition catalogue
- 1984 Michael O'Pray, *Art Monthly*, November
- 1986 Stuart Morgan, *Artscribe International*, February/March
- 1987 Rozsika Parker & Griselda Pollock, *Framing Feminism*
- 1988 Jean Fisher, *Escalator*, catalogue essay, Riverside Studios, London
Jeremy Welsh, 'Tina Keane's *The Diver*', review, *Art Monthly*, March
Michael O'Pray, 'Tina Keane', profile, *Performance Magazine*, number 53, April/May
Gary Varro, *Canadian Video Guide*, Satellite Video Exchange Society, Vancouver



Tina KEANE *The Diver* video/neon installation, **1987**. City Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, 1987.

Denis MASI (UK)

Denis Masi takes the sharp-edged theatricalism of Minimalism and uses it in his sculptures and installations, not to explore the limits of formal excellence, but to expose the ubiquity of legitimised civil repression and control. His work has stimulated some of the most serious and significant texts in recent British art criticism:

'This set of objects, this straightforward, uninflected specification of hardware is placed on the wall next to Denis Masi's assemblage, *Prompt* 1977-87. In its relationships are not specified, modifying adjectives are avoided, there are not nuances. It is a chilling list. As chilling as the artwork . . . Behind this precision is the American born Masi who spent three years in a military academy, but left the States because he didn't like the national concept of *continuous improvement*. Behind this disturbing elegance and high resolution is the Masi of Italian extraction who studied in Milan, who responds to materials, finishes and craftsmanship but questions the tyranny of order . . . That *certain level of terror* within the efficient exercise of power is where Masi operates . . .'

Deanna Petherbridge, 'A Certain Level of Terror', *Constructions +* 1987

' . . . what sustains in Masi's work is the onus it places on the spectator to move continually amongst a range of judgmental "positions". His work addresses power as it is structured within society, and provides a consistently negative critique. What Masi rejects is that power is always the power to *do* some particular thing. It is its fixity which proves problematic. There is no flexibility, no "not-knowing" about a situation. Increasingly, also, the idea of knowing something is itself becoming reduced to a question of whether or not one possesses some piece of factual information, this scenario has been extensively dealt with by Adorno in his analyses of the *fully administered society*, and it was from Adorno that Masi took the epilogue for his last catalogue in 1981:

In principle everyone, however powerful, is an object.

Objectification and alienation are the ever-present adjuncts to the existence of institutional power.'

Michael Archer, 'Monuments to Collapse', *Construction +*, 1987

Born Follansbee, West Virginia, USA 1942
Lives in London

1960-64 Seton Hall University, New Jersey, USA

1964-66 Brera Academy of Fine Arts, Milan

1967-68 Slade School of Fine Art, London

Awards, Residences

1984 The first Artist in Residence, Imperial War Museum, London

Selected References

1979 Sarah Kent, 'Absence as Presence', *Encounter/counter: Four constructions*

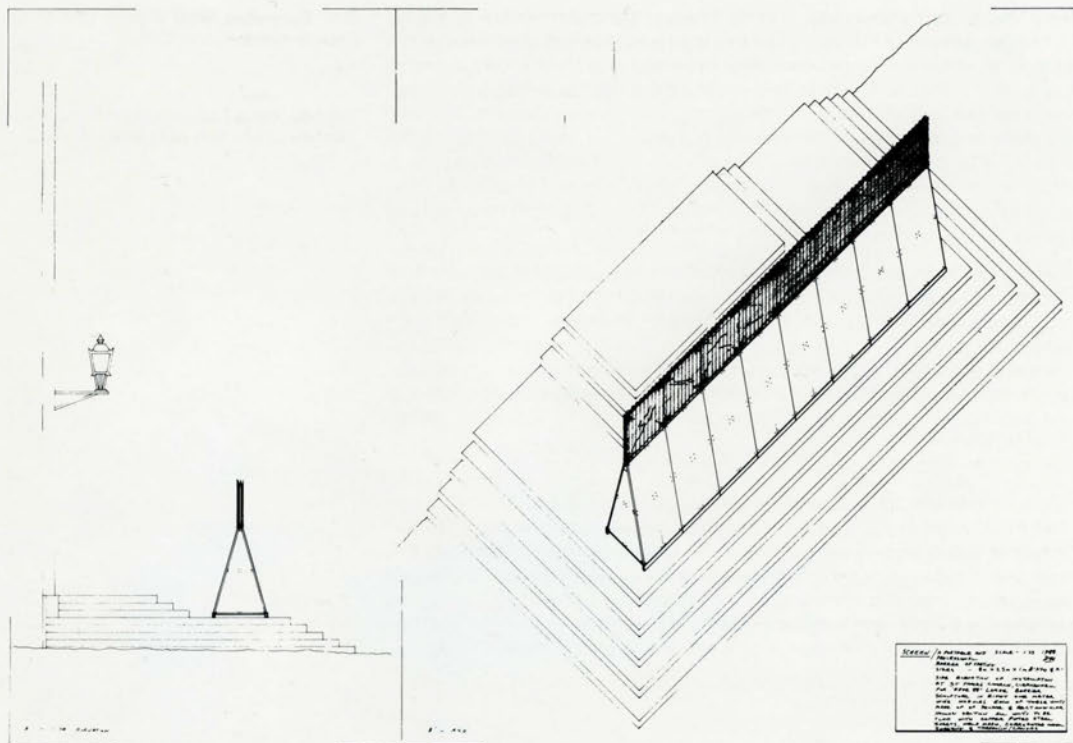
1975-79 Denis Masi ICA, London

1981 Stuart Morgan, 'Denis Masi: Theatre as Metaphor', *1 Construction + drawings, etchings and photographs*, Spacex Gallery, Exeter and Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool

1984 John Roberts, 'Denis Masi: Under Darkness', *Geometry of Rage*, Arnolfini, Bristol

1987 Michael Archer, 'Monuments to Collapse'; Deanna Petherbridge, 'A Certain Level of Terror', *Constructions+*, Third Eye Centre, Glasgow

1988 Margaret Garlake, review, *Art Monthly*, April
Gray Watson, review, *Artscribe International*, summer issue



Denis MASI Screen, 1988. Side elevation of installation St James's Church, Clerkenwell Edge 88, September 1988.

Alistair MACLENNAN (UK)

Alistair MacLennan, senior course tutor MA Fine Art programme, Ulster Polytechnic, is a founder member of Art and Research Exchange based in Belfast. MacLennan began as an academic painter and started performance in 1970 while teaching at Nova Scotia College of Art; since then his 'durational' performances and installations, often days long, sited at venues throughout North America, Britain and Europe, have made him one of the most influential and respected artists working 'on the periphery' of the cultural system. He is unusual in that he gives maximum attention to both his art and his teaching. Also, while Anglo-Irish relations are central to his work, it is embedded in a broad whole-world perception that crosses cultural viewpoints from both East and West.

'I would like to show aspects of living which are raw and problematic, but also convey means to overcome escapist attitudes and negative forces we allow to infiltrate our lives. We must face up to self-made contradictions, not run from them . . .

As well as ecology of natural environment there is ecology of mind and spirit. Each is a layer of the other. Interfused three in 'one'. The challenge for tomorrow is to live this out. Already we're late. Time we have is not so vital as time we 'make'. Time is now.'

Interview with Nicholas Stewart, *Circa*, number 4, 1983

'Coming to Belfast could be seen as choosing a "marginalised" context to live. Many see Belfast as the edge of Europe. There are edges and "edges". The post industrial age is one of decentralisation . . . New wave communications and information media now contribute to the disintegrating stranglehold of centres built by, and for redundant technologies and attitudes. "Centres" are becoming peripheries, peripheries "centres" . . .'

Interview with Declan MacGonagle, *Performance Magazine*, number 47, 1987

Today the periphery is the cutting edge of culture

Bled Edge

A seven-day 24 hour non-stop performance/installation, based on issues of political, social, cultural alienation and interpretation.

When disaster strikes, do we wash the blood,
heal the victims, or polish the floor?
To heal we make WHOLE.

One tires of upstart assertion 'double parking' as truth.

What lies beyond the world of artifice,
(yet manifests through it)?
Communicate from there.

Born in Scotland **1943**
Lives in Belfast (since 1975)

Selected References

- 1983** Nicholas Stewart, interview, *Circa*, number 4
1984 Paul McCarthy, 'To Heal is to make Whole', *High Performance*, issue 25
1985 Peter Hill, interview, *Aspects*, number 30
Robert Ayers, 'Live Work at the British Art Show', *Performance Magazine*, number 37
1987 Declan MacGonagle, 'I see Danger', *Performance Magazine*, number 47
Audio Arts, conversation with William Furlong
1988 Malcolm Dickson and Billy Clark, interview, *Variant*, number 4



Alistair MacLENNAN Actuation Castle Museum, Nottingham 1987.

Photo: Negative from Positive, Oded Shimson

Nigel ROLFE (Ireland)

Nigel Rolfe is concerned with structures: breaking old ones and creating new — which is in part why he moved to Ireland in 1975: 'I think in England, because everything is firmly in place, to leap-frog is difficult'. Ireland, a society moving almost straight from a rural economy to a post-industrial world, is in a state of flux, on an edge, which suits Rolfe's strategy of turning worn out and elitist English art practices on their head. He was visiting Professor at Yale University School of Art from 1983-85 and has been visiting Lecturer at the Royal College of Art, London since 1986.

'The first thing it did for me, moving to Ireland, is that it set up a structure in the work where I would by default become a nomad. Probably had I stayed in England I wouldn't have done that. What I have done in the last few years is try to take on board America as well, besides England and Europe, as a place to work. So it starts to be a nomadic view of issues. I liked Ireland because a lot of the issues in life are near the surface . . . there is a rout in the air always, which you just don't find with the English, the English in comparison are really tight-assed. I don't like a myopic view, but I was in ROSC in 1980 and the sense of that cultural elite, it's very myopic, if you get into what you consider real life to be and you leave the art life behind you. I was on the Late Late Show and did a performance live in the studio . . . I made the decision to make things extremely well, not to undermine the television principle, but to use it. Otherwise you naff around for years with your 1/2 inch video camera and your portapack doing bad edits, making unreadable images.'

Nigel Rolfe, *Sculptures in Motion, Island Stories*, ICA, London 1986

'Rolfe portrayed himself as a contemporary messenger of the gods. He was wearing a pair of owl's wings on his head — the shaman as anti-hero, a post-modern Mercury.'

John Hutchinson, *Sculptures in Motion, Island Stories*, 1986

(Nigel Rolfe's music for *Island Stories* was released by Reekus Records 1986)

SHOOTING — SHITTING

SHOOTING — SHITTING

SHOOTING — SHITTING

A BIG YELLOW DIGGER

AND

A SMALL BLUE VAN

To make a work about a particular moment in History. The ambush and killing of eight IRA members by the SAS and the RUC's special support unit on 8th May, 1987 in Loughgall, Co Armagh, Northern Ireland.

To stand and fall, to try to sit.

The first witness interviewed after the incident said,

'Shooting' in such a broad brogue and in such excitement, it sounded like 'shitting'.

An excerpt from 'MORAL TALES — UNTOLD STORIES' in the chapter 'NORTH'. A

chronology of events in the world in which we live, to be presented in full in 1988/89.

NIGEL ROLFE, DUBLIN, IRELAND, 1987

Born Isle of Wight, England 1950
Lives in Dublin

Awards, Residencies

1976 Irish Arts Council Award

1982 Slade Sculpture Bursary

1984 Irish Arts Council Touring Exhibition Grant and Travel Grant

1983-87 Department of Foreign Affairs Travel Award

1985-86 Artist in Residence Bath College

Selected References

1984 Linda Burnham, 'Nigel Rolfe — An Englishman Searches Ireland's Landscape, Inventing an Archaeology', *High Performance*, issue 25
John Hutchinson, review, *Dublin Magazine*, 23 August

1985 Lucy R. Lippard, *Divisions, Crossroads, Turns of Mind; Some New Irish Art*.

1986 Andrew Graham-Dixon, 'The Art of the Newcastle Rope Trick', *Sunday Times* 2 March
Island Stories, Nigel Rolfe in conversation with William Furlong, John Hutchinson and Declan McGonagle, *Sculptures in Motion*, retrospective catalogue published by the artist in conjunction with the ICA, London 1986



The Wings of Fear, 1985
Photo: Bob Hamilton

Ulrike ROSENBACH (W. Germany)

Up to 1982 Ulrike Rosenbach's work — video, photography, performance and installation — explored her relationship to the roles and myths of women in history. Her more recent work focuses on the relation of humankind with Nature and on the construction and preservation of that relationship. She is currently working with the project of The World Academy of Creative Sciences, Arts and Consciousness, based in Poona, India. These new concerns are reflected in the recent video installation *Ama-Zonas* 1986-87.

While Ulrike Rosenbach's content is complex, her means, as Lucy Lippard points out, are relatively simple; the works have a 'central focus, a single intellectual point'. Major performances and installations include *Don't believe I am an Amazon* 1975, Biennale des jeunes, Paris; *Herakles-Hercules-King Kong* 1977, Documenta 6, Kassel and *Or-Phelia* 1987, Documenta 8, Kassel.

'Ulrike Rosenbach's conceptual pieces, performance and videotapes appear at first to be detached from her own face and body — the consistent vehicle for her attempts to communicate the reality of "female substance and power". On perusal, however, they are revealed as intense, if rapid, explorations of women through history. She has avoided obvious rhetoric and autobiography in favour of a more mythically (and mythical) feminist viewpoint . . .

Woman is seen repeatedly in Rosenbach's work as both the magic centre of energy and, conversely, as the prisoner in a cage of her own image . . . Rosenbach sees ritual and magic as the medium by which woman transformed nature into culture, and . . . she turns to ritual as new and ancient means of communication, appropriate to her consistent motif of superimposing past and present.'

Lucy Lippard, 'The Past as Target of the Future', *Ulrike Rosenbach* . . . 1983

Or-phelia (installation), In the House of Women (performance)

Born in Bad Saizdetfurth, West Germany

1943

Lives in Cologne

1964-69 Studied sculpture with Joseph Beuys at the Dusseldorf Academy of Art

Awards, Residencies

1970 The Prize of North-Rhine Westphalia

1982 The Promotional Prize for Art from the City of Cologne

1983 The Promotional Prize for Art from the City of Hamburg
Scholarships from the 'Kunstfonds' and the 'Glockengasse', Cologne

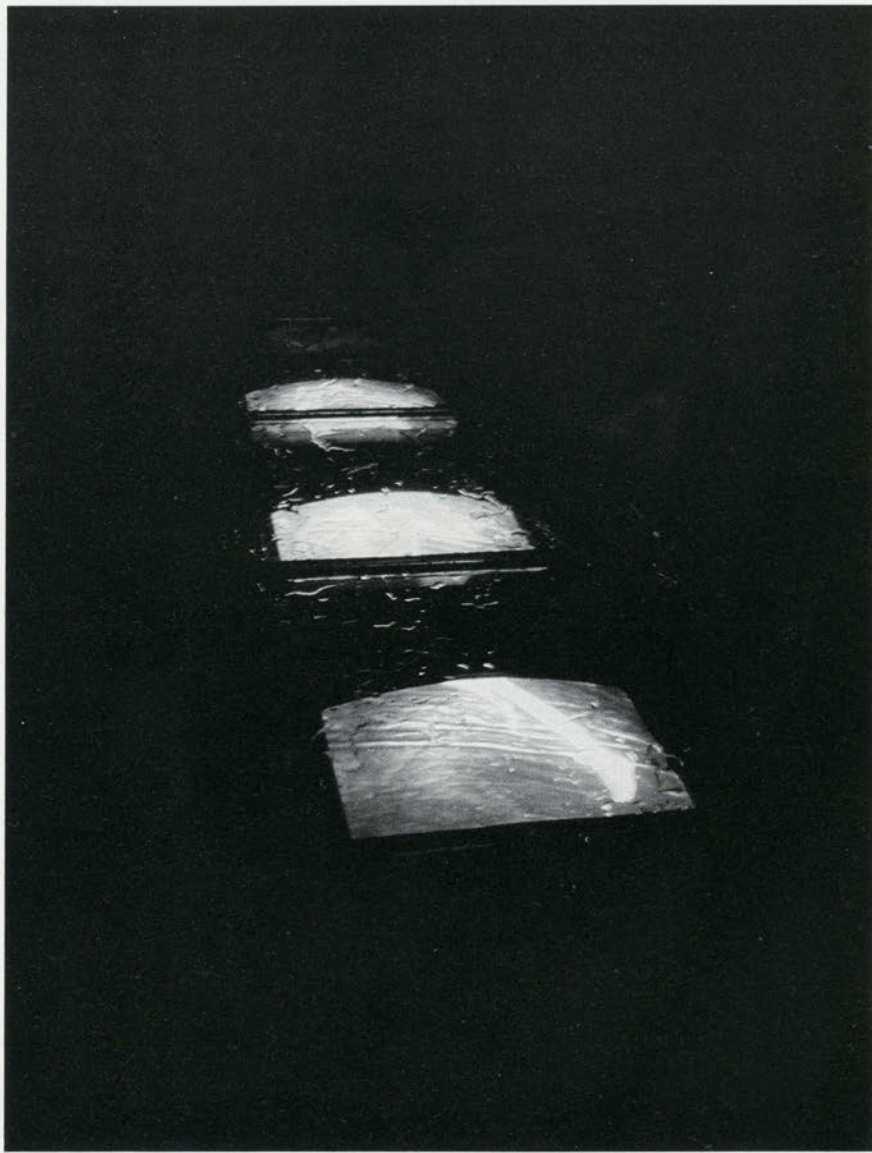
Selected References

1982 Ulrike Rosenbach ed, *Ulrike Rosenbach, Videokunst, Foto, Aktion Performance, Feministische Kunst*, Walter König, Köln

1983 Wulf Herzogenrath, *Video Kunst in Deutschland*, Hatje Verlage, Stuttgart
The Video History Show, Museum of Modern Art, New York
Ulrike Rosenbach, Video and Performance Art, essay 'The Past as Target of the Future', by Lucy Lippard, ICA, Boston

1985 *Kunst in der Bundesrepublik von 1945-1985*, National Galerie, Berlin
Gisela Ecker, *Feminist Aesthetics*, The Women's Press, London
Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn, ed. Silvia Eibl-mayr, Valie Export, Monika Prischli-Maier, Museum moderner Kunst/ Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts, Wien, Schweizergarten, Locker Verlag, Wien
Karin Thomas, *Zweimal Deutsche Kunst nach 1945*, Du Mont

1986 *Hommage an Joseph Beuys*, Lehn-bachhaus, München
Dr W. Becker, *Spuren des Heiligen in der Kunst 2*, Neue Galerie-Sammlung Ludwig, Aachen



Ulrike ROSENBACH *Or-phelia* Video installation Documenta 8, Kassel, West Germany, 1987

Carles SANTOS

Carles Santos and company — dancers, singers and musicians — present tragic — comic spectacles, layered with Spanish imagery, where male and female stereotypes are sharply and poignantly drawn to the accompaniment of absurdly climactic sounds. The bathos of the machismo Mediterranean male is juxtaposed to the indefinable, but powerful identity of the woman in the Grand Finale of *A small Spanish Opera* where civic pomp and male pomposity is comically savaged to the strains of a crazed Bolero-like dirge, conducted by Santos himself wreathed in oranges and adorned with the horns of a bull.

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 the piece, however, was how very competently voice and visual choreography were successfully blended . . . One may accuse him of being an Entertainer, but it is difficult to nail him for insincerity, or a lack of passion . . .

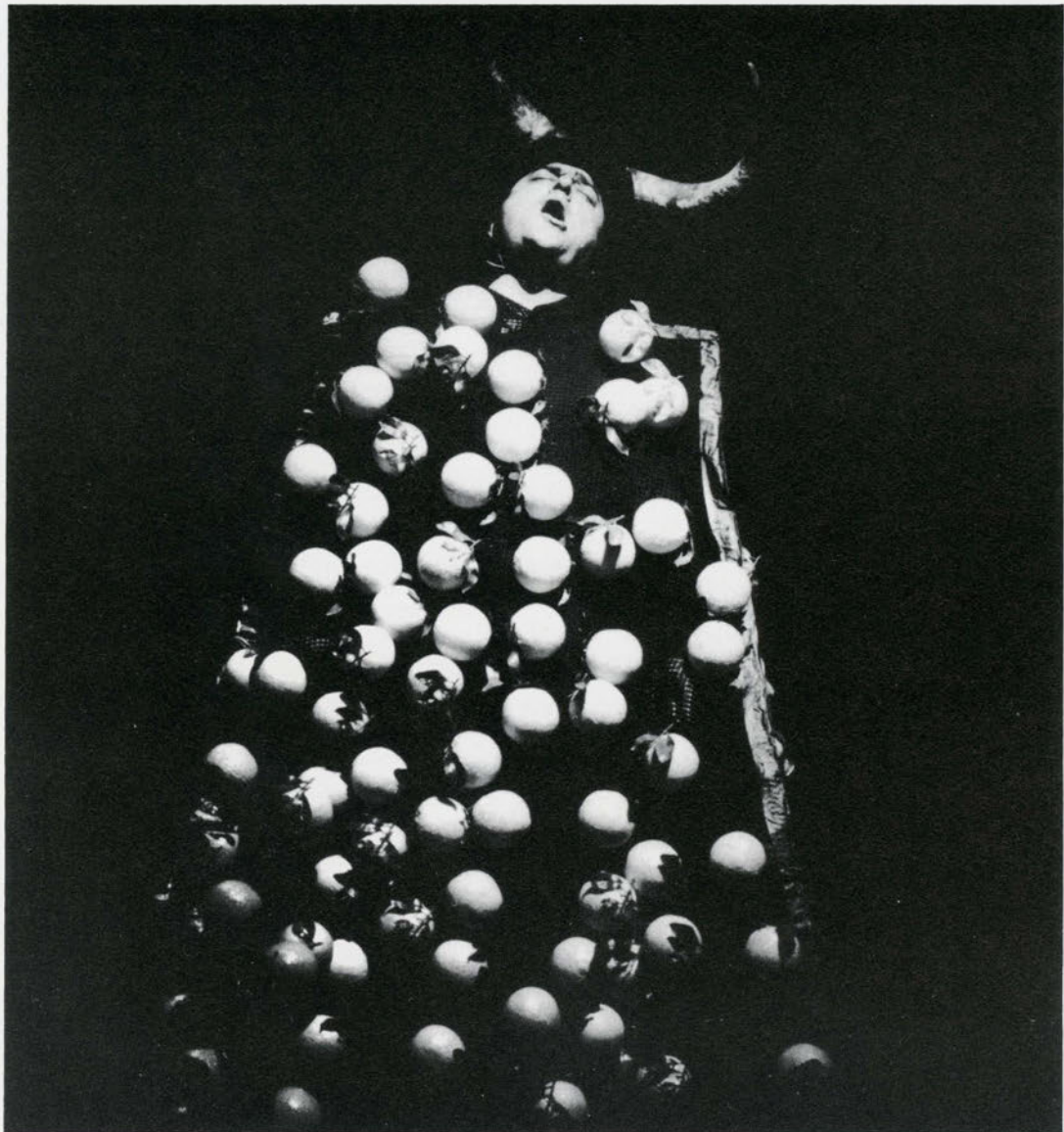
Ken Gill, review of *A Small Spanish Opera*, The Academie der Kunst, West Berlin, 12 February 1988, *Performance Magazine*, number 53, 1988.

A Small Spanish Opera

Born in Vinales, Catalan fishing village, in
1940
Lives in Barcelona

Selected References

1988 Ken Gill, review *Performance Magazine*, number 53, April/May.



Carlos SANTOS *A Small Spanish Opera* The Academie de Kunst,
West Berlin, February 1988.

Carolee SCHNEEMANN (USA)

Carolee Schneemann's *Meat Joy* performed at the Festival de la Libre Expression, Paris, the Dennison Hall, London and Judson Church, New York, in 1964, made her one of the most controversial and influential artists of the sixties. Schneemann described the work as a 'flesh celebration', relating to 'Artaud, McClure and French butchers' shops'. Blood instead of paint covered naked bodies — a rejoinder to Yves Klein's use of painted women as 'Living Brushes' in the *Anthropometries of the Blue Age*. Schneemann's nakedness in her live performances was an attempt to prove that 'the life of the body is more variously expressive than a sex-negative society can admit . . . In some sense I made a gift of my body to other women: giving our bodies back to ourselves'. A painter as well as a mixed media artist, Carolee Schneemann began in the seventies to make more films, such as *Kitch's Last Meal* 1973 and videos. A mixed media performance, *Up to and Including Her Limits*, has been seen widely, including London — at the Arts Meeting Place and London Filmmaker's Co-operative in 1974. Recent performances include *Fresh Blood — a Dream Morphology* 1985-1986, performed in the USA and in Canada.

Cat scan

graves cave in TV explodes cat corpse laid in flower strewn dirt red wrapping unravels dancers torso fish float red strings floor covered in yards serpentine fabric TV explodes Egyptian Lion Goddess fades in

'My recent work involves structures which incorporate personal materials with methods of non-intentionality. The performance *CAT SCAN* layers dream imagery in metaphoric, psychic and analogous connection to lived events and to research in ancient history which has been indicated by dreams. Dreamt actions evolve as drawings; with these and visual research sources, performers build a vocabulary of movement, gesture and objects. In *CAT SCAN* interconnections of movement, visual projection (slide, film), ordinary objects (tables, chairs, ladders, ropes), live and pre-taped sound are sequentially ordered even while their interaction and duration remain unpredictable. The performance develops concentration and shifting intentionality — parallel to that of a dreamer's intercutting of content; and the performers find themselves becoming conduits for embedded unconscious physicality and associative information.

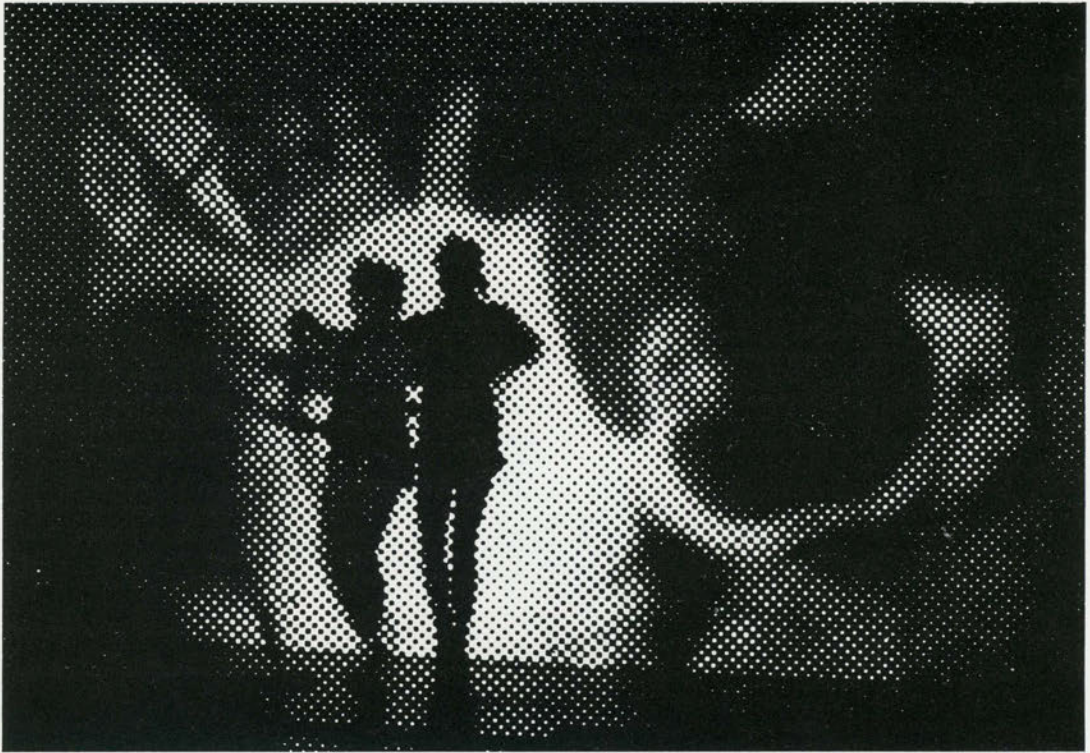
Sustained themes in my body of work posit intimacy and physicality, shifts of the erotic to the obscene, of dream to enactment, of the visible to the invisible.'

Carolee Schneemann 1988

Born Fox Chase, Pennsylvania, USA
Lives in New Paltz, New York

Selected References

- 1979 Carolee Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy, Complete Performance Works & Selected Writings*, McPherson/Documentext, New York
- 1981 Peter Selz, *Art in Our Time*, Abrams/Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, New York
- 1982 Moira Roth, *The Amazing Decade: Women & Performance 1970-1980*, Astro Arts, Los Angeles
- 1983 Carolee Schneemann, *Early and Recent Work*, essays by J. Ballerini and Ted Castle, McPherson/Documentext
- 1984 Lucy Lippard, *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory*, Pantheon Books, New York
- 1985 Thomas McEvelley, 'Carolee Schneemann', *Art Forum*, April
- 1986 Edith Almhofer, *Der Körper als Medium kreativer Manifestation Carolee Schneemann, Performance Art Die Kunst Zu Leben*, Kulturstudien Bei Bohlau, Vienna, Cologne, Graz
- 1988 Elinor Gadon, *The Once and Future Goddess*, Harper & Row, New York
Scott MacDonald, 'Interviews with Filmmakers', *Critical Film*, Berkeley, University of California
Henry Sayre, *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde Since 1970*, University of Chicago Press



Carolee SCHNEEMANN *Cat Scan* 1988

Roberto Lucca TARONI (Italy)

Roberto Taroni's performances in collaboration with Luisa Cividin in the seventies and early eighties integrated film, television, sound and theatre where the 'set' became the site for live sculpture. Materials and objects changed function — a table became a screen for the projection of implausible events whose unpredictable ruptures destabilised the viewer. Taroni and Cividin won the First Prize for their work *Interferences* at the Festival du Cineaste, Milan 1982. *Splatter*, a 'Film Opera' in fourteen acts 1985 'starred' Luisa Cividin, Maurizio Marsico and Taroni. These multi-media events make semiotic transgressions (Jacques Derrida and Roland Barthes are an influence); elements — material, things — are merely presented, they do not re-present, or signify.

'Sculpture has always been too visible, too exposed, recklessly prone to vie with the human nature of bodies . . . Let Taroni exceed the limit in gracefully hammering the excessiveness of this art, in a sort of vulcanism, that is his strength . . . Usually a sculpture makes its creator a bit more silent, a little less literary, than a painter . . . he has to reckon with energies, loads, balances. The excessiveness, which in Taroni gives the effect of brutalism, in reality produces such pensive adjustments and balances as to surpass in fineness.'

Tommaso Trini, *Roberto Lucca Taroni*, Galleria Mazzocchi 1988, translated by Rodney Stringer

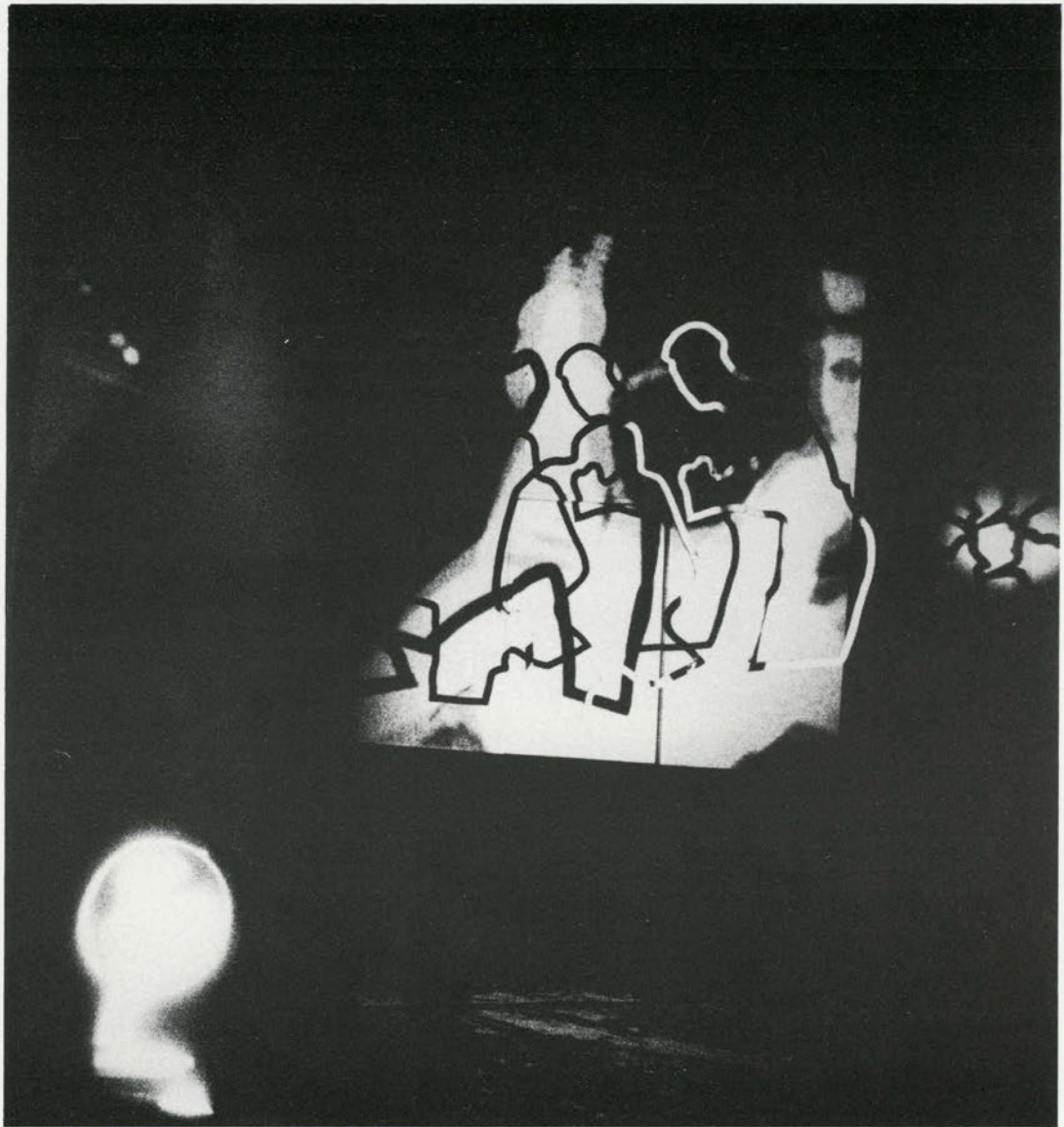
In *EDGE 88* Taroni works in collaboration with Silvia Fiorentino.

Portrait de l'artiste en Saltimbanque

Lives in Milan

Selected References

- 1980 Tim Maul, 'Performance', *Flash Art International*, number 94-95
- 1981 Rossella Bonfiglioli, 'Luisa Cividin-Roberto Taroni: Indizi', *Studio 67*, number 3-4, Bologna
Luisa Cividin-Roberto Taroni/La Gaia Scienza, Italienisches Kulturinstitut, Cologne
- 1982 Achille Bonito Oliva, curated by, *Critica ad arte*, Politi Editore, Milan
- 1983 'Performance, zwischen Tanz und Theater,' *Kunstforum*, number 58
- 1984 *Cinq Ans d'Art Performance a Lyon 1979-1983*, Edition ELAC, Lyon
- 1987 Gianpiero Vincenzo, *Roberto Lucca Taroni*, Galleria Decalage, Milan
Peter Friese, *Roberto Lucca Taroni*, Kunstraum, Wuppertal
- 1988 Tommaso Trini, *Roberto Lucca Taroni*, Galleria Mazzocchi, Parma



Roberto Lucca Taroni *Splatter*, 1985

Adrienne GAHA Derek KRECKLER Sarah MILLER (Australia)

Told By An Idiot

Adrienne Gaha, Derek Kreckler and Sarah Miller work together as Told by an Idiot. Leading Australian performance artists, they were represented in the Sydney Biennale in 1986 and in the Alternative Biennale in 1984.

'In Kreckler's work, the ingredients are simple and straightforward: voice and movement are used to full effect without any superfluous gestures . . . *Evensong* and *Sweet Nothing* were two brief but punchy pieces executed by Adrienne Gaha and Sarah Miller . . . The words referred openly again through various techniques of repetition, quotation, rhythm, to a series of statements/parodies around the dominance of women, and women's roles defined by men. The meaning was never a closed meaning; it allowed for a dissemination . . . Kreckler maintains that he concentrates on the "art of performance".'

Robert Thirwell, *Artlink*, June 1984.

'We perform. Our means are basic. We use simple props, borrowed equipment. In our culture, the performance "space" is a form of poverty. Our work is brief and tightly co-ordinated, utilizing voice, image and gesture. Meaning is not produced as finite or literal. We do not aim for illustration. Our work is most often concerned with the collision between the individual and the dominant power structures; with mythology, as perpetuated through our institutions and social mores.

Our performances are choreographed, scripted and rehearsed; the style is sharp and minimal. Some words run forward and some backward; some too fast or too close together to be heard. We use a slide projector and transparencies, as our main source of lighting.

Themes in the past have dealt with the nature of fear, nationalism, patriarchy, eroticism and feminism. The source material is wide ranging — advertising, journalism, television, Hollywood and "High Art", literature, drama and the visual. The performance, while scripted, changes in response to the challenges of new venues and different contexts.'

Told By An Idiot

Art is not neutral. It is a social construct

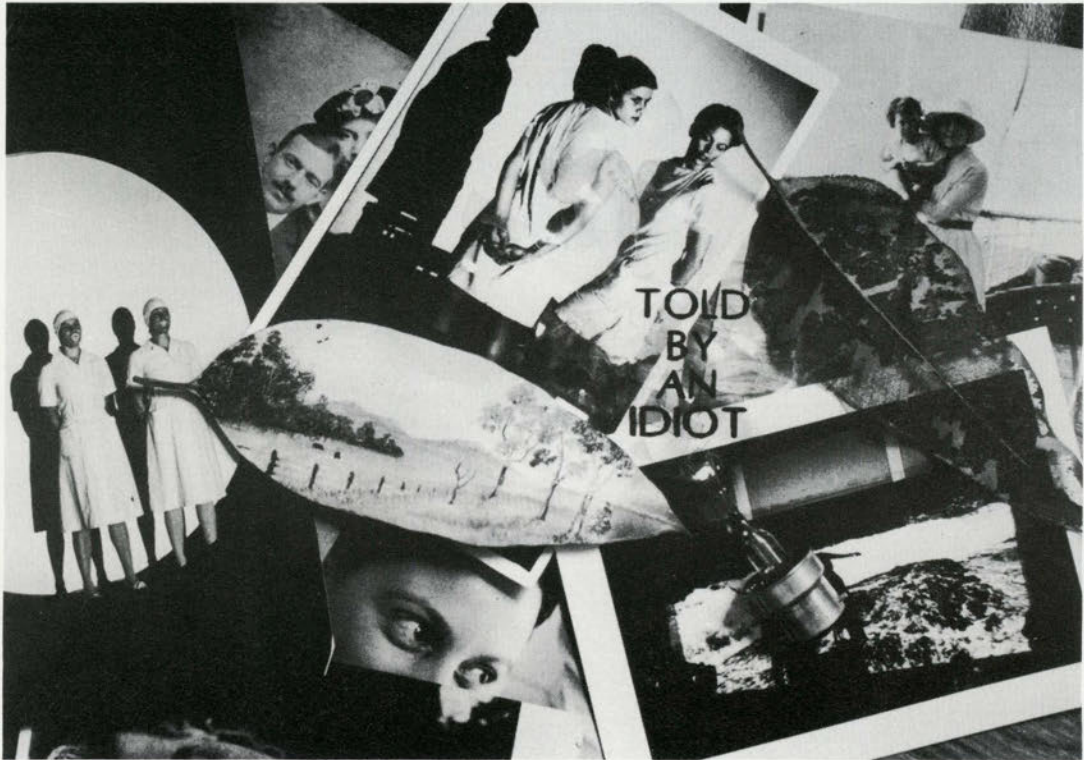
Adrienne Gaha
Born in Sydney in 1960
Lives in Sydney

Derek Kreckler
Born in Sydney in 1952
Lives in Sydney

Sarah Miller
Born in Sydney in 1953
Lives in Sydney

Selected References

1984 Robert Thirwell, review, The Adelaide Festival of the Arts, *Artlink*, June



Adrienne GAHA and Sarah MILLER *Told By An Idiot*

Marcelle van BEMMEL (Netherlands)

Marcelle van Bommel makes astounding illusions of light where objects metamorphose and move of their own volition, creating allegories of 'seeing' and 'reading'. Her performances are short, intense impressions at the edge of truth and delusion. Some of her works — performances, videos and installations — which take many months of preparation, are re-presentations of natural creatures and objects like rocks:

'They are the KEYS to the invisible world. Sometimes they have a symbolic meaning, but most of the time I just prefer to do something unexpected with them. With the exception of *Roving Rocks* all my performances are in the dark. With the help of little lights I isolate the objects from the surrounding darkness and leave the rest to the interpretation/imagination of the public.'

Marcelle van Bommel

'Her work took place in darkness, in which everything had its own light, like the dark of the primordial floor or ocean bed. She created a magical atmosphere of the "origin of things", not only as it is presented to us by, say, natural history, but also as it is re-examined and re-created in story, myth and by play. But her piece was also an allegory of "seeing" . . . Seeing is explored borrowing images from two very different creations: *Alice in Wonderland*, with its quirky paradoxes of logic and appearances, and the Perseus myth in which seeing is connected with elemental forces, struggle, life and death.'

Guy Brett, 'Experiment or Institutionalisation', *Performance Magazine*, number 47, 1987

Peeneewally

'Peeneewally is the Jamaican name of a certain kind of firefly. For the male, love-life can be hazardous: if he hurries to the signals of a female of the wrong species, he might get eaten'.

Marcelle van Bommel

Born in Bogor, Indonesia (former Dutch Colony)
Lives in Rotterdam

Selected References

- 1985 Moe Meyer, 'Breaking down the borders', *High Performance*, issue 28, volume 7, number 4
- 1986 *Marcelle van Bommel*, monograph CBK
- 1987 Tara Babel, 'Performance Festival in Portugal', *Performance Magazine*, number 38
Steve Rogers and Rob La Frenais, 'Perf 4D', *Performance Magazine*, number 44/45
Guy Brett, 'Experiment or Institutionalisation' "At the Edge", AIR Gallery, London, *Performance Magazine*, number 47, May/June



Marcelle van BEMMEL Scene from Peeneewally, 1988

Zbigniew WARPECHOWSKI (Poland)

A poet, painter, lecturer and performance artist, Warpechowski has made, since 1967, over 150 performances in Europe: in France, Holland, Belgium, Italy, West Germany, West Berlin and Poland. In 1979 he toured Britain with other Polish artists. For Warpechowski, performance is not a synthesis of the arts but a different language — closer to philosophy. Like Berés, he appropriates Christian imagery, still a vital fact in Poland today. His performance at the Lyon Symposium 1983, *The Ten Commandments*, in a sense a manifesto of his position, he describes as

'an anti-intellectual dialogue with Professor Stefan Morawski focusing on four ideas: philosophy, history, personalism and socialism.

This dialogue *The Ten Commandments* was created at Lyon specifically for this performance by Professor Morawski. Conclusion and 11th Commandment: forget or change the ten other Commandments and be physically and spiritually as close as possible to the middle, at the centre, tend towards "The Unique".'

'He uses elements that verge on the grotesque, often starting from analogies between sport and religion, using the imagery of the cross and of Golgotha, the place of skulls. His performances involve ironic commentaries on the culture of the long distance cycle race, the epiphany of the footballer. He has been profoundly influenced by the Russian Suprematist, Malevich' . . .

Angela Carter, 'Performance from Poland', *Performance Magazine*, number 3, 1979

Performance cannot be defined, but it can be codified. I know this code for me. My code of performance is only for me. Your code can be similar, but it must be different

Zbigniew Warpechowski 1988

Born in Ploski (now part of the USSR) 1938
Lives in Łódź and Sandomierz, Poland

Selected References

- 1972 Paul Overy, 'The sense of urgency in Polish art', *The Times*, 24 August
Marina Vaisey, 'From Poland with love', *The Financial Times*, 2 September
- 1979 Roland Miller, 'Anglo-Polish Art and Performance', *Artefact*, October
Angela Carter, 'Performance from Poland', *Performance Magazine*, number 3
Ros Price, 'Art in Struggle', *Lambeth Arts*, issue 3
- 1982 Jaroslav Sverakova, 'The Polish Link', *Circa*, Belfast, January/February
- 1984 *Cinq Ans D'Art-Performance 1979-1983*, curated by Orlan and Hubert Besacier, ELAC, Lyon
- 1986 Guy Schraenan, 'De l'honneur d'être Artiste', *Force Mentale*, number 13



Zbigniew WARPECHOWSKI performance Documenta 8, Kassel 1987.

Paul WONG (Canada)

Paul Wong is one of the most significant mixed media artists working in Canada; he has shown in International Festivals and exhibitions world wide, including the *Worldwide Video Festival*, Kijkhuis, Holland in 1982 and *The History of Video Art*, MOMA, New York in 1983. He was included in *Visual Facts*, Third Eye Centre, Glasgow and the Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield in 1985. Wong is also active as a curator and editor of video, film and performance events and publications and teaches at colleges and universities throughout Canada. He is a founding member of the Video Inn in Vancouver, the Vancouver Artists League, On Edge Productions and Mainstreet Inc. His work is distributed by Video Out, Vancouver. Paul Wong's central concern is the power and ubiquity of popular culture, the subject of his best known performance/installation *Body Fluids* 1987: 'a revolving display of performers as mass media icons taking part in a structuralist rearrangement of the elements of television.'

'We are witness to an opulent array of video technology and lighting effects set in a multi-perspective vision . . . These images of macho men and attractive women are stereotypically familiar . . . Their presence alludes to, but makes no judgements about, the motives of glamour, physical strength, beauty, ego . . . But together they create a larger-than-life spectacle, an amplification of reality . . . By stripping off the narrative and presenting only the form, he reveals the surface manipulations . . . Paul Wong's fascination with mass culture leads him to take it apart in the process of cultural investigation without surrendering any of its pleasures.'

Daina Augaitis and Karen Henry, *Retrieving Cultures*, Western Front/Video Inn 1986

Self Winding

'30 to 40 minute spectacle . . . a deconstruction of light, motion and narcissism, with human, live, pre-recorded, visual, aural, mechanical and electronic elements. Both natural (acoustic fire) and synthetic (man-induced) elements . . . create a performance-scape of evocative sounds and a bricolage of popular iconography . . . By appropriating the title of Benjamin's essay, the artist is continuing the process of removal from the original context . . . Even the artist's means of production will be destroyed in the process.'

On Edge Productions 1988

Born 1955

Lives in Vancouver

Awards, Residences

1974-1987 Numerous Travel Grants and Arts Grants from the Canada Council

1976,81,83 Video Artist-in-Residence, Western Front

1987 Artist-in-Residence / Commission, National Museum of Science & Technology, Ottawa. Several other Commissions

Selected References

1983 *Vancouver Art & Artists 1931-1983*, Vancouver Art Gallery, includes essays by Jo-Anne Birnie-Danzker: 'Vancouver Land and Culture Scape, West Coast performance, Praxis Without Ideology' and Claudia Beck: 'Through The Looking Glass'

1986 Daina Augaitis and Karen Henry, *Retrieving Cultures*, Western Front/Video Inn

1979 *Vanguard*, volume 8 (Russell Keziere)

1980 *Vanguard*, volume 9 (Peter Wollheim)

1984 *Vanguard*, volume 13 (Ian Carr-Harris)

1986 *Vanguard*, volume 15 (Peter Culley)

1984 *Fuse*, volume VII, number 6 (John Greyson)

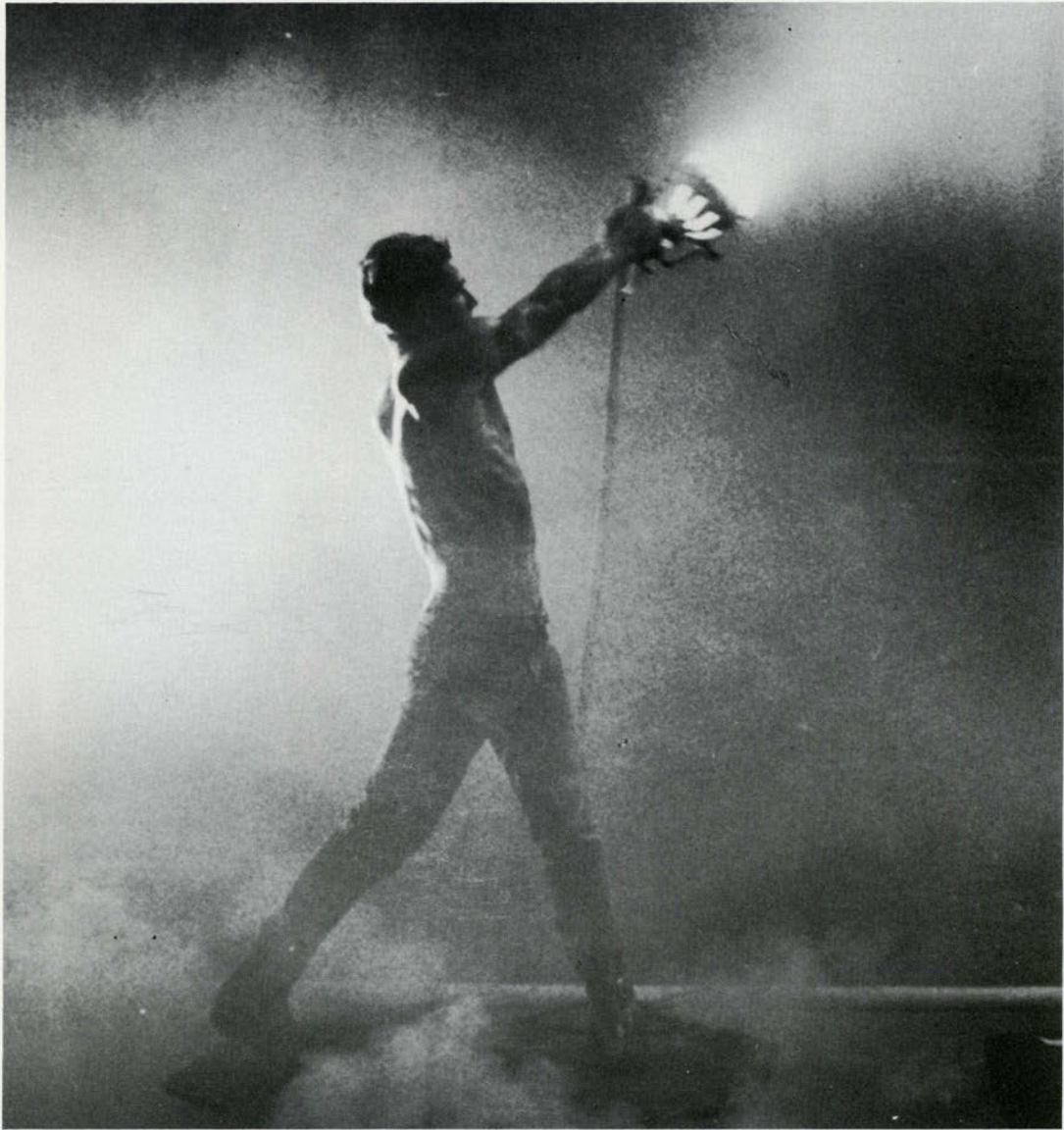
1986 *Fuse*, volume X, number 3 (Sara Diamond)

Video Guide, volume 8, Keith Wallace, 'Body Fluid' 1986, Paul Wong

1982 *Parallogramme*, volume 8 (Tim Guest)

1987 *Parallogramme*, volume 12 (Elsbeth Sage)

Parallogramme, volume 13 (Karen Henry, Sara Diamond, Jean Gagnon)



Paul WONG *Body Fluid*, 1987.

Peter ZEGVELD (Netherlands)

Peter Zegveld's visual scores have been performed throughout the Netherlands; they include *Kaspar Rapak*, available on cassette, Staaltapes 1984, *Dynamica Tumultus*, also on cassette, Stichting De Appel (Amsterdam) 1985, *Tumultus Concerta*, performed at Bimhuis, Amsterdam, *Tabula Sonus* at the Beeldende Kunst Biennale Noord Holland 1986 and *Barca Fumus*, performed in the harbour of Scheveningen and Het Gebeuren, The Hague 1987. Theatre projects include *ARA* at the Shaffy Theatre, Amsterdam and touring in Holland and Germany 1984-85, *Woont hier A. Hitler?* produced in collaboration with Harry Hageman throughout the Netherlands, of which there is a video, Stampij, 19 min. made in 1987 and *Meritus Jubilee*, at the Shaffy Theatre, Amsterdam in 1987. Video pieces include *Paint* 4 min. 1987 and *Transitus Christus*, 4 min. VPRO/Shaffy Theatre, Amsterdam 1987 and also a 16mm film, *Paint* 1987. Peter Zegveld has also exhibited throughout Holland since 1982 and in 1984 at Gallery Bertha Urdang, New York.

TRANSFORMATION OF SOUND INTO IMAGE AND *VICE VERSA* IS A PROFESSION.

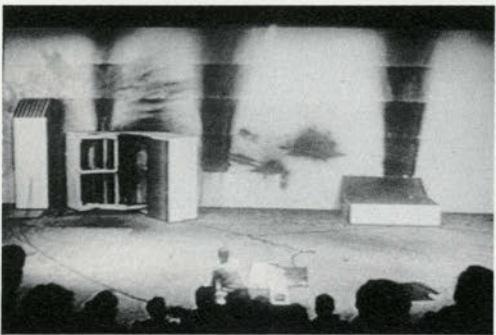
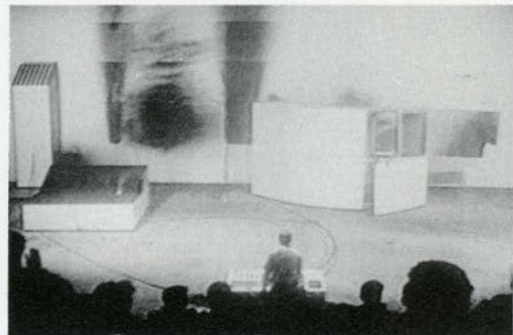
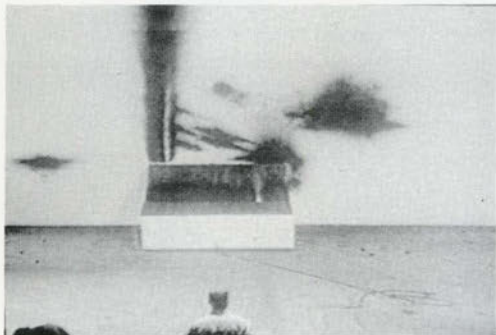
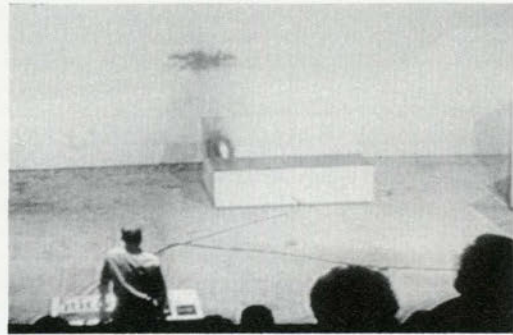
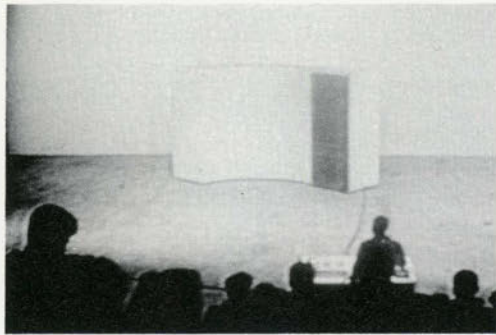
The Galley

Born in The Hague, Holland **1951**
Lives in Amsterdam

Educated Royal Academy of Fine Arts, The Hague

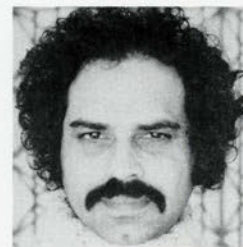
Film

1986 Oswald Berends, *Hel Gebaar*, a movie about Peter Zegveld, 16mm, 19 min.



Peter ZEGVELD Concert: *Tabula Eruptus*, Holland, 1988

Rasheed ARAEEN (UK)



Rasheed Araeen's work, from the *Structures*, steel 'I' beam sculptures, non-hierarchical cubes that subverted the basic, traditional formal principles of British New Sculpture of the sixties, to his shift in 1971 to direct political statements and activities, is concerned fundamentally with the politics of representation. In the seventies Araeen worked with radical black groups, becoming in 1973, an active member of the Black Workers Movement (formerly Black Panther Movement) and founded and edited *Black Phoenix*, an art magazine which dealt with contemporary art from a radical Third World perspective. In 1987 this was incorporated in a new publication, *THIRD TEXT*, edited by Rasheed Araeen, which, as he writes, 'represents a historical shift away from the centre of the dominant culture to its periphery in order to consider the centre more critically'. In 1982 Araeen set up PROJECT MRB to research the contribution of black artists to postwar art in Britain and in 1984 this was expanded into BLACK UMBERELLA to establish an AfroAsian multicultural and multiracial educational resource centre. In his recent work *Mon St V* 1984-85, a structure with references to Cezanne's series of paintings, Araeen interrogates Modernism on its own ground, exposing its ethnocentric limits.

'*Paki Bastard* was part critique of bourgeois activity, part tracing of existential experience — a bareing of the heart and heartache — and part a call to arms for the black struggle. Identity as artist, identity as black person, identity as exploited worker, were the three themes whose interrelationship was questioned continually in the piece, and it ended with a synthesis of the three realities. *Paki Bastard* was performed first at Artists for Democracy (July 1977), later at the Whitechapel Gallery, and to a mainly Asian and Afro-Caribbean and non-art world audience at Sussex University. Rather than a polished, style conscious contribution to a recognised genre of "performance art", it was a framework for the novel, and perhaps painful and awkward process, of presenting his experience through his physical being in front of an audience.'

Guy Brett, essay, Rasheed Araeen *Making Myself Visible* 1984

'It is imperative to abandon the models of binary oppositions which impose fixed ordering systems, and according to which some cultural practices are classified in terms of Same or Other. And it is to this end that consideration of art cannot be separated from politics.'

Rasheed Araeen, editorial, *THIRD TEXT*, number 1, autumn 1987

Lecture/Performance

Born Karachi, Pakistan **1935**
Lives in London, since 1964

- 1949** Started painting: self taught
- 1959** Decided to take up art professionally
- 1962** Graduated in civil engineering, University of Karachi
- 1964** Came to England
- 1968** Gave up engineering and worked as a sculptor

Awards

- 1969** John Moores, Liverpool
- 1978** Arts Council Award
- 1984** GLC (Greater London Council, now abolished) Antiracist Painting Prize

Selected References

- 1963** Sultan Ahmad, catalogue introduction to Rasheed Araeen's one person exhibition, Arts Council Gallery, Karachi
- 1975** Frank Popper, 'ART: Action & Participation', *Studio Vista*, London
- 1978** Interview, *World Times*, June 22
- 1978-79** *Black Phoenix*, London, edited by the artist with the help of Mahmood Jamal
- 1979** *THIRD WORLD INTERNATIONAL*, Karachi, numbers 5,6
- 1984** Rasheed Araeen, *Making Myself Visible*, Kala Press, London, with an introduction by Guy Brett
Michael Archer, *Art Monthly*, July, August
John Roberts, *City Limits*, London, number 150
'The Artist as Gentle Revolutionary', *Asian News*, Middlesex, London, volume 1, number XI
- 1985** Gavin Jantjes, *Red Letters*, London, number 17
Danny Padmore, *Multi-Ethnic Education Review*, ILEA, London, volume 4, number 1
- 1986** Michael Newman, catalogue essay, *Rasheed Araeen, White Power, Black Sexuality* Pentonville Gallery, London
- 1988** Andrea Rehberg, review of the artist's Retrospective Exhibition, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, *Flash Art*, number 139, March/April



Vera BÓDY (Hungary)

Born in Hungary, 1952
Lives in Cologne

Doctorate, University of Dusseldorf
The Age of the Enlightenment in Transylvania

Vera Bódy collaborated closely with her late husband, the celebrated film-maker Gábor Bódy, on projects including the international media magazine *Infermental*, which she now co-ordinates.

The energy of Vera Bódy in the production of the magazine *Infermental* and many other projects around the world is renowned. She recently entered the highly secretive world of Moscow's young experimental artists and shot some revealing video of their activities, which EDGE 88 has invited her to personally present. She writes on her experience of being 'kidnapped' by the Moscow underground artworld:

'A new world unfolds once one has, by sheer luck, penetrated the network of Moscow artists and progressive scientists. A flock of young Muscovites conducts the western visitor from one house to the next, and from studio to practice room. "Last summer I found myself in this position. After an uncensored showing of *Infermental VI* at the *Domkino*, I was kidnapped for six days by young artists and scientists from Moscow. This adventurous journey began at the house of Igor A . . . At the age of twenty, he has several experimental films to his name . . . I was moved (it is impossible to express this in matter-of-fact terms) by the way in which these young Soviet citizens, who never knew Stalinism, feel such a serious urge to record the killing machinery of their society on film. Picture compositions and techniques in the manner of Eisenstein are mixed with memories of gigantic 19th century oil paintings of Siberia. Unlike the rest of the Russian audience in Igor's parents living room, the sight of so many corpses and the ballet they performed did not make me laugh. A Georgian slapped my leg in an encouraging manner and told me "you should laugh, this is Soviet humour!" . . . The art critic Ilija F. prepared a performance on *Kanin Prospekt*. He had been allowed the use of a video projection screen the size of a tennis court (and normally used for advertising), for a video performance of four hours. How he had managed to obtain permission — something that could never happen on the Berlin *Kurfürstendamm* I do not know. He succeeded, and it was a unique event in the history of the *Prospek Mediamatic*.

Vera Galatica, 'Moskva 1987', Volume 2, number 3, March 1988

Lecture

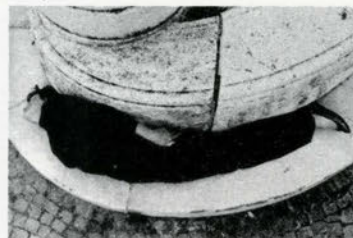
Selected References

Infermental 1980-86, the First International Magazine on Videocassettes, catalogue, text of a lecture by Vera Bódy, given at the Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach;

Infermental I-VII 1980-88, various videocassette magazines, each produced by a different country;

1988 Vera Galatica, 'Moskva 1987', *Mediamatic*, volume 2, number 3, March

Valie EXPORT (Austria)



Valie EXPORT *Körperkonfiguration* 1982

Valie Export in the sixties worked with the Vienna Actionists — Muel, Herman Nitsch, Brus, Weibel. In her body-actions, films and videos, she focuses on the human body as bearer of meaning and communication. Her practice has consistently addressed her environment, the reality of present conditions. Major works include *Tapp and Tast Cinema* 1968, *Eros/ion* 1971, *Hyperbolie* 1973 and the film made in collaboration with Peter Weibel, *Invisible Adversaries* 1978. The film's parodies, *noir* humour and sophisticated use of stills and video, is undercut by acerbic political comment, about for example, continuing Nazi influence in postwar Austria.

'Valie Export's brilliant film describes a psychic plague, or a contagion of hostilities, instigated by Hyskos, extraterrestrial beings who "take over" the hapless citizens of Vienna. Unlike the mental vampires of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* the Hyskos want to destroy the earth completely, not colonise; the metaphoric point is that their plans harmonise perfectly with general trends of human history.'

Gary Indianna, *On Film*, CIRCLES

'But the "adversaries" are all around — in the police, in the state, in lovers, in one's self, in nature and in objects.'

Amy Taubin, *Soho Weekly News*, CIRCLES

'Similar to the animal body that is branded as property in the course of nature's incorporation, man is embedded in the social community through signals on his body. The same happens in civilisation, only camouflaged. First she covers the human body with clothes and then with buildings. Clothing as the second and architecture as the third human skin. The more we disrupt these concrete and abstract institutions, the more we demolish architecture, cut up our clothes, the closer we get to the human body as venue of the mind, the bearer of inter-personal communication. It means to initiate the liberation of the individual, to discard the social rites, to renounce signs, their meaning and image.'

Valie Export, Venice Biennale 1980

Lecture: The Real One and its Double

Born in Vienna 1940
Lives in Vienna

Selected References

- 1975 Valie Export ed. 'Zur Geschichteder Frau in der Kunstgeschichte', *MAGNA, Feminismus und Kunst*, Galerie nächst St. Stephan, Vienna
Valie Export, ed. *Works from 1968-1975*, Biennale de Paris, Vienna
- 1977 *Körperkonfiguration 1972-1976*, Galerie Krinzinger, Innsbruck, Galerie Stampa, Basel
- 1980 *Valie Export*, Biennale di Venezia, ed. Hans Hollein, Galerie in der Staatsoper, Vienna
Körpersplitter, volume one; *Konfigurationen, Fotografien 1968-1977*, edition neue texte, ed. H. Backer, Linz/A
- 1985 *Kunst mit Eigen-Sinn. Aktuelle Kunst von Frauen, Texte und Dokumentation*, ed. Silvia Eiblmayr, Valie Export (Film preface and note), Monika Prischli-Maier, Löcker Verlag, Vienna, Munich
- 1987 *Corpus More Geometrico: Self Neue Selbstbildnisse von Frauen*, Frauen Museum, Bonn
Das Reale und Sein Double: Der Körper, ed. G.J. Lischka, Benteli-Verlag, Berne
- 1988 *Die Fraue und das Reale: das verdrängte Soziale*, Neue Forum, Vienna
'Aspects of Feminist actionism', *New German Critique*, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee



Silvia ZIRANEK

Born in London
Lives in London

Silvia Ziraneck, *The Legendary*, not only does 'perfs' which, with great visual extravagance and glittering verbal irony, point up the oppressive tyranny of Fashion, but she also introduces objects — 'Arrangements' — which take on an independent life of their own. She began to extend her oeuvres with the publication of her writings of which the most recent is *VERY FOOD*, 1987; *A MUST — SEMINAL, POLEMIC, DOMESTIC POLITICALE — IN SHORT COMME CHEZ NOUS, THE ONLY BOOK FOR THE CONSCIOUS COOK*

Silvia Ziraneck likes to write her own biographies.

Selected References

- 1980 *About Time*, group exhibition, ICA, London
- 1982 *Collazione Inglese*, group exhibition presented by Anthony Reynolds in the Scuola di San Pasquale, Venice Biennale 1982, catalogue introduction by David Brown
- 1983 Silvia Ziraneck, *CHEZ Z (SHE SA)ID; (Audio Arts Supplement) COOKING WITH G*D (I (H)ATE ART)*
- 1984 Phil Hyde, 'How Life Differs From Detergent — The Politics of the Kitchen', interview *Performance Magazine*, number 27, December/January *Perfo 2*, De Lantaren, Rotterdam, May
- 1985 'The Maureen Cleave Interview', *Evening Standard*, 21 January
Anthony Reynolds, essay *The British Show*, British Council touring exhibition, Australia and New Zealand
- 1986 Jane Withers, *Sunday Times*, colour supplement, 21 September
Jeni Walwin, introduction, *INTERNATIONAL WITH LIPSTICK*, Anthony Reynolds Gallery London
William Packer, *Financial Times*, 11 December
- 1987 Silvia Ziraneck, 'I TEND TO EAT', *Harpers & Queen*, September;
VERY FOOD, Bookworks, October
Cathy Courtney, review, *Art Monthly*, December
- 1988 Paul Vaughan, interview, *Kaleidoscope*, BBC Radio 4, 4 January
Andrew Graham-Dixon, *The Independent*, 13 January
Gray Watson, *City Limits*, number 333, 18-25 February
DAS GLÄSERNE U-BOOT, Donau Festival, Krems, Austria, June

WAS GOOD AT HOCKEY (LIKED TO POUT). RESISTED FULL TERM QUASI INTELLECT FROM NORTHERN UNI. REDISCOVERED SLICED CABBAGE IN WATER COLOUR AND PURPLE CARDIGANS ON CROYDON FOUNDATION. RECEIVED DEGREE FOR POSITIONED FEET (EN CHAUSSURES, MOSTLY) AT GOLDSMITHS. TRAVELLED (KENYA, ETHIOPIA). BECAME ADEPT (ALL TOO) AT CORRECTING SURNAME SPELLING. HOOVERED WITH BRUCE. FLEW BRIT COUNC. RECOGNISED THE CIRCUS SPOTLIGHT ON SEALDOM SYNDROME (AND THE INTERIOR OF A BEAUTIFUL VENETIAN SCUOLA). TALKED LOUDER AND TIED BIGGER BOWS AROUND MY CONTRACTS AND FOREHEAD. SURVIVED SYDNEY AND RECONSIDERED CANADA. REQUESTED LOVE, RESPECT, AND MONEY, AND ABHOR INEFFICIENCY. INDULGE IN HONEST SELFDOM AND WROTE A COOKBOOK. MAKE THE ODD FROCK, USE 35MM, APPRECIATE DEADLINES, LIVE IN HOPE.

ALOHA CLERKENWELL AND A COUPLE OF CARDS

CAPACITY DILUTED INTO CATEGORISATION, C.V.S. INTERPRETED AS QUALITY, ACCENT DUE TO DUTY FREE AND HOSPITABLE TECHNICIANS, SELL-BY DATES ON APPLICATION FORMS EVAPORATE WITH ELEVATION, RESPONSES HAVE LITTLE TO DO WITH LOCATION OH BUT APEX? UNINFORMED BUT EAGER VIES WITH BLASÉ GUEST LISTS. EFFICIENCY AND CONSIDERATION ARE INTERNATIONAL, SO IS STUPIDITY. TRAVEL BROADENS THE BIOG AND ONE SEES THE PLACE ONE WORKS IN. PEOPLE MATTER. A HAND ON THE PHONE IS WORTH TWO WITH A BRUSH. ONE TENDS TO BE AWARE OF SOLIDARITY. LATE NIGHT EUROLINGO BLOOMS. INCOMPETENCE GETS KNOWN. ORGEUIL REFUSES TALENT FOR MORE SYCOPHANTIC SUBSIDIES. GENDER IS NOTED. I USED TO PRACTISE WITH PHONE BILLS, NOW IT'S BONJOUR ESPERANTO AND HOW MUCH DO YOU COST? ICH BIN KUNSTASTISCH AND THE TOKEN SKIRT. ARTOCRACY? ... NEIN DANKE.

Lecture/performance

PERFORMANCE

Magazine

Editor: **Steve Rogers**

Founded in 1979, *Performance* is a bi-monthly magazine devoted to performance art, experimental theatre, video, installations and related events.

In each issue there is

News* details and discussion of current events and issues.

Analysis* features on artists, issues and major events.

Interviews* a full length, verbatim interview with a major international artist or group.

Reviews* reviews of recent performances, exhibitions, events and conferences.

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Jon Bewley or Simon Herbert

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